

*Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the  
questione della lingua*



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*The way back to town is only seventy miles... If you save your breath, I feel a man like you can manage it...*

- Clint Eastwood, *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*

A thesis can, even at the best of times, be likened to a seventy-mile slog through the sands of a seemingly endless desert. “I’ll keep the money and you can have the rope...” But unlike the journey that lay ahead of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*’s lovable buffoon, I’m incredibly thankful for the unwavering support of a few key people.

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- Luc

## Table of Contents

<i>Short Abstract</i> .....	1
<i>Long Abstract</i> .....	2
<b>Introduction:</b> <i>Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua</i> .....	7
<b>Chapter 1:</b> <i>I fatti miei e i miei pensieri: The Life, Language, and Writings of Ruggero Bonghi</i> 12	
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <i>Perché la lingua italiana non sia popolare in Italia: Language, Culture, Society, and the Literary Divide</i> .....	49
<b>Chapter 3:</b> <i>“Dell’unità della lingua...”: Literary Criticism, Dictionaries, and the Promulgation of an Italian Standard</i> .....	89
<b>Chapter 4:</b> <i>Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione: Language, Education, and Political Reform</i> ....	135
<b>Chapter 5:</b> <i>La donna e il suo avvenire: The Role of Women and the questione della lingua</i> ...	192
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	239
<b>Appendices</b> .....	242
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	247

*Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua*

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In Italian history, the *Risorgimento* represents not only the push for political unification but a process of social change that manifested itself in the efforts to establish a national identity, develop a centralized system of government, and implement a comprehensive system of education. With the promulgation of a standardized language as the most fundamental component of achieving any degree of political, social, or educational cohesion, the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua* demonstrates – more than in any other period in Italian history – the interconnected nature of linguistic, literary, social, political, and economic cultures. It is precisely in this capacity that an analysis of a historical figure such as Ruggero Bonghi – who operated as a journalist, academic, and politician in equal capacities – provides incomparable insight into the extent to which the *questione della lingua* shaped every facet of Italian society. As someone who began engaging with the issue from the early 1850s – prior to Italy’s political unification – and continued working on initiatives pertaining to education until the 1890s – over three decades following the nation’s first piece of national educational legislation – Bonghi’s ideas and methods of addressing Italy’s linguistic, literary, and socio-political formation developed alongside the evolution of the language debate itself. This comprehensive study on Ruggero Bonghi and his involvement with the *questione della lingua* serves to not only elucidate the historical significance of a figure who has been largely overlooked in contemporary scholarship but also demonstrate – through the life and career of one particular individual who operated in both a literary and political perspective – the extent to which the language debate in Italy shaped more than simply the nation’s means of linguistic or artistic expression.

*Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua*

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*Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua* explores two primary issues of study: 1a) the historical significance of Ruggero Bonghi – a figure who operated at the highest levels of Italy’s journalistic, academic, and political spheres – and 1b) his involvement and impact on the nineteenth-century language debate, and 2) the profound degree to which the *questione della lingua* shaped all forms of literary, social, political, economic, and legislative discourse in Italy during the nineteenth century. The study, which has been organized according to both thematic and chronological considerations, demonstrates how, over the forty-year period in which Bonghi was actively involved in relevant debates and initiatives, the language debate evolved to reflect the changing sociopolitical cultures in Italy.

1a) To begin understanding Bonghi’s impact on the *questione della lingua* – as seen through his extensive experiences as a literary critic and politician – it was imperative to first establish a comprehensive biographical context. Despite his prominence in many facets of nineteenth-century literary, social, and political discourse and the esteem with which he was regarded by his contemporaries, Bonghi has yet to be the subject of a monograph devoted to his contributions and has largely been overlooked in contemporary scholarship. Since the republication of his collected writings by notable historians and literary critics such as Francesco Torraca and Walter Maturi in the 1930s and 1940s, recent scholarship on Bonghi has been limited to either short, general works addressing the broad spectrum of issues with which he was involved or, in even fewer cases, a brief biographical sketch preceding a republication of a notable work such as *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*. Using primary sources – Bonghi’s

publications, archival records of parliamentary discussions, and the accounts of his contemporaries – this study provides the most comprehensive biographical account of Bonghi’s life and accomplishments and contextualizes his contributions to literary and political discourse within the overarching framework of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*.

1b) The focus on Bonghi’s involvement with the language debate in Italy is another feature of *Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua* that addresses a gap in Bonghi scholarship. It is important to note the four most prominent areas of cultural discourse to which Bonghi devoted himself: i) classical scholarship, philosophy, and literary studies, ii) religion and theology in a politically united Italy, iii) the state of education in Italy, and iv) the state of nineteenth-century European politics. While monographs could be devoted to his contributions to the development of each issue, Bonghi’s involvement in the *questione della lingua* and his beliefs on language, identity, and social formation transcend each of his most prominent interests. Inasmuch as Bonghi’s academic work shaped his beliefs on language and literature, his approach to language and literature, consequently, informed his approach to the legislative implementation of his beliefs concerning the state of education in Italy. Additionally, his awareness of the encompassing nature of Italy’s linguistic and educational divide was further informed by his interest in politics and economics. Thus, as Bonghi was one of the very few figures in Italy to operate as a literary critic, academic, and journalist whilst occupying a position as a formal ministerial official – let alone as someone who had served in Parliament for over three decades and featured heavily in political discussions with the Catholic Church and the creation of *la legge delle guarentigie* – his longstanding engagement with the *questione della lingua* provides a unique and important account of the encompassing nature of the language debate in the nineteenth century. Most importantly, an analysis of his direct contributions to social progress

through education – seen most notably with his regulation permitting female enrolment in Italian universities – demonstrates how the questions of language and education evolved to feature new forms of social equality.

2) In considering the various ways in which Bonghi formally engaged with issues concerning language and education alongside his expansive set of interests and experiences, a study of Ruggero Bonghi and the *questione della lingua* provides a unique opportunity to explore how the language debate evolved to include political, economic, and legislative factors. Thus, the analysis conducted in *Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua* seeks to provide innovative and original research in two capacities. Firstly, with regards to overarching scholarship on the *questione della lingua*, this study examines the features of the history of the Italian language that are unique to the nineteenth century. In going beyond the linguistic or literary factors that dominated the Italian language debate since the *quattrocento* and *cinquecento*, a focused exploration of the mid- to late-*ottocento* demonstrates the inextricable connections between language, political policy, educational legislation, and economics and factors that directly shaped modern-day Italy. Secondly, a sociopolitical analysis of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua* – as considered through the contributions of a figure like Ruggero Bonghi – provides contemporary scholarship with a perspective beyond those of Alessandro Manzoni and Graziadio Isaia Ascoli. Considering the close personal and intellectual relationship between Bonghi and Manzoni and their shared beliefs on the Italian language, this study underscores how the approach to linguistic diffusion developed and changed over the course of the nineteenth-century.

*Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua* is divided into five chapters with each exploring a different component of Bonghi's engagement with the *questione della lingua*.

Chapter 1: "*I fatti miei e i miei pensieri: The Life, Language, and Writings of Ruggero Bonghi*" provides a biographical account of Bonghi's life, experiences, interactions, and overall significance in nineteenth century Italian history. Inasmuch as it focuses on the biographical elements pertaining to the language debate in Italy, the chapter serves as the most comprehensive biographical sketch to date.

Chapter 2: "*Perché la lingua italiana non sia popolare in Italia: Language, Culture, Society, and the Literary Divide*" explores Bonghi's core beliefs on linguistic selection, his interactions with Alessandro Manzoni and the way in which these interactions shaped his vision of the Italian language, and the overarching difficulties of promulgating a national language. This chapter provides the necessary theoretical backdrop to underscore Bonghi's practical impact on the language debate.

Chapter 3: "*Dell'unità della lingua...*": Literary Criticism, Dictionaries, and the Promulgation of an Italian Standard" analyzes Bonghi's writings on the dynamics between language and literature, the ways in which literary criticism could be reformed to better aid with exegetical analysis for a wider audience, his beliefs on the selection of literary texts for children, and involvement on the 1868 Broglio Commission. This chapter highlights the evolution of Bonghi's approach to the *questione della lingua* and, using his continued work with Manzoni as an example, highlights the distinct characteristics that separated his beliefs and initiatives from those of Italy's most prominent figures.

Chapter 4: “*Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione: Language, Education, and Political Reform*” considers the historical factors which shaped the formation of Italy’s first centralized system of education and explores how historical, social, political, and economic factors informed Bonghi’s political actions before, during, and after his tenure as Minister of Public Education. Using the writings of Italy’s leading economists, the archival records of the discussions in the Chamber of Deputies, and historical collection of laws and regulations passed and made during Bonghi’s service in Parliament, this chapter demonstrates the interconnected nature of the *questione della lingua*, how it evolved to include political, legislative, and economic factors, and the extent to which Bonghi contributed to the implementation and development of new political policies concerning education.

Lastly, Chapter 5: “*La donna e il suo avvenire: The Role of Women and the Questione della Lingua*” demonstrates the ways in which the language debate in Italy impacted social progress and, specifically concerning the educational rights of women, precipitated the political changes under Bonghi that allowed female students to formally enrol in Italian universities. This chapters shows not only the social impact of the *questione della lingua* but also the manner in which Bonghi considered female education to be a critical component of Italy’s linguistic and academic enrichment.

With a heavy focus on archival materials and primary source research, *Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua* seeks to provide an innovative and original piece of scholarship that addresses and highlights the historical significance of a figure who has been largely overlooked in contemporary scholarship and demonstrates the extent to which the language debate in Italy evolved to shape the development of literary, linguistic, social, political, economic, and legislative discourse in Italy.

## Introduction

### *Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua: Ruggero Bonghi and the questione della lingua*

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Ruggero Bonghi's involvement in the *questione della lingua* spanned over four decades – from the 1850s until the 1890s – and his contributions to the development of Italy's linguistic, artistic, social, and political cultures can best be considered in light of the language debate that rooted itself in every aspect of Italian society. Inasmuch as the *questione della lingua* as a whole can be considered from both an artistic and political perspective, the manifestation of the language debate in the nineteenth century rooted itself more profoundly than ever before in Italy's evolving political situation. With Italy's political unification in 1861, the push for the diffusion of a standardized tongue not only rooted itself in the efforts to establish a national identity but also in the development of a centralized system of government, in the implementation of comprehensive system of education, and in the evolution of the country's means of economic generation. It is precisely in this capacity that an analysis of a historical figure such as Ruggero Bonghi – who operated as a journalist, academic, and politician in equal capacities – provides incomparable insight into the extent to which the *questione della lingua* shaped every facet of Italian society. As someone who began engaging with the issue from the early 1850s – prior to Italy's political unification – and continued working on initiatives pertaining to education until the 1890s – over three decades following the nation's first piece of national educational legislation – Bonghi's ideas and methods of addressing Italy's linguistic, literary, and socio-political formation developed alongside the evolution of the language debate itself. Thus, a comprehensive study on Ruggero

Bonghi and his involvement with the *questione della lingua* not only elucidates the historical significance of a figure who has been largely overlooked in contemporary scholarship but also demonstrates – through the life and career of one particular individual who operated in both a literary and political perspective – the extent to which the language debate in Italy shaped more than simply the nation’s means of linguistic or artistic expression.

The following five chapters explore Ruggero Bonghi’s contributions to the development nineteenth-century *questione della lingua* and examine how his approach to the language debate evolved alongside the changing linguistic, social, and political climate. Considering the extent to which historical circumstances contributed to the formation of Bonghi’s beliefs and the execution of his initiatives or policies, as well as the interconnected nature of linguistic, literary, social, political, and economic cultures, a substantial historical framework is used to contextualize each chapter.

**Chapter 1:** “*I fatti miei e i miei pensieri: The Life, Language, and Writings of Ruggero Bonghi*” provides a comprehensive biographical study of Bonghi’s life to properly contextualize the various capacities in which he approached the *questione della lingua*. Beginning with an analysis of his formative years, Chapter 1 examines historical considerations alongside his personal writings in order to explore his early exposure to literary and linguistic theory as well as his initial points of contact and interactions with the historical figures that became instrumental in his rise to cultural and political prominence. The chapter continues to highlight his pedagogical work as a university professor and follows his career trajectory as he became increasingly involved with politics and engaged with prominent issues of the day – from his personal invitation to attend of the inauguration of the Suez Canal to his involvement in the composition of *legge delle guarentigie*.

Chapter 1 concludes with a brief examination of his initiatives involving education, language, and linguistic and literary accessibility.

**Chapter 2:** With the necessary biographical understanding of Bonghi's life established, "*Perché la lingua italiana non sia popolare in Italia: Language, Culture, Society, and the Literary Divide*" is divided into two sections which analyze the most important components of Bonghi's early theories on linguistic selection and his beliefs regarding the role of literature in the *questione della lingua*. The first part examines the passages in his personal diary pertaining to the characteristics of various European languages and Italy's process of linguistic selection. Using his personal writings and his transcriptions of his dialogues with figures such as Antonio Rosmini and Alessandro Manzoni, the chapter considers Bonghi's beliefs on which "Italian" should form the basis of a linguistic standard in Italy and the ways in which his early exposure to Italy's most prominent author shaped his views on linguistic promulgation in Italy. The second part analyzes Bonghi's most prominent work of literary criticism, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, as it takes into consideration his theories on the relationship between spoken and written Italian and his beliefs on the role of literature in addressing the linguistic divide in Italy.

**Chapter 3:** "*Dell'unità della lingua...* ": Literary Criticism, Dictionaries, and the Promulgation of an Italian Standard" begins to explore the various ways in which Bonghi considered practical solutions to Italy's literary and linguistic problems. The chapter, which is divided into two sections, begins by highlighting the arguments in *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* that demonstrate Bonghi's early transition in mentality – from theoretical analysis to conceptualizing practical solutions – when addressing the *questione della lingua*. The first section begins by unpacking his ideas on the role of literary criticism and the ways in which it could be reformed in order to both improve the state of contemporary literature in Italy and bridge the gap

between authors and an increasingly literate public. The first section also considers Bonghi's arguments concerning literary selection as a means of both increasing public consumption of literature as well as appealing to a younger demographic of reader. The analysis of Bonghi's more practical theories on literary criticism is followed by an in-depth examination of his involvement on the 1868 Broglio Commission – first major foray in the political implementations of linguistic theory – in the second part of the chapter. Chapter 3 concludes with a study of the two distinct sections of “Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” – co-authored by Alessandro Manzoni, Ruggero Bonghi and Giulio Carcano – to highlight Bonghi's potential impact on Manzoni's most historically significant politically guided initiative.

**Chapter 4:** “*Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione: Education, Economics, and Political Reform*” applies the biographical information provided in Chapter 1 and, building on the political initiatives discussed in Chapter 3, explores the full extent of Bonghi's political involvement and his implementation of legislative policy concerning the educational components of the *questione della lingua*. In the way that Chapters 2 and 3 explore the literary components of the language debate in Italy, Chapter 4 and 5 focus on the various historical components of the *questione della lingua* that are distinct to the nineteenth century. In doing so, it is critical to first provide the necessary context in order to i) understand the ideas that contributed to Bonghi's intellectual formation – as someone who was interested in the history of education and the impact of Italy's economic systems on its educational structures, and had personal correspondences with Italy's most prominent economists – as well as to ii) be familiar with the social, political, and economic factors which impacted the decisions made during his time serving in the *Camera dei Deputati* and during his tenure as Minister of Public Education. Thus, Chapter 4 begins with a brief summary of the origins of Italy's educational systems and the economic/regional factors which directly and profoundly impacted

the state of Italian education, and provides a more thorough analysis of the 1859 Casati Law which formed the basis of Italian education during the first two decades of Italy's political unification. With the necessary context established, the second part of Chapter 4 examines Bonghi's theories on how Italy's educational model could be adapted to address the social and financial issues faced by schools, his legislative proposals in the Chamber of Deputies, and the degree to which his involvement impacted Italy's most basic levels of education.

**Chapter 5:** "*La donna e il suo avvenire: The Role of Women and the *Questione della Lingua**" brings together the themes, ideas, and issues explored in Chapters 1-4 to demonstrate the ways in which female equality was connected to the *questione della lingua* and the extent to which Bonghi advocated for female educational and legislative equality and recognized its importance for linguistic diffusion and cultural enrichment. Chapter 5 begins with a brief summary of the ways in which the Risorgimento saw changes in women's involvement in the public sphere and how various prominent figures paved the way for increased female participation in the literary and educational sphere. It also demonstrates Bonghi's connections to the women of Italy's most prominent salons and the extent to which his life and career were enriched and advanced by his personal and intellectual relationships with figures such as the Marchesa Arconati and Emilia Peruzzi. The second part of the chapter explores Bonghi's advocacy for female equality and female representation at the highest levels of literature, literary criticism, and education.

## Chapter 1

### *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri: The Life, Language, and Writings of Ruggero Bonghi*

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Despite being vastly overlooked in contemporary scholarship, Ruggero Bonghi (1826-1895) is one of the most heavily involved and important figures of the late nineteenth century in Italy. A writer, journalist, politician, scholar, professor, philologist, Catholic, critic, and – most importantly – an Italian, he was a man of uncompromising moral standard who contributed greatly to every facet of social, political, and spiritual life in Italy. He was a friend of Alessandro Manzoni and Antonio Rosmini, a confidant to Emilia and Ubaldino Peruzzi, an antagonist to Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII, and a major proponent of – and fierce advocate for – Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour’s Historical Right. With his drive to contribute to the betterment of Italy as the underlying factor in his every endeavour, Ruggero Bonghi, candidly and, at times, caustically, played an integral role in nineteenth-century Italian society and, more specifically, was an important figure in the evolution of the *questione della lingua* debate. In his capacity as literary critic, pedagogue, and politician, he demonstrated how the thematic intersectionality that defined the nineteenth-century language debate in Italy impacted and shaped everything from the content and style of Italy’s prose, to the implementation of political policy, to the approach to Italy’s economic situation, to the advocacy for greater female equality. As a central figure to all elements of the *questione della lingua*, Bonghi demonstrates, to a modern reader, the inextricable nature of national identity, linguistic unity, and social and political progress.

## *Early Life*

Ruggero Bonghi was born in Naples on March 21 1826 to Luigi Bonghi, a prominent lawyer in the Neapolitan court of aristocratic origins, and Carolina De Curtis. Not long after the loss of his father to cholera in 1836, his mother married writer, poet, and politician Saverio Baldacchini – a man who would become an instrumental figure in Ruggero’s intellectual development and early political engagement – in 1840. In 1837 he was admitted to a college “presso gli Scolopii di San Carlo a Mortella” – a college affiliated with the Catholic educational order of Piarists in the church of San Carlo delle Mortelle in Naples – where he began studying classical Greek under the direction of a father Del Verme before going on to continue his studies of Greek with an Epirote of “acutissimo ingegno”, Costantino Margaris, Roman law with economist and politician Giacomo Savarese, and philosophy with Luigi Palmieri.<sup>1</sup> As Bonghi reflects upon his early life in his *La vita italiana*, published on January 1 1895, he describes being immediately drawn to Plato, a figure whose writings and philosophies would, perhaps more than any other, form the basis of Bonghi’s approach to understanding the world around him. From language to literature to politics, the philosophical undercurrent of Bonghi’s early studies remain an inherent and intrinsic part of both his attempts to understand the social, political, religious, and linguistic factors present in nineteenth-century Italian society and his approach to trying to solve the problems that he felt were preventing Italy from flourishing to its maximum potential. Furthermore, it would be his translation of Plato’s *Philebus* (*Filebo*) that would precipitate his first

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<sup>1</sup> Roux, Onorato, “Ruggero Bonghi,” *Illustri italiani contemporanei: memorie giovanili autobiografiche di letterati, artisti, scienziati, uomini politici, patrioti e publicisti*. Firenze: R. Bemporad & Figlio Editori, 1908, pp. 76-77. See Bonghi, Ruggero, *La Vita Italiana*, a.II, No. 4, Jan.1, Roma, 1896.

correspondence with the man that would become the single most influential figure in Bonghi's life, Alessandro Manzoni.

Shortly after the Papal election of Pius IX in 1846, Bonghi terminated his studies and became increasingly involved with the push for social reform and the establishment of a constitution in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. As a young liberal who was only just becoming more engaged with the Italian political situation, Bonghi took advantage of his stepfather Saverio Baldacchini's friendship with Carlo Troya – historian, politician, and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from April 3 1848 to May 15 1848 – and became more involved with the political moderates with whom Troya associated.<sup>2</sup> In a brief article on his youth published posthumously in 1896, Bonghi wrote:

Appena che Pio IX fu eletto papa, lasciai gli studii. Presi molta parte, non ultima, ai tumulti della città, coi quali si ottenne che fosse concessa la costituzione... Io, appena uscito al mondo, mi trovai, per circostanze e per gusto, introdotto nella società più ricca e nobile della città. Adunque, io mi proposi di trarre al movimento il maggior numero di giovani di quella società che io potessi.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is particularly interesting to note how closely connected the network of European Liberals was during the nineteenth century and the way in which these connections might have informed or shaped Bonghi's political ideals. Bonghi, much like Cavour, had a particular affinity for English Liberalism and upheld both English political and academic systems as the ideal example which Italy should emulate. With this in mind, it is noteworthy that William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898), who became Prime Minister of England for the first time in 1868, had made several trips to Naples between 1850 and 1852 and met with many liberal Italian politicians, read the political and religious writings of prominent Italian figures including Antonio Rosmini, and was in contact with several future Prime ministers of Italy including Camillo Benso and Marco Minghetti, under whom Bonghi would serve as Minister of Public Education. As far as his connections to Bonghi are concerned, the name “Carlo Troja” appears several times in Gladstone's diaries during this period. In a diary entry dated February 1, 1851, Gladstone notes that he “Saw Carlo Troja an hour or more.” before proceeding to “Work on Farini.”, a translation of *Storia dello Stato Romano dall'anno 1815 al 1850* he had been working on. Although Bonghi had since left Naples, these connections are particularly noteworthy as Bonghi would go on to write extensively on the life and politics of Gladstone. Furthermore, the political model in England and the structure of England's constitution heavily informed the Neapolitan's approach to politics and education. Gladstone, William. *The Gladstone Diaries: Volume IV 1848-1854*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1974, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Published in Roux, “Ruggero Bonghi,” *Illustri italiani contemporanei: memorie giovanili autobiografiche di letterati, artisti, scienziati, uomini politici, patrioti e publicisti*, p. 78.

As is reflected in these few lines, Bonghi was neither content being used as an instrument to a political end nor was he satisfied operating as a cog in a larger political machine; instead, he took it upon himself to lead and engage others for the benefit of what he, in his eyes, deemed just or beneficial for Italy.

That same year, under the guidance of Baldacchini and Troya – the two founders of the political periodical of liberal leanings, *Il Tempo*, which they had established in 1847 – Bonghi began writing articles for and collaborating on *Il Tempo*. His work as a journalist – something that he would continue to do his entire life – was temporarily halted once he was appointed by decree on April 8 1848 as secretary of a delegation sent to Rome by Prime Minister Carlo Troya to negotiate the formation of a political alliance between the moderate political groups in Rome, Tuscany, and Turin. Although the delegation was received by Pope Pius IX – who, at the time, was perceived to be sympathetic to the liberal ideals in Italy – it was disbanded on May 6 1848 due to pressures from Bourbon ruler King Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies.<sup>4</sup> Bonghi, who had also publishing a series of articles against the Bourbon rule and was contributing to the Neapolitan efforts to push Ferdinand II to establish a constitution, feared reprisal from Ferdinand II – who had, since the uprising in Sicily in 1837 in which demonstrators called for the establishment of a constitution, suppressed any forms of dissent to Bourbon rule and fiercely opposed any notions of a constitutional democracy – and remained in Rome until August before moving to Florence. Although he eventually moved to Turin in 1850, Bonghi used this brief period of time in Florence to become more acquainted with the prominent Florentine liberals and firmly establish himself in the political circles that would remain an integral part of his involvement in Italian politics later in

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<sup>4</sup> The constitution which was granted by Ferdinand II on January 29 1848 after a series of insurrections in Reggio Calabria, Messina, and Palermo in 1847-1848 was promptly abolished shortly thereafter on May 15 1848.

his life. It is during this period that Bonghi made the acquaintance of journalist Celestino Bianchi – the same Celestino Bianchi to whom Bonghi would address the letters that comprise his most famous work *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* – and began contributing to the periodical *Il Nazionale*. As a result of his relationship with Bianchi, the young Neapolitan became acquainted with members of the Florentine branch of political moderates that would become critical pieces of the Historical Right – such as Bettino Ricasoli and his close Genoese friend, Raffaele Lambruschini.<sup>5</sup> Although Bonghi was still a young man when he left Florence, he established himself – from a very early age – as one who never shied away from criticizing those who did not act in accordance with his idea of Italian liberalism – kings, popes, politicians, or otherwise – and certainly one who never shied away from advocating against those he deemed as oppressors of the people.

### ***Formative Years and Political Encounters***

After Bonghi's self-exile from Naples and brief sojourn in Florence, the young Neapolitan moved to Piedmont in March 1850 and began interacting and engaging with various groups of Italian liberals in northern Italy. This period of Bonghi's life can largely be regarded as a transitional period – geographically, personally, and intellectually – as the young man moved from

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<sup>5</sup> Enrica Viviani della Robbia writes in her book on Bettino Ricasoli, “Celestino Bianchi, che da allora troveremo sempre a fianco del Ricasoli, tant'è vero che il Tabarrini diceva di non potere parlare dell'uno senza nominare l'altro.” Viviani della Robbia, Enrica. *Ricasoli*. Torino: UTET, 1976, p. 76. Not only does this demonstrate Bonghi's initial exposure to what would become the Historical Right, it is important to note the connectedness of political figures and how this network would be continue to be present throughout Bonghi's life. Bianchi, who was close friends with Ricasoli, was also connected to Lambruschini who, as will be explored in Chapter 3, was appointed vice-president of the Broglio commission in 1868.

place to place, expanded his network of acquaintances and friends, and matured as a person, as a thinker, and as a writer. He lived in Turin for most of 1850 and 1851 before taking an extended trip to Paris – with a brief trip to London – in 1851-1852 and returning to Turin in May 1852. As exemplified by the five-year gap in Bonghi's published works, it would not be until 1852 that he would find the stability – and intellectual guidance and inspiration – needed to mature fully and begin contributing to the formation and development of the Italian state. More than any other work, Bonghi's diary, which he had begun writing in March 1852 whilst in Paris, continued writing during his lengthy sojourn at the Rosmini estate in Stresa, and ceased writing in February 1853 whilst in Turin, not only provides an insightful account of the experiences of an exile but also an account of the collective workings and interactions of those who sought to contribute to the question of Italian Unification in a social, political, or linguistic capacity. It is for these reasons that a close examination of his most intimate writings is crucial in understanding the extent to which his encounters and correspondences with Italy and Europe's political and intellectual elites shaped his personal and political development. Furthermore, the extensive list of names which Bonghi cites or details in his diary later became – if they were not already – members of the governing parties of Italy with whom Bonghi corresponded during his tenure as Minister of Public Education.

Those unfamiliar with Bonghi might be taken aback when they read the first few entries in his diary and discover a man with an unbridled capacity for speaking and writing in earnest, regardless of the political stature of the person on the receiving end of his "attention". In an entry dated March 10 1852, he detailed his attendance at a ball at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his encounters with prominent members of European society such as Pierre Bernard Magnan,

François Canrobert, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Louis Félix Étienne, Marquis of Turgot.<sup>6</sup> After remaining at this event until “four o’clock in the morning”, Bonghi candidly recounted the events of the evening and the people he had met, going so far as to dismiss the Marquis of Turgot – noted as simply “Turgot” – as a “uomo mediocre”.<sup>7</sup> Even more humorously, the description of his stay in Paris from April 26–30 1852 and the ball held at the Tuileries Palace depicts, to the modern reader, a rather perturbed Bonghi who, already agitated by stomach pains, used his diary to critique, in his view, the utter lack of attractive women in the French aristocracy, the terrible sense of French fashion – “sia in abito, sia in divisa” – and, most importantly, the appearance and character of Louis Napoleon, President of the French Republic.<sup>8</sup> After having watched the President maneuver throughout the rooms of the Palace, Bonghi described him as “Figura goffa, persona mal fatta, mezzo sfiancato, consumata dalla libidine, faccia gialla, naso aquilino, occhio smorto, incavato, gambe corte, corpo lungo. Ci ha dell’intelligenza nel viso come ci ha fuoco sotto la cenere calda: manca la scintilla.”<sup>9</sup> Although such minor anecdotes can be considered insignificant compared to Bonghi’s more notable historical contributions, an understanding of his character is critical in order to fully critique and comprehend his work in all aspects of literary criticism, journalism, and political engagement.

As the reader progresses through the diary, one notices a flurry of names – some are quite notable; others are not necessarily those that Plutarch might have upheld as the notable few whose

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bernard Magnan (1791 – 1865) was a Marshal of France elected by Louis Bonaparte in 1849, François Canrobert (1809 – 1895) was a senator and Marshal of France, and Louis Félix Étienne, Marquis of Turgot (1796 – 1866) was a fierce supporter of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III) and was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1851.

<sup>7</sup> Bonghi, Ruggero, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*. a cura di Piccolo, Francesco. Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1927, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62. Charles-Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III) (1808 – 1873) was the nephew and heir of Napoleon Bonaparte, the only President of the French Second Republic (1848 – 1852), and Emperor of the Second French Empire.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

deeds might be regarded with greater attention on the wider historical spectrum – that, when compiled together, provide a staggering depiction of the closely connected nature of the Italian intelligentsia and, in regards to Bonghi, demonstrate a potential influence on his thoughts concerning social, political, and linguistic issues in Italy. Thus, in the context of an analysis of Bonghi’s involvement in the *questione della lingua*, it is imperative to examine the people with whom Bonghi was in regular contact in order to understand their significance in both the Italian and European political context and, by extension, the manner in which their experiences might have informed Bonghi’s political or philosophical stances. Beginning with those whom Bonghi had met outside of Italy, someone like Victor Cousin (1792 – 1867) would undoubtedly have influenced Bonghi’s approach to language and education. Victor Cousin, or “Il Cousin” as is noted in Bonghi’s diary, was not only a particularly important figure in France during the nineteenth century as a major proponent of the revitalization of French philosophical discourse, but he was also a supporter of the Carbonari and had worked to promote the ideals of European liberalism – as seen in his sentiments of Philhellenism in regards to Greece’s political struggles and his constant support of Italy’s liberation and unification.<sup>10</sup> In addition to being a friend of Manzoni, Cousin was someone with whom Bonghi had been in contact, had visited whilst in Paris, and whose writings Bonghi read throughout his time in Stresa.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, given Cousin’s active involvement with educational reform in France, the two men would certainly have exchanged ideas and theories concerning educational reform and Italy’s linguistic situation. In addition to Cousin,

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<sup>10</sup> Maurizio Isabella’s book *Risorgimento in Exile* excellently contextualizes Victor Cousin’s involvement in the greater international European discourse surrounding liberalism and nation-building. With Cousin as a central figure in the ideological debate of both the Greek and Italian revolutions, Bonghi would have, at the very least, contemplated and reflected on Cousin’s thoughts and writings.

<sup>11</sup> Bonghi met with Cousin on May 2 1852 whilst in Paris and described reading his articles published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* in a diary entry dated June 7 1852 as well as an article on “Mme. de Longueville”, French princess Anne Geneviève de Bourbon who was notable for both her amorous liaisons and her involvement in The Fronde during the Franco-Spanish War, in an entry dated September 7 1852.

patriot Federico Casanova and Filippo Maria Canuti (1802 – 1866), a lawyer and outspoken liberal who had spent his time in exile in Corfù, Malta, and Paris getting involved in external unificatory efforts alongside with other exiled patriots, also accompanied Bonghi during his “pranzo dai Collegno” in Paris on May 2 1852.<sup>12</sup> To further the idea of interconnectedness, the countess Collegno was the sister of the marchioness Arconati, a figure who – as discussed in Chapters 1, 2, and 5 – contributed significantly to the early stages of Bonghi’s career.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, Ludovico Trotti, Giuseppe Pisanelli, Gennaro Bellelli, Filippo Capone, as well as a Tupputi, Sabini, Guerritore, and Del Giorno are notable figures who visited Bonghi on May 5 1852 during his stay in Geneva. The meetings and encounters with many of these figures demonstrate the kind of Italian patriotic activity and discourse that had been taking place in countries outside of Italy by people who had been exiled from their regions throughout Italy. Although several of the names mentioned would not become significant or particularly notable figures in regards to the Italian Risorgimento, it is important to note the accomplishments and contributions of figures such as Trotti, Pisanelli, Bellelli, and Capone as all were active participants in the formation of the Italian national state throughout the Risorgimento and would continue to be actively involved in Italy’s political scene after the unification. Ludovico Trotti (1829 – 1914) was a patriot that contributed to the *cinque giornate di Milano* and was exiled in 1849. He would become an Italian politician and senator of the Kingdom of Italy in the *XVII Legislatura del Regno d’Italia* (1890) serving alongside prominent names such as Giosuè Carducci, Carlo Negroni, and

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<sup>12</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> In the letter to Carlo Landriani dated June 24 1873 which serves as the preface to the third edition of Bonghi’s *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, Bonghi wrote of the Collegno, “Non erano soli. Stava con [gli Arconati] quello spirito fine e sagace della contessa Collegno, sorella della marchesa; e il conte Collegno, altresì, mente asciutta ed indole perfetta, che è tra gli uomini che ho visto a’ miei giorni, quegli il quale m’ha meglio ritratto l’immagine che nella fantasia giovanile m’ero formato d’un eroe di Plutarco.” Bonghi, Ruggero, *Perché la letteratura non sia popolare in Italia*. Varese: Sugarco Edizioni, 1993, p. 22.

Ubalдино Peruzzi.<sup>14</sup> Giuseppe Pisanelli (1812 – 1879) was a jurist, politician, and academic who had spent significant time in Turin, Paris, and London after having been exiled in 1848. He would become *Ministro di Grazia e Giustizia* in 1860 in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, serve as a member of parliament from 1861 – 1873 in the *Camera dei Deputati*, and serve as *Ministro di Grazia e Giustizia* under the Historical Right governments of Farini and Minghetti. Gennaro Bellelli (1812 – 1864), whose father was made Baron by Gioacchino Murat, was a liberal who opposed Bourbon rule and was imprisoned and exiled. After having been elected *deputato* of Salerno in the newly established *Parlamento napoletano* in 1848 and becoming actively involved in insurrections, political demonstrations, and the attempted coup d'état on May 15 1848, Bellelli was forced to flee to Marseille and, from 1852 – 1860, settle in Florence with his wife Laura Degas. Lastly, Filippo Capone (1821 – 1895) was an Italian patriot who, in autumn 1849, was discovered by Bourbon police as a member of the Italian secret society *Unità Italiana* and was forced to flee to Geneva to escape imprisonment. Whilst in exile, he became acquainted with Ruggero Bonghi, someone with whom Capone maintained regular contact during Bonghi's stay in Stresa.<sup>15</sup> Capone would eventually serve as senator in the *XVI Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* (1886) alongside prominent figures such as Giacomo Giuseppe Costa, Domenico Farini, and Giuseppe Meneghini.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Giosuè Carducci (1835 – 1907) was one of Italy's most prominent poets during the nineteenth and very early twentieth century. Not only was he the first Italian to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1906, he also served as a senator in the Senate of the Kingdom of Italy. Carlo Negroni (1819 – 1896) was a journalist and politician who also served as senator. Ubalдино Peruzzi (1822 – 1891) was a prominent Italian politician, an integral part of the Historical Right political party and, for an extended period, a close friend and political confidante of Bonghi.

<sup>15</sup> The *Archivio Privato Ruggiero Bonghi: Inventario* indicates that there were approximately twelve letters sent from Capone to Bonghi from Geneva between May 19 1852 and December 7 1852.

<sup>16</sup> Giacomo Giuseppe Costa (1833 – 1897) was a prominent magistrate and politician who served as *Ministro di grazia e giustizia del Regno d'Italia* as well as senator in the Senate of the Kingdom of Italy. Domenico Farini (1834 – 1900) was a soldier in the Second and Third Italian Wars of Independence, a member of the Historical Right, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies from 1878 – 1880 and 1880 – 1884, and President of the Senate of Italy from 1887 – 1898. Giuseppe Meneghini (1811 – 1889) was a professor and politician who, after having studied medicine at the University of Padua and appointed professor of chemistry, physics, and botany in 1839 and Professor of geology at the University of Pisa in 1848, served as a senator in the Senate of the Kingdom of Italy.

If the interactions that took place within Bonghi's network in France and Switzerland indicate the extent to which political collaboration and patriotic collusion outside of Italy influenced the social and political happenings in Italy, the importance of Bonghi's network in Stresa of people operating within the peninsula must also be noted. After his trip to Geneva, he visited Turin for several days and spent much of his time meeting and engaging with his friends – much of whom belonged to the liberal intelligentsia and social elite of Italy. On May 11 1852, Bonghi described visiting “la Marchesa Arconati” and lunching at her residence along with Carolina Litta, “il Provano”, “il Melegari”, and Giuseppe Massari. Costanza Trotti Bentivoglio (1800 – 1871), La Marchesa Arconati, was a Viennese-born noblewoman who married Giuseppe Arconati Visconti – another figure who would become Senator of the Kingdom of Italy from 1865 to 1873 – in 1818 with whom she would become actively involved with the Carbonari and participate in political insurrections before following her husband into exile in 1820. After returning to Italy in 1838, the couple moved from Milan to Pisa to Florence before settling in Turin in 1849 and establishing a salon which would host many of the most prominent figures of the Turinese liberal elite.<sup>17</sup> Of those that frequented the marchioness's salon, Giuseppe Massari (1821 – 1884) was a patriot, journalist, writer, politician, and friend of Ruggero Bonghi that regularly frequented the *Salotto Arconati* and contributed to liberal periodicals in Italy. Similarly, Giovanni Berchet (1783 – 1851), whom Bonghi had met on May 12 1852, was another writer and poet who regularly frequented the Arconati Salon and, as a major proponent of Italian literary romanticism,

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<sup>17</sup> In the same letter to Carlo Landriani, the preface to the third edition of Bonghi's *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, Bonghi reflected upon his past and described his sentiments towards the Arconati: “Quanta schiettezza e purezza di vita e generosità di spirito era in quel Giuseppe Arconati, uomo che non trovava diletto che nel beneficiare, e non aveva mai avuto traversato l'animo da nessuna bassezza o viltà o paura, e metteva tutto l'affetto suo nella religione e nella patria! E la marchesa Arconati? Chi ha mai conosciuto donna di dignità più affabile e più colta, di maggiore delicatezza nell'apprezzare coloro i quali avevano la fortuna di avvicinarsi a lei, più fermamente amica, se vi aveva stima, più sinceramente cortese, più elevate ed eletta ne' pensieri, ne' sentimenti?” Bonghi. *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 22.

exalted liberal political ideals in his poetry. Earlier that day, Bonghi, who had also just lunched at the Marquis of Cavour's estate, returned to the Arconati residence to meet "il Ferretti", "il Butera", and "il piccolo Greppi" before joining other members of the salon, Berchet, "il Pellegrini", and the mother and two children of Pasquale Stanislao Mancini later in the day. In this case, the "Marchese" to which Bonghi refers is Gustavo Benso di Cavour (1806 – 1864) who, alongside his younger brother Camillo Benso – albeit to a lesser extent – was one of the most prominent political and aristocratic figures in Italy during the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Giuseppe Greppi (1819 – 1921), or "Il piccolo Greppi" as noted in Bonghi's diary, lived an astoundingly long life which was largely devoted to the Italian national cause as both a diplomat and a senator in the *XVII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia*. To underscore how interwoven the Bonghi's network of connections was, Greppi was closely acquainted with Gabrio Casati, Giuseppe Massari, Massimo d'Azeglio, Camillo Benso, and Ruggero Bonghi. Lastly, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini (1817 – 1888) was another prominent jurist and politician in Italy. Although he was a member of Urbano Rattazzi's Historical Left, he served as a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies (*Camera dei Deputati*) from 1861 to 1888, as Minister of Public Education for a mere 27 days from March 4 1862 to March 31 1862 under Rattazzi, Minister of Justice under Agostino Depretis from 1876 to 1878, and Minister of Foreign Affairs under Depretis from 1881 to 1885.

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<sup>18</sup> According to the letters between Gustavo Benso di Cavour and Antonio Rosmini, the Marquis of Cavour met Bonghi for the first time in Turin in March 1851 and had been eagerly anticipating the meeting. In a letter to Rosmini dated March 14 1851, Gustavo Benso wrote: "...mi rallegro anticipatamente del piacere di conoscere personalmente il signor Bonghi di cui già apprezzo molto il bel talento." It appears that the Marquis took an immediate liking to the young Neapolitan as, in his remaining letters to Rosmini, he frequently extended his regards to "il nostro amico Bonghi" or "il nostro Bonghi". Benso, Gustavo, *Lettere del Marchese Gustavo di Cavour ad Antonio Rosmini*, a cura di Picenardi, Don Gianni. Stresa: Rivista Rosminiana, 2011, p. 213-214. Interestingly, in a letter dated February 9 1853, he discussed Bonghi's potential to make significant contributions to whatever he set his mind to: "Vedo spesso il nostro amico Bonghi che si occupa sempre dei suoi studi di svariato genere, mi pare che il di lui spirito prometta molto, e quando egli sentirà il bisogno di concentrare i suoi sforzi intellettuali sopra alcuni punti speciali non dubito che i suoi lavori riusciranno di gran pregio." Ibid, p. 241.

The following day, March 13 1852, Bonghi paid a visit to Cesare Balbo: a name that appears several times in Bonghi's diary as both someone with whom Bonghi met as well as someone whose writings Bonghi read during his time in Stresa. Balbo (1789 – 1853) was the son of Prospero Balbo, mayor of Turin, and Enrichetta Taparelli d'Azeglio, and was the cousin of Massimo D'Azeglio. In addition to being a writer whose works were focused primarily on Italian history and the Risorgimento, he was the first Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia from March 18 1848 to July 27 1848 – succeeded by Gabrio Casati – and a member of the party known as *I moderati*. He, much like Cavour, was a non-revolutionary progressive who upheld the importance of government reform over revolution.

Although, in certain cases, Bonghi's summaries of his encounters and meetings are limited to a brief description of those involved and, depending on the subject, the topics which were discussed, other passages from his diary – especially those describing a meeting that had taken place over lunch or dinner and involved discourse over literature, philosophy, or politics – feature comments that summarize the nature of the discussions that had taken place, the stance of each party, and, more often than not, a brief description of the character of the person involved in the discussion. What is particularly noteworthy when one reads the diary in the context of Bonghi's involvement with the *questione della lingua* is the prevalence of the notion of language in Bonghi's discussions. In much the same way that Bonghi would regard the universality of philosophy, language becomes not only the basis of human interaction but, especially in politics, a reflection of the capacities of the speaker. This notion first becomes apparent in his description of his meeting with Balbo. In the entry dated May 13 1852, Bonghi described having lunched and spent the evening at the home of Cesare Balbo. After having spent most of the day discussing politics, lamenting the nomination of Urbino Rattazzi as President of the Chamber of Deputies two days

prior, and discussing the low morale of the Chamber, Bonghi wrote a few lines about Balbo's character with a particular emphasis on language and efficacy in government. Of Balbo, Bonghi wrote:

...uno dei pochi italiani dotti, che abbia dell'«esprit» di buon lega e pronto: piena di fatti la sua conversazione, anzi troppo di fatti propri: loquela abbondante, ma non facile, nè limpida e lesta, anzi tanto più lenta e intricata, quanto più è il calore del discorso. Questa fa male, perchè si vede che vorrebbe essere eloquente e non può: se la prontezza della parola l'accompagnasse, avrebbe tutte le altre parti necessarie per essere paragonato e messo in terzo con Cousin e con Troja, i due più amabili, più piacevoli, più continui *causeurs* ch'io abbia mai conosciuti.<sup>19</sup>

This example is one of many passages in which Bonghi, with a constant fixation on linguistic analysis, analyzed the stylistic and rhetorical properties of the person with whom he was speaking and the ease with which he or she was able to deploy language as a means of articulating an idea or argument.

This is even more apparent in an entry written in Stresa dated September 23 – 24 1852 when Bonghi turned his attention to Gabrio Casati who had spent the night at Rosmini's home. Casati (1798 – 1873), in addition to serving as *Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri del Regno di Sardegna* from July 27 1848 – August 15 1848, as *Presidente del Senato del Regno* from November 8 1865 – November 2 1870, and as *Senatore del Regno di Sardegna* from October 20 1853 – November 13 1873 to name a few of his political appointments, was *Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione del Regno di Sardegna* from July 19 1859 – January 21 1860 under Prime Minister Alfonso La Marmora. Most notably, he was responsible for the *Casati Law* which, deriving from the Prussian model of a centralized educational system, was passed in 1859 in order to restructure the educational model in Italy. In reforming Primary, Secondary, and Post-Secondary education, Casati sought to provide a foundation for a centralized system of mass education in

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<sup>19</sup> Bonghi. *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 66.

Italy. Despite his accomplishments, Bonghi did not shy away from providing a detailed assessment of the man's character and intellect. Foregoing a summary of their discussion, the Neapolitan proceeded directly to criticize the rhetorical style of the former Prime Minister of Sardinia. While the diary entry does indeed begin with the compliment of Casati "Eccellente uomo," it is immediately followed by a description of the man as:

...preoccupatissimo di sè: gran parlatore, che non sa parlare: ingegno confuso: e volontà imbelle. Ogni discorso, a cui si trova, vuol ripigliarlo lui da capo: per non dire altro di quello che stava dicendo, fuori che lui lo dice peggio, e v'annoia per una immaginazione continua che l'assedia, e che gli fa parere che egli dica del nuovo e meglio. S'imbrogliata nelle parole, e le connette così male, che per continuare a far senso, ha bisogno di rifare un dieci volte la costruzione. Del resto, animo eccellente...<sup>20</sup>

While it may seem ironic that Casati later became the Minister of Public Education under Alfonso La Marmora in 1859, he and Bonghi would have undoubtedly discussed the best means of addressing the linguistic issues in Italy which would, in turn, have provoked Bonghi to dissect and criticize the arguments made. Although these brief passages are by no means comprehensive, they demonstrate how Bonghi – almost thirty years junior in both age and experience to many of the prominent figures with whom he came in contact – possessed an unbridled passion for his country that spurred him to contemplate the most effective and impactful means of contributing to the formation and advancement of the social and political state of Italy. Similarly, it is clear that, despite the difference in age or experience, Bonghi neither shied away from criticizing an argument nor upheld any person or idea as inherently infallible.

### *Life After Stresa and Political Involvement*

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 141-142.

Following Bonghi's time in Stresa, save for a brief trip to Switzerland and southern Germany in 1854, he remained in Lombardy. In 1855 he married Carlotta Rusca – a woman of aristocratic descent from Locarno – and purchased a villa in Belgirate not far from the Rosmini estate in Stresa.<sup>21</sup> Together, they had three children: Luigi, born in 1856, Cristina, born in 1857, and Mario, born in 1864. Although family life occupied much of his time, he continued writing and published several major works including his six-volume translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in 1854, a collection of letters on the state of literature in Italy entitled *Perchè la letteratura non sia popolare in Italia* in 1856, and translations of Plato's dialogues *Eutidemo* and *Protagora* – which he dedicated to Manzoni – in 1857. On January 29 1858, he was offered a professorship in philosophy and classical Greek at the University of Pavia – a position which required the approval of Austrian authorities that controlled much of Lombardy – but declined as a result of Lombardy's political situation. Following the Second War of Independence and the subsequent liberation of Lombardy from Austrian rule in 1859, the network of connections that Bonghi had formed in Stresa proved beneficial as he was invited by none other than the Minister of Public Education – and “gran parlatore” – Gabrio Casati, to assume the professorship at Pavia on October 19 1859. Bonghi accepted the professorship position and taught until 1860 when he began to focus more closely on his contributions to Italian politics. Using his journalistic initiatives as a means of furthering and assisting with his political causes, and his academic endeavours as a means of

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<sup>21</sup> Carlotta was not the first love of Bonghi's life. Whilst in Stresa, he fell in love with Vittoria Cima, the niece of Domenico Pino, a prominent Italian general in Napoleon's army. Vittoria was a remarkably bright young woman, a talented pianist, and the host of a salon in Milan which was frequented, most notably, by the most prominent authors of the time including Arrigo Boito and Federico De Roberto. Despite his persistence, Vittoria declined Ruggero's marriage proposal.

understanding the educational state of Italy, Bonghi began to orient himself towards a career in public service.

In the following six to seven years, Bonghi's path to public service became significantly clearer as he moved throughout Italy according to the changing political climate and where he could best contribute to both Italy's unification and the political initiatives of the Historical Right. Upon leaving his role as professor at the University of Pavia, he returned to Naples in 1860 – after Ferdinand II had reinstated the constitution and proclaimed amnesty to political emigrants and exiles – and founded and directed the periodical *Il Nazionale* in which he published articles in support of a political union with Piedmont. This became the first in a series of Bonghi's periodicals that he had hoped would use the overarching socio-political discourse to link local regions to a larger, national identity and, ultimately, advance the political initiatives and perspectives he deemed would benefit Italy as a whole. In the case of *Il Nazionale*, it was founded at a time when the political tides were turning and the first stage of Italian unification was close to realization. Using the Neapolitan periodical as a means of emphasizing the importance of a fully unified Italy – one that included a southern voice –, it sought to galvanize support in one of southern Italy's largest cities and build a foundation of people that would vote in favour of political unity through the plebiscite. It was also during this particular sojourn in Naples that Bonghi was appointed professor of history of philosophy at the University of Naples on November 29 1860.

In regards to Bonghi's involvement in public service, the early 1860s marked an increase in his work for Italy's governing parties. On November 9 1860, he was appointed, for a brief period, secretary to the *Consiglio di Luogotenenza* by Domenico Farini who was serving as *Luogotenente del Re* in the Neapolitan provinces. More notably, Bonghi was elected a member of parliament and served on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* in 1861 where he represented the

commune of Manfredonia – located in the province of Foggia, Puglia. As the first Italian parliament – assembled by Victor Emmanuel in Turin on February 18 1861 and closed on September 7 1865 – it was a critical point in Bonghi’s political career and an important venue in which he could voice his opinions on the educational state of Italy.<sup>22</sup>

During his return to Turin, he continued his work as a journalist and founded *La Stampa* in which he published articles meant to sustain and perpetuate the political ideas and initiatives of Cavour. He would remain director of *La Stampa* for the duration of his stay in Turin until his departure from Piedmont in 1865. Much like his stay in Naples and Lombardy, Bonghi maintained his academic interests and continued his involvement in Italy’s educational sphere. He was appointed honorary professor – an appointment he sought as a means of circumventing bureaucratic issues which prevented him from occupying a paid professorship position – on February 26 1862 and honorary professor of Greek literature at the University of Turin on August 6 1864. After the conclusion of the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia*, Bonghi followed the political trends and, with the relocation of the Italian capital from Turin to Florence, moved to the Tuscan city in 1865. He was appointed professor of Latin literature at the *Istituto di Studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento* on June 28 and member of the *Consiglio superiore di Pubblica Istruzione* on October 15. It was during this period that he also began what became a thirty-year working relationship with the founders and editors of the *Nuova Antologia*, Giuseppe and Francesco Protonotari. Between 1866 and 1895, Bonghi published over one hundred fifty articles

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<sup>22</sup> On the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia*, Bonghi served alongside very prominent members of Italian society who were – and would continue to be – important contacts in Bonghi’s life. The members of parliament included Viscount Gieseppe Arconati, Celestino Bianchi, Nino Bixio, Emilio Broglio, Benedetto Cairoli, Cesare Cantù, Michele Coppino, Francesco Crispi, Francesco De Sanctis, Agostino Depretis, Domenico Farini, Giovanni Battista Giorgini, Stefano Jacini, Alfonso La Marmora, Raffaello Lambruschini, Terenzio Mamiani, Marco Minghetti, Ubaldino Peruzzi, Giuseppe Pisanelli, Urbano Rattazzi, Bettino Ricasoli, Aurelio Saffi, Quintino Sella, Luigi Settembrini, Silvio Spaventa, and Giuseppe Verdi.

with the Florence based journal which included topics ranging from language, literature, and education to religion, politics, and women's rights. As one of the most prominent journals in Italy, the *Nuova Antologia* became Bonghi's preferred outlet for publishing articles that considered national interests – including his controversial open letter to Pope Leo XIII and his analysis of the state of women's rights. Moreover, it was also during this period that Bonghi built and fostered a close personal and working relationship with Emilia and Ubaldino Peruzzi. Considering their geographical proximity and their involvement as members of the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* – something that was discussed regularly in his correspondences with Ubaldino – Bonghi became increasingly involved with the Florentine nucleus of the Historical Right and would collaborate extensively with both Emilia and Ubaldino on political initiatives that concerned the party.<sup>23</sup>

For family reasons, he returned to Lombardy in 1866 where he took over from journalist Pacifico Valussi and directed the Milanese newspaper *La Perseveranza*. As both director and contributor to the Milanese periodical, Bonghi's involvement continued until his time as Minister of Public Education in 1874. It is no coincidence that his time working with *La Perseveranza* corresponded directly with not only his prime output and contributions to the linguistic, political, and religious discourse in Italy but also the period of time leading to his role as Minister of Public Education. As director, he worked to increase distribution and circulation to establish the daily periodical as one of the most prominent politically centrist newspapers in Lombardy and one of the most critical components of the Historical Right's relations with the public. As can be seen in the letters to both Ubaldino and Emilia Peruzzi, there are frequent references to his articles in *La*

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<sup>23</sup> Ubaldino Peruzzi would continue to serve on the VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI Legislatures while Bonghi would serve on Legislatures VIII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX.

*Perseveranza* which were published strategically in accordance to the political situation.<sup>24</sup> Not only was this used to promote the political initiatives of the local representatives of the Historical Right, it was also used as a means of bringing together and reporting on the issues concerning all members of the party – Lombardy, Tuscany, and Piedmont alike. Inasmuch as Bonghi used the *Nuova Antologia* to make larger statements, *La Perseveranza* was, undoubtedly, Bonghi’s primary outlet for relaying political ideas to the public for more mass consumption.

Academically, it was not long before he was called to resume his work in educational settings as he was appointed professor of ancient history at the *Accademia scientifica letteraria di Milano* – a university founded as a result of the Casati law on November 13 1859 – on December 15 1867. During his tenure as professor, his teachings on pedagogy reflected his ideas regarding a unified Italy and can be seen through his trip in 1869 when he, alongside his students, traveled throughout Italy so his students could gain an understanding of both the teaching methods and the instructional conditions present in Italian schools. This trip resulted in the writing and publication of an article in the *Nuova Antologia* in November 1869 entitled “Da Milano a Napoli: Appunti di un Maestro di Scuola” where Bonghi detailed his observations on teaching and the importance of allowing students and instructors to see and appreciate Italy’s cultural and historical patrimony firsthand.

An increased involvement in both Italy’s educational and political spheres saw Bonghi also increase his contributions – and the comprehensive scope of his contributions – to the linguistic situation in Italy. His writings and publications on language and linguistic unity began to reflect a more pragmatic approach that considered the national state of education and policy reform as much

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<sup>24</sup> Bonghi. Letters to Ubaldino Peruzzi. 1861-1877. Cassetta VIII, 22-23. *Carteggio Ubaldino Peruzzi*. Sala Manoscritti at the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze. The use of *La Perseveranza* as a political tool can be seen shortly after Bonghi begins directing the periodical in 1866. See Cassetta VIII, 22, Letter 5 onward.

as it did linguistic theory. He published more substantial works like *L'Università Italiana* in 1866, delivered a multitude of speeches – from 1860 to 1874 – to the *Camera dei Deputati*, and contributed a series of articles to the *Nuova Antologia* including “Scienza del Linguaggio” in 1866, “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” in 1868, and the aforementioned “Da Milano a Napoli- Appunti di un maestro di scuola” in 1869. As a result of both his increased involvement with issues concerning education and language and his friendship with Alessandro Manzoni, Bonghi worked alongside the Milanese author – who had been nominated president of the committee – on the 1868 Commission set up by Minister of Public Education Emilio Broglio to address the linguistic divides in Italy and thus “proporre tutti i provvedimenti e i modi coi quali si possa aiutare e rendere universale in tutti gli ordini del popolo la notizia della buona lingua e della buona pronunzia.”<sup>25</sup> Through both his writing and his work in parliament, Bonghi continued to influence educational and linguistic reform as his political career culminated with his tenure as the Minister of Public Education under Prime Minister Marco Minghetti from 1874-1876 – something that will be more closely detailed in the following chapters.

From a political perspective, Bonghi also had an interest in economics and foreign policy that he considered and applied throughout his every role in the public sector. Although Bonghi was still continuing to develop his beliefs concerning foreign policy in the 1860s, his beliefs regarding Italy’s relations with countries like France, Prussia, and England can be considered rather moderate and in line with the Historical Right’s approach to navigating Europe’s precarious political situation – one that included not only Italian interests but also the ultimate goal of establishing Rome as the nation’s capital.<sup>26</sup> Naturally, considering the historical connections to

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<sup>25</sup> Manzoni, Alessandro, “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di difonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441, p. 425.

<sup>26</sup> Inasmuch as the party found a degree of cohesion in its approach to international relations with France, there were indeed prominent political figures in Italian society who were critical of this “moderate” approach. In his *Lettera*

France through the House of Savoy and the Kingdom of Sardinia, the prominence of Piedmontese politicians in the Historical Right, the continued importance of France as a trading partner, and the push for a Roman capital city, discussions regarding Italy's relations with France dominated much of the Historical Right's foreign policy. The debate concerning how best to proceed with Franco-Italian relations was something that continued throughout the 1860s and early 1870s until the Franco-Prussian War and the capture of Rome. Although Italy, through the leadership of Luigi Federico Menebrea and Giovanni Lanza, remained a neutral party during the war, there were various approaches considered by Italy's political elite that were informed by differing beliefs concerning how Italy could benefit depending on the degree to which it aligned itself with France and French interests.<sup>27</sup> Bonghi, who believed in both the importance of maintaining ties with France as trade partners and political allies and in the establishment of Rome as the Italian capital, worked to circumnavigate both factors by addressing the Church directly and working for an internal resolution.

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*agli amici di Genova* dated July 19 1870, Giuseppe Mazzini wrote, "Bisogna dunque decidersi a fare e fare... Il giorno in cui il re dirà con un manifesto l'alleanza colla Francia, dirà pure che il compenso sarà Roma e l'appoggio francese per una rettificazione verso il Trentino. Lo farà perché sa che, senza quello, avrebbe contro il paese. Ma quando lo dirà, perderemo la metà della forza. I moderati, i tiepidi, gli immorali, diranno: "è un'importante concessione. Viva il Governo!". Mazzini, Giuseppe, *Opere Vol. I – Lettere*, a cura di Luigi Salvatorelli. Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1967, p. 882.

<sup>27</sup> The debate concerning the degree to which Italy should support France was a critical issue that shaped not only foreign policy but the way in which the government dealt with the Roman question. In a speech made in parliament on December 9 1867, Giovanni Lanza, President of the *Camera dei Deputati*, stated "Ci conforti infine il pensiero, ed esso valga a renderci più concilievole, che se esiste fra noi dissenso di opportunità e di mezzi, tutti però siamo unanimi a volere il compimento della unità nazionale, e Roma tardi o tosto per la necessità delle cose e per la ragione dei tempi dovrà essere, la capitale d'Italia." Lanza went on to lead the Historical Right (December 14 1869 – July 10 1873) after the Menebrea government, continuing with the party's moderate neutrality, realized the government's hopes for a Roman capital city. See *Rendiconti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1867 Vol. III (Prima della Legislatura X)* – Discussioni della Camera dei Deputati dal 16 luglio al 23 dicembre. Firenze: Tipografia Eredi Botta, 1868, p. 2999 for full discourse. It is also interesting to note that the *Civiltà Cattolica*, perhaps the most prominent Catholic periodical of the nineteenth century, republished and commented on Lanza's statements in an edition published on December 24 1870. See *Civiltà Cattolica: Anno Vigesimosecondo Vol. I. Della Serie Ottava*, Firenze: Luigi Manuelli Libraio, 1871, pp. 74-139 for the full *Cronaca*, article, and public message on the Roman Question and p.76 for Lanza's comments on Rome as the Italian capital in light of the Franco-Prussian War.

Notwithstanding the more moderate approach to Franco-Italian relations the party, Bonghi – and the Historical Right – sought to integrate the newly unified Italy as a more prominent entity in the wider European political sphere and in the emerging trend of global politics. In November 1869, Bonghi was invited by Isma'il Pasha – the Khedive of Egypt and Sudan from 1863 to 1879 – to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Suez Canal – an occasion which Pasha sought to use as an opportunity to further relations with Europe and ingratiate himself with Europe's political elite. Happy for the opportunity to participate in a momentous occasion in history, Bonghi accepted the invitation, attended the ceremony on November 17 and, on November 26, wrote an article from Cairo detailing his optimism for the canal's potential benefits for international trade and intercontinental relations. Of his more minor areas of interest, the Suez Canal is a subject that Bonghi discussed on several occasions and used as a case study for exploring and applying more efficient and effective measures of bureaucratic policy. In the *Nuova Antologia* alone, Bonghi published “L'Apertura del Canale di Suez” in Vol. XII (1869) in which he explored the history of the Canal, the contemporary state of Egyptian international relations, and the future impact the Canal could have on world trade and global relations, and “L'Egitto e gli Europei: Le Giurisdizioni e la Riforma” in Vol. XIII (1870) in which he detailed his concerns regarding changes in policy concerning consular jurisdiction.<sup>28</sup> Inasmuch as the opening of the Suez Canal represented a significant event in European history, it also provided insight into a key component of Bonghi's

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<sup>28</sup> As Luigi Nizzo outlines in his article “Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of Legal History: International Law, Foreign Policy, and the Construction of Legal Order”, “...no reform could be introduced in Egypt without the support of the European powers. Nubâr Pasha knew this and thus tried to arouse their interest. The Egyptian minister recalled that the deplorable condition of Egypt's administration of justice had also affected Western interests. As a consequence, he remarked that the Egyptian subjects and the Western traders shared the same need for a fast and efficient legal system. Even in Europe, diplomats and international lawyers were aware of the limits of consular jurisdiction and the damage that it had caused to the Western economy. In Italy, for example, the critical comments of Nubâr Pasha were also expressed by Ruggero Bonghi in 1870 and five years later by Pasquale Stanislao Mancini.” Hellmann, Gunther, Andreas Fahrmeir, and Milos Vec, editors. *The Transformation of Foreign Policy: Drawing and Managing Boundaries from Antiquity to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 153.

political thought: his consideration of administrative practices and their effect on the efficacy of political policy. Although Bonghi's talents with administrative reform would become increasingly sought after with his continued work in the public sector, his reflections on the administration of justice in Egypt were considered and valued both in Italy and abroad.<sup>29</sup>

Although these are relatively minor roles, it was during this period that Bonghi established himself as an important figure capable of making significant contributions to many aspects of Italian society. His dedication to politics and the public sector became increasingly recognized by Italian political leaders and, by the end of the 1860s, the Neapolitan had become an integral party member of the Historical Right and a valued asset to various governing bodies and institutions throughout Italy. Much like his transfers to Turin and Florence which arose as a result of the relocation of Italy's political capital, so too did the impending transfer of Italy's capital to Rome see Bonghi relocate again in 1870. However, unlike his previous trips where teaching, minor political roles, or journalistic endeavors brought him work, in Rome, it was his focus on bureaucratic efficiency and his ideas on the optimization of administrative procedures that allowed him the opportunity to operate in a position of authority. He was appointed *Consigliere d'Amministrazione* of the *Società delle Strade ferrate Romane* on November 9 1870 and had his appointment renewed on December 17 1873. His transition from operator – a worker who operated

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<sup>29</sup> See Carpi, Arturo, *Della giurisdizione consolare in Levante e della riforma giudiziaria in Egitto*. Firenze: Regia Università di Bologna, 1875, p. 58. "...lo conferma il Bonghi, che stupendamente ci ha posto sott'occhio il desolante prospetto, dal quale si ritrae come molti non abbiano scrupolo di pretendere in dennizzi a loro non dovuti, e che le insistenti sollecitazioni diplomatiche di un Console finiscono per far loro ottenere." See also Esperson, Pietro. *Diritto Diplomatico e Giurisdizione Internazionale Marittima*. Milano: Libreria di Gaetano Brigola, 1874, p. 256-258 for Pietro Esperson's, Professor of International Law at the University of Pavia, transcription and analysis of articles written by Bonghi on his call for administrative and policy reform in Egypt. See also Sammarco, Angelo, *Précis De L'Histoire D'Egypte Par Divers Historiens Et Archéologues. Tome Quatrième: Règnes de'Abbas, De Sa'Id et D'Isma'Il (1848-1879)*. Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1935, p. 275 for a passage citing the particular importance of Bonghi's work before Egypt's eventual judiciary reform: "Un clair exposé des inconvénients de l'administration de la justice en Égypte avant la Réforme a été fait, en 1870, par Ruggero Bonghi, L'Egitto e gli Europei. Le Giurisdizioni e la Riforma, dans la « Nuova Antologia »."

within a larger group or committee to facilitate political or educational goals – to figure of authority was not something that remained exclusive to his work in the administrative sphere. On April 25 1873, he was charged with the responsibility of representing Antonio Scialoja and the Ministry of Public Education at the inauguration of the 1873 Vienna World's Fair and was granted the title of Commander of the Imperial Austrian Order of Franz Joseph by Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria.<sup>30</sup> This role would be the final preparatory position before being appointed Minister of Public Education by Marco Minghetti on September 27 1874. As Minister – a role that marked the peak of his political career – he made, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, many lasting, significant contributions to the Italian educational sphere and would continue to be an important voice in parliamentary debates even after the fall of the Historical Right.

### ***Religious Criticism and Life after the Fall of the Historical Right***

Although his interest in religious discourse – as it pertained to both his studies of philosophy and the way in which the institution of the Catholic Church engaged with a politically changing Italy – was present in his writings from an early age, his direct involvement with attempts to reconcile the relations between Church and State did not occur until later in his life.<sup>31</sup> In 1871

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<sup>30</sup> Antonio Scialoja was a Neapolitan economist, politician, and academic who served as Minister of Public Education under Lanza from August 5 1872 – July 10 1873. According to the *Archivio privato Ruggiero Bonghi*, although there are letters between Bonghi and Scialoja that date back to 1869, it appears that their correspondences increase in frequency after Scialoja becomes Minister of Public Education.

<sup>31</sup> Much like Manzoni, Bonghi recognized the significance of the Catholic Church as an institution in Italian society and the need to integrate it into the newly unified political state. Perhaps the best summation of the Church's dynamic with the Italian people can be found in Manzoni's letter to a young Edmondo De Amicis dated June 15 1863 in which he discussed the two sacred and irrefutable "truths" that form the basis of society: "Religione e patria sono due grandi verità, anzi, in diverso grado, due verità sante; e ogni verità può spiegar tutte le sue forze e usar tutte le sue difese senza insultarne un'altra." Manzoni, Alessandro. "Gentilissimo Giovanetto." Letter to Edmondo De Amicis. 15 Giugno 1863. BNCf- Firenze, Cassetta 123, Lettera 12.

he was chairman to the *Camera delle Leggi* during the composition of the controversial *Legge delle guarentigie* which were a set of thirty “guarantees” which would serve as an attempt to reconcile the relations between the Catholic Church and a politically united Italy – an Italy that now included Rome. While this was largely regarded by Moderates and Liberals as a compromise which guaranteed the spiritual authority of the Church at the expense of relinquishing its political sovereignty – something that represented, at least to politically Liberal Catholics, the Church’s necessary return to its humble, spiritual roots – it did not please Pope Pius’ desire for political sovereignty and resulted in one of several open feuds between Bonghi and the Papacy. Bonghi’s ire was further stoked by the Church’s intransigence and Pius IX’s affirmation that being a spiritually engaged Catholic and a politically engaged Italian were conflicting and mutually exclusive identities. With the 1874 “non expedit” – a papal decree stating that Catholics were to abstain from participating in Italian elections: “né eletti, né elettori” – as an example of the pope’s unwillingness to compromise, Bonghi would spend the rest of his life fighting for the reconciliation of the two institutions of Church and State that he believed were equally necessary for the betterment of Italian society. As Sandro Rogari discusses in his book *Ruggiero Bonghi nella Vita Politica dell’Italia Unita*, Bonghi’s objection to the non expedit was compounded by the potential

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To appreciate Bonghi’s position, it is imperative to consider the extent to which Italy was divided on issues concerning the government’s relations with the Catholic Church and the Church’s sovereignty over Rome. As Bonghi and the *Camera*, through the *guarentigie*, worked to appease both the Catholic Church and liberals, the government worked to balance relations with the monarchy, with France and with the Church whilst trying to temper and restrain those – some allies – on the political left. To highlight the sort of ideological division that existed, one can consider Mazzini’s letter to Domenico Narratone dated November 8 1869 in which he denounced Garibaldi’s anticlerical “monomania”. He wrote, “Fratello, È debito mio parlar chiaro ai buoni. Il concetto di Gar[ibaldi] è pessimo, e, se eseguito, indugerà per due anni lo sviluppo decisivo delle cose nostre... Non parlerò di ciò che in Garibaldi è ormai diventato una specie di monomania. I preti non sono nemico potente. Se in Roma non avessimo avuto la Francia che venne non pei preti, ma pei suoi fini, vi saremmo ancora. I preti non ci hanno dato Custoza e Lissa, non hanno venduto Nizza, non ci hanno regalato il deficit, non son cagione degli arbitri, delle persecuzioni, delle immoralità sistematiche. Il re è un libertino che lavora per proprio conto e non crede in Dio né in altro di sano. L[ui]gi N[apoleone] è un briccone che non ha né può avere un briciolo di religione Cattolica o altro... Un Governo rep[ubblicano] forte e fondato sul giusto non avrebbe da temere preti o papa.” Mazzini. *Opere- Vol.1: Lettere*, pp. 865-866.

implications to educational freedoms as it concerned learning and taught content, access to nationally distributed materials in public schools by Catholic children, and outreach to families of all backgrounds. Moreover, a church that involved itself in the political happenings in Italy – and one that, consequently, had a say in national educational matters – effectively limited the efficacy of using education as a means of consolidating national identity.<sup>32</sup>

Bonghi's involvement in religious debates and disputes only increased after the fall of the Historical Right in 1876 as seen by a striking increase in production of writings devoted to the Catholic Church and concepts such as spirituality and religiosity. Books such as *Pio IX e il Papa Futuro* (1877), *Leone XIII e l'Italia* (1878), *Leone XIII* (1884), and *Francesco d'Assisi* (1884), and articles in the *Nuova Antologia* like but not limited to “Pio IX e il Papato” (1877), “Leone XIII e i Suoi Predecessori dello Stesso Nome” (1878), “Il Cattolicesimo Contemporaneo” (1879), “Leone XIII e il Governo Italiano” (1882), “Leone XIII e i suoi Ultimi Atti” (1886) are works in which Bonghi discussed his hopes for and criticisms of Catholicism as both a faith and an institution. As time progressed, his opinions concerning the comportment of the Church became increasingly acerbic, as reflected in his articles published in the *Nuova Antologia* that had become decidedly harsher and more critical – both in content and in style. While Bonghi's criticisms became more subdued after the election of Pope Leo XIII in 1878, it was not long before his hope for a spiritually stronger Church degenerated into a pessimistic view of the Church's conformity to misguided conservatism. While Pope Leo initially contemplated reversing the “non expedit” and accepting the Church's role as a strictly spiritual guide, it was not long before he resumed his crusade to reacquire the Roman territories. Never afraid to point out an institution's mistakes, Bonghi devoted

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<sup>32</sup> Rogari, Sandro, *Ruggiero Bonghi Nella Vita Politica Dell'Italia Unita*. Napoli: Scuola di Pitagora Editrice, 2001, p. 26.

himself to “enlightening” the Church on the ways in which it *should* be comporting itself: a quest that managed to provoke little more than the Pope’s ire. In 1890, Bonghi published his most controversial work, *Vita di Gesù*, in which he used a comprehensive narrative account of Christ’s life as a thinly veiled indictment of the direction of the Catholic Church and an acerbic reminder of the institution’s humble origins. Although the work would be added to the Index Librorum Prohibitorum on March 16, 1892, Bonghi eventually had the final say in an article published in the *Nuova Antologia* entitled “La Chiesa e l’Italia: Lettera Aperta a s. Santità Leone XIII” where he denounced the behaviour of Leo XIII and reminded him that, as a vicar of Christ, the pope should behave like one.<sup>33</sup>

Following Bonghi’s tenure as Minister of Public Education, he remained in Rome and continued working, writing, and publishing books and articles on his areas of interest. Although the most prominent of Bonghi’s writings that were published after his time in public office focused on religion and the spiritual state of Italy, the lack of fixed obligations permitted the Neapolitan to publish and work according to personal inclinations and the most prominent contemporary issues. He continued serving as a member of the *Camera dei Deputati* and contributed to issues pertaining to education and policy reform – as exemplified by both his addresses and speeches in parliament and his work with various educational initiatives. He also resumed his work in classical studies and used this period in Rome to apply his work in various capacities in the academic sphere as a scholar, in the educational and academic sphere as a professor, and in the public sector as a politician. One such example was his work to improve the state of women’s education – as he had

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<sup>33</sup> Bonghi. “La Chiesa e l’Italia: Lettera Aperta a s. Santità Leone XIII”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 126 (1892), pp. 393-411. In the penultimate paragraph of Bonghi’s open letter, he provides Pope Leo XII with several rather direct suggestions on how best to act as a vicar of Christ. He writes, “Rinunci ad ambizioni, che non approderanno, e intanto gli levano credito negli animi sinceri e onesti. Raffreni, anzi sopprima giornali, che si richiamano dall’autorità sua, e la offendono, la fiaccano. Reprima la sètta, che irretisce lei e la Chiesa. Esca all’aria libera e la respiri. Scenda per le vie; e conforti i poveri e sproni i ricchi. Poiché è Vicario di Cristo, lo imiti.”

done during his time as Minister of Public Education – in which he delivered lectures on classical history and Roman and Greek literature at the *Scuola Superiore Femminile* in Via della Palombella in 1877. Similarly, he remained a prominent figure in initiatives concerning primary and secondary school education and, once again, worked alongside Marco Minghetti and Giovan Battista Giorgini – as well as with academic and politician Francesco Brioschi – to improve upon the existing school texts on Greek and Roman history. In an initiative to provide secondary schools with updated texts and more comprehensive materials, Bonghi completed and published the *Manuale di antichità romane ad uso dei ginnasi e licei* in 1882, the *Storia orientale e greca per ginnasi e licei* in 1883, and the *Storia di Roma scritta per le scuole secondarie* in 1884 which were distributed throughout Italy. In addition to his school texts, he completed several substantial volumes on ancient history including the *Bibliografia storica di Roma antica* and *La storia antica in Oriente e in Grecia* which were both published in 1879, and Volume I and II of the prominent *Storia di Roma* which were jointly published in 1888.

Bonghi also served on a variety of different committees and worked with a myriad of organizations pertaining to his varied interests – some were based in Italy, others operating in other European nations. In the journalistic sector, he was elected President of the *Associazione della Stampa* on April 29 1884 and was the driving force behind an initiative to provide impoverished journalists with financial assistance. In the political sphere, he met Hodgson Pratt in 1887 during the Englishman’s visit to Milan and began working with Pratt’s International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA). As a result of his involvement, in 1889, Bonghi was appointed President of an Italian committee intended to explore how Italy and Italian peace societies could more closely collaborate with other European organization – an extra-parliamentary congress that was

considered a success by Pratt and his IAPA.<sup>34</sup> Believing in an Italy committed to peace – and one more closely allied with England and France – he organized a follow-up meeting and invited the Universal Peace Congress and Interparliamentary Conference to hold a joint meeting – a congress that was held in 1891 and was the third in a series of international peace congresses held between 1889 and 1939.<sup>35</sup> In addition to Bonghi's efforts to work with England in establishing international peace agreements, he also sought to further develop the cultural and commercial exchange between the two nations. He made several trips to England – of which, two resulted in publications describing his stay with *In viaggio da Pontresina a Londra* in 1888 and *In autunno su e giù* in 1890 – and was the president of the organizing committee behind the Italian Exhibition in London in 1888.<sup>36</sup> He involved himself with similar initiatives to better relations with France and

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<sup>34</sup> The International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA) was an organization founded in London by Hodgson Pratt in 1880 whose purpose was to promote international arbitration and peace. In Sandi Cooper's *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914*, he writes, "An attempt to form a national network of Italian peace activists was the object of a congress in Rome in 1889, which Ruggiero Bonghi helped to organize. Bonghi was worried that the united nation, which he had struggles to create, was abandoning its generous ideals, turning toward militarism, copying its German and Austrian alliance partners, building a professional military instead of a healthy economy, and planning to lunge into an imperial scramble." Cooper, Sandi, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 66.

In the *Official report of the fifth Universal peace congress held at Chicago, United States of America, August 14 to 20, 1893*, the summary of the 1891 meeting read: "We mention here, also, a Congress rather Italian than International, held at Rome from the 12th to the 16th of May, 1889, under the presidency of Mr. Ruggiero Bonghi, for the purpose of creating a more intimate union between the Italian peace societies... The Italian peace societies took upon themselves the organization of the third Universal Congress, which opened at Rome the 11th of November, 1891, in the large hall of the Capitol, under the presidency of Ruggiero Bonghi, a deputy and former minister, and continued its sessions until Saturday in the Palace of Fine Arts." *Official Report of the Fifth Universal Peace Congress: Held at Chicago, United States of America, August 14 to 20, 1893, Under the Auspices of the World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition*. American Peace Society, 1893, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> *The Herald of Peace* provided a summary of the 1891 congress: "The President, Signor Bonghi, took the Chair, and was supported by the members of the Roman Municipality... Signor Bonghi, speaking in French, then made an effective opening address. He said that even if Government should continue hostile to the idea of Arbitration, yet the humanitarian idea will penetrate the public conscience, and must be promulgated among the masses." It is noteworthy to consider how both Pratt and Bonghi upheld the importance of education in their plan for sustained peace. The report continued, "Mr. Hodgson Pratt urged that the teaching in schools should be guided by the principle of imbuing children at an early age with an idea of the horrors of war and the benefits of Peace. Mr. Pratt also advised the Congress to draw up a report on the present tendency of school legislation, and forward its resolutions to Ministers of Public Instruction in different countries...". *The Herald of Peace and International Arbitration: A Monthly Journal Published Under the Auspices of the Peace Society Vol. XXII (1890-1891)*. London: Office of the Peace Society, 1891, pp. 331-332.

<sup>36</sup> See Lowe, Charles, *Four national exhibitions in London and their organiser*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892. pp. 135-155, 189-198, for a complete study on the Italian Exhibition in London, Bonghi's role as contributing organizer, and the public reception to the Exhibition.

strengthen the political and cultural bonds that had previously been a more prominent component of Italy's foreign policy. From a political standpoint, he was nominated President of the *Lega Franco-Italiana* – a small organization based in Italy which advocated for a change in foreign policy that realigned Italian and French interests and allegiances. From a cultural standpoint, his appreciation for French culture and literature drove his initiative of founding a *Società di studi francesi* in Italy as a response to *Société d'études italiennes* that was created in France in 1893.<sup>37</sup> Through both his work with France and England, Bonghi, until his death, upheld the political beliefs that formed the basis of the Historical Right's foreign policy.

### ***The Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano and Other Initiatives***

During the years following Bonghi's work for the Historical Right, he remained committed to the ideals, beliefs, and initiatives that guided his approach to civil service, journalism, and academia. But perhaps more than any other aspect of Italian society, Bonghi considered language and education – universal language and education that were accessible to all Italians, regardless of sex, region of origin, or socioeconomic status – to be the most fundamental components to the betterment of the nation and remained committed to ameliorating the situation until his death. In 1885, he began collaborating with writer and patriot Giulio Barrili (1836-1908) and physiologist,

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<sup>37</sup> In a letter to Prof. Ferrari dated May 26 1894, Bonghi wrote: “Le dirigo questa lettera per chiederle se le piacesse confortare del suo nome un proposito nato nella mente di molti; ed e ricambiare la gentilezza di quei francesi, che hanno costituita una Società di studii italiani nel lor paese, col costituirne una di studii francesi nel nostro. Nè è gentilezza soltanto, o voglia d’imitare; bensì persuasione che le due potenti letterature, le cui influenze reciproche sono state nel passato e sono nel presente così grandi, si gioveranno a vicenda, conosciute meglio ciascuna nella patria dell’altra, e non che esserne stimolati i letterati dell’una a imitare quelli dell’altra, ne sarebbero aiutati gli uni e gli altri a tenersi del pari fedeli al genio della propria.” Bonghi, Ruggero, “Per una Società di studi francesi”. *La Cultura* Vol.13 (1894). pp. 325-326.

anthropologist, writer, and former Senator Paolo Mantegazza (1831-1910) in an initiative meant to further the process of democratizing language and literature. In a joint initiative with Piero Barbèra and G. Barbèra Editore, they began publishing a series of books called the *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano* in which popular, contemporary works of Italian literature were published every fortnight and sold for half a lira each. To understand precisely how Bonghi, Barrili, Mantegazza imagined this initiative could impact Italians and the linguistic situation in Italy, one can examine the personal correspondences between Mantegazza and economist and statistician Luigi Bodio (1840 – 1920).<sup>38</sup> In the hundreds of letters between Mantegazza and Bodio, there is one particular letter from the former to the latter dated October 22 1885 in which Mantegazza thanked Bodio for his continued support and requested the economist's backing on an initiative meant to further democratize literature in Italy. In addition to the brief letter, Mantegazza included a printed letter of proposal – something most likely sent to various political and cultural figures in Italy – jointly written by the directors of the *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano* which outlined their collective goal for the initiative and detailed – with phrasing that is not entirely devoid of political rhetoric – the importance of providing the opportunity for every echelon of Italian society to access literature. The printed letter began with the following:

Noi vi scriviamo per aver l'opera vostra in una impresa che vorremmo condurre a buon fine e che crediamo larga promettitrice di ottime cose per il nostro paese.

Noi abbiamo, e con ragione, obbligato per legge tutti i cittadini d'Italia a saper leggere e scrivere; ma quando l'operaio, il contadino hanno imparato

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<sup>38</sup> Although Bonghi had met Bodio in the early 1870s, their series of personal correspondences did not begin until the late 1880s, after the Neapolitan's involvement with the *Piccola Biblioteca* initiative. From 1888 until 1895, Bonghi and Bodio corresponded on a relatively frequent basis with literature, commentary on literature, and an exchange of suggested readings as the most prominent topic of discussion. Most of the eleven letters – dated June 2 1888 to December 8 1894 – in the Bodio Collection at the Biblioteca Braidense feature an exchange on literature and their thoughts on recently published texts. It is interesting to note the rather eclectic nature of their discussions – as seen with the letter dated December 12 1881 where Bonghi asks whether Bodio might know of a book on naval navigation of the Tiber River with statistics on the number, frequency, etc. of boats that pass – and the diverse nature of their readings.

l'alfabeto, non hanno altro da leggere che il libro da messa o il giornale. Eppure anche tutti quei milioni d'Italians che non hanno potuto passare al di là del gran ponte della scuola elementare, hanno un'ora al giorno e un dì della settimana che vorrebbero dedicare a letture geniali e sane; anch'essi sentono il bisogno di dare una capatina in quel mondo ideale, che è al di là del pane quotidiano e che spesso è più necessario che il pane.<sup>39</sup>

In this initial proposal letter, the three directors of the *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano* outlined the reality faced by Italians as they highlighted the two fundamental components to addressing the literary and linguistic situation in Italy: access to education and the opportunity to learn how to read and write, and access to materials to enhance the average person's literary and linguistic competencies. As indicated in the letter, the average labourer or farmer – those that were able to overcome the barrier of illiteracy that was exacerbated by the limited time available to spend on self-betterment – had scarcely more than a missal or a newspaper to feed their intellectual needs. Placing the need for mental sustenance on par – if not higher, if one reads into the thinly veiled reference to the Lord's "daily bread" – than the need for the spiritual sustenance, formal education and the continued push to learn was the only means of ensuring social stability and, naturally, fulfillment of one's most basic needs.<sup>40</sup> To address this need, *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano* would publish a volume – with subjects ranging from science to literature – twice per month which would sell for 50 centesimi each. The relative affordability of G. Barbèra Editore's line of books can be considered a significant contribution to nineteenth-century publication and indicative of a concentrated push by people like Bonghi to reduce the financial barriers that prevented lower socio-economic spheres from partaking in intellectual and linguistic discourse. The cost of 50 centesimi per volume of the *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano* line is all the more striking when one considers the cost of other print media at the time and its

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<sup>39</sup> Carteggio Bodio 1457 No. 38- Paolo Mantegazza a Luigi Bodio, R.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 4 for a complete analysis of the economic situation in Italy and the impact that the nation's reliance on agriculture impacted the educational sphere.

comparable pricing model to popular contemporary newspapers. When Bonghi, Barrili, and Mantegazza had begun pushing this initiative in 1885 – 1886, a copy of a popular newspaper like *La Gazzetta del Popolo* (1848 – 1983) or *Il Messaggero* (1878–) cost 5 *centesimi* each with a monthly subscription in Italy costing 1 *lira*. With a comparable cost to a popular periodical, the volumes *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano* cost a fraction of what publishing houses like Treves or Le Monnier charged for their published volumes. For example, in 1890, Treves Editori in Milan charged 2 *lire* for a popular edition of *Cuore* by Edmondo De Amicis and 3.50 to 5 *lire* for any of his other non-illustrated single-volume works – many of which were meant for popular consumption.<sup>41</sup> Compared to other economical publications, in 1889, even the *Biblioteca Nazionale Economica* by prominent publishing house Le Monnier in Florence charged 1 – 2 *lire* each for many of their volumes.<sup>42</sup> With this in mind, the affordable nature of these volumes could bridge major divides in granting common workers access to a previously exclusive cultural sphere.

<sup>43</sup> As the letter stated: “Questa letteratura per i neofiti della coltura, per gli scampati dal naufragio dell’ignoranza è tutta da creare: tutto è da trovare: il pensiero, l’indirizzo, lo stile.”<sup>44</sup>

In addition to the factors concerning the democratization of culture, this initiative – much like the *questione della lingua* itself – had a strong undercurrent of nationalistic sentiment and maintained an emphasis on promoting an Italian identity which the proposal letter addressed by

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<sup>41</sup> Cited prices were found in a copy of *Il Romanzo D’un Maestro* by Edmondo De Amicis published by Fratelli Treves Editori in 1890.

<sup>42</sup> Cited range of prices were found in a copy of *Niccolò De’ Lapi* by Massimo D’Azeglio published by Le Monnier in 1889 under their *Biblioteca Nazionale Economica* line. According to the price list, copies of Dante’s *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* cost 1.20 *lire* each, works like Ugo Foscolo’s *Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis* or Silvio Pellico’s *Le mie prigioni* cost 1 *lira* each, Machiavelli’s *Il Principe e Opere Politiche Minori* or Manzoni’s *Promessi Sposi* cost 1.50 *lire*, Tommaso Grossi’s *Marco Visconti* cost 1.75 *lire*, and Ippolito Nievo’s *Le Confessioni di un Ottuagenario* cost 3.50 *lire*.

<sup>43</sup> The joint initiative of Bonghi, Barrili, and Mantegazza caught the attention of book sellers internationally and was featured in journals and newspapers in the English-speaking world such as *The Bookseller: A Newspaper of British and Foreign Literature* (No. CCCXL, March 5, 1886, p. 221) and *Publishers' Weekly: American Book-trade Journal* (No. 762, September 4, 1886, p. 269)

<sup>44</sup> *Carteggio Bodio 1457 No. 38*- Paolo Mantegazza a Luigi Bodio, V.

directly stating how the line of books could contribute to the “difficile ma gloriosa” endeavour of developing and fostering the notion of *italianità*:

Un altro carattere della nostra Biblioteca dev'esser quello di essere *italiana*: italiana nell'ispirazione, nella forma, in tutto. In ogni volumetto, fosse pur di storia della China, d'astronomia, o di fiabe, deve vibrare la nota *nazione*, deve fremere quel sentimento caldo che è in tutti e che è sfruttato dai difensori del passato come dai visionari dell'avvenire, e che invece deve fondarsi in una coscienza piena e calda di appartenere ad una grande nazione, di aver diritto ad un grande avvenire, perchè discendiamo da un grande passato.<sup>45</sup>

As outlined by Bonghi, Barrili, and Mantegazza, the series of books would not only resonate with nationalistic ideas that they hoped would transcend the regional cultural barriers that divided Italians, but would also appeal to a mass audience by incorporating ideas, opinions, realities that reflected every stratum of society. Moreover, the collection of books would seek to demonstrate and instill values – “dalla più santa fra tutte, quella della famiglia, fino alla più alta, quella della Gloria del nostro paese” – that would form the bedrock for the moral framework of future Italians.<sup>46</sup> With such an explicit statement on the intertwined nature of language, literature, education, and cultural unity, the brief letter of proposal serves as a telling example of Bonghi's overarching vision for Italy's future and the extent to which he wanted every echelon of society to be incorporated in national discourse.

The following year, Bonghi continued his work to address the struggles faced by the less privileged members of society. In 1889, he founded the *Collegio Regina Margherita* in Anagni for the orphaned daughters of school teachers in Italy. In an attempt to expand the initiative to include the daughters of economically disadvantaged teachers – much like his attempts to found the *Collegio Umberto I* for children living in extreme poverty which included the children of teachers

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., V.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., V.

who were forced to relocate to find work – he was able to successfully increase the number of spots available at the school and create a lottery system which paid for the education of a limited number of girls at the College. As Bonghi worked to increase the funds available for his college in Anagni in the 1890s, he also considered the cultural and linguistic situation of the many Italians who had emigrated from Italy. In 1890, he was elected President of the *Società Dante Alighieri* and was considered by many of his colleagues to have worked tirelessly to organize conferences, talks, and other events alongside his efforts to publish more in journals and newspapers and see a more widespread circulation of materials published by the society.

Ruggero Bonghi remained tenacious and outspoken until his death on October 22, 1895 and his contribution to intellectual life would continue as societies throughout Italy – in honour of his passing – published his previously unpublished works and organized commemorative addresses and conferences to recognize his achievements in their respective fields. Publishing houses such as Florence’s *Stamperia Dell’Arte* and Milan’s *Treves* printed, respectively, posthumous writings such as *Sentenze di Ruggero Bonghi scritte per le sue figliuole di Anagni* and *Storia di Roma, vol.III: Frammento postumo*, organizations such as the *Società Dante Alighieri* published a volume of his discourses and speeches delivered to the society entitled *In memoria di Ruggiero Bonghi e la Società Dante Alighieri*, and writers and journalists such as Ugo Ojetti delivered – and published with proceeds donated to the orphans in Anagni – a public eulogy in the Teatro di Spoleto.<sup>47</sup> Even Bonghi’s more distant acquaintances and former colleagues or collaborators took it upon themselves to work alongside various societies with which Bonghi had been affiliated to further honour his memory – as seen with the correspondence between Luigi

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<sup>47</sup> *In memoria di Ruggiero Bonghi e la Società Dante Alighieri* was published in Rome in 1896 by the Società Editrice Dante Alighieri and *Per Ruggero Bonghi- Elogio letto nel maggior Teatro di Spoleto VIII Dicembre MDCCCXCV* was published in 1896 by the *Prem. Tip. dell’ Umbria*.

Bodio and publicist Pio Lazzarini and their work with the *Comitato franco-italiano* to organize a public memorial service in Rome.<sup>48</sup> Public memorials and services dedicated to recognizing Bonghi's lifelong contributions to the formation and development of the Italian state continued through 1896 and Italy – north and south – honoured the impact that the Neapolitan had on Italian society and the prolific nature of his accomplishments.

Although there are undoubtedly things that Bonghi would have wished to do before his death – there are countless examples in his published and personal writings where he laments not having enough time to undertake a certain initiative, write a certain book, translate a particular text, etc. – his contributions as a writer, journalist, politician, scholar, and professor, and his eternal devotion to his country will forever secure him recognition as one of the most important figures of the Italian nineteenth century.

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<sup>48</sup> A letter from Pio Lazzarini to Luigi Bodio found in the Bodio collection in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense sheds light on the kind of collective effort made to recognize Bonghi and is an example of the kind support garnered by organizations and societies throughout Italy. In a letter dated July 9 1896, Lazzarini writes, “Caro Professore, Avrà a tempo e luogo ricevuto l’elenco della Commissione Generale pel ricordo a Bonghi, Commissione alla quale Ella ha acconsentito di appartenere. Il Suo nome sta con quello del Suo amico Senatore Blaserna e quello del l’ex-deputato Conte Bosdari. Stiamo raccogliendo i fondi per l’esecuzione del ricordo, che sarà compiuto da Ettore Ferrari. Le offerte, che verranno pubblicate, s’iniziano: Alla presidenza della Giunta Esecutiva Centrale per un ricordo a R. Bonghi, 13, Via di Tor Sanguigna, Roma. Le somme versate, dalla giunta depositano al banco Marignoli e Cavallini, nostro tesoriere. Gradisca, Caro Professore, i miei più cari saluti.” Lazzarini, who was affiliated with the *Comitato franco-italiano* began corresponding with Bonghi, according to the *Archivio privato Ruggiero Bonghi: Inventario* in 1888, approximately the same time that Bonghi began working on developing cultural relations between France and Italy. Although Lazzarini was not in frequent contact with Bonghi – only four letters from Lazzarini to Bonghi are found in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli – and had, according to the Carteggio Bodio, only corresponded with Luigi Bodio once before in 1882, the two men worked together on the memorial service with the help of others such as Senator Pietro Blaserna (1836-1918) and – presumably – Conte Alessandro De Bosdari (1867-1929).

## Chapter 2

### *Perché la lingua italiana non sia popolare in Italia: Language, Culture, Society, and the Literary Divide*

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In a diary entry dated June 14 1852, Ruggero Bonghi described his ‘passeggiata’ to Baveno with a *forestiere irlandese* who had arrived two days prior to visit Antonio Rosmini.<sup>1</sup> After having spent much of the day walking along the coastline of Lago Maggiore with the Irish Dünne, Bonghi described having sat down with Rosmini’s guest to enjoy several passages by Lord Byron and commented on the literary characteristics that he found to be, despite the difference in nation and language, an evocation of the same poetic expression as the writings of Giacomo Leopardi. As he delved into the stylistic quality of Lord Byron’s *Don Juan* – which he described as “calda”, “viva”, and “naturalissima” – Bonghi expressed the way in which he felt the poetic forms and principal characters of Byron’s opus embodied an equilibrium of sentiment and intellect, and reflected upon the universality of poetic sentiments and the manner in which they can be evoked in different languages.<sup>2</sup> With the *passeggiata* to Baveno with Dünne clearly on his mind, Bonghi considered the nuances of languages and reflected upon the way in which German, English, and Italian could be likened to the walk from which he had just arrived. In his diary, he wrote: “La lingua tedesca rassomiglia ad un uomo, che può ire sibben da per tutto, ma sulle grucce e con tanti giri: la inglese ad uno che cammini rapido e dritto a uno scopo predeterminato e certo: la italiana, ad uno, che

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<sup>1</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 86. Bonghi wrote about the arrival of “un irlandese” who had arrived “a far visita al Rosmini” in an entry dated June 12. “M. Dünne” – very likely referring to David Basil Dunne (1828–1892) – was a doctoral student of the Pontifical Irish College in Rome and future professor of the Catholic University of Ireland in Dublin. Throughout the duration of Dünne’s stay in Stresa, Bonghi and Dünne would often discuss English literature and, on one particular occasion, specifically engaged with the topic of female poets in England and Italy. See Chapter 5, pp. 215-216.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

vada sì senza pigliar girate, ma che si fermi per via a guardare.”<sup>3</sup> Much like its historical linguistic trajectory, the Italian language seemed almost destined to stall and, ultimately, fail to both reach its destination of a linguistically unified people and – perhaps unlike *Don Juan* – reconcile the sentimental aspirations of linguistic unity with the pragmatic reality of accomplishing such a task.

While these minor anecdotes may at first glance seem to be little more than subjective musings in the larger historical narrative of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*, these brief passages found both in Ruggero Bonghi’s diary and in his other early writings indicate a mind that, from a rather young age, had been predisposed to contemplating the complementary themes of philosophy and philology and the means by which these metaphysical concepts could – and would – be applied in practical terms to achieve social, cultural, and political goals. Inasmuch as the 1850s marked a formative period for the development and creation of Italy’s political and social state, so too did this period represent a formative period for the maturation of Bonghi’s academic and philosophical beliefs and his ability to begin conceptualizing the ways in which these ideas could be applied to the linguistic situation in Italy. It is with this in mind that a comprehensive analysis of Bonghi’s contributions to the debate surrounding the Italian language can provide significant insight in understanding not only the defining characteristics and nuances of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua* but also the way in which this debate developed and changed according to social and political factors. As these changing sociopolitical elements necessitated a distinct approach to resolving the linguistic situation after the realization of Italian unification, one can follow the trajectory of linguistic discourse throughout Bonghi’s life to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

understand the nature of his contributions to the *questione della lingua* alongside the social and political factors that informed his thoughts and decisions.

In beginning with an analysis of Bonghi's early writings – namely, his diary and his most recognized work, *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* which were written and published during the 1850s – one can understand not only the point of departure for Bonghi's involvement in the linguistic debate but also, as seen in his famous published collection of letters to Celestino Bianchi, a summation of Italy's linguistic and literary problems and a general framework for how to navigate these issues. One can see the way in which Bonghi, in his early writings, drew from his experiences and interactions with notable figures such as Antonio Rosmini and Alessandro Manzoni as well as how he reflected upon Italy's linguistic situation and addressed the various elements that comprised the language debate prior to Italy's unification. Not only does this provide insight into the most fundamental tenets of Bonghi's approach to the various elements of the *questione della lingua*, it also demonstrates how his methodology in addressing Italy's literary and linguistic issues developed over the course of his career.

Bonghi's diary was the first of his writings to touch upon virtually every element of the *questione della lingua* and, often through Manzoni's influence, elaborate on the fundamental problems that prevented pre-unification Italy – with a politically unified Italy in mind – from attaining a basic, albeit widespread, degree of linguistic unity. While the themes and ideas that Bonghi discussed in his diary were brought together in a much more cohesive and pragmatic manner later in his career, his acute awareness of the interconnected nature of these ideas – the best means of promulgating the Italian language, the ways in which Italy could learn from foreign education and political models, and the importance of women's literacy – formed the bedrock of

his approach to addressing the sociolinguistic issues in Italy when he became increasingly involved with the political execution of these philosophical initiatives.

All factors considered, a supplemental analysis of Bonghi's diary – in addition to the excerpts explored in Chapter 1 – serves a dual purpose when considering his involvement in the *questione della lingua*. Firstly, an exploration of Bonghi's most intimate writings gives modern scholars the ultimate tool to reconcile the 'public figure' with the 'private figure', in addition to allowing readers of his work to garner a more informed perspective on the sincerity of his published political writings. Moreover, when read in conjunction with – or, more importantly, as a precursor to – the content of Bonghi's more substantial works, his founding or directing of periodicals like *Il Nazionale*, *La Stampa*, *La Perseveranza*, and *La Cultura*, his articles in the *Nuova Antologia*, his involvement with initiatives for educational reform, and his history as a public servant, his early personal writings can be read, understood, and interpreted with a large degree of certainty that his actions as a public "persona" – literary, journalistic, political, or otherwise – genuinely reflected his personal beliefs regarding what could better the conditions in Italy. Secondly, his diary serves as a means of understanding how Bonghi's early exploration of the state of language, literature, and education in Italy underscored his approach to addressing the *questione della lingua* on a social and institutional level later in his career. Although his early writings can be considered as concise, perhaps undeveloped, accounts of thoughts on such issues, they provide, as a whole, an informative perspective on the defining characteristics of the language debate in Italy prior to the nation's political unification.

Present in his diary are exchanges and debates with theologians and philosophers like Antonio Rosmini, writers like Alessandro Manzoni, and politicians and eventual Ministers of Public Education like Gabrio Casati concerning the Italian language and culture, and passages that

explore the relationship between Italian language and literature, the linguistic interaction between the Italian language and foreign languages, and the complementary qualities of philology and philosophy. Each of these topics were fundamental aspects of the *questione della lingua* that manifested themselves in both the philosophical and pragmatic approach to remedying the linguistic discrepancies in Italy as well as concepts that formed the underlying basis of Bonghi's contributions to the debate during the *ottocento*. While the manner in which Bonghi engaged with these issues evolved throughout the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s according to the changing social and political conditions, his initial beliefs regarding linguistic, philological, and educational ideologies can be traced to these early encounters both in Stresa and abroad and examined as they developed into the more fully-formed practises necessitated by a need for practical and pragmatic implementation.

When the ideas present in Bonghi's diary are read in conjunction with the critical letters in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, the progression from the first work (written in 1852) to the second (written in 1855) demonstrates not only the natural maturation of Bonghi's ideas on the language debate but also the progression and development of a more practical approach to remedying the obstacles preventing linguistic – and, by extension, literary – unity. As a contrast to the more philosophical exploration of the problems with language in Italy found in the diary, the critical letters examined the linguistic situation in the context of Italy's sociopolitical backdrop in order to highlight the unique factors that shaped the nation's literary production. As such, Bonghi's exploration of literature as a creative tool was conducted in a significantly less abstract way – as it was in his diary – and, instead, was used as a means of analyzing literature as, to a certain degree, a metric that was capable of emphasizing – or, at the very least, comparing – the differences in the social, political, and literary cultures that separated

Italy from other European nations like France, Germany, and England. At the same time, inasmuch as he analyzed literature as a reflection of a nation's sociopolitical and linguistic situation, he also explored how said factors directly informed and shaped the linguistic, stylistic, and thematic qualities of a nation's literary production. When one considers the historical importance of literature to the *questione della lingua* – one need look no further than the Bembian model of adopting the language of the “*tre corone*” as both the linguistic and literary standard – Bonghi took into consideration previous literary and linguistic models and broke down what he deems as the fundamental flaws in adopting these methods.<sup>4</sup> In detailing the relationship between language and literature, he posited his ideas regarding how best to reconcile these two forms of communication and outlined the ways in which a mutual and simultaneous betterment of both written and spoken forms was a necessary part of solving the nineteenth-century language debate. With Bonghi's extended reflection on the nature of literary “style” alongside a detailed series of case studies on the literary examples of Italy's most culturally significant eras – Boccaccio and the *trecento*, Machiavelli and *cinquecento*, and Manzoni and the *ottocento* – *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* can be considered as one of the most significant works of Italian literary criticism. Not only do his letters provide an insightful analysis of the dynamics of language and literature, the work was both Bonghi's first exploration of the potential means of implementing various philosophical linguistic ideals in a practical capacity and an example of “literary criticism” that provoked discussion on issues that would, in the 1870s and 1880s, shape issues such as education policy and legislative equality for Italian women.

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<sup>4</sup> Pietro Bembo advocated for the Italian language to be based on the literary language of the *trecento* with Boccaccio and Petrarch as the linguistic models for, respectively, prose and poetry. By the nineteenth century, when unification was imminent, a more nuanced and comprehensive approach was needed; one that considered social, political, economic, and legislative factors in light of the hopes for a centralized system of education, widespread literacy, and national linguistic diffusion.

***Manzoni, Rosmini, and Stresa: Bonghi's Diary and the "Italian" Language in Italy***

While the interaction with politicians and writers, especially those who would later serve as Ministers of Public Education, would have undoubtedly contributed to the development of Bonghi's beliefs regarding how best to proceed with linguistic unification and educational reform, it can be argued that the two greatest influences on Bonghi were Antonio Rosmini and Alessandro Manzoni. In Bonghi's letter to Carlo Landriani dated June 24 1873 – which served as the introduction to the third edition of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* – he described his initial encounters with the “due celebri uomini” that had transpired over twenty years prior as a result of three men's mutual rapport with the Arconati family. Bonghi, who had known that Manzoni and Rosmini were paying a visit to the Arconati, was, at first, bashfully reluctant to meet the two prominent figures for whom he had profound admiration and to whom he had sent, some five years prior, a copy of his translation of Plato's *Filebo* – a work that he describes as being received not without pleasure by Rosmini and not without dismay by Manzoni.<sup>5</sup> After spending several days with the two great figures, Bonghi asked Rosmini if he, the young Neapolitan, would be permitted to visit the philosopher at his home in Stresa. Considering over twenty years had passed since his request was happily granted, Bonghi, in his letter to Landriani, recounted the moment with an exuberant vivacity that highlights how profoundly Rosmini's intellectual,

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<sup>5</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 22. “Pure, l'uno e l'altro sapeva che io esistessi, poichè aveva all'uno e all'altro mandato da Napoli, già cinque anni prima, la mia traduzione del *Filebo*, che il Rosmini non aveva visto senza qualche piacere, ed il Manzoni senza qualche sgomento; poichè il lavoro, se riproduceva il pensiero del filosofo greco con scrupolosa diligenza, lo riproduceva in italiano con una lingua e uno stile, che al Manzoni non potevano parere altrimenti che abominevoli.”

ideological, and philosophical influence had informed Bonghi's perspectives.<sup>6</sup> As the letter went on to describe Manzoni's presence at the Rosmini estate in Stresa, the dynamic between the philosopher and writer was described in perhaps the most beautiful and succinct way: "Il Manzoni era al Rosmini il poeta del cuor suo; il Rosmini era al Manzoni il filosofo della sua mente."<sup>7</sup> Although the two men regarded each other with the utmost esteem, it becomes increasingly apparent to the modern reader that these identities of "poeta del cuor suo" and "filosofo della sua mente" are equally reflective of Bonghi's perception of Manzoni and Rosmini to himself as they were Manzoni's and Rosmini's respective perceptions of each other.<sup>8</sup>

As a man who was in his mid-twenties during the time in which the diary was written, Ruggero Bonghi held dear the mentorship and scholarship he received under these two monumentally important figures. While feisty, excitable, and barely able to restrain the opinions, passions, and ideas that comprised the overall zeal of his personality, Bonghi regarded these men with the highest esteem and drew heavily from insight they provided. As he stated in the preface to the third edition of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, "il vero ispiratore delle mie lettere al Bianchi sia stato il Manzoni; un ispiratore, s'intende, inconsapevole e passato attraverso il povero vaglio del mio cervello. Voi non potete pensare, Landriani mio, che effetto la

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 23. If there were any mistaking the degree to which Bonghi's stay in Stresa impacted his life, Bonghi wrote to Carlo Landriani, "Io benedico quegli anni per molte ragioni; e soprattutto per questa, che m'hanno cancellato nel cuore ogni grettezza di pregiudizii e di odii; m'hanno dato quell'insegnamento, che più manca, e che mancando, rende più questa vita aspra e dolorosa."

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> To further prove the point, in Bonghi's introduction for *I promessi sposi: Nelle due edizioni del 1840 e del 1825 raffrontate tra loro*, he wrote of Manzoni: "Il Manzoni era un uomo vero... Egli passava i mesi di state nella villa di suo figliastro Stefano Stampa a Belgirate, e veniva più volte la settimana a visitare il Rosmini a Stresa, presso il quale io ero, e talora vi restava dormire la sera. Non ho mai visto amicizia più sincera e rispettosa; nè credo che si sia mai dato altrove l'esempio di due uomini di così grande ingegno tanto scrupolosi a farsi ciascuno piccolo dinanzi all'altro." Bonghi, Ruggero, "Alessandro Manzoni, la lingua italiana e le scuole", *I promessi sposi: Nelle due edizioni del 1840 e del 1825 raffrontate tra loro*, edited by Riccardo Folli, Milano: Briola e Bocconi Librai Editori, 1877, p. X.

conversazione di cotest'uomo producesse sopra di me!"<sup>9</sup> In spite of Manzoni's reputation as one of Italy's most important literary and historical figures, Bonghi's respect for the Milanese author and his adoption of Manzoni's ideas on language and literature were not simply inspired by the author's repute; rather, it was a gradual process of discussing and debating everything from "la storia del Papato, e l'influenza civile di esso sulla storia italiana" to "la costituzione politica delle società" to "la letteratura italiana e la francese, e la lingua, la nostra lingua" that convinced Bonghi of the ideological and practical merit of Manzoni's positions.<sup>10</sup> Bonghi went on to state, "Pensate che meraviglia mi fece, che turbamento mi produsse il sentire il Manzoni a proporre teoriche così diverse sulla natura della lingua... e ad esprimere giudizi, o piuttosto ad arrisicare osservazioni così irreverenti sugli autori nostri più riveriti. Io stetti bene un pezzo in guardia contro di lui, poich'egli era tra' miei letterati ritenuto per *impuro*, ed avevo il Rosmini dalla mia; ma, mano a mano, mi sentii conquidere, e mi si mutò l'animo."<sup>11</sup>

Although it can be argued that these statements about Manzoni's lasting influence – written approximately twenty years after Bonghi's time in Stresa – could be influenced by the feelings of nostalgic sentimentality brought on by Manzoni's recent passing, when read in conjunction with various entries in his diary, such an interpretation appears less convincing.<sup>12</sup> In the diary entry marked July 23, the reader cannot help but be amused by the tender honesty of Bonghi who, in an attempt to control his passions, wrote himself a reminder to be less argumentative with Rosmini: "Mi risolvo ogni dì di non contraddir sempre, come faccio, il R., pure, per una petulanza tutta mia, non ci riesco: ed ogni volta che il discorso non sia meramente filosofico, o dommatico-teologico,

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<sup>9</sup> Bonghi. *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Bonghi's letter to Carlo Landriani is marked "Milano, 24 giugno 1873". Alessandro Manzoni had died in Milan on May 22 1873.

mi par dessentire, e non so tenermi che non mostri. Egli soffre con grandissima pazienza ed umiltà, ma gli è chiaro che l'annoio un pò. Perchè dunque non tacere, almeno qualche volta? Il voglio pur fare, e davvero risponderai così meglio all'affetto e il rispetto che gli ho.”<sup>13</sup> Although there are fewer examples of Bonghi arguing with Manzoni – largely due to the fact that Bonghi had been living with Rosmini and saw Manzoni far less frequently – disagreements and spirited discussions were very much a part of their intellectual relationship. Similarly, the young Neapolitan's character and his zeal for issues pertaining to politics, religion, literature, and language spurred him to be argumentative, regardless of the person with whom he found himself disagreeing.

In addition to the explicit examples of Manzoni's influence, the abundance of implicit examples in Bonghi's diary proves quite telling when considering the mutual similarities of their beliefs, especially those pertaining to language. Perhaps the most significant example of Manzoni's importance to Bonghi's beliefs is the centrality of the Milanese author's presence in all discussions, debates, and contemplations regarding language and literature. Even when the Milanese author is not physically present at the Rosmini estate, Manzoni's thoughts and writings inspired Bonghi to reflect upon his mentor's stance, consider any philosophical or practical alternatives, and proceed to build an informed perspective or approach when confronting the linguistic or educational issues present in Italian society. All factors considered, regardless of the extent to which they shared opinions on the *questione della lingua*, both figures ultimately saw the nineteenth-century language debate as a critical component of nation building that included cultural unity and effective and efficient governance.

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<sup>13</sup> Bonghi. *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 103.

When one considers that less than 10% of the population spoke Italian at the time of Italy's unification in 1861, the emphasis on choosing a "standard" Italian and establishing a means of promulgating Italian in a unified nation took on an immediacy that had never been present in the previous "iterations" of the *questione della lingua*.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, when one reflects upon the statistics that demonstrate that even the most literate provinces like Piedmont and Lombardy had, respectively, a 42.3% and 45.2% illiteracy rate, those involved with the debate on language needed to establish a clear and concise methodology that would address these issues in the most efficient manner once Italy's unification was finally realized.<sup>15</sup> With this in mind, it is no surprise that some of the most substantial entries in Bonghi's diary were either reflections on or transcriptions of the series of dialogues – those that would later be transcribed and published under the title *Le Stresiane* – involving, primarily, Bonghi, Manzoni, and Rosmini where they assessed the linguistic situation in Italy and sought the best philosophical and practical means of establishing a national standardized language.

In the diary entry dated 18 August 1852, Bonghi transcribed a dialogue regarding the Italian language that had taken place between him, Manzoni, Rosmini, the marquis of Cavour, Francesco

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<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the most cited percentage of italo-phone speakers in Italy at the time of Unification comes from Tullio De Mauro who estimated that a mere 2.5% of the population spoke the language. See De Mauro, Tullio, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*. Bari: Editori Laterza, 2011, p. 43. Contrarily, Arrigo Castellani disagreed with De Mauro's calculations which factored solely "italofoni di cultura" and, instead, posited that a more accurate number was closer to 10% of the population. See Castellani, Arrigo, "Quanti erano gl'italofoni nel 1861?". *Studi linguistici italiani* VIII (1982), pp. 3-26. As Luca Serianni summarizes in his *Storia della lingua italiana*, "La quota complessiva di italo-foni così risultante (intorno ai 630.000 cittadini su una popolazione di oltre 25 milioni di abitanti: quindi appena il 2,5%) è messa in discussione con solidi argomenti in Castellani 1982. Accogliendo il metodo del De Mauro – ma correggendone l'applicazione – il Castellani calcola in 435.000 persone il numero degli «italofoni per cultura»; a questa cifra vanno aggiunti i toscani i quali, nella quasi totalità, «debbono esser considerati italo-foni per diritto di nascita, e non in quanto abbiano appreso a leggere e scrivere... Il criterio che il De Mauro segue per la Toscana e per Roma (lingua naturale vicina all'italiano + alfabetismo = italo-fonia) potrebbe» essere accolto per Roma e per quelle zone dell'Italia mediana in cui si parlano varietà prossime al toscano... In tal caso gli italo-foni del 1861 sarebbero stati più di 2,2 milioni, pari al 9,52% della popolazione con più di tre anni d'età. Serianni, Luca. *Storia della lingua italiana: Il secondo Ottocento*. Bologna: Società Editrice il Mulino, 1990, pp. 17-18.

<sup>15</sup> Clark, Martin, *Modern Italy*. London: Pearson Education Limited, 2008, p. 43. Martin Clark uses statistics as found in the census reports: *Annuario Statistico Italiano* and *Annali di Statistica*.

Puecher, Vincenzo De Vitt, Giuseppe Gatti, and Giovanni Battista Pagani.<sup>16</sup> In a discourse which, to a modern reader familiar with his extensive study of classical philosophy, bears a striking resemblance in structure to that of a Socratic dialogue, Bonghi began the transcribed narrative with Manzoni asking him for his thoughts on language: “E lei, Bonghi, è del credo sulla lingua?”<sup>17</sup> In affirmation of Manzoni’s known opinion on which “Italian” should constitute the national linguistic standard, ‘Ruggero’ (co-protagonist of the dialogue referred to as “Bonghi” in the text) establishes the central element of the debate by upholding the spoken Florentine Italian as the linguistic standard for the rest of Italy: “Credo ancor io che si debba scrivere come lei dice, una lingua viva, usata, parlata.”<sup>18</sup> With these brief opening lines of the transcription, Bonghi effectively outlined the most fundamental component of the Manzonian premise that later became the central principle in the primary political and educational measures to establish linguistic unity. Manzoni

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<sup>16</sup> Bonghi, Ruggero, *Colloqui col Manzoni*, edited by Alessandra Briganti. Roma: Editore Riuniti, 1985, p. 293n. The Marchese Cavour was a frequent visitor to both casa Manzoni in Milan and casa Rosmini in Stresa. Similarly, this is one of many ties that Bonghi would have had with the Benso family. (See Chapter 1 Footnote 18) He was a fierce supporter of “*i Moderati*” and, later, the *Destra Storica*, the political party to which he belonged. While the voices outside of Bonghi, Rosmini, and Manzoni are few, Cavour’s interjections in *Le Stresiane* are interesting as they tend to focus on the political and religious aspects discussed in the dialogues. When one considers that Gustavo, like Camillo, would have been a native speaker of French rather than Italian, the reader’s interest is piqued regarding how the Benso brothers would have approached linguistic unity had Camillo not passed away the year of the unification. It is interesting to note that, during Bonghi’s visit to Turin in 1853, Gustavo Benso wrote this of the Neapolitan and his “stresiane”: “Vedo spesso il nostro amico Bonghi che si occupa sempre dei suoi studi di svariato genere...I suoi dialoghi stresiani sono molto ingegnosi ed acuti.” *Lettere del Marchese Gustavo di Cavour ad Antonio Rosmini*, p. 241.

In regards to the others present, according to Francesco D’Ovidio, Padre Francesco Puecher was one of Rosmini’s very first acquaintances and friends from the Istituto della Carità in Stresa. D’Ovidio, Francesco, *Rimpianti Vecchi e Nuovi Vol. I*. Caserta: Casa Editrice Moderna, 1929, p. 229. Vincenzo de Vit (1811 – 1892) was a lexicographer and classicist from Padua. He befriended Rosmini and, through his influence, also joined the Istituto della Carità where he edited the third edition of Egidio Forcellini’s *Lexicon totius Latinitatis*. Giuseppe Gatti (1810 – 1882) was a canon and long-time friend of Rosmini whose relationship dates back to the early 1830s. Gatti began frequenting the Rosmini estate in Stresa in the late 1840s where he would meet Manzoni and Bonghi. Giovanni Battista Pagani (1806 – 1860) was a seminarian and another long-time friend of Rosmini with whom he had become acquainted in 1831.

<sup>17</sup> Bonghi. *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 128. While a dialogue of the sort certainly transpired during his time in Stresa, the extent to which Bonghi may or may not have taken artistic liberties in order to more clearly drive or emphasize a point is unknown. For the sake of clarity and to more clearly identify the distinction between Bonghi, the author of the dialogue, and Bonghi, the character, the “character” will be referred to as “Ruggero”. The literary present tense will be used when analyzing passages of the dialogue so as not to conflate historical accuracy with potential literary subjectivity.

<sup>18</sup> Bonghi. *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 128.

consolidates Ruggero's premise later in the dialogue by stating, "Io dico usate sempre le parole e le frasi fiorentine insin che potete: nè perchè valgono meglio di quelle delle altre città italiane. Ciascuna città parla perfettamente..."<sup>19</sup> Refuting any "Bembian" notion that a standard Italian should derive from the written Florentine of the fourteenth century, Ruggero and Manzoni, in agreement, uphold the *contemporary, spoken* Florentine variety as the model for any linguistic standard in Italy.

The Manzonian position of establishing the Florentine vernacular as the national language is a premise that is not only a critical element of the dialogue found in Bonghi's diary but also a fundamentally central position in both nineteenth and twentieth-century linguistic discourse. Embedding itself in the very bedrock of debate during the *ottocento*, Manzoni's philosophies regarding the establishment of a *lingua dell'uso* as a national standard continued to spark debate well into the 1900s. When one considers the significance of the periodical *La Ruota* (1941–1942) during the fascist debate on language, Italy's most prominent linguists including Gianfranco Contini, Giacomo Devoto, Carlo Emilio Gadda, Mario Meschini, and Bruno Migliorini used Manzoni's premise of a *lingua dell'uso* as a central element of dialogue when considering and positing their own respective stances concerning the Italian language, linguistic unity, and lexical selection. Despite the distinct difference in social, political, and historical circumstances, the continued impact of Manzoni's thoughts concerning language and its ability to spark debate underscores both the centrality of his position to the *questione della lingua* as well as the chronological universality of its potential application. As Bruno Migliorini describes in his article "Lingua Letteraria e Lingua Dell'Uso":

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

Il Manzoni pone al centro delle sue meditazioni linguistiche il concetto di *uso*, facendone quasi il sinonimo di lingua: l'esigenza politica, sociale, culturale dell'unità della nazione e l'esigenza letteraria di una lingua antiretorica si compenetrano nel suo ideale d'un «uso vivo», esistente già di fatto presso i Fiorentini colti, e che vorrebbe propagato a tutta l'Italia.<sup>20</sup>

With the central argument for adopting a contemporary Florentine *dell'uso* established, the men in Bonghi's dialogue begin to analyze Manzoni's premise by not only scrutinizing any potential linguistic discrepancies but by assessing the potential obstacles in the practical implementation of such a linguistic ideal. Although this dialogic exploration is, naturally, conducted in a much more informal and less technical manner than it would be in a formal piece of writing, there is still an assessment of each of the major forms of linguistic variation, the potential problems with or impediments on establishing linguistic unity, and the potential means of addressing or working around such variations present in the brief exchange transcribed by Bonghi. With his initial stance of adopting the contemporary Florentine vernacular and prioritizing it over any antiquated written forms, Manzoni immediately reconciles any diachronic variations that would be present when comparing the contemporary spoken language – or written language, for that matter – to that of the past. Despite this, Rosmini, in response to Ruggero's initial statement, acknowledges the complex nature of Italy's linguistic variation by addressing the inherent difficulties of implementing the Manzonian proposal in order to, in a technical sense, overcome the remaining diastatic and, most importantly, diatopic variations in Italy. Manzoni, acknowledging the difficulty in putting into practise his plan, cites the first of several major issues: “Chi di noi sa tutto il dialetto della propria città?”<sup>21</sup> In a historical sense, not only was there the need to address the dialectal diversity that existed throughout Italy, but there was also the need to

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<sup>20</sup> Migliorini, Bruno. «La Ruota. Rivista mensile di letteratura e arte», III serie, II, 10-12, ottobre-dicembre 1941 – XX, pp. 223-28. Articles collected in *Lingua Letteraria e Lingua dell'Uso: Un Dibattito tra critici, Linguisti e Scrittori* («La Ruota» 1941-1942) edited by Giuseppe Polimeni, Firenze: Accademia della Crusca, 2013, p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 128.

account for the linguistic diversity present *within* each city and, before addressing the difficulties in the adaptation of Florentine by speakers of other dialectal origins, to consider the variations found within Florence. Addressing the prevalence of a *mistilinguismo* – a mixing of linguistic elements found in both written and spoken languages – Manzoni describes the many occasions in which he had found himself debating with other Milanese about the dialectal origin of a particular word and whether or not it indeed pertained to the dialect. Quantifying the situation, he affirms that this problem is present within any dialect of any city of any region and would need a solution in order to satisfy the linguistic variation regardless of which “Italian” was adopted as a standardized language. Similarly, Manzoni reiterates the logical consistency when Rosmini questions Manzoni and Ruggero about situations in which Florentine, or any dialect for that matter, lacks the appropriate word to denote the significance of that which the speaker is trying to express. In other words, Rosmini inquires about the appropriate linguistic response to ideas that do not have a corresponding word. To this, Manzoni responds:

La parola forse che corrisponda al concetto vostro manca? Allora, avete tutti i diritti d'introdurre una nuova... Che si debba scegliere quella parola, la quale abbia più d'affinità al commune delle parole usate colle quali deve convivere: e così che abbia più probabilità da essere accettata universalmente... Ora verrà caso in cui il fiorentino non vi basti? Ebbene: allora introducete quel tanto di nuovo che vi bisogna: pigliatelo donde volete: purchè quel tanto di nuovo sia necessario ed abbia quelle due qualità, conformità e probabilità di passare.<sup>22</sup>

In responding to Rosmini, Manzoni simply acknowledges the need to adopt loanwords when the Florentine vernacular is insufficient in providing the appropriate word when expressing an idea. To the Milanese author, Italian, much like any vernacular that encountered linguistic interaction, needed to maintain a degree of fluidity in order to accommodate regional diversity if it is to become accepted as a standardized form. Even with Manzoni's insistence on giving

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 128-129.

precedence to Florentine Italian, he concedes that there must be room to recognize its potential limitations and allow for it to adapt to the Italian linguistic climate. In either case, Manzoni states that “queste gradazioni le vedono assai pochi: e chi la vedesse, dove non è, e si pigliasse la briga di trovarle una parola nuova, pagherebbe la pena col vedersela morire tra le braccia.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, Manzoni’s brand of Florentine *purismo* can best be described by Gianfranco Contini’s statement that “La lingua è per [Manzoni] un Sistema di totalità espressiva, e l’applicazione Fiorentina mantiene il valore simbolico della forza logica di lui.”<sup>24</sup>

Once the linguistic model is established by the characters of the dialogue and affirmed by Bonghi, the author and proponent of linguistic unity, the natural progression of the dialogue leads Ruggero to put aside the linguistic difficulties and inquire about the *social* hurdles that must be surmounted in order to codify Florentine as the national norm. He states, “In somma, poi, bisognerebbe sempre trovare un modo, perchè tutti gli Italiani non fossero obbligati d’andare a vivere in Firenze per divenire scrittori.”<sup>25</sup> Referencing the journey to Florence that Manzoni had undertaken in 1827 in order to filter out the linguistic heterogeneity of the 1827 edition of *I promessi sposi*, Ruggero comments that few Italians can afford the benefit of spending periods in the Tuscan city simply to learn a different vernacular.<sup>26</sup> While choosing which Italian vernacular

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<sup>23</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 129.

<sup>24</sup> Contini, Gianfranco. «La Ruota. Rivista mensile di letteratura e arte», III serie, III, 1-2, gennaio-febbraio 1942 – XX, pp. 6-12. Articles collected in *Lingua Letteraria e Lingua dell’Uso: Un Dibattito tra critici, Linguisti e Scrittori («La Ruota» 1941-1942)* a cura di Giuseppe Polimeni, p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 129.

<sup>26</sup> After the publication of *I promessi sposi* in 1827, Manzoni, who had sought to create the first Italian novel and thus establish his work in the Italian literary canon, was largely dissatisfied with the linguistic purity of the novel and wanted to make a journey to Florence so he could learn the vernacular in order to fully revise the work. From the first version of *Fermo e Lucia* that had been written between 1821 and 1823 to the 1827 edition of *I promessi sposi*, Manzoni, who was rigorous in editing his work, was still quite reliant on Cherubini’s 1814 *Vocabolario milanese-italiano* when “translating” certain passages of the text. An annotated copy of Manzoni’s *Vocabolario* found in the Braidense Archive in Milan shows Manzoni’s process of assessing the dialectal presence in *I promessi sposi* and replacing certain Milanese words with the Florentine equivalent found in Cherubini’s *Vocabolario*. Notwithstanding the literary merit of the linguistic “conversion”, while this direct translation was appropriate in certain contexts, there are examples of Florentine words found in the 1827 version that are used in an inappropriate context. So as to fully Tuscanize the novel, Manzoni, along with his wife, children, and mother, made a trip to

should be upheld as the Italian standard remained a matter of debate, making Florentine accessible to non-Florentine speakers was a far bigger hurdle that would involve far-reaching practical measures. In a simple, matter-of-fact response, Manzoni downplays the difficulty of finding a practical method – “E ci sarebbe: è facile.” – by stating that dictionaries would provide the easiest means of promulgating Florentine throughout Italy; it would be a simple matter collecting dialectal dictionaries, going to Florence, and systematically going through every word and phrase to hear the equivalent in the Florentine vernacular. If the reader considers the 1870 publication of the first volume of Manzoni’s *Novo Vocabolario*, a dictionary that sought to do exactly as he had outlined in this 1852 dialogue, one can appreciate the almost wry humour of Manzoni’s statement of, “Se avessi la metà degli anni che ho, mi ci metterei.”<sup>27</sup> While there would likely have been allusions to the creation of the Florentine dictionary in some of Manzoni’s previous personal interactions and correspondences, a reading of this particular dialogue allows the reader to almost bear witness to the burgeoning of the great writer’s idea to create a new tool to diffuse the Italian language. Considering the significance of the *Novo Vocabolario* in the context of the nineteenth century *questione della lingua* – not to mention the polemic it created with linguist Graziadio Isaia Ascoli – it is particularly interesting to see a context in which the idea for Manzoni’s dictionary might have been created.<sup>28</sup>

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Florence during the summer of 1827 so he could fully learn the Florentine vernacular. As described by the famous phrase, it was only in going to Florence and “risciacquare i panni in Arno” that Manzoni could fully immerse himself in the language in order to truly Italianize his novel.

<sup>27</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 129.

<sup>28</sup> Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829-1907) was, alongside Manzoni, one of the most prominent figures involved with the debate concerning the *questione della lingua* during the nineteenth century. Widely considered one of the greatest linguists and comparative philologists in Italian history, Ascoli’s position on the language debate was articulated in his “Proemio”, published in the *Archivio glottologico italiano* in 1873, which served as a contrast to Manzoni’s positions in “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di difonderla” and *Appendice alla relazione intorno all’unità della lingua e ai mezzi di diffonderla*. Giulio and Laura Lepschy describe the ideological division in the following terms: “Against the proposal that contemporary spoken Florentine should be adopted by all Italians and that a main vehicle for its diffusion should be a dictionary, Ascoli pointed out that this was not the way national languages were formed. He drew his examples from the linguistic history of France, England, and Germany... the linguistic situation of a

Although this is an early example of Manzoni's thoughts concerning the creation of an Italian Vocabolario *dell'uso*, he was quite familiar with the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* and its prioritization of a spoken vernacular over the language's written counterpart. Much like Italy's Accademia della Crusca, the Académie française, founded by cardinal Richelieu in 1635, was the primary linguistic authority in France. With the first edition of the *Dictionnaire* published in Paris in 1694, the French dictionary, much like the *Vocabolario della Crusca*, underwent a series of revisions over the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. It is important to note that, in the preface to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* published in 1835, there is a particular passage which emphasizes a focus on *l'usage*: "On résolut de revenir à l'usage, et de composer le Dictionnaire, non des auteurs, mais de la langue."<sup>29</sup> When one considers Manzoni's stance on the purpose of dictionaries and their potential use as a means of making one linguistic variety accessible to non-speakers – as asserted in Bonghi's dialogue – alongside the ideas articulated in introductory passage of the 1835 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, a natural extension can be drawn to Manzoni's 1869 *Appendice alla relazione intorno all'unità della lingua e ai mezzi di diffonderla*. Written almost seventeen years after the dialogue at Stresa, Manzoni's article not only served as an elaboration on the linguistic arguments found in the 1868 "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla", but a culmination of ideas that had long been in development with peers like Ruggero Bonghi. In his *Appendice*, Manzoni wrote:

...lungi dal supporre che ci possa essere un intiero dizionario della lingua a uso particolare delle persone di lettere, come richiede evidentemente il senso del passo citato, crede che un tale concetto non possa altro, che far perdere di vista cosa sia in fatto una vera lingua, e per conseguenza quale abbia a essere il suo vero

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country could not be changed by decree, nor by giving people a dictionary of the dialect which was being proposed as a standard. The formation of a national language was a complex historical phenomenon which depended on social and cultural forces." Lepschy, Anna Laura, and Giulio Lepschy, *The Italian Language Today*. New York: Routledge, 1988, p. 25. See the "Proemio" in Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia. *Scritti sulla questione della lingua*, edited by Corrado Grassi, Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*. Académie française. 1835. Préface. XIII.

vocabolario; e quindi crede che, se un tal concetto venisse adottato generalmente, si dovrebbe abbandonare anche la speranza d'aver il vocabolario della lingua intera, del quale l'Italia abbisogna; crede, che il criterio logico per comporre tal vocabolario, si deva prendere dal fatto che costituisce una lingua qualunque e nel tutto e in ogni sua parte, quale è l'Uso... E perchè ciò possa avvenire, come avviene, è di stretta necessità, che in tutti gli elementi che compongono una lingua, ci sia, in ogni suo momento, qualcosa d'identico, che costituisca una tale unità, e sia un mezzo di riconoscere e d'affermare logicamente che un vocabolo o un modo di dire qualunque appartiene a una data lingua, e di far quindi una compita raccolta, di tutti, per quanto è possibile; e questo qualcosa è appunto l'Uso, e null'altro che l'Uso.<sup>30</sup>

Although this particular passage – and other lengthier elaborations on what constitutes a *lingua dell'uso* – were published significantly after his discussions with Bonghi in Stresa, a consideration of Manzoni's ideas over an almost twenty-year span does indeed reflect Bonghi's centrality to the linguistic debate of the time period and his involvement in the most historically noteworthy initiatives. Granted, Manzoni would have been familiar with the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* and would have begun formulating his ideas on the feasibility of creating an Italian equivalent long before meeting Bonghi. However, the fact that one of the earliest documented discussions of the *Vocabolario* is found in Bonghi's diary, and one of the most elaborate discussions on using a dictionary for linguistic diffusion can be found in an article co-authored with Bonghi – “Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” – Bonghi's involvement in Manzoni's linguistic initiatives cannot be ignored. Moreover, considering how frequently subjects such as religion, politics, history, or language were discussed at the Rosmini estate during Bonghi's stay, other detailed discourses on the language would undoubtedly have been had during both Bonghi's time in Stresa as well as during the ensuing years.<sup>31</sup> As Bonghi

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<sup>30</sup> Manzoni, Alessandro, *Appendice alla relazione intorno all'unità della lingua e ai mezzi di diffonderla*. Milano: Stabilimento Redaelli dei Fratelli Richiedei, 1869, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> According to both the *Archivio privato Ruggiero Bonghi: inventario* and the collection of Manzoni's letters, Bonghi and Manzoni remained in contact until their joint work on the Broglio Commission in 1868. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Bonghi is one of the first people that Manzoni approached and asked to assist with the Broglio initiative. According to the letter dated January 21 1868, Manzoni wrote that he was eager to meet with Bonghi that evening to discuss the initiative at length. Manzoni, Alessandro, *Carteggi Letterari, Tomo Secondo*, edited by Laura Diafani e Irene Gambacorti. Milano: Centro Nazionale Studi Manzoni, 2016, p. 1349.

noted in his letter to Carlo Landriani, he recalled Manzoni's propensity to frequently engage in discussions concerning language during their time in Stresa: "la letteratura italiana e la francese, e la lingua, la lingua nostra, ch'era colla rivoluzione francese il soggetto nel quale il Manzoni ricadeva più spesso."<sup>32</sup> Moreover, if one also considers that Manzoni would send his unfinished or unpublished articles to Bonghi to read – as exemplified later in the Chapter with the analysis of the diary entry dated November 19 1852 – this mutual discourse emphasizes how, even when Bonghi may not necessarily have been directly involved in certain aspects of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*, his interaction with these issues and his presence during the ideological or philosophical workings of these aspects is inextricable.<sup>33</sup>

When one returns to the dialogue on language found in Bonghi's diary, despite the authority with which Manzoni speaks – not to mention his stature as one of the greatest authors in Italian literary history – Ruggero, who in actual fact admittedly was not one to "*tacere*", is quick to point out the oversimplification of such a method and, reprising Manzoni's earlier statement, cites the linguistic variances within a city. In response to Manzoni's statement that the dictionary was an "easy" solution to exporting Florentine Italian to the rest of Italy, Bonghi responds: "Che non è facile. Quando a un fiorentino si domanda come dica una cosa e se usa una parola, vi dirà, poniam caso, che no: e parecchie volte non è già che non si usi, ma o che non l'usi lui, o che nol

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<sup>32</sup> Bonghi. *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. XVI.

<sup>33</sup> In regards to Bonghi's involvement in the development of Manzoni's ideas and writings, in addition to the unpublished works sent to Bonghi noted in the Diary, if one examines Manzoni's personal letters and manuscripts, it becomes clear that the Milanese author continued to send Bonghi his writings throughout the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. As an example, if one considers the original manuscript of Manzoni's *Lettera a Ruggero Bonghi intorno al Vocabolario* found in the Manzoni collection of the Biblioteca Braidense, it appears that Manzoni took extreme care in crafting and composing works sent to the younger writer. The manuscript of the relatively significant letter on the *Vocabolario* features not only the significant wordsmithing that one would expect from the author of the three editions of *I promessi sposi*, but also entire sections that were crossed out and rewritten in the margin. The nineteen handwritten pages feature substantial revision and demonstrate the care and attention placed on formulating and articulating writings that were critical components of his literary and linguistic initiatives and pieces to which he expected Bonghi to respond and critique. See *Manz. B. XIII. 4.* in the *Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense*.

sa, o che nol ricorda.”<sup>34</sup> In response, Manzoni expresses his agreement with Bonghi but clarifies that a methodology of this sort for diffusing language needs a *good* dictionary: one that would require a great deal of time, effort, and commitment to bring to fruition in the manner Manzoni intends it. If it were indeed able to be carried out to the extent to which Manzoni hoped and the manner in which he had envisioned, it would effectively replace the need to “fish” the appropriate word or meaning from either older Italian texts or from the “Crusca”.

Although it may seem strange that Manzoni – an author who, with an obsessive zeal, fixated on the linguistic nature of his major opus – would altogether dismiss the importance of literature in establishing a nationally standardized language, his insistence on focusing on the contemporary vernacular is unwavering. In response to Bonghi, a scholar who was consumed with literature, and his suggestion to consult written sources before integrating a non-Florentine loanword, Manzoni consolidates his position by stating, “Che vuol dire lingua scritta? Una parola uscita dall’uso appartiene tanto poco alla lingua, quanto una che non gli sia appartenuta mai.”<sup>35</sup> He elaborates this perspective by positing that the manner in which Italian “forefathers” spoke is not only irrelevant in the context of contemporary vernacular, but that there is also no certainty that the authors of the past indeed *spoke* in the same manner as they *wrote*. Again, it is interesting to note that Ruggero has no rebuttal and appears to be contented by Manzoni’s position on the issue.

While at first it seems striking that neither Manzoni nor Bonghi – neither in the dialogue nor as a commentator on the nature of language and literature – would remotely consider the Bembian proposal of using literary sources as the basis of diffusing Florentine throughout Italy,

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<sup>34</sup> Bonghi. *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

when one delves deeper into the Bonghian canon, it becomes increasingly apparent that the Neapolitan presents the bond between literature and language as being weaker than one might have presumed. Though this notion would be fully explored and elaborated upon to a much greater degree in his later writings like *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, the arguments present in his diary remain, to a large extent, the basis on which he operates when engaging with the various social, political, and linguistic factors of the *questione della lingua*. Similarly, his lack of direct support for Manzoni's dictionary initiative is, when regarded in the context of Bonghi's involvement in the language debate throughout his life, also quite telling. As Bonghi became increasingly involved in Italy's political sphere, he actively supported initiatives that he felt would yield a more profound impact on curbing Italy's state of linguistic disharmony. Despite the slight variations in approach, the fundamental vision was shared between the two men. In a diary entry dated November 19 1852, Bonghi reflected upon the first chapter of a book on language that Manzoni had been writing and, in complete agreement, felt the need to transcribe the passage to his notebook:

Porta a un luogo questo paragone che trascrivo perchè rappresenta benissimo il caso in cui ci troviamo noi, e in cui si trova chi nega. «In un gran coro di cantanti che, ora vanno d'accordo, ora stonano a meraviglia, uno dice: fratelli miei, questa che noi cantiamo insieme è la musica di certo: giacchè non può essere a caso che andiam tanto d'accordo; ma ci sono, di certo ugualmente, molti di noi che non lo sanno bene, perchè come l'accomodiamo tutti insieme, non è più musica.»<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bonghi. *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 161. In addition to transcribing Manzoni's words into his notebook, Bonghi also includes this passage in the sixteenth and final letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* dated August 3 1855 where he uses this to bring together the notion of linguistic unity. Bonghi. *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, pp. 218-219. The complete work from which the passage derives, *Libro Primo Capitolo 1: Dello stato della lingua in Italia, e degli effetti essenziali delle lingue*, was published by Bonghi in his collection of Manzoni's rare or unpublished works, *Opere Inedite o Rare di Alessandro Manzoni Vol. 4*, Milano: Richiedei, 1891, pp. 145-216.

For Manzoni, the emphasis on “singing together” should by no means be considered an argument for the inherent superiority of the Florentine vernacular. In fact, in Bonghi’s transcribed dialogue with Manzoni and Rosmini, the Milanese author responded to the Neapolitan’s remarks about Siena as one of the best-spoken cities in Italy with the comment, “...non ci ha città meglio parlante di un’altra.”<sup>37</sup> Rather, in his completed book on language, *Dello stato della lingua in Italia, e degli effetti essenziali delle lingue*, Manzoni introduced the premise of linguistic unity with the statement, “io non mi propongo di cercar altro che il mezzo d’intendersi italiani con italiani.”<sup>38</sup> It is with the desired outcome of a linguistically harmonious Italy that one can consider Manzoni’s passage and Bonghi’s appreciation for what he considered a rather eloquent metaphor for the contemporary linguistic situation. With the understanding that each dialect should be regarded as highly as any other, in order to create musical harmony throughout Italy, there must be a willingness for each “chorister” to learn – and learn well – the music the entire choir is preparing to sing. Only in this state of musical cohesion can true harmony – in every sense of the word – exist. As Bonghi would continue to reflect upon the linguistic situation in Italy and its social ramifications, and write about the appropriate measures to remedy the social obstacles, he set himself on a path that eventually led to his involvement with Italy’s governing bodies. As he became increasingly involved with the political initiatives concerning language, and worked to implement strategies designed to, in Manzoni’s words, unite Italy’s “chorus”, one can be certain that the mentorship that Manzoni had given him in Stresa provided Bonghi with the model with which to guide his own “choir”.

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<sup>37</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 129.

<sup>38</sup> Manzoni, *Opere Inedite o Rare di Alessandro Manzoni Vol. 4*, p. 150.

*Letters to Celestino Bianchi: Language, Literature, and Foreign Examples*

While Bonghi's diary provides an excellent point of entry into the various elements that comprised the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*, it is his most recognized work, *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, that truly breaks down and analyzes particular elements of the language debate and ultimately tries to establish the best means of reconciling these issues. Although the work – comprised of sixteen letters directed to Celestino Bianchi dated from March 9 to August 3 1855 that were originally published in the Milanese periodical *Lo Spettatore* – focuses primarily on the complex dynamics between language and literature, it approaches this relationship with an acute awareness of the political and social backdrops that inform both the interpretation of previously written texts and the composition of new works.<sup>39</sup> As Bonghi proceeded to dissect and explore the anatomy of literature – including a detailed reflection on literary style and the problems and potential benefits of literary criticism in Italy – he did so in a manner that, while philosophical, never deviated from the intended purpose of establishing a practical solution to the problems discussed in the work. In this sense, it is less a work of strict

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<sup>39</sup> In the greater context of Italy's thinkers and writers, the letters to Celestino Bianchi provide another example of Bonghi's centrality in the network of the most prominent figures of the time. In a letter from Celestino Bianchi to Manzoni dated April 1 1855, the Florentine journalist expresses the honour and delight of having – at Bonghi's request to have the published letters of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* sent to Manzoni – the opportunity to correspond with Italy's most prominent writer: a privilege he would not have had without the personal connection to Bonghi. Bianchi writes: "Mi scrive l'amico mio Ruggero Bonghi da Stresa di mandarle lo Spettatore, nel quale si contengono alcune lettere di lui sulla letteratura Italiana. Nell'affrettarmi di sodisfare al desiderio dell'amico, gli debbo esser grato di aver dato occasione al mio giornale di presentarsi a Lei, a cui, senza questa raccomandazione non avrebbe ardito mai. S'Ella volesse guardarlo benignamente, e onorarlo, se non d'altro, di una parola di suggerimento, e di consiglio, sarebbe fortunatissimo. Desiderare e pregarla di qualche suo scritto sarebbe forse temerità, ma il timore stesso di esprimere questi sentimenti Le dica in qual [undeciphered] se ne avrebbe l'adempimento. Le invio adesso i due numeri nei quali si contengono le lettere del Bonghi, s'Ella però desidera vedere anco gli altri numeri del giornale, me ne faccia un cenno, e l'avrà per un favore. [Undeciphered] di aver avuto occasione di esprimerle quella profonda stima e quella riconoscenza che ogni Italiano sente per l'Autore dei Promessi Sposi, del Carmagnola, dell'Adelchi, e della Morale Cattolica." *Manz. B. XIX. 50.* in the Biblioteca Braidense.

literary criticism and more a work of societal analysis through a comprehensive – and, at times, highly technical – study of Italian prose.

The emphasis on linking language, literature, and society in order to find a practical solution that could be applied to a nineteenth-century Italian context can perhaps best be seen in Bonghi's regular comparisons to foreign literary "situations" – something he had always done; as seen in the diary entry about the linguistic *passeggiata* cited above. His frequent references to the French, German, and English literary traditions and the impact their respective political situations had on shaping their languages and literatures emphasize a particular awareness of the distinctive nature of Italy's situation. Again, his aim is not to create a work of literary theory but to provide Italy's cultured elite – who, as seen in his diary, were either directly or indirectly affiliated with Italy's governing bodies – with a text that not only refuted historical arguments for using literature as a means of remedying Italy's lack of linguistic unity but also outlined the ways in which literature could be used to ameliorate the linguistic situation whilst also contributing positively to Italy's cultural development and social progress. In the first letter, he establishes the fundamental premise of his collection of letters by contrasting Italy's situation to that of other European nations:

I libri italiani hanno in Italia molto minor numero di lettori che non i francesi in Francia, i tedeschi in Germania, e gl'inglesi in Inghilterra. E i libri, intendo, di qualunque genere: gravi e leggieri son letti meno...E non è già che in Italia si legga assolutamente meno che altrove; si leggono meno i libri nostri; e a quel soprappiù di lettori a cui i libri nostri o non bastano o non piacciono, suppliscono quelle tre altre letterature.<sup>40</sup>

What is particularly noteworthy in this first letter is how, immediately following this passage, Bonghi uses the comparison with England and Germany to underscore the social differences that contribute to the literary divide: namely, the contrast in women's participation in

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<sup>40</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 53.

the literary sphere. As he would emphasize the importance of female equality throughout his career – a topic that will be discussed at length, including these particular passages, in Chapter 5 – it is important to not only highlight the impact of language on social equality but also emphasize the ultimately sociopolitical scope of these letters.

The distinction in the national and general societal approach to language and literature arises again in the fifth letter when Bonghi reprises the linguistic generalizations of his *passaggiata* allegory and elaborates upon those ideas to highlight the specialized approach that must be adopted for an Italian linguistic context. He writes, “Sarà un consiglio a tutti coloro i quali ora tentano di propagare ed insinuare le dottrine germaniche in Italia. Non mi pare che abbiano abbastanza atteso alla diversità naturale della mente italiana dalla tedesca, e delle lingue nelle quali s’esprimono.”<sup>41</sup> Although he neither provides extensive elucidations on the nature of such linguistic variations, nor elaborates on the respective differences of each of the three languages to which he typically compares the Italian language – German, English, and French – a close reading demonstrates that Bonghi ultimately attributes these “natural differences” to three fundamental linguistic elements: paradigmatic, syntagmatic, and sociohistorical and sociopolitical factors. Regarding the German language, he compares the linguistic “shades” of German’s lexicon to the fundamentally different lexical and syntactical composition of Italian in which words, when translated into Italian, “danno un senso più reciso ed acquistano una tinta o più chiara o più scura.”<sup>42</sup> This is not merely as a result of the natural paradigmatic variation in translated texts; rather, there is a fundamental difference in the syntagmatic structure of the language which not only calls for a different mental

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

conceptualization of the understood phrase but also, more importantly, demands a different approach to the writing and understanding of written texts:

Se è necessario per ogni lingua, ad intenderla, a tradurla, a propagarne i libri e la coltura, di studiarla filologicamente, è necessarissimo per la tedesca. Se è necessario per concetti espressi in qualunque lingua di avvezzarsi a sentire la maniera stessa e la forza e particolarità dell'espressione per riprodurli e diffonderli in un'altra lingua, è necessarissimo per un Italiano.<sup>43</sup>

With these defining features comes a difference of approach for creating and understanding literature that, in turn, affects the way in which a writer strives to compose a written text and, by extension, the way in which said writing assists in shaping the language.

This variation in the approach to language and literature – prose, in particular – is also heavily affected by sociohistorical and sociopolitical factors. Of course, the political and cultural centralization in Paris and London contributed extensively to the elements of linguistic unity found in France and England, but in Bonghi's sixth letter, he elaborates on how political and cultural factors influenced the development of literature. In this letter, he explores the interplay of political autonomy and cultural patrimony – as it pertains to historical literary contributions – in which political autonomy grants the writer the freedom to think, express, and generate cultural capital which can then be exported to influence other cultures and literatures. It is for these reasons that he argues that the French, following the reign of Louis XIV, and the English, following the reign of Queen Anne, were able to create works of prose that were superior to the classical texts from which they derived. These authors who were “associati intimamente colla cittadinanza per la quale scrivevano”, were able to go beyond simple literary imitation and build upon the examples of the “antichi” and, in search of “nuove vene di pensiero e di stile”, create works of supreme literary

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

value.<sup>44</sup> These factors, in addition to the linguistic complexities, impeded Italy from producing – save for Boccaccio and Machiavelli – writers of prose that superseded the quality of Classical texts and rivalled the works of other European nations.<sup>45</sup> Although he states that he would have judged Italy’s literary history in a far less “gentle” manner, he transcribes several lines from a letter sent to him from “un grande amico nostro, il cavalier Bunsen” one year prior to summarize Italy’s literary history as it pertained to prose: ‘Ecco le sue parole, non tradotte da me... «La prosa *italiana* è divenuta un poco verbosa perchè mancava il libero movimento della mente nazionale nel campo del sapere storico, e così non vi esisteva più l’equilibrio fra il sapere che condensa e la fecondità e, per così dire, ampiezza naturale del genio italiano...»’.<sup>46</sup>

### ***The Dynamics of Language and Literature***

With these differences established, it becomes evident that, inasmuch as he considers the political and literary examples of foreign nations and, in certain cases, regards them with the highest esteem, his approach to literature and language takes into account the nuances of the Italian situation and his attempts to solve Italy’s linguistic and literary problems are informed by what he feels would best suit Italy’s unique situation. This acute awareness of Italy’s idiosyncratic elements also dictates his understanding of the dynamics between language and literature and how this relationship factors into the *questione della lingua*. But before proceeding to assess Bonghi’s

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>45</sup> To clarify, Bonghi uses this a general framework to understand the trend in prose during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. He does not include the works of nineteenth-century authors in this passage as he goes on to discuss the literary merit of Leopardi and Manzoni’s prose at length in his later letters.

<sup>46</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 166.

proposed methods of incorporating literary elements in his approach to promulgating a standardized Italian, it is necessary to first understand his ideas regarding the relationship between language and literature, how both elements could be bettered simultaneously, and how the debate on linguistic selection applies as much to the written medium as it does to the spoken one.

Perhaps the simplest means of understanding the philosophical dynamics of language and literature is to consider Bonghi's proposal of language as an "instrument" of "art".<sup>47</sup> If one is to continue with the metaphor of music from the allegory of Manzoni's choir, language is an instrument in which the dexterity and proficiency of the metaphorical musician can be continuously perfected to ameliorate the various kinds of music performed. If one is to consider spoken and written linguistic mediums as two distinct but related forms of music, it is only natural that the capabilities of the performer elevate the level of each type of music performed. It is with this basic premise that Bonghi approaches the linguistic and literary situation in Italy and posits that both the Italian vernacular and Italian literary standard must be improved simultaneously by means of practising and perfecting each respective "art". In a linguistic sense, the continuum between the spoken and written language forms a cyclical dynamic in which the spoken medium becomes, informs, and influences the lexical and syntactic choices of written literature that, in turn, can both influence and elevate the common vernacular. In a more technical sense, this connectivity is particularly important when one considers the general degree of diachronic stasis that characterizes the linguistic history of the Italian language. As "Italian" had, historically, been used only by a select few writers of poetry and prose, their influence over, as Tullio De Mauro describes, the "strutture fonologiche, morfologiche, lessicali e sintattiche, sulla forma interna della lingua e sulla evoluzione storica" is critical when considering the significance these texts had on the debate

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

surrounding what should constitute a linguistic standard.<sup>48</sup> Contrary to the linguistic trajectory of English in England, French in France, Spanish in Spain – all of which had a cultural and linguistic nucleus and a language that was used in both a spoken and written medium – Italian, when considering the diachronic variations, remained comparatively unchanged.

Yet even if one approaches the linguistic dilemma in Italy with the understanding that there must be a simultaneous approach to addressing both linguistic mediums, the issue of determining what constitutes a desirable linguistic “outcome” remains. Bonghi approaches this philosophical – and, by extension, practical – question by contemplating what constitutes a “beautiful” or “elevated” language and, consequently, a “beautiful” or “elevated” literature. Although a metaphysical understanding of the factors that constitute such abstract concepts will forever be debated, a general framework for what comprises an elevated language or literature is critical when trying to establish either a national linguistic identity or a standardized educational curriculum. Antonio Cesari (1760 – 1828) was one the most prominent figures of the eighteenth and nineteenth century to consider the nuances of such issues as they pertained to establishing a linguistic or literary model and was one of the figures with whose work Bonghi was very familiar. As a linguist, literary critic, and writer – not to mention, an acquaintance of Manzoni with whom he shared a free exchange of ideas pertaining to language and literature – Cesari was a major proponent of the trends in linguistic purism of the nineteenth century and was an advocate for the adoption and adaptation of literary Tuscan from the *trecento* as a model for a literary and linguistic Italian. In his 1809 work *Dissertazione sopra lo stato presente della lingua italiana* – where he argues for linguistic purity and the merit of establishing the Tuscan of the ‘300 as a linguistic and literary standard – Antonio Cesari meditates briefly on a theme that would be an integral part of his

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<sup>48</sup> De Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*, pp. 27-28.

writings on language: “la bellezza di una lingua”.<sup>49</sup> Although Cesari would describe such “bellezza” as something that is felt or heard rather than clearly defined – he describes linguistic beauty as a certain “Non so che” – Bonghi, in the interest of providing a concrete framework for the amelioration of language and literature, takes a much more pragmatic approach and links the *beauty* of a language to the *character* of a language. Bonghi describes “l’indole d’una lingua” as “semplicissimamente quel complesso dei mezzi svariati e numerosissimi, de’ quali quella tal lingua si serve per esprimere così le singole parti come tutto l’intreccio del pensiero” and is something that can be recognized by answering the three following questions:

1. Di che mezzi si serve essa lingua per esprimere il concetto sostantivo ed il verbale, e quelle lor modificazioni che ricorrono più o meno in ogni proposizione?
2. Di che norme usa nella disposizione delle parole che formano le proposizioni?
3. E nelle congiunzioni delle parole che costituiscono il periodo?<sup>50</sup>

In reflecting upon these three questions, one can understand, as Bonghi describes, the organism of a language, the fundamental structures by which a given language operates, and – as stated earlier – the paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures that allow the writer or speaker to convey ideas in the clearest and most accurate manner possible. To emphasize this in the most succinct way, Bonghi writes in the Fourteenth Letter in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* that “L’organismo d’una lingua non lo fanno gli scrittori; lo trovano fatto e se ne servono.”<sup>51</sup> With this premise in mind, it corroborates the metaphor of a writer or speaker as an artist who uses language as an instrument to express and convey the meaning of ideas. Put simply, those whose words reflect most closely the ideas they wish to convey should be lauded; those who are unable to do so should be ignored. As this is of paramount importance to both a written and

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<sup>49</sup> Cesari, Antonio, *Dissertazione sopra lo stato presente della lingua italiana*. Venezia: Girolamo Tasso Ed. Calc. Lit. Lib. E Fond., 1832, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Bonghi. *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 172.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

spoken medium, it is necessary to ensure that a more precise, clear, and accurate language be considered simultaneously when regarding both the Italian vernacular and Italian writings.

Notwithstanding that Bonghi would further elaborate on the beauty of language when considering the elements comprising literary and linguistic “style”, this initial premise of language as a reflection of ideas does not necessarily take into consideration the linguistic variation that was present in Italy during this time. As mentioned above, the most commonly cited percentage of Italian speakers in Italy is approximately 2.5% of the population and, as Tullio De Mauro outlines in his *Storia linguistica dell’Italia unita*, around the period of Italian unification in 1861, there were approximately 400,000 people in Tuscany, 70,000 in Rome, and 160,000 in other regions of Italy that could speak a common language of Italian.<sup>52</sup> With such extensive linguistic diversity in Italy, the debate surrounding which “Italian” to choose as a literary model is as important a question in the nineteenth century as it was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Moreover, with the spoken and written language as mediums in need of simultaneous educational attention, the debate to adopt contemporary Florentine as the linguistic foundation upon which to build and promulgate the Italian language becomes as critical in defining an optimal literature as in creating a linguistically connected political state.

If literary style can be set aside temporarily, it is important to consider the linguistic variations in early nineteenth-century Italian prose and analyze the prominence of Florentine in the literary context in which Bonghi was writing his letters to Celestino Bianchi. Unlike the most prominent authors in England, Scotland, and Ireland who each had a strong tradition of prose leading into the nineteenth century, Italy’s greatest literary talents turned to the Anglophone

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<sup>52</sup> De Mauro, Tullio. *Storia linguistica dell’Italia unita*, p. 43. See Chapter 2 for more information on literacy rates and how statistics on those that could read and write, those could only read, and those that could neither read nor write impacted approach to education and the composition of curricula.

literary tradition for a model when writing. While works such as Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* and *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* and Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* provided authors like Foscolo and Manzoni with not only a literary model but material to translate for literate Italians, the linguistic model – especially for works of fictional prose – was sorely lacking.<sup>53</sup> Without one underlying linguistic identity, it is important to note linguistic nuances that separate the writings of Antonio Cesari from – to name a few – Alessandro Manzoni, Niccolò Tommaseo, Tommaso Grossi, Cesare Cantù, Giulio Carcano, or Massimo d'Azeglio. Even if one is to – for the sake of brevity – set aside the monumental importance of the linguistic evolution of Manzoni's magnum opus and the heavy influence of Manzoni's native Lombard dialect on *Fermo e Lucia* and – albeit to a lesser extent – the 1827 rewrite of *I Promessi Sposi*, there is still a stark contrast in the way each of these authors instrumentalizes their idea of a Tuscan “standard” and is informed by their respective linguistic identities. Although Antonio Cesari's works should be noted more for their lexical selections as opposed to grammatical or stylistic innovations, his insistence on linguistic purism and adapting the literary language from when “Tutti in quel benedetto tempo del 1300 parlavano e scrivevano bene” informs and dictates the linguistic nature of his writing.<sup>54</sup> Tommaseo's literary contributions provide a similarly nuanced representation of a literary Tuscan in the way in which “Il Dalmato” was able to blend more traditional examples of linguistic purism with a push for an elevated

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<sup>53</sup> Ugo Foscolo began translating Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* in 1805, completed his translation in 1812-1813 after his return to Florence, and published it in 1813 with the title *Viaggio sentimentale di Yorick lungo la Francia e l'Italia*. It is interesting to note that his translation reflects a recurring theme in Italian textual translations. In much the same way that Bonghi meditated on how best to capture and convey the beauty and elegance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, or *Richard III* in Italian, Foscolo too wrestled with the idea of balancing the essence of the English language with a blend of Tuscan from the '300 and contemporary period.

<sup>54</sup> Cesari, *Dissertazione sopra lo stato presente della lingua italiana*, p. 9. He describes the Florentine of the fourteenth century as possessing unparalleled “grazia, purità, gentilezza, e proprietà”.

Florentine *lingua dell'uso*.<sup>55</sup> In his *Testamento Letterario* published in 1852, Tommaseo recalls his youth and states “ben presto riconobbi che la Toscana è la fonte della lingua più efficace, e più degna d’essere italiana, e più italiana nel fatto.”<sup>56</sup> The emphasis on adopting a form of Florentine continued to be seen in the works of Grossi, Cantù, Carcano – who were Lombards – and d’Azeglio – who, although Piedmontese, married Manzoni’s eldest daughter, Giulia Manzoni, and spent significant time with Milan’s social and literary elite. Although works such as *Marco Visconti* (1834), *Margherita Pusterla* (1838), *Angiola Maria* (1839) were – to varying degrees – influenced by the Lombard dialect that informed the linguistic choices of the three authors, the intent to adhere to Manzoni’s proposal for linguistic homogeneity is present.

With this literary context established, it is no surprise that Bonghi advocated for the use of Florentine as a standard language. Perhaps the most succinct summation of his stance regarding which “Italian” to adopt as a standardized language is seen in his 1873 letter to Carlo Landriani in which he writes:

Quale città poi deva servire di centro per questa fine, è determinato da cause storiche le quali basta riconoscere nel loro effetto, quantunque contribuiscano a produrlo in modi assai diversi, e possano aver fondamento non solo nella storia politica, ma anche nella letteratura d’un paese. Ora, che in Italia questo centro non possa e non deva essere altro che Firenze non pareva dubbio al Manzoni, e non può parere dubbio a nessuno...<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Tommaseo’s contributions to the *questione della lingua* can be considered on two fronts: as a writer who in his 1840 *Fede e Bellezza* put into practice his thoughts on a literary Italian, and as a linguist and lexicographer responsible for the *Dizionario dei Sinonimi* (1830) and the *Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* – otherwise known as the “Tommaseo-Bellini”. Although the linguistic style of *Fede e Bellezza* was criticized by writers like but not limited to Carlo Cattaneo, his contribution to the advancement of Italian lexicography is undeniable. The first parts of the *Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* were initially published shortly after Italy’s Unification in 1861 but it was not until 1879 that the completed dictionary was released. The Tommaseo-Bellini attempted to find an equilibrium between the lexicographical model of the past whilst considering the synchronic and diachronic elements of Italian’s linguistic history. This involved balancing the emphasis on words used in classical Italian texts – as exemplified in the earlier editions of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* – without forgetting the linguistic additions from the technical and scientific sphere and linguistic changes of the spoken vernacular.

<sup>56</sup> Tommaseo, Niccolò. “Il testamento letterario del Tommaseo”, *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*. Jan 1 (1954), 33-69, p. 54.

<sup>57</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 32.

If one is to be reminded of the dialogue with Manzoni from Bonghi's diary, Bonghi's letter elaborates upon the reconciliation necessary for privileging one particular vernacular without diminishing the value or importance of all other vernaculars. In this sense, while all Italian vernaculars are a critical feature of Italy's regional and national identity – and when one language must be selected and applied for political and bureaucratic reasons – it is natural to consider historical political, cultural, and literary factors. Although the first two reasons appear less convincing when one bears in mind – despite Florence's prominence as the cultural and commercial epicentre of the Renaissance – the importance of Venice as a port city and the significance of the Venetian vernacular in trade, and the economic rise and strength of Piedmont and Lombardy, the presence of a strong written tradition features greatly when selecting a language. When considering literary factors, it is again important to be reminded of its interconnected relationship with the spoken language and the ways in which the influence of written text “è molteplice”.<sup>58</sup> The first means by which written text informs a language comes as a result of literary innovation and linguistic creativity. In this sense, a writer can, through a written medium, influence a language by either consolidating established conventions or creating new linguistic paradigms. These conventions or changes are then consolidated through technical texts, such as dictionaries or *vocabolari*, that provide a basis for understanding phonology, syntax, and pragmatic and semantic meaning that serves to reduce linguistic uncertainties and variations within a group of speakers. Through these two models, the spoken language, in turn, reflects these changes which consequently inform, again, the writer's linguistic choices. About this, Bonghi writes:

Qui gli scrittori hanno una prima influenza; poichè le pronuncie ch'essi riproducono, e le forme grammaticali ch'essi prescelgono, come quelle che sono

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

più sicuramente attestate, hanno valore di prova ed autorità d'esempio. Pure, come non s'accordano sempre nè in tutto, nasce una scienza lessicografica e grammaticale, che, con criteri più o meno buoni e certi, e con maggiore o minore successo, determina pronuncia e scrittura delle parole, e ferma le regole dello scrivere grammaticalmente corretto.<sup>59</sup>

With such a profound abundance of both creative literary examples and technical examples in Florentine in the Italian tradition, the decision to privilege Florentine as the basis of the Italian language is as natural a decision to Bonghi as it was to other non-native Florentine speakers like Manzoni, Grossi, Tommaseo, or D'Azeglio. However, this does not mean this argument was met without opposition. In the same letter to Carlo Landriani, he cites a common criticism that the intellectual and literary life in Florence had long since subsided in favour of more flourishing centres of literary production such as Milan and quotes a general proclamation made by those opposing the promulgation of Florentine: “– Ma Firenze è appunto la città d'Italia in cui oggi la vita intellettuale è minore –”.<sup>60</sup> Bonghi is quick to express his doubt concerning the accuracy of this statement – “Qui, bisogna da prima dubitare se la sentenza è vera...” – and provides several rebuttals to counter the potentially problematic indictment of both the literacy rate and the state of intellectual life in Florence.<sup>61</sup> Although the original statement is a more speculative, anecdotal argument based primarily on Florence's general decline as Italy's cultural nucleus, it is important to note that there was indeed a degree of truth to the criticism of the state of Florence's literary and academic life that could be quantified by the data collected through a national census. According to the 1871 census reports, the illiteracy rate in Tuscany was only marginally better than the Italian average and trailed virtually every region in northern Italy. Even if one were to set aside the illiteracy rates in Piedmont and Lombardy – which, as stated above, had the lowest levels in Italy

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

with 42.3 and 45.2 illiterates per 100 inhabitants – Tuscany, at 68.1 illiterates per 100 inhabitants, had a higher level of illiteracy than Liguria (56.3), Veneto (64.7), and Lazio (67.7), and was only slightly better than Italy’s national average of 68.8.<sup>62</sup> When both Manzoni and Bonghi’s premise of linguistic unity revolves around the promulgation of a Florentine *dell’uso*, both the discrepancy in literacy rates when compared to northern regions and the general shift to Milan as the literary nucleus of Italy posed a potential problem to the argumentative rigour of their proposal.<sup>63</sup>

To address this problem, Bonghi focuses his attention on how diastatic factors should be considered when determining which “uso” to adopt as the national linguistic standard and how the appropriate selection of a spoken medium can circumvent – or even be simplified by – the previously cited problems. He writes:

Del rimanente, non hanno che fare qui; e l’uso del quale ci parla il Manzoni, è quello delle persone colte e pulite, non perchè sono colte e pulite, ma perchè appartengono, in genere, ad una classe nella quale l’esperienza della vita è ricca, le fonti degli affetti, gli stimoli degl’interessi son molti, le osservazioni dei sentimenti, delle idee sono naturalmente frequentissime, e, quindi, le occasioni al parlare sono molteplici e varie.<sup>64</sup>

The choice to select a Florentine *dell’uso* from a particular linguistic stratum – an educated stratum that provides the most comprehensive lexical selection to account for the most expansive range of ideas and experiences – provides a solution to several of the problems encountered when determining which language to use as a linguistic or literary basis. Firstly, such a focused approach

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<sup>62</sup> Clark, *Modern Italy 1871 to the Present*, p. 43.

<sup>63</sup> To be clear, Florence remained an important city in regards to intellectual, literary, and political discourse in Italy. From both a political and literary perspective, Florence – and Tuscany as a whole – contained some of the most important and influential salons in Italy including those hosted by Emilia Peruzzi with her “Salotto rosso”, Luisa di Stolberg-Gedern or *La contessa d’Albany*, Fanny Targioni Tozzetti, and Amelia Sarteschi Calani Carletti. From a strictly political perspective, the political and journalistic activity in Florence contributed significantly to the Italian Unification with the Florentine contingent of the Historical Right – as seen with the political activity of Bettino Ricasoli and Ubaldino Peruzzi – forming an undeniably integral part of Cavour’s party. Even if the most flourishing city in Italy during the nineteenth century for literary production was Milan, Florence continued to play a monumentally important role in the development of academic, political, and literary thought.

<sup>64</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 35.

limits significantly – even considering variations within a city – the linguistic heterogeneity that potentially hinders the uniformity of a desired linguistic standard and makes linguistic selection more difficult. When the variance for lexical discrepancies is limited as much as possible, Manzoni’s use of both practical lexicography and theoretical lexicography to put together a *vocabolario* whilst remaining true to his ideas for linguistic *purismo* becomes a straightforward, albeit time-intensive, endeavour. Secondly, this selection also circumvents the issue of illiteracy as the language of that particular stratum of speakers would be used to simply enhance and expand upon the lexical offerings of the *uso* “colto” to complete the totality of the language. In fact, Bonghi highlights the importance of integrating and incorporating elements of the other Florentine strata: “Non è già che il popolo, quando per questa parola s’intende la *plebe*, non eserciti anch’esso un ufficio di primaria importanza e non fornisca al tesoro comune le più schiette e lucenti delle sue monete. Ma non è il solo a farlo; e a questa totalità d’uso concorre, per vero dire, la totalità della cittadinanza.”<sup>65</sup>

At this point in the letter, Bonghi recalls the dialogue with Rosmini and Manzoni that he had transcribed into his diary some twenty years prior regarding loanwords and linguistic borrowings. Although the text is brief, Bonghi incorporates these ideas to argue that linguistic purism cannot and should not entail a linguistic rigidity that limits the language or stunts its ability to, as he describes in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, convey the ideas of the speaker or writer as clearly, succinctly, and accurately as possible. Moreover, he argues that this approach does not, in any way, contradict the argument for linguistic homogeneity and affirms that situations requiring the invention or adoption of locutions – words or phrases that are necessary in accounting for the expansion of the Italian experience – are very few and thus would

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

not significantly impact the state of the “general linguistic body”.<sup>66</sup> This approach can be as pertinent to the establishment and development of a written standard as it is to the widespread adoption of a spoken standard. Although there will naturally be diamesic variations present in the medium through which the individual communicates, the basis of an educated Florentine *dell’uso* is the basis upon which a national Italian must be based.

Inasmuch as Bonghi goes on to explore the technical nuances of the interpretation and composition of literature and how language can and should be instrumentalized in a national literary context, it is more fruitful to examine his thoughts on precisely how literature features in the *questione della lingua* in the context of education and educational policy. While there is indeed some merit to the literary criticism found in the letters of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, when read in the larger context of Bonghi’s oeuvre, the stylistic and linguistic analysis present in those letters provide far greater insight into his thoughts on instruction, education, and policy – themes that will be explored fully in Chapter 3. However, in the general context of language, literature, and society in Italy, an exploration of the aforementioned themes and ideas provides fundamental insight into Bonghi’s approach to the *questione della lingua* and how his ideas inform his actions throughout his career. Put simply, his diary and his early personal and published writings provide a critical understanding of Bonghi’s vision for – considering all the sociolinguistic variables that had long been debated – what should comprise the Italian linguistic standard. In regards to diachronic and diaphasic variations, Bonghi affirms that literature of the past cannot be the basis of a spoken or written language and that the Italian standard must derive from a contemporary vernacular. With such extensive diatopic variation in Italy, based on historical political, cultural, and literary considerations, a contemporary Florentine vernacular

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

must be considered as the national linguistic model. Finally, in considering diastratic variation, a contemporary Florentine vernacular of an educated, erudite, and culturally experienced class offers both the most lexically complete vernacular and the most conducive to adapting as the written “instrument” of “art”. While his arguments at this stage of his career are predominantly theoretical, the potential for practical implementation remains at the very core of his thoughts, his words, and his writings.

## Chapter 3

### *“Dell’unità della lingua...”*: Literary Criticism, Dictionaries, and the Promulgation of an Italian Standard

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The political unification of Italy in 1861 created a need to establish linguistic unity in order to facilitate the operation of a national system of government, the development of a centralized system of education, and, ultimately, the formation of a unifying social and cultural identity. With a demand for Italy’s educated and political elite to consider all potential practical measures that could be instituted in order to achieve a widespread sense of linguistic unity, Ruggero Bonghi, among others, began – even before unification – considering the best and most efficient means of promulgating a standardized spoken and written Italian to a larger, national community. As the most prominent members of Italy’s educated class devoted themselves to addressing one of the most critical and fundamental issues that would inhibit the civic development of “Italians”, there arose, perhaps more than any other period in Italian history, a need for political facilitators with both an understanding of language and philology, and a nuanced perspective on how linguistic theory could be applied to achieve and maximize practical results. Writers, linguists, and philologists became increasingly regarded as not only critics of spoken or written linguistic mediums but architects of a comprehensive system of linguistic diffusion. Literary criticism was not merely a means of literary enquiry for a more limited pedagogical purpose but an integral component of assessing, composing, and implementing centralized curricula for a widespread or national educational culture. Most importantly, those, like Bonghi, who were able to operate as writers, literary critics, and political facilitators became increasingly important affiliates of

political parties seeking comprehensive expertise.<sup>1</sup> Bonghi, who made his career not only as a journalist but as one who worked closely with the Historical Right, benefitted greatly from his astute understanding of Italy's linguistic issues and his progressive thoughts and actions concerning the measures that could be taken in order to address these problems. A close analysis of even Bonghi's earlier published works indicates a foresightedness that serves as a testament to the comprehensive and nuanced approach to solving the *questione della lingua* in the nineteenth century and foreshadows a lengthy and successful career as a civil servant.

If one were to consider the period in Bonghi's life from the mid 1850s until the mid 1860s and the works written and published during this time, one can see a rapid evolution in his approach to addressing the linguistic issues in Italy. It is precisely this transition from abstract theory to pragmatic practices that shows a method that considers the solutions to the language debate on two distinct levels: firstly, by addressing the linguistic divide by considering the most efficient means of promulgating Florentine as the accepted form of standardized Italian and, secondly, by enacting educational reform at the primary, secondary, and university level. Although there is a great degree of thematic – and chronological – overlap with these two connected but distinct forms of solving Italy's linguistic problems, it is important to consider these issues separately as each involves fundamentally different factors, methods, and levels of governmental jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup> As far as

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<sup>1</sup> Naturally, Bonghi was not the only writer, journalist, or literary critic to serve either as a minister of a particular party or as a senator of the Senate of the Kingdom of Italy. Prominent literary critic Francesco De Sanctis is one of the most notable examples of writers, thinkers, or critics to serve as Minister of Public Education. He did so several times: under Cavour from March 17 1861 to June 12 1861, under Bettino Ricasoli from June 12 1861 to March 3 1862, under Benedetto Cairoli from March 24 1878 to December 19 1878 and from November 25 1879 to May 29 1881. It is also important to note that he served under Prime Ministers belonging to both the Historical Right – Cavour, Ricasoli – and the Historical Left – Cairoli. He was also a longstanding member of the *Camera dei Deputati*. Giosuè Carducci is another author who served as a member of the *Camera dei Deputati*.

<sup>2</sup> Although Bonghi begins writing various short works and articles on his ideas concerning educational reform and the ways in which primary, secondary, and post-secondary studies could be restructured for the better, it would not be until later in his life that these works are published. Considering these writings address a fundamentally different aspect of the *questione della lingua* than the elements listed above, Bonghi's engagement with policy and education

political policy is concerned, both Bonghi's earlier published writings and his involvement in the 1868 Commission by Minister of Public Education, Emilio Broglio, are fundamental in understanding the development of the Neapolitan's more practical approach to the *questione della lingua*.<sup>3</sup>

It is in this capacity that *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* is such an important work in the Bonghian canon. While certain elements of his sixteen letters to Celestino Bianchi were explored in Chapter 1, those points were largely general, abstract arguments that served to contextualize Bonghi's stance on Florentine as a national standard and the relationship between language in literature in the context of the *questione della lingua*. Although these points form the very core of Bonghi's arguments, the fundamental premise does more to reiterate Manzoni's linguistic ideals than it does to demonstrate Bonghi's more innovative ideas on Italy's linguistic situation. While this certainly did not mean a blind adherence to Manzoni's vision for the means through which Italy could be united linguistically – Bonghi was not one to simply accept the stance of another, even one for whom he held profound admiration and respect, without thorough critical examination – many of the elements discussed in the previous chapter were abstract arguments that had, since Stresa, been discussed by and with the Milanese author.<sup>4</sup> Rather,

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– as it pertains to government – will be discussed fully in the following chapter as an introduction to his initiatives as Minister of Public Education.

<sup>3</sup> Emilio Broglio (Milan 1814 – Rome 1892) was Minister of Public Education from November 18 1867 to May 13 1869 under Luigi Federico Menebrea of the Historical Right. He studied jurisprudence at the University of Pavia, graduating in 1835. He participated in the 1848 *Cinque giornate* insurrection in Milan before devoting himself to politics, moving to Turin, and working as a member of parliament in the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sardinia. As a long-serving member of the Historical Right, he served not only as Minister of Public Education under Menebrea but also as Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce from November 29 1867 to October 23 1868.

<sup>4</sup> Setting aside his disputes with figures like Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII, it is perhaps his relationship with Emilia and Ubaldino Peruzzi that best demonstrates how Bonghi's tenacity lead to differences of opinion that resulted in the end of long-term friendships. Despite the very close relationship he had with both Emilia and Ubaldino that spanned the better part of twenty years, an analysis of the Emilia Peruzzi and Ubaldino Peruzzi Carteggio at the BNCF indicates a souring of the relationship as a result of what appears to be disagreements pertaining to differing ideals and approaches to the political situation and the direction of the Historical Right. See Bonghi, Ruggero. Letters to Ubaldino Peruzzi. 1861-1877. Cassetta VIII, 22-23. *Carteggio Ubaldino Peruzzi*. Sala

it is the way in which Bonghi uses literary criticism as a means of, albeit implicitly, constructing a curriculum for future Italians and the way in which he reimagines the role of a literary critic in a linguistically developing society that makes *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* an important and innovative work of literary criticism. Moreover, the arguments posited in his critical letters and his increasingly pragmatic approach to improving the linguistic situation in Italy provide the necessary context when considering his involvement in larger political initiatives prior to his tenure as Minister of Public Education. Thus, the second part of the chapter will consider, in light of Bonghi's history with Manzoni and his growing reputation as an effective leader and political or bureaucratic administrator, the 1868 Broglio Commission and its significance as not only Bonghi's first major foray in the political implementations of linguistic theory but as a crucial event in the chronology of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*.

### ***The Problem with Literature and the Constructive Role of Literary Criticism***

In Chapter 2, the passages cited from *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* consider the relationship between language and literature in relatively abstract terms and did not consider if, how, or in what capacity literature – or the study of literature – could be incorporated as one aspect of improving the linguistic and literary competencies of Italians. In this sense, although the collection of letters serves as an example of literary criticism, when read in conjunction with Bonghi's other writings and interpreted alongside the general political context in

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Manoscritti at the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze and Bonghi, Ruggero. Letters to Emilia Peruzzi. 1859-1886. Cassetta VIII, 2-18. *Carteggio Emilia Peruzzi*. Sala Manoscritti at the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze.

which Bonghi operated for much of his life, his message becomes more considerable when seen as a framework for how literature could and should be used in a culture of – as he hoped – increasingly literate people. As such, when Bonghi reflects upon the quality and readability of works of prose in the Italian canon, he does so with a mass audience in mind: a mass audience that includes the newly literate, non-native Florentine speakers, and women. With a wider readership in mind, he begins to unpack and explore the problems with literature and readership in Italy.

To begin with the simplest and most straightforward premise, Bonghi questions whether literature should or could be used as a means of not only diffusing a Florentine standard but also imbuing Italian society with a universal or standardized language. His answer, quite simply, is that it could not. In his fourth letter in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* dated April 10 1855, he outlines a series of arguments for how the composition and interpretation of literature prevents it from being a feasible method of resolving the *questione della lingua*. Even if one were to set aside the complexities of any approach to linguistic unity, a universal language based on literature must, consequently, require a consensus on *which* literature is selected. Herein lies the first problem: inasmuch as there are conflicting opinions on which vernacular the Italian standard should be based, there are even greater divisions on what constitutes good literature which arise as a result of a difference of opinion regarding both literary style and linguistic style.<sup>5</sup> As any given work of literature can be critiqued based on – content aside – a composition style that includes an assessment of both syntax and semantics, variations in critical opinion of these factors further complicates the already complex issue of linguistic unity. Bonghi states:

Voglio dire, per esprimermi meglio, che per il vuoto della letteratura nostra, la divisione è cagionata principalmente da diverse opinioni sulla lingua e sullo stile,

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<sup>5</sup> To clarify what Bonghi means by style, in the tenth letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, Bonghi summarizes: “Dicevo che lo stile è la vita del pensiero espressa colla parola.” Bonghi, *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 122.

tutte privissime di senso comune, e fondate sopra criterii gretti ed arbitrarii... Riguardo allo stile la confusione è maggiore, non ci essendo dieci scrittori italiani che mostrino d'averne concetto chiaro, e che lo distinguano nettamente dalla lingua.<sup>6</sup>

Although this concept is discussed extensively in the following letters and will be analyzed in further detail in the context of Bonghi's critical analysis of works from the *Trecento*, *Cinquecento*, and *Ottocento*, the inherent subjectivity of these factors adds an additional layer of variation that prevents an efficient acceptance of one particular standard. Moreover, these questions regarding an acceptable standard with regards to stylistic composition and linguistic selection must also be considered for each of the three most significant periods of Italian literature. He emphasizes this notion by mentioning the critical variance in privileging different periods of literary Italian:

Chi vuole che la lingua deve essere del trecento, e chi gli par di fare, anche così, una concessione, perchè i puri davvero volevano che dovesse essere quella di tre autori soli; chi, invece, si distende fino al cinquecento; chi grida che è pedanteria tutto, e che le parole son buone se chi le scrive l'intende, quand'anche chi le legge, non le intendesse.<sup>7</sup>

With this in mind, there would be the need to select a point in literary history that could inform language, a need to determine a linguistic standard from the selected time period on which to base language and literature, as well as a need to consolidate a stylistic standard on which to base writings meant for the literary consumption of a national audience. With such discrepancies with the critical opinion of each individual factor, the argument for a literary linguistic basis becomes less tenable.

Once the overarching problem of critical variation is addressed, a closer analysis of the texts that comprise the Italian literary canon demonstrates another issue that impedes the feasibility

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

of using literature as a means of mass linguistic education. With this in mind, it is important to consider, as Bonghi describes, the historically exclusive demographic to whom most works of Italian prose were directed as well as the general public reception to those works in Italy. As Bonghi describes in the first letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* dated March 9 1855, “I nostri libri, dunque, privati dalle altre letterature del più gran numero de’ lettori, restano quasi circoscritti tra quelli che fanno professione di lettere, e che leggono per scrivere, a fine di esser letti da altri come loro.”<sup>8</sup> From the opening letter to Celestino Bianchi, Bonghi demonstrates an acute vision of the demographic he intends to address with his approach to literary or linguistic reform. Instead of merely addressing literature in and of itself, his critical approach to works of Italian prose not only reflects the conventional method of evaluating a work’s language, style, and content, but also incorporates the way in which any given work can be received by a wider audience. It is precisely in this capacity that the letters of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* consider the mutual relationship of the writer and the audience and the ability of a text to engage, inform, and instruct a collective audience of diverse readers – men and women, northerners and southerners, common people and intellectual elite alike – to the same extent that an audience must be able to – with an improved system of education – receive, understand, and appreciate the written works. In the second letter dated March 23 1855, he states the interconnectedness of writers and readers, and reflects upon the relationship in Italy: “Di certo una ragione che di questo gran danno, di cui si accagionano gli uni gli altri, lettori che non vogliono leggere, e autori che non si fanno leggere, gli scolpa tutti, e’ c’è, e ognuno la sente.”<sup>9</sup> The divide between readers and writers that Bonghi mentions is something that he notes is not as pronounced in countries like England, Germany, or France. Although much of this can be attributed to the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

discrepancy in the degree to which the literary language was spoken and understood by common people and the historical considerations that affect the formation of a national literature, as seen in the previous chapter, Bonghi did not believe these factors were entirely the root cause of the problem.<sup>10</sup> While one might indeed be reluctant to set aside such considerable factors, it is important to note that Manzoni had similar concerns regarding the mutual dynamics between readers and writers in Italy during the nineteenth century. Both Giuseppe Polimeni in his introduction to *Il Troppo e il Vano* and Franco Gavazzeni in his introduction to the critical edition of Manzoni's *Inni Sacri* cite Manzoni's letter to Claude Fauriel dated February 9 1806 and highlight the importance of Manzoni's stance on the state of literature in Italy and the reception of literature by Italians.

Per nostra sventura, lo stato dell'Italia divisa in frammenti, la pigrizia e l'ignoranza quasi generale hanno posta tanta distanza tra la lingua parlata e la scritta, che questa può dirsi quasi lingua morta. Ed è per ciò che gli Scrittori non possono produrre l'effetto che eglino (m'intendo i buoni) si propongono, d'erudire cioè la moltitudine, di farla invaghire del bello e dell'utile, e di rendere in questo modo le cose un po' più come dovrebbero essere.<sup>11</sup>

Manzoni's interpretation of the distinct divide between the language of written works in Italian and the vernacular of the people in Italy is to be expected considering his insistence on the promulgation of a *lingua dell'uso* as a national linguistic standard and his attempts to rewrite – and in certain cases, “translate” – *I promessi sposi* to reflect the contemporary spoken Florentine.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 1, n. 30 for Bonghi's argument that, linguistic factors aside, Italians still read fewer Italian works than other nations do their respective literatures.

<sup>11</sup> *Carteggio Alessandro Manzoni Claude Fauriel*, vol. 27, edited by Irene Botta, Milano: Edizione Nazionale ed Europea delle Opere di Alessandro Manzoni, 2000, p. 5. This passage is also cited in Polimeni, Giuseppe. *Il Troppo e il Vano: Percorsi di formazione linguistica nel secondo Ottocento*. Firenze: Franco Cesati Editore, 2014, p. 9; and Manzoni, *Inni Sacri*, edited by Franco Gavazzeni, Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo/ Ugo Guanda Editore, 2013, IX.

<sup>12</sup> When Manzoni was reworking *Fermo e Lucia* into *Gli sposi promessi*, he used Francesco Cherubini's 1814 *Vocabolario Milanese-Italiano* as a means of translating certain locutions from his native Milanese to Florentine (see Chapter 2 Footnote 26). In an 1877 letter to Professor Riccardo Folli, Bonghi comments on Manzoni's use of the *Vocabolario* and the writer's deep admiration for Francesco Cherubini: “V'ha di certo un lavoro del Manzoni che resta: il Dizionario milanese tutto postillato da lui. Gli piaceva osservare, e far notare altrui, che il Cherubini

It is, however, a perspective very much shared by Bonghi whose assessment of the situation – and whose inclination to compare the situation to the literary culture in France – demonstrates a wholehearted embrace of the Milanese author’s stance. In the same letter from Manzoni to Fauriel, Manzoni writes:

Vi confesso ch'io veggo con un piacere misto d'invidia il popolo di Parigi intendere ed applaudire alle commedie di Moliere. Ma dovendo gli Scrittori Italiani assolutamente disperare di un effetto immediato, il Parini non ha fatto che perfezionare di più l'intelletto e il gusto di quei pochi che lo leggono e l'intendono; fra i quali non v'è alcuno di quelli ch'egli s'è proposto di correggere...<sup>13</sup>

Both Polimeni and Gavazzeni are clear in highlighting Manzoni’s emphasis on “erudire” the “multitudine” which involved, as Gavazzeni points out, a need to separate the linguistically anachronistic characteristics of Italian literature, and, as Polimeni discusses, a need to appeal to a social collective by means of a universally accessible language.<sup>14</sup> Bonghi shares a similar sentiment in the sixteenth and final letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* in which he contrasts the success of French comic theatre in France with the success of Italian comic theatre in Italy.<sup>15</sup> Although he argues that the liveliness and ingenuity of Italian comedies is not lacking, the lack of overall quality and public appeal lies in an inability to capture

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s’era presa la più gran pena del mondo per combinare, di capo suo, o ritrovare locuzioni italiane corrispondenti alle milanesi; ma ci correva, per lo più, tra le une e le altre questa differenza; che le prime si leggevano soltanto nel suo Dizionario e non erano conosciute da nessuno, né in Milano, né altrove, dove le seconde, almeno a Milano, erano amiche di casa di tutti. Il Manzoni annota in margine le fiorentine ch’era stato in grado di accertare.” Giovanni Sforza, “Alessandro Manzoni e il Vocabolario milanese-italiano di Francesco Cherubini” republished in *Annali Manzoniani*, terza serie, n. 1, 2018, p. 161.

<sup>13</sup> *Carteggio Alessandro Manzoni Claude Fauriel*, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Polimeni, *Il Troppo e il Vano*, pp. 9-10. Gavazzeni, *Inni Sacri*, p. X.

<sup>15</sup> It was not uncommon for Italian writers, thinkers, and linguists to compare and contrast the state of Italian theatre to the state of French theatre in the nineteenth century. Prominent Italian writer Arrigo Boito – who, as a librettist for, most notably, Giuseppe Verdi, was aware of the nuances involved in capturing the style and tone of spoken Italian in art – argues a similar point in his “Rivista Drammatica” published in 1866 in Milan’s *Il Politecnico*. He notes: “Volendo comparare le condizioni del teatro francese alle condizioni del teatro italiano, il *parium comparatio* di Cicerone non sarebbe veramente da citarsi, giacché le disparità del paragone non potrebbero essere maggiori, essendoci da un lato tutte le fortune, dall’altro lato tutte le sciagure.” As with Manzoni and Bonghi, he too attributes the disparate qualities and successes of the two theatrical counterparts to the, as far as national literature is concerned, the lack of brilliance in theatrical works that adopted a “lingua non parlata” over a “dialetto parlato”. Verdi, “Rivista Drammatica”. *Il Politecnico*. Serie 4, Vol. 1 (1866), 635-646, p. 635.

those elements in the play's linguistic or dialogic composition. By contrast, French comedy, whose ingenuity is not greater than its Italian counterpart, manages success in linguistic dexterity that appeals to the audience. He writes:

I francesi, che in questo anche a noi paiono d'esser tanto più ricchi di noi, non hanno nè più brio nè maggior vena comica di noi. Anzi, la lor vena comica da un pezzo in qua è poverissima, ed ora è come esaurita. Pure quella continua vivacità e proprietà del dialogo copre la miseria della commedia.<sup>16</sup>

Inasmuch as French comedy is able to conceal its shortcomings with a linguistic styling that resonates with its audience, Bonghi argues that, as a result of the country's linguistic history, a literary Italian – an elevated “lingua bella” – is significantly less capable of capturing the natural qualities of speech that are a necessary component of a literature that engages its general public.<sup>17</sup> Although this argument is most pertinent with theatre – especially comic theatre – he feels the validity of the arguments remains true with all forms of literature.

With all arguments considered, Bonghi's underlying premise is a call for erudite Italians – literary critics, writers, etc. – to act as facilitators to provide a constructive form of literary criticism whose ultimate purpose is to improve the level of writing in Italy, increase the level of accessibility

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<sup>16</sup> Bonghi. *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 217.

<sup>17</sup> Although Bonghi's indictment of the state of language in Italian theatre is largely applied to the Italian theatrical tradition as a whole, the significance of Machiavelli's writings – both works of theatre and prose – occupy an interesting place in Bonghi's framework of literary criticism. On one hand, in his twelfth letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare*, Bonghi writes, “Del Machiavelli io credo che si deva dire come qualcheduno ha detto del Dante: se uno sente di preferire la prosa di altri nostri scrittori a quella del Machiavelli, ha un criterio certo per giudicare sé medesimo un uomo mediocre, di gusto non sano, e d'animo piccino.” On the other hand, after outlining his criticisms of Machiavelli's stylistic choices, Bonghi comes to the conclusion that “Questi difetti del Machiavelli producono l'effetto solito: una stanchezza in chi legge.” Bonghi. *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, pp. 145, 151. While this argument applies to Machiavelli's prose, despite how Bonghi considers Machiavelli's theatrical works to be of a higher standard than other works such as Bernardo Dovizi's *La Calandria* – “la lingua è in genere buona; ma lo stile è cattivo” – Lasca's *La Pinzochera* – “ridonda di locuzioni, che non son più vive, e più non s'intendono” – or Aretino's *Il Marescalco* – “è scritta mirabilmente male, in qualunque modo s'intenda lo scriver male” – Bonghi discounts the importance of theatre in the promulgation or betterment of a language. Of theatre, he writes, “Ora, io non so che a teatro si vada ad apprendere la lingua; nè credo, che, chi vi andasse per questo, vi riuscirebbe, certo, si seccerebbe. A teatro si ama sentir parlare la gente in una lingua che si sa prima d'andarvi.” “Le nostre commedie del secolo XVI e un dramma francese del XIX”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 91 (1887), pp. 209-224. p. 210.

of Italian works of literature, and intellectually and linguistically engage a mass audience of Italians. In much the same way that he argues for a literary criticism that considers a mass populace as the intended audience of literature, so too do literary critics need to change the way in which they operate. In the fourth letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, Bonghi provides an extensive account of his views concerning how literary criticism and literary critics contribute to the development of literature and how both can be reformed to improve not only the literary situation but also the linguistic and educational situation in Italy.

Ora ti dirò, che questa molteplicità di gusti disparati e cozzanti tra' letterati, ha impedito che sorgesse in Italia una critica comparabile a quella dei Francesi, degl'Inglese e Tedeschi. In primo luogo è stata arrestata troppo la nostra critica sulle questioni di forma; e per essere queste mal formulate e peggio sciolte, ci ha fatto poco o nessun progresso; ed è rimasta, perfino in quel giro in cui s'è rinchiusa, fiacca ed incompiuta. Il sapere che si discorreva d'un libro che non era letto da molti, e tra que' pochi diversissimamente giudicato per ragioni futili, ha, se posso dire poeticamente una cosa punto poetica, tarpate le ali alla critica. Come poi le divisioni de' letterati hanno diminuito il valor della critica, così lo scredito di questa ha diminuito il numero de' lettori.<sup>18</sup>

Considering the situation, Bonghi argues that a positive and reformed criticism is of the utmost importance for contemporary literature in Italy and is a fundamental component in bridging the gap between those who read and those who write. In essence, literary critics should operate as educators that not only provide an insightful exegetical breakdown of literary works for a mass society of readers – or students – but also as mediaries that convey to the writer a “sentimento della realtà” that connects their message – and linguistic stylings – to the audience for whom they are writing.<sup>19</sup> In addition, literary criticism would, in an idealistic sense, serve as a written testament to the popular reception of a work at a particular point in history, moderate the “frenzy” of unrestrained innovation without impeding artistic progress, and spur on or inspire creative

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<sup>18</sup> Bonghi. *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 70.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

advancement. As literary criticism detaches itself from “questioni grette”, it sets itself up to become an educating force in a society in the process of becoming increasingly literate and educated: “sarà un gran mezzo per produrne migliore la letteratura italiana contemporanea; allargarne l'uso e la stima nel popolo; e rinnovare con criterio e con distinzione, e sotto vedute diversissime dalle attuali, lo studio della nostra letteratura passata.”<sup>20</sup> With an increased importance in the literary dynamics of a nation comes an increased responsibility to educate and prepare oneself for the task at hand. Inasmuch as the authors themselves need to adopt a linguistic style that can appeal to a mass audience, it is imperative that literary critics also write in a style that is highly readable and universally accessible. Moreover, to be proper evaluators of Italian literature, they must also have a sound understanding of, at the bare minimum, Latin and French texts with a familiarity with works in Greek, English, and German. Although Bonghi acknowledges that the reformed role, in the manner that he envisioned it, would be a challenge, he emphasizes the profound impact it could have on the literary and linguistic culture in Italy. Although he neither elaborates on how to execute his strategy of educating and deploying critics, nor indicates the capacity in which they would work – be it as journalists or formal educators – a framework for a restructuring of Italy’s educational systems is beginning to be composed.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>21</sup> To clarify, it is to be determined the capacity in which Bonghi envisioned such literary critics would work. Considering his letter was dated April 10 1855, it is most unlikely that Bonghi understood the financial workings of a governing political party, let alone the knowledge to project how a budget of a national government might look after a political unification at this point in his life. In either case, it is unknown whether Bonghi felt this should be an initiative backed by government funding – as would be argued for funding the education of teachers studying Florentine – or whether he believed that having the literary critics operating as journalists for newspapers, periodicals, or journals would be more financially sustainable. Although the market for newspapers continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, journalists typically belonged to the higher echelons of Italian culture. With this in mind, it is entirely plausible that a partially subsidized education would be Bonghi’s solution for ensuring both proper education whilst also allowing for social mobility for students who, in school, demonstrated an aptitude for reading and writing – again, as would be done for gifted students learning Florentine.

### *Selecting Works and Composing a Curriculum*

Another critical component of the letters that comprise *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* is the analysis of works that *are* read in Italy and an exploration of works that *could* garner a larger readership. In doing so, Bonghi proceeds with the underlying criteria of works of Italian prose that not only possess a high degree of stylistic, linguistic, or thematic merit but also are written in a highly readable and clear style. In this capacity, as he provides a syntactic and semantic analysis of the most prominent works of Italian prose, he does so with the understanding that these works could fulfill several factors: an increased awareness of Italian culture, an increased awareness of the factors that contribute to stylistic and linguistic clarity, and, ultimately, through these factors, a greater sense of national identity. Naturally, in selecting works for potential readers in Italy, there is the hope that such works would be of an exemplary literary standard that, as stated above, are models of stylistic excellence that could be emulated by other writers and better the state of linguistic competencies in Italy. To conclude the second letter of to Celestino Bianchi, he writes:

È la prosa quella che colla sua perfezione attesta e colla sua diffusione aumenta la coltura generale d'un popolo: e di questa bisogna che ciascuno studii e sappia perchè stia così giù in Italia, e quale sforzo bisogna che adoperi ciascheduno perch'ella acquisti quella certezza, quella vena, quella nettezza, e quelle tante altre qualità che le mancano.<sup>22</sup>

With this sentiment, he highlights the importance of prose in a growing national culture. Moreover, while Bonghi is almost twenty years away from becoming Minister of Public Education, he demonstrates that the process of carefully choosing works in order to build a

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<sup>22</sup> Bonghi. *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 60.

curriculum, inform or better the stylistic or linguistic competencies of Italians, and generate a linguistic continuum in which literature improves the spoken language which, in turn, improves the state of literature, is at the very core of his sixteen letters to Celestino Bianchi. With a *lingua dell'uso* adopted as the instrument used by writers and speakers alike, the interconnected nature of these elements and the potential to reform educational structures and materials to reach the ultimate goal of a linguistically united and more literarily aware culture in Italy is something that Bonghi believed long before his time in politics.

In the first letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, Bonghi – to prove his point concerning the need for significant improvement in Italian prose, he limits himself to selecting only from contemporary authors – considers how one might answer if one were asked by a foreigner to recommend several “libri italiani” to read. Once the writings of Machiavelli and Leopardi are discounted – the Neapolitan was considering a different kind of prose in his statement – Bonghi makes it explicitly obvious that, unlike the English and French traditions whose literary canon abounded with examples of literary excellence – from poetry to theatre to every form of prose – the Italian tradition was sorely lacking in literary examples that could be regarded and emulated by Italians and foreigners alike.<sup>23</sup> He writes:

Non so se ti sia mai accaduto che una forestiera ti dimandasse, quali libri italiani potrebbe leggere. Tu avrai risposto: *i Promessi Sposi*, le *Mie Prigioni*, forse

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<sup>23</sup> In his second letter dated March 23 1855, Bonghi seeks similar assessments of Italian literature in the critical works of other prominent thinkers and writers. He writes: “Dopo averti scritto l’ultima volta, ho volute vedere se mai trovassi, per caso, qualcheduno, il quale concorresse con me in uno stesso giudizio sulla nostra letteratura. Proviamo, ho detto, il Leopardi. È un ingegno di cui tutti dicono un gran bene, e fanno – e confesso che mi par giusto – le più grandi meraviglie.” On Leopardi, he writes, “Né finirei così presto se citassi tutti i luoghi dell’*Epistolario*, nei quali il Leopardi si adira e si lagna della condizione soprattutto presente delle lettere in Italia; alla cui letteratura, che gli pare «l’ultima» dell’Europa, e quasi tutta occupata in «pedanterie» dichiara che mancano moltissimi generi ed ogni utilità. He notices a similar sentiment in the critical writings of Pietro Giordani: “Del resto, devo dire che anche il Giordani... nelle sue lettere non ci si mostra neppur lui un così grande ammiratore della nostra letteratura.” Bonghi, *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 60.

il *Marco Visconti*, forse l'*Angiola Maria*, forse qualche scritto del d'Azeglio; e fermi lì. Almeno, io non so se ci siano parecchie altre opere da proporre.<sup>24</sup>

After having cited these authors, Bonghi is quick to acknowledge that even those who were considered to have produced the best novels in Italian literature and regarded with the highest esteem – to varying degrees – by certain critics, have still faced harsh scrutiny by Italian intellectuals for their perceived linguistic, stylistic, or thematic deficiencies. Notwithstanding the lack of critical agreement, he posits that there still remained an underlying lack of interest from the literate in Italy – a factor that remains at the very heart of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*. Perhaps unlike the writers comprising the literary canon of England or France whose literary contributions are met with significantly more consensual approval, he describes the situation in Italy wherein one who proposes the literary merit of an author – Manzoni, Pellico, Grossi, or otherwise – must be prepared to defend such choices against the criticisms of linguistic impurity or stylistic borrowings.

Bonghi uses Manzoni as a prime example of the need to – even with such a highly regarded author – consider the external linguistic and stylistic influences on his writing in Italian. The Milanese author, who demonstrated a profound skill and literary dexterity in two languages, as Bonghi attests, found writing in Italian significantly more burdensome than writing in French. About the aforementioned authors and Manzoni, Bonghi states:

Ti dirà, probabilmente, che la lor lingua non è pura, e il loro stile è francese. Avrà torto, mettiamo: ma te lo dirà. Ora, il Manzoni ha scritto francese anche; dimanda se abbia scritto bene: tutti ti diranno di sì; e pure ti so dire, e di buon luogo, che la lingua italiana gli è costata più pena di molto, e più fatica della francese.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

With this in mind, this reference to Manzoni's literary example highlights another hurdle to be confronted when using literature as a learning tool for honing the linguistic competencies of a nation. Inasmuch as Manzoni's style, as Bonghi references, can be deemed heavily inspired by the French literary tradition, there is the critical need to consider not only the linguistic influence of his native Milanese on his earlier works but also the potential criticism of the artificiality of the Florentine of *I promessi sposi* and the way in which such a forced linguistic change – arguably – influenced the stylistic and compositional structure of the work. It is interesting to note that even Bonghi, earlier in his life, held a similar opinion. In a diary entry dated June 16 1852, Bonghi writes: “Rileggo il Manzoni. Mi par vero quello che dicono, che mutando in toscane certe frasi e parole abbia piuttosto peggiorato che migliorato il color dello stile.”<sup>26</sup> Although Bonghi continues to confess that he had not yet found the time to compare the various editions of *I promessi sposi* line by line, he notes two distinct linguistic “flavours” – “qualche gusto toscano: il resto Lombardo o italiano aulico” – that were not successfully blended together.<sup>27</sup> He notes a similar phenomenon with the writings of Carlo Goldoni - “Il Goldoni non è riuscito a scrivere una commedia italiana di maniera che tutti se ne contentino; anzi, scontenta la più gran parte; e preferiscono le sue veneziane” – and of Ferdinando Galiani - “Il Galiani, in italiano, si può quasi dire che scriva non bene; e pure le sue cose scritte in francese sono eccellenti: e alcuni italianismi che gli rimproveravano i Francesi, col tempo, gli hanno accettati.”<sup>28</sup> Although Bonghi's opinion would

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<sup>26</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 91.

<sup>27</sup> Francesco D'Ovidio notes the irony of Bonghi's criticism and likens it to a man who writes a satirical sonnet about a woman with whom he would eventually fall madly in love. “Codesto giudizio agretto, che si chiude con una insinuazione tanto aspra, ci fa oggi un effetto curioso, come se, per esempio, scopriremo il sonettuccio satirico contro una bella donna, di un uomo che doveva poi divenire perdutamente innamorato. Se quelle poche righe gli fossero tornate sott'occhio più tardi, il Bonghi avrebbe sorriso di sè, o ne sarebbe rimasto compunto e vergognoso, poco meno di quello che sarebbe avvenuto al Manzoni medesimo se dopo la conversione religiosa gli fosse capitata quella lettera giovanile in cui aveva detto di non poter reggere al pensiero che un certo amico suo dovesse morire con la orribile figura di un prete davanti!” D'Ovidio, *Rimpianti vecchi e nuovi vol. 1*, p. 220.

<sup>28</sup> Bonghi, *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 55.

change by the time he wrote the introduction for *I promessi sposi: Nelle due edizioni del 1840 e del 1825 raffrontate tra loro* in 1877, the need to consider teaching and understanding linguistic nuance – especially with the intent of understanding and bettering one’s own spoken or written language – remained a critical component of his approach to education. It is for precisely this motive that Bonghi and Professor Riccardo Folli’s collaborative effort on *I promessi sposi: Nelle due edizioni del 1840 e del 1825 raffrontate tra loro* was such a critical work in Manzoni studies. In an edition that annotates all changes made from the 1825 to the 1840 editions of *I promessi sposi*, it became a text that not only facilitated language instruction for teachers to more easily select and highlight pertinent passages of Manzoni’s novel but also gave students a model of linguistic conversion – a conversion that could make the text more accessible to a larger linguistic demographic. When considered in the context of national education, even with the difficult task of determining how precisely to teach works of Italian literature – or any work, for that matter – to new speakers and learners of the language, Bonghi’s approach to language and literature recognized the importance of taking into consideration the linguistic nuances of each work – even those deemed linguistically heterogeneous – and using such linguistic and stylistic nuances as a means of bringing together personal linguistic expression with the addition of a Florentine *dell’uso*.

With all factors considered, the question of which works of Italian literature to read for both personal consumption and formal education remains as important a question for literary criticism as it does for the establishment of a national curriculum. Bonghi’s response to this can be considered in his synopsis on the overarching history of Italian literature that he writes in the sixth letter of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*. On literature written before the nineteenth century, he writes: “Perchè perdemmo il posto? Perchè i nostri scrittori fuori del

Boccaccio e del Machiavelli, erano rimasti inferiori agli antichi così in questa parte come nel resto.”<sup>29</sup> On the contemporary state of Italian literature, he concludes:

Ma dunque, non c'è scrittori moderni italiani, i quali per questa parte si possano paragonare a' buoni francesi e inglesi, senza che però trascurino le altre? Scrittori che badino a non inserire nel loro discorso ragioni che non collimino, frasi vaghe che distolgano, concetti volgari e comuni che non calzino? Scrittori che curino insieme le altre qualità d' una buona prosa, dalla prima fino all'ultima, senza scambiarne la dignità ed il valore rispettivo? Io non conosco se non due scrittori di questa fatta: il Manzoni e il Leopardi.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the remaining letters, Bonghi would himself adopt the role of literary critic and analyze the stylistic and linguistic elements of the works of prose he deemed worthy of consideration as the basis of a national literature. As he would go on to explore the elements of individual works that should be emulated by a new generation of writers and speakers of the Italian language, the underlying factor of improving education remains at the crux of the issue. In fact, when the arguments found in his critical letters concerning the selection of Italy's “best” literature and the importance of education are compared to his later writings, one notes a degree of consistency in his message.

Although Bonghi would not publish substantially on his thoughts concerning, specifically, Italy's best literature following the publication of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, one of the most interesting examples of Bonghi revisiting the themes discussed in his letters to Celestino Bianchi can be found in a completed questionnaire sent to Swiss-Italian publisher Johannes Ulrich Höpli dated November 1889.<sup>31</sup> In what the *Nuova Antologia* would later describe as a “plebiscito bibliografico”, Ulrico Hoepli responded to the English and German trend

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>31</sup> Johannes Ulrich Höpli (1847 – 1935), or ‘Commendatore Hoepli’, founded the Casa Editrice Hoepli in 1870 – a publishing house that is currently active – and played an important role in the publication industry in Italy.

of compiling a list of “the best books” and sought to compile an Italian equivalent featuring the best works of Italian literature with the ultimate hope of streamlining both focus and access to works that could facilitate the personal and intellectual development of Italy’s youth.<sup>32</sup> With the assistance of Giuseppe Fumagalli, librarian of the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Hoepli composed a simple questionnaire, distributed it to one hundred of the most prominent figures in Italian society, and published their responses in a work entitled *I migliori libri italiani consigliati da cento illustri contemporanei* in 1892. Included in Hoepli’s comprehensive survey is Bonghi who, over thirty years after the publication of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, is able to reflect on his life and his career and respond to the three questions concerning literature, education, and intellectual formation.

With the first question, the survey considers books as tools for personal career preparation and development:

Quali sono i libri che Ella giudica i migliori in qualunque ramo della nostra letteratura, anche per le scienze ed arti, o almeno quali sono i libri italiani che Le hanno fatto più profonda impressione e che più influirono sul corso luminoso della sua professione?<sup>33</sup>

Beginning his answer with a wry comment on never having been able to settle on one career – “Non ho professione, nè son mai riuscito a prenderne una”, he writes – Bonghi reflects on his life’s work and, true to his roots as a classicist and his lifelong passion for classical writings and antiquity, attributes his intellectual and literary formation to his extensive readings of classical texts: “La mia mente si è fatta piuttosto sopra libri antichi che sopra quelli moderni.”<sup>34</sup> In

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<sup>32</sup> “Bollettino Bibliografico- I migliori libri italiani consigliati da cento illustri contemporanei”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 120 (1891), pp. 371-373, p. 372. The model of compiling a list of the “best books” was popular in England with examples such as *The Best Hundred Books* by Sir John Lubbock in 1887 and was replicated in Germany with *Die besten Bücher aller Zeiten und Litteraturen* in 1889.

<sup>33</sup> Bonghi. *Lettera al Commendatore Hoepli*, November 1889. AE.XV.14.13, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

accentuating the personal impact of classical works over contemporary ones, he goes on to describe his affinity for Greek authors over Latin ones, and his preference for writers of prose such as Plato, Thucydides, and Aristotle over Greek poets. In these brief lines, he attributes, as he states, “quel tanto acume e agilità di spirito che ad alcuni pare che io posseda” to his extensive reading of such texts.<sup>35</sup>

Although one might expect such a response from someone who had devoted his life to the study and translation of ancient texts, his approach changes when responding to the second question and it becomes apparent that, as the questionnaire shifts its focus from personal reading to suggested reading, so too does Bonghi’s mindset shift from personal development to pedagogical instruction. The second question reads: “Quali sono i libri migliori che Ella consiglierebbe per lettura utile e gradevole a un giovane colto, ad una buona famiglia?”<sup>36</sup> While the book review of *I migliori libri italiani consigliati da cento illustri contemporanei* found in Volume 120 of the *Nuova Antologia* argues that the second and third questions might have best been reserved for Italy’s most notable educators, Bonghi’s more nuanced and thoughtful responses – compared to his rather direct response to the first question – seem to reflect his continued interest in matters concerning education.<sup>37</sup> In his response to the second question, Bonghi is immediate in citing his former mentor as the preeminent example of an accessible work of Italian literature and begins his response with a definitive, “Il Manzoni, di certo, e poi?”<sup>38</sup> He continues by mentioning Dante as another writer whose works he would recommend to the “giovane colto” but struggles to find additional authors whose writings could both enlighten and interest Italy’s youth: “Ne

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> “Bollettino Bibliografico- I migliori libri italiani consigliati da cento illustri contemporanei”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 120 (1891), pp. 371-373., p. 372.

<sup>38</sup> Bonghi, *Lettera al Commendatore Hoepli*, Braidense, p. 2.

rivangherei alcuni altri nella mia memoria, se ci pensassi su; ma non credo molti poichè m’immagino che questo giovine non si vuole che s’annoi o si corrompa.”<sup>39</sup> For Bonghi, it is precisely in bridging the gap between interest and education where the Italian literary canon was sorely lacking. Unlike the English literary tradition which, according to him, featured authors who were significantly more successful in writing popular literature that was intellectually or morally stimulating – in fact, Bonghi directly states “Io consiglieri a questo giovine d’imparare l’inglese...” – Italian authors were only just starting to produce works that addressed the new class of literary neophytes. He closes his response on an optimistic note assuring his reader not to be taken aback by his “stitichezza” and that, while many names come to mind, he preferred to only list those such as Manzoni or Dante – or De Amicis or Carducci as contemporary authors – as those he could categorically endorse without any personal objection or reservation.<sup>40</sup>

After having considered Bonghi’s previous responses regarding *which* literature to choose, his third answer provides a superbly concise response to *why* choosing the right literary works is such an integral part of a child’s intellectual and literary formation. While the third question attempts to bring together the main elements of the first two questions – “Quali sono i libri migliori che Ella darebbe a un giovane il quale intendesse dedicarsi a quella speciale disciplina o a qual campo di umana attività nel quale Ella è diventato sì chiaro?” – Bonghi, instead, reacts to what he feels is an oversimplification of a nuanced issue and outlines the complex relationship between

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<sup>39</sup> Bonghi, *Lettera al Commendatore Hoepli*, Braidense, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Bonghi’s literary selections fall in line with the works most commonly cited by those polled for *I migliori libri italiani consigliati da cento illustri contemporanei*. In the book review published in the “Rassegna Bibliografica” in Ser. XVI Vol. II of monthly review *L’Ateneo Veneto*, the breakdown of most popular votes were as follows: “Manzoni, con voti 37 – Alfieri, 28 – Machiavelli, 28 – Dante, 27 – D’Azeglio, 26 – Pellico, 25 – Leopardi, 23 – Foscolo, 21 – Galileo, 21 – Giusti, 20 – Gioberti, 18 – Parini, 18 – De Amicis, 17 – Stoppani, 17 – Ariosto, 16 – Balbo, 16 – Carducci, 15 – Goldoni, 15 – Petrarca, 15 – Cellini, 14 – Tasso, 14 – Villari, 14.” “Rassegna Bibliografica”. *L’Ateneo Veneto* Ser. XVI Vol. II (1892), pp. 348-350., p. 349.

language, literature, and education and civic or personal development.<sup>41</sup> Beginning his response with a typically Bonghian mix of sarcasm and self-depreciation, much like his response to the first question, he uses the example of his life to demonstrate that human beings – be it personally or professionally – cannot simply be reduced to archetypal entities that are formed by schematic processes. He writes, “Qui poi m’impaccio. I campi di attività umana o letteraria, nei quali ho passeggiato, sono parecchi: e in nessuno son diventato chiaro. Sicchè da una parte la domanda è troppo larga e dall’altra non ho diritto a rispondervi in nessun senso.”<sup>42</sup> As Bonghi describes in his answer, before a young person can even think about an area of study or career, they must first seek to broaden their horizons, learn from their experiences, enhance their capacities to think and reason, and develop a resolute nature to their moral and spiritual character. To this point, he writes, “Giacchè non pensa nè scrive fermo, chi non ha ferma la mano. Questa necessità di preparazione è soprattutto trascurata ora; anzi non s’intende; e si crede che l’opera della istruzione consiste nell’empire la mente di molte cose, anzichè nel fare la mente.”<sup>43</sup> His statement serves as a reminder to the readers of Hoepli’s book that the “best literature” cannot be regarded as something meant to effectuate a concrete end, but must be as a tool to facilitate one’s personal moral, intellectual, or linguistic journey. For him, although Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* was the work that – in reading, studying, interpreting, and applying to his life – was the most impactful, it is integral that each student find works that challenge them to consider different perspectives, reflect on new ideas, and develop morally, intellectually, and linguistically.

Bonghi’s closing line to Hoepli’s questionnaire is perhaps the most powerful and brilliantly succinct phrase to summarize the Neapolitan’s approach to language, literature and society, and is

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<sup>41</sup> Bonghi, *Lettera al Commendatore Hoepli*, Braidense, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

a fitting way to conclude an analysis of his writings on literary criticism. To conclude his brief response on the importance of literature, Bonghi ends with a simple statement: “I libri facili uccidono.”<sup>44</sup> To Bonghi, a book that neither challenges nor engages its reader kills the reader’s interest, breeds intellectual complacency, prevents future engagement with other works, and destroys any hope of a flourishing literary culture. For both personal consumption and formal education, it was of the utmost importance to provide Italy’s young minds access to works that would contribute to their personal development and facilitate the betterment of a collective educational standard. While his approach to bringing about educational reform was still in its infancy when Bonghi wrote and published *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, from the mid to late 1850s until his tenure as Minister for Public Education, he worked on conceptualizing a tiered approach to promulgating the Italian language and building a national culture in Italy. His approach began with the push for a selection of a linguistic standard, continued with a careful selection of literary works to be imitated and learned from, would be furthered by a reformed educative role of literary criticism and literary critics, and conclude with governmental reform that could facilitate and optimize the implementation and execution of all stages of linguistic standardization and education. As will be explored in the following section and chapter, Bonghi’s drive to make the biggest impact on Italian language and education continues as he takes on an increasingly central role in Italy’s political sphere.

***Political Initiatives, the 1868 Broglio Commission, and the “Novo Vocabolario”***

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 4

Inasmuch as *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* reflects Bonghi's consideration of both abstract and practical approaches to addressing the linguistic situation in Italy, it is not until later in Bonghi's life that he begins to apply the ideas espoused in his earlier works. Although he had started writing and publishing short works and articles concerning the measures that could be instituted by Italy's governing parties to promulgate the Italian language from the very late 1850s through the 1860s, the first major government-backed initiative with which he was involved was the commission instituted in 1868 by Minister of Public Education, Emilio Broglio. On January 14 1868, Broglio, who was a close acquaintance of Manzoni and very much shared the belief that Florentine Italian should be adopted as the national linguistic standard, put together a committee of prominent writers, linguists and thinkers to "ricercare i modi più facili di diffondere in tutti gli ordini del popolo nostro la notizia della buona lingua e della buona pronunzia."<sup>45</sup> He appointed Manzoni as president, Raffaele Lambruschini as vice-president, and Niccolò Tommaseo, Giulio Carcano, Giuseppe Bertoldi, Achille Mauri, and Ruggero Bonghi as members of the committee.<sup>46</sup> In addition to the extensive collective experience and work in the

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<sup>45</sup> "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 425 footnote 1.

<sup>46</sup> Raffaello Lambruschini (1788 – 1873) was an agronomist and politician from Genoa who was heavily involved in Italy's educational sphere. As someone with a longstanding interest in the theoretical and practical evolution of didactics and pedagogy, he – alongside Cosimo Ridolfi, Gino Capponi, and Giovan Pietro Vieusseux – founded the *Giornale Agrario Toscano* which was intended to educate Tuscans on better agricultural practices to facilitate an increase economic production and thus enhance the general standard of living in the province. He also founded and directed the journal *Guida dell'educatore* – which was circulated throughout Italy – from 1836 to 1845 which was established to provide comprehensive strategies to better educate children both at home and in a school setting. He would go on to found the periodical *La famiglia e la scuola* in 1860 and *La Gioventù* from 1862–1869.

Giulio Carcano (1812 – 1884) was a politician, writer, journalist, and patriot from Lesa, Lombardy. In addition to being known for his literary works such as *Angiola Maria: Storia Domestica* (1839), he was a close friend of Andrea and Clara Maffei, an active participant in the *cinque giornate di Milano*, and a Senator of the Kingdom of Italy (1876–1884). He relationship with Bonghi dated back to the early-mid 1850s and was person to whom Bonghi dedicated the second edition of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* (July 23 1856).

Giuseppe Bertoldi (1821 – 1904) was a politician, writer, journalist, and academic from Fubine, Piedmont who served as an inspector general for public schools in Piedmont and, later, Tuscany.

Achille Mauri (1806 – 1883) was a politician, writer, and patriot from Milan who was a close acquaintance of Manzoni and his network of writers and politicians. Although he studied at Rosmini's *Istituto della Carità* and had

educational sphere from all members of the committee, there was an emphasis on choosing members who were not only born outside of Tuscany but also had a profound understanding of the educational conditions and learning needs of the various regions throughout Italy. With Manzoni, Carcano, and Mauri from Milan, Lambruschini from Genoa, Tommaseo from Dalmatia, Bertoldi from Piedmont, and Bonghi from Naples – not to mention the significant amount of time spent by each of these men working for periodicals, journals, and educational institutions throughout Italy – Broglio sought to put together a team of those whose diverse backgrounds and experiences as citizens and writers would give a “senso vivo” of the needs and demands at each level of education throughout Italy. With a continued focus on centralizing education, this commission was not simply a means of addressing the lack of linguistic cohesion, but also a means of working towards a unified system of education.<sup>47</sup> In the article entitled “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” published in Volume 7 of the *Nuova Antologia* in March 1868, Manzoni, Bonghi, and Carcano – who were all residing in Milan at the time – jointly composed a “proemio”, or written summary, of the conclusions made by the Broglio Commission and an outline for the ensuing government initiatives that could bolster the efforts to promulgate a national language.

“Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”, which was described as the “primo frutto di quel savio pensiero che ispirava al commendatore Emilio Broglio”, is divided into two parts: the first section was written by Manzoni and contained ideas and initiatives that he believed

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intended to become a seminarian, he changed focus and devoted himself to the study and composition of writing and literature. After collaborating on several journals and periodicals – such as *L'Eco. Giornale di scienze, lettere, arti, mode e teatri* in Milan from as early as 1828 – in 1835, he composed an anthology of both classic Italian texts and translations of foreign authors to be used by middle-schoolers entitled *Il libro dell'adolescenza*. He also collaborated in 1836 with Carlo Grolli to found the weekly periodical, *Il Giovedì*, which featured examples of poetry and prose – either by Italian authors or foreign authors translated into Italian –, lessons or tales pertaining to morality and ethics, and brief lessons or stories pertaining to various aspects of history, astronomy, geography, natural history, and physics.

<sup>47</sup> Footnote 1 in “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” published in *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441 contains an explanation by “La Direzione” briefly highlighting what they were looking for when selecting committee members.

would contribute significantly to the linguistic situation, and the second section was written by Manzoni, Bonghi and Carcano which outlined government initiatives – including initiatives that were both dependent on and independent of the measures taken with the Broglio Commission – that could assist in establishing linguistic unity.<sup>48</sup> Although both sections together outline a comprehensive approach to addressing the lack of linguistic unity – and to a lesser extent, the lack of educational unity – in Italy, the nuances between the first and second sections provide insight on the centrality and significance of Bonghi’s role in the proceedings set forth by Broglio and Manzoni as well as an idea of the aspects of the nineteenth century *questione della lingua* to which the Neapolitan contributed most. In regards to the first section, even ignoring the titular phrase of “Proposta da Alessandro Manzoni agli amici colleghi Bonghi e Carcano, ed accettato da loro”, it is clear that, with the ideas proposed by the article as well as the structural and written composition of the article, Manzoni was the inspiration and driving force behind the initiatives proposed.<sup>49</sup> By comparison, if one considers the content of second section which was jointly written by the three representatives of the committee, it is likely that Bonghi played a more significant role in contributing to the conceptualization of methods of linguistic diffusion involving changes to educational policy.<sup>50</sup> The difference between these two sections is quite telling when situating the

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<sup>48</sup> “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 425 footnote 1.

<sup>49</sup> Considering Manzoni’s importance as the primary architect of the ideas proposed in the first section of “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”, it is important to note the collaborative nature of the commission and the extent to which Manzoni valued Bonghi and Carcano’s input. If the letters between Manzoni and Broglio reflect the working relationship of the members of the committee, a letter from the commission’s president to the Minister of Public Education dated March 10 1868 reads, “Nè il Bonghi, nè il Carcano si sono più fatti vedere; onde, per non ritardare la risposta, sono costretto a non parlare che in mio nome.” Manzoni, *Lettera a Emilio Broglio*, Marche 10 1868. Manz. B. I. 166/6, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, p. 1r.

<sup>50</sup> When analyzing both Bonghi’s earlier writings and that nature of his involvement in any joint initiatives with Manzoni, it is difficult to individuate precisely how much of Bonghi’s writings and thoughts are his own and how much were as a result of a prolonged and intimate intellectual relationship with Manzoni. Although Bonghi would certainly not have adopted beliefs based on the repute of the source of the beliefs, considering the age at which he met Manzoni, the overlapping nature of their network, and the extent to which they interacted, it is unclear how “original” some of Bonghi’s thoughts were. This is further complicated by – minor differences in literary taste, personal political nuance, etc. aside – the general degree of agreement in their views and approach to issues such as

1868 Broglio Commission in Bonghi's political timeline and examining how and when his contributions to the Italian political life evolved.<sup>51</sup>

To use Manzoni's exact words as seen in the opening lines of the article, the purpose of the commission was to "proporre tutti i provvedimenti e i modi coi quali si possa aiutare e rendere più universale in tutti gli ordini del popolo la notizia della buona lingua e della buona pronunzia."<sup>52</sup> In a nation with a deeply engrained culture of widespread dialectal variation that, as Manzoni writes, aspires to a communal language and a common means of communication, it was the prerogative of the governing parties of Italy to facilitate the diffusion of a vernacular that would allow the entirety of the population to freely communicate and be mutually understood. To summarize in the most concise way possible, the ultimate goal was to:

...sostituire a que' diversi mezzi di comunicazione d'idee un mezzo unico, il quale, sottentrando a fare nelle singole parti della nazione l'ufizio essenziale che fanno i particolari linguaggi, possa anche soddisfare il bisogno, non così essenziale, senza dubbio, ma rilevantissimo, d'intendersi gli uomini dell'intera nazione tra di loro, il più pienamente e uniformemente che sia possibile.<sup>53</sup>

The problem, as they describe in the article – as has been discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 – is that Italy remains divided in the varied ideas regarding both which linguistic form should be adopted as a national standard and what methods would best yield such a desired result.

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linguistic unity. With that said, it is unsurprising that Manzoni would have wanted Bonghi as a member of Broglio's committee.

<sup>51</sup> So as not to overstate the significance of the Broglio Commission to Bonghi's timeline and the evolution of his approach to language and politics, it must be emphasized that Bonghi had published on educational reform from as early as 1860 and addressed the *Camera dei Deputati* on matters pertaining to education on several occasions between 1862 and 1865. Although these examples will be explored fully in Chapter 3, it is important to note that the Broglio Commission was the first instance where Bonghi was appointed to a committee whose purpose was providing Italy's governing parties with a framework for unifying Italy linguistically and bettering the state of education throughout the country.

<sup>52</sup> "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441, p. 425.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 425-426.

As far as Bonghi is concerned, Manzoni's solution to diffusing a linguistic standard throughout Italy – as detailed in the first part of the article – is noteworthy in that it is a direct reprisal of the arguments espoused in the dialogues found in Bonghi's diary. As one recalls Manzoni's response of "E ci sarebbe: è facile" found in Bonghi's 1852 transcribed dialogue, almost sixteen years later, the Milanese author fully elaborates on his plans of putting together a dictionary for a Florentine *dell'uso* that could be published and used as an important tool to teach Florentine Italian to Italy's significant population of dialectal speakers.<sup>54</sup> In "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla" he states explicitly:

Uno poi de' mezzi più efficaci e d'un effetto più generale, particolarmente nelle nostre circostanze, per propagare una lingua, è, come tutti sanno, un vocabolario. E, secondo i principi e i fatti qui esposti, il vocabolario a proposito per l'Italia non potrebbe esser altro che quello del linguaggio fiorentino vivente.<sup>55</sup>

While this statement, in and of itself, would not be remotely unfamiliar to those familiar with Manzoni's work, the early appearance of this argument in Bonghi's diary, Bonghi's involvement in the formation and development of this idea, and the Neapolitan's involvement in the execution of this initiative both sheds light on the extent to which Manzoni had considered creating this dictionary and highlights the importance of having collaborators that could effectively implement strategies and policies that would allow for the success of this initiative.

Although Italy had had a strong lexicographical tradition, Manzoni highlights the importance of a dictionary that focuses on and captures the essence of a spoken linguistic form. With this as his primary focus, he specifically references the linguistic situation in France and the impact of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* on the French language. He writes:

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<sup>54</sup> See Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 129 or Chapter 2, pp. 16-18, for the full context of Manzoni's quotation.

<sup>55</sup> "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 430.

E non c'è nulla più da meravigliarsi che una lingua tale abbia potuto dar materia a un vocabolario come quello dell'Accademia Francese, il quale, e appunto perchè rappresenta intero, per quanto è possibile, un uso vivo, e per sapiente e feconda semplicità del suo metodo, che dà il modo di raccogliere tutte, per dir così, le forme speciali d'una lingua, potè registrare una copia di locuzioni, maggiore, e di molto, a quella che si possa trovare nel più abbondante de' nostri vocabolari.<sup>56</sup>

In adopting this approach in the composition of his *Novo Vocabolario*, Manzoni would look to incorporate locutions – as he describes, to the fullest extent of the word – that include both words and phrases that comprise the entirety of a linguistic body. Not only would it include the simple lexicon that formed the typical “vocabolario semplice”, but his contribution to Italian lexicography would also incorporate the idiomatic expressions, provincialisms, solecisms and *idiotismi* that comprise a spoken linguistic medium.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Objections and Rebuttals to Florentine standard and Manzoni's “Novo” Vocabolario***

Before concluding the more theoretical discussions on language and proceeding to discuss the importance of Bonghi's role in the Broglio commission – thus beginning the exploration of Bonghi's more formal involvement in the development of policy and the restructuring of educational systems in Italy – it is necessary to explore the nuances of the first section of “Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” to appreciate and understand Bonghi's contributions to the second section of the article – and the second aspect of Broglio's politically driven linguistic initiative. Moreover, it is also important to briefly consider the opposition that

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 428.

<sup>57</sup> It is important to highlight Manzoni and Bonghi's usage – mostly in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* – of the word “idiotismo” to denote, especially in the context of linguistic purism, a locution or idiomatic phrase adapted from a spoken language – including dialectalisms, provincialisms, or regionalisms – that have acquired “tutta la pronta e sicura efficacia di significazioni proprie”. Ibid., p. 428.

Manzoni and Bonghi had faced, as well as the arguments for and against the adoption of a Florentine *dell'uso* as a linguistic standard, that could have impeded widespread implementation or acceptance of Bonghi and Manzoni's goals. Although many of the arguments are found throughout Bonghi's writings on language, it is perhaps "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla" that both exemplifies the difference in Manzoni's and Bonghi's approach to the political implementation of their linguistic beliefs and most succinctly compiles the most "clamorose", "risolute", and "incalzanti" objections to the Manzonian approach to linguistic unity.<sup>58</sup>

The first cited objection is the argument that a compendium of words representing the thoughts, opinions, and general ideas that reflect the life of an entire nation should take into consideration the languages of an entire nation, not simply the language of a city. To this, Manzoni responds with a rebuttal not unlike that found in Bonghi's dialogue: "A questo rispondiamo che in Firenze si trovano tutte le cognizioni, le opinioni, i concetti di ogni genere che ci possano essere in Italia".<sup>59</sup> As he had argued with Rosmini and Bonghi, Manzoni states that the Florentine vernacular, much like the vernaculars of Naples, Turin, Venice, Genoa, Palermo, Milan, Bologna, or any of the larger, more populated Italian cities, possesses a similar level of history and culture that reflects a substantial portion of the Italian "experience". It includes words and phrases used in public, private, political, and domestic life, and has a lexicon that reflects the ideas from both the educated and working classes and the scientific and practical spheres. Although there are, naturally, discrepancies in the idiomatic expression of certain ideas or experiences, Manzoni argues that the ideas conveyed are not so categorically different that a communal language would

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<sup>58</sup> "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 430.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

inhibit the accuracy and clarity of linguistic expression. In a practical sense, the completion of his dictionary – much like the learning of a language – would involve a careful, thorough, and systematic compilation of words and expressions to ensure that the ideas of an entire nation are considered with the appropriate and corresponding locution.

The second cited objection is the criticism that a unified Italy needed a “language” and that Florentine was nothing but a “dialect”.<sup>60</sup> To this, Manzoni responds: “Questa antitesi non è altro che un cozzo di parole male intese, e che, in questo caso, non corrispondono ad alcun fatto reale.”<sup>61</sup> He goes on to argue that, in Italy, there was no inherent correlation between the usage of regional linguistic varieties and the socio-economic status or level of education of the speaker. In fact, there had always been significant diastratic variation found within regional and provincial vernaculars throughout Italy to reflect every part of the socio-economic spectrum. With Italy’s historical composition as a land of city states without a centralized monarchy or dominant – or dominating – cultural nucleus, there had never been a vernacular in Italy that was intrinsically more aligned with more educated ideas or a more erudite class. Unlike other nations with a clear distinction between “language” and “dialect” – where a certain tongue became adopted, exclusively or almost exclusively, as the linguistic milieu of a cultural or political elite – Italy’s “dialects” were, as stated in “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”, “in pieno vigore, e servono abitualmente a ogni classe di persone”.<sup>62</sup> Until one particular vernacular was adopted as a national standard in Italy, there could be no distinction between the differentiating factors of a “language” and “dialect”.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 432.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 432.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>63</sup> Linguist Max Weinreich famously quipped that “a language is a dialect with an army and navy” to highlight the arbitrary distinction between the two linguistic forms.

The next objection was the perceived absurdity of privileging one city and “imposing” its language as law over an entire nation of people. Manzoni’s rebuttal is clear as he rebukes the notion of linguistic unity as a penalty imposed on other regions of Italy: “Imporre una legge? come se un vocabolario avesse a essere una specie di codice penale con prescrizioni, divieti e sanzioni. Si tratta di somministrare un mezzo, e non d’imporre una legge.”<sup>64</sup> Although Manzoni posits his argument from a linguistic point of view – emphasising the nature of language as a something that is imperfect, always changing, always adapting, and always expanding – the most honest and pragmatic rebuttal to this objective was the bureaucratic, institutional, and logistic necessity of a centralized language. Setting aside the ideological need for linguistic unity to facilitate cultural or national unity in Italy after its independence, Bonghi was acutely aware of the need for a centralized language to facilitate a system of centralized education, an improvement of the educational systems throughout Italy, and a streamlining of all governing institutions in an effort to foster collaborative and nationally beneficial leadership. Neither Bonghi nor Manzoni had the remotest intention of replacing regional vernaculars with Florentine but instead hoped that, in a linguistic sense, the addition to and expansion of the average Italian’s linguistic repertoire would benefit with the ability and means to access a linguistic form common to all Italians. In an ideological sense, the accessibility of language meant – much like the advent of the printing press – a democratization of knowledge as well as the potential to participate in and engage with national discourse. As Manzoni states in the *Appendice alla relazione intorno all’unità della lingua e ai mezzi di diffonderla*, the desired language would be, “comune a un’intera società, cioè a tutte le classi, più o meno chiaramente distinte, che la compongono, e a ciascheduna, s’intende, in proporzione dell’idee, che è quanto dire de’ vocaboli, di cui usa.”<sup>65</sup> In Manzoni and Bonghi’s

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<sup>64</sup> “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 433.

<sup>65</sup> Manzoni, *Appendice alla relazione intorno all’unità della lingua e ai mezzi di diffonderla*. p. 14.

constant emphasis on the degree of inclusivity to which their solutions to the *questione della lingua* considered, both figures uphold the promulgation of language as a bridge to national inclusion that overcame significant diastratic factors and benefitted all members of Italian society.

The final cited objection found in “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” is the criticism that a dictionary that limits itself solely to the language *dell’uso* fails to fulfill the necessary obligation of incorporating the contemporary and historical language of Italian authors. Naturally, Manzoni is quick to clarify that a dictionary composed of a literary language and a dictionary composed of a local or regional vernacular are two different tools with distinct purposes. Although the argument is made that a dictionary intended to aid in the understanding of a literary language is neither more nor less meaningful in the study of Italian, a dictionary compiling the lexicon of a living language not only requires different sources and a different methodology of compilation, but also has a unique intent with a fundamentally different intended audience. Manzoni writes, “Un vocabolario destinato a propagare in una nazione intera l’uso d’una lingua, deve servire a un numero molto maggiore di persone, che non siano quelle che mirino all’altro intento.”<sup>66</sup> With a much wider readership in mind, Manzoni’s proposed dictionary of Florentine locutions hoped to make language – the language the Broglio Commission desired as the linguistic standard, that is – accessible to a national audience.

As far as the task of compiling the words and phrases of a certain vernacular is concerned, Manzoni states that, while the process of completing such a dictionary would involve a significant investment of time and energy, a dictionary of a *lingua dell’uso* can be more easily put together with a clear, methodical system in place. To serve as an example, those compiling the dictionary

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<sup>66</sup> “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 434.

could follow the same methodological model as those such as but not limited to: Giuseppe Boerio and his *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano* (1829), Francesco Cherubini and his *Vocabolario milanese-italiano* (1814), Francesco Pasqualino and his *Dizionario siciliano-italiano*, Vincenzo Porru and his *Nou dizionariu universali sardu-italianu* (1832) – followed by Giovanni Spano and the *Vocabolario sardo-italiano e italiano-sardo* in 1851-1852 –, Claudio Ferrari and his *Vocabolario bolognese co'sinonimi italiani e francesi*, and Antonio Morri and his *Vocabolario romagnolo-italiano* (1840). With a similar model of compilation to the bilingual dialectal dictionaries mentioned, the Broglio Commission's dictionary of a Florentine *dell'uso* would proceed in a thorough and systemic manner to collect and document the words and expressions used in every aspect of daily life. Naturally, an initiative of this sort would involve a team of people that could work with groups of Florentines to most thoroughly compile the entirety of the spoken language and ensure a collaborative approach in regards to both lexicographical collection and linguistic consensus. Manzoni writes:

Nessuno, è vero, possiede l'uso intero di una lingua, ma ognuno che non sia, nè rozzo, nè ottuso ne possiede una gran parte, e la più universale, cioè la più importante per la compilazione d'un vocabolario. È poi evidente che una tale facilità e sicurezza di trovar locuzioni d'una lingua viva, e di trovarne in tanta copia, da accostarsi (s'intende per quanto è possibile) all'intera raccolta di esse, deva crescere grandemente quando la ricerca sia fatta in comune da più persone. Si potrebbe quasi asserire che, in una compagnia di concittadini riuniti in un tale lavoro, sarebbe scarsissimo il numero delle locuzioni dimenticate, come rarissimo il caso che per una locuzione proposta, il voto o del *sì* o del *no*, non fosse unanime.<sup>67</sup>

The final element to consider was whether Italy would be receptive to accepting the *Novo Vocabolario* as a means of linguistic diffusion and, more importantly, receptive to adopting another Latinate form as a standardized language. To this, the Broglio Commission responds with three reasons that give reason to be optimistic regarding the potential success of the creation and

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<sup>67</sup> “Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 435.

distribution of the dictionary throughout Italy. The first consideration is the reiteration of the potential impact of a dictionary that, if put together as Manzoni had intended, would be the first of its kind in Italy. Not only would it be a dictionary of a *lingua dell'uso*, it would be a dictionary rooted in a spoken language whose intended readership was comprised of a national audience. As the first of its kind, it – as argued in “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” – would be a tool used in language education which could provide an immediate impact on a national level. The second consideration is, although the dictionary would be a new and innovative endeavour, its composition would be – as stated previously – modelled after the dictionaries of the “vari idiomi d’Italia” which were already present throughout Italy. It goes without saying that Manzoni – who had relied heavily on Cherubini’s *Vocabolario milanese-italiano* when attempting to eliminate the “idiotismi lombardi” from the earlier editions of *I promessi sposi* – was a firm believer in the impact a dictionary could have on the formation and development of one’s linguistic repertoire. The final and most important consideration is the considerable support – “gli aiuti”, as Manzoni describes – that the Italian government had planned on devoting to the *impresa* of a linguistically united Italy.<sup>68</sup> Since Italy’s unification in 1861, the Historical Right had, save for Urbano Rattazzi’s tenures as Prime Minister in 1862 and 1867, held office until the party’s fall in 1876. Although the Historical Right had changed leadership several times before Luigi Federico Menebrea took office on October 27 1867, the internal stabilization of the party – not to mention, the general political state of Italy which had begun to settle down after the Third War of Italian Independence – allowed the opportunity for its members to focus on larger projects and implement more significant changes in policy.<sup>69</sup> With education as one of the primary focuses of the

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 436.

<sup>69</sup> If one were to consider the collection of letters to and from Ubaldino Peruzzi found in the *Carteggio Peruzzi* in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, the reader gets a picture of the Historical Right as a party that was desperate to find a leader that could provide both the level of internal leadership and capability of fostering

Menebrea, Lanza, and Minghetti governments, it gave Manzoni the confidence in the long-term impact of initiatives resulting from the Broglio Commission. Although Manzoni's involvement would only extend as far as the creation of the dictionary, he was well aware of the multifaceted approach of the Commission – something that was necessary to maximize the effects of Manzoni's proposed ideas.

It is precisely in the passage regarding the Commission's potential success where Manzoni begins to conclude his thoughts on the initiative and introduce the second section of the article which addresses the practical political measures that Minister of Public Education Emilio Broglio, supported by the members of the Broglio Commission, could enact to help achieve linguistic unification and, ultimately, the development of a national identity. As he concludes the first section of the article, Manzoni writes a summation of the overarching purpose of the Commission to state, in a clear and concise a manner as possible, the importance of language and education in the formation of an Italian civic identity. He concludes:

Ci corre però prima l'obbligo di tributargli la singolare e ben meritata lode, dell'aver proposta con pubblica autorità, e insieme avviata per la vera strada, una questione di tanta importanza; giacchè, dopo l'unità di governo, d'armi e di leggi, l'unità della lingua è quella che serve il più a rendere stretta, sensibile e profittevole l'unità d'una nazione. Enunciando lo scopo *d'aiutare e rendere più universale in tutti gli ordini del popolo la notizia della buona lingua*, il signor Ministro ha sostituita la questione sociale e nazionale a un fascio di questioni letterarie, e messe le opinioni sistematiche al partito, o di mostrar d'esser atte a dare il mezzo conveniente a un tale scopo, o di sostenere che un tale scopo non sia quello a cui si deve mirare: cosa che, crediamo, nessuna di esse si sentirà d'affermare, quantunque tutte la sottintendano, proponendo scopi diversi: qualcosa di bello, di scelto, di nobile, d'autorevole, di venerando; tutt'altro insomma che una lingua.<sup>70</sup>

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interparty collaboration that had been lost with the death of Cavour. Although there were, naturally, divisions within the party, the Historical Right found a greater degree of internal cohesion in the late 1860s and early 1870s.

<sup>70</sup> "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 439.

*Political Initiatives and Bonghi's Influence on the 1868 Broglio Commission*

Although much of the previous section focused on Manzoni's contributions to the Broglio Commission and the composition of "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla", this slight digression is imperative when exploring and assessing Bonghi's contributions to the *questione della lingua*. While the published and unpublished writings of Ruggero Bonghi discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate a large degree of overlap in Manzoni's and Bonghi's ideas on language and literature, the Broglio Commission is a critical moment in which both men collaborate on an initiative and contribute their own distinct ideas on how to achieve a shared goal. This distinction is particularly apparent when considering "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla". While the first section – written by Alessandro Manzoni – is a fairly substantial argument for the potential impact of a Florentine dictionary *dell'uso*, the second section – jointly written by Alessandro Manzoni, Ruggero Bonghi, and Giulio Carcano – is a concise, almost bullet-point list of the initiatives that the government could support, both before and after the completion and publication of the dictionary, that could bolster the efforts to establish linguistic unity. These measures, unlike the creation of a dictionary, addressed the language problem in a profoundly different way and considered government support in a manner that involved changes to both educational policy and the restructuring of the allocated budget. Although Manzoni's opinion would certainly have been incorporated when considering all aspects of linguistic diffusion, it was almost certainly Bonghi who was the driving force behind the supplemental initiatives discussed in the second section and the reason for the contrast in style, content, and focus between the two

sections of the article.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, from a publishing standpoint, it is telling that when Manzoni publishes his *Appendice alla relazione intorno all'unità della lingua e ai mezzi di diffonderla* in 1869 – a reprisal of and reflection on the arguments found in the original article published in the *Nuova Antologia* in 1868 – he includes only the arguments made in the first section of the article and does not take credit for the arguments outlined in the second.

From the opening lines of the second section of “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”, there is a distinct change in style with a noted directness that sounds more like a proposal addressed to congress than it does an article published in a literary journal. It begins:

Passiamo ora a dire qualche cosa anche di altri mezzi che servano a diffondere in tutto il paese la cognizione della buona lingua, oltre a quel primo d'un nuovo vocabolario, composto secondo i principii ora disegnati. Accenneremo alcuni provvedimenti come ci si presentano a primo studio, da discutersi o da modificarsi, o anche da potersi sostituire con altri meglio opportuni. E più d'uno di questi mezzi potrebbe anche non poco giovare alla diffusione della buona pronunzia, per quanto la diversità de' nostri dialetti lo conceda.<sup>72</sup>

Immediately following these introductory lines, the article outlines a series of measures and initiatives that could be instituted – some independently, others in conjunction with the publication of Manzoni’s dictionary – to facilitate the promulgation of a linguistic standard. With

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<sup>71</sup> Not to discount Carcano’s contributions to the Broglio Commission and the composition of “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”, however, it was likely that Bonghi was the most significant contributor to the second part of the article. Although Carcano served as a *membro dei Comitati per l'istruzione universitaria e secondaria* from December 1866- September 1867 and was nominated as *membro straordinario del Consiglio superiore della pubblica istruzione* on November 14 1867, he was not made an ordinary member until March 22 1868 – though he remained a member, alongside Bonghi, of the *Consiglio* until January 1873. From what can be ascertained from the records documented in the 1868 *Bollettino degli Atti del Consiglio superiore di pubblica istruzione*, Carcano was significantly less active – he was referenced only in regards to his attendance at the various meetings – than the more politically-involved members of the committee like Bonghi and Coppino who featured more prominently in discussions, regularly served as *relatore*, and were responsible for the drafting of certain documents on issues pertaining to educational reform. Although Carcano was likely an important contributor behind-the-scenes, the limited references in the 1868 *Bollettino* – the same year as the Broglio Commission – and his overall limited publications on politics and educational reform would indicate that Bonghi likely acted as more of a lead in the composition of the second part of “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. See *Bollettino degli Atti del Consiglio superiore di pubblica istruzione: Documenti e notizie riguardanti il corpo insegnante e le scuole*, Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1868.

<sup>72</sup> “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 439.

that in mind, the second section of the article is divided into two parts: a list of the means of linguistic dispersion that would be “fattibile di mettere in pratica, anche senza attendere la formazione del nuovo vocabolario” and a list of those that “dovrebbero seguire la pubblicazione del nuovo vocabolario”.<sup>73</sup> Beginning with the measures that would precede the publication of the dictionary, the first step would involve sending teachers – in the highest quantity possible – that were either from Tuscany or had studied in Tuscany to various provinces throughout Italy to teach the Florentine vernacular. The article clarifies that the position of “cattedra di lingua” in “scuole magistrali e normali” would be held exclusively by those native to Tuscany.<sup>74</sup> Unlike the first section of “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” exclusively written by Manzoni, the second section – albeit briefly – also considers the impact these initiatives would have on the federal budget and factors finances in the allotment of funds. In the case of sending Tuscan instructors throughout Italy, the Ministry of Public Education would draw from the funds allocated for primary school education to provide subsidies and funds for schools to hire Tuscan educators.

Once the initial placement of Tuscan – or Tuscanized – educators was completed, the next steps of linguistic promulgation could then be carried out. These educators, stationed in provinces and regions throughout Italy, could then collaborate to analyze, teach, and, in certain cases, revise various mediums of circulated published materials to contribute to a modernization of the language used in such texts. These considerations for published texts not only impacted the printing materials found in classrooms but also the printed materials that circulated in society at large. In the educational sphere, the Ministry of Public Education would look to finance conferences throughout the year that brought together teachers and instructors of the Italian language to analyze

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

classical and contemporary texts taught in schools to note the lexical and phrasal archaisms while providing linguistic alternatives that corresponded more closely with a contemporary *lingua dell'uso*. In the case of literary works, these opuses would serve as a contrasting model to demonstrate how the Manzonian linguistic model might differ from the literary texts studied in classrooms. Otherwise, as far as contemporary texts were concerned, the conferences would seek to amend teaching materials so they more closely adhered to the language the instructors wanted the students to learn and adopt. In either case, provincialisms, neologisms, and locutions native to the local areas would be noted so as to highlight any linguistic discrepancies between the Florentine *dell'uso*, the local vernaculars, and the language of literary prose.<sup>75</sup>

In order to ensure that the most sought-after teaching positions did not continue to be monopolized by Florentine-born Italians, it was critical to ensure that students throughout Italy were able to access the same opportunities as their Tuscan counterparts. With this in mind, the Broglio Commission would look into awarding bursaries and scholarships to top students to allow them the opportunity to spend a year studying at one of the top schools in Florence. From Bonghi's dialogue with Manzoni and Rosmini found in his diary, Bonghi understood that it was impossible for all Italian to conduct their own "rischiacatura" in the Arno river as Manzoni had, noting, "In somma, poi, bisognerebbe sempre trovare un modo, perchè tutti gli Italiani non fossero obbligati d'andare a vivere in Firenze per divenire scrittori."<sup>76</sup> He does, however, as seen through the measures proposed in the second section of "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla", recognize the importance of affording outstanding students – including those that did not possess

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<sup>75</sup> To be clear, save for any revisions made to teaching materials such as text books and *grammatiche*, the purpose of highlighting the differences between the taught materials and a Florentine *dell'uso* was to demonstrate the differences so as to enhance the linguistic repertoire of speakers rather than to simply eliminate any regionalisms and provincialisms. To reiterate the words of Manzoni in "Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla", it was an incorporation of a language rather than the imposition of a "codice penale".

<sup>76</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 129.

the kind of financial capital that Manzoni had – the opportunity to both develop their linguistic repertoire and maximize their educational potential by studying at highly regarded institution. Although, at this stage, it is unclear how these bursaries would be awarded and precisely how these awards would be financed – whether it would be regionally, federally, or jointly funded – the groundwork of interregional academic exchanges was an integral component of the Historical Right and Bonghi’s educational policies.

Outside of the educational sphere, the next measures would consider, as had been done in the past, the language of other texts that were an integral part of Italian society and how they could be amended to contribute to the “diffusione della lingua viva”.<sup>77</sup> The first cited example was to consider the language of catechisms and other texts – those that were read, studied, and memorized from a very early age – and how they could be revised and modernized to similarly reflect the desired linguistic changes. Considering the impact of sermons on the historical linguistic transition from classical Latin to the “volgare” – not to mention, the significance of the publication of Niccolò Malerbi’s Bible in 1471 as the first bible to be translated in *volgare* and his inclusion of lexical glosses – the members of the Broglio commission certainly did not fail to recognize how widely distributed religious texts could contribute to the widespread adoption of a linguistic standard.<sup>78</sup> Naturally, rather than the emphasis on a northern koiné found in Malerbi’s translation,

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<sup>77</sup> “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 440.

<sup>78</sup> The historical significance of the composition and publication of Niccolò Malerbi’s bible is noteworthy in that it reflects both a change in devotional texts and the need for them to appeal to a congregation and larger audience on a spiritual, pedagogical, and linguistic level. Published in Venice in 1471, Niccolò Malerbi’s translation of the Bible was the first recorded translation and publication of the Bible in *volgare* – a publication with an importance to Italian linguistic history not unlike that of the Latin translation of the Vulgate Bible in the fourth century. What is particularly noteworthy about this translation is how, as far as notations are concerned, Malerbi includes far more lexical glosses than he does exegetical notations. Although his glosses largely derive from two prominent Latin dictionaries, the *Elementarium di Papia* (1041) and Giovanni Balbi’s *Catholicon* (1286), his focus on clarifying and elucidating for a mass audience his lexical selections and his inclusion of colloquial Italianized Latin words demonstrates a cultural focus on a communal language. In much the same way, the Broglio commission would hope to use such texts as instruments of furthering the linguistic competencies of Italians in a newly unified Italy.

the nineteenth-century attempt to promulgate an Italian standard would use gatherings such as the aforementioned conferences to leverage the collective knowledge of Florentine language instructors to more thoroughly Tuscanize existing texts.<sup>79</sup>

The following measures proposed by the Broglio Commission sought to address the remaining avenues of publicly circulated materials and would involve appointing linguistic experts in administrative centers to work with local journalists and officials on the language used in government forms, public notices, news and statements issued to local periodicals, and reports and stories printed in local newspapers. Inasmuch as “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” only touches upon these examples of text and includes them under the umbrella initiative of diffusing a Florentine *dell’uso*, it is very likely that Bonghi – who was the most involved of the three contributors with newspapers, periodicals, and governing bodies – would also consider how best to streamline bureaucratic procedures and the ways in which linguistic standardization could optimize a centralized system of operation. While Bonghi’s contributions to the optimization of Italy’s governing structures will be fully explored in the following chapter, in this particular instance, it is not difficult to imagine – from the brief four lines found in the article – how Bonghi might have been considering all potential advantages of a common language. From a governing standpoint, as the Historical Right worked towards integrating all regional governments of Italy into a centralized system, the implementation of standardized forms – or forms that shared a similar bureaucratic language – would contribute significantly to the

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<sup>79</sup> Granted, there was the realization initiatives of this sort would not likely be met without opposition from the Catholic Church. Considering the Apostolic Penitentiary had sanctioned the *Non Expedit* decree in 1868 – the decree that prohibited Catholics from participating in civic life as both electors and elected – and Pius IX was fighting to retain sovereignty over the Papal States, it was unlikely that the Church would change its stance on Bibles printed in the vernacular after Pius VII – who had also opposed the insurrections in Naples and Sicily in 1820 – had condemned the translation and distribution of translations of the Bible. This included the recent translation of the Old and New Testament (1769-1781) by Antonio Martini, Archbishop of Florence, which was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* by Pius VII in 1811.

optimization and facilitation of administering national documents and forms. Not only would this contribute to a standard understanding of nationally circulated documentation, it begins a process of establishing uniform documents that could be used throughout the entire nation. From a journalistic standpoint, one must recall the trend in the 1860s and 1870s that saw an increase in national connectivity as a result of the establishment of nationally distributed newspapers – newspapers that are currently in operation. If one considers the founding of *La Nazione* in 1859, *La Stampa* in 1867, *Il Corriere della Sera* in 1876, and *Il Messaggero* in 1878, to name a few, a concerted push to standardize the language found in news and statements issued to periodicals and in reports and in stories published for public consumption enabled both a level of national connectivity and – more importantly – the ability for a national audience to participate in a discourse that had previously been inaccessible.

The final point proposed in the section devoted to measures that could be implemented independently of Manzoni's dictionary takes scientific language into consideration and advocates for members of various bodies pertaining to science and industry to – amongst themselves – determine a standard set of nomenclatures in the sectors that were most accessible to the public. In sectors like but not limited to natural history, mechanics, metallurgy, the scientific bodies of each area of study would come together to establish a set of recognized terms and lexical norms that could then be adopted within each sector and used when teaching the next generation of scientists. Although the brevity of the lines found in “Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” can give the impression that this measure was included simply to incorporate every aspect of language, the inclusion of Achille Mauri and the consideration of his past experiences in education and publication demonstrates the importance of including the scientific sector in the *questione della lingua*. As stated above, Mauri collaborated on journals and periodicals for

adolescents like *L'Eco. Giornale di scienze, lettere, arti, mode e teatri* and *Il Giovedì* which not only featured examples of poetry and prose but also incorporated sections on astronomy, geography, natural history, and physics. With an increased focus on national distribution of published materials, a concerted effort by those such as Mauri to provide children with resources to learn and engage with all areas of study, and a reassessment and what should be incorporated in national curricula, the importance of establishing a linguistic standard was as great in science as it was everywhere else. While a technical, scientific language would indeed only be accessible to a small percentage of the population, the Broglio Commission pushed to give the scientific community the opportunity and the autonomy to shape the general lexicon which would become an integral part of composing and circulating curricula, informing and educating future generations, and fostering a collaborative approach to science that would benefit Italy as a whole.

To conclude the article, Manzoni, Bonghi, and Carcano return to the topic of Manzoni's dictionary initiative and list the various measures that would need to be taken in order for the dictionary to successfully achieve the desired goal of “diffondere in tutti gli ordini del popolo nostro la notizia della buona lingua e della buona pronunzia”. From a logistical perspective, there would be no more critical component than ensuring that the dictionary was accessible to pupils throughout Italy. From an availability standpoint, all secondary schools throughout Italy – “scuole governative, così dette, secondarie” – should have copies of the dictionary in proportion to the number of students at the school and all elementary schools should have shortened versions with all the relevant vocabulary.<sup>80</sup> While the secondary schools would have copies of the complete dictionary, elementary schools would have portable dictionaries that contained words pertaining to more familiar ideas – household items, words pertaining to local trades, etc. From an economic

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<sup>80</sup> “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 7 (1868): 425-441. p. 441.

standpoint, ensuring there were editions of the dictionary that were as economically affordable as possible was imperative in allowing schools to purchase copies in greater quantities and students to purchase copies for their own use. This would involve not only funding from the public sector – as financed by the Ministry of Public Education – but also, ideally, the financial support of writers, editors, and book vendors in the private sector. To ensure that schools were appropriately equipped with the learning tools necessary to democratize language, a collective approach was key to its success.

The final point of the article addresses female education and how educating girls and women – a vastly underrepresented group in literary and political cultures – was a necessary component of building a sustainable model for language learning and education. The article notes the importance of ensuring all-girl schools had copies of the dictionary – especially the elementary dictionary – as they would grow up to become the nucleus of the family unit and the primary point of linguistic contact for their children. With Bonghi advocating for female literacy throughout his life – from the early 1850s until his death in 1895 –, the importance of including women in the *questione della lingua* was, as will be explored fully in Chapter 5, a critical component of his approach to linguistic unity and not something that he would have ignored when working with the Broglio Commission.

All factors considered, as Giuseppe Polimeni notes in his work *La similitudine perfetta*, Manzoni, Bonghi, and the Broglio Commission see “come un privilegio dell’Italia il fatto che l’unità linguistica sia stata realizzata attraverso la letteratura e possa essere ora realizzata a livello di popolo attraverso la scuola, quindi nella sua dimensione culturale, senza l’intervento delle armi

o della forza politica.”<sup>81</sup> To underscore the previously mentioned sentiments of inclusion and democracy, Bonghi and Manzoni believed that not only was the use of force – one that was militaristic, aggressively political, or otherwise – an unnecessary component of linguistic unity, but an element that directly contravened the very premise of using the language debate as an opportunity to address and ameliorate the social and economic conditions in Italy. If the language debate could be considered an overarching factor in political and social discourse, it was education that embodied the means through which a long-term positive impact could be effectuated. With that established, inasmuch as the Broglio Commission and the eventual publication of the *Novo vocabolario della lingua italiana secondo l'uso di Firenze* can be directly attributed to Manzoni, both the nuances of Bonghi’s contributions to literary and linguistic discourse – as seen in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* – and his holistic approach to linguistic promulgation and education – as seen in “Dell’unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla” – indicate a centrality to Bonghi’s involvement in the organization, facilitation, and execution of Manzoni’s linguistic ideals and goals. From his argument to reevaluate the role of literary critics and reintegrate them into a pragmatic educational context, to his reflections on national Italian curricula, to his proposed measures concerning language learning, Bonghi’s contributions to the *questione della lingua* were integral to Italy’s linguistic progress and, as will be explored in Chapter 4, featured prominently in parliamentary discussions concerning the development and restructuring of political policy and educational systems.

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<sup>81</sup> Polimeni, Giuseppe, *La similitudine perfetta: La prosa di Manzoni nella scuola italiana nell'Ottocento*. Milano: Francoangeli, 2011, p. 33.

## Chapter 4

### *Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione: Language, Education, and Political Reform*

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In the introductory chapter of Massimo d'Azeglio's autobiographical work *I miei ricordi*, the former Prime Minister of Sardinia and Senator of the Kingdom of Italy writes: "il primo bisogno d'Italia è che si formino Italiani dotati d'alti e forti caratteri."<sup>1</sup> Although the ensuing lines would lament how, five years after unification, the goal of uniting a people appeared to be of even greater difficulty than that of uniting a nation, this short phrase emphasizes a new focus on guiding Italy through a new stage of nation building and a concerted push made towards forming an Italian people.<sup>2</sup> With Italy's governing bodies working to facilitate the formation of a national collective identity following the unification of Italy as a political state, the *questione della lingua* embodied a different element of cultural unity and social cohesion, and evolved to reflect a changing social and cultural landscape. With changes to government policy being used as an attempt to drive social reform, the Italian language debate – more than in any other time period – became a feature that both informed educational policy and influenced the shaping of a more centralized system of education. As the efforts to promulgate a national linguistic standard became increasingly backed by Italy's governing parties, those – like Manzoni and Bonghi – who devoted a significant portion of their study to the linguistic situation in Italy were called upon to assist with government initiatives and contribute to the formation and development of educational policy. Where theoretical deliberations and discussions regarding potential practical measures pertaining to

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<sup>1</sup> D'Azeglio, Massimo. *I miei ricordi*. Firenze: G. Barbèra Editore, 1873, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> The following line of D'Azeglio's work reads, "E pur troppo si va ogni giorno più verso il polo opposto: pur troppo s'è fatta l'Italia, ma non si fanno gl'Italiani." Ibid., p. 7.

language, prior to unification, dominated the conversations, correspondences, and writings of the intellectual elite, formal scholastic education – and its impact on language, literacy, economics, and social progress – became the most critical feature of the language debate in the second half of the nineteenth century. In a politically united state, education was the crux of not only facilitating the formation of Italians “dotati d’alti e forti caratteri”, but also improving the intellectual and economic conditions of the nation. It was only through a common tongue – one with which they could use to communicate and collaborate with other Italians, regardless of their respective region of origin – that Italians could engage in national discourse that would improve the social, political, and economic state of the country at-large.

Naturally, as Ruggero Bonghi became increasingly involved with Italy’s governing bodies and was called upon to assist with the development and execution of political measures meant to address the linguistic problems in Italy, so too did his approach to language reflect the shift in focus of the *questione della lingua*. By the mid-1860s, the Neapolitan writer had already held professorship positions at the Universities of Pavia, Naples, and Turin, and his work in the educational sphere added yet another layer to his thoughts concerning linguistic unity. Although these three elements – his work with Italy’s governing parties and time in parliament, his work in education, and his studies on the Italian language – would culminate with his tenure as Minister of Public Education under Marco Minghetti from 1874 to 1876, his formal involvement in the legislative development of the nation’s systems of education had begun in the mid-1860s and would continue until the 1890s. He too believed that, to promulgate both a sense of national identity and a national language, and establish an effective system of education – one that was as bureaucratically manageable as it was intellectually stimulating, engaging, and productive – was crucial in overcoming the obstacles that had long prevented either goal from being realized. It is

precisely in this capacity that Bonghi made his mark on the *questione della lingua*. Although figures like Alessandro Manzoni and Graziadio Isaia Ascoli had differing ideas concerning the promulgation of a standardized language – which can be seen with the publication of Ascoli’s “Proemio” in 1873 – Italy’s system of education had adopted Florentine as the pedagogical standard. By the time Bonghi assumed the role of Minister of Education in 1874, the primary focus of Italy’s governing bodies concerning the overarching *questione della lingua* was that of improving the national standard of scholastic learning and increasing the rates at which Italians received, at the very least, an elementary education.

Through an analysis of Bonghi’s published writings, his discourses in parliament, and his initiatives before, during, and after his tenure as Minister of Public Education, one can determine not only the expansive nature of his contributions to each level of education in Italy, but also the extent to which he was involved in initiatives and reform at each level. Found in the overarching Bonghian canon is a substantial number of writings and texts that address everything from primary to university education, and access and outreach to female academic equality. As Bonghi examines both the macro and micro dimensions of Italy’s educational system – and the levels that comprise it – there is the explicit notion that education formed the bedrock of Italy’s potential to develop as a nation. In considering the integration of scholastic learning alongside the push for linguistic accessibility, the following chapter will contextualize Bonghi within the larger framework of Italian educational policy in the *ottocento* before breaking down his thoughts and initiatives pertaining to – with a focus on primary education – the three fundamental levels of schooling and the ways in which educational reform developed into a new component of the nineteenth-century

*questione della lingua*.<sup>3</sup> Through his contributions to every facet of scholastic life in Italy, Bonghi remains as integral to the shaping and restructuring of educational systems in Italy as he was during the composition of the *legge delle guarentigie* or the Broglio Commission in 1868. As Sandro Rogari summarizes in his *Ruggiero Bonghi nella vita politica dell'Italia unita*, “Come ministro fu responsabile di altri provvedimenti importanti per la cultura italiana, come il varo della Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II, la creazione della Direzione Scavi e Musei del ministero, la promozione dell’Accademia dei Lincei, e come è stato giustamente ricordato, l’introduzione nell’insegnamento universitario della scienza dell’amministrazione.”<sup>4</sup> His contributions were profound, and his impact on the development of policy in a period when, not two decades after unification, governing bodies sought to establish a political, judicial, and economic framework for future generations, cannot be discounted. As Celestino Bianchi writes – in regards to the discussions and disagreements provoked by Bonghi’s critical letters on literature – in the annotated *Appendice* to Bonghi’s *Lettere intorno la letteratura italiana*, “Intanto questo discutere, questo contraddire mostra che il Bonghi se non ha ragione in tutte le cose, nel fondo della questione ha toccato il vero, o che almeno ha posta una questione rilevante assai”.<sup>5</sup> This perception of Bonghi is perhaps even more pertinent when analyzing the impact of his involvement in the debates surrounding educational reform than it is when considering his thoughts and writings on literature.

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<sup>3</sup> While Bonghi was involved with legislative and administrative reform at every level of Italian education, his ideas and initiatives pertaining to primary education are the most directly related to the issues surrounding the *questione della lingua*. As will be explained in further detail later in the chapter, Bonghi’s involvement with secondary and university education – while significant, especially regarding his lifelong focus on university reform – pertains to the language debate inasmuch as such levels of education received greater proportional funding than elementary education. While Bonghi sought to improve upon the governing structures and systems that affected each level of education, in order to remain focused on the overarching theme of the *questione della lingua*, this chapter will limit its consideration of higher levels of education to their direct impact on elementary education – which, for sociohistorical reasons that will be examined later in the chapter, has a much greater impact on language, literacy, and socioeconomic equality.

<sup>4</sup> Rogari, Sandro. *Ruggiero Bonghi Nella Vita Politica Dell'Italia Unita*. Napoli: Scuola di Pitagora Editrice, 2001, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Bonghi, Ruggiero. *Lettere Critiche di Ruggiero Bonghi: Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*. Milano: Francesco Colombo Libraio-Editor & Fortunato Perelli Lib.-Editore, 1856, p. 201.

That is, during Bonghi's longstanding service as a member of parliament – serving on eleven *Legislature del Regno d'Italia* – it can be said that, even when deemed wrong in his assumptions or approach to a given issue by his contemporaries, he provoked discussion and ultimately brought Italy and its governing bodies closer to finding a solution to the problems that were present in Italian society.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Revolution and Education: Early Educational Systems and a Changing Mindset***

In order to more fully understand the relevance and lasting impact of the policies and structures pertaining to scholastic education introduced in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is beneficial to first examine the educational structures that existed in Europe prior to Italy's unification. As James Albisetti describes in his chapter “National Education Systems: Europe”, while “educational institutions in Western and Central Europe, mostly associated with the Catholic Church, date back to the Middle Ages”, he states that “To discuss education as either “national” or a “system” before 1815 makes little sense.”<sup>7</sup> While Albisetti's statement is used as a general summary of the structure of educational institutions throughout Europe, it would not be until the mid 1850s that Italy would begin to see the emergence of overarching institutional structures that encouraged a more universal and democratic approach to education. Although the implementation of such policies and laws was a process that spanned a substantial portion of the nineteenth century in Italy, these changes were fuelled by both a changing social awareness that

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<sup>6</sup> Bonghi first began serving on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* (February 18 1861 – September 7 1865) – the first legislature of the Kingdom of Italy – and continued serving on Legislatures X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX (June 10 1895 – March 2 1897) until his death in 1895. All information pertaining to senators and members of the *Camera dei Deputati* was taken from historical archive curated and published online by *Camera.it*.

<sup>7</sup> Albisetti, James. “National Education Systems: Europe”. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education*, edited by John L. Rury, Eileen H. Tamura, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 149-163, pp. 150-151.

arose after the French Revolution, and a recognition of the economic benefits of education amid a changing global landscape.

From an ideological standpoint, it was during the French Revolution that the belief of universal education – one that was free and accessible to all, regardless of sex or socio-economic status – began to feature more prominently in public discourse and figures like the Marquis de Condorcet began to advocate more fervently for public instruction and equal rights.<sup>8</sup> The push for accessible formal instruction for the lower socio-economic echelons of society marked the beginning of a change in mindset that contradicted previously held beliefs that education was a luxury of aristocratic or economically advantaged classes. Rather, as seen in the Marquis de Condorcet's *Rapport et projet de décret sur l'organisation générale de l'Instruction publique* which was presented in 1792 at the *Assemblée Nationale* on behalf of the *Comité d'Instruction publique*, the argument was put forward that education and formal instruction should be recognized as a fundamental human right that benefits both the individual and society at large. He opened his *Rapport* with: 'Messieurs, Offrir à tous les individus de l'espèce humaine les moyens de pourvoir à leurs besoins, d'assurer leur bien-être, de connaître et d'exercer leurs droits, d'entendre et de remplir leurs devoirs', and extends the notion to underscore its purpose in any functioning society.<sup>9</sup> As a fundamental human right, he argues that education – as a means of accessing and discerning truth – is tool that not only empowers the individual but prevents the widespread corruption of society: "La première condition de toute instruction étant de n'enseigner que des vérités, les établissements que la puissance publique y consacre doivent être aussi indépendants qu'il est

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<sup>8</sup> Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis of Condorcet (September 17 1743 – March 29 1794) was a mathematician and philosopher who was appointed inspector general of the Paris mint. He was an abolitionist and a fierce advocate of social and economic equality for all – regardless of sex or race.

<sup>9</sup> Condorcet, *Rapport et projet de décret sur l'organisation générale de l'Instruction publique*, Paris: L'Imprimerie Nationale, 1793, p. 8.

possible de toute autorité politique.”<sup>10</sup> For the Marquis de Condorcet and other likeminded figures, these efforts represented a means of empowering the individual with the ability to fight corruption – he argues a mass is significantly more difficult to corrupt than an individual – the ability to learn and think freely, and the ability to defend against those who wish to take advantage of others. These ideas resonated with liberal supporters in places like France and Italy who felt the masses were being taken advantage of by political and aristocratic authorities.<sup>11</sup> The primary discerning factor, however, that separated the Italian and French cultural contexts was a distinct difference in linguistic uniformity. Insofar as the two countries shared an ideological end, for the Italian state to bring about the empowerment of disenfranchised societal groups and classes through education, there was the need to address – either prior to or consequently – the linguistic discrepancies of the nation. As the peninsula lacked the same linguistic cohesion that benefitted a country like France or Germany, the push for a democratization of knowledge, power, and social autonomy – the ideas exemplified by writers like Manzoni in works like *I promessi sposi* - manifested itself primarily in the language debate. All factors considered, the influence of figures such as Marquis de Condorcet on Italian liberals was profound; however, as Italy’s leading figures worked towards establishing

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> During the period leading to the 1820 revolts in Naples and Sicily, figures like Luca de Samuele Cagnazzi (1764-1852) – mathematician, scientist, and political economist from Altamura – and Marco Gatti (1778-1862) – writer and patriot from Salento - argued for the importance of mass education and its necessity for political freedom, social progress, and communal wellbeing in, respectively, works such as *Saggio sopra i principali metodi d'istruire i fanciulli* (1819) and *Della riforma della istruzione pubblica nel Regno delle Due Sicilie* (1820). The ideological inspiration drawn from the French Revolution and the Marquis de Condorcet can be seen particularly in the patriotic sentiment of Gatti’s opus in which he not only elaborates on Matteo Angelo Galdi’s *Pensieri sull’Istruzione Pubblica relativemente al Regno delle Due Sicilie* (1809) (See footnote 32) but imbues the treatise on education with the contemporary political fervor of local patriots. Beginning with an introduction entitled “Alla Patria”, he concludes his opening ode with, “Accetta questi che io volentoso ti offro, frutto delle meditazioni alle quali le pubbliche e le private circostanze hi hanno invitato. Non ultimo nel sentimento che dagli anni più teneri nudrii vivissimo per la tua gloria e per la tua grandezza, io mi doleva in segreto del fatale governo che della parte più nobile del tuo civile regimento facevasi, della Pubblica Istruzione. Da questa tu spera tutto il vigore ne’ figli tuoi, e nobiltà di carattere, ed elevatezza di sentimenti, e conoscenza di se medesimi e de’ loro diritti. Possano i miei lumi, or che tu risorgi a nuova vita, concorre in parte alla fortuna che ti auguro gloriosa e intemerata!” Gatti Salentino, Marco. *Della riforma della istruzione pubblica nel Regno delle Due Sicilie*. Napoli: Angelo Trani, 1820, pp. 3-4.

institutional structures defined by the new tenets of social equality, the difficulty of forming such structures was exacerbated by the profound linguistic disparity between regions, the literacy rate, and the different – at times, archaic – social cultures. It is precisely with this in mind that one cannot overlook the contributions of Italy’s early governments – almost exclusively formed by the Historical Right – and their Ministers of Public Education – from Francesco De Sanctis to Ruggero Bonghi.

*Economics and Education: The Lombard Case Study, Global Trade, and Technological Innovation*

The call for social equality by means of a comprehensive and inclusive system of education certainly appealed to the more liberal members of European society, however, there were indeed other factors that contributed to the development of such systems and greatly impacted the educational situation in Italy. Perhaps more than any other factor, economic conditions in Italy dictated not only the approach to structuring and financing education, but also the reception of a changed – and mandatory – system of schooling by a populace that, largely, received little to no formal instruction.<sup>12</sup> The link between economics, formal education, and linguistic unity was a critical feature that defined the nineteenth-century language debate, and informed figures like Ruggero Bonghi in the creation and implementation of measures pertaining to education. While a brief analysis of the economic conditions in Italy might seem to be a deviation from a focused

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to consider the impact of what Rosario Romeo describes as “the embryo of a capitalistic bourgeoisie which was forming before unification in the more advanced parts of Italy”. The capitalistic awareness of the economic benefits of a more educated population by a socio-economic elite can help serve as a catalyst for advancements in social equality and economic distribution, as seen in nineteenth-century Lombardy. Romeo, Rosario. “Introductory Essay”, *Economics and Liberalism in the Risorgimento* by K.R. Greenfield, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965, pp. xii.

study of the evolution of the *questione della lingua*, it is necessary to fully comprehend the context in which Bonghi was operating. More importantly, Bonghi had an interest in economics, published works like *Storia della finanza italiana dal 1864 al 1868* detailing the financial situation in Italy, was a minister in the Minghetti Cabinet that was the first in Italy to successfully balance the federal budget in 1876, and had extensive contact with a great number of prominent economists – not to mention, agricultural specialists and agronomists who published on the economic situation of their respective regions. From linguistic promulgation and the efforts to increase the literacy rate, to educational reform and the importance of national buy-in to an efficient and effective system of education, the economic structures in Italy impacted every component of the *questione della lingua* and heavily informed the approach to educational structures in the first half of the nineteenth century.

From a social perspective, there is a clearly defined link between education and economics that can help contextualize the overarching impact on nation in the process of developing national systems and structures. As Giuseppe Bertola and Paolo Sestito describe in their chapter “Human Capital”:

Education can foster economic and cultural growth and convergence (or divergence) through several well-understood theoretical mechanisms. Schooling contributes to economic productivity not only through provision of specific skills, but also of general skills that ease on-the-job training and, at the primary level, of communication and relational skills that make it possible for individuals to function in a large society with extensive division of labor.<sup>13</sup>

While these principles can be applied to any nation, the notion of economic productivity through the development of skills defines not only the agro-economic trends in Italy during the nineteenth century but also clarifies the variations in industrial structures of each respective region

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<sup>13</sup> Bertola, Giuseppe, and Paolo Sestito. “Human Capital”. *The Oxford Handbook of the Italian Economy Since Unification*, edited by Gianni Toniolo, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 249-270, p. 249.

and how they impacted the standard of education and literacy rates in the first half of the 1800s. Moreover, the correlation between the Italian regions with the highest economic output and the highest literacy rate at the time of unification cannot be ignored. Inasmuch as economic circumstances dictated – and were dictated by – the respective states of education throughout Italy, the economists who analyzed the economies of regions like Lombardy and Piedmont were those who served alongside Bonghi in the Chamber of Deputies and provided insight on the economic ramifications of certain forms of political change.

With this in mind, an analysis of the educational and economic conditions in Lombardy – perhaps more than any other region in light of the social and historical factors – provides the best example of an Italian model that would have informed the implementation of wider policies after unification. While the profound influence of Piedmont on the shaping and implementation of Italian policy is undeniable, the concentration of academic discourse in Milan – seen as much in the literary sector as in the economic sector with notable economists like Stefano Jacini –, the prevalence of more progressive social cultures, and the influence of the Austrian primary educational systems leaves the Lombard capital as the optimal point of reference for the first half of the nineteenth century when dissecting the dynamics between education and economics.<sup>14</sup> As Kent Roberts Greenfield notes in the introduction to his study on the economic systems in Italy during the Risorgimento, “At the Restoration Lombardy was not only the most important part of

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<sup>14</sup> Stefano Jacini (1826-1891) was one of Italy’s most prominent economists and served on the VIII, IX, and X *Legislature del Regno Italia*, as Senator in the X *Legislatura*, as *Ministro dei lavori pubblici del Regno di Sardegna* under Cavour from January 21 1860 to February 14 1861, and as *Ministro dei lavori pubblici del Regno d’Italia* under Alfonso La Marmora and Bettino Ricasoli from September 28 1864 to February 17 1867. He served alongside Bonghi in parliament – someone with whom he shared a slightly infrequent correspondence between 1867 and 1870 – and his work *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia* – the product of a concerted push by Lombard aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie to study and improve the economic conditions in the region – was considered one of the most important economic studies of an Italian region in the nineteenth century, received several reprinted editions, and was, along with his other writings, received positively by economists and political figures throughout Europe – including figures such as William Ewart Gladstone.

Italy under foreign domination but was the richest and most “progressive” of the Italian communities. Furthermore, its capital, Milan, led the peninsula in the making of books and the publication of journals addressed to the whole of Italy.”<sup>15</sup> The “progressive” approach to which Greenfield alludes manifested itself as much in the social cultures as in the region’s economic systems. While the Lombard economy was as dependent on agriculture as the rest of Italy, the economic systems found in the plains – as opposed to the mountains or hills – can be defined as a form of agrarian capitalism which was, as Greenfield describes, “peculiar” to Lombardy.<sup>16</sup> Common to the plains was a system in which the estates of absentee proprietors – typically living in Milan – were leased to and managed entirely by a class of renters who commanded fairly substantial capital to acquire livestock and equipment and employ an entire hierarchy of workers. Those employed by the renters ranged from specialists – who managed a particular area of the land such as cheese production, or livestock management – to employed workers – who performed a specific duty such as manning the stables, milking the cows, etc. – to day-labourers – who were typically unskilled but given shelter, rations of food, and a percentage of food produced from the managed farms or gardens. The corporate structure of the agricultural systems – primarily in the plains but also, to a far lesser extent, in the hills – saw social and economic changes akin to the rise of the mercantile classes of the Italian renaissance in which gradual economic advancement

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<sup>15</sup> Greenfield, Kent Roberts. *Economics and Liberalism in the Risorgimento: A Study in Nationalism in Lombardy, 1814-1848*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1934, p. xi.

<sup>16</sup> Greenfield, *Economics and Liberalism in the Risorgimento*, p. 11. In regards to occupation breakdown, Stefano Jacini states in *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia* that the total population of Lombardy in 1854 was 2,855,219, of which, 502,205 were of males over the age of eighteen that belonged to “quella classe che coltiva il suolo colle proprie braccia.” This figure accounts for neither the women and males under the age of 18 who also worked in the same capacity nor the “proprietarj i quali non lavorano essi medesimi la terra ma dirigono l’amministrazione dei propri fondi, gli agenti di campagna e tutte le persone professanti alcuna delle arti che sono esclusivamente al servizio della agricoltura.” Jacini, Stefano. *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia: Studj Economici*. Milano: Stabilimento Civelli Giuseppe e Comp., 1857, pp. 51-52. As a whole, Jacini estimates that agriculture occupied over three-fifths of the Lombard population throughout the three geographical sectors of the mountains, hills, and plains.

was made possible by a system that had the potential to reward personal development and successful risk.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the potential for upward mobility in the agricultural hierarchy, regions like Lombardy benefitted significantly from a more democratic redistribution of the land – properties that had been taken from religious orders and resold, primarily, before and after the Restoration – which gave a different class of workers access to economic opportunities that had previously been unavailable to them.<sup>18</sup> The impact of the redistribution of such lands was noted by Stefano Jacini who, in *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia*, detailed the situation from an economic perspective and noted its impact on increasing the number of local businesses outside of Lombardy’s central hubs.<sup>19</sup> Between 1838 and 1850, Lombardy saw a population increase of 10.20% and an 11.54% increase in the number of *ditte* with provinces like Bergamo, Como, and Sondrio seeing, respectively, a 19.55%, 19.36%, and 21.29% increase in the number of local businesses despite the 7.34%, 12.56%, and 7.89% growth in population.<sup>20</sup> More importantly, Jacini stresses the socio-economic classes from which the region’s proprietors belonged as he notes how there was, “Niente di più assurdo quanto il linguaggio di alcuni giornali nella Monarchia Austriaca in cui sono considerate come sinonimi le parole *signori, possidenti e nobili*” considering his

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<sup>17</sup> So as not to overemphasize the nature of social mobility, as Greenfield states, “experience showed that [ambitious peasants] generally involved themselves in obligations beyond their strength and the relationship ended in loss to themselves and damage to the interests of the proprietor”, even the hill zones – which lacked the more robust corporate structure of the plains – had a system in which “some ambitious peasants rented small farms outright.” Greenfield, *Economics and Liberalism in the Risorgimento*, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> This is not to be mistaken with the laws passed by the Senate in 1866 regarding the suppression of ecclesiastical orders and the liquidation of Church assets.

<sup>19</sup> This trend can also be seen from a literary perspective by Carlo Ravizza (1811-1848). Ravizza was a writer and professor who, despite being the only child of a working-class family, showed intellectual promise from an early age, caught the attention of Alessandro Manzoni who facilitated the procurement of a bursary to assist in funding Ravizza’s studies, and went on to study jurisprudence at the University of Pavia. His most famous work, *Un curato di campagna* (1841), is noteworthy in its depiction of pedagogy and social change in a rural setting and its emphasis on the importance of education for Italy’s lower socio-economic classes.

<sup>20</sup> Jacini, *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia*, p. 117.

calculated estimation that, of the approximately 350,000 Lombard proprietors, no more than 3000 were “*nobili*”.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the trend of economic distribution created a demand for an enhanced skillset – one where theoretical knowledge was coupled with practical experience – in order to fully optimize the potential to stabilize or outright increase one’s economic situation. Moreover, the developing agro-economic system – combined with the growing industrial sector which also required its own set of learned skills – precipitated, as noted by politicians and economists alike, a more widespread push in Lombardy for advancing the level of education attained by oneself or one’s children that extended beyond agriculture. As mentioned in Carlo Cattaneo’s *Progetto di un istituto agrario nelle terre incolte dell’Alto Novarese* (1833) and *D’alcune istituzioni agrarie dell’alta Italia applicabili a sollievo dell’Irlanda* (1847), Giuseppe Devincenzi’s *Dell’agricoltura milanese* (1844), and Stefano Jacini’s *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia* (1854), the increased circulation of wealth allowed the opportunity for an increasing number of farming families to send their children to school and for renters – many of which had limited formal schooling with a small percentage having attended university – the financial means to send their sons to university.<sup>22</sup> With an increasing number of children attending school – along with the development of agricultural schools that combined theory with practical knowledge – came a

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>22</sup> Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869) was a prominent patriot, politician, and writer best known for his role in the Five Days of Milan in 1848 and his literary account of the event. Cattaneo also had a profound interest in economics and agriculture and their impact on society. See Cattaneo. *Progetto di un istituto agrario nelle terre incolte dell’Alto Novarese* in *Saggi di economia rurale*. Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 1975, pp. 3-9. *D’alcune istituzioni agrarie dell’alta Italia applicabili a sollievo dell’Irlanda*. Milano: Giuseppe Bernardoni di Giovanni, 1847, p. 75. Giuseppe Devincenzi (1814-1903) was born into an agrarian bourgeois family and twice served as *Ministro dei Lavori Pubblici del Regno d’Italia* under Bettino Ricasoli (February 17 1867- April 10 1867) – preceding Stefano Jacini – and Giovanni Lanza (August 31 1871-July 10 1873). He worked alongside Bonghi twice in the Chamber of Deputies on Legislatures VIII, IX, and X. Devincenzi, “Relazione sull’Agricoltura dell’alto e del basso Milanese”. *Annali universali di statistica, economia pubblica, storia, viaggi e commercio* Vol. 81 (1844), p. 336. This report was also included in *Annali civili del regno delle Due Sicilie* with the title “Dell’agricoltura Milanese”. See Jacini. *La proprietà fondiaria e le popolazioni agricole in Lombardia*, pp. 96-97 for numbers of children attending school and increase in education rates in Lombardy.

greater awareness of the necessary practices involved with contributing to, running, or starting an economically stable business in agriculture and, by the middle of the nineteenth century, “entrepreneurship” was present not only in towns but in the countryside as well.

The impact of enhancing one’s personal skillsets on increasing potential for economic advancement within a local agricultural system was furthered still by a changing global landscape of world trade and an international distribution of goods. Global trade and the demand for foreign goods from cultural and economic hubs in England, France, and Germany added a sense of global competition – in addition to regional competition – and regions like Lombardy and Piedmont saw increase in investment in the study of science and technology in order to improve the means of production and create more efficient practices and structures – largely due to the booming silk industry which fuelled the Italian economy.<sup>23</sup> There are two pertinent examples found in the *Annali universali di statistica, economia pubblica, storia, viaggi e commercio* from 1826 and 1844, which Greenfield also cites in his study, that bring together the competing notions of action and reaction as they pertain to technology, progress, and education. The first citation comes from a report entitled “Su i progressi dell’industria in Inghilterra” included in Volume 7 of *Annali* (1826) – written when Lombardy was one of most prominent distributors of silk in the world – where the editors state the importance of learning from England’s example and actively working to invest in the education, technological means, and structural processes of every sector. Regarding the silk industry, they write:

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<sup>23</sup> To highlight the importance of global trade on regional laws and practices, the example of the silk industry in Italy proves quite telling. In the early 1800s, the demand for silk exploded in England, America, France, and Germany. Despite how Lombard silk was considered to be of lesser quality than the finest silk produced in other regions in Italy, Lombardy benefitted from a progressive stance on exporting goods and dominated the London market. By comparison, laws in Piedmont prohibited the exporting of crude silk and it was not until 1841 that the prohibition was lifted. By the end of the Opium War between England and China in 1842, the English market once again began importing silk from India and China, and Italian producers were forced to invest in means that could produce a greater quantity and a higher quality of silk faster than their international competitors.

Le sete del Bengala non hanno nè il lucido, nè il brillante di una parte delle sete d'Italia, ma non per questo gli Italiani devono rimanere colle mani alla cintola, nella persuasione di avere eternamente, e per ogni dove la preferenza, quindi li preghiamo con calore di impiegare ogni studio onde migliorarne sempre più la qualità.<sup>24</sup>

The second quotation comes from a report entitled “Sul setifizio. Rapporto della Commissione letto dal Dott. Gera nella Sessione di Agronomia e Tecnologia al IX Congresso in Venezia, settembre 1847” included in Volume 94 of *Annali* (1847) in which an even more integral component of progress is highlighted.

E mi onoro riferire a conforto essersi ritenuto che l'Italia è più avanti di ogni altra nazione in tutto quello che riguarda l'arte di svolgere i bozzoli; e solamente che ella ha bisogno di estendere, o per dir meglio, di rendere più volgari e comuni i miglioramenti introdotti, tuttavia confinati a pochissimi.<sup>25</sup>

These two passages not only capture the outlook towards technological progress and economic advancement, but, more importantly, emphasize the need to democratize better means of production and greater access to the knowledge and technology involved with such means. Naturally, as Cattaneo, Devincenzi, Jacini – all acquaintances of Bonghi – emphasized in their studies and writings, an enhanced and more widespread system of education was the crux of elevating the economic state of Italy. When one notes the reference to “rendere più volgari e comuni” noted above, one cannot help but recall the purpose of the Broglio Commission – over two decades later – of “ricercare i modi più facili diffondere in tutti gli ordini del popolo nostro la notizia della buona lingua e della buona pronunzia”. Herein lies a component of the *questione della lingua* not discussed in the previous chapters. Inasmuch as linguistic accessibility empowered a large portion of the Italian population by granting them the ability to partake in wider public

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<sup>24</sup> “Su i progressi dell'industria in Inghilterra”. *Annali universali di statistica, economia pubblica, storia, viaggi e commercio* Vol. 7 (1826), Milano: Gli Editori degli Annali Universali di Medicina e di Statistica, 234-250, p. 240.

<sup>25</sup> “Sul setifizio. Rapporto della Commissione letto dal Dott. Gera nella Sessione di Agronomia e Tecnologia al IX Congresso in Venezia, settembre 1847,” *Annali universali di statistica, economia pubblica, storia, viaggi e commercio* Vol. 94 (1844), Milano: Societa' degli Editori degli Annali Universali delle Scienze e dell'Industria, p. 257.

discourse that had long been exclusive to the educated elite, the promulgation of a national language also provided access to educational opportunities that imparted the knowledge and skills that were necessary for economic sustainability or advancement. When Bonghi and the other Ministers of Public Education worked to restructure educational systems and implement reform at every level of the educational hierarchy, they did so with a new awareness of the changing economic cultures in the country. As industries which fuelled Italy's economy – and the respective economy of each region – changed and developed throughout the nineteenth century, it came down to Italy's governing bodies to implement legislation that bolstered the social and economic climate of the nation at large.

***Italy and Education: The State of Formal Instruction, Centralized Systems of Education, and Difficulties Encountered***

In having established the positive developments of various economic trends in a region like Lombardy, one can begin to comprehend the more nuanced divisions that separated both the socio-economic classes within the region – but applicable to any region in Italy – but also the economic divide which separated northern and southern Italy.<sup>26</sup> This economic divide was, perhaps more

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<sup>26</sup> The economic situation that Carlo Cattaneo details in *Su le condizioni economiche e morali della Bassa Lombardia* (1851) becomes as pertinent to the economic divide within Italy after unification as it was to internal distribution of wealth in Lombardy in 1851. He considers, from the perspective of both an economist and a politician, the best means of addressing the poor economic conditions of the region's peasants that were struggling as a result of the growth of the agricultural industry, the increase in labour supply, the decline in real wages, and the rise in food prices. See Cattaneo, Carlo. *Saggi di economia rurale*. Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 1975, pp. 147-170. In his "Della Beneficenza Publica", Cattaneo systematically examines many forms of public assistance for the members of society that either could not or were unable to meet the basic needs of either themselves or their families. In moving away from the previous models of local charitable support – confraternities, local parishes, etc. – he considers how a system, through taxation and government support, could provide for those who could not provide for themselves. Naturally, access to education also played a critical role in the overall benefit of society. Cattaneo, "Della Beneficenza Publica" in *Opere Edite ed Inedite di Carlo Cattaneo: Scritti di Economia Publica Vol. V*, edited by Agostino Bertani, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1888, pp. 293-324.

than any other, one of the most critical components that informed the shaping of educational systems throughout Italy and stunted the literacy rate – and recognition of the benefit of educating one’s children – in the southern regions. With economic, educational, and linguistic trends so closely intertwined, there were several underlying factors that contributed to a degree of educational stasis throughout Italy, relative to other European nations. First and foremost was the lack of structured systems – working, economic, or otherwise – that streamlined social mobility in all but Italy’s most prosperous regions. Inasmuch as both the corporate agricultural structure and examples of land redistribution found in the plains of Lombardy provided potential for social mobility, much of the nation – especially the southern regions – failed at any attempt of significant agrarian reform and children tended to work in the same capacity as their parents. In southern Italy, any improvements that arose as a result of the abolishment of feudal systems around 1812 and the redistribution of land belonging to religious orders in 1861 were stunted by trends which saw lands purchased by a small group of economic elites. The economic divide between the wealthy agricultural ruling class and the class of small land owners and peasants was further exacerbated after the Italian unification by new taxes on consumer goods – rather than income tax – and a laissez-faire economy that exposed the embryonic industries of the South to both domestic and foreign competition.

The economic conditions and structures of southern Italy also, consequently, increased the aversion to the social and economic risks. From both an agronomic and educational standpoint, such an aversion to entrepreneurial risk was as much a product of necessity – the need to provide one’s family with secure food and housing – as it was a reluctance to embrace new industrial trends or new agricultural measures, means, or systems. However, even before systems of agronomic specialization could be considered, it was necessary to first address and overcome the issues

pertaining to education and widespread illiteracy. Using the statistics found in the *Annuario Statistico Italiano* and *Annali di Statistica*, Martin Clark notes, “According to the 1871 census, 68.8 per cent of the Italian population aged 6 and over were illiterate (61.9 per cent of men, 75.7 per cent of women)” and, noting the “considerable regional variations”, affirms that “Among Southern peasants, illiteracy must have been well-nigh total.”<sup>27</sup> When one recalls – as indicated in Chapter 2 – that illiteracy rates in Piedmont and Lombardy in 1871 were the lowest in Italy at, respectively, 42.3 and 45.2 illiterates per 100 inhabitants – followed by Liguria (56.3), Veneto (64.7), Lazio (67.7), and Tuscany (68.1) as the only regions under the national average (68.8) – it is important to note how the illiteracy rates of Northern Italy compared with those of Southern Italy.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, Basilicata (88.0), Calabria (87.0), Sardinia (86.1), Sicily (85.3), Abruzzi and Molise (84.8), and Apulia (84.6) had the highest levels of illiteracy in Italy in 1871 – figures that are even more telling when one factors how “literacy” was defined simply by the ability to write one’s name legibly and read a brief passage successfully.<sup>29</sup> To further emphasize the dire state of nineteenth-century Italian literacy and education using other metrics and records, Clark notes that “In 1871 67.2 per cent of people getting married did not sign the parish register (57.7 per cent of the men, 76.7 per cent of the women)” which serves as a stark contrast to countries like Scotland and England where, respectively, 14.8 and 23.1 per cent of people getting married failed to sign.<sup>30</sup>

All factors considered, working to address the high levels of illiteracy throughout Italy – linguistic divisions aside – was as much a matter of establishing new, universal systems as it was convincing Italy’s working classes of the long-term importance of education. However, the precarious socioeconomic circumstances that defined the lives of Italy’s lowest working classes

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<sup>27</sup> Clark, *Modern Italy 1871 to the Present*, p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

was a tremendous impediment that enforced a cycle of illiteracy, lack of education, and lack of opportunity. Regarding scholastic education and attendance throughout the nineteenth century in Italy, James Albisetti states:

Getting many children to attend school, much less to do so on a regular basis for an extended period, was a difficult and contested process. Parents who had not attended school themselves often questioned the need for their children to do so. Even willing parents might be unable to pay for the tuition that many elementary schools charged in the early nineteenth century, or they might need their children's work in the fields or at home or their wages from outside employment. The rhythms of agrarian life often limited the length of the school year or took pupils out of class for extended periods.<sup>31</sup>

To Albisetti's point, even when the willingness to educate one's children was present, Italy, as a whole, lacked the educational infrastructure and resources to support a radical bolstering of national primary and secondary scholastic systems that could substantially impact rural southern areas – let alone change a mindset and create alternate means of economic generation outside agriculture that could employ Italians en masse.

In the same capacity that, for Italian patriots, a politically united nation called for linguistically, socially, and culturally united people, the increasing likelihood of unification also precipitated a dire need to address the clear educational divide that existed between Northern and Southern Italy. Until the establishment of a national educational system after unification, Piedmont and Lombardy were the only regions in Italy with a tradition of lay education – due to the French and Austrian educational systems that were implemented in each respective region – with the rest of Italy reliant on the Catholic Church and Church ministers for formal instruction. By comparison, despite the historical significance of public universities and academies in the Kingdom of Naples and Kingdom of the Two Sicilies – not least of all the University of Naples which produced monumentally important figures such as Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) or Antonio Genovesi

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<sup>31</sup> Albisetti, "National Education Systems: Europe". *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education*. p. 150.

(1713-1769) – and the rapid industrialization of Naples with its growing textile – and later iron and steel – industry, attempts to establish a system of lay education in the southern regions were ultimately unsuccessful under both Napoleonic and Bourbon rule.<sup>32</sup>

Between the periods of Bourbon Restoration – after 1830 – and Italian unification – in 1861 – there were multiple attempts to establish a system of public education in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under the jurisdiction of the state, however, political turmoil and rapid flux of *Presidenti del Consiglio dei ministri del Regno delle Due Sicilie* and their appointed ministers inhibited the implementation of significant legislative reform. Initial attempts to reassign the administrative and instructional duties of primary education away from the Church – which had been legally granted responsibility of primary instruction with a decree passed on January 10 1843 – began with the establishment of a formal Ministry devoted to matters of *istruzione pubblica*. With the decree of March 6 1848 (No. 72.: Art. 1.) *Cavalier* D. Carlo Poerio (1803-1867) was nominated “pel dipartimento dell’istruzione pubblica”, officially made *Ministro Segretario di Stato dell’istruzione pubblica*, and tasked by Ferdinand II to lead a provisional committee devoted

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<sup>32</sup> To clarify, the recognition of the importance of education for society at-large following the French Revolution was as prevalent in liberal circles in the Kingdom of Naples as it was with similarly-minded people throughout Europe. Figures like Matteo Angelo Galdi (1765-1821) – who was a patriot, politician, writer, and pedagogue – wrote extensively on the importance of public instruction and mass education. As perhaps Galdi’s most notable work, *Pensieri sull’Istruzione Pubblica relativamente al Regno delle Due Sicilie* (1809) created a detailed framework for the creation and administration of a centralized system of education including purpose and benefits to society, potential difficulties, general curriculum, structural breakdown and potential educational paths, and classification and organizational structures of subjects. Even in the context of a monarchy, he notes the importance of “un Sistema di Pubblica Istruzione che assicuri egualmente la forza e la grandezza del trono, la stabilità del governo, a la felicità de’ cittadini” – even one that was granted by “la generosità del loro Monarca”. Galdi, Matteo. *Pensieri sull’Istruzione Pubblica relativamente al Regno delle Due Sicilie*. Napoli: Stamperia Reale, 1809, p. 6. By 1810 in the Kingdom of Naples, Gioacchino Murat sought to introduce an extensive series of measures that reflected the social changes following the French Revolution in France. The initiatives which included the implementation of obligatory primary schooling and the restructuring of technical institutes for those studying mathematics, sciences, and engineering did not endure beyond the Bourbon Restoration under the rule of Ferdinand I and Ferdinand II who, again, implemented their own series of changes.

to restructuring the state of primary education with decree No. 105. on March 22 1848.<sup>33</sup> The provisional committee – which included none other than Saverio Baldacchini, Ruggero Bonghi’s stepfather – was short-lived as government minister positions were changed thereafter with the election of Carlo Troya – Bonghi’s mentor – as *Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri del Regno delle Due Sicilie* and his brief tenure from April 3 1848 to May 15 1848. Much like Carlo Poerio and Francesco De Sanctis – who had also been heavily involved in the initiatives pertaining to education in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies – Troya and his *Segretario di Stato della Istruzione Pubblica*, Paolo Emilio Imbriani (1808-1877), recognized the rampant levels of illiteracy which plagued all but Southern Italy’s highest social sphere and believed in the inherent connection between popular public instruction, political freedom, and social progress. Through decrees No. 166 and 177, Imbriani and Troya set the groundwork for a system of public instruction in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies with the following measures:

- 1) Decree No.167 on April 16 1848 built on the decree of March 6 1848 to establish a central Ministry of Education and detailed which institutions fell under the jurisdiction of the state and, generally, the capacity in which the central ministry would be involved. With the intention that “il pubblico insegnamento di ogni maniera di utili discipline proceda nel Regno con quella unificazione e verità di principii che risponda agli attuali progressi intellettivi, e concordi ad un tempo col nostro politico regimento”, the Ministry of Education would lend it support to the “perfezionamento” of institutions involved with education – primarily through the

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<sup>33</sup> See “(No. 72.) Napoli, 6 Marzo 1848”, *Collezione delle Leggi e de’ Decreti Reali del Regno delle Due Sicilie. Anno 1848. Semestre 1 da gennaio a tutto giugno*. Napoli: Dalla Stamperia Reale, 1848, p. 115 for the list of nominees.

See “(No. 105.) Napoli, 22 Marzo 1848” concerning the “Decreto che abolisce la presidenza della regia Università degli studii, e la Giunta di pubblica istruzione”. “(No. 105.) Decreto che istituisce una Commissione provvisoria di pubblica istruzione, onde formare un progetto di riforme per l’ordinamento del pubblico insegnamento, ed esercitare la censura sugli attuali metodi e sull’abilità de’ professori.” *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

contribution of funding by the Treasury – and regulate and invigilate the instruction at or operation of institutions such as archives, primary and secondary schools, universities, university-affiliated resources – like botanical gardens, medical clinics, institutes involved with meteorology or astronomy, etc. – literary societies, musical academies, and museums.<sup>34</sup>

- 2) Decree No. 177 on April 19 1848 abrogated the decree of January 10 1843 which placed primary instruction “nella dipendenza de’ Vescovi” and affirmed that it would “rientra nella dipendenza del Ministro della istruzione pubblica.”<sup>35</sup>

Relative to the standards that had been in place in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies – and previously in the Kingdom of Naples – the initiatives of Troya and Imbriani were progressive in both their approach to public instruction as well as their treatment of artistic, historical, and intellectual patrimony as integral components of education that should be supported financially by regional – and later, national – governing bodies. However, the political turmoil of 1848 and the dissolution of parliament by Ferdinand II on May 15 1848 – which saw Troya replaced by Gennaro Spinelli di Cariati – derailed any hope of implementing lasting reform and shifted the focus away from educating the mass public.

Despite the difficulties encountered in much of Italy, by 1861, the country was not without a successful model which could be applied on a national scale. The first major legislative decree to work towards establishing a standardized system of education was proposed by Gabrio Casati, *Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione del Regno di Sardegna* (July 19 1859 – January 21 1860) – the

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<sup>34</sup> “(No. 167.) Napoli, 16 Aprile 1848”, *Collezione delle Leggi e de’ Decreti Reali del Regno delle Due Sicilie: Anno 1848 Semestre I.*, pp. 215-218. A more complete list of public schools, universities, academies, and institutes can be seen in De Sanctis, Gabriello. *Dizionario statistico de’ paesi del regno delle Due Sicilie*. Napoli, 1840, pp. 25-26.

<sup>35</sup> “(No. 177.) Napoli, 19 Aprile 1848”, *Collezione delle Leggi e de’ Decreti Reali del Regno delle Due Sicilie: Anno 1848 Semestre I.*, pp. 222-223.

same man Bonghi had described in 1852 during his time in Stresa as the “gran parlatore che non sa parlare” – and passed by Piedmontese parliament in November 1859 following the Second War of Italian Independence and the annexation of Lombardy by the Kingdom of Sardinia. The *Regio decreto legislativo n. 3725 del 13 novembre 1859*, otherwise known as the *Legge Casati*, was extended to the whole of Italy in 1861 after the nation’s unification and remained a vital piece of educational legislation until the 1920s. As a precursor to a national centralized system of education, the law systematically examined every component of formal instruction and defined the responsibilities and goals of each level of education, the administrative and financial responsibilities of the state and local municipalities to educational institutions, and the qualifications required of teachers under the following headings: *Titolo I – Dell’Amministrazione della pubblica istruzione*, *Titolo II – Dell’istruzione superiore*, *Titolo III – Dell’istruzione secondaria classica*, *Titolo IV – Dell’istruzione tecnica*, *Titolo V – Dell’istruzione elementare*.<sup>36</sup> Beginning with primary education, the Casati law divided *l’istruzione elementare* into two levels of study in which there were two years of *istruzione del grado inferiore* – in which students six years of age or older studied religious education, reading, writing, basic mathematics, the Italian language, and basic components of the metric system – followed by two years of *istruzione superiore* – where students continued with the lessons of the first level alongside lessons on grammar, handwriting, geography, history, theoretical and practical sciences and supplementary material depending on the school.<sup>37</sup> The law mandated that all public forms of elementary education were under the jurisdiction of local municipalities (Art. 318.) who were legally obliged

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<sup>36</sup> Casati, Gabrio. “Legge sul Riordinamento dell’Istruzione Pubblica.” *Gazzetta Piemontese* Venerdì 18 Novembre 1859: 1-12.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, *Titolo V, Capo I, Art. 315*. Article 315 also notes the differences in male and female schools: “Alle materie sovvr’accennate saranno aggiunti, nelle scuole maschili superiori, i primi elementi della geometria ed il disegno lineare; nelle scuole femminili i lavori donneschi.”

to both have a designated school in their community (Art. 319.) – rather than a makeshift room or house – and provide instruction (Art. 318.) – in compliance with the standards set forth by what would be a central Ministry of Education – that was free of cost for all inhabitants of the community (Art. 317.).<sup>38</sup>

Following the completion of four years of elementary education, students were able to decide between two types of secondary education depending on the nature of their desired occupation. For students wishing to advance their academic studies – “acquistare una coltura letteraria e filosofica” (Art. 188.) – with a more theoretical approach that was more in-line with a university education, *l’istruzione secondaria classica* was the more traditional secondary school option. With a curriculum divided over five years of *ginnasio* and three years of *liceo*, courses consisted of subjects ranging from Italian, Latin, Greek – and French depending on the region – language and literature to mathematics, geography, history, physics, chemistry, and natural history with religious education taught by un *Direttore spirituale* chosen by the Ministry of Public Education. For students with a desired career in public services, industry, commerce, or agriculture, *l’istruzione tecnica* would offer a more practical approach which was more conducive to the development of knowledge and skills that were directly relevant to the student’s sector of choice. The curriculum was divided into two levels – each of which lasted three years – where students could study Italian, French, mathematics, personal accounting and bookkeeping, basic algebra and geometry, handwriting, geography and history, natural history in their first three years, and literature, history and geography, English and German, administrative or commercial law, public economics, commerce, chemistry, physics, and forms of mathematics like algebra, geometry, and trigonometry (Art. 275-276.).<sup>39</sup> The first three years of *l’istruzione tecnica* –

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., *Titolo V, Capo I, Art. 317-8.*

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., *Titolo IV, Capo I, Art. 275-6.*

“*l’istruzione tecnica inferiore*” – was to be offered free of cost for citizens of the municipality (Art. 298.).<sup>40</sup>

For students wishing to take their academic development to the furthest degree, *l’istruzione superiore* would prepare students – who had developed the necessary cognitive abilities in primary and secondary schooling – in a specialized manner for work in the private or public sector which would ultimately help in “mantenere ed accrescere nelle diverse parti dello Stato la cultura scientifica o letteraria.”<sup>41</sup> Modelling the system after the established administrative structures used by the Universities of Turin, Pavia, Genoa, and Cagliari, universities and future universities would be divided into five basic faculties: 1. *La Teologia*, 2. *La Giurisprudenza*, 3. *La Medicina*, 4. *La Scienze fisiche, matematiche e naturali*, 5. *La Filosofia e le Lettere*.<sup>42</sup> All forms of public higher education would be financially supported by the State – and, eventually, the central Ministry of Public Education (Art. 50.).

While the Casati Law was effective at setting the groundwork for future educational reform by redefining and restructuring the levels of education from an administrative and instructional perspective, placing the administrative and financial obligation of public education under the jurisdiction of the state, and creating a comprehensive framework for a standardized national curriculum, its practical implementation and extension outside of Piedmont – to regions lacking the proper educational infrastructure – created problems that demanded the attention of Italy’s governing bodies and their Ministers of Public Education in the ensuing years. The first, and perhaps most critical, obstacle to overcome was the lack of resources – financial or otherwise – at the municipal level and the educational divide between the Northern Italy and Southern Italy. The

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., *Titolo IV, Capo IV, Art. 298.*

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., *Titolo II, Capo I, Art. 47.*

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., *Titolo II, Capo I, Art. 49.*

Casati law placed the financial and administrative responsibilities of primary education (Articles 317 and 318.) and the stipendiary responsibility of teachers (Art. 344.) under the jurisdiction of local municipalities. With the lack of funds available to the average local council in Italy, allotting resources for primary education proved a difficult task – especially for communities in the South and rural communities at large that lacked the funds of their more densely populated – or northern – counterparts. Furthermore, Article 319 which stated that every *Comune* would have at least one school – one for boys and one for girls – only furthered the financial burden of local communities and increased the aversion to educational policies forced upon a newly unified Italy. When one looks at the numerical breakdown of registered schools in Italy after the annexation of Rome, the problem becomes even more apparent. Clark cites that, in Italy in 1871-72, there were 33,556 public elementary schools with 34,309 teachers and 1,545,790 registered students, alongside 8,157 private schools with 9,114 teachers and 177,157 registered students.<sup>43</sup> Educational divisions were as prominent between Northern and Southern Italy as the divide in illiteracy rates as, of the 33,556 public elementary schools, over 13,000 were located in Piedmont and Lombardy and only 2,228 were located in Apulia, Basilicata, and Calabria.<sup>44</sup> With the Casati law, communities were not only legally obligated to finance primary and secondary education but also pay for the proper establishment of registered schoolhouses.

The second major obstacle to arise as a result of the Casati law – that was a point of interest for Ministers of Public Education like Bonghi – was the ideological impact on relations between the Church and State. With the historical presence of members of the clergy in formal instruction and the responsibility of educating children having been in the hands of the Church in much of Italy, shifting the jurisdiction of children’s education from the Church to the State complicated the

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<sup>43</sup> Clark, *Modern Italy 1871 to the Present*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

already tenuous relationship between Italy's most powerful institutions. To fully understand the potential for conflict, one must consider the following articles of the Casati Law:

- 1) The new requirement for teachers to obtain proper certification via examination as stated in Article 328: "Per essere eletto maestro in una scuola pubblica elementare, il candidato deve essere munito di una patente di idoneità e di un attestato di moralità, secondo le norme infrascritte."<sup>45</sup>
- 2) The selection process for teachers as outlined in Article 332.: "I maestri di scuole comunali elementari sono eletti dai Municipii. Spetta ai Consigli provinciali per le scuole il riconoscere, salvo ricorso al Ministro, se le elezioni sieno state fatte in conformità della legge."<sup>46</sup>
- 3) The role of the local parish priest as one who administers examinations rather than one who teaches religious education in Article 325: "Alla fine d'ogni semestre vi sarà in ogni scuola comunale un esame pubblico, nel quale gli allievi saranno interrogati ciascuno sopra le materie insegnate nella propria classe. Il Parroco esaminerà gli allievi di queste scuole sopra l'istruzione religiosa. Questo esame sarà dato nel tempo e nei luoghi che verranno stabiliti di comune accordo tra il Municipio ed il Parocco."<sup>47</sup>

If one is to consider the dynamics of Church and State in nineteenth-century Italy, the aforementioned articles indicate the way in which the State could be perceived as claiming religious instruction in the same capacity that it had been attempting to – and eventually succeeded in 1870 with the conquest of Rome – infringe on the temporal power of the Catholic Church. As a

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<sup>45</sup> Casati, "Legge sul Riordinamento dell'Istruzione Pubblica." *Gazzetta Piemontese* Venerdì 18 Novembre 1859: 1-12. *Titolo V, Capo II, Art. 328.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, *Titolo V, Capo II, Art. 332.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, *Titolo V, Capo II, Art. 325.*

result of the *Legge Casati*, religious education – which was compulsory in schools – and formal instruction of the catechism was effectively forced out of the hands of parish priests who lacked teaching certificates into the hands of laymen who were elected by municipalities but validated and confirmed by city council. When examined in the sociohistorical context of both rising anticlericalism and the refusal of Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII to reverse the *Non Expedit* of 1868 which prohibited Catholics from participating in politics – "Né eletti né elettori" – the educational sphere became another example that highlighted the divisions in Italy.

If one considers the most impactful examples of legislation pertaining to education and examines Bonghi's place in the historical development of Italian educational policy, his time as Minister of Public Education takes place during a critical point in Italy's history of education. Not only did his tenure fall between two of the most historically significant pieces of educational legislation in the *Legge Casati* in 1859 and the *Legge Coppino* in 1877, his time served as a member of public office highlights the attempts to reconcile various ideological divisions in Italy that manifested themselves in Italy's systems of public instruction. With the *Legge Casati* as merely a framework of educational structures and parameters, the state of national education required substantial financial investment and administrative change on a municipal, regional, and national scale. In addition to being the final Minister of Public Education affiliated with the Historical Right to hold office, Bonghi – alongside fellow party members – was faced with the difficulty of working in a changing political and social landscape to shape an educational system that accounted for the growing socio-economic divides, integrated members of society with no formal instruction, and yielded positive and sustainable benefits for the nation at large.

***Ruggero Bonghi and Italian Education***

In having established a contextual basis that outlines the social, historical, and economic circumstances in which Bonghi was operating, one can understand the degree to which such factors directed the development of educational policy in Italy following the nation's unification during the tenures of the Ministers of Public Education belonging to the Historical Right. Moreover, from a personal standpoint, detailing the initiatives pertaining to educational reform in northern and southern Italy prior to unification, the contributions of the figures involved, and the connection of such politicians, economists, ministers, and pedagogues to Bonghi provides a framework to better comprehend the early and prolonged exposure to the political side of education and their importance to the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*. Both his intellectual formation and his approach to developing and implementing educational legislation was shaped directly by the theories and writings of his predecessors and the difficulties encountered by his mentors. He was born in Naples in 1826 during a period in which figures like Matteo Angelo Galdi and his *Pensieri sull'Istruzione Pubblica relativamente al Regno delle Due Sicilie* (1809), Luca Cagnazzi de Samuele and his *Saggio sopra i principali metodi d'istruire i fanciulli* (1819) and Marco Gatti and his *Della riforma della istruzione pubblica nel Regno delle Due Sicilie* (1820) espoused the need for public education for citizens of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and was politically active in 1848 when his stepfather, Saverio Baldacchini, and family friend, Carlo Troya, were fighting to establish radical legislative reform that would secure a public system of education. He regularly debated language and education with the primary architect of Italy's first national system of education, Gabrio Casati, whilst at the Rosmini estate in Stresa in 1852-1853, and was an integral component of the Broglio Commission in 1868 which sought to address the linguistic divide and state of illiteracy in Italy through both lexicographical and structural educational means. He had

both personal and professional working relationships with economists like Carlo Cattaneo, Giuseppe Devincenzi, and Stefano Jacini who espoused the importance of education for both economic advancement and social progress. Furthermore, from a structural or systemic perspective, Bonghi's contemplation of foreign examples applied as much to educational models as it did to his study of language, literature, and history. Thus, his approach to Italian education at every level incorporated models and administrative structures that borrowed from the respective French, German, and English counterparts and was informed by the ideas and experiences by those, like Victor Cousin, who contributed greatly to the development or legislative implementation of such models.<sup>48</sup>

Bonghi's involvement in the shaping of Italian education reflects as much his prolonged exposure to debates surrounding scholastic learning as it does the thematic diversity of the issues that comprised such debates. His work in the sector spanned four decades as he first involved himself with historically significant measures pertaining to university education from 1859, began

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<sup>48</sup> Regarding the various international examples with which Bonghi had come in contact, he had, first and foremost, the French model of education which, having been establishing in the Napoleonic era, favoured a heavily centralized and state-funded system with central administration that enforced a degree of uniformity throughout the nation. For largely geopolitical motives, the French systemic model of education was adapted in the Kingdom of Sardegna and became the basis of the Casati Law in 1859. The second model came from the German system which Bonghi had come to know through Victor Cousin, as he notes in his lengthy treatise entitled "Riordinamento e Bilancio dell'Istruzione Pubblica" (1863), published in *Discorsi e Saggi sulla Pubblica Istruzione* (1876). Although his work examines the German system in the context of potential university reform and employment structures for professors, the implementation of certain features in an Italian context impacted the financial structure of the entire budget and allowed for increased spending at the primary and secondary levels. The model featured, as adopted by the University of Pavia and University of Padua in 1857, three types of university instructors: 1) Ordinary professors: "Professori ordinari si nomineranno di regola soltanto per la materia principale in ciascuna Facoltà, e la nomina a tali posti dovrà cadere possibilmente sopra persone della fama scientifica più fondata." 2) Extraordinary professors: "I professori straordinari hanno impiego stabile al pari degli ordinari, e precisamente o per materie d'insegnamento, che non sono sistemate come materie principali, ma i cui posti è pure desiderabile che sien coperti stabilmente, o per materie principali, allorquando non vi sono per esse professori ordinari o delle quali è a desiderarsi che alle relative cattedre sia addetto più di un professore." See *Discorsi e Saggi sulla Pubblica Istruzione Vol. 2 – Saggi*. Firenze: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1876, pp. 28-9. 3) Private instructors: "...dei privati docenti si deve pagare un onorario semestrale di 5 franchi in media per ogni ora di lezione che si ha in una settimana." *Ibid.*, p. 85. Lastly, there was the English model which Bonghi regarded with the highest esteem that allowed private educational institutions to operate alongside public ones. In this model, Bonghi examines the ways in which Italy could sacrifice centralized uniformity for an increase in educational liberty and increase in spending for public institutions.

publishing articles and delivering speeches in parliament on *la pubblica istruzione* and *l'insegnamento universale* from 1860, and continued publishing on the state of Italian educational systems until the early 1890s. As one might expect from Bonghi, his work in the educational sphere mirrors the same comprehensive devotion that he demonstrated in every other aspect of his life and career.<sup>49</sup> Despite his particular interest for issues surrounding the state of Italy's post-secondary institutions and his notable involvement with such debates – like but not limited to the debate concerning whether to abolish the University of Sassari in 1860 – his writings and work as Minister of Public Education reflected a comprehensive consideration of every level of formal instruction and the manner in which they formed one cohesive system that was both administratively efficient and conducive to the natural intellectual development of a student. With this in mind, Bonghi believed that despite the moral success of the Casati Law, it was necessary to reconsider and restructure Italian education in order to address the inherent issues in the system and adapt the contemporary system to better serve an entire nation. Although he worked towards reform for every level of education – *istruzione elementare*, *istruzione secondaria*, *istruzione superiore* – his work on elementary education best demonstrates the intrinsically connected nature of establishing a central system education and promulgating a national tongue.<sup>50</sup> Thus, for the sake

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<sup>49</sup> Considering the extended period over which Bonghi wrote and published, it is crucial to examine his arguments with the same flexible scrutiny that one would when critiquing the position of any other politician – historical or contemporary. Not only do changing social and political circumstances dictate changes in political strategy, but even the most resolute political figures are prone to change their opinion concerning the best approach or solution to any given situation. In fact, Bonghi upholds the importance of one's willingness to change his or her opinion or approach on a given issue and is the first to acknowledge the changes in his beliefs that occurred over the duration of his career.

<sup>50</sup> On March 13 1863, Bonghi delivered a speech in the *Camera dei Deputati* concerning higher education in which he defines four types of education, differing slightly from the four detailed in the Casati law. Rather than making the distinction at the secondary level, Bonghi makes the distinction at the post-secondary level: “ci sono per dirla così in grosso, quattro maniere d'insegnamento: v'ha l'alto insegnamento, quello che serve alla diffusione nella cultura la più squisita, al progresso scientifico, all'incremento delle scoperte astronomiche, geografiche, all'avanzamento delle discipline filologiche. Vi ha l'insegnamento universitario che, secondo il concetto moderno, è destinato a fornire le carriere dell'avocheria, dell'ingegneria, della medicina, di persone adatte.” To simplify, the chapter will consider and allude to the three most fundamental levels of education of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary

of thematic clarity and consistency, the following analysis of his writings and political involvement limit itself to Bonghi's contributions to Italy's most basic level of education and consider only the aspects of reform to secondary and post-secondary education that impacted universal education and the *questione della lingua* directly.

Lastly, within such organizational framework, to accurately assess Bonghi's contributions to the *questione della lingua* – rather than merely his efficacy as one member of Marco Minghetti's cabinet – it is necessary to appropriately study his time in public office alongside his initiatives and writings outside of office.<sup>51</sup> As Bonghi first started serving as a Member of Parliament from the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* on February 18 1861 and was an active and frequent contributor to debates and discussions regarding educational reform in the *Camera dei Deputati*, a wider scope provides greater insight on his beliefs and his longstanding involvement with government-backed initiatives. Furthermore, when examining the exact contributions of a person holding public office, one cannot consider politics as anything but an ongoing process in which any given government or cabinet is impacted – be it positively and negatively – by the government that preceded it and impacts the government that succeeds it – as a result of legislative policies,

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education rather than delve into the nuances of Bonghi's more technical explanation. Bonghi, *Discorsi e Saggi sulla Pubblica Istruzione Volume I – Discorsi*. Firenze: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1876, p. 74.

<sup>51</sup> While a more focused analysis of Bonghi's time as Minister of Public Education provides a significantly narrower scope for such a brief study, a reflection on the fullest extent of his engagement with issues pertaining to education better exemplifies the ways in which educational policy and related initiatives were intertwined with the overarching debate that was the *questione della lingua*. In Sandro Rogari's brief chapter on Bonghi and education entitled "Bonghi e l'Istruzione Pubblica", he follows a similar approach to presenting the material, stating, "cerchiamo di ricostruire l'evoluzione di Bonghi su questo tema non limitandoci al periodo nel quale, in qualità di ministro della Pubblica Istruzione dell'ultimo governo Minghetti, ricoprì responsabilità di carattere istituzionale, quanto piuttosto estendendo la nostra attenzione al lungo dibattito sull'istruzione elementare, media e superiore cui egli partecipò con innumerevoli scritti e discorsi dagli esordi dell'Italia unita fino agli anni novanta. Come per le questioni inerenti le relazioni fra lo Stato e la Chiesa, la questione dell'istruzione pubblica può essere considerata un grande tema trasversale per Bonghi, che lo coinvolge lungo tutto il corso della sua attività politica e di pubblicista e sul quale si riflette un contesto politico culturale in grande evoluzione che lo induce ad assumere una linea talvolta contraddittoria, comunque mutevole." Rogari, *Ruggiero Bonghi nella vita politica dell'Italia unita*, p. 17.

financial decisions, and overall political direction.<sup>52</sup> Inasmuch as Bonghi's tenure as Minister of Public Education was influenced by the measures taken by former ministers and cabinets, there were also regulations implemented and amendments made to educational legislation between 1874-1876 that directly led to the implementation of policies and laws following the fall of the Historical Right. Moreover, through his active involvement in the *Camera dei Deputati* on Legislatures XII-XVI, he continued to be a significant contributor to the discussion, development, and implementation of political measures pertaining to every level of Italian education.<sup>53</sup> All factors considered, through the examination of historical records alongside his published writings, speeches in parliament, and personal correspondences, Ruggero Bonghi's significance to the *questione della lingua* and his impact on the state of language and education in the nineteenth century cannot be discounted.

### ***Bonghi and the VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia: Restructuring Systems of Education and Changing Italian Social Cultures***

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<sup>52</sup> There were thirteen Ministers of Public Education that served before Bonghi, with the Historical Right in power for all but the tenures of two of the ministers: Francesco De Sanctis, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, Carlo Matteucci, Michele Amari, Giuseppe Natoli, Domenico Berti, Cesare Correnti, Michele Coppino, Girolamo Cantelli, Emilio Broglio, Angelo Bargoni, Quintino Sella, and Antonio Scialoja. Cesare Correnti served twice under Bettino Ricasoli (February 17 1867 – April 10 1867) and Giovanni Lanza (May 13 1869 – May 18 1872) and Girolamo Cantelli, who immediately preceded Bonghi, served under Luigi Federico Menabrea (October 27 1867 – November 18 1867) and Marco Minghetti (February 6 1874 – September 27 1874). The three short terms of Pasquale Stanislao Mancini (March 4 1862 – March 31 1862), Carlo Matteucci (March 31 1862 – December 8 1862), and Michele Coppino (April 10 1867 – October 27 1867) under Urbano Rattazzi during his two terms as *Presidente del Consiglio* were the only Ministers of Public Education to serve the Historical Left between 1861 and 1876. The constant flux of ministers not only highlights Bonghi's criticisms of the lack of political cohesion from within the Historical Right – as explored later in his letter to Professor Sacchi – but also accentuates what Bonghi was able to accomplish during his relatively brief time in office.

<sup>53</sup> Although Bonghi served on Legislatures XVII and XVIII, the archival collections of *Atti del Parlamento Italiano* and *Atti Parlamentari- Camera dei Deputati* demonstrate that, much like the decline in his number of published works and articles, he was significantly less active in parliamentary discussions.

During Bonghi's time serving as a Member of Parliament on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* (February 18 1861-September 7 1865) – the first of eleven legislatures on which he served – he delivered a speech to the *Camera dei Deputati* on March 13 1863 on the state of higher education in which he defined the different levels of instruction and their overall purpose in the academic development of a student. Although his brief discourse *Sull'istruzione superiore* focuses on higher levels of education, his speech serves as an early example of formal political involvement that demonstrates, in as concise a manner as possible, the underlying tenets of his approach to public education, educational policy, and legislative changes – which is equally applicable to every level of formal instruction. Additionally, it serves as an early example of Bonghi's vision for how each level of education could, in his opinion, be restructured to positively impact the system as a whole and, most importantly, improve the quality of and funding for elementary education.

In his introductory remarks, he emphasized the first of several fundamental features of his outlook on the role of formal instruction in a unified Italy. He stated, “Vi ha infine l'insegnamento primario, il quale ha quasi meno un interesse individuale, che non un interesse sociale, un interesse morale, e corrisponde ad un bisogno comune di elevare ed educare le classi popolari.”<sup>54</sup> While rhetoric of the sort can be considered commonplace in parliamentary addresses concerning the state of national affairs following Italy's unification, when considered alongside Bonghi's and Manzoni's insistence on a unifying language as a means of enabling Italians to partake in public discourse, the push to “educate and elevate” Italy's working classes shows the future Minister of Public Education's beliefs on the purpose of public schooling for socioeconomic advancement that extended to every echelon of Italian society. This is furthered by his reiteration that “nell'insegnamento primario vi è una ragione generale di utilità morale e sociale” that goes beyond

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<sup>54</sup> Bonghi, *Discorsi e Saggi sulla Pubblica Istruzione (Vol. 1)*, p. 74.

any simplistic notions of nationalism but, instead, denotes a degree of social cohesion that advances the socioeconomic situation of the nation at-large.<sup>55</sup> Much like Gatti, Cattaneo, Ravizza, and Troya, Bonghi regarded primary instruction as an indispensable means through which Italy's citizens could be empowered with the ability to read and write, a necessary component of economic distribution, and the optimal setting in which children could, through their interactions with others, build a social and moral character that allowed for the formation of a closer bond with their peers. In addition to the economic benefits discussed previously – of which, through his correspondences with the aforementioned economists and their collective time serving in the *Camera dei Deputati* as well as his personal interest in finance seen through works like *Storia della finanza italiana dal 1864 al 1868* (1868), Bonghi was well aware – there were many social benefits – social equality and equal rights, political empowerment to disadvantaged classes, national solidarity, etc. – that could only be achieved through an effective system of primary education. Not unlike the depictions of the classroom as a microcosm of the Italian state seen in the literary works of De Amicis – who also shared a close friendship with Emilia Peruzzi and was in contact with Bonghi during the period in which he wrote *Cuore* (1886) and *Romanzo d'un Maestro* (1890) – primary education was a child's first exposure to the social differences that existed in Italy and the optimal setting to overcome long-standing divisive regionalisms and foster a degree of communal solidarity. By extension, if one considers Bonghi's advocacy for sound foreign policy – as seen in his letters to personal friends with political roles like Ubaldino Peruzzi – the growing trend towards a global economy – as seen in the changes in approach to international trade like Piedmont's changes in legislation concerning the exporting of raw silk – and Italy's changing approach to education – as seen in the growing investment in the technological side of agronomy – Bonghi was aware that

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

nationwide social and economic progress was contingent on forming generations of Italians that thought beyond the scope of the known, local experience.

The second component of Bonghi's approach to education was that of *libertà d'insegnamento* which he believed to be essential when considering legislative policy at the primary and secondary level as it was at the university level.<sup>56</sup> He was well aware that the formation and administration of a national system of education was heavily influenced by sociohistorical factors and realized the way in which Italy's institutions considered education as an effective means of shaping new generations of citizens – at their most intellectually malleable – on a mass scale. Primary instruction was at a juncture which saw the State – which recognized a national system of education as a means of imbuing children with a sense of national *italianità* – assume control over the intellectual formation of Italy's youth after an extended period of having been controlled by the Church in much of Italy. Much like Manzoni who believed in Church and State as fundamental pillars of Italian society that needed to work in conjunction for Italy to prosper, balancing institutional support in education – from both a teaching perspective and a learning perspective – through political legislation was a delicate and, at times, self-contradictory process. Regarding the difficulties in achieving educational freedom at the primary level and the differences between public and private schooling, Bonghi states:

Lo stesso dicasi per l'insegnamento primario. Quella che ivi daresti, e dovette dare, libertà d'insegnamento, vi produrrebbe per sè sola piccolo effetto, se non fosse animata da un principio di propaganda religiosa, o politica, la quale lo Stato può trovare non sempre conveniente che sia affatto surrogata ai principi che esso rappresenta, e non sia in nessun modo combattuto da esso. Il privato, nell'insegnamento primario, trova piccolo campo all'esercizio della libertà che gli lascereste, perchè la retribuzione che vi potesse raccogliere alla sua fatica, non è

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-77.

proporzionata a questa, nè uguale a ciò che con altre occupazioni si potrebbe facilmente procacciare.<sup>57</sup>

While Bonghi believed that educational freedom was only truly feasible at the university level, he worked to consider ways in which the system of primary education – which was in a much more precarious situation considering the resources required to operate on a national level and the institutions willing to provide financial support – could be optimized to provide greater intellectual opportunities to Italy’s budding minds. Although Italy’s political and religious institutions served a critical role not only in the shaping of the social and moral character of its citizens but in the administrative and financial support of primary education, it was necessary to consider the degree and manner in which such institutions shaped, guided or potentially restricted the content or structure of primary instruction. Thus, inasmuch as he believed in primary education as a means of building a collective social identity, formal schooling, as it pertained to nationalism or religious devotion, had to be considered as a tool to unite citizens for a greater and mutual good rather than a means of propaganda or indoctrination.

The third component of Bonghi’s approach to education – the feature that best defines his contribution to Italian education and underscores his significance to the overarching *questione della lingua* – was his devotion to the optimization of educational systems and structures and the awareness of how practical legislative solutions could yield quantitative results. He believed primary instruction to be the basis for intellectual, moral, and social development of Italians – as both individuals and as a collective – and felt that such an integral stage of education should receive the utmost attention to ensure it functioned adequately as the bedrock of Italy’s scholastic hierarchy. To Bonghi, this entailed establishing new legislative policies that bolstered the measures

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

instated by the Casati law, streamlining administrative processes to better accommodate a national system with a central Ministry of Education, optimizing financial support in a manner that was more sustainable at both the federal and municipal level, and reforming the requirements for pedagogical preparation that better considered – and addressed – the discrepancies between Northern and Southern Italy. If one recalls Bonghi's relocation to Rome in 1870 and his work streamlining bureaucratic systems and administrative procedures – such as his role as *Consigliere d'Amministrazione* with the *Società delle Strade ferrate Romane* – his capabilities were regarded with the highest esteem by those working in both the private and public sector and were sought after in the *Camera dei Deputati* during the development of policies and legislation concerning education. From his early involvement on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia*, he believed that the most effective means of advancing the state of Italian education was to examine the entirety of the educational system and, as a legislative body, work towards optimizing administrative structures and reconsidering financial distribution over the various levels of education.

From a practical standpoint, Bonghi felt that Italy could only begin to address the issues concerning illiteracy, the lack of scholastic participation, and the lack of municipal support for education by examining the inherent flaws of the *Legge Casati* as a piece of national – rather than regional or Piedmontese – legislation. Inasmuch as he considered the Casati Law to be both a great moral victory for national scholastic education in Italy and a strong framework for a national system of education, he also recognized the ways in which it required substantial revision in order to better accommodate the considerable discrepancy in infrastructure and funding that existed over the various regions in Italy. An examination of the transcribed parliamentary sessions which were published by the *Camera dei Deputati*, as detailed in the *Indice Generale degli Atti Parlamentari* and the many volumes of the *Atti del Parlamento Italiano*, demonstrates not only the extent to

which Bonghi worked to address the problems with the Casati Law but also the ways in which his ideas and legislative proposals would be incorporated in the composition of the *Legge Coppino* in 1877 and, significantly later in the *Legge Daneo-Credaro* in 1911.<sup>58</sup> The first notable example of Bonghi's contributions to the shaping of primary education in Italy can be seen in his involvement in the debates concerning the budget for public education in the *Camera dei Deputati* in 1863. In the series of discussions concerning allocation of the budget – which began on March 6 1863 and concluded on March 16 and 17 1863 – Bonghi featured heavily in all discourses and debates pertaining to education and, backed by Minister of Finance Quintino Sella and future Prime Minister Francesco Crispi, was the leading voice to call for a reallocation of the budget that favoured primary education.<sup>59</sup>

On March 6 1863, Bonghi delivered his first of three speeches in which he detailed his perceived problems of the current system alongside a proposal for how such issues could be addressed and rectified. Unlike Crispi who appeared to be less inclined to elaborate on his proposal – “La mia proposta è così chiara che non ha bisogno di commenti; la Camera quindi sa che cosa deve fare. (*Viva ilarità*)” – Bonghi, who shared both Crispi and Sella's view on greater financial support for primary education and had given Crispi the opportunity to address the Chamber, was quick to reclaim the initiative and assume the lead on pushing for legislative change.<sup>60</sup> Beginning

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<sup>58</sup> Rogari, *Ruggiero Bonghi nella vita politica dell'Italia unita*, p. 24.

<sup>59</sup> “Legislatura e Sessione- VIII-1<sup>a</sup>. Oggetto e Nome del Proponente- Proposta per circoscrivere la discussione dei bilanci 1863 ai soli capitoli dove esista dissenso tra Ministero e la Commissione. (Deputato Guerrieri-Gonzaga). Data di presentazione: Del disegno o della proposta- 4 marzo 1863 letta e svolta il 6 marzo 1863 v. VI p. 3587. Della relazione- 13 marzo 1863 Mazza v. VI p. 3587. Data della discussione- 16 e 17 marzo 1863.” *Indice Generale degli Atti Parlamentari: Storia dei Collegi Elettorali 1848-97*. Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1898, p. 747. The *Commissione Parlamentare* refers to a collective body within the Italian Parliamentary system tasked with the composition of bills and laws.

<sup>60</sup> “Bonghi: Volevo fare una proposta molto simile a quella del deputato Crispi (*Oh! oh!*), quindi mi unisco a lui, e rinunzio alla parola.” *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*, edited by Giuseppe Galletti and Paolo Trompeo. Roma: Tipografia Eredi Botta, 1883, p. 5607.

with a call to fundamentally reevaluate “l'intero bilancio della istruzione pubblica”, he details his beliefs on how and why Italy and its entire system of education would benefit from reconsidering the means of financial support for the various levels of education.

Io intendeva dimostrare come noi abbiamo oggi un bilancio per l'istruzione pubblica che, in proporzione al generale bilancio dello Stato, è molto superiore a quello degli altri Stati in Europa, ed è superiore al nostro bisogno; mi proponeva dimostrare che la somma che esso importa è malamente distribuita, cosicchè noi spendiamo troppo e male. Lo Stato presso di noi spende diffatti enormemente più del bisogno per l'insegnamento universitario; spende ancora troppo e si avvia a spendere enormissimamente per l'insegnamento secondario, classico e tecnico, e non spende quasi nulla per l'insegnamento primario.<sup>61</sup>

From Bonghi's opening remarks, he demonstrates not only an awareness of the country's practical needs, but a willingness to fundamentally change, adapt, and optimize systems and structures in order to address issues or flaws. Unlike his involvement on the 1868 Broglio Commission – in which one might argue that he played, on all fronts, a secondary role to Manzoni – Bonghi's time in parliament and his approach to addressing issues pertaining to language and education on Italy demonstrates that his ideas were far from derivative. Not unlike the manner in which he applied his understanding of foreign languages and literatures to his study of Italian language and literature, Bonghi's political work embodies a similar ideological flexibility and willingness to deviate from conventional means or systems. His approach to forming and implementing legislation was heavily informed by a study of foreign models and he would frequently consider the ways in which certain elements or systems could be adopted to or integrated with domestic systems or practices. While his thoughts on foreign systems of education will be explored further when considering his ideas on secondary education, the Bonghian model – which was inspired by the English system – allowed for a greater degree of privatization at the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 5607.

secondary and university levels which, consequently, allowed for increased funding at the primary level. Bonghi ultimately recognized that, as far as primary education was concerned, the Ministry of Public Education was required to address the two most fundamental problems: the lack of financial support from local municipalities and city councils, and the lack of moral support from communities and civilians. In alleviating the financial burden at the municipal level, he hoped that city councils would be more receptive to supporting initiatives pertaining to education and would have greater financial resources to support local educational infrastructure.

Ora io credo che bisogna appunto capovolgere tutto questo e dirigerci dietro il criterio accettato da per tutto che le altissime colture, quelle al di là dell'universitaria, e l'istruzione primaria richiedono i maggiori sforzi dello Stato, dimandano che più si venga in loro aiuto dalla generalità del paese... nell'insegnamento primario, infine, bisogna far rifluire le spese che lo Stato risparmierebbe sull'universitario e sul secondario, e ricordarci bene che è impossibile che, mantenendolo soprattutto affatto gratuito com'è ora, anche per quelli che potrebbero pagarlo, è impossibile che il comune in Italia supplisca solo a spese che in Francia, per esempio, e così del pari in altri paesi d'Europa, sono sostenute in buona parte dallo Stato, in buona parte dalle provincie, in una parte non piccola dagli scolari e solo per una quarta parte dai comuni.<sup>62</sup>

After examining the budgets of other European governments such as those of France and England, he concluded that Italy could make markedly better use of its resources and, with the appropriate restructuring of its educational structures, both ameliorate their current system and reduce federal spending. His approach to achieving a more balanced budget and a better quality of national primary instruction was twofold. The first step involved implementing legislation that

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<sup>62</sup> *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*, pp. 5607-8. He furthers this argument by comparing the French model to that of the English, "In Inghilterra, in quell'Inghilterra che tutti s'immaginano abbandonare tutta l'istruzione all'iniziativa dei cittadini, lo Stato spende per l'istruzione primaria venti milioni all'anno. Nè dico già io che si debba spendere questa o simil somma, dico bensì solo- che senza aumentare l'ammontare del nostro bilancio, anzi diminuendolo, noi potremmo alligare una molto maggior somma all'insegnamento primario, e non fare come ora ch'esso, che pure non serve a farvi una carriera nella vita, sia il solo il cui peso, se non cade sopra chi ne profitta, cade tutto sugli abitanti del comune a cui appartiene, mentre il prezzo dell' insegnamento universitario e secondario dell' insegnamento che serve ad aprirvi una carriera e a rendervi abile a negozi lucrosi, non solo non è pagato da chi lo chiede allo Stato, ma casca tutto, con enorme ingiustizia, sulla classe più povera dei contribuenti, sulla generalità di questi."

allowed for – like the model for secondary schooling in England – greater freedom for private secondary schools and academies. Such measures would permit, as outlined in his speech on March 6, an overall decrease in federal spending, higher spending on primary education, greater financial stability for local municipalities with regards to financing local schools, greater freedoms or “l’esercizio della libertà” for private institutions, tuition for students in private institutions from families that could afford to pay for their children’s education. This would be bolstered by a second initiative that would entail pushing for a reconsideration of university tuition and a reallocation of government funding for higher education that favoured a more select group of institutions. As Bonghi summarizes with his concluding statements on March 6:

Il discorso che io intendeva fare e che non mi par bene di fare per ora, era indirizzato a proporre il modo, secondo me, più adatto, più confacente al fine di capovolgere così interamente il bilancio dell’istruzione pubblica, il modo di aumentare i proventi in alcuni rami di insegnamento, e di diminuire le spese in alcuni altri e di coordinarli tutti ai bisogni effettivi del paese.<sup>63</sup>

Bonghi’s ideas concerning greater funding for primary education – as well as his proposed means of doing so, especially with regards to the raising of university tuition and reduction of government subsidies for university students – was met with resounding support by prominent figures in the Chamber such as Apollo Sanguinetti:

Sanguinetti: Dirò innanzi tutto che questa volta sono d'accordo coll'onorevole Bonghi, cioè vorrei che fossero aumentate le tasse universitarie, perchè in sostanza l'insegnamento universitario si dà a poche persone e si dà per fare dei professionisti; ora una professione è un patrimonio; chi vuole questa professione deve comprarla. Senza dubbio questo principio vuole essere mitigato da quell'altro che esenta i figli poveri e distinti dall'imposta.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*. p. 5608.

<sup>64</sup> Apollo Sanguinetti was a Piedmontese writer, pedagogue, and politician who featured heavily in debates concerning education and allocation of the budget. See *Indice alfabetico per autori delle relazioni sui disegni di legge sulle proposte presentate al Senato ed alla Camera dei Deputati*. Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1883, p. 166. *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*, pp. 5622-23.

Pier Carlo Boggio:

Boggio: Ora, io, in ordine all'insegnamento elementare, sono lieto di trovarmi d'accordo con un onorevole amico mio personale col quale frequentemente non sono d'accordo nelle questioni politiche, l'onorevole Bonghi. Io mi rallegro di essere pienamente d'accordo con lui in questo, che cioè l'insegnamento elementare è quello in cui ora noi dobbiamo portare più che mai la attenzione nostra, perchè egli è solo nella diffusione dell'istruzione popolare, credetemi, signori, che voi potrete porre le vere e larghe basi, le solide radici delle nostre libertà.<sup>65</sup>

and Minister of Public Education Michele Amari:

Amari: Qual è ora lo stato dell'istruzione pubblica? L'onorevole mio amico Bonghi credo che ve l'abbia detto in poche parole, ed io non posso che ripetere in altri termini ciò ch'ei diceva. L'istruzione elementare è in uno stato infelicissimo in alcune provincie. Noi vediamo provincie, nelle quali mancano quasi assolutamente le scuole elementari, e pochissimi comuni ne sono provveduti... L'istruzione elementare dappertutto è affidata ai comuni. I comuni provvedono ognuno nel modo che ei può e secondo il proprio stato di civiltà, perchè bisogna dire che in alcuni comuni i quali non sono molto avanzati (e di questo forse noi non possiamo nemmeno farne loro una colpa) l'istruzione pubblica non si tiene veramente come uno dei maggiori bisogni.<sup>66</sup>

Deputies in the *Camera dei Deputati* like Sanguinetti, Boggio, Amari – as well as Michele Coppino who voiced his observations on March 10 – recognized the dire need to address the state of education – especially primary education – in Italy and were in agreement with Bonghi that it was necessary to reconsider the administrative and financial structures that were in place. However, despite the support that Bonghi was able to garner, his proposal for such a radical restructuring of Italy's educational structures and the federal budget proved too great a task in 1863 with the Chamber of Deputies who, instead, opted for more minor changes. Between March 6-17, the *Camera* voted to maintain the allotment of 200,000 lire for public education, to limit

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<sup>65</sup> Pier Carlo Boggio (1827-1866) was a journalist, politician and patriot who studied jurisprudence at University of Turin and contributed to debates on legal reform on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia* before drowning in battle at the Battle of Lissa in 1866. *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*, p. 5651.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5640. Michele Amari (1806-1889) served as Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione del Regno d'Italia under Luigi Carlo Farini from December 8 1862 to March 24 1863 and under Marco Minghetti from March 24 1863 to September 28 1864.

administrative redundancies – of which Bonghi was a significant proponent – by streamlining central duties, structures, and processes, and to cut the salaries of administrative positions such as *rettori*, *presidi*, *provveditori* and *ispettori* that were created by the *Legge Casati* – inspired by roles and elements found in the French educational system – and seen as a drain on the budget.<sup>67</sup> Naturally, with the infusion of 200,000 lire guaranteed by the *Camera dei Deputati*, any cuts in funding would be reallocated to other areas of education that were in need of greater financial support.

Despite these changes, Bonghi ultimately felt that the motions passed were altogether minor, contributed little to the longstanding sustainability and quality of the Italian educational system, and, ultimately, failed to address the problems with, most notably, primary education in any meaningful way: “...resta l'insegnamento primario; esso non è venuto neanche in discussione”.<sup>68</sup> In response, his proposal on March 13 – which he had prepared in advance in the event the discussions that took place did not sufficiently address the needs inherent in the system – was an alternate means of working towards a better system of education if the Chamber was unwilling to consider more comprehensive legislative change. His proposal was to create, as noted in the minutes of March 14, “una Commissione con ufficio di studiare e riferire sulle condizioni

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<sup>67</sup> See *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*, pp. 5583-5869 for complete proceedings on the budget for public education. Discussions concerning the budgetary cuts to central administration were formally presented, defended, and debated over the span of the eleven days, though only minor changes were made. See 5780-5800 for one example of a proposal submitted by Bonghi to reduce the budgetary allotment for *rettori* and *presidi* from 60,000 lire, as proposed by the *Commissione*, to 20,000 lire. This serves as only one example the issues that Bonghi, and other members of the Chamber had with the Casati Law and the administrative positions it created. With regards to salaries and redundancies in administrative positions, concerns were voiced by several members of the Chamber like Sanguinetti and Vito d'Ondes-Reggio, however, it was Bonghi who was among the most vocal in calling for the creation of a fundamentally new set of systems and laws to address the root of the problems. He stated on March 13, “Convengo, mi preme ripeterlo, che la legge in questa parte, come in molte altre, è cattiva, anzi pessima; ma non voglio che noi modificandola illegalmente, invece di essere spinti a migliorarla poi nella sua sostanza, ne siamo invece ritardati; giacchè ogni modificazione di questo genere, che migliora una legge cattiva solamente in una parte, oltre alla illegalità sua sostanziale, produce ancora un danno gravissimo, ed è quello di rimuovere la necessità, o di diminuire la spinta, la voglia, l'urgenza di una riforma sostanziale ed efficace.” p. 5783.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5809.

attuali dell'istruzione pubblica in Italia e proporre i modi di migliorarla” that could work towards addressing issues like but not limited to problems with the Casati Law, the lack of sustainable funding for primary education, administrative redundancies, problems with the structure of secondary schooling, etc.<sup>69</sup> In proposing such an initiative, Bonghi was very clear in establishing that the commission, backed by a formal office, would operate as much in a critical role as in a legislative one: it would have the freedom and means to examine and scrutinize the practices and the systems of every level of education as well as the authority to work with government ministries and parliament to propose bills or laws accordingly.<sup>70</sup> The first component of Bonghi’s proposal, that of establishing a creating a Commission, received the approval of the Chamber and the motion was passed.<sup>71</sup> While the Commission would result in a report that featured thirty-two proposals that, without any constitutional or legal amendments, sought to restructure and streamline various elements of the educational system, it failed to gain any significant traction in the Camera dei Deputati. Nonetheless, for Bonghi, his active involvement on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d’Italia* provided him with the invaluable insight that would allow him to operate more effectively later in his career. Although Bonghi’s proposals and actions became decidedly more subtle and were on a significantly smaller scale – considering his frustrations with parliament’s unwillingness to commit to substantial but necessary change – the core tenets of democratizing language and

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 5822.

<sup>70</sup> Bonghi once again turns to the English example to cite their process for constitutional amendments and cites how similar initiatives yielded positive results for their system of public education. “Bonghi: Ho qui davanti a me quella per l’educazione popolare in Inghilterra. Ecco come corre la formola del decreto: « La regina dietro domanda dèi Comuni, nominò una Commissione affine di inquirere e riferire nello stato dell’istruzione popolare in Inghilterra, e proporre le misure che siano richieste per la diffusione d’una sana e marcata istruzione in tutte le classi del popolo.»” It is important to note the way in which he cites the portion of the report that speaks to the notion of accessibility of education for all classes. *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Sessione del 1861-62 Continuazione del 5° periodo (dal 1° marzo al 30 marzo 1863)(VIII Legislatura)*, p. 5816.

<sup>71</sup> Raffaele Piria was nominated President by Michele Amari, Minister of Public Education, with the remainder of the Commission comprised of Ruggero Bonghi, Leopoldo Galeotti, and Carlo Grillenzoni.

education, as will be discussed in both the following section and in Chapter 5, remained at the core of his message.

***Bonghi and the XI-XII Legislature del Regno d'Italia: New Reforms, New Frustrations, and Bonghi's Role as Minister of Public Education***

By the XI (December 5 1870-September 20 1874) and XII Legislature del Regno d'Italia (November 23 1874-October 3 1876), Bonghi was vocal in his frustrations with the *Camera dei Deputati* and what he felt were insufficient or poorly executed measures by the Chamber to address the ongoing problems with public education in Italy. By 1874, over a decade had passed since he had begun pushing for measures of significant legislative reform and one can see his antipathy towards Italy's governing bodies in both his personal and published writings. In a letter dated April 7 1874 addressed to Professor Giuseppe Sacchi, president of the *Società pedagogica di Milano*, Bonghi denounced the approach of Italy's governing bodies in addressing the problems in the Italian system and was critical of their utter lack of collective action. He wrote: "Nè ciò che importa all'istruzione primaria è d'aprire nuove inchieste sopra di essa. Chi segue le pubblicazioni ufficiali, che si sono fatte negli ultimi anni, sa già tutto ciò che è necessario saperne, ed anche più, a fine di metter mano a riformarla."<sup>72</sup> When his words to Sacchi are considered alongside his previous contributions to the *Camera dei Deputati*, a chronological framework is constructed that depicts a situation in which, eleven years following his proposal for a comprehensive "inchiesta" in 1863, the government continued to form more commissions with the purpose of identifying the problems

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<sup>72</sup> Bonghi, *Opere di Ruggero Bonghi VIII: Studi e discorsi intorno alla Pubblica Istruzione*, edited by Giorgio Candeloro. Firenze: F. Le Monnier Editore, 1937, p. 73.

with Italy's system of education yet, in practical terms, no appropriate action were taken to properly remedy the issues that had been brought forth two legislatures and almost a decade prior.

Bonghi's frustrations were also directed towards the members of Minghetti's cabinet and the lack of cohesion in the approach of prior Ministers of Public Education. In an article published on February 11 1874 in *La Perseveranza* entitled "Antonio Scialoja, ministro della Pubblica Istruzione", he sternly criticized Cantelli, Scialoja, and Italy's governing bodies at large of having "riguardata l'istruzione come cosa la quale non meriti nessuna collettiva considerazione del governo, né implichì nessuna sua responsabilità collettiva."<sup>73</sup> In Bonghi's eyes, the problem was twofold. From a legislative standpoint, there was a distinct divide between what many of Italy's politicians *discussed* doing and what they were *actually* doing to address the issues that persisted in Italy: issues such as the nation's level of literacy, its fundamental educational divide between northern and southern regions, the discrepancies in the quality of education between cities, provinces, and regions, the lack of financial sustainability of rural schools, etc. From a political standpoint, the internal struggles, the lack of initiative, and the rapid flux in party leadership and ministers further exacerbated the situation and prevented the political cohesion needed to implement greater change in the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Bonghi, *Antonio Scialoja, ministro della Pubblica Istruzione*, in «La Perseveranza», 11. Referenced in Ciampi, Gabriella. "Ruggiero Bonghi ministro della Pubblica istruzione", in *Ruggiero Bonghi: La figura e l'opera attraverso le carte dell'archivio privato*, Roma: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, 2004, p. 163.

<sup>74</sup> To provide a contextual, chronological framework, Giovanni Lanza served as *Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri del Regno d'Italia* from December 14 1869 to July 10 1873, immediately preceding Marco Minghetti who served from July 10 1873 to March 25 1876. The Lanza and Minghetti governments saw a collective total of five Ministers of Public Education with Antonio Scialoja (See Chapter 1) serving under both *Presidenti del Consiglio*. The letter was dated April 7 1874, immediately following Antonio Scialoja's tenure as Minister of Public Education under Minghetti (August 5 1872–July 10 1873 under Lanza and July 10 1873–February 6 1874 under Minghetti) and early into the transitional tenure of Girolamo Cantelli (February 6 1874- September 27 1874). Bonghi noted in his letter to Sacchi, "Lo Scialoja – bisogna riconoscerlo – non si era condotto vilmente; anzi preso il suo coraggio a due mani, aveva a dirittura proposto d'introdurre la retribuzione scolastica. Al che il Correnti s'era opposto, proponendo invece una tassa di famiglia. La Camera, tra i due, era poi caduta in un'estrema confusione." Bonghi, *Studi e discorsi intorno alla pubblica istruzione*, p. 75.

Thus, when Prime Minister Minghetti approached Bonghi in September 1874 to assume the role of Minister of Public Education, the journalist and cultural critic was initially reluctant to accept the nomination. In a letter written in September 1874 from Bonghi to his wife Carlotta, he wrote “Cara Carlotta, il discorso che tenni jeri col Minghetti, non ha ancora risoluto se io deva essere ministro o no, perché io ho molto insistito per il no; ma ha cambiato una buona parte del mio programma.”<sup>75</sup> Despite his hesitation, Bonghi saw the potential to implement concrete political changes and assumed the role of Minister of Public Education on September 27 1874.

All factors considered, Bonghi’s extensive experience in the academic, political and administrative spheres allowed him to transition into his role as Minister of Public Education rather seamlessly. His approach as Minister was calculated, precise and carried out in such a way that he could maximize the effect of his political decisions and minimize the involvement of what he deemed an ineffective parliamentary collective of complacent politicians. As Gabriella Ciampi states in her article, “Ruggiero Bonghi ministro della Pubblica istruzione”, “Il modo di procedere appare lineare e concreto: stabilire le priorità degli interventi, avvalersi di un doppio binario, legislativo e amministrativo, coinvolgere la pubblica opinione.”<sup>76</sup> Bonghi was aware that, with a strategic plan and the support of party leader Marco Minghetti to galvanize support from within the party, he could more easily facilitate the development of Italy’s educational systems by focusing as much on making impactful regulations as attempting to pass legislation. From the onset of his tenure, he established a set of priorities concerning the areas of Italian education that, informed by the most fundamental components of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*, were in most dire need of being addressed. To Bonghi, the area of utmost importance was that of

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<sup>75</sup> See Archivio di Stato di Napoli, *Archivio privato Ruggiero Bonghi*, b. 23, lettera B, n. 1055, lettera a Carlotta Rusca, as documented in Ciampi, Gabriella. “Ruggiero Bonghi ministro della Pubblica istruzione”, in *La figura e l’opera attraverso le carte dell’archivio privato*, p. 163.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

elevating the standard of elementary education, ensuring the financial security and sustainability of schools, and addressing the stark regional disparity – regarding literacy rate, number of schools, student attendance, etc. As Ciampi affirms in her article on Bonghi tenure as Minister of Public Education:

Il problema a suo avviso più urgente riguardava l'istruzione elementare, o per meglio dire l'alfabetizzazione del paese, che doveva passare attraverso il miglioramento delle condizioni economiche dei maestri e la loro riqualificazione professionale mediante la riforma delle scuole normali. A questi due obiettivi si collegava la stesura di «una buona e sicura statistica dei fanciulli che avrebbero l'obbligo di andare a scuola», per proseguire poi, nella seconda sessione della legislatura, con il «proporre le leggi per estendere e rendere più efficace l'obbligo e determinare il programma della scuola popolare ed elementare».<sup>77</sup>

In considering Bonghi's contributions, it is interesting to once again consider his letter to Professor Sacchi from April 1874. Not only was it written before Bonghi had considered assuming a formal position in Minghetti's cabinet, it demonstrates the future minister's continued engagement with the practical measures taken to address the *questione della lingua* and serves as a concise and systematic outline of the measures that either he would work to enact. Moreover, even when he was unsuccessful in implementing the policies which he felt would benefit Italy, it is important to note the extent to which his proposals – as outlined in his letter to Sacchi – would be incorporated into various policies following the fall of the Historical Right.

To Bonghi, the key to begin rectifying Italy's educational problems – as well as the factors that inhibited the full realization of a unified language – remained addressing the inherent problems of the Casati Law which continued to pose the same problems in 1874 as they did in 1861. He divided the most prominent contemporary issues into two: 1) the proposals without clearly defined

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 165. Citations were taken directly from “Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione”, *Consiglio superiore della Pubblica Istruzione, Verbali*, seduta del 5 ottobre 1874, which has been preserved by the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Ciampi, “Ruggiero Bonghi ministro della Pubblica istruzione”, in *Ruggiero Bonghi: La figura e l'opera attraverso le carte dell'archivio privato*, p. 163.

legislation, and 2) the proposals for reform to existing legislation. The distinction he made to Sacchi was, at its core, a distinction between educational legislation – which required a vote of approval from Italy’s parliamentary body – and regulation – which could be made by individuals in a party with the authority to do so. With this in mind, both the letter to Sacchi and his actions in office demonstrate a more refined and measured approach to his advocacy for political change; something which he acknowledged directly to the *Camera dei Deputati* on February 4 1875:

Io aveva visto, per una lunga esperienza, che il presentare nella Camera nostra, in qualunque Camera del rimanente, dei progetti di riforme complessivi ad un tratto, è una via certa di non andare innanzi, dappoiché quei progetti urtano in difficoltà d'ogni sorta durante la discussione, ed alla fine della discussione poi, come abbiamo visto più volte, naufragano miserissimamente.<sup>78</sup>

To ensure that this trend did not continue, Bonghi was careful in not wasting too many resources – or time – fighting for radical changes that would inevitably stall or be voted down in parliament and focused on the issues which he felt would bring national education closest to his vision of an ideal system. In order to provide a concise summary of his contributions – and to remain focused on the overarching theme of the *questione della lingua* – the following points will briefly discuss Bonghi’s ideas, as presented in his letter to Sacchi, and the relevant actions (when applicable) during his tenure as Minister of Public Education.<sup>79</sup>

Regarding the issues that required appropriate legislation, his first concern was to address the issue of obligatory education, the extent to which attendance should be legally enforced, and the ways in which authorities should respond to fathers who did not send their children to school.

In his letter to Sacchi, he wrote:

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<sup>78</sup> *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Camera dei Deputati (XII Legislatura – Sessione del 1874-75) Discussioni Vol. II Dal 4 febbraio al 13 marzo 1875*. Roma: Eredi Botta Tipografi della Camera dei Deputati, 1875, p. 1009.

<sup>79</sup> Although much can be written on Bonghi’s political contributions, a detailed analysis of his contributions and advocacy between 1874-1876 requires the focus of an entire monograph. Within this context, I will only consider what is applicable to the educational aspects of the *questione della lingua*. Furthermore, it is important to note both the lengthy process of passing legislation and Bonghi’s tenure as Minister which lasted less than two years.

Io credo indubitato, che quest' obbligo morale vi sia; e credo altresì, che si possa legittimamente accompagnarlo, e confermarlo con una sanzione legale. Esso è però uno di quegli obblighi, che non è sentito se non a un dato grado di sviluppo morale ed economico della famiglia; e a cui la sanzione legale non si può aggiungere, o certo aggiungervela con alcuna efficacia, se non a un dato grado l'istruzione di sviluppo sociale.<sup>80</sup>

The issue of obligatory education was one of the most difficult to address as a result of the aforementioned socioeconomic circumstances present in Italy and the difficulty in balancing incentive, legal punishment, short-term economic ramifications for families, and long-term educational and economic gains for society at large. Nonetheless, Bonghi worked to, at the very least, provide the framework for a new law that could serve to address the issue and, alongside deputy Petrucelli on December 19 1874, presented “un progetto di legge sulla istruzione elementare obbligatoria” in which they sought to, as Bonghi stated, address the gap in the Casati Law:

“Manca per prima cosa nell'amministrazione un congegno sufficiente a rendere l'obbligo efficace. Non è ordinata l'amministrazione in modo che si possano rintracciare i figliuoli che non vanno a scuola e punire i padri che non ve li mandino... Il primo bisogno dell'amministrazione è di sapere quanti, quali e dove sono i figliuoli che non vanno a scuola. Qui la legge l'assiste.”<sup>81</sup>

Although Bonghi’s law did not pass during his tenure as minister, it would provide the framework for the *Legge Coppino* (N° 3964) 1877 which addressed the issue of obligatory education in Art. 1 and Art. 2.<sup>82</sup>

The next issue that Bonghi outlined to Professor Sacchi was that concerning the stipend of elementary school teachers and securing their wages for the smaller communities (See pp. 26-28) whose budget could not sustain stable pay for teachers. He wrote:

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<sup>80</sup> Bonghi, *Studi e discorsi intorno alla pubblica istruzione*, p. 70.

<sup>81</sup> *Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati: Discussioni (Legislatura XII – Sessione 1874)*. Roma: Eredi Botta Tipografi della Camera dei Deputati, 1874, pp. 445-6.

<sup>82</sup> Coppino, “Legge sull’obbligo dell’istruzione elementare”, *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno* 30 luglio 1877 (n.177)

“Certo quelli sono mirabilmente scarsi; ma un'accurata disamina della loro misura negli altri paesi — più accurata che non è stata fatta sinora, o che non può esser fatta coi documenti che sogliono essere a mano di tutti — prova che qui non sono troppo inferiori a quello che sono altrove; come, d'altra parte, una leggierissima cognizione della complessità e grandezza di cotesta organizzazione della scuola popolare in un paese persuade, credo, alla prima, che il ricercare un acconcio assetto delle condizioni dei maestri solo nel miglioramento dello stipendio è affatto vano...D'altra parte la legge in Italia, così com'è ora, pone un particolare ostacolo a cotesti aumenti, pur piccoli quanto si vogliono.”<sup>83</sup>

This particular legislation also presented its own set of difficulties and required a more comprehensive change in the financial structures of local and national education systems. As Bonghi wrote to Sacchi: “Le riforme delle quali ho parlato più su, insieme con questa, avviano ad una soluzione del nodo più difficile di tutto il problema, la spesa.”<sup>84</sup> Despite the difficulties, the outspoken minister was committed to this issue from his first full day as Minister of Public Education as he noted during his presentation of a law on December 19 1874:

Come l'onorevole Pissavini ha avuto la cortesia di accennare nel discorso che io tenni al Consiglio superiore il giorno dopo la mia nomina a ministro dell'istruzione pubblica, ho promesso che avrei proposto una legge per il miglioramento della condizione dei maestri elementari. Intendo di mantenere la mia promessa, e credo che sarò in caso di presentare questa legge, se i lavori della Camera non lo impediscono, alla fine del prossimo febbraio.<sup>85</sup>

His plan involved several factors: 1) Within the party, Bonghi worked with Marco Minghetti, who was serving as *Ministro delle Finanze* in addition to his role as *Presidente del Consiglio*, to comprehensively restructure the budget and the financial distribution of funding for Italy's levels of education in order to provide communities the appropriate subsidy to finance the labour cost of elementary teachers according to the needs of the local councils. Considering the Minghetti's cabinet was able to balance the federal budget by March 1876, the financial model was set for future governments. 2) Regarding the administrative organization of a new means of

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<sup>83</sup> Regarding payment for teachers, he wrote, Bonghi, *Studi e discorsi intorno alla pubblica istruzione*, pp. 70-72.

<sup>84</sup> Bonghi, *Studi e discorsi intorno alla pubblica istruzione*, p. 74.

<sup>85</sup> *Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati: Discussioni (Legislatura XII – Sessione 1874)*, p. 441.

distributing the resources to such an expansive network of schools, Bonghi and Senator Luigi Pissavini presented a law on December 10 1874 which outlined the administrative structure of their proposal.<sup>86</sup> 3) Regarding the stipends for teachers, Bonghi and Pissavini proposed an amendment to Title V of the *Legge 13 novembre 1859*, which was adapted from Piedmont's system of education, in order to address the demands of a national, rather than regional system of education.<sup>87</sup> Although the discussions concerning legislative change would continue throughout Bonghi's tenure (see February 5, 1875, February 25 1875, May 18 1876) while only minor changes were made, the impact of Bonghi's proposals – and his continued involvement in the Chamber – would extend far beyond his tenure as Minister and shape the formation and implementation of *Regolamento 3 novembre 1877, n.4152* concerning the provincial administrative structures, and *Legge 1 marzo 1885, n.2986* and *Legge 11 aprile 1886, n.3798*, on the structure and increase of stipends for elementary school teachers.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to the proposed legislative measures, Bonghi's letter to Sacchi also outlined five measures of reform that were under consideration in the Chamber of Deputies during Scialoja's tenure as Minister of Public Education but saw no specific action. The proposed areas of reforms were outlined as follows:

1. “La prima riforma è questa, che l'amministrazione pubblica diventi, per l'adempimento degli uffici, i quali rispetto all'insegnamento popolare le sono commessi dalla legge, un istrumento più abile, più pronto che non è ora.” This initiative was in line with the proposals

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 114-115. See Art. 1-10.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 115-116. See Art. 1-5.

<sup>88</sup> See *Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati: Discussioni (Legislatura XII – Sessione 1874-75) Vol.II Dal 4 febbraio al 13 marzo 1875, Atti Parlamentari- Camera dei Deputati (XII Legislatura – Sessione del 1876) Discussioni Vol I*, and the collection of volumes in the *Atti del Parlamento Italiano* for complete parliamentary discussions. See *La Legge: Repertorio Generale Analitico Alfabetico del Dodicennio 1875-1886 (Anno XV-XXVI)*. Roma: Ufficio di Direzione ed Amministrazione, 1888, p. 133 for more information on the specific legislation and regulations passed between 1875 and 1886.

that Bonghi had suggested since 1863 and involved a reorganization of central administration and a streamlining of the processes and duties of all administrative branches. This also featured, as advocated by Bonghi in 1863, a restructuring of the educational Inspectorate.

2. “La seconda riforma – è nella fissazione delle norme d'una buona statistica dell'insegnamento primario...” The second series of measures involved the implementation of a new, comprehensive system of statistical surveys that accounted for the needs of primary schooling at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. As Bonghi stated that “La nostra statistica, com'è condotta ora, non vale nulla, o ben poco”, one can see the ways in which the establishment of an office designated to the statistical analysis and betterment of education resembled the original purpose of Bonghi’s “Commissione con ufficio”.
3. “La terza riforma e quella delle scuole normali. Le nostre in genere, e con poche eccezioni, non creano nè maestri, nè maestre buoni...” The third aspect of reform addresses the state of pedagogical formation of students in the *scuole normali* looking to become teachers. Through a series of reforms meant to address the methods, materials, and examinations required for students studying pedagogy, it was the hope that schools would be in better position to increase the quality and quantity of the teachers produced. As Bonghi stated, “Da esse deve uscire un uomo od una donna, disposti a seguire durevolmente l'onorata professione per il cui avviamento quelle scuole sono, o dovrebbero essere istituite; e forniti, quindi, di tutte quante le attitudini morali, pratiche, intellettuali, che li rendano adatti e contenti di compiere il nobile ufficio loro.”
4. “La quarta riforma è quella di tutto l'ordinamento speciale della scuola popolare... che serve così alle classi che non possono stare a scuola più di alcuni mesi per due anni o più, come

a quelle che s'avvieranno poi a scuole tecniche, a ginnasi, licei, istituti, università.” The fourth reform addressed, as Bonghi described it, the level of elementary education – separate from primary education – for those, primarily in the agricultural sector, who were unable to attend school. Such a form of popular schooling, which would not require attendance, would be used as a means of filling the gaps in the educational system and reach the portions of the population for which a standard education was inaccessible.

5. “La quinta riforma è poi quest'altra: sottrarre la scuola popolare all'amministrazione del Comune, soprattutto a quella del Comune rurale, o anche a quella del Comune urbano, quando la popolazione di questo non raggiunge almeno lo 40,000 anime.” The fifth and final measures of reform involved a push for greater centralization of elementary education and administration that alleviated some financial burden from smaller communities. This measure, which Bonghi likened to “una maniera di School-Board consimile a quello istituito in Inghilterra”, would allow for more uniformity in the standard of teaching throughout Italy while, at the same time, improving upon the stipendiary and pension structures for teachers in rural communities. It was the hope of Bonghi and Scialoja that an updated model, which shared a similar budgetary breakdown and distribution to its English counterpart, would translate, in an Italian context, into an improved level of education for smaller communities and better financial security for teachers.<sup>89</sup>

During his tenure as Minister of Public Education from 1874 to 1876, Bonghi worked to address all five areas of reform through various regulations (*regi decreti*) and Councils of State (*Consigli di Stato*) in order to increase financial sustainability of local schools and better the state

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<sup>89</sup> Bonghi, *Studi e discorsi intorno alla pubblica istruzione*, pp. 73-74.

of elementary education for Italy's working classes.<sup>90</sup> His impact on education was immediate, following his nomination as Minister, as noted by Senator Luigi Pissavini's statement on December 19 1874 which emphasized not only the greater respect in the Chamber for Bonghi's particular capabilities but also the planning and preparation with which the newly nominated Minister approached his duties:

L'onorevole Bonghi pochi giorni dopo la sua nomina a ministro dell'istruzione pubblica, scartando, con quel senso pratico che lo distingue, l'idea di un progetto omnibus sull'istruzione elementare, assicurava i maestri che avrebbe incominciato dal presentare alla Camera quello che concerneva il miglioramento delle loro condizioni. Ed in una delle sue ultime circolari sull'istruzione elementare, l'onorevole Bonghi scrive che l'istruzione elementare vuole essere amata coi fatti e non colle parole, poichè è il principale elemento di un risorgimento non solo morale ma economico del paese.<sup>91</sup>

Senator Pissavini's assessment of Bonghi's first actions as Minister of Public Education depicts a particular attention to the contributions of someone best known for his work on policies and initiatives concerning university education in Italy. The focus on elementary education and the working conditions of public-school teachers demonstrates Bonghi's commitment to enacting the positive, impactful reform during his time serving in the Chamber of Deputies and the extent to which his views on the democratization of language shaped his approach in democratizing education. Moreover, his concerns for Italy's system of primary schooling underscores the ways in which his historical involvement with the *questione della lingua* directed his political efforts. Pissavini's reference to Bonghi's belief in a "risorgimento economico del paese" also demonstrates his awareness of the intrinsically connected nature of education and economic advancement – in

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<sup>90</sup> To list a few, see *Regio Decreto 29 novembre 1874* which approved *il regolamento pel Consiglio superiore di pubblica istruzione*, 1875 II, 358, *Cons. Di Stato*, 24 marzo 1875 which concerned the mandate to keep schools open during agricultural seasons in which significantly fewer students attended classes, 1876, II 98, *Cons. Di Stato*, 7 april 1875 which collected and published statistical information pertaining to schools. See *La Legge: Repertorio Generale Analitico Alfabetico del Dodicennio 1875-1886 (Anno XV-XXVI)* and *Collezione delle leggi ed atti del governo del regno d'Italia (Anno 1874 and Anno 1875)*.

<sup>91</sup> *Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati: Discussioni- Legislatura XII Sessione 1874*, p. 441.

the ways outlined previously in the chapter – and alludes to the way in which his correspondences with economists like Stefano Jacini informed both the scope and consideration of his political decisions. Leveraging his experiences and interactions with Europe’s greatest figures, Bonghi contributed to the development of Italy’s educational system by means of legislation passed in the Chamber of Deputies, regulation passed directly concerning every level of Italy’s scholastic hierarchy – from primary education to pedagogical instruction – and collaboration on initiatives (or legislation) that advanced his vision of a better system of education. Although he would not realize the implementation of the systematic changes for which he had advocated during his time serving on the *VIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia*, it was as a result of his prior experiences – and a significantly greater understanding of the political and ideological divides within the Chamber – that he was able to make changes that forever shaped the state of Italian education and, as will be explored in Chapter 5, precipitated a significant step towards female equality.

## Chapter 5

### *La donna e il suo avvenire: The Role of Women and the questione della lingua*

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On April 19 1892, Bonghi delivered a public lecture in Verona on the future of women in Italian society where he discussed the importance of redefining and revitalizing their role in both the private and public sphere. Bonghi's speech, which was later published as an article in the *Nuova Antologia* entitled "La donna e il suo avvenire", examines the role of women in Italy's primary social institutions – family, education, and government – and outlines his thoughts on how an integration of women in social, political, and, most importantly, literary and linguistic discourse was a necessary component of ameliorating every facet of society and ensuring the individual and collective success of the next generation of Italian youth. In a direct appeal to women, he urges them not to merely assume a traditionally submissive or dependent role in society but to assume control over their lives and work to develop the intellectual and personal virtues which could positively impact Italy as a whole: "diventate più colte che oggi non siate".<sup>1</sup> While, in this particular instance, Bonghi's message was a direct call to action, he recognized the need for those in positions of power – in both government and education – to take on the necessary responsibilities of acting as facilitators of social change that would allow women, or other underrepresented groups, the opportunity to take on a more prominent role in Italian society.

Bonghi recognized that the process of bettering the social and economic conditions of Italy needed to include all Italians – regardless of region, socioeconomic status, gender, etc. – and that the state of women – as both facilitators and beneficiaries of such changes – had to be considered

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<sup>1</sup> Bonghi, "La donna e il suo avvenire". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 123 (1892): 94-111. p. 110.

in all forms of social and legislative change. As one can infer from the public address in Verona, the process of elevating the status and role of women in Italian society required, much like the gradual attempts to change educational cultures in the South, women to be open to and embrace the potential to operate outside of the traditional roles that had, historically, been defined for them as much as it needed men to, socially, recognize women as equal members of society and, politically, enact legislation that granted women the same rights and freedoms as men. To Bonghi, the reevaluation of the role of women in Italian society was inextricably tied to the *questione della lingua* and demanded the same attention, consideration, and action that was called for in every other component of the language debate. His belief in the importance of a common language as a means of facilitating the creation of a national identity, fostering a collective solidarity, and improving Italy's economic stability through a democratization of knowledge and power was not simply a notion that included women, alongside men, as collective beneficiaries but a process that needed to involve women in order to achieve any desired goal. As seen in his personal writings and correspondences, his publication of articles such as "La donna e il suo avvenire", his work involving educational reform that allowed women access to a university education, and his establishment of the *Collegio Regina Margherita* in Anagni for orphaned daughters of teachers, the work towards linguistic and educational accessibility remains a pivotal component in Bonghi's drive to contribute to the betterment of the nation. In his capacity as a writer, member of parliament, and Minister of Public Education, Bonghi used his position and influence in Italy's political nucleus to fight for legislative change that granted greater legal equality for women and worked to empower women of all ages with the hopes that they could assume traditionally male positions in society and, ultimately, define their own roles in a newly unified nation.

***Women in Italy: The Risorgimento, new opportunities, and redefining societal roles***

A brief, albeit limited, summary of the changing role of women in Italy during the nineteenth century serves to underscore not only the interconnected nature of women's rights and the *questione della lingua* but also contextualizes Bonghi's place in the chronological and thematic framework of both topics. More importantly, a reflection on several of Italy's most prominent female figures in the nineteenth century highlights both their impact on the advancement of social and legislative change concerning women's rights as well as their personal influence on Bonghi's intellectual and personal formation. Much like the historical discussions which were used to provide a contextual framework in Chapter 4, the analysis of the role of women in the nineteenth century discussed in Chapter 5 serves as a means of exploring the extent to which Bonghi advocated for the advancement of women's rights and the ways in which he regarded female literacy as an integral part of the *questione della lingua*.<sup>2</sup>

On a broader scale, the Risorgimento and the decades immediately following Italian unification saw the beginning of a changing perspective concerning the role of women in Italian society which impacted, due to both evolving social cultures and necessity, their role inside and outside the familial institution. Through the French Revolution, the influence of figures like the

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<sup>2</sup> A study of this sort does not – and cannot, considering its inherent limitations as a study on Bonghi and the elements of the *questione della lingua* with which he engaged – appropriately reflect the extensive contributions of Italian activists such as Anna Maria Mozzoni and Gualberta Alaide Beccari; patriots and writers such as Giuditta Bellerio Sidoli, Giulietta Pezzi, Evelina Cattermole, or Antonietta De Pace; heads of political and literary salons like Clara Maffei and Emilia Peruzzi; or private instructors such as Emilia Luti who all contributed to the development of women's rights. Furthermore, it does not take into consideration the Paulina Schiff who advocated for women's rights in Italy or – albeit to a lesser extent – the political and social support of European women like Elizabeth Barrett Browning who supported the Italian Risorgimento. The complexity of examining the advocacy for women's rights from both women and men in the nineteenth century, the political impact of female patriots, and literary impact of female writers – all of which relate either directly or indirectly to many components of the *questione della lingua* – cannot be discounted. Thus, supporting materials will largely be selected based on the degree to which they impacted, or were connected to, Bonghi.

Marquis de Condorcet, as exemplified with his article *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité*, events like the 1789 Women's March on Versailles, and the ensuing social, political, and economic changes – as described in Chapter 4 – that rippled throughout Europe in the nineteenth century, the role of women in society began to be redefined in the context of a new European landscape. The diffusion of more progressive liberal ideals provoked greater discourse on gender equality as the turbulent political and social climate of revolutionary Europe provided women the opportunity to demonstrate that they indeed possessed the same intellectual capabilities as men. Much like the liberal ideals which influenced and inspired Italian revolutionaries in their political initiatives, the push for social change, bolstered by the unifying desire for national political independence, gave rise to ideological and practical changes that manifested themselves in both the public and private spheres.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the most significant – and socially acceptable – advancements towards increased social equality began with the reconsideration of women's role in the familial institution and the greater emphasis placed on the importance of the *mother* in Italian society. The overarching period of the Risorgimento saw a centralization of political institutions, a growth in industrialization, and an increase in globalism – as it pertained to economics, foreign policy, and social progress – which shaped Italy's approach to shaping and forming its national culture and its implementation of legislative policy. As a result of the greater emphasis from Italy's intellectual authorities on developing a collective identity and ensuring political, social, and economic sustainability for future generations, the role of the *mother* was reconsidered in order to address the changing needs of society. From both a social and legislative standpoint – which will be considered in the context of Bonghi's contributions to female education – it was important for women to not only bear and rear children, but also participate actively in their intellectual and

moral formation – and, by extension, the civic formation of the nation at large. Such emphasis is exemplified in Giuseppe Mazzini’s pamphlet, *Doveri dell'uomo* (1860), which, as the most significant pamphlet on the moral, social, and civic formation of Italians in the nineteenth century, addressed the role of women in a manner that could garner widespread social acceptance. He writes:

L'Angelo della Famiglia è la Donna. Madre, sposa, sorella, la Donna è la carezza della vita, la soavità dell'affetto diffusa sulle sue fatiche, un riflesso sul l'individuo della Provvidenza amorevole che veglia sull'Umanità... Ed essa è inoltre per ciascun di noi l'iniziatrice dell'avvenire. Il primo bacio materno insegna al bambino l'amore. Il primo santo bacio d'amica insegna all'uomo la speranza, la fede nella vita; e l'amore e la fede creano il desiderio del meglio, la potenza di raggiungerlo grado a grado, l'avvenire insomma, il cui simbolo vivente è il bambino, legame tra noi e le generazioni future.<sup>3</sup>

Although the symbolic and idealized representation of women described in Mazzini’s passage cannot be considered innovative – one needs to look no further than the example of the Virgin Mother as the traditional example of a perfect archetypal woman – his reference to women as the familial bond that links one generation to the next was, in the context of his advocacy for women’s education and the importance of mass education, a component of the Risorgimento which contributed to a ripple effect in the social perception of how women could impact Italian society. Paola Govoni affirms this notion and the positive impact of Italy’s founding fathers’ ideological views on, specifically, female academic research between 1870-1900:

...the first women to graduate in Italy lived within a context of female illiteracy of around 80% in 1870 and around 60% in the early years of the twentieth century. But it is also true that, despite the strong opposition of some conservative and Catholic sectors of the elites, those few women pioneering quite new social experiences benefitted from the liberal climate of the first governments after

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<sup>3</sup> Mazzini, Giuseppe. *Doveri dell'uomo*. Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1949, p. 66.

unification; important politicians and intellectuals demonstrated some by no means banal involvement in the issue.<sup>4</sup>

When considered within the overarching theme of the *questione della lingua*, to people like Bonghi who addressed the topic directly in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, investing in female education and developing the linguistic and literary capacities of Italy's female population would yield concrete benefits for both their children and the nation. The increased, albeit still limited, freedom for personal development for the sake of being better prepared to contribute to the personal and intellectual formation of one's children granted, consequently, a crucial opportunity for self-betterment. This changing conception of the potential role of women in a newly unified country created what was referred to by Mazzinians such as Gualberta Alaide Beccari as the "madre-cittadina" whose impact extended beyond the limited scope of the familial institution.<sup>5</sup> As Rosella Bufano describes in her chapter "Donne e Politica: Cittadinanza, Rappresentanza, E-Democracy", "La donna risorgimentale italiana, dunque, non è solo la madre che sacrifica i figli alla patria, ma è una donna che si mette in gioco, che partecipa attivamente alla costruzione della nazione. Sono le emancipazioniste dell'Italia post-unitaria a riconoscere alla madre-cittadina questa valenza più ampia."<sup>6</sup> Although the growing female presence in public discourse remained almost exclusive to the members of Italy's higher socio-economic groups, the

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<sup>4</sup> Govoni, Paola. "Challenging the Backlash: Women Science Students in Italian Universities (1870s-2000s)" in *Sciences in the Universities of Europe, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Ana Simoes, Springer, 2015, pp. 69-88, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> Gualberta Alaide Beccari (1842-1906) was an Italian writer and founder of the periodical "La Donna" in 1868. On April 12 1868, Beccari writes, "L'Italia fu fatta coll'armi, collo studio e il lavoro conviene consolidarla perciò è di mestieri che ognuno, quale ebbe la felicità di nascere sotto il suo cielo, alacre vi concorra. E la donna non dev'essere da meno dell'uomo in questo compito santo: nella sua mente Dio accese la scintilla dell'intelligenza, nel suo cuore pose il germe d'ogni nobile sentimento." See quotation found in Frau, Ombretta, and Cristina Gragnani. *Sottoboschi letterari: sei case studies fra Otto e Novecento*. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2011, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Bufano, Rosella, "Donne e Politica: Cittadinanza, Rappresentanza, E-Democracy." *Donna e società. Partecipazione democratica e cittadinanza digitale*, Università del Salento: Tangram Edizioni Scientifiche, 2013, pp. 93-145, p. 106.

transition from the private, familial sphere to the public sphere can be seen especially prominently in the context of revolutionary Italy.

The Risorgimento provided significant greater opportunities for women to operate outside the bounds of the traditional familial setting and support the political formation of a nation as well as the social foundation of a sense of *patria*. Both the ways in which women could assist the national cause and the extent to which they could be involved was bolstered by the progressive and liberal approach of Italy's most prominent ideological leaders such as Mazzini and Garibaldi who felt that antiquated social constructs pertaining to gender inhibited Italy's growth and development as a nation. In their respective capacities, they both believed that women were not only an integral component of the Italian revolutionary effort, but equally capable as men in contributing to widespread social and political change. As Mazzini wrote in his 1855 *Alle Donne d'Italia*:

“Sorgete all'Alpi al mare in nome non più di un uomo, ma d'un principio: in nome di Dio e del Popolo! In nome d'Italia. Intanto, o sorelle, voi dovete prepararvi, voi dovete affrettare con noi il gran momento. Maestre come siete di perseveranza e longanimità, voi dovete rispondere colla scienza del cuore ai sofismi della viltà...”<sup>7</sup>

The ultimate, underlying message of his ode to women was a call to action: one that encompassed everything from direct revolutionary activity to passive support for their “fratelli” in action. The female support received by Mazzini proved to be, as a collective, a critical component of his success as a revolutionary and, as individuals, examples to a patriarchal society that women deserved equal respect, consideration, and recognition in the public sphere. When examined alongside the women that supported Garibaldi, the distinct means of pushing for Italian unification by Italy's two revolutionaries provided the opportunity for the women in their lives to exhibit, in

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<sup>7</sup> Mazzini, *Opere Vol.II – Scritti*, edited by Luigi Salvatorelli. Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1967, p. 576.

the context of revolutionary history, a diverse set of characteristics that would not have been – or simply were not, in the case of Garibaldi's *garibaldine* – attributed to women.

The expansive network of female Mazzinians, whose support for Italy's revolutionary leader spanned throughout Europe, is indicative of not only women's contribution to the push for national unity but also the way in which the *padri della patria* selected likeminded and capable females to support their collective vision of Italian unification. Giuseppe Mazzini, the inspiring ideological force behind the Italian insurgence, surrounded himself with women with the intellectual and social savvy to facilitate the subversive efforts against Austria. To name a few, Eleonora Curlo Ruffini (1781-1856) – born to an aristocratic family, orphaned at the age of seven and raised in a convent, and joined the Carboneria in 1830 – was an example of a revolutionary for whom he had the utmost respect and was someone on whom he relied throughout the 1830s during his exile.<sup>8</sup> While Ruffini provided Mazzini with, as their personal correspondences demonstrate, invaluable personal support, his account of the development of his *Giovine Italia* emphasizes her and her family's importance to his movement's success:

I Comitati si costituirono rapidamente nelle principali città di Toscana. In Genova, i Ruffini, Campanella, Benza ed altri pochi che accettarono l'ufficio di diffondere l'associazione, erano pressochè ignoti, giovani assai e senza mezzi di fortuna od altro che potesse conquistare ad essi influenza. E nondimeno da studente a studente, da giovine a giovine, l'affratellamento si diffuse più assai rapidamente che non era da sperarsi.<sup>9</sup>

In a more politically acceptable capacity, Mazzini relied on Quirina Mocenni Magiotti (1781-1847) – a noblewoman perhaps best known for her affiliation with Ugo Foscolo, and her work collecting and preserving his literary works – to publish articles and various writings on

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<sup>8</sup> Mazzini's letter to her dated September 30 1836 emphasized precisely what she meant to his cause, his ideological aims, and his personal wellbeing: "Non so che cosa darei, per avere un colloquio d'un'ora con voi – per dirvi tutto me – per chiedervi, come una benedizione religiosa, un conforto; conforto alle idee..." Mazzini, *Opere Vol. I- Lettere*, p. 168.

<sup>9</sup> Mazzini, Giuseppe. *Giuseppe Mazzini: La vita, gli scritti, le dottrine*, edited by Pietro De Nardi. Milano: Tipografia Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1872, p. 269.

figures or ideas pertaining to the social and political changes in Italy.<sup>10</sup> Supporting his network of revolutionaries, who often operated on the fringes of political society as a result of their political status or exile, were figures like her – and the heads of the salons to whom Bonghi was connected which will be discussed in the following section – who provided the forms of legal resistance which bolstered his cause. Outside of Italy, he was frequently in contact with both English and Italian women like Sara Nathan (1819-1882) who were living in London, whose support he relied on when working to gain international ideological and financial support for Italy's opposition of Austrian and Bourbon political authority. Mazzini wrote in a letter to Sara Nathan dated January 26 1848: "Mia cara signora Nathan, Com'Ella avrà udito da Angelo Rosselli, parecchie signore Inglesi hanno cominciato una *Penny-Subscription*, in aiuto del nostro Fondo Nazionale."<sup>11</sup> In their individual capacities, their contributions to the Italy's political and social journey towards unification emphasized the need for Italian society to progress from the archaic societal restrictions that had, historically, been imposed on women and prevented them from achieving their fullest potential as individuals – and prevented Italian society from truly progressing.

In a different capacity, the women that aided Garibaldi in his efforts operated in a particularly distinct role that served as an even greater departure from the traditionally defined areas of public participation for women. Additionally, the birth of the *garibaldina* and the social

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<sup>10</sup> In a letter from London dated November 12 1838, Mazzini writes to Quirina Mocenni Magiotti for the first time to request the publication of a biographical account of Ugo Foscolo's life and what he stood for. He opens his letter with "Signora. Non ho l'onore di conoscervi di persona e a voi forse anche il mio nome è ignoto, ma vi so gentile d'animo e calda e sincera amica di Foscolo finchè visse; però, mi fo animo di scrivervie spero che vorrete accogliere con favore la mia dimanda. Una vita di Foscolo è desiderata in Italia..." Mazzini, *Opere Vol. I- Lettere*, p. 219.

<sup>11</sup> Mazzini, *Opere Vol. I- Lettere*, p. 409. The female involvement in the success of the penny subscription is particularly notable. Denis Mack Smith describes the history of Mazzini's National Fund and the penny subscription: "Other Londoners opened a penny subscription, for which the stockbroker Meyer Nathan collected sixteen shillings in one day. A subterfuge was necessary, because some people would contribute only to the school, while others might be ready to help fund propaganda, and bolder spirits would assist a revolution if only they could be shown that Italians felt strongly enough to risk their money and lives." Mack Smith, Denis. *Mazzini*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, p. 54. Sara Nathan, and the network of middle- and upper-class English women who supported Italy's efforts, was a critical component of Mazzini's strategy.

class from which Garibaldi's most prominent female supporters derived epitomized the radical separation from contemporary societal norms and served as a unique example of popular support. As far as the role of women in war was concerned, perhaps the most clearly defined method of participation for them in the eighteenth and nineteenth century can be seen in the 1793 *levée en masse* which served as a form of mass national conscription during the French Revolutionary Wars. The roles of each individual were defined according to age and sex in the following terms:

The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provision; the women shall make tents and clothes, and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into lint; the old men shall repair to the public places, to stimulate the courage of the warriors and preach the unity of the Republic and hatred of kings...<sup>12</sup>

Although wartime roles remained the same in revolutionary Italy, the Risorgimento, like the French Revolution, provided the opportunity for female deviation from established and clearly defined roles. More importantly, it demonstrated the way in which female supporters of Italy's national political unification were able to put their ideals into practice without the social or political support afforded to those of the higher echelons of society. Aiding Garibaldi in his military expeditions were women such as, to name a few, Rosalia Montmasson, Antonia Masanello, and Jessie White Mario who demonstrated the folly in the prevailing societal beliefs that women's capacities should be limited to making tents and clothes, tending to the injured, and taking care of the children while the men were at war. Rosalia Montmasson (1823-1904) served as the only female to depart from Quarto in Garibaldi's Expedition of the Mille. Although, beginning with the Battle of Calatafimi, Montmasson's primary role consisted of tending to wounded soldiers, she operated in such a capacity on the battlefield and was known to take up arms when necessary.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kramer, Lloyd. *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Rosalia Montmasson (1823-1904) was a Piedmontese patriot of humble origins who, to alleviate the family's financial burden following the death of her mother, moved to Turin to work as a *stiratrice* and household domestic.

Giacomo Oddo's 1863 account of Garibaldi's Expedition pays particular attention to Montmasson's role in battle:

Affrontò i pericoli, espose alle palle del nemico il proprio petto per accorrere la prima ovunque un valoroso cadesse. A chi fasciava le ferite, a chi ridava animo con l'accento della speranza, a chi leniva i dolori con la parola del conforto, e ai moribondi chiudeva gli occhi piangente.<sup>14</sup>

Another example was that of Antonia Masanello (1833-1862) who served as a soldier under Garibaldi in 1860 after, alongside her husband, having arrived too late for the departure of the Mille from Quarto and travelling to Sicily on their own accord to aid in his political and military efforts.<sup>15</sup> In his monograph on Masanello, Alberto Espen writes, "Soltanto un paio di ufficiali erano a conoscenza della reale identità di Tonina (così veniva affettuosamente soprannominata) ed ebbero a dichiarare che «avrebbe potuto comandare un battaglione se la sua condizione di donna non glielo avesse impedito»."<sup>16</sup> Lastly, the figure of the Jessie White Mario (1832-1906) served as another example of the detrimental effects of the lack of equality and opportunity for women in

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In 1849, she met her future husband – and future Prime Minister of Italy – Francesco Crispi whilst he was in exile and became increasingly involved with the movement for national independence as she worked as runner delivering orders and instructions to and from Mazzini and his affiliates. While in Genoa in 1860 she met with Garibaldi who was preparing for his famous expedition from Quarto to Sicily. Against Crispi's – her then husband – opposition, she shipped off with Garibaldi as the only female soldier in his *mille*.

<sup>14</sup> Oddo, Giacomo. *I mille di Marsala: scene rivoluzionarie*. Milano: Giuseppe Scorza Di Nicola Editore, 1863, p 248. Neither Montmasson nor Masanello were the first females to take arms alongside the Italian general during the overarching period of Italian resistance although, given her disguise, it was unlikely Garibaldi was aware of the female soldier in his company. Colomba Antonietti (1826-1849) fought in the Battle of Velletri in 1849 and fell in battle during the 1849 siege of Rome shortly thereafter.

<sup>15</sup> Antonia Masanello (1833-1862) was a patriot born to a farming family from Montemerlo, commune of Cervarese Santa Croce, under Austrian rule. While the origins and development of her political ideals is relatively uncertain, in 1860, she and her husband decided to leave their residence in Modena to join Garibaldi in his military endeavours. Despite having missed the departure of the Mille from Quarto, the reason for the absence of her and her husband's name in the "I Nomi dei Mille" published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* on November 12 1878, they were able to journey to Sicily on their own accord and join Garibaldi's army in Messina in July 1860. She fell ill to tuberculosis and died on May 20 1862 with the hopes that, one day, her native home would become a part of Italy. See Espen, Alberto. "Sulle tracce della 'guerriera' di Garibaldi: Antonia Masanello da Montemerlo," *Terra d'Este: Rivista di storia e cultura* Vol. XXI (2011), 25-49.

<sup>16</sup> Espen, Alberto. *Da Montemerlo al Volturmo: Storia di Antonia Masanello, la "guerriera" di Garibaldi*. Venezia: Consiglio Regionale del Veneto, 2012, p. 42.

Italy.<sup>17</sup> In response to having been denied entrance to medical school in London in 1855 as a result of her gender, she devoted her talents to Mazzini and Garibaldi's mission for Italian unification – a cause she had begun to feel strongly about since her transfer to Paris in 1852. Described by Mazzini as the “Giovanna d’Arco della causa italiana”, she worked alongside the Genoese revolutionary to publish articles in the *British Daily News* in 1857, operated as one of Garibaldi's most important medics during the Italian wars of Independence, and served, at times, as a mediator between the two strong-willed patriots – in Mazzini and Garibaldi. Immediately following the final stage of Italy's unification and the annexation of Rome in 1870, Jessie White devoted herself to various social concerns that plagued Italy including: research on the causes of, effects, and remedies for pellagra – a disease caused by the lack of B<sub>3</sub> causing skin diseases, diarrhea, and dementia –; a study on the living conditions of the poor in Naples – *La miseria in Napoli* (1877) –; and a study on the health and living conditions of sulfur miners in Sicily – *Le miniere di zolfo in Sicilia* (1894); and a study on Italy's penitentiary system – “Il Sistema Penitenziario e il domicilio coatto in Italia”.<sup>18</sup>

Through revolutionary figures like Eleonora Curlo Ruffini, Antonia Masanello, and Jessie White Mario, the Risorgimento marked a period in which an increasing number of women were able to deviate from societal norms and able to begin forging an identity independent from men. As Lucy Riall states in “Men at War: Masculinity and Military Ideas in the Risorgimento”, “...During the more revolutionary phase of the Risorgimento, before and including the events of 1848-49, definitions of female patriotism embraced both the private and public roles of women.

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<sup>17</sup> Jessie White Mario (1832-1906) was born in Hampshire, England to a family of middle-class boat builders. At an early age, she was afforded educational opportunities that were not common for girls in Victorian England and was able to leave for Paris to study philosophy at the Sorbonne between 1852-54. It was during this period that she became increasingly familiar with the activity of Mazzini and Garibaldi and sympathetic to the Italian cause under Austrian and Bourbon control.

<sup>18</sup> White Mario, Jessie. “Il Sistema Penitenziario e il domicilio coatto in Italia”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 148 (1896), pp. 16-35.

At the same time, the ideal of ‘manliness’ was not necessarily defined in opposition to women, and women were not necessarily excluded from public life.”<sup>19</sup> With the greater opportunity to operate in the public sphere, such women demonstrated to Italy’s less traditional or conservative figures that the nation, as a whole, needed to address the state of inequality between sexes. Not only was it, to figures like Mazzini, Garibaldi, and, later, Bonghi, the moral prerogative of Italy’s governing bodies to address such inequality and lack of opportunity with legislation – especially pertaining to education – but the duty of society to progress beyond antiquated social norms.

***Women in Italy and Bonghi: The women of Italy’s political and literary salons***

Inasmuch as the female figures connected to Mazzini and Garibaldi played an integral role in the political and social goals of Italy’s most prominent revolutionaries, it can be argued that their contributions – with the exception of perhaps Jessie White – were overshadowed by their status as individual pieces in an overarching network that was defined by one single male figure. Although they were recognized for both their efforts and their tangible contributions, the unifying or underlining attribute to their place in history was their individual connection to a significantly more recognized male figure who was able to bring them together. For this reason, it is imperative to consider the role of the female figures in Italy who were able to create a network of their own and bring together – and in certain cases, develop as intellectual, political, or literary talents – Italy’s social, artistic, and political leaders for a mutual cause. In this capacity, the women of Italy’s salons were of great historical relevance as a result of their tremendous impact on local, regional,

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<sup>19</sup> Riall, Lucy. “Men at War: Masculinity and Military Ideas in the Risorgimento”, *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, edited by Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 152-170, p. 165.

and national artistic and political cultures and their ability to bring together and moderate discourses that directly shaped the building of a national state and influenced the development of the country's artistic culture.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, their impact on the development of Bonghi's career and his approach to the *questione della lingua*, especially as it concerned women, cannot be overlooked. If one recalls the overarching chronology of Bonghi's life and intellectual formation in Chapters 1 and 2, one can see the extent to which his place in Italian linguistic and political history was indebted to his connections to figures like Costanza Trotti Bentivoglio and Emilia Peruzzi – historical figures who allowed Bonghi the opportunity to participate in their sociopolitical domain and become acquainted with Europe's most influential figures. More importantly, a more detailed assessment of his working relationships with the women of Italy's salons demonstrates the direct impact they had on both his beliefs regarding the language debate and the implementation of educational legislation.

Despite the expansive presence of Italy's political and literary salons throughout Italy, limiting the scope to those with which Bonghi had direct contact or the women with whom he had a working relationship still underscores the importance of these women during the nineteenth century in Italy. To examine the salons on a regional basis, the Turinese *Salotto Arconati* was, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, hosted by Costanza Trotti Bentivoglio (1800-1871), “la Marchesa Arconati”, and was one of the most prominent political salons in Piedmont prior to unification. She began hosting the salon in 1859, following her transfer from Milan after the *Cinque giornate*

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<sup>20</sup> The importance of women in the study of Italian salons in the nineteenth century cannot be overstated as they indeed were the unifying bond which brought together Europe's intellectual, literary, and political elite. Moreover, their connections, correspondences, and interactions with society's elite were often complimentary to but independent from their husband's network. For example, Emilia Peruzzi's *Salotto Rosso* featured some of Italy's most prominent figures from politicians like Massimo D'Azeglio and Bettino Ricasoli to writers like Edmondo De Amicis. However, Emilia's connections and correspondences, as seen in the *Carteggio Emilia Peruzzi* and *Carteggio Ubaldino Peruzzi* collected in the BNCF were independent from her husband's and it was not uncommon for people like Bonghi to write separate letters about separate issues to each spouse.

in 1849, and used it as a means of connecting Italy's most prominent political and literary figures like Manzoni, Rosmini, Fauriel, Cousin, Berchet, Giusti, and Massari.<sup>21</sup> In addition to Bonghi's praise, Carlo Bassi – Costanza's nephew – spoke to the inspirational qualities that defined his aunt's conduct and historical involvement in his autobiographical account of his youth. He writes,

Io non saprei proprio dire come sia avvenuto che Costanza Arconati, figlia di una Schaffgotche, imparentata con l'alta aristocrazia viennese, abbia rotti i ponti con tutta la tradizione, con tutte le tenaci consuetudini di famiglia e di ambiente per lanciarsi a capo fitto nel vortice della politica liberale, a quei giorni periglioso davvero.<sup>22</sup>

The idea that someone – especially a woman – could, despite societal factors and impositions, defy tradition, operate independently, and impact the world around them was critical in pushing for wider acceptance of new roles for Italian women in a rigidly male-dominated culture.

In Florence, Emilia Toscanelli Peruzzi's (1827-1900) *Salotto Rosso* had, arguably, an even greater and more sustained impact on Bonghi's life and career. Emilia, born to a family of the upper bourgeoisie, had liberal leanings and – alongside her husband, Ubaldino Peruzzi, whom she married in 1850 – used her position in society to contribute to all forms of political and cultural discourse in Italy.<sup>23</sup> As Edmondo De Amicis describes in his *Un salotto fiorentino del secolo scorso* (1902), “Ma non si può descrivere quel salotto senza parlar prima della signora, che ne fu

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 10-11 and Chapter 2, p. 7 for more information on Costanza Trotti Bentivoglio, her connection to Bonghi, and a list of some of the more prominent figures who frequented her salon.

<sup>22</sup> Bassi, “Quarantotto Intimo”. *La Rassegna Nazionale* Vol. CLXX Anno XXXI (1909), pp. 72-80.

<sup>23</sup> Elisabetta Benucci notes in her article “La scrittura privata. A proposito del Diario di Emilia Toscanelli Peruzzi”, “Divenuta moglie dell'uomo politico Ubaldino Peruzzi, che ebbe numerosi incarichi prima nel governo toscano del 1859, poi fu ministro nel primo governo del Regno d'Italia e infine sindaco di Firenze, Emilia ne fu il braccio destro, rivelandosi, oltre che donna brillante e coltissima, anche straordinaria esperta di politica.”<sup>23</sup> Benucci, Elisabetta. “La scrittura privata. A proposito del Diario di Emilia Toscanelli Peruzzi,” in *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 1/2010, pp. 61-91, p. 63. See also Benucci's introduction in Peruzzi, Emilia Toscanelli. *Diario (16 maggio 1854 – 1 novembre 1858)*, edited by Elisabetta Benucci, Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2007, pp. IX-CXXXVI.

l'anima, e a cui è quasi al tutto dovuta la bella rinomanza ch'egli ebbe.”<sup>24</sup> In their house in Borgo de' Greci, Emilia, through the establishment of her *Salotto Rosso*, wanted to recreate the same salon setting from her youth that had contributed immeasurably to her own personal intellectual formation. The result was one of the most prominent literary and political salons in Tuscany that remained, alongside Cavour's group of political affiliates in Turin, the most influential branch for politicians affiliated with the Historical Right until after the fall of the party in 1876. Although the respective networks of two prominent spouses can blend together, it is important to note the distinction between Emilia and Ubaldino's respective networks and connections. While the two certainly shared acquaintances and friends – like Bonghi, Massimo D'Azeglio, Cavour, Francesco Guerrazzi, Giuseppe Giusti, etc. – and the salon hosted the most prominent Italian and European figures visiting Florence, both Emilia's diary and her collection of letters and correspondences denote distinct literary, artistic, and philosophical interests that were separate from those of her husband. Bonghi's relationship with each Peruzzi is indicative of Emilia and Ubaldino's respective interests and underscores how *la signora* Peruzzi was regarded with the utmost esteem as a result of her own merit and not simply as a result of her matrimonial status. While Bonghi's letters to Ubaldino reflect a predominantly working relationship with politics dominating the subjects of discussion, his letters to Emilia denote a significantly greater degree of warmth and affection. This is not uncommon for the founder of the *Salotto Rosso* who was regarded by her contemporaries for her literary tastes and political savvy as much as for the supportive warmth and compassion with which she conducted herself. Anne Urbancic describes in her book on Mario Pratesi the

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<sup>24</sup> De Amicis's literary portrait of Emilia's *Salotto Rosso* was published first in the *Nuova Antologia*, followed by a brief edition published by Barbera in 1902 under the title *Un salotto fiorentino del secolo scorso*, and again in the *Nuovi Ritratti Letterari ed Artistici* in 1908. De Amicis, Edmondo. *Nuovi Ritratti Letterari ed Artistici*. Milano: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1908, p. 7.

impact of Emilia Peruzzi's mentorship and guidance on the Florentine author's approach to literature and his career as a writer and critic:

He may have learned the art of constructive criticism through the conversations and discussions that animated the Salotto Rosso of Emilia Toscanelli Peruzzi, the genteel hostess of the much-frequented literary salon in Florence. Mrs Peruzzi regularly sent copies of recently published books to the salon's participants, and solicited their own works from them, in order to offer constructive opinions and commentary. She was well known for her encouragement, promotion, and support (including financial) of young writers she considered worthy, among whom we find notable names like Edmondo De Amicis, Giannina Milli, Ada Negri, and Pratesi himself.<sup>25</sup>

Emilia Peruzzi's devotion to developing Italy's young artistic talent certainly enforced an opinion that Bonghi had expressed in even his earlier works such as *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* regarding the need to include women in every stage of the literary process: reading, writing, reviewing, editing, and critiquing. Emilia possessed a particularly refined ability to deconstruct, analyze, and interpret literary works and an acute capability to identify talent and artistic potential.

In Bonghi's view, Italy needed to overcome archaic social standards and restrictions in order to find and develop the talents of those, like Emilia Peruzzi, who could ameliorate what he felt was a lacklustre production of literary works in Italy in the nineteenth century. He was aware that Emilia Peruzzi was certainly not the only example of females inspiring, editing, and refining the literary productions of male authors and receiving little to no public recognition. As a close friend of Alessandro Manzoni, Bonghi was well aware of the impact of Emilia Luti (1815-1882) on the substantial revisions of the *ventisettana* of *I promessi sposi* from 1839.<sup>26</sup> In Manzoni's letter

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<sup>25</sup> Urbancic, Anne. *Reviewing Mario Pratesi: The Critical Press and Its Influence*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014, p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> "Fu l'Emilia Luti. Nata di Luigi e di Giovanna Feroci il 29 giugno del '15, gli studi a cui attese nella giovinezza, non furono né estesi, né propriamente letterari; imparò per altro, il francese, e si può dire che tutto si riducesse lì. La marchesa Luisa D'Azeglio contenta dell'unica prova di averle fatto scrivere sotto i suoi occhi una lettera, la prese come bambinaia della figliastra, la Rina, che Massimo ebbe dalla sua prima moglie Giulia Manzoni. La Rina aveva

to the Marquis Alfonso Della Valle di Casanova dated March 31 1871, the Milanese author describes having “la fortuna di trovare un'altra colta persona, ch'ebbe la santa pazienza di riveder con me il lavoro, da cima a fondo, a passo a passo, appuntando i vocaboli e i modi di dire eteroclitici, e suggerendo quelli a proposito.”<sup>27</sup> Emilia Luti, alongside Gaetano Cioni, Giovanni Battista Niccolini, and Giuseppe Borghi, was, despite being the last of the four Tuscans to join the Milanese author's fourteen-year process of linguistic revision, one of Manzoni's most important collaborators and editor whom he trusted to review, passage by passage, the entire novel before the publication of the *quarantana*.<sup>28</sup> Luti was the youngest editor – by a margin of twenty-five years – of the most significant work of Italian literary prose in the nineteenth century, in addition to being considered one of the most sought-after and prominent private instructors in Italy.

Borghi was aware of the tremendous importance of figures like Emilia Peruzzi and Emilia Luti on Italy's literary production and believed that more women needed to operate in a similar capacity in order to ensure greater success for not only the nation's literary production but also for the state of education – both inside and outside the familial institution. More importantly, he believed that empowering women was a necessary component of bettering social, educational, and economic conditions of the entire nation and that women, as exemplified through the actions of his female friends and acquaintances, possessed the same virtues, qualities, and skills as the men that dominated Italian society. While these sentiments will be demonstrated in the writings and

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in casa tutti, o quasi, i maestri per l'insegnamento privato; e l'Emilia sacrificando nascostamente molte notti al sonno, poté fare insieme la scolara e la ripetitrice. Così con una qualche coltura, ma non senza zoppiare un tantino nell'ortografia, difettuccio dal quale non seppe mai liberarsi, entrò poi come istitutrice nella casa Manzoni; dalla quale passò successivamente, in quella de' Litta Modignani, de' Bassi e de' Greppi, dove morì il 7 gennaio 1882.” Sforza, Giovanni. “Alessandro Manzoni e il Vocabolario milanese-italiano di Francesco Cherubini”, *Annali Manzoniani*, terza serie, n. 1 (2018): 155-166, p. 163.

<sup>27</sup> Manzoni, Alessandro. “Lettera al marchese Alfonso della Valle di Casanova, a Napoli.” *Manuale della Letteratura Italiana nel secolo decimonono: Vol. II Parte I*, edited by Giovanni Mestica. Firenze: G. Barbera Editore, 1885. 170-179, p. 175.

<sup>28</sup> Polimeni. *La similitudine perfetta- La prosa di Manzoni nella scuola Italiana dell'Ottocento*, p. 287.

initiatives discussed later in the chapter, with regards to his association with the women of Italy's salons, his respect and admiration can best be summarized with the sepulchral epigraph which he wrote for the head of one of Milan's most historically significant salon's, Clara Maffei.<sup>29</sup> The epigraph reads:

A  
CLARA MAFFEI  
CHE NATA AD AMARE A COMPATIRE A PERDONARE  
PURE TROVÒ NELLA SUA DEVOZIONE ALLA PATRIA  
L'ENERGIA DELLO SDEGNO L'ARDIRE DELLA LOTTA  
E TUTTA ACCESA NEL DESIDERIO DEL BENE  
CUSTODÌ FINO ALL'ULTIMO IMMUTATI  
GLI ENTUSIASMI DELLA FEDE DELL'AMICIZIA DELLA PIETÀ .  
LE AMICHE GLI AMICI LA EREDE  
CON MEMORE AFFETTO QUESTO RICORDO  
POSERO<sup>30</sup>

Author and journalist Raffaello Barbiero notes that, in Clara Maffei's will, she wished for the crucifix on her tomb to simply read, "Implorate misericordia e pace all'anima di Clara Carrara Spinelli Maffei".<sup>31</sup> Despite the limited personal connection to Maffei, Bonghi was among her friends who believed that Milan's prominent patron of the arts deserved an epigraph that more appropriately reflected her character and her notable contributions to Italian culture and society.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Clara Carrara Spinelli Maffei (1814-1886) was born an only child to an aristocratic family. Following her marriage to poet Andrea Maffei in 1832, she became increasingly involved in the discussions on literature and art between her husband and the prominent figures – Tommaso Grossi, Massimo D'Azeglio, Francesco Hayez – they hosted in their residence in Milan. The reputation of the burgeoning salon grew largely as a result of Clara's sharp intellect, affable nature, and innate ability to moderate discussion. What became known as the *Salotto di Clara Maffei* attracted the likes of Giuseppe Verdi – who formed a lifelong friendship with Clara – and despite her concerns, survived her marital separation. By 1848, with the increased number of political figures like Cesare Correnti and Carlo Cattaneo, the Salotto Maffei became the nucleus of political discourse in Milan and remained an integral contributor to national artistic and political discourse until its slow decline in the 1870s.

<sup>30</sup> Barbiera, Raffaello. *Il Salotto della Contessa Maffei e la Società Milanese (1834-1886)*. Milano: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1895), p. 330. See also "Iscrizioni de Ruggero Bonghi". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 153 (1897): 385-398 for a complete collection of Bonghi's epigraphs.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>32</sup> If one recalls, as discussed in Chapter 1, Bonghi's connections to Europe's most prominent figures, it comes as no surprise that he had an informal relationship with Clara Maffei. He was almost certainly put in contact with the Maffei by Giulio Carcano, who had a very close friendship with Clara, and would likely have met with them in Stresa during his stay with Rosmini. In a letter to Carcano dated May 23 1855 from Stresa, Bonghi writes a letter to catch up with his friend and remarks that he had seen "il bel Maffei; ma da lontano". Acocella, Giuseppe. *Per una filosofia politica dell'Italia civile*. Napoli: Rubbettino Editore, 2004, p. 124. Carcano also kept Clara Maffei

The result was a dedicatory address that not only satisfied the wishes of her friends but also reflected Bonghi's beliefs on the full capabilities of women. The epigraph, which uses phrases that include connotations or attributes that were seen in the nineteenth century as traditionally masculine like "devozione alla patria", "energia dello sdegno", and "ardire della lotta" alongside phrases like "entusiasmi della fede" and "amicizia della pietà" which could be considered more neutral or traditionally feminine attributes, depicts a person that was complete in their set of virtues and one that could not be defined with archaic and restrictive descriptors. Such words were fitting for a woman who, despite the social stigma of her separation from her husband and the potential belief that the success of her salon was predicated on her husband's name and connections, was able to bring together Italy's most prominent figures. In the context of equal opportunity, those like Bonghi were aware that women like Clara Maffei possessed all of the virtues that were lauded in men and believed that society, in light of Italy's political unification, needed to recognize – socially and politically – women's potential and their impact on the betterment of Italy for contemporary and future generations of Italians.

***Bonghi and Women's Literature: Females in the critical and creative development of a new literary standard***

Bonghi's recognition of female talent and his beliefs that integrating women in Italy's artistic culture would benefit the educational state of Italy – from the perspective of both literacy and cultural enrichment – is especially clear when examining his beliefs on the *questione della*

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apprised of Bonghi's personal and working life as he describes Bonghi's wedding in a letter dated October 6 1855: "Il matrimonio di Bonghi colla giovine Rusca, nostra cugina, ci offerse alcune scene curiose e nuove..." Carcano, Giulio. *Opere Complete di Giulio Carcano: Pubblicate per cura della famiglia dell'autore Vol. X – Epistolario*. Milano: L.F Cogliati Tipografo, 1896, p. 198.

*lingua* and the condition of Italian literature. An analysis of his earlier personal and published writings, like but not limited to *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, his letters in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, and his articles in the *Nuova Antologia* and *La Cultura*, establishes not only a longstanding history of advocating for greater rights and recognition for women but also a basis for the initiatives and policies he would implement during and following his time as Minister of Public Education. Through his revaluation of the role of the *mother* in the familial institution as literate and culturally aware educators and his advocacy of the creative merit of both international and domestic female authors, one can see the first component of his vision for the role of women in a unified Italy as well as the way in which all factors contributed to the advancement of Italy's literary and linguistic situation.

Bonghi's emphasis on the importance of quality literary criticism and his revaluation of the role of a literary critic discussed in Chapter 3 applied in equal measure to his desired integration of women in the literary sphere. As he described in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, the quality of a nation's literary production was contingent on two factors: 1) the facilitation of high-quality literature by literary critics who were able to provide feedback and exegetical explanations that could improve the level of writing, increase the level of public accessibility, and engage a wider audience, and 2) the creation of literature of a high linguistic and thematic standard by authors whose writing, consequently, is improved by productive critical analysis and fundamentally elevated by a higher standard of childhood. In his view, not only were women fundamentally capable of operating in the same capacity as contemporary male authors and critics – and, in many cases, were capable of improving upon the overall quality of the Italian standard – but they also needed to be incorporated in a significantly greater capacity than they had been, historically and during the nineteenth century, in Italy.

In a critical capacity, Bonghi envisioned increased female involvement and greater recognition of their capabilities as much in the private sphere, as facilitators of their children's linguistic and literary education, as in the public sphere, as literary critics who could ameliorate the literary standard in Italy. Naturally, greater accessibility for female education was a critical factor for their integration in the artistic community and figures like Bonghi and Mazzini were aware that wider support – from the perspective of both national investment and public support – could most easily be garnered when framed within the context of improving the state of familial institution and improving Italy for the benefit of current and future generations of Italians. In the same manner that Mazzini's advocacy for female equality in his *Doveri dell'uomo* focused on “la donna” as “l'angelo della famiglia” in order to be more accessible for mainstream society, so too did Bonghi broach the topic of increased female involvement in the literary sphere by speaking to women's role in the private sphere. In the first letter of *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, he argued his case in the simplest of terms: “...il suo posto nella famiglia e nella società è l'istrumento più adatto e più sicuro della diffusione della coltura, e per la natura delle sue occupazioni potrebbe fornire il maggior numero de' lettori d'un libro.”<sup>33</sup> Although the case for improving female linguistic and literary education was implied, Bonghi's argument calls for a change in artistic culture, as discussed in the context of the readability of Italian prose Chapter 2, as well as in societal culture which privileged – almost exclusively – male involvement in the creative and critical formation of Italian literature. More specifically, literature needed to be written in order to appeal to a wider audience than Italy's most educated, cultural elite and society at large needed to consider the women's capabilities and recognize their importance in the

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<sup>33</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 54.

diffusion of a national language and an elevation in the country's artistic standard.<sup>34</sup> Thus, women needed to have the opportunity to be educated, develop their critical literary faculties, and impart that knowledge to their children.

In addition to featuring more prominently in the intellectual development of the family, Bonghi also felt that more women needed to operate in a formal critical role in order to improve upon the contemporary state of literary production. The examples set by Eleanora Curlo Ruffini, Costanza Trotti Bentivoglio, Clara Maffei, and, most importantly, Emilia Peruzzi and her contributions to the development of young Italian literary talents provided women's rights advocates like Bonghi – not to mention, women in general – with the ultimate example of how women in Italy could influence, shape, and better the quality of Italian literature. Immediately following his call for greater female participation in the intellectual development of the family in his letter to Celestino Bianchi, he outlined his views on the importance of integrating a female perspective in literary criticism which he contrasted with the quality of literature in France. He wrote:

Abbiamo avute, pur troppo, donne letterate, forse non meno degli altri; ma la donna, nella letteratura nostra, non ha esercitato quell'ufficio che t'accennavo e che ha esercitato, per esempio, nella francese, alla quale, forse, è stata appunto essa la cagione principale di quella nettezza, di quella precisione, di quell'urbanità, di quell'universalità, di quella finezza, di quella vita, di quella speditezza, di quella opportunità, di quella varietà, in somma di tutti quegli altri pregi ne' quali è superiore alla nostra.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Katharine Mitchell cites Silvio Pellico's 1819 article in *Il Conciliatore* which "encouraged women to not only read but to write novels", Giovanni Piroto's 1822 *Biblioteca amena ed istruttiva per le donne gentili* which "specialized in translations of fashionable foreign novels for female readers", and Ruggero Bonghi's letters to Celestino Bianchi in which he argues that "women should form the backbone of a modern public" as three of the most prominent calls for female equality in literature prior to Italy's unification. Mitchell, Katharine. *Italian Women Writers: Gender and Everyday Life in Fiction and Journalism, 1870-1910*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Bonghi, *Perché la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, p. 54.

It is noteworthy that Bonghi attributed a degree of the qualities present in the French and English literary traditions – the clarity, linguistic precision, accessibility, etc. – to female involvement and their literary sensibilities which he had described earlier in his letter as “fino e giusto”.<sup>36</sup> Not only did Bonghi feel they possessed the acute awareness to recognize and refine the writing of contemporary authors, he also felt, as women were not the target audience of contemporary writings, they were in the best position to identify the problems of accessibility that he felt plagued Italy’s prose. This involvement was as integral to improving upon the thematic content of the nation’s prose as it was to diffusing the linguistic qualities of the works. Thus, if one considers their critical involvement in literature alongside their involvement in the intellectual formation of the family and their increased historical participation in pedagogical roles in the public sphere, one can see the importance of female integration in the wider *questione della lingua*.

In addition to the integration of women in the critical analysis and development of literature, Bonghi also felt they needed to be granted the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities in a creative capacity. He felt there needed to be a concerted push by Italy’s cultural elite to support and develop the artistic talents of women who were creating art – such as Giulietta Pezzi (1810-1878), Caterina Percoto (1812-1887), and Luisa Emanuel Saredo (1830-1896) – and foster and encourage the talents of young females who demonstrated artistic promise. When considered in the context of Bonghi’s life, even his earliest writings demonstrate a core belief that women needed to be considered for their ability to produce high-quality literature. The diary entries of *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri* are among the Neapolitan’s earliest writings in which he explores the merits of female literature – an argument which can best be seen through his analysis of English literature. In his discourse with M. Dünne on June 14 1852, the two men discussed the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

literary similarities of Byron and Leopardi during the Irishman's visit to Stresa and Bonghi comments on, Leopardi aside, how Italian authors, regardless of sex, could adopt the qualities that were present in, particularly, English poetry that would better the overall national literary standard in Italy. Following their discourse and a collaborative reading of various English and Italian works, Bonghi noted his overall assessment of English poetry, describing its defining literary characteristics in the following terms:

Queste qualità di sentimento vago ed intimo, colto di in sè, senza confine e forma, e che piglia atto di morale e d'immorale dalla persona che n'è commossa e che lo canta, e che par bello ed invagisce chi legge. Non in ragione della moralità sua, ma della sua intimità e profondità buia ed indefinita, fa il carattere della maggior parte dei poeti inglesi d'oggi.<sup>37</sup>

Although his comments were written in the context of his discussion with Dünne about the writings of Lord Byron, the Neapolitan's praise extended, as emphasized by his quantifier of "maggior parte dei poeti inglesi", far beyond the author of *Don Juan*. In his admiration for what he considered to be an exceptionally high literary standard, Bonghi cited the works "di Miss Hemans, di Miss Landon, di Frances Brown" as embodying the quality of English poetry as their writings were "piene di tenerezza e di delicatezza, e di verità poetica e naturale."<sup>38</sup> He noted that *L'ora della preghiera* (*The Hour of Prayer*, 1827) and *La voce della primavera* (*The Voice of Spring*, 1823) by Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835) and *I doni della partenza* (*A Parting Voice*, 1847) by Frances Brown (1816-1879) were simply "bellissime" and that "in Italia non abbiamo poesie di quest'ordine, e per averne ci bisognerà dare una nuova tinta e piega alla nostra, flessibilissima, in sè, ma irrigidita dall'incapacità degli scrittori dei tre ultimi secoli."<sup>39</sup> While it

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<sup>37</sup> Bonghi, *I fatti miei e i miei pensieri*, p. 88.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89. Although Bonghi cited the names of the poems in Italian, he was proficient in reading in English and typically read English poetry and prose in their original language. See the diary entries dated March 8 and 13 where Bonghi transcribed – in English – and commented on various passages from Hamlet: "Leggo l'*Amleto*. Ecco immagine splendida: "...look, the morn, in russet mantle clad, Walks' o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill." *Ibid.*, p. 27. While it is uncertain whether it was Dünne or Bonghi to suggest the poems written by Hemans, Landon, and

would be inaccurate to infer that the “nuova tinta e piega” to which Bonghi referred was simply a matter of incorporating female voices in a male-dominated artistic domain, he believed that a greater degree of inclusion certainly enriched the nation’s literary production.

Within the context of the Risorgimento, despite how women saw greater opportunity to operate in a more public capacity – as exemplified by the actions, achievements, and contributions of the previously discussed figures – Lucienne Kroha still affirms that in Italy “the woman writer was perceived as nothing less than a trespasser invading a masculine domain unless she confined herself to pedagogical writing.”<sup>40</sup> By contrast, Bonghi demonstrated an attention to female literature that extended beyond foreign literary productions and spanned his entire career. In his beliefs that female authors could contribute and enhance the readability of Italy’s nineteenth-century poetry and prose, Bonghi actively promoted the talents of more established female authors and worked, primarily in his role as a literary critic, to foster the talents of Italy’s burgeoning talents. As educational opportunities for women in Italy expanded in the latter half of the nineteenth century – largely as a result of the increased participation in a pedagogical capacity in the workforce but also due to the legislative changes that permitted women to acquire a university degree – so too was there an increase in the literary production of female authors.<sup>41</sup> Bonghi’s connections to these authors and his work promoting or fostering their literary talents provides a deeper understanding of his vision for greater female equality in a post-unificatory developing Italy. To cite several instances of his efforts to promote women’s literature, his review of *A Village Commune* (1881) by Ouida – pseudonym of English author Maria Louise Ramé (1839-1908) –

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Browne, the Italian would certainly have wanted to seize the opportunity to read the text with a native speaker. Moreover, although it is also uncertain whether they read any other English authors, it is evident that Bonghi, after having read the poetry together with the Irishman, was effusive in his praise for the three *poetesse*.

<sup>40</sup> Kroha, Lucienne. *The woman writer in late-nineteenth-century Italy: Gender and the formation of literary identity*. Lewiston: E. Mellon Press, 1992, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> See pp. 39-42 for Bonghi’s involvement in the implementation of political policy granting women the right to a university education.

and the Italian translation by Sofia Fortini-Santarelli was an example that garnered attention both in Italy and abroad. In his review of *A Village Commune* – a work Ouida described as “a satirical political sketch” on the socio-political conditions in Italy – published in *La Cultura*, Bonghi, despite minor criticism for the accuracy of Ouida’s depiction of certain elements of Italy’s political system, was effusive in his praise for both the author and the translator.<sup>42</sup> In addition to his praise for the author’s depiction of municipal law and its impact on Italian citizens – affirming in the introduction to his review that “I deputati, che sono occupati a riformare la legge comunale e provinciale farebbero assai bene di leggerlo” – he was also complimentary on Fortini-Santarelli’s ability to capture the qualities that he found lacking in most contemporary Italian prose:

Un racconto simile si legge, e non potrebbe essere altrimenti, con grandissimo interesse. V'aggiunge attrattiva la felicità della traduzione che si può dire perfetta. È dovuta alla signora Sofia Fortini-Santarelli, e si deve fargliene i maggiori complimenti. Chi dubita ancora che solo quando si scriva la lingua italiana « con eleganza e proprietà tutta toscana » si conseguono davvero tutti quei migliori e maggiori effetti di chiarezza, di vivezza, di efficacia, che son proprio dello scriver bene, smetterà credo, ogni dubbio, dopo letta questa traduzione.<sup>43</sup>

Considering Bonghi’s rather critical assessment of contemporary Italian literature as outlined in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, his description of Fortini-Santarelli’s “perfect” translation and her ability to capture the linguistic and stylistic clarity and liveliness, underscores his call for readable prose. When the engaging stylistic qualities were coupled with relevant themes, works such as *Un comune rurale in Italia* could increase the numbers in mass readership and, ultimately, contribute to the betterment of a national linguistic standard.

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<sup>42</sup> See Letter to Chatto & Windus, 7 June 1880, Berg Collection, New York Public Library as published in Jordan, Jane. “Ouida: The Enigma of a Literary Identity”. *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* Vol. 57, No. 1 (Autumn 1995), pp. 75-105, p. 99.

<sup>43</sup> Bonghi, Review of *Ouida- Un comune rurale in Italia (Racconto)*. *La Cultura: Rivista di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, Anno I. – Volume I (1882), Roma: Tipografia Elzeviriana. 415-418, pp. 417-418.

Although, in a modern context, it is easy to dismiss the significance of a positive review by a recognized critic on the distribution of a particular work, Bonghi's impact on domestic and international readership of *A Village Commune* can be seen through both the ensuing literary reviews in England and Ouida's own comments on the Italian reception of her work. In London, the monthly periodical *The Gentleman's Magazine* published a review of Ouida's work that, on the basis of Bonghi's recommendation, rebuked the "ignorance" of the critical reception in periodicals like the *Contemporary* and the *Spectator* and urged its readers to read the novel.<sup>44</sup> Before proceeding to cite various passages from Bonghi's review in *La Cultura*, the review described the former Minister of Public Education in the following terms:

It is probably needless to remind the reader that Rughero Bonghi is one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest philosophical writer in Italy, and filled, himself, the place of Minister of Public Instruction. He must, therefore, be looked upon by all the world as a man capable of judging the political aspect of the work, and not likely to be carried away by mere momentary enthusiasm.<sup>45</sup>

Bonghi's reputation as being unapologetically candid in his work as both a politician and a literary critic certainly preceded him, but his honesty served as a seal of approval (or disapproval) for noteworthy or laudable literature. Although one can argue the inherent bias in *The Gentleman's Magazine* review, given the shared publisher of the novel and periodical (Chatto & Windus), and dismiss any impact that Bonghi may have had, considering the novel's lack of commercial success, Ouida noted his support as a contributing factor to her literary success in Italy. Following a letter to Chatto & Windus from Rome in which the author stated that she was "quite a power [there]",

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<sup>44</sup> Urban, Sylvanus. "Bonghi on 'The Village Commune'", *The Gentleman's Magazine, Volume CCLII. January to June*, pp. 633-635. London: Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly, 1882, p. 633.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 633.

she happily informed her publisher that “Bonghi, one of the cleverest ministers here, has written that the V. Commune ought to be in the hands of every Italian deputy”.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the literary significance of Ouida and Fortini-Santarelli as an example of high-quality and successful female prose in Italy, a more pertinent and direct example of Bonghi’s belief in female literary equality in the Italian context can be seen more clearly with his working relationship with Nobel Prize nominated author Matilde Serao and his endorsement – one of his final contributions before his death – of burgeoning talent and future Nobel Prize winner Grazia Deledda. In the case of Matilde Serao, her and Bonghi’s collaborative relationship speaks to the level of respect that he had for an author who would be nominated six times for a Nobel Prize in Literature. In Carlo Gioda’s review of the Greek-born author’s *Nel Paese di Gesù* (1898) in the *Nuova Antologia*, he described the literary relationship between the two Neapolitan-raised writers and their mutual affinity for literature, religious studies, and the city that inspired their respective careers. During her time living in Rome – the same period in which Bonghi was writing the *Vita di Gesù* in the late 1880s – she would frequently visit the former Minister of Public Education to, most importantly, discuss their thoughts on literature and share their own writings. For Bonghi, Serao, who had already achieved a degree of public recognition with works such as *Il ventre di Napoli* (1884) and was in the process of writing *Il paese di cuccagna* (1891), served as an invaluable resource during the composition and completion of his most controversial work of religious institutional criticism.<sup>47</sup> Considering the subject matter of *Nel Paese di Gesù* which Serao would publish less than three years following Bonghi’s death, Gioda noted her contributions to the

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<sup>46</sup> See 56 Letter to Chatto & Windus, n.d. 1882, Berg Collection, New York Public Library as published in Jordan, “Ouida: The Enigma of a Literary Identity”, p. 99.

<sup>47</sup> Although the *Archivio di Stato di Napoli- Archivio Privato Ruggero Bonghi- Inventario* notes only several letters sent from Serao between 1888 and 1892, the majority of their interactions during this period would have taken place in person.

thematic and stylistic composition of the religious opus authored by a man who had been instrumental in the composition of the *legge delle guarentigie*:

La giovane napoletana, che già era salita in fama, rivolgeva allo studioso uomo molte interrogazioni su la *Vita*, che veniva dettando, traendola, come ognuno sa, con grande scrupolo, dagli Evangelii. Una mattina, in quella ampia sala a pian terreno del villino di via Vicenza, il Bonghi, che non era poi con tutti molto condiscendente, lesse alla sua provinciale la prefazione alla *Vita di Gesù* che pur allora aveva finito di scrivere.<sup>48</sup>

Gioda's comment on Bonghi's usual reluctance to share his work before publication speaks to the Neapolitan's trust in Serao's judgment and his admiration for her intellectual and literary capabilities – a trust that is further underscored by the personal nature of his *Vita di Gesù* and how strongly he felt about the subject matter.<sup>49</sup> As Gioda affirms, “Bonghi faceva grande stima dell'ingegno, di cui vedeva fornita la Serao; ne lodava la facilità dello scrivere...”<sup>50</sup> Although Bonghi produced fewer works of literary criticism in his final years, his incorporation of Serao in the stylistic and intellectual development of one of his most important works further speaks to his beliefs that: firstly, Italy could produce authors and literature of the highest standard; and secondly, that women were instrumental in this process.

If one traces Bonghi's lifelong advocacy for female authors, it is appropriate that perhaps his very final work of literary criticism comes in the form of a preface written for *Anime Oneste* (1895) – a work by burgeoning literary talent and future Nobel Prize winner, Grazia Deledda. Deledda, who had never formally met Bonghi, was put in contact with the Neapolitan by Angelo de Gubernatis (1840-1913) who urged the former politician and literary critic to write a preface

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<sup>48</sup> Gioda, Carlo. Review of “Nel Paese di Gesù (Ricordi di un viaggio in Palestina)”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 168 (1899): 586-595, p. 586.

<sup>49</sup> Bonghi's *Vita di Gesù* (1890) generated tremendous controversy for its criticism of the politicization of the Catholic Church and would be put on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* on March 16 1892. The introduction, which he read to Serao, received particular attention and was analyzed by Benedetto Croce in his chapter of *La Letteratura della Nuova Italia-v.3* entitled “Ruggero Bonghi e la Scuola”.

<sup>50</sup> Gioda, Review of “Nel Paese di Gesù (Ricordi di un viaggio in Palestina)”, p. 586.

for the young author's *Anime Oneste*.<sup>51</sup> It is important to note the young Sardinian author's personal interest in the state of linguistic unity in Italy, its impact on the *questione della lingua*, and the contemporary state of Italian prose. Deledda, who had, at the very least, been familiar with *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*, shared similar feelings with Bonghi on the readability of Italy's literary classics and confessed in a letter to Antonio Scano in 1892 that: "...cerco di studiare la lingua, perché la fantasia non mi manca. E ho afferrato il Manzoni, il Boccaccio e il Tasso, e tanti altri classici che mi fanno sbadigliare e dormire. Dio mio! È inutile!"<sup>52</sup> As someone who had neither been inspired by Italy's literary greats nor was tried to emulate their literary characteristics and stylistic attributes – not to mention, someone who, in 1895, occasionally lacked confidence in the caliber of her writing – it was beneficial for both her career and personal development to receive the endorsement of a highly respected critic and public figure.<sup>53</sup>

Despite being ill and initially unwilling to write the preface to Deledda's *Anime Oneste*, he changed his mind after reading the quality of her work and wrote, not two months before his death in October 1895, a rather tender farewell to Italy's next generation of authors which he saw embodied in the writing of the young Sardinian. Despite his almost abandonment of reading fictional writing and his belief that literature was "dopo i giornali, la cosa più passeggera e labile del mondo", he confessed that "Qui c'è già una novità, degna di lode" when considering the honest,

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<sup>51</sup> King, Martha. *Grazia Deledda: A Legendary Life*. Leicester: Troubadour Publishing, 2005, p. 66.

<sup>52</sup> Deledda, Grazia. *Versi e prose giovanili*. Milano: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1938, p. 238. Deledda shared similar sentiments with the opinions espoused by Bonghi in, particularly, 'Lettera Prima' of *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* in which he argues "I libri italiani hanno in Italia molto minor numero di lettori che non i francesi in Francia, i tedeschi in Germania, e gl'inglesi in Inghilterra... Ci pare, con un libro francese o inglese, di trovarci più a casa e in compagnia d'amici che con un libro nostro. Almeno, questo è il sentimento della maggior parte dei lettori, e soprattutto delle lettrici."

<sup>53</sup> In the same letter to Scano, Deledda lamented, "Io non riuscirò mai ad avere il dono della buona lingua, ed è vano ogni sforzo della mia volontà. Scriverò sempre male, lo sento, perché l'abitudine di scrivere così come viene è radicata ormai nella mia povera penna." Deledda. *Versi e prose giovanili*, p. 238.

sincere depiction of its themes and characters.<sup>54</sup> In his analysis of the work, it becomes evident to a modern reader familiar with Bonghi's prior examples of literary criticism that Deledda's work satisfied, with the exception of adherence to the Florentine vernacular, every criterion for what he had dreamed would define Italian literature. From a thematic standpoint, the work's depiction of its characters provided Italians with a candid representation of modern values: "Esercitano virtù utili."<sup>55</sup> In regards to the way in which it was written, Bonghi affirmed that *Anime Oneste* was an example of stylistic excellence in which "lo stile fluvio è senza attorcigliature di sorte o oscurità proveniente sia da cattivi criterii, sia da negligenze, che voglion parere arti fini" and was written "come la gente per bene parla; ma scritta modernamente, come moderna è la gente che oggi udiamo parlare."<sup>56</sup> Most importantly, he states that the work, as a whole, "ci distilla negli animi il sentimento del bello, del bene e del vero, come da questo ne nasce e si è nutrito il desiderio."<sup>57</sup> Possessing every component of quality literature that Bonghi had argued in *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia* was lacking in contemporary Italian literature, *Anime Oneste* represented, to Bonghi, not only a new standard of Italian literature but a future that considered the merits of Italy's *scrittrici* as much as of those of its *scrittori*. Considering Bonghi's fight for greater legislative equality for women – which will be discussed in the following section – it is appropriate that Bonghi concluded his preface with a hopeful message for Deledda's future:

Le anime ch'Ella dipinge delicate ed oneste son tali perchè Ella ha onesta e delicata l'anima sua. Addio, cara fanciulla; e si ricordi, sinchè viva, di questo vecchio stanco, cui sorride il tramonto quanto a lei sorride l'aurora.

Torre del Greco, 28 - 8 - 95.

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<sup>54</sup> Bonghi, Ruggero. Introduction. *Anime oneste: Romanzo Familiare*, by Grazia Deledda, pp. VIII-IX. Milano: Tipografia Editrice L. F. Cogliati, 1895, pp. VIII-IX.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. X.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. X.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XI.

R. Bonghi.<sup>58</sup>

***Bonghi and Women in Italy: The fight for greater access, opportunity, and equality in education***

Despite how the concerted push by prominent cultural figures like Bonghi to foster the literary talents of female Italian authors saw an increase in both the production and prominence of female authors in the second half of the nineteenth century – authors such as Anna Radius Zuccari (1846-1918), Evelina Cattermole (1849-1896), Ida Baccini (1850-1911), Emma Perodi (1850-1918), Fanny Salazar Zampini, Vittoria Aganoor (1855-1910), Matilde Serao (1856-1927), Luisa Anzoletti (1863-1925) Annie Vivanti (1866-1942), Grazia Deledda (1871-1936), and Amalia Guglielminetti (1881-1941) – there remained a dire need to address the fundamental divide in education rights between men and women. While Bonghi pushed for women to believe in their own capabilities and not to shy away from working or behaving to the fullest extent of their intellectual capabilities – especially later in his life, as seen in his “La donna e il suo avvenire” – he was also acutely aware that, in order to advance the state of women’s rights, it was of the utmost necessity to have the political support of the men that comprised Italy’s governing bodies in order to implement legislation that ensured rights and freedoms for women. Although Bonghi used his position in public office to push for changes in legislation regardless of external influence, it is not unlikely that his working relationship and friendship with figures like Cristina Trivulzio Belgiojoso (1808-1871) – a noblewoman, writer, journalist supporter of the carboneria, and the head of a prominent salon in Paris – informed and shaped his approach to women’s issues

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. XII. Bonghi would pass away at his home in Torre del Greco not long after the completion of the preface on October 22, 1895. Considering his illness and his reluctance to write the preface altogether, it is noteworthy that Bonghi, aware that he did not have much longer to live, would change his mind and write such a positive and optimistic review of Deledda’s work and her place in the future of Italian literature.

throughout his career. Bonghi, who admired both her astute skills in literary criticism and her capabilities as a journalist, invited her to work with him at “La Perseveranza” in 1867, one year following the publication of her article in the *Nuova Antologia* entitled “Della presente condizione delle donne e del loro avvenire” (1866) in which she described the state of gender equality in Italy. In her article, the princess of Belgioioso called for a fundamental reevaluation of women’s intellectual and moral capabilities and, in regards to her own personal advocacy for women’s rights, described the need for males in positions of political authority to assume the responsibility of fighting for legislative equality. In the article, she wrote:

Ho sempre rifuggito dal ragionare dei diritti e dei doveri delle donne nella moderna società, e perchè sono convinta che una donna trattando cotal quistione non è mai reputata imparziale e disinteressata, è più ancora perchè il cangiare la condizione odierna delle donne presenta difficoltà tali, tali pericoli e danni, che non so qual possa essere a questi adeguato compenso.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, concerning the divide between acknowledging the moral and intellectual capabilities of women and implementing concrete legislative or practical changes, she affirmed:

Che la donna non sia nè moralmente nè intellettualmente inferiore all’uomo, se non per l’azione esercitata dal fisico sul morale e sull’intelletto, o ancora per gli effetti della educazione, è cosa omai generalmente riconosciuta ed ammessa. Ma alcuni si maravigliano però che, a malgrado di tale uguaglianza tra la parte spirituale della donna e quella dell’uomo, la donna sia sempre rimasta e rimanga tuttora in una condizione sociale così inferiore a quella dell’uomo.<sup>60</sup>

Cristina Trivulzio Belgioioso’s two arguments concerning the perceived conflict of interest in female advocacy for legislative equality and the lack of practical measures set in place to rectify the social and legal divide highlighted societal power dynamics and the limited political sway of women belonging to even the highest social, economic, or aristocratic spheres. These ideas certainly resonated with Bonghi who, having witnessed the lack of political authority of women

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<sup>59</sup> Belgioioso, Cristina. “Della presente condizione delle Donne e del loro avvenire”. *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 1 (1866), 96-113, p. 96.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

like Emilia Peruzzi relative to their husbands', worked to address some of the fundamental inequalities between the two sexes during and after his tenure as Minister of Public Education.

Much like the *questione della lingua* which featured both an evaluation of the efficacy of Italy's educational systems and a demand for the advancement of the nation's socioeconomic conditions, the advocacy for i) linguistic diffusion, ii) a more effective system of education, and iii) legislative reform were integral components of the push for female equality. While the original case for greater female education was, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, framed in the context of its potential to improve the learning conditions for children in their immediate family, more progressive thinkers and advocates understood that the boundaries for what Italian society deemed acceptable concerning traditional gender roles needed to be reevaluated in a legislative capacity in order to improve the potential for increased advancement in aspects like language, education, science, and technology. While the case for greater female involvement in the arts had been exemplified by the contributions of the many women of Italy's literary salons, from a scientific perspective, figures such as Jessie White Mario and, later, Ersilia Caetani Lovatelli demonstrated that women indeed possessed the practical (as, respectively, a medic and archaeologist) and theoretical (as researchers) capabilities to contribute all forms of academic discourse. Considering women were still unable to attain a university degree – and were thus barred from even accessing the most esteemed male-dominated positions, from politics to jurisprudence, medicine to academia – and were thus barred from even accessing when Bonghi began his tenure as Minister of Public Education in 1874, he felt it was of the utmost necessity to break down the barriers that he felt inhibited the academic, scientific, cultural, and linguistic enrichment of Italy as a nation. In a more concrete sense, he recognized that before Italian society could even begin working to include women in traditionally masculine roles or positions in greater numbers – as he sought to do with

the issue of female representation in literature – women first needed to be afforded the *possibility* of accessing such positions. Driven by the initiatives concerning female equality which were born from the nineteenth-century evolution of the *questione della lingua*, it was Bonghi's contributions to women and education that can be considered as the most culturally and historically impactful.

The process to address the fundamental inequalities in Italy's system of education began shortly after Bonghi assumed the role of Minister of Public Education in September 1874 and, as far as his involvement was concerned, continued throughout the duration of his service in the Chamber of Deputies as he advocated for greater rights and privileges for women at every level of education. Regarding the implementation of educational reform, unlike his attempts to implement drastic legislative changes to Italy's system of education – which yielded less significant results due to the politically demanding nature of his proposals and the difficulty in swaying the *Camera dei Deputati* to consider and adopt changes that departed radically from the nation's established standard – his success in addressing women's education was effective as a result of the simplicity and directness of his approach. Bonghi's impact on education and female equality can best be seen with his amendment to the national university policy in 1875 in which he noted, in the most explicit of terms, that women were to be admitted to institutions of higher learning.

Shortly after assuming the role of Minister of Public Education on September 27 1874, Bonghi began working, with greater authority, to address the issues with Italy's educational system that he had articulated in his letter to Giuseppe Sacchi. Working to build upon the initiatives of former Ministers of Public Education Antonio Scialoja and Girolamo Cantelli, Bonghi addressed the calls for equality by figures such as Salvatore Morelli and pushed for political change. With over a decade of experience advocating for radical reform of Italy's educational structures, the outspoken politician sought to put forth effective measures that contributed positively to the

educational and linguistic state of Italy that would not be – or did not need to be – stagnated or blocked by the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>61</sup> As far as women in education was concerned, after having worked as a university professor in Pavia, Naples, Turin, Florence, Milan, and Rome, he recognized the need to allow women to study at the university level. From a political perspective, his experience serving in the Chamber of Deputies informed his approach to enacting meaningful change concerning women's rights as his strategy changed from passing legislation – as seen in Chapter 4 – to making regulations that, in addition to circumventing the need for formal approval by the *Camera dei Deputati*, could serve as a catalyst to wider social and legislative changes.

The first – and perhaps most important in Bonghi's career – example of impactful regulation can be seen with his university regulation on October 3 1875, *Il Num. 2728 (Serie 2<sup>a</sup>) della Raccolta ufficiale delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno*, to law No. 2513 (May 30 1875) which explicitly stated that women were to be formally registered as students if they met the same necessary criteria as men. This was a problem that Antonio Scialoja had recognized during his tenure as Minister of Public Education, as young women from socially advantaged families who had received extensive personal academic instruction were permitted to audit – as an *uditrice* – a university course but were barred from formally registering as a student. However, unlike Scialoja who had proposed the creation of an entrance exam for women wishing to study at the university level, Bonghi's regulation was much more effective, direct, and in-line with the arguments for

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<sup>61</sup> One cannot discuss the advancements in women's education without, at the very least, discussing the contributions of Mazzinian socialist politician and advocate of female equality, Salvatore Morelli (1824-1880). Morelli, who served as *Deputato del Regno d'Italia* on Legislatures X, XI, XII, and XIII, was best known for his opus *La donna e la scienza o la soluzione del problema sociale* (1861) which was republished multiple times in Italy (1862 and 1869), translated into French and English, and highly regarded by figures such as John Stuart Mill. In 1867 he composed a law advocating for comprehensive female equality entitled, "Abolizione della schiavitù domestica con la reintegrazione giuridica della donna, accordando alla donna i diritti civili e politici" and, in 1877, composed the Morelli law which was passed on December 9 1877, legally recognizing women's ability to act as witness to matters concerning the Italian Civil Code. Romano, Ruggiero, and Corrado Vivanti, *Annali della storia d'Italia*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1978, p. 444.

equality from advocates like Morelli.<sup>62</sup> Section II (*Degli studenti e degli uditori*). Articles 6-8 of *Regio Decreto* (R.d.) No. 2728 defined precisely what it meant to be a student:

Art. 6. *È studente o uditore* in una Università del Regno, chi venga iscritto con l'una o l'altra qualità nella matricola di essa.

Art. 7. Lo *studente* avrà diritto di conseguire i gradi accademici conferiti da ciascuna Facoltà, quando si sia conformato in tutto ai regolamenti.

L'*uditore* s'iscriverà a corsi singoli, e potrà conseguire in questi l'attestato di assistenza e di profitto.<sup>63</sup>

To dispel any ambiguity concerning the rights of Italian women, the regulation outlined in *Art. 8, 1-4* the necessary information and requirements (place of birth, address, faculty to which the student was applying, “diploma originale di licenza liceale”, etc.) and explicitly stated “Le donne possono essere iscritte nel registro degli studenti e degli uditori ove presentino i documenti richiesti nei paragrafi precedenti.”<sup>64</sup> Although this proved to be a historically significant step towards female equality in the educational sphere, Bonghi recognized that the formal recognition of female participation at the highest academic level held minimal practical value without the appropriate secondary school reform. Nonetheless, the attention given to the question of female participation in the academic sphere provoked mixed reactions both in Italy and abroad. On one hand, the degree of societally perceived novelty of a highly educated female conflicted with – as noted in the report on scholastic participation in Bologna and the discrepancy in enrolment between men and women – the “pregiudizio antico, e non vinto ancora del tutto, che la ignoranza nelle donne sia preservatrice di costumatezza, e che gli studi facciano amar meno le buone

<sup>62</sup> See Musiani, Elena, and Simona Salustri, *Le donne per l'Italia: Il laboratorio bolognese*. Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2012, p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> “Leggi e Decreti: Il Num.2708 (Serie 2ª) della Raccolta ufficiale delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno”, *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno D'Italia*. 22 October 1875. See also *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione: Bollettino Ufficiale Vol. II*. (1876), p. 12.

<sup>64</sup> *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione: Bollettino Ufficiale Vol. II*. Roma: Tipografia Operaia Romana Cooperativa, 1876, p. 12.

consuetudini del vivere appartato e casalingo”.<sup>65</sup> Simonetta Soldani notes the following in her article “Le Donne all’Università di Firenze. Numeri e Volti di un Cammino Travagliato” when discussing the case of Ernestina Puritz Manasse, the first woman to receive a degree from the University of Florence:

Quella primazia non riguardava solo Firenze: la laurea di Ernestina, in effetti, era la prima in assoluto assegnata a una donna da una struttura universitaria italiana, in base a un articolo del nuovo Regolamento universitario varato due anni prima (11 ottobre 1875) dal ministro della Pubblica istruzione Ruggiero Bonghi. Ma per quanto commentato dai giornali del tempo con simpatia, il caso dovette suscitare più curiosità che emulazione, visto che dopo di lei e fino al 1890 le donne che in Italia conseguirono una laurea furono una ventina...<sup>66</sup>

On the other hand, when considered as the catalyst that provoked the regulations concerning female enrolment in both the traditional *ginnasio* and in *scuole tecniche* in 1883 – not to mention, the extended period of time over which substantial cultural change takes place – Bonghi’s push for female education proved significant in both the advancement in women’s rights in Italy and the educational development of women. Moreover, Bonghi’s regulations drew international attention in the years following his regulation as academic journals and studies in countries such as England, Switzerland, United States, and France noted his impact on women’s education in Italy.

In England, *The Englishwoman’s Review* No. XLIX (1877) discussed the progress in the development of Italy’s educational systems and their approach to women’s education and translated the exact citation from Bonghi’s R.d. No. 2728:

The efforts which are being made to secure a better position for women in Italy, are in no instance more successful than in the enlightened attitude taken towards them by the Italian Universities. The new law for the regulation of the

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<sup>65</sup> Masi, E. “Censimento scolastico della Provincia di Bologna per l’anno 1874-1875”, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione: Bollettino Ufficiale Vol. II* (1876), p. 274.

<sup>66</sup> Soldani, Simonetta. “Le Donne all’Università di Firenze. Numeri e Volti di un Cammino Travagliato”, *Le Donne nell’Università di Firenze: Percorsi, problemi, obiettivi*, edited by Simonetta Soldani, Firenze University Press, 2010, p. 9.

fifteen Universities of the Kingdom, contains in Section VIII., the following words: “Women can be matriculated either as regular or special students, on presenting the documents required in the preceding paragraphs.”<sup>67</sup>

In Switzerland, the *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse 90<sup>me</sup> Année – Troisième Période Tome XXVII, N° 79* (1885) recalled Bonghi’s contributions as one of the most significant proponents of women’s education in Italy: “Les universités italiennes ont été ouvertes aux femmes sous le ministère Bonghi, et il ne tient qu'à elles d'y poursuivre les hautes études scientifiques.”<sup>68</sup>

In the United States, the *International Education Series*, Vol. XVI (1890) devoted a volume to “Higher Education of Women in Europe” in which, in its sparse references to the Italian educational system, Bonghi is the only Italian politician – not Morelli, Coppino, or Depretis – whose contributions are noted:

*Italy.* — In Italy the better - educated class has been favorable to the question of higher education of women. The Minister of Public Instruction, Bonghi, opened the university to women shortly before he was obliged to resign (1876).<sup>69</sup>

Lastly, in France, Italian philosopher Antonio Labriola published “L’Université et la liberté de la Science” in *Le Devenir Social – Revue Internationale D’Economie, D’Histoire et de Philosophie* (1897) in which, twenty years after Bonghi’s regulation, he highlights the contributions of Italian women to academic discourse:

Chez nous les femmes ont été admises de plein droit à l’Université, il y a vingt-deux ans, par un simple règlement, qui n'a jamais été contesté, même par les conservateurs les plus endurcis. C'est M. Le ministre Bonghi qui en fut l'auteur, et il ne passa jamais pour un radical; il fut au contraire pendant toute sa vie le doctrinaire par excellence du parti modéré.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> “Italian Universities”, *The Englishwoman’s Review* No. XLIX. May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1877, p. 193.

<sup>68</sup> Quesnel, Léo. “L’amélioration de la condition des femmes”, *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse 90<sup>me</sup> Année – Troisième Période Tome XXVII, N° 79 – Juillet 1885*, Lausanne: Bureaux de la Bibliothèque Universelle, pp. 276-308, p. 299.

<sup>69</sup> Lange, Helene. *International Education Series: Higher Education of Women in Europe*, Vol. XVI, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890, p. 113.

<sup>70</sup> Labriola, Antonio, “L’Université et la liberté de la Science”, *Le Devenir Social – Revue Internationale D’Economie, D’Histoire et de Philosophie*, pp. 40-64. Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1897, p. 47.

Although *The Englishwoman's Review* published the article on Italian universities relatively soon after R.d. No. 2728 in 1875 and the fall of the Historical Right in 1876, the delay with which the other aforementioned academic journals and works reflected on the development of educational policy in Italy and the impact of Bonghi's contributions on the Italian educational landscape (rise in publications on the subject between 1885-1900) is indicative of the increase in female academics in Italy during the 1890s. Soldani cites:

Prima che il secolo diciannovesimo morisse, le donne laureate erano già 237 – secondo un calcolo ministeriale tanto puntiglioso nei propositi quanto poco preciso nei fatti –, alcune con doppia laurea (e una perfino con tre), cosicché le lauree conseguite da giovani donne assommavano a 257, di cui 140 a Lettere, 37 a Filosofia, 30 a Scienze fisiche e naturali, 24 a Medicina e chirurgia, 20 a Matematica, 6 a Giurisprudenza.<sup>71</sup>

The increase in female university enrolment in the 1890s which Soldani describes – not to mention the relatively higher number of “STEM” graduates noted by Govoni – can be attributed to the 1883 regulation concerning *l'istruzione secondaria classica* and *l'istruzione tecnica* which allowed young women the opportunity to study, respectively, at a traditional *ginnasio* or at a *scuola tecnica*.<sup>72</sup> Naturally, greater access to a more academically-oriented secondary school education precipitated the increase in female university enrolment, however, any debates surrounding female education became decidedly more complicated – in addition to the prevailing socio-cultural ideals

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<sup>71</sup> Soldani, “Le Donne all'Università di Firenze. Numeri e Volti di un Cammino Travagliato” in *Le Donne nell'Università di Firenze: Percorsi, problemi, obiettivi*, p. 9. Soldani uses the statistics found in Vittore Ravà, “Le laureate in Italia”, «*Bollettino Ufficiale*» del ministero della Pubblica istruzione, aprile 1902, pp. 634-654.

<sup>72</sup> “The international debates on women reported in the press played a role in Italy in attracting the first young women to higher education. In the 1880s the middle and upper middle classes were a small percentage of the population but they did make up a public particularly interested in scientific subjects.” Govoni, Paola. “Challenging the Backlash: Women Science Students in Italian Universities (1870s-2000s)” in *Sciences in the Universities of Europe, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 74. As discussed in Chapter 4, investment in agronomy and agricultural technology at a local and national level contributed to the greater degree of scientific “accessibility” to middle-class Italians. When combined with the publication of scientific literature in affordable and accessible collections like Bonghi's *Piccola Biblioteca del Popolo Italiano*, and the inclusion of scientific concepts and topics in children's periodicals like *Il Giovedì* (by Achille Mauri – fellow member of the Broglio Commission) and in teaching guides for parents like the *Guida dell'educatore, La famiglia e la scuola*, and *La Gioventù* (by Raffaello Lambruschini – another working connection of Bonghi), there was a concerted effort by educated Italians to democratize and foster an interest in science, technology, and natural history.

that upheld education as a predominantly male domain – when the financial costs to local and national governments was considered. Thus, inasmuch as Italy’s governing bodies debated how best to organize, structure, fund, and oversee the management of Italy’s secondary schools – as seen with the debates concerning Bonghi’s push to restructure Italy’s system of secondary education in Chapter 4 – further questions were raised over how best to handle female inclusion in “male” *ginnasi* and *scuole tecniche*.<sup>73</sup> The result was a secondary school system that heavily favoured male and female secondary schools over mixed-sex institutes – a situation for which Bonghi was heavily in favour.

The approach to addressing women’s admission to traditional *ginnasi* and *scuole tecniche* was heavily informed by the model that defined Italy’s approach to elementary education (See Appendix II: Table 1). When compared to the other systemic models of scholastic education in France, Germany, and England, in 1887 Italy had both the lowest percentage of mixed elementary schools (18.3%) and the highest percentage of boys’ schools (41.8%).<sup>74</sup> Although the debate concerning co-education featured prominently in both academic discourse and in parliament (see footnote 73), politicians like Bonghi felt that investing in girls’ schools at both the primary and

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<sup>73</sup> Formal political and parliamentary divisions aside, the topic of coeducation at the secondary school level spurred great debate from not only those with extreme differences of opinion (the Catholic Church and traditional Mazzinians, for example) but also from those who had a different conceptualization of what should constitute an “ideal” education for women. The direct exchange of ideas even between female writers and pedagogues such as Caterina Franceschi Ferrucci (1803-1887), Giulia Molino-Colombini (1812-1879), and Bice Miraglia demonstrates the degree of nuance and differences of opinion that surrounded female education. To cite an example from the mid-1890s – when female university education was beginning to rise and educational practices that had arisen from legislative policy in the early 1880s began to settle – Bice Miraglia, writer and former director of the periodical *La Mammola*, emphatically disputed Molino-Colombini’s ideas on the differences between men and women and, thus, the approach to their respective educations. She posits, “Educare non significa imporre la volontà propria e il proprio gusto ad una giovane esistenza affidata alle nostre cure. Ma soltanto aiutare lo sviluppo di quei germi posti in essa dalla natura, ed impedire gli errori, volgere al bene le tendenze non buone” and, in direct opposition to Colombini, “Dio ha dato alla donna un sentimento fine, squisito, profondo, che è la sua principale caratteristica, il suo pregio maggiore, e la Colombini glie lo vuol togliere, lo vuol indebolire, reprimere, soffocare. Vuole che ella diventi fredda ragionatrice al pari dell'uomo, vuole quindi snaturarla per renderla uguale all'uomo.” Miraglia, Bice. *Le Pedagogiste Italiane*. Firenze: Tipografia di Salvatore Landi, 1894, pp. 40, 65.

<sup>74</sup> Lange, *International Education Series: Higher Education of Women in Europe*, p. xxvi.

secondary level was the best means of enhancing the state of education in Italy and provided the greatest opportunities for female students and pedagogues alike. On a legislative level, the most significant debate on the issue can be found in the archival records of the *Camera dei Deputati* dated March 11-14 1882 in which university instructor and politician Pietro Nocito (1841-1904) and Ruggero Bonghi spoke in favour of the motion addressing the *disegno di legge per la conversione in legge del decreto concernente la fondazione degli istituti femminili Firenze e Roma*.<sup>75</sup> Nocito began on March 11 by commenting on the state of women's education in Italy and, seven years following R.d. No. 2728, the relatively low percentages of women studying in universities:

Come avviene adunque, che mentre l'istruzione universitaria delle donne fa progressi nelle Università di nazioni a noi vicine, presso di noi sono rari gli esempi di donne che si addottorino in lettere, o medicina, o farmacia? Sarà forse la donna italiana inferiore alla donna russa o alla donna americana, ovvero noi intendiamo la questione meglio degli altri popoli? Io credo che il motivo sta nell'assoluta mancanza di istituti femminili di insegnamento secondario, per la quale le donne mancano della licenza liceale o d'altro titolo che li possa fare entrare nell'Università senza privilegi e favori, come quelli che appartengono al sesso maschile.<sup>76</sup>

Bonghi agreed with Nocito's position and, over the ensuing days, articulated his plan for women's education and his beliefs on what he wanted to see for a more educated female populace. More than most moderate politicians that held public office during the late 1890s, Bonghi firmly upheld that female secondary education needed to be considered as a *means* to greater opportunity rather than simply as an *end* to satisfy an arbitrary metric of social progress. He felt that female secondary institutions should be at the same standard as their male counterparts, that the aims of institutions should be to provide young women access to ideas and opportunities which they could further develop at the university level, and provide female teachers the ability to operate at a higher

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<sup>75</sup> *Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Camera dei Deputati Sessione del 1880-81 (I<sup>a</sup> della XIV Legislatura) Vol. X Dal 2 marzo al 1<sup>o</sup> maggio 1882*. Roma: Eredi Botta Tipografi della Camera dei Deputati, 1882, pp. 9437-9532.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9441.

level than had been expected of them. Much like his arguments for an elevated standard of linguistic expression, the elevation of the academic standard for women fostered the development of better, brighter, and more effective pedagogues which would – in every aspect of societal life – create a continuum of more successful students which would, consequently, further improve the standard of academic, scientific, and artistic discourse throughout the nation.<sup>77</sup> In a lengthy discourse on March 11, Bonghi emphatically articulated his position: “Noi vogliamo elevare il livello intellettuale della donna, noi vogliamo altresì introdurre nelle scuole secondarie femminili le donne come insegnanti. Sta bene.”<sup>78</sup> Most importantly, he wanted education for women to serve as significantly more than solely a means of producing more teachers. Directly addressing the men serving in parliament, he affirmed Nocito’s arguments for education as a means of access and opportunity and stated, “L’onorevole Nocito ha anche ragione quando dice: voi vi preoccupate di creare una carriera alle donne. Sta bene. Ma è questa la sola carriera che potete creare? Ce ne sono delle altre, nelle quali le donne possono entrare in maggior numero che in questa.”<sup>79</sup> As had been demonstrated by the many women that helped shape Italy’s social, cultural, linguistic, artistic, and academic cultures – those like Eleonora Curlo Ruffini, Jessie White Mario, Emilia Peruzzi, Ersilia Caetani Lovatelli, Cristina Trivulzio Belgiojoso, etc. – Italy had a wealth of untapped potential that needed to be encouraged, developed, and permitted to operate in every aspect of society. Although Italy and its governing bodies were slow to adapt to such examples of social change, Bonghi used his position of authority in Italy’s political and cultural hierarchy to advance the issues which he felt would ameliorate the nation at large.

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<sup>77</sup> “Voi, introducendo così nell’insegnamento delle donne men bene istruite produrrete l’effetto di avere gli istituti secondari per le donne meno buoni di quello che sono gli istituti secondari per gli uomini.” Ibid., p. 9445.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 9445.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 9448.

***Conclusion: “La Donna e il Suo Avvenire” and Bonghi’s final “sentenze” to his “figliuole di Anagni”***

To Bonghi, inasmuch as the implementation of an effective and comprehensive national system of education was the final component to the *questione della lingua*, the advancement of women’s rights embodied every component of the language debate in Italy: the ability to speak a communal language in order to engage in public discourse at a level that was, historically, largely exclusive to males or a small group of elite females; the opportunity to foster one’s literary talents to elevate the overall artistic standard in Italy; the access to education for both one’s personal betterment and for the betterment of one’s children; and the collective empowerment of a group of people to progress the social and economic growth of the entire nation. When Bonghi delivered his public lecture in Verona on the future of women in Italian society on April 19 1892 – which was published as an article in the *Nuova Antologia* entitled “La donna e il suo avvenire” – and discussed the importance of redefining and revitalizing their role in both the private and public sphere, he did so with the knowledge and experience of someone who had spent over thirty years advocating and working towards the empowerment of a wider range of Italian citizens. With the retrospective awareness of someone who began his journey when Italy had not been unified and the national literacy rate was below 30%, Bonghi’s “La donna e il suo avvenire” speech represented a call for Italian women to continue striving for the betterment of the nation and to continue actively fighting for equality. In his speech, he stated:

Ora, abbracciate in uno sguardo la serie lunga dei passi che l'umanità ha percorso da quel primo rito a quest'ultimo, e potrete insieme immaginare la serie delle modificazioni che ha subite la relazione di diritto tra l'uomo e la donna. E ora, chiedetevi due cose: questa relazione di diritto è diventata oggi oramai quella che dev'essere; o non v'ha ancora a sperare e desiderar che migliori, e migliori nel senso

che alla donna sia riconosciuta una capacità piena e la facoltà conseguente di usarne, com'è riconosciuta all'uomo?<sup>80</sup>

In the same capacity that called for Italian citizens to yearn for linguistic, literary, and social empowerment, so too was his message one of empowerment to Italian women. He continued:

Ma, Signore, la donna dell'avvenire non si contenta di questa eguaglianza giuridica coll'uomo nella vita privata; vorrà prender parte alla vita pubblica, vorrà, come e quanto l'uomo, intromettersi negli affari della città, dello Stato; influirvi col voto, reggerli con la parola, esercitarvi il potere. Giacché è bene non illudersi; l'elettore è eleggibile; e l'eleggibile può essere presidente o ministro, non deputato o senatore soltanto.<sup>81</sup>

Bonghi's vision for "la donna dell'avvenire" can be seen with the same passionate optimism that defined the hopes of patriots like Giuseppe Mazzini, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Alessandro Manzoni and his hopes for "l'Italia dell'avvenire" is one that featured a populace who was able to wield language and knowledge for the betterment of Italians – as individuals and as a nation. It is fitting that when Bonghi founded the *Collegio Regina Margherita* in Anagni in 1890 for the orphaned daughters of school teachers in Italy, he left behind a small collection of maxims or *sentenze* for his "figliuole di Anagni" which was published posthumously by his sons Luigi and Mario. His *Sentenze di Ruggero Bonghi scritte per le sue figliuole di Anagni* represent a lifetime of experience – as a writer, journalist, scholar, professor, politician, Catholic, and, most importantly, Italian – and his aphorisms reflect the personal lessons of a public figure who was instrumental in the formation of a nation. As he left behind a parting message to the young children *dell'avvenire* who would shape and mold Italian society for generations to come, he did not forget the importance of language. It is most fitting that, when one considers Bonghi's contributions to

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<sup>80</sup> Bonghi, "La donna e il suo avvenire". *Nuova Antologia* Vol. 123 (1892): 94-111, p. 100.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

the development of the *questione della lingua*, his final *sentenze* serve as a concise but powerful message about language and its ability to transcend boundaries to unite a people.

*Parla bene la lingua della gran patria tua. Non senti quanta ha insieme dolcezza e robustezza di suoni? Non senti come attraverso questi sprigioni e si manifesta ogni idea della tua mente, ogni moto del tuo cuore? Nessuna lingua è più bella della tua.*<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Bonghi, Ruggero. *I diritti dell'Italia sulle terre irridente- I fini della Società Dante Alighieri- Sentenze per le figliuole di Anagni*. Firenze: Tip. Antonio Di Stefano Santamaria C.V, 1917p. 48.

## Conclusion

### *Il Cammin di Nostra Lingua*

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Published in 1894, Bonghi's *Le Prime Armi: Filosofia e Filologia* is a collection of his writings in which he considers, as a whole, the complementary ideas of philosophy and philology. In a collection of works that incorporates a thematic diversity ranging from his translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1854) to his linguistic and philological discussions in *Scienza del Linguaggio* (1866), Bonghi draws a striking comparison between philosophy/logic and philology/grammar and considers the parallel nature of the ontological study of being and the grammatical purpose of a verb. As he considers *il Verbo Divino* – “Le idee vivono nel Verbo Divino”, as written in his letter to Terenzio Mamiani – alongside the grammatical function of *il verbo* – “il verbo vi forma un'immagine unica e distinta; una determinazione ottenuta per modo essenziale ed intrinseco, poichè penetra tutto intero il vocabolo, e gli dà una sua propria forma,” as discussed in *Scienza del Linguaggio* – he draws the thematic connection between the two ideas.<sup>1</sup> As Bonghi alludes, verbs are not simply a means of grammatical articulation, but a process of connecting with and understanding the very ideas that comprise human existence.

For Bonghi, language, much like his philosophical understanding of the grammatical verb, represented far more than more than a simple means of linguistic expression. A common language represented not only an identity that could unify a national collective of people to provide them with a sense of communal solidarity and mutual trust, but an instrument that could empower a nation with access to ideas, abilities, and opportunities that could enrich their lives – individually

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<sup>1</sup> Bonghi, Ruggero. *Le Prime Armi: Filosofia e Filologia*. Bologna: Ditta Nicola Zanichelli, 1894, p. 60; p. 437-459.

and collectively – both culturally and economically. Thus, the state of language and the overarching debate surrounding the *questione della lingua* were issues that embedded themselves at the very core of Bonghi's approach to literature, education, politics, and social progress.

From the early 1850s, Bonghi engaged publicly with the debate concerning the means of linguistic selection and promulgation, and considered the ways in which Italy's cultural and artistic standard could be elevated in its stylistic construction and made more accessible to a wider audience. He reflected on the dynamics of language and literature and considered Italy's literary production within the larger social framework of Italian unification and considered prose and literary criticism as critical components of the development of national education. As the language debate evolved throughout the course of the nineteenth century, Bonghi's foresight and vision for the linguistic and educational state of Italy remained consistent as he became increasingly involved in Italian politics. With an acute awareness of the systematic and structural factors that inhibited the effectiveness of Italian education, he was a fierce advocate of radical reform that would continue to be integrated into legislative policy even after his death in 1895. Lastly, he was aware of the societal connection between education, economics, and social progress, and he used his position at the highest levels of national political and social influence to shape Italian society in a manner that he felt would benefit future generations of Italians – male and female, Northern and Southern Italian alike.

Although the names of Alessandro Manzoni and Graziadio Isaia Ascoli remain synonymous with the *questione della lingua* in the nineteenth century, it is a figure like Ruggero Bonghi that more fully represents the scope of Italy's language debate. As the *questione della lingua* debate evolved to influence and shape not only the nation's means of artistic production and linguistic expression, it manifested itself in the establishment of a national system of education

which impacted – and was impacted by – both the economic conditions and means of economic generation of the entire nation. When the debate was considered alongside the fight for female legislative equality, Bonghi continued to implement historically significant – and ground-breaking – measures of reform. When considered in the overarching timeline of the *questione della lingua*, an analysis of Ruggero Bonghi’s accomplishments provides contemporary scholarship with a greater understanding of the defining characteristics of the nineteenth-century *questione della lingua*. Moreover, it provides the opportunity for further discussion on the ways in which the language debate in Italy shaped national linguistic, artistic, educational, political, economic, and social cultures.

When Bonghi returned from his *passeggiata* to Baveno with a *forestiere irlandese* on June 14 1852, he considered the distinctive characteristics of languages and reflected upon the way in which German, English, and Italian could be likened to the walk from which he had just arrived. In his diary, he wrote: “La lingua tedesca rassomiglia ad un uomo, che può ire sibben da per tutto, ma sulle grucce e con tanti giri: la inglese ad uno che cammini rapido e dritto a uno scopo predeterminato e certo: la italiana, ad uno, che vada sì senza pigliar girate, ma che si fermi per via a guardare.” Despite the many factors which slowed the progress of linguistic and educational diffusion in Italy, one could say with utmost certainty that, between 1826 and 1895, Bonghi played an instrumental role in assisting the Italian language to metaphorically find, as Dante would say, its *diritta via*.

## Appendices

### Appendix I – Ruggero Bonghi Bibliography\*

- 1846 – *Vita di Galluppi*, in “Ausonio”
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- 1856 – *Perchè la letteratura italiana non sia popolare in Italia*
- 1857 – Translation of *Eutidemo and Protagora*
- 1859 – *Delle relazioni della filosofia con la società*
- 1860 – *Sunto delle lezioni di logica*
- 1860 – *Camillo Benso di Cavour*
- 1864 – Preface to translation of *Stuart Mill: Torto e diritto dell’ingerenza dello Stato nelle corporazioni e nelle proprietà della Chiesa*
- 1865 – *La Elezione del Deputato: Lettere Due di Ruggero Bonghi già deputato al Parlamento*
- 1866 – *Del concetto di ogni scienza storica*
- 1866 – *L’Università Italiana*
- 1867 – *La vita e i tempi di Valentino Pasini*
- 1868 – *Dell’unità della lingua italiana*
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- 1870 – *L’alleanza italiana e l’acquisto della Venezia*
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- 1876 – *Discorsi e saggi sulla pubblica istruzione*
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\* The bibliography includes Bonghi’s published works and a list of the journals and newspapers with which he was affiliated as either founder or director. All articles, including his most prominent articles for the *Nuova Antologia* have been left out as they are far too numerous. See *Lettere inedite alla Nuova Antologia*, a cura di Lisi, David, for a complete list of articles published in the *Nuova Antologia*.

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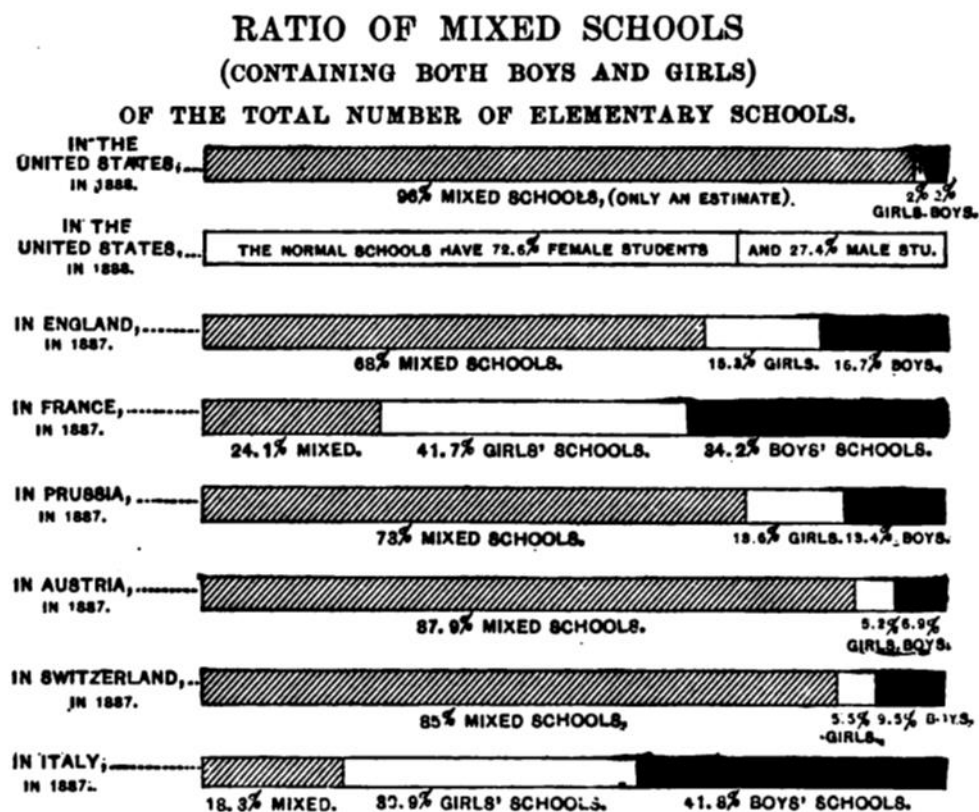
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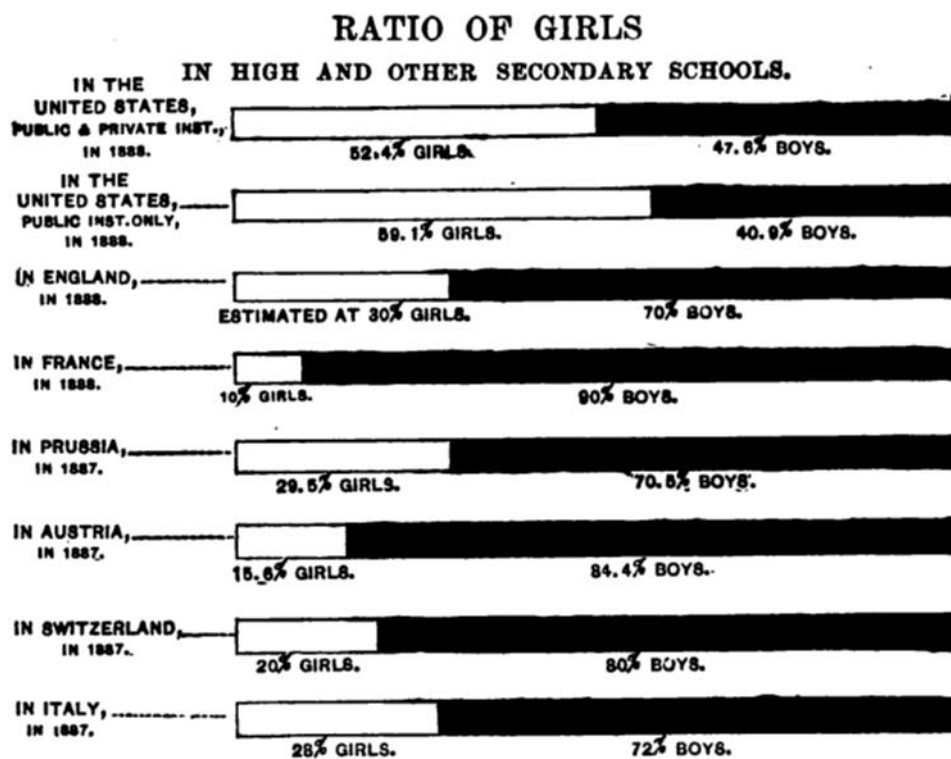
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Appendix II – Statistical comparison of school structures and demographics in Europe in the 1880s

Table 1:<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Chart taken directly from the study conducted in 1890 and published in "Higher Education of Women in Europe", *International Education Series*, Vol. XVI, 1890, p. xxvi.

Table 2:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Higher Education of Women in Europe", *International Education Series*, Vol. XVI, 1890, p. xxv.

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