

next move. They declared themselves ready to consider any reasonable proposals. They regretted that some quarters in Egypt were already challenging the six-point declaration of principles which had been unanimously approved by the Security Council. In Egypt, expectations were for a new conference to meet in Geneva, probably within the next ten days.

The Egyptian feelers for a new conference, which had been communicated to the British and French Governments through the United Nations, were suddenly rebuffed on October 23. The two Western powers felt that Egypt's proposals were too vague to warrant negotiations, that in fact they could not be "seriously" considered. The crisis seemed to be in a state of complete suspension when the news reached Western capitals that Israel had struck across the Egyptian border into the Sinai Peninsula.

## Near Eastern Studies in Italy

By Ettore Rossi

**A**S far back as 1940 (*Oriente Moderno*, XX, 209, Apr., 1940) I expressed regret over the spreading use of the designation of the territory always known as the Near East by the new name, the Middle East, a designation which had come into vogue some time before and continued after World War II. This usage is also properly deplored by E. A. Speiser in the introduction to his book, *The United States and the Near East* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947). I think I am right in insisting on this matter of terminology, though there is not much hope of seeing corrected an error that by now has taken root in the press, in broadcasting, and in official political parlance.

By Near East we understand then the territory which embraces hither Asia, from Cyprus to Pakistan, from the Black Sea to southern Arabia, including certain lands bordering on the western shores of the Red Sea and the African coast of the Mediterranean, lands that are completely or partially within the orbit of the civilization of, or that radiate from, hither Asia.

The interest of Italians in the study of this civilization and these lands manifests itself in: 1) university instruction; and b) institutions for spreading scholarly information.

University instruction in oriental studies is concentrated in the Oriental School of the University of Rome and the University Oriental Institute of Naples. Since 1906 the Oriental School, with its own library, has

---

The late Ettore Rossi (1894-1955) became associated with *Oriente Moderno* in 1922 and served as editor-in-chief from 1938 until his death.

been within the framework of the University's Faculty of Arts. The School's scope is the whole Orient, including India and the Far East. The Near East is represented with Assyriology, Hebrew and comparative Semitics, Arabic language and literature, Persian language and literature, Turkish language and literature, history of Islam and Islamic institutions, and history and institutions of Ethiopia. Additional subjects of instruction are provided for in the program but are not being taught at present (Iranian philology, Armenia, Semitic inscriptions and antiquities, Coptic, Egyptology, etc.).

The student body of the Oriental School is not large. The reasons for this include the difficulty of the studies, for which no preparation is given in any of the lower schools, and the dearth of employment possibilities for those who specialize in Near Eastern subjects. To make up for this, the few students who attend the University's oriental courses are eager and often very gifted. Upon them depends the preservation of the Italian orientalist tradition, which can boast of many distinguished names (among the better known in the last few generations are Michele Amari, Celestino Schiapparelli, Leone Caetani, Ignazio and Michelangelo Guidi, Carlo Alfonso Nallino, Umberto Cassuto, Francesco Beguinot, Luigi Bonelli and Carlo Conti Rossini).

Since 1907 the Oriental School of Rome has been publishing *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, which contains important contributions on the Near East, both ancient and modern. It has also published a series of studies (the two latest E. Cerulli, *Il libro etiopico dei miracoli di Maria e le sue fonti nelle letterature del Medio Evo latino*, and M. Nallino, *Le poesie di an-Nabigah al Ga'di*).

At the University Oriental Institute of Naples (founded in 1727 as the Chinese College and reorganized as the Oriental Institute in 1888), courses are offered in Arabic, Islamic institutions, Turkish language and literature, Persian language and literature, Berber, ethnography with special attention to Africa and the Amharic East, as well as subjects on India and the Far East. The Naples Institute is the only place in Italy where a degree can be obtained directly in oriental studies. As mentioned above, the Oriental School of the University of Rome is part of the Faculty of Arts and its students must follow a program of prescribed humanistic studies, classical and modern, in addition to their orientalist electives.

The Naples Oriental Institute has a more practical slant; it is geared to the study of and practice in the Oriental languages, with a view to training interpreters and officials for diplomatic service in the Near East. Here, too, the students are few, and for the same reasons as mentioned above. However, this Institute, which periodically publishes articles and research findings in its *Annali*, strives to keep alive in Italy interest in the languages, history and culture of the peoples of the Near East. It confers

diplomas in languages, and the doctoral degree in an oriental language after four years of study.

At the present time there is no integrated university instruction in orientalist subjects in Italy outside of Rome and Naples, although up to about a decade ago the University of Florence was an active center of orientalism and the seat of the Italian Asiatic Society, now transferred to Rome. As far as the writer knows, instruction is offered at various Italian universities in Hebrew (the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart at Milan and the University of Florence; for a time it was also taught at Pavia); in Arabic (Palermo, Bari, Milan, but conducted in the absence of a regular chair by annual appointees); in Egyptology (Pisa, Milan).

There are two scholarly institutes in Italy independent of official university courses which contribute to the knowledge of the Near East. They are the *Istituto per l'Oriente* and the *Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente*, both in Rome.

The *Istituto per l'Oriente* is a private association founded in March, 1921. Since May 15 of that year it has been publishing the monthly, *Oriente Moderno*, which contains notes on political and cultural events culled directly from the Arabic, Turkish and Persian press, and articles on political events, social evolution, literature and customs of the peoples of the Near East. The Institute has a specialized library, in western and oriental languages, and publishes linguistic manuals, dictionaries, documentary collections, and studies on law. From the list, which includes some fifty volumes, the following outstanding examples may be pointed out: grammars (I. Guidi, Coptic and Amharic; Conti Rossini, Ethiopic; L. Vecchia Vagliere, Arabic; E. Rossi, Turkish and Persian; G. Furlani, Babylonian-Assyrian); the four volumes of E. Cerulli's *Studi Etiopici*; A. Giannini's *Le Costituzioni degli stati del Vicino Oriente*; C. A. Nallino's *Scritti* (six volumes), of which the first is a description of Saudi Arabia; Guidi's Amharic-Italian dictionary; L. Bonelli's Turkish-Italian and Italian-Turkish dictionaries; Fr. Beguinot's Berber manual; the two-volume *Istituzioni di Diritto Musulmano*, by David Santillana. A substantial Arabic-Italian dictionary is in preparation.

The Institute also arranges lectures on subjects pertaining to the contemporary Near East, sometimes inviting Easterners as speakers; it organizes free afternoon classes in oriental languages, open to all (students and workers), and with a practical slant. During 1954-1955 classes were held in Arabic, Turkish and Persian. The Arabic course, better attended than the others, had twenty students. A course in modern Hebrew was planned.

The *Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente* deals specifically with India and the Far East, but is also interested in certain sectors of the

Near East. It gives courses in Persian and on Persian culture; organizes lectures and exhibitions; and publishes a journal, *East and West*, in English.

To complete the scope of Italy's cultural interests in the Near East and its oriental studies, mention should be made of the *Fondazione Caetani per gli studi musulmani*, established in 1919 by the orientalist, Prince Leone Caetani, author of *Annali dell'Islam* (ten volumes in folio, 1905-1920). The Foundation, which is attached to the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, has a vast collection of oriental manuscripts and photocopies of oriental manuscripts. It represents an effective instrument for the study of the Near East, especially the Islamic East. It has published orientalist works and researches, including the work by M. Guidi, *La lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo. Un libro di al-Muqaffa' contro il Corano confutato da al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim* (Rome, 1927).

Omitted from this survey are the denominational institutions, the courses in Hebrew at the Catholic seminaries and Jewish theological schools, and the scholarly oriental institutes of the Vatican, such as the Biblical Institute and the Oriental Institute, both in Rome, which have rich libraries accessible to all students.

Those who are devoted to the study of the Near East feel that the work and the institutions concerned with furthering knowledge in this field should be more encouraged and better appreciated than they are. Italy is in close touch with the Near East—by the sea that connects her with the lands of Asia and Africa, with whose history her own is closely interwoven; by the noble tradition of her past Near Eastern studies; and by her more recent interest (as shown by R. Ciasca in a recent article, "*Contributo italiani agli studi arabi*," in *Oriente Moderno*, Aug.-Sept., 1954). There are signs that permit one to hope for a better evaluation of the importance of these studies in the future.

## Documents

### STATEMENT BY ARAB LEAGUE HEADS

Following an invitation of His Majesty, King Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a meeting was held in Beirut on the 10th and 11th day of Rabi' al-Thann, 1376, of the Hegira (corresponding to Nov. 13 and 14, 1956), by His Majesty, King Saud Ibn Abdel

Aziz, King of the the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; His Excellency, Abdel Fattah Muhammad el-Mughrabi, President of the Sovereignty Council in the Sudan; His Excellency, Shukri al-Kuwatli, President of the Republic of Syria; His Majesty, King Faisal, King of the Kingdom of