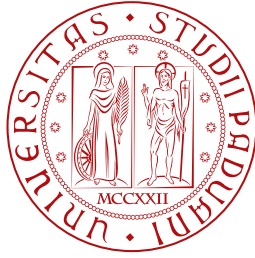


1222 • 2022  
**800**  
ANNI



**UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA**

**Free your future**

**Inauguration of the 800<sup>th</sup> academic year**

---

*May 19, Aula Magna, Palazzo Bo*

Twenty words, no more. Two sentences written in the annals of Padua. “1222. Messer Giovanni Rusca da Como podestà de Padoa. At this time, the Studium of Bologna was transferred to Padua”. Eight centuries on, speaking for the community that makes up this great University of Padua, it is I who am tasked with celebrating its eight hundred years of existence.

A task at once pleasant and weighty. Pleasant, because it represents an enviable achievement, a moment that invites us to reflect on the past, not in a self-congratulatory way, but as the only exercise of genuine use that can help us in envisaging and building the future. Weighty, because great indeed is the responsibility of representing a university whose history has been shaped by men and women of the highest moral and scientific value. But it is comforting that we can point to one inescapable truth: faces change, as do the times and the needs of society, but the University of Padua remains a bastion of knowledge, a place of science, culture and education, and of hope for future generations.

It was Antonio Gramsci who said “History teaches, but has no pupils”. We on the other hand wish to learn from our eight hundred years, and we have chosen this message to mark our celebrations: “800 years old, and still learning”. Because ultimately, history is of little use unless it can teach us something. And our gaze today is fixed more than ever on what is to come, while remembering with pride what we have managed to accomplish.

I began by referring to our university as great. And it is great in every respect: in numbers, in values, in research, in education. Given the solemnity of the occasion, I would like to take a few moments, in this short address, to consider some of the values that are representative of our institution.

In doing so, I will take my lead from you, our illustrious guests, who have honoured us with your presence at this inauguration. And so, I will begin by highlighting an essential feature of our university: we are, and we aspire to be, *international*.

Seeing President Roberta Metsola here today, along with so many representatives of higher education institutions, thoughts go at once to a place not far from this great hall, here at the heart of the University of Padua, which recalls and brings alive stories of shared knowledge, where we can experience what has been, and will always be, the community of science, free of barriers. I refer to our Hall of the Forty, which houses the podium on which Galileo Galilei stood and lectured, and the portraits of 40 foreign scholars who, in ages past, chose Padua as the place to pursue their studies. Here they grew, and trained their minds, then took their knowledge to other places, often their country of origin. Those 40 faces seem almost to inspect the visitors, and to remind them that science is a universal language speaking to us of freedom and brotherhood, as it has always done. On reflection, we might see these peregrinations of scholars as having created a Europe united by science, hundreds of years before the emergence of Europe as a political institution.

Culture has no boundaries: we are reminded of the fact by more than 2,400 students from around the world who, this year alone, have chosen Padua as the university where they wish to spend the key years of their education. They account for more than 10% of our enrollees for the current academic year and, along with students on various exchange programs, like Erasmus plus, they will surely generate that broad and open view of the world which is essential for a university continuing to grow.

My heartfelt thanks to President Sergio Mattarella, for coming back to see us only a few years after his last visit, and it is to him that I wish to “dedicate”, if I may put it so, our sense of *Homeland*.

Our university is in fact the only one to have received the gold medal for military valour in recognition of its role in the Resistance. Young people — all too young, in many cases — who wrote an indelible chapter in the history of the country and of a university which from its foundation has had freedom as a guiding principle. Who knows what they would have thought, almost eighty years ago, those students who gave their lives restoring to everyone that *libertas* which, until just a few years beforehand, had to them been a source of pride for the university where they studied, not a principle to be defended even at the cost of dying. Their supreme sacrifice transformed the University of Padua into that “temple of civic faith and stronghold of heroic resistance” by paying, Mr President, “the highest and longest toll in blood”. Words that continue and will always continue — every time they are repeated — to stir in us a sense of infinite respect, deep gratitude and emotion toward those who won them for us at the cost of their lives. Toward those who have taught us that freedom cannot be taken for granted, an irreversible conquest, but must be continually defended and nourished. Toward those who have made it possible for us to be here today, telling a story of freedom, not of oppression.

Another story our University has to tell is one of law. Or more exactly, *laws*. That law which recalls the *Universitas Iuristarum* of the early days and which, over time, developed into the focus on human rights, an expression of our pluralist nature, which is free from all conditioning and discrimination of an ideological, religious, political or economic character.

Today, the question of rights is crucial more than ever: we all have a duty to contribute, as best we can, in the building of a fairer and more caring world, a more democratic and inclusive society.

I said that focusing on rights is an expression of our pluralist nature: and this is another essential characteristic of our university, its *multidisciplinarity*. Or let us say, diversity. Diversity of voices and views, of ideas and approaches, of sensibilities. Thanks to confrontation, which can sometimes be lively — all to the good — our university improves. Cross-contamination of ideas is a priceless asset. In effect, different points of view allow a better appreciation of the various facets and depths of any issue. And our diversity, believe me, stimulates the curiosity of students and their enthusiasm for education. The numbers tell the story: 199 degree courses, 51 of which held in English, and a total of 5,462 individual subject courses every year.

A diversity that is reflected in the make-up of our university: 2,462 teachers and researchers, 2,504 men and women on the ancillary staff, 1,500 doctoral graduates, 854 research assistants, 2,800 trainees. An ecosystem that welcomes and supports an ever-expanding body of students; even in years registering a general decline in numbers nationally, the University of Padua has seen more and more young people wanting to come here, to the point that we now have approaching 70,000 enrollees. And my wish for all these students is that the time they spend here will be “the best years of their lives”, as it was for Galileo.

On behalf both of myself and of our Director General, engineer Alberto Scuttari, I wish to thank everybody: without the efforts made by each one of you — the skill, the commitment, the enthusiasm, and I imagine the patience too — in carrying out your everyday tasks, this university would not be the prestigious place of learning, research and culture that it is. Room for improvement? Certainly, as in every human endeavour. But, I repeat, a great establishment of which I am sure all of you are proud to be a part.

Allow me, before concluding, to make mention of another vital factor: the bond between the university and the *local area*. “Padua and its University” is an expression often heard, but we might also say: Padua *is* its University. In this verb, there is the sense of a symbiosis that for centuries has fuelled the growth of the

university. A bond with an area that takes in more and more of the Veneto, and beyond: our sites at Bressanone, Castelfranco Veneto, Chioggia, Conegliano, Legnaro, Rovigo, San Vito di Cadore, Treviso and Vicenza are not peripheral campuses, as sometimes suggested, but integral and vital parts of a University with a wider and wider outreach.

So we say *Gaudeamus igitur* for our eight centuries of history, a history that has always been closely linked with the notion of European identity. A Europe based on that *freedom* — and this is the last of the values I wish to enumerate — which epitomizes our motto: *Universa universis patavina libertas*. Freedom of study, of thought, of expression, of debate, and indeed freedom of movement, for people and for ideas, religious, political and academic freedom: all different articulations of a single essential value that cannot be taken for granted or guaranteed — witness the events of the present day... Afghanistan, the terrible and despicable Russian aggression in Ukraine — whether now or eight hundred years ago when the *studium patavinum* was founded.

Who knows what they would say about us, today, those students who made their courageous choice eight hundred years ago. Who knows if in their minds, and in their hearts, they dreamed or realized they would be founding a university that is still driven, eight centuries on, by those values they sought.

Who knows if those students would smile today, gratified at seeing my pride as I express the hope that this establishment will continue, for many centuries more, to be a premier centre of research and education, and to write its indestructible history of freedom.

Long live the University of Padua!

And now, calling on the spirit of those students who chose freedom eight hundred years ago, I am proud to announce here today, 19 May 2022, that the 800<sup>th</sup> academic year of the University of Padua is officially open.

We are gathered here today to inaugurate the academic year of our university for the eight hundredth time, a glorious and historic occasion for an institution whose motto, and whose boast, is “*universa universis patavina libertas*”: “the freedom of the University of Padua, in everything, for everyone”.

But I wonder what this means, in reality. I wonder, in particular, if the concept of academic freedom can be limited simply to the formal, legal and political freedom of being entitled to an education and to conduct research.

Perhaps not, if science and research continue, increasingly, to be governed by dynamics of profit that have nothing to do with actual research.

Perhaps education is not free, in a country where access to a university career is still the prerogative of a privileged few; a country that has one of the highest taxation systems in Europe, but where only 29% of young people succeed in gaining a degree — the second lowest percentage in the Union.

A country in which the right to study is based on regional criteria, often meaning that the already meagre funds available for education, for scholarships, free and efficient public transport, halls of residence and canteen facilities, do not reach their intended target.

We are taught — and I will gladly stand corrected if what I say is untrue — that we study so we can work, and not to enhance our culture, only to find ourselves in a world of employment that expects our thanks for the chance to be exploited,

since this is how we “gain experience”; a world, moreover, in which we must hope not to become one of the three workplace fatalities that happen every day.

They tell us that opportunities exist, and that what counts is merit.

I am sorry, but I am afraid that this statement is not borne out in reality. Whilst the newspapers praise “those who achieve stellar results”, they also print stories of students who in the course of their studies are driven to the point of suicide.

There are inconsistencies here that we cannot underestimate.

How much importance is given to numbers, rankings and statistical scores? And how much to the well-being of persons who live in these facilities? How much to psychological health, theirs and ours? There can be little surprise at this, if a healthy state of mind is still a privilege few are able to afford. Mental health is no less important than physical health. Our Constitution states that “The Republic safeguards health as a fundamental right of the individual and as a collective interest, and guarantees free medical care to the indigent”, and yet, it is hard not to notice how the right to universal and public healthcare is being eroded more and more by privatization. Sadly, we have seen the effects of this during the pandemic emergency.

Speaking of privilege, I ask myself how a country can consider itself free, when freedom is a fountain for some and a mere trickle for others; when Senators of the Republic feel comfortable publicly applauding the defeat of a parliamentary bill which, albeit in some small measure, aimed to defend the right of persons, citizens, to exist; when the state continues to shut its eyes to the reality of being patently transphobic while having the highest transgender murder rate in Europe.

Again, I ask myself how it can be possible that such diverse national policies coexist within the Union. And I tell myself it is no surprise, when the interests of the élites in single countries hold sway, when the legacy of a colonial past renders us incapable of making an impact, not only in relations between States, but especially in managing ecological transition, which has again stalled.



What is needed is a Europe of the peoples, a return to the original idea of the Ventotene Manifesto, so that the Union's half a billion inhabitants can find their role, taking part in decisions that are made in the collective interest. And in this historic period, the need is even more pressing.

There is no freedom for the individual without freedom for all. This is true today more than ever for the Ukrainian people, but for the Yemenis too, the Palestinians, the Syrians and many others who are oppressed and subjugated. Only with their liberation will our flimsy freedoms, hanging by a thread, cease to be an empty privilege.

Now, if after all you might want to ask us — my generation — how we are feeling, it would be hard for us to answer by saying we feel like a generation free to imagine what the future holds. So I should like to put a question to you, if I may: we are celebrating an eight hundredth anniversary, looking from the past at the present.

So, thirty or fifty years ago, what was the future you had imagined back then for us? We are not the future, but the present — you too reminded us of this, President Mattarella, in your New Year speech.

If we are the present, then as such we represent the outcome of a past system that has self-evidently not worked.

There is another direction that can be taken, but it is not up to me, in this situation, to come up with proposals. Should you care to listen to us, you can find us any time, anywhere, here in the Universities, away from the ceremonies and in our own shared spaces.

Dear institutions, don't ask us to be courageous; we will find strength together, we will unite, it is something we are already doing.

Dear institutions, have the courage to take a thorough look at the future, and seek to redress the errors of the past. Have the courage to ask us how we feel, and to take responsibility for the answer we give.

Have the courage to listen to us.

**“Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue  
freely according to conscience, above all liberties”<sup>1</sup>**

It is difficult to think of a higher honour, and at the same time a more arduous task<sup>2</sup>: how, in a few minutes, to crystallize the essence of eight hundred years of history, thought, science, and culture. The essence is undoubtedly freedom, liberty, but it has been enriched over eight centuries by profoundly different meanings, going through times both dark and glorious, revealing its most characteristic historical connotation: that it is fragile.

We all know that the University of Padua sprang from a Bolognese diaspora: a sort of parthenogenesis that explains the origin of some of the oldest universities precisely in the light of that longing for freedom which was experienced by small and quite mobile communities of students and teachers. From those first restless stirrings, which included Padua, grew an unstoppable momentum: by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century there were already 143 universities in Europe; today there are some 31,000 *Institutions of higher learning*<sup>3</sup> worldwide.

A success that is mysterious, in part: one notable medievalist admitted that “the corporate or associative form” assumed by Universities in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries could not alone explain their success, “and neither could it account for the resilience they were able in general to demonstrate in the face of Authority”<sup>4</sup>, even if their “public” though not “state” dimension would, I believe, have represented the first bastion of *Libertas*.

Thus, if it is true that the history of the University embodies the most lasting and successful cultural experience in human intellectual history, it is also true that it is marked by a brutal tension between authority and knowledge, science and power,

defiance and conformity, intellectual rebellion and persecution, ingeniousness and servile obedience, dogma and freedom of thought (a “dimension” of the human spirit that also has a history and cannot be discounted). A tension which in the context of the Venetian Republic, during the middle centuries of our university’s history, would create a profitable paradox, as it were, for *Patavina libertas*, with regard to the power of the Serenissima, being both “protected” by it and “distanced” from it<sup>5</sup>: with Galileo seen as the turning point, it has been observed, what Paris had been in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and Oxford in the 14<sup>th</sup>,

Padua became in the fifteenth: the center in which ideas from all Europe were combined into an organized and cumulative body of knowledge. [...] The conception of the nature of science, [...] handed on to his successors by Galileo, appears rather as the culmination of the cooperative efforts of ten generations of scientists [...]. For three centuries the natural philosophers of the school of Padua, in fruitful commerce with the physicians of its medical faculty, devoted themselves to criticizing and expanding this conception and method, and to grounding it firmly in the careful analysis of experience<sup>6</sup>.

A few centuries after the creation of this fertile “new intellectual word” in which *reading became learning*<sup>7</sup>, European universities were at the centre of another cultural revolution, rooted in a huge and truly epoch-making upheaval: when William Gilbert wrote *De Magnete* (1600), Francis Bacon his *New Atlantis* (1626), and in Padua, Harvey, Vesalius and Galileo were revolutionizing medical science and astronomy, the world was thrown into a completely new dimension, where

the authority of ancient texts was clearly no longer a secure foundation for knowledge. Other major civilizations did not suffer such blows. [...] Thus the Europeans, more than any other major civilization, suddenly found that the classical tradition that they had sought to embrace now had to be escaped if they were going to understand the true nature of their world and their universe<sup>8</sup>.

To do this, it was necessary, following the lead of John of Salisbury — the 12<sup>th</sup> century English philosopher and prelate — to keep away from the worst vice of scholars and professors: *vanity*, the past mistress of arrogance and conformism. Returning to Paris after an absence of twelve years, he found his old companions

“the same as they had been, and in the same position [...]. Certainly they had made progress, in just this one thing that, having unlearned moderation, they had thereby lost all modesty; so much so indeed that one might well despair of their recovery”<sup>9</sup>.

Humility, by contrast, is the virtue of those engaged in the most fascinating of professions, in contact with the search for truth, or rather for its many findings, and which rests on fragile stilts: one of these, perhaps the main one, is that “intellectual probity” that Max Weber identifies as the crucial element in modern scientific professionalism (or alternatively, an updated form of *parrhesia* — the courage to speak out, to speak the truth to the “tyrant”<sup>10</sup>).

This same probity requires us to note that the motto *Universa universis patavina libertas*, which seems to inspire eight centuries of history, is in fact recent. Created in the late Fascist era, it was coined most probably by Concetto Marchesi, at the request of Rector Carlo Anti<sup>11</sup>.

Pleasingly musical, and unabashedly “classical”, this motto is nonetheless cleverly conceived by Marchesi, who succeeds not so much in “inventing” a tradition as in revealing an experienced truth.

Following the thread of *Patavina libertas*, we must therefore switch the perspective and start from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here is an example of the lesson in freedom that Concetto Marchesi succeeded in giving us, despite the stifling climate of Fascist rhetoric. Echoing Mussolini’s famous “bivouac” speech on the installation of his government following the March on Rome, Marchesi wrote in 1933:

A legislative assembly that cannot exercise its sovereignty in the law of the State is no more than an assembly of functionaries, subjects and schemers: and in these conditions, a barracks full of praetorians has more power than the Roman Senate. [...] It needs only a handful of soldiers around the curia for all mouths to open in courtly acclamation and the odd mouth to stay shut. It is the time of eloquent pusillanimity and voiceless anger<sup>12</sup>.

The time for silent courage and eloquent anger would come ten years later, marked by the creation of the Committee for Liberation immediately after 8

September, the memorable inauguration of the academic year in November of 1943 — no longer in the name of the King or of the Duce, but of an Italy of “workers, artists and scientists” — and finally the first call for Italian youth to take up the armed struggle against Nazis and Fascists, made by a Rector who at 64 years of age pocketed a pistol, went into hiding, made his way to Switzerland and from there kept up contacts between the Veneto Resistance and the allies. Resistance operations were directed from here, in these rooms, thanks to men like Egidio Meneghetti (though I could name many more); a political endeavour, but military too, let us remember, which would be recognized by a University being awarded the gold medal for military valour — a case unique in Italy, and possibly in Europe.

Tracing the thread of *Libertas* back in time, there would be much to say concerning that crucial turning point represented by 8 February 1848 and its pre-insurrectional dimension when the University, and in particular its students, provided the fulcrum for an unprecedented political alliance with the city and opened hostilities with Austria in Northern Italy much earlier than Milan and Venice (and above all, well before the revolution was also sparked in Vienna).

When the revolutionary storm broke during the first months of 1848, events in Padua were certainly a minor episode, but of great significance in ways peculiar and essential to an assessment of the “Italian revolution”, and undoubtedly a seminal moment in determining the identity of the University of Padua in modern times, as it marked “the start of a tradition of civil commitment that is a singular and distinctive feature of its history”<sup>13</sup>.

The notion that Padua was the only European university of the early modern era to claim “freedom as the core of its public identity”<sup>14</sup> would be confirmed by the degree in philosophy conferred on Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia in 1678 (in Utrecht, 1636, the Dutch philosopher, theologian and scientist Anna Maria van Schurman was allowed to follow lessons from a special niche protected by a curtain, but not to take a degree<sup>15</sup>). The sensation created by the Paduan degree

was widespread and profound, but many European women scholars were to be disappointed: fifty years would pass before Laura Bassi was able to graduate in philosophy at Bologna University, with the help of pope Benedict XIV, who also offered a chair in mathematics to Gaetana Agnesi<sup>16</sup>. Only “the sky is the limit”, and not human conventions, insisted Anna Maria van Schurman, claiming the full right of women to equality in the field of education. Here is a field of research and civil and political action where the University would excel and lead the way: the conquest of a true *Libertas* for women.

Someone else who gazed into the sky, in other ways, was Galileo Galilei, and here we will limit ourselves to recalling the anger expressed by the philosopher Cesare Cremonini on his departure for Florence: “Oh, how much better for Galileo Galilei had he not got into these spins, and not left the Patavina libertas!”<sup>17</sup>; or again, the envied and respected *tolerance* that made Padua a place of welcome and education for countless Jewish, protestant and orthodox students, gathered in their noisy and numerous *nationes*. So it is no surprise that an English traveller, Thomas Coryat, noted in 1608 that he had encountered more foreign students in Padua than at any other university in Christendom<sup>18</sup>.

To remind us that the University of Padua has written some noble pages concerning this struggle for freedom, we need only quote a brief comment on the *History of Freedom of Thought* by John Bury: “the University of Padua, more than any other, bred the men and developed the schools of thought which made the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was under secular control and it was derided by the Humanists for its averroistic Aristotelianism: it responded by developing a new scientific humanism”<sup>19</sup>.

A new scientific humanism, sober and “eager to find a way of living based on the nature of man himself, the community of mankind in intellect and truth”: this is what was embodied by “the wisdom of the long Padua tradition”<sup>20</sup>.

An admirer of Galileo and Paolo Sarpi, the poet John Milton, in his impassioned 1644 defence of press freedom, placed the freedom of thought **above** civil

liberty: “Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties. [...] If the waters of truth “flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition”<sup>21</sup>. And again:

Who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. [...] a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, [...] imbalm’d and treasur’d up on purpose to a life beyond life<sup>22</sup>.

The history of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an age of tyrannies, genocides and book-burning, would invite greater prudence. Isaiah Berlin, for whom liberty was a principal field of enquiry throughout his life, discussing John Stuart Mill in 1959, asked himself, posing what is — still today — a dramatic question to which the scientific community must give an answer:

Is it so clear that we must permit opinions advocating, say, race hatred to be uttered freely, because Milton has said that “though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth [...] who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?”. These are brave and optimistic judgements, but how good is the empirical evidence for them today? Are demagogues and liars, scoundrels and blind fanatics always, in liberal societies, stopped in time, or refuted in the end? How high a price is it right to pay for the great boon of freedom of discussion? A very high one, no doubt; but is it limitless? And if not, who shall say what sacrifice is, or is not, too great?<sup>23</sup>.

This dilemma is alive today, expressed in an all too contemporary enigma that poses the question: freedom of speech, or rather *impunity from the consequences of what we say*? Freedom of research or “social responsibility”? We are concerned these days, especially in our universities, with drawing up codes (of language, of behaviour, of new duties and tasks, individual and collective) inspired no doubt by the noble precept of “not offending anyone” but often dumbing down, in practice, not least through forms of censorship, and above all self-censorship, which present an extremely serious threat to *Libertas*, so that a rethink of the question is needed today. In an inaugural lecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century

(Naples) dedicated to *the University and the freedom of science*, Antonio Labriola made the point that scientific freedom is not a personal right like others: to be considered such, “one could simply stay at home, talk, do propaganda and write books”, since “freedom to speak cannot be equated with the entitlement not to speak”. And again: “The State, which defines science, is itself a church. In order to define, there must be dogma and catechism”<sup>24</sup>.

So it is with profound distress that we read the Motion of the Union of Russian rectors dated 4 March 2022, which states that it is a fundamental duty of the university “to educate the young in patriotism and in the desire to help the Motherland”, because “the universities have always been a bastion of the State. Our primary purpose is to serve Russia. Today more than ever we must [...] actively rally round and support our President [...]»<sup>25</sup>.

Such a statement tellingly ordains the demise of the University and of every *libertas* it enjoys, since research cannot be placed at the service of the State. Of any State, anywhere.

A similarly telling statement had been made by a young German university student in 1942, in Munich: “I find it unjust that a German or a French person, or any other, should defend their people simply because they belong to that people”<sup>26</sup>. This was Sophie Scholl, member of the White Rose group, guillotined by the Nazis 22 February 1943.

In 1882 Ernest Renan, philologist and religious historian, coined the famous definition of the nation existing by virtue of a “daily plebiscite”, and not as a deterministic reflection of race, language, geography or economy<sup>27</sup>. No. In the name of its fragility, it is freedom, much more than the nation, that must be the fatiguing, conscious and humble choice we make daily. The freedom that enlightens the search for truth.



## Endnotes

- 1 John Milton, *Areopagitica. Discorso per la libertà di stampa*, edited by Mariano and Hilary Gatti, Bompiani, Milan 2002.
- 2 First and foremost, I wish to thank our Rector, professor Daniela Mapelli, for asking me here today; and secondly, my gratitude to the CSUP (Centre for the History of the University of Padua) for all their help, given with the customary generosity and professionalism.
- 3 According to the Ranking Web of Universities, as of July 2021 there were 31,097 universities worldwide: [https://www.webometrics.info/en/distribution\\_by\\_country](https://www.webometrics.info/en/distribution_by_country)
- 4 Girolamo Arnaldi, *Introduzione - Le origini dell'Università*, edited by Girolamo Arnaldi, il Mulino, Bologna 1974, pp. 13-14.
- 5 On the crucial tension between “protection” and “distance”, see Piero Del Negro, *L'età moderna*, in *L'Università di Padova. Otto secoli di storia*, edited by Piero Del Negro, Signum, Padua 2001, pp. 48-58.
- 6 John Herman Randall, Jr., *The Development of Scientific Method in the School of Padua*, «Journal of the History of Ideas», Apr., 1940, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 182-4; Id., *The School of Padua and the Emergence of Modern Science, Antenore, Padova 1961*. [«Padua became in the fifteenth: the center in which ideas from all Europe were combined into an organized and cumulative body of knowledge. [...] But the conception of the nature of science, of its relation to the observation of fact, and of the method by which it might be achieved and formulated, that was handed on to his successors by Galileo, [...] appears rather as the culmination of the cooperative efforts of ten generations of scientists [...]. For three centuries the natural philosophers of the school of Padua, in fruitful commerce with the physicians of its medical faculty, devoted themselves to criticizing and expanding this conception and method, and to grounding it firmly in the careful analysis of experience»]
- 7 Arnaldi, *Introduzione - Le origini dell'Università*, p. 15.
- 8 Jack Goldstone, *Perché l'Europa? L'ascesa dell'Occidente nella storia mondiale 1500-1850*, il Mulino, Bologna 2010, pp. 212-3. [«the authority of ancient texts was clearly no longer a secure foundation for knowledge. Other major civilizations did not suffer such blows. [...] Thus the Europeans, more than any other major civilization, suddenly found that the classical tradition that they had sought to embrace now had to be escaped if they were going to understand the true nature of their world and their universe», pp. 149-50].
- 9 *Metalogicon*, II, c. 10, p. 83. Quote in Charles Homer Haskins, *L'origine delle università*, in *Le origini dell'Università*, p. 55.
- 10 Michel Foucault, *Discorso e verità nella Grecia antica*, introduction by Remo Bodei, Donzelli, Rome 1996.
- 11 Piero Del Negro, *La Facoltà di Giurisprudenza di Padova (1938-1950). I docenti, il quadro istituzionale, le scelte politiche*, in *Giuristi al bivio. Le Facoltà di Giurisprudenza tra regime fascista ed età repubblicana*, edited by Marco Cavina, Bologna, Clueb, 2014, p. 116; Id., *Carlo Anti rettore*, in *Anti, archeologia, archivi*, edited by Irene Favaretto, Francesca Ghedini, Paola Zanovello, Emanuele M. Ciampini, Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, Venice 2019, pp. 148-9.
- 12 Guglielmo Monetti, *Concetto Marchesi e la libertas*, in *Libertas. Tra religione, politica e saperi*, edited by Andrea Caracausi, Paola Molino, Dennj Solera, Donzelli Pup, Rome 2022, pp. 71-2. The text by Marchesi is taken from the third edition of *Storia della letteratura latina* (1933).
- 13 Angelo Ventura, *L'8 febbraio nella storia dell'Università di Padova*, now in Id., *Risorgimento veneziano. Lineamenti costituzionali del governo provvisorio di Venezia nel 1848-49 e altri saggi su Daniele*

*Manin e la rivoluzione del 1848*, Introduction by Adriano Viarengo, Donzelli, Rome 2017, pp. 143-56.

14 Paula Findlen, *Dalla Patavina libertas alla libertas philosophandi*, in *Libertas. Tra religione, politica e saperi*, p. 40.

15 Maria Rosa di Simone, *Admission*, in *A History of the University in Europe*, Vol. 2, *Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)*, edited by Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, pp. 296-7.

16 Maria Rosa di Simone goes on: “In Germany, after some Ph.D.s (Wittenberg 1733, Greifswald 1750), the first degree obtained by a woman in a professional faculty was the MD conferred in 1754 at Halle on Dorothea Erzleben, daughter of the Quedlinburg physician Leporin and an active feminist writer. In 1777, Maria Pellegrina Amoretti graduated at Pavia, in jurisprudence, and 1785, at Alcala, Maria Isidora Quintina Guzman y la Cerda obtained a doctorate in philosophy and letters” (pp. 296-7).

17 Findlen, *Dalla Patavina libertas alla libertas philosophandi*, p. 39.

18 «More students of forraigne and remote nations do live in Padua, then any one University of Christendome». Ivi, p. 46. For his part, Ronald Edward Ohl noted that “The largest community (and probably one unprecedented in size) of medical students and professors in Europe before 1500 may have been that in mid-fifteenth-century Padua” (Ronald Edward Ohl, *The University of Padua 1405-1509. An International Community of Students and Professors*, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1980, p. 46).

19 The note by Harold John Blackham, British humanist and philosopher, appears in the second edition (1952) of the famous book by John Bury, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, (original pub. Oxford 1913, Italian pub. Milan 1959; quote taken from p. 80) [«The University of Padua, more than any other, bred the men and developed the schools of thought which made the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was under secular control and it was derided by the Humanists for its averroistic Aristotelianism: it responded by developing a new scientific humanism»]

20 The thoughts of John Herman Randall Jr. on Pietro Pomponazzi and his *De immortalitate animae*, from which the quote is taken, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, edited by Ernest Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller and John Herman Randall Jr., Chicago University Press, Chicago 1948, p. 273. [«And since the Averroists had also denied personal immortality, Pomponazzi seems in his restrained tones to be delivering to that age, so eager to find a way of living based on the nature of man himself, the wisdom of the long Padua tradition: the community of mankind in intellect and thruth»]

21 John Milton, *Areopagitica. Discorso per la libertà di stampa*, edited by Mariano and Hilary Gatti, Bompiani, Milan 2002, pp. 83 and 63. [«Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties». «[...] flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition»]

22 Ivi, p. 9 and 11. [«Who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. [...] a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life»]

23 Isaiah Berlin, *John Stuart Mill and the ends of life*, in *Liberty*, edited by Henry Hardy, Feltrinelli, Milano 2005, p. 238. [«Is it so clear that we must permit opinions advocating, say, race hatred to be uttered freely, because Milton has said that “though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth . . . who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?” These are brave and optimistic judgements, but how good is the empirical evidence for them

today? Are demagogues and liars, scoundrels and blind fanatics always, in liberal societies, stopped in time, or refuted in the end? How high a price is it right to pay for the great boon of freedom of discussion? A very high one, no doubt; but is it limitless? And if not, who shall say what sacrifice is, or is not, too great?». Isaiah Berlin, *John Stuart Mill and the ends of life*, in *Liberty*, edited by Henry Hardy, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, p. 233]

24 Antonio Labriola, *L'Università e la libertà della scienza*, Laterza, Rome 1897, quotes from p. 30, 79, 20 and 39. It will be noted en passant that the daughter of Labriola, Teresa, was the first woman to teach philosophy of law in Naples and the first woman lawyer in Italy. The text of the inaugural lecture was published by Benedetto Croce, who defined it “in feeling and thought, a lecture of the highest order ever heard in the halls of Italian universities”.

25 For original text see <https://rsr-online.ru/news/2022-god/obrashchenie-rossiyskogo-soyuza-rektorov1/>

26 Quote in Paolo Macry, *Storie di fuoco. Patrioti, militanti, terroristi*, il Mulino, Bologna 2022.

27 Ernest Renan, *Che cos'è una nazione?*, Donzelli, Rome 1993, introduction by Silvio Lanaro.

**Free your future**

[www.unipd.it](http://www.unipd.it)