

## Reply

I understand that Marco Beretta did not appreciate the autobiographical remarks in my essay. Actually, I was asked to write the piece just because of my personal experience on the subject, and depriving the text of any autobiographical considerations would have been as impossible as inappropriate. Mentioning “names” or “cases,” however, was neither my purpose, nor my task, the latter belonging to the judiciary (which in fact is quite busy in this regard).<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the distortive habits I have described are not “presumed.” As every Italian scholar knows, it is still very easy for well-connected candidates to obtain academic positions “with just a handful of publications, not necessarily in the history of science”; and even an extremely concise list of references attesting to how broken the academic recruitment system is in Italy (and how the ANVUR rules have boosted self-citation, conformism, and clientelism among scholars) would be too long to be reported here. Nevertheless, besides mentioning again the references in my essay,<sup>2</sup> I suggest some other recent articles<sup>3</sup> which—I hope—will prove that I feel all but “nostalgic” for the past, the past being still pretty much present.

I never said that journals like *Olivo e Olio* or *Perfumer & Flavorist* were included in the “list of history of science journals.” Here, Beretta confuses the “A-Class” lists with the “scientific” journals lists.<sup>4</sup> Some confusion seems also to surround his assertion that I did not grasp “the difference between the center and the peripheries” because “Anglo-American” scholarship is not as engaged as Italian scholarship in textual criticism: actually, this is the very reason why I described critical editions in the history of science as an Italian excellence (although excellent projects of this kind are being carried out also in the English-speaking world,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a significant (but incomplete) list of recent cases, see <https://www.trasparenzaemero.org/notizie/categories/ricorsi>.

<sup>2</sup>Francesco Luzzini, “Bibliographical Distortions, Distortive Habits: Contextualizing Italian Publications in the History of Science” *Isis* 109, no. S1 (2018): 1–13, on pp. 9–11 (notes 23–29).

<sup>3</sup>Alberto Baccini, Giuseppe De Nicolao, and Eugenio Petrovich, “Citation gaming induced by bibliometric evaluation: A country-level comparative analysis,” *PLoS One* 14, no. 9 (2019); Walter Lapini, “Lucrezio ai tempi dell’ ANVUR,” *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana* VII, no. 13 (2017): 589–608; Lapini, “La nostra università ha bisogno d’ aiuto,” *Corriere della Sera*, 10 June 2019; Carlo Sini, “Gorgia, dicci chi sei,” in *La Scuola dell’ Ignoranza*, eds. Sergio Colella, Dario Generali, and Fabio Minazzi (Milan: Mimesis, 2019), pp. 99–102. A strictly related, and still heatedly debated, issue is the conflict of interest caused by those full professors who are also editors of scholarly journals and whom ANVUR appointed as “experts” in charge of drafting the journal lists. This could also explain why several Italian journals which had joined the international protests against the “metric ranking” attempted by ERIH in 2009 are now far from zealous in opposing the quantitative rules of ANVUR (see <https://www.roars.it/online/lenigmistica-di-anvur-trovate-le-differenze/comment-page-1>).

<sup>4</sup>The difference is explained in Luzzini, “Bibliographical Distortions, Distortive Habits,” pp. 9–11.

<sup>5</sup>Important, but not exclusive examples are the following online resources: the

and I am surprised that Beretta ignores this fact). In any case, I said that critical editions are becoming less common, not that they are not produced anymore—and *Nuncius*, although commendable in this respect, is not the only Italian journal regularly featuring editions of unpublished sources.<sup>6</sup>

The final part of the letter contests the main historiographical thesis of my essay, which is the role played by the School of Milan and by philosophy in shaping the history of science in Italy after World War II. Of course, this interpretation is not meant to suggest that important historians of science had not existed before: during the positivist period, authors—mainly scientists—like Guglielmo Libri, Raffaello Caverni, Aldo Mieli, Antonio Favaro, Gino Loria, and Federico Enriques produced many seminal works. However, the influence of this tradition was severely undermined by the hegemony of Croce’s idealism and by the enactment of the racial laws during Fascism (Mieli, Enriques, and Loria were of Jewish descent). Thus, it was essentially (but, I repeat, not exclusively) with the studies promoted by the *Scuola* that our discipline in Italy could flourish again, and these studies included also the re-evaluation of Vailati’s thought. Hence the special connection between the history of science and philosophy that still exists in Italian scholarship—and hence the reason why the (questionable)<sup>7</sup> assertions that Vailati considered himself “more a philosopher than a historian” and that he “wrote very little on the history of science” reveal, in my view, some lack of understanding of the subject.

The School of Milan trained many important academics throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It would have been impossible to mention all of them in my essay, due to the length restrictions. On the other hand, it would have been equally impossible not to mention Ludovico Geymonat and Paolo Rossi, for it is an established fact that both of them were key members of the *Scuola*: Geymonat became professor in Milan precisely because of Antonio Banfi (with whom he was a long-time collaborator), and Rossi was pupil and assistant to Banfi in the early 1950s. Moreover, both Geymonat and Rossi collaborated with Giulio Preti.<sup>8</sup>

I hope I managed to dispel some of Beretta’s doubts. I remain at his disposal for any further assistance in this matter.

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Newton Project (see <http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk>), the Oxford Francis Bacon (see <http://www.oxfordfrancisbacon.com>), the Thomas A. Edison Project (see <https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/title/papers-thomas-edison>), the Sloane Letters Project (see <http://sloaneletters.com>)

<sup>6</sup>Other significant, but not exclusive examples being *Technai*, *Bollettino di Storia delle Scienze Matematiche*, *Geographia Antiqua*, *Galilaeana*, and *Bruniana & Campanelliana*.

<sup>7</sup>See the studies provided by Mauro De Zan, the foremost historian of Giovanni Vailati (these are mentioned in Luzzini, “Bibliographical Distortions, Distortive Habits,” pp. 3–4, notes 2–4).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 5–6 (see also notes 8–11).

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humanities, and textual criticism. His latest book *Theory, Practice, and Nature In-between* (Edition Open Sources, 2018) is a critical edition of Antonio Vallisneri's manuscript *Primi Itineris Specimen* (1705).