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ENRICO DE LEONE
(1906-1983)

On May 6th, 1966, the XIX Congress of Polish Orientalists, with the participation of foreign scholars, took place in the Mirrors Hall of the Staszic Palace in Warsaw. A very interesting lecture was delivered there by the director of the African Studies Institute of the University of Cagliari (Istituto di Studi Africani dell'Università di Cagliari), professor Enrico de Leone. He spoke about the Poles' contribution to the modernization of the Ottoman Empire in the XIX century. Naturally, the lecture aroused considerable interest among Polish specialists. Moreover, the archival materials presented by professor de Leone proved to be of a unique character.

My contacts with professor de Leone were only through correspondence at first. We struck up a friendship after we had met at the I Congress of North-African Studies in January of 1965. Professor de Leone stayed in my memory as a cheerful, kind and considerate person. He was, however, very demanding of himself, as well as of his collaborators.

Professor Enrico de Leone was born in Rome, on May 9th, 1906. He began his studies at the Faculty of Law, specializing in the Muslim law, at the University of Rome. After graduation he continued to study international law and political science at the University of Padua. He completed the year-long course with excellent results in 1930.

The year 1930 saw also the publication of his first works: the II 'waqf' nel diritto coloniale italiano (The Waqf in the Italian Colonial Law) which appeared in the Revista delle Colonie Italiane, Agosto-Settembre 1930 and the Lo scambio greco-turco delle popolazioni (The population exchange between Greece and Turkey) published in Nuova Antologia, 16 Dicembre 1930.

In 1930 professor de Leone was granted his first scholarship for studying Muslim law at the University of Algeria. This was followed by a two-year course of law and administration at the Institute of Higher Moroccan Studies in Rabat. These studies bore fruit in the form of the following publications: Problema indigeno e questioni sociali in Algeria (The indigenous problem and social issues in Algeria) which appeared in Rivista Militare Italiana, Aprile-Maggio 1932; L'opera politica e sociale della Francia nel Marocco (The political and social activity of France in Morocco) published in Rassegna di Politica Internazionale 1935; Politica indigena nell'Africa del Nord francese (The French indigenous policy in North Africa), Roma, Cremonese, 1935; Studi di Diritto Coloniale, Roma, Cremonese, 1935, two volumes.

In 1934 professor de Leone was granted a diploma in Oriental Law at the famous Roman and Oriental Law School in Rome (La Scuola di Diritto Romano e Diritti Orientali di Roma). After completing studies, professor de Leone held several responsible posts as advisor on Muslim matters to the state administration and educational departments. In 1947 professor de Leone became the secretary of the Italian Geographical Society. This position gave him the opportunity to devote himself fully to research work. Thanks to his thorough theoretical and practical knowledge

accompanied by experience coming from everyday life, professor de Leone was able to finish off his work entitled *La colonizzazione dell'Africa del Nord* (The colonization of North Africa), Padova, volume I 1957, volume II 1960. In his work, professor de Leone utilized the archival materials from state archives of Rome, Genoa, Livorno, Naples and Turin.

For many years professor de Leone had been collaborating with various research institutes and editorial offices of periodicals dealing with the problems of the Third World. From those times date de Leone's detailed studies, reports, articles, expertise and reviews on historical problems, especially concerning relations between Italy and Egypt, but also concerning the economy and sociology of law in Muslim countries of Africa.

Apart from a predilection for research work, professor de Leone was also a born organizer. Thus, in 1963, he took over the department of History of Institutions in Asian and African Countries at the University of Sardinia in Cagliari. A few months later, thanks to his energy, organizational talents and the support of university and local authorities professor de Leone created the Institute of African Studies. It was transformed into the African and Oriental Studies Institute several years later.

In January 1965, professor de Leone, together with the most eminent scholars from France, Spain and North Africa, organized the I International Congress on North-African Studies. It was attended by such distinguished scholars as Jean Despois and Jean Poncet of the Sorbonne Institute of Geography in Paris. André Adam, Robert Mantran, Maurice Flory and Roger Le Tourneau from the Aix-en-Provence University, René Raynal from the University of Strasbourg, Pierre Boyer and Chantal de la Veronne archivists from Paris, André Martel and André Nouschi from the University of Tunis, Gabriel Camps from the University of Alger, Jean le Coz, Pierre Guillen and Abbes Lahlou from the University of Rabat, Mariano Arribas Palau from the Mulay Hasan Institute in Tetuan, Julio Samsó from the University of Barcelona, Jacinto Bosch Vilá from the University of Granada, Roberto Rubinacci and Laura Vecchia Vaglieri from the University of Naples. The Congress also gathered many young research workers, just starting on their careers. For them the opportunity to meet so many famous scholars, to listen to their lectures, and even to discuss with them certain topics of mutual interest, was of great importance.

The Congress proved to be a success and inspired professor de Leone to organize an international round table conference on the methodology of research on African history, which took place in Cagliari in April of 1966. The continuing decolonization of the African continent and its consequences created a new situation in the field of research work in this region. A new approach towards historical science in North Africa had already been taken up during the period between the Wars by Charles-André Julien and was continued later on by other European scholars. Along with the development and creation of new research institutes, the decolonization period saw a considerable increase in the number of young scholars working in the field of North-African history. This could be observed not only in the decolonized countries but all over the world. More and more scientists, tempted by the vast perspectives of development of the Third World and of research work connected with this were forced to reach out to the past, as the source of knowledge. This created the need of a meeting between historians and Africanists. The discussion on the problems of modern research yielded the conclusion that it was necessary to utilize to the fullest extent all new archaeological materials, orally conveyed traditions and archival materials which have not been analysed up to now, coming especially from countries like Turkey, Egypt or even Italy and Spain. Professor Jean Louis Miège, in his appearances, drew attention to the necessity of further study of North African sources. He also called for a closer linking of the history of this region with the history of all Mediterranean countries and even of Europe. The participants of the round table conference concluded that there should be a mutual exchange of scientific achievements and further development of interdisciplinary studies, and called for greater efforts towards publication of sources concerning the history of the Mediterranean.

In May of 1969 professor de Leone organized an international conference called "Settimana Maghribina" (The Maghrib Week). The conference was attended by scholars

from France, Spain, Libya, Tunisia and Italy. The most creative discussion arose on the idea of country and nation in North Africa¹. Professor de Leone took part in this exchange of views as Turkish history was very much in the line of his interest². The history of Turkish reign in North Africa remained to a large extent unknown thus the controversy over this subject caused a heated discussion. It resulted in the activation of research on the Turkish domination in France as well as in Tunisia and Algeria. In 1972, at a congress of Italian historians and philologists held in Cagliari, professor de Leone extended the field of research of his Institute by linguistics³. This line of research, to a large extent interdisciplinary, dominated the International Conference in Cagliari in April 1979⁴.

The tireless professor de Leone came up with yet another idea of organizing a symposium on Italian-Turkish relations in the field of science. This joint conference took place in Ankara and Istanbul between October 9 and October 14, 1980.

Professor de Leone also planned to organize a similar symposium entitled "150 years of cultural relations between Egypt and Italy". The conference was to take place in Cairo and Alexandria in October of 1983. Professor de Leone, however, did not take part in this symposium. He died on March 31, 1983 of a cerebral haemorrhage.

Professor de Leone will be remembered as a kind, cheerful and tireless scholar and as organizer of research activities on the international level. He was a continuator of the traditions of friendliness towards Poland and Poles as many other Italian orientalists. He did not have the chance to visit Warsaw and Cracow again, although he had promised to do so.

Notes

¹ *Atti della Settimana Maghribina, Cagliari 22-25 Maggio 1969*, Milano 1970, pp. 129-171 and 195-204.

² Enrico de Leone, *L'Impero Ottomano nel primo periodo delle riforme (Tanzimat) Secondo fonti italiane* (The Ottoman Empire in the first Tanzimat Period. Italian secondary Sources), Milano 1967 and *Riformatori Musulmani del XIX secolo nell'Africa e nell'Asia Mediterranea* (The Moslem Reformers of the nineteenth century in Africa and Mediterranean Asia), Milano 1973.

³ *Atti di Convegno di Studi Storia e Filologia negli Studi Afro-Asiatici* (Records of the Conference on the historical and philological Researches in Afro-Asian Studies), Milano 1974.

⁴ *Atti della Settimana Internazionale di Studi Mediterranei, Medioevali e Moderni* (Records of the International Week of the Mediterranean, Mediaeval and Modern Studies), Milano 1980.