

Rezension zu:

Giambattista Cairo, Pericle Ducati: il carteggio ritrovato (Bologna 2012).

Antonino Crisà

The main aim of Cairo's book, relevant to the history of Italian archaeology during Fascism, is to present a new set of archival records on Pericle Ducati. Born in Bologna in 1880, he was a well-known Italian Etruscologist, Professor of Archaeology at the Università di Catania (1912-16), Turin (1916-20) and Bologna (1921-44). He became an active member of the Fascist Party, having also signed the Manifesto of the Fascist Intellectuals (1925) and fulfilled prestigious tasks: Inspector of Monuments (1909-12), Director of the Museo Civico di Bologna (1923-44) and Head of the Università di Bologna (until 1929). After 25 July 1943, Ducati joined the Italian Social Republic and became official of the Provincial Court of Florence. Lastly, two partisans of the G.A.P. ('Gruppi di Azione Patriottica') shot him in 1944. Ducati died not long after in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

Kept at the Department of Archaeology of the Università di Bologna, Ducati's archive comprises substantial documentary sets, which are undoubtedly illuminating for reconstructing his academic and political activity, networking and private life.

The present book is mainly an inventory of records with the addition of selected documentary translations. Documents can be consulted by scholars at the University of Bologna, as Giuseppe Sassatelli reports in his short preface (*Presentazione*, 7-8). Giambattista Cairo provides a detailed bibliographic account on Ducati (*Cenni biografici*, 9-13). The inventory of letters and documents (*Epistolario*, 17-153) certainly comprises the most considerable section of this book and offers a brief insight on records. Each entry – while not numbered – contains the following information: sender/author, date, description, condition (for letters); number, title, description (for documents).

Cairo transcribed a considerable selection of letters (*Appendice. Lettere e documenti trascritti*, 155-210), which he briefly described in the relevant introduction (157-158). Documentary material is undoubtedly significant, especially to reconstruct Ducati's private and academic networks. For instance, we learn that even Adolf Hitler was one of Ducati's correspondents, as a letter of October 1941 clearly proves (173). Unfortunately, the letters are only transcribed without any footnotes, commentary or discussion.

Cairo's work is certainly a valuable starting point for further historical and documentary research on Pericle Ducati, an important protagonist of the history of Italian archaeology during Fascism. We hope that new studies will clarify his thick social and academic networks, and his awkward role as archaeologist and professor fully involved in the Fascist regime and propaganda.

Contact to the author:

Dr Antonino Crisà
School of Archaeology and Ancient History
University of Leicester
University Road
LE1 7RH Leicester (UK)
ac472@le.ac.uk
<https://leicester.academia.edu/AntoninoCrisà>