

**Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli**  
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Born in Naples on 16 April 1911 to a family of Calabrian origin, Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli died in Rome on the 12th February 2010, at his home – or perhaps it would be more correct to say in his library – at 15 Via Francesco Denza in the Parioli district, two months before celebrating his ninety-ninth birthday. With his passing, the international cultural world has suffered the irreparable loss of a personality of the highest standing in the field of the human sciences, who made a significant contribution to the cultural life of the twentieth century. Although his academic position was that of a historian of Greek, Latin and Oriental antiquity, in reality Pugliese Carratelli was a genuine humanist, an intellectual of such broad and multiform horizons that any definition inevitably fails to do him justice. The breadth and depth of his knowledge was equalled only by the extraordinary naturalness with which he could express and communicate this knowledge through conversation of incomparable charm, suffused with a humour typical of the Southern Italian character. He had the ability to soar to the loftiest peaks without the slightest affectation or bombast.

His immense academic productivity was further enhanced by a range of popularising works no less vast and committed, arising out of his profound conviction that culture should reach a public as broad and differentiated as possible. He directed the creation of numerous collections, both of a scientific nature as well as works intended for a wider readership (to which he himself often contributed),<sup>1</sup> he inspired and organised important exhibitions and events of various types (one of his last being the great 1996 exhibition ‘I Greci in Occidente’ at Palazzo Grassi in Venice), and was a promoter of culture at all levels.

Pugliese Carratelli taught Greek and Roman History at the Universities of Catania, Naples and Pisa, the History of Ancient Near East and Greek and Roman History at the University of Florence from 1954 to 1966, and Greek History at ‘La Sapienza’ University of Rome until 1974, before being appointed to the Chair of History of Greek Historiography at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa (of which he was also Director for the academic year 1977–1978), his last academic post. He was a member of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, of the Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Naples, of the Accademia Pontaniana of Naples and of the Accademia ‘La Colombaria’ of Florence; he was a foreign member of the Academy of Athens, an honorary

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member of the *Archaiologikè Hetairía* of Athens and of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies of London, and finally a member of the Scientific Council of the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana*, for which he directed the *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica*. His tireless commitment saw him involved in numerous cultural institutions, such as the *Istituto Italiano di Studi Storici*, the *Istituto Italiano di Studi Filosofici* of Naples and the *Istituto per la Storia e l'Archeologia della Magna Grecia* of Taranto, to which we will return later.

Retaining his penetrating intellectual faculties to the very end, at his death he was still working on his long-term project, that of completing the edition of a fifteenth century Latin translation of the Platonic Theology of Proclus. Those who knew him primarily as a historian of ancient Greece, and in particular as a specialist of Minoan and Mycenaean Greece of the second millennium BCE, can measure, even if only in terms of its range across time, the remarkable breadth of his interests and fields of research. If to this we add the history not only of Greece but also of Rome in its manifold developments, his monographic studies on the most diverse aspects of Western Greek culture, on various Eastern civilizations and languages, on ancient religions (in particular eschatological themes and mystery religions such as Orphism and Pythagoreanism, but also Oriental religions such as Buddhism), on the tradition of Plato and Pythagoras during the Renaissance, and last but not least, his considerable knowledge of modern philosophical thought, stimulated by his frequent contacts with Benedetto Croce and the Crocean entourage, there emerges the portrait of an undoubtedly extraordinary and probably unique intellectual figure, whose academic stature was complemented on the one hand by the incomparable distinction of his Neapolitan and Southern Italian heritage and, on the other, by his innumerable activities within the context of scientific institutions or in favour of cultural events. I believe it would be impossible even to begin to do justice to the full extent of his profile, and it is certainly not something I am claiming to do here.

Pugliese Carratelli's interest in classics and study of the ancient world became apparent very early in life, during an adolescence and youth characterized by a more than considerable precociousness. He was only eight years old when his education was taken in hand by a very competent private tutor, who taught him how to translate ancient texts without the aid of any explanatory commentaries. She also presented him with a copy of her university thesis on the topic of the Elysian Fields, devoted to problems of comparative mythology in relation to Greek and Indian eschatology. One can hardly fail to view these early years of his education as the wellspring of his interest not only in Greek and Latin authors, but also in themes of a religious and historical character, a curiosity he would cherish throughout his life (on this see Maddoli, 1990: 11, note 2), no less than his equally enduring interest in the world of the Orient: he began the study of Sanskrit while at high school, and then became fascinated by Persian world and the whole area of the Near East.<sup>2</sup>

Another episode from his early years, when seen with hindsight, takes on the flavour of an initiation that was to bear rich fruits. While still at high school, Pugliese received, as a gift from a friend, a publication on the papyri of Herculaneum this promptly aroused his curiosity with regard to the precious documents preserved in the subsoil of the area around Naples, which at that time had only in part and with much difficulty been collected and studied. His discovery of such an intriguing field of research was to have lasting consequences that lay at the origin of the constant attention he would devote to all types of written evidence dating from antiquity, which he pored over with such predilection that it could be described as a veritable passion. It became an abiding enthusiasm that found expression in the critical edition of ancient texts, philology, palaeography (at university he also studied Greek palaeography with Alessandro Olivieri) and the study of Greek inscriptions, all of which became a more and more fundamental part of his academic training and signalled what was to become one of his major fields of lifelong study and work. His interests

extended from the Herculaneum papyri<sup>3</sup> to the discoveries of Minoan and Mycenaean tablets in Crete and on the Greek mainland (Linear A and Linear B), and to the wide variety of ancient inscriptions found throughout the Mediterranean, as well as to the famous Orphic lamellae, found in tombs in Magna Graecia, in Crete and in Thessaly,<sup>4</sup> on which he produced a considerable number of studies. Extending his sphere of enquiry even further, he also devoted great attention to the edicts of the Indian emperor Ashoka, the third century BCE ruler of a large part of the Indian sub-continent, who undoubtedly attracted Pugliese's admiration as a ruler of notable tolerance and open-mindedness.<sup>5</sup> Nor should one overlook the final publishing project on which he was working, mentioned earlier (the Platonic Theology of Proclus), an undertaking that testifies to his interest in Neo-Platonism, which can certainly be traced back to his edition of Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, published in 1946.

These multifaceted lines of investigation illustrate the great breadth of Pugliese's interests as a philologist, editor and interpreter of texts inscribed and preserved on various materials. His research in these fields was eloquently accompanied by his contributions as a historian of many periods and geographic regions, ranging from areas of the East to the entire zone of Greek influence in Italy and the Western Mediterranean, in an all-embracing and coherent vision which is increasingly rare among scholars today.

But let us go back once again to his youth, whence can be traced the origins of a surprising and significant number of the interests subsequently developed by his wide-ranging intellect. While still in high school, Pugliese's curiosity was aroused by discoveries archaeologists were bringing to light in Crete from the excavations at Knossos that had only recently been started, and his interest was such that he wrote an article on the subject for the school magazine. A few years later, when his period of confined residency in Gaeta, where he had been sent because of his opposition to Fascism, was commuted to a 'warning', the young student was able to travel to Crete between 1935 and 1937, thanks to the intervention of the archaeologist Biagio Pace (the then President of the 'Consiglio Superiore delle Antichità e Belle Arti'), with whom he had become acquainted at university. His profound and long-lasting interest in Cretan civilization was the source of his close links with the famous Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, founded in 1909 as the institutional expression of a long series of important Italian archaeological activities associated with the figure and extraordinary achievements of Federico Halbherr, who was Domenico Comparetti's pupil in Florence and with whom Pugliese had engaged in correspondence.<sup>6</sup> Crete was at that time the privileged field of Italian archaeology: following on from the discovery of the great embossed inscription at Gortyn in 1884 there came, as from the summer of 1900, the excavations of the Minoan palace of Phaistos, and shortly thereafter at Hagia Triada. From 1914 onwards, Italian archaeologists were also working in Rhodes and Cos;<sup>7</sup> this allowed Pugliese to devote much attention to inscriptions and archaeological discoveries from these two islands (and indeed, after the death of Mario Segre at Auschwitz, he became responsible for the whole collection of the Cos inscriptions). Throughout his life he showed prompt and lively attention towards all developments in the field of archaeology, with that irrepensible enthusiasm for all that is new with regard both to field discoveries and novel interpretations, with an indomitable curiosity that was a tangible sign of his passion for research in the most authentic sense. Among the vast and diverse range of archaeological findings, he derived special delight from ancient inscriptions: his bibliography abounds with studies dedicated to inscriptions of all types and provenances and engraved on the most diverse objects.

Pugliese always experienced a sense of perfect intellectual harmony with Domenico Comparetti (1835–1927), one of the great 'patriarchs' of Antiquity studies in Italy, who was Professor of Greek Literature at the University of Pisa from 1853 and, as from 1872, at the 'Istituto di Studi Superiori'

in Florence (Maddoli, 1990: 12, note 1; cf. Ferri, 1976: ix). This affinity was based on two elements: Pugliese shared with Comparetti not only an intense liveliness of mind that allowed him to address problems of diverse origins highly differentiated in era, location and discipline, but also a belief in the need for a unified approach to text philology and historical reconstruction. Concrete evidence of this admiration for Comparetti, which was also common to Giorgio Pasquali's approach, can be found in Pugliese's list of publications. As early as 1944 he had drawn up the preface and bibliography for the re-edition of a volume of Comparetti's writings; he was subsequently also the author of the entry: 'Comparetti Domenico' in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, and in more recent times he further agreed (upon the request of the author of these lines) to compose a preamble to a re-edition of Comparetti's study of the Finnish Kalevala epic (Comparetti, 1944). Moreover, it was Comparetti who had succeeded in ensuring that the archaeological expedition to Crete was entrusted to Halbherr, a mission which led to the discovery of the Gortyn inscription and opened up the path to international scientific exploration of many areas of the Aegean.

In Pugliese's scholarly career, the study of history, culture and the inscriptions of the Near East and the Aegean always went hand in hand with studies focusing on mainland Greece as well as on the westwards spread of Greek civilization. Once again, the beginnings of this broad field of study and research can be traced back to his earliest youth. With his versatile intellect that was prominent from the very start of his education, and his love of culture that shaped his mind even at a young age, Pugliese graduated with a 'laurea' (master's degree) when he was barely twenty (in 1931), with a thesis entitled *Gelone principe siracusano*, written under the supervision of Emanuele Ciaceri. From this thesis he drew an article published in 1932, which, if my information is correct, may be regarded as his debut in the world of scholarship (Pugliese, 1932). Thus began his lifelong interest in the Western Greeks, a subject to which he would dedicate a considerable part of his energy and projects. Among other things, his name is indissolubly linked to the Istituto per la Storia e l'Archeologia della Magna Grecia in Taranto, founded in 1961 with the aim of promoting study of the history of the civilization of Magna Graecia in all its aspects. For many decades, the regular gatherings of the Congress of Taranto saw him take a leading part, along with many other specialists in Antiquity studies, who gathered in the city from all parts of Italy and indeed from throughout the world. The 1974 Taranto Congress on 'L'orfismo in Magna Graecia' (one of his preferred themes, if indeed any can be awarded priority among his multiple areas of investigation) remains vividly in my mind: it was on that occasion that I first made his acquaintance, and I was deeply struck by the warmth with which he conversed at length even with young graduates like myself (I had just obtained my degree the year before), his observations radiating immense knowledge that sparkled with humour and irony. In the years during which he taught at the Scuola Normale in Pisa, we met several times, at his seminars or whenever I was able to approach him, or in the library, often at a dinner in town. Frequently he was tired, due to the great number of engagements that obliged him to travel constantly throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula, but there was always a moment in which the conversation was lit up by witty remark or a reminiscence or the mention of a new discovery. We last met on 2 February 2006 at the Swiss Institute of Rome, when Pugliese, by then nearly 95 years of age, took part in a Study Day in honour of Walter Burkert. As I greeted him I remarked that we had not met for a while, to which he instantly replied: 'The last time was when we presented your Greek-Italian Dictionary at the Accademia dei Lincei, which must have been ten years or so ago'. The presentation to which he referred had taken place on 15 May 1996.

As has been regularly and fittingly mentioned, Naples and its environment – a rich, vibrant and exhilarating context that had few, if any, parallels – played a decisive role in his development as a

scholar, shaping his entire intellectual and personal career. It was here that his relationship with Benedetto Croce became established, as well as with other leading personalities like Raffaele Mattioli, the above-mentioned Emanuele Ciaceri, Vincenzo Arangio Ruiz (professor of Roman law and an eminent law historian), and Biagio Pace, to whom can be added another archaeologist, Amedeo Maiuri. Among his teachers at university, mention should also be made of Adolfo Omodeo, a figure of exceptional renown as a historian (primarily of Christianity and of Judaeo-Hellenistic culture, but also of other fields, since the overall range of his studies extended from classical Greece to the period of the Italian 'Risorgimento'). Furthermore, Omodeo was an intellectual close to Croce, and as an engagé scholar he was strongly committed to the world of politics and the institutions, taking an active part, after the fall of Fascism (25 July 1943), in the efforts to rebuild a free society – a task interrupted by his premature death on 28 April 1946 (he was born in 1889). Omodeo was appointed Chancellor of the University of Naples from 1 September 1943 and Minister of Education from 22 April 1944 in the Badoglio government, a position he held for only fifty days, until 10 June of that year. In 1945 Omodeo founded the journal *L'Acropoli. Rivista di politica* (which did not survive him) and he supported Luigi Russo in the foundation of *Belfagor*, a journal first published in Florence on 15 January 1946 in the midst of the fervour of reconstruction after the disastrous years of Fascism and war.<sup>8</sup> In that same year, Benedetto Croce founded the Istituto Italiano di Studi Storici, seeking help for the initial organisational stages from his young friend Pugliese Carratelli, who conducted courses in the History of Ancient Historiography at the Institute. Omodeo was expected to become the Director of the Istituto at the wish of Croce (despite the divergence in their political views that had emerged after the close links they had established during their common opposition to Fascism), but he declined the opportunity, shortly before his death definitely resolved the issue. From 1947 the position of Director was held by Federico Chabod, in turn succeeded by Pugliese Carratelli, who, as stated in the Council Minutes of 10 September 1960,<sup>9</sup> had from the moment of its foundation been called by Benedetto Croce to the Chair of History. His directorship continued until 1986.

It was likewise in Naples that Pugliese forged and subsequently strengthened an important bond with Gaetano Macchiaroli, an enlightened publisher of cultural works, with whom, once more in 1946 – truly a fruitful year – Pugliese founded the journal *La Parola del Passato*, which became one of the most important international periodicals in the field of Antiquity studies, and of which he remained the director until his death. And it is Naples, again, that is the seat of the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, founded on 17 May 1975 (in Rome, at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei) by Gerardo Marotta, Elena Croce, Enrico Cerulli, Pietro Piovani and Pugliese himself, who held its directorship throughout the rest of his life. His interest in the most archaic phases of Greece and in Minoan and Mycenaean civilisation was mentioned above; within the Centro Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), the first institute devoted to historical sciences was set up in 1968 at the behest of Carlo Gallavotti, Piero Meriggi and Pugliese himself, namely the Istituto per gli Studi Micenei ed Egeo-anatolici (ISMEA), which later became the Istituto di Studi sulle Civiltà dell' Egeo e del Vicino Oriente (ICEVO).

When the Germans occupied Naples on 8 September 1943, Omodeo boarded a boat for Sorrento together with Pugliese Carratelli, heading for the residence of Benedetto Croce in order to flee from probable imprisonment, or worse: this episode brought together three personalities who had long been linked by a common set of perspectives and cultural awareness (Mustè, 1990: 384, note 11). Pugliese had made Croce's acquaintance at the beginning of the Thirties and their first meeting soon developed into a close friendship, with Pugliese's increasing participation in the circle frequented by the philosopher: 'a circle of thought that signified education to history and, at the same time, to philosophical reflection, to the indissoluble bond between these two

spheres within that Crocean vision of research entrusted to the intellect and to civil commitment that translates into bearing personal witness'. The heritage of this relationship still stands out strongly in the entry 'Storia' that Pugliese Carratelli composed for the *Enciclopedia del Novecento* (Maddoli, 1990: 14–15, note 1).

If the influence of Croce on Italian and European culture was so important and so profound, this was because in addition to addressing specific issues that aroused extensive debate, it played a moral and intellectual role that contributed to shaping a specific *forma mentis*: not only a historicism conceived as a synthesis between erudite research and a general vision of the world, but also a view of culture and study as an instrument for the improvement both of man and society. In the darkest period of Italian and European social and institutional life, the habit, practice and custom of devoting one's life to studies constituted *de facto* an anti-Fascist, hence anti-totalitarian attitude, a true source of civil progress and growth (cf. Ferri, 1976: vi–ix, note 9). In this Crocean 'soul' lies the essence of the most authentic Pugliese, a figure as solid as a rock: in the face of the progressive degradation of society, he taught by example that the weapons at our disposal consist of study, the pursuit of knowledge, the quest to be well informed, to acquire learning and understanding, and critical thought. A lesson whose relevance remains as significant today as in his own time.

Translated from Italian by Colin Anderson and Rachel Barritt Costa

## Notes

1. For example: 'Antica Madre. Studi sull'Italia antica', 'Magna Graecia', 'Civitas Europea'.
2. This information is drawn from Maddoli (1990; pp. 20–21 offer valuable bibliographical details relating to Pugliese Carratelli's personality). Maddoli records very pertinently that Pugliese's interests in the Eastern world were so solidly rooted 'as to enable him, in his few years' teaching of the "History of ancient Asia Minor" at the University of Florence between 1957 and 1964, to build up a group of orientalist who today [scil. in 1990] are particularly authoritative' (pp. 10–11). See also Doro Levi's profile of Pugliese in *Imparati* (1988: 9–16).
3. As from 1946 he began publishing in the journal 'La Parola del Passato' a series of *Tabulae Herculanenses*, partly in collaboration with Vincenzo Arangio Ruiz.
4. In 2001 Pugliese brought out a revised and expanded edition of a 1993 book in which he presented the original Orphic texts accompanied by an introduction, translations and commentaries.
5. In 2003 Pugliese brought out a similarly revised and expanded edition of a work he originally published in 1960, in which he presented in translation a broad selection of the inscribed edicts of the Indian ruler together with annotated commentaries and introduction. Maddoli (1990: 11, note 2).
6. This is one of the most prestigious Italian cultural institutions on the international stage, which only the ingrained and incurable ignorance of second-rate politicians has recently endangered. Information concerning the Scuola can be found on <http://www.scuoladiatene.it>.
7. Following the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese islands in 1912, in 1914 the Italian Dodecanese Archaeological Mission was established on this territory.
8. Upon his death, *L'Acropoli* (II, 1946) devoted an entire supplement to Omodeo, under the title *L'Acropoli ad Adolfo Omodeo*, with separate pagination and with an introduction consisting of a 'Commiato' [Farewell] by the publisher indicating the review's closure due to it being 'troppo legata alla personalità del suo fondatore' [too closely linked to its founder's personality]. The first two articles of this supplement were by Piero Calamandrei (*Dignità del vivere*) and Benedetto Croce (*L'opera che fu nostra*), followed by contributions from various personalities, among whom one may cite A. Galante Garrone, C. Marchesi, L. Russo; it also featured a heartfelt *Ricordo del maestro* by Pugliese Carratelli. Omodeo was commemorated in a ceremony arranged by Delio Cantimori at the Scuola Normale of Pisa on 28 April 1947; the

associated commemorative article was published in the *Annali della Scuola Normale di Pisa* (Cantimori 1947); cf. also De Marzi 1983 and Mustè 1990.

9. Information on the history of the Institute may be found in the documents of Gennaro Sasso, Marta Herling and of Pugliese himself, published on <http://www.iiss.it>, under 'Storia'.

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