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The Museum of Tropical Medicine of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, an international support for the Italian colonial policy between 1930 and 1943

ABSTRACT

The article reconstructs the history of the Museum of Tropical Medicine of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, created by Giuseppe Franchini, professor of Colonial Pathology, who moved from Bologna to Modena in 1930. At the University of Modena, thanks to the financial support of the city authorities, Franchini was able to give adequate accommodation to the Museum, unique in Italy¹ and of great international importance, which was expanding and acquiring specimens from various parts of the world.²

The history of the Museum is related to their transfers and rearrangements: the reconstruction of its history is an indispensable first step of a modern and engaging setting up which should mainly valorize the scientific and multidisciplinary context of the collections, with specific reference to the studies and researches on tropical medicine, parasitology and also on the infectious diseases that the Covid pandemic has made very topical all over the world.

Secondly, the rearrangement of the Museum should be an opportunity to critically present the historical context that was decisive for the realization and progressive expansion of this museum which, alongside the laboratories, was part of the educational infrastructure available to doctors, veterinarians, nurses, and missionaries active in the Italian colonies during the Fascist regime as well as in the Modena University Clinic. Another aspect that should not be overlooked is that the Museum also served the propaganda of the Fascist colonial

¹ This Museum can be considered unique because, born with scientific and research purposes related to the treatment of tropical diseases, it became a useful instrument of social propaganda for the fascist colonial policy of Benito Mussolini unlike the Colonial Museum of Rome, where memorabilia of African culture were collected and exhibited to witness the customs and habits of the colonies' populations and to emphasize Mussolini's colonial policy and the strength of Italy as a country colonizing country: *The Colonial Museum of Rome*, ed. F. Gandolfo, Rome 2015.

² E. Corradini, *Percorsi di valorizzazione per i Musei Anatomici di Modena: il Museo Ostetrico, il Museo Anatomico, il Museo Etnografico Antropologico e il Museo di Medicina Tropicale*, "Museologia Scientifica" 2011, N.S. No. 1–2, Vol. 5, pp. 97–108.

policy, supported by the leader Benito Mussolini, in particular to safeguard the health of the people who worked in the African continent. Lastly, the Museum's reorganization should aid a reinterpretation of the multicultural contexts, by giving a voice to new citizens and to heterogeneous communities by facilitating their social inclusion through direct dialogues and common initiatives.

The Museum's redevelopment project could be part of a larger endeavor, Ago Modena Fabbriche Culturali (www.agomodena.it), funded by the Modena Foundation, which envisages the redevelopment for cultural purposes of the entire large area of the complex of buildings called Sant' Agostino and in particular the relocation of some University Museums to the buildings overlooking Berengario street built by the University of Modena between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to house University Medical Institutes Clinics.

Keywords: Museum of Tropical Medicine colonial pathology, Italian colonial policy, parasitology, Ethiopia, Giuseppe Franchini, medical sciences

Słowa kluczowe: Muzeum Medycyny Tropikalnej, patologia terenów kolonialnych, włoska polityka kolonialna, parazytologia, Etiopia, Giuseppe Franchini, nauki medyczne

The scientific career of Giuseppe Franchini and his arrival at the University of Modena in 1930

Giuseppe Franchini, born in San Pietro Capodifume di Molinella (Bologna) in 1879, graduated in Medicine and Surgery at the University of that city in 1904, obtained his postgraduate diploma in Medical Clinic at the University of Florence at the Medical Clinic directed by Pietro Grocco. He later went to Berlin where he was a pupil of Ernst Leopold Salkowski in the Institute of Physiological Chemistry of the Charité Hospital and later pupil of Nathan Zuntz in the Institute of Physiology of the same University. Franchini's passion for colonial pathologies began in 1910, after he has attended the tropical diseases clinics in London, Brussels, and Hamburg. The following year he returned to Italy: in Catania he studied in particular the effects of malaria. In the Medical Clinic of the University of Rome, he dealt with colonial diseases and obtained free teaching in special Medical Pathology: in 1913 in exotic Colonial Pathology. In 1912 Franchini returned to England to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine where he was a pupil of Ronald Ross and was able to attend some courses: Ross's Tropical Medicine and Robert Newstead's Medical Entomology. Two years later, in 1914, he was called to the prestigious Pasteur Institute in Paris to help the director Charles Louis Alphonse Laveran, winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1907, discoverer of the malaria parasite: after his death in 1922, in the same year, Franchini took over the management of his laboratory.³

³ P. Croveri, *Giuseppe Franchini*, "Annuario della Regia Università di Modena per l' anno accademico 1938–39" 1939, pp. 326–328; F. Testi, *In memoria del Prof. Giuseppe Franchini*: adunanza 11 aprile 1939, "Atti e Memorie dell' Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Modena" 1939, Vol. V, No. V, pp. XLIV–LII; G. Bock Berti, *Franchini Giuseppe* [in:] *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 1998, Vol. 50, pp. 116–119, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-franchini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-franchini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) [accessed: 5.05.2020]. See also documents and letters in Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena, Fondo Giuseppe Franchini; L. Bellingieri, *L'eredità culturale di Giuseppe Franchini a Modena*, "Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Modena. Memorie scientifiche, giuridiche, letterarie" 2008–2009, s. VIII, 12, pp. 80–81.

For ten years Franchini remained in Paris and traveled to many countries: in Africa he stayed in Algeria, Egypt and Senegal; in Latin America in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay; in Central America in Mexico; in North America in California and in Arizona; in Arabia; in the island of Ceylon and in the English Indies. In 1923 the University of Bologna entrusted Franchini, in addition to the teaching of Colonial Pathology, the task of directing a Specialization School dedicated to the same subject, commissioned by the minister of the Colonies Luigi Federzoni: two were the courses, one for doctors and students and another for missionaries, nurses and colonial officers.

Since his arrival in Bologna Franchini began to collect photographic images, animals and bacteria by resorting to students and colleagues in the various continents to constitute a first nucleus of a Museum of Colonial Pathology. In Bologna, however, he had neither a suitable space available to set up the Museum nor the opportunity to create a tropical disease clinic to allow him and his students experimental studies on therapies.

In 1930, the rector of the University of Modena Ruggero Balli approved his transfer from Bologna supported by the Modenese deputy Guido Corni, who, Governor of Somalia since 1928⁴, was aware of the importance for the colonial policy undertaken by Fascism to safeguard the state of health of those who were engaged, in various capacities, in the African colonies. Moreover he was also interested in Franchini's growing collections of tropical medicine.

The creation and development of the Colonial Pathology Institute with the Museum

Franchini was appointed director of the Colonial Pathology Institute for which larger spaces were made available by the University of Modena than in Bologna, in the eastern sector of the former convent of St. Geminianus (now seat of Department of Law) with entrance from via Camatta, previously home to the Veterinary School. This School was suppressed, as a consequence of the Gentile Reform of 1923, and, with the intervention of Ermenegildo Reggiani, transformed into an Experimental Institute of Zootechny which still occupied part of the rooms. After the spaces were renovated and adapted to the new Colonial Pathology Institute, Franchini moved in the former convent of St. Geminianus the Museum realized in Bologna. Its creation was supported, as well as by Corni, by the city authorities, the Major and the vice-Major, and received contributions from the Saving Bank, through the director and vice-director, from the Rector of the University, from the Prime Minister Provincial of Economy and by the President of the Province who in this way could provide tangible proof of their support for the colonial policy of the Fascist regime. In addition, at the University of Modena from the academic year 1930–1931 the

⁴ A. Del Boca, *Corni Guido*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 1988, Vol. 34, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-corni_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-corni_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) [accessed: 5.05.2020]; attentive to the numerous problems of Somalia, Corni published in Milan in 1937 two volumes *Italian Somalia* in which all aspects of the colony are reviewed. The work can be considered an encyclopedia where each chapter is a monograph on its history, geography, botany, zoology, ethnic groups, agriculture and livestock, prospects for the future.

Colonial Pathology Course was compulsory for students of the 5th year of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

In Via Camatta the Institute of Colonial Pathology and the Museum occupied six rooms and was entrusted to the care of Gino Montorsi who, hired by Franchini as a janitor in 1930, became his valid collaborator: his work was fundamental for the various transfers undergone by the Museum and for its safeguard during the Second World War.

The following year, with a Royal Decree of 27th October 1932 n. 2073, the School of Specialization in Colonial Pathology was established, attached to the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, and under the direction of Franchini. The school was divided into four courses: pathology of colonial diseases, protozoology, entomology, bacteriology.⁵

In the *Report on the functioning of the Colonial Pathology Institute for the year 1930–1931* Franchini reminds that the Institute, like the Pasteur Institute of Paris, was equipped with scientific material for research and didactic activity: “consisting of parasites living, from cultures of germs and especially of fungi, from arthropods, some of which are infected.” The Institute was also “equipped with a thriving Museum, rich in interesting collections of reptiles, arthropods, worms, molluscs, vegetables,” studied by a lot of colleagues from Italian and foreign Universities. There were duplicate copies of these specimens, available for exchanges with colleagues from other Universities, confirming the numerous international contacts of Franchini and his collaborators for research activities “with the Rockefeller Institute in New York, the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, the University of Berkeley in California, the Entomological Department of Washington, the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory of Panama, the Institute of prof. Hoffmann of Havana.” Relevant “scientific material from the various transoceanic institutes”⁶ arrived at the Museum by Salvador Mazza, director of the mission of studies in the region of Northern Argentina and by other colleagues, such as doctor Valenzi, professor Del Favero, doctor Amadori.

The main specimens of the Colonial Museum were divided into seven groups: “1. Reptiles and Amphibians. 2. Fish. 3. Mollusks. 4. Worms. 5. Insects: a) Culicidae and Aedinae; b) Psychodidae; c) Chironomidae; d) Pupipari; e) Brachiceri; f) Pulicidae. 6. Hemiptera: a) Cimicidae; b) Reduviidae. 7. Hymenoptera, Isoptera and Neuroptera-Arachnids: a) Linguatulini; b) Acrina; c) Arachnids, Scorpionids, Galeodids, Myriapods.”

To these were added “indigenous medicines coming mostly from Derna (Cyrenaica) and some specimens from Bangkok (Siam).”⁷

Franchini’s contribution to colonial politics also received some international acknowledgments: in 1931 Franchini was awarded the honorary diploma by the International Jury of the Colonial Exhibition of Paris.⁸

The development of the Colonial Pathology Institute was announced by Franchini in the *Report of the year 1933–34* with the imminent creation of a Center of studies for

⁵ G. Franchini, *Rapporto sul funzionamento dell’ Istituto di Patologia Coloniale*, Modena 1930–1931, pp. 11–13.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 60–61, 65–67.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 77–79.

⁸ *Annuario della Regia Università di Modena per l’anno accademico 1937–38*, Modena 1938, p. 71; T. August, *The Colonial Exposition in France: education or reinforcement?*, “Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society” 1982, Vol. 6/7, pp. 147–154.



Fig. 1. Museum of Tropical Medicine. One of the old Museum windows in Villa Pentetorri. Photo G. Roli



Fig. 2. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Zoology Collection. Window with vectors of parasites. Photo G. Roli



Fig. 3. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Zoology Collection. Vectors of parasites. Photo G. Roli



Fig. 4. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Zoology Collection. Vectors of parasites. Photo G. Roli

indigenous medicine in tropical countries, already announced in the *Report* of the previous year, directed by a former student and collaborator of the Institute “the military major medicine professor Tommaso Sarnelli, one of the rare Italian doctors who have dedicated themselves at the same time to the clinical practice of Tropical Medicine and to the humanistic study of the indigenous world. Moreover he spent ten years of his life in various East African countries, and conceived and supported with fervent passion the

plan of the institution of our School.”⁹ The Center, unique in Italy and in Europe, was the first in Italy, created, as Franchini himself wrote, because of the recognised “need for doctors, called upon to exercise their profession among tropical populations, to be prepared not only technically but also humanistically and spiritually for their new and difficult task.”¹⁰

The creation of the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases in 1935

The Institute of Colonial Pathology in 1935 increased its clinical direction and assumed the name of Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical diseases: thanks to its experimental researches the Clinic developed a considerable scientific production.

The Clinic, a pole of attraction for a very large network of scholars and researchers, due to its uniqueness, was perceived as a forge of doctors, missionaries and high colonial officials when fascist Italy was aspiring to his own empire: the Clinic assumed an important role for fascist colonialism, perhaps even with the conviction that medicine could be a useful tool for political penetration in the conquered populations.

Bologna had been the first University to provide a medical specialization in Colonial Pathology but Modena was the first to assign it to veterinary doctors.¹¹ The “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia” of 22th August 1935 reports the news of an accelerated Colonial Pathology course specifying that most of the students had applied for the military service in Ethiopia. In the same newspaper another article of 1th October refers to another two-week accelerated course, when in Ethiopia they were military operations: in fact in Ethiopia the war started in early October 1935.¹² In the same year, 1935, Francesco Testi, a general and military doctor, reorganised the Museum and compiled the catalogue for the zoology section, including information on the danger of the species.

In those years of Institute fervent activity, the Museum also grown considerably, as stated in an article in the “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia” of 14th November 1935: “By giving a quick look at the rooms, full of material, you have an idea of the very interesting specimens existing there.” Among these in particular were mentioned “collections of snakes

⁹ G. Franchini, *Rapporto sul funzionamento dell’ Istituto di Patologia Coloniale*, Modena 1933–1934, pp. 11–12.

¹⁰ *Il nostro Centro di Studi per la Medicina Indigena dei Paesi Tropicali*, “Archivio Italiano di Scienze Mediche Tropicali” 1934, Vol. XV, pp. 481–484.

¹¹ G. Franchini, *Rapporto sul funzionamento dell’ Istituto di Patologia Coloniale*, Modena 1934–1935, p. 15.

¹² “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia”, 1st October 1935; S. Fari, *Un simbolo della Modena fascista e colonalista: l’ Istituto di Patologia Coloniale* [in:] *Sognando l’ Impero: Modena-Addis Abeba (1935–1941)*, ed. P. Bretella Farnetti, Milano 2007, p. 147, nota 34, p. 159; F. Testi, *Catalogo sistematico e illustrativo del Museo coloniale (Zoologia). Anno scolastico 1933–34*, “Archivio Italiano di Scienze mediche coloniali” 1935, suppl. al n. 5, pp. 64–119; F. Testi, *Catalogo sistematico del Museo coloniale (Zoologia). Anno scolastico 1934–35*, “Archivio Italiano di Scienze mediche coloniali” 1936, suppl. al n. 5, pp. 47–68; M. Mari, I. Ansaloni, *Antonio Boccolari (1855–1931), Paolo Parenti (1863–?), Francesco Testi (1858–1948): tre militari modenesi e le loro collezioni nei musei cittadini*, “Atti della Società dei Naturalisti e Matematici di Modena” 2014, Vol. 145, pp. 157–189.



◀ **Fig. 5.** Museum of Tropical Medicine. Zoology Collection. “Dangerous Scorpions from Eritrea, one from Bardera (Somalia)”. Photo G. Roli

▼ **Fig. 6.** Museum of Tropical Medicine. Zoology Collection. Dangerous Scorpions. Photo G. Roli



from Italian colonies, from South America brought last year by prof. Franchini who made a trip to those regions.” Furthermore, in the same newspaper we read that the Institute also enjoyed the attention of the king of Italy Vittorio Emanuele III (1869–1947; King from 1900 to 1946):¹³ in fact, in the rooms of the Institute there were “a lot of boxes with a label of the real estates of S. Anna Valdieri” in Piedmont which contained “numerous vipers who, for the personal interest of his Majesty the King – who follows these studies with interest – have been sent to the director so that he can make important and new

¹³ Franchini was also received on a visit by the King as shown in the “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia” of 23th November 1935.

experiences already in progress. Others will soon arrive from Castel Porziano, from Pisa, from San Rossore.”

Franchini, his collaborators and students also carried out activities for the dissemination of their research, such as the conference that he held in Argentina¹⁴ or in Modena at the Storchi Theater on 8th July 1935 by invitation of the Fascist Colonial Institute¹⁵: in addition to promoting consensus for the war of Ethiopia and for Fascism, the conferences were mainly used to inform workers and soldiers leaving for the colonies on prophylactic and hygiene measures to be followed in Africa. The travels and numerous conferences abroad were also a way of spreading the image of a culturally advanced Italy in the Fascist era: in fact, in 1935 Franchini was appointed president of the Modena branch of the Fascist Colonial Institute. It was an important assignment that allowed to highlight the value of the Museum for the colonial policy of Fascism for example in the context of the exhibition of colonial products set up, with the evident intention of celebrating the victory of the War of Ethiopia, on the occasion of the Modena Weeks of 1936, organized annually between April and May. The exhibition, organized from 19th April to 11th May, celebrated the capture of Addis Abeba and the proclamation, which took place on 9th May, by Duce Benito Mussolini, of the Empire of Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the king of Italy Vittorio Emanuele III who assumed the title of Emperor of Ethiopia. In addition to significant Museum specimens, the exhibition hosted paintings by the Modenese artist Augusto Valli (1867–1945) who traveled to Africa, in particular in Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and an exhibition by the Ministry of Colonies, by the Royal Banana Monopoly Company, objects of the Italo-Somali Society founded by the Duke of Abruzzi, of others of the Italian Colonial Chamber of Commerce, of the Body for the Colonization of Libya and of the colonial collection of Guido Corni.¹⁶

The high scientific level reached by the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical diseases can be identified by the considerable number of scientific publications. The Franchini publications amounted to about 600 on specialist periodicals, related to the General Medical Pathology and Clinic, to the Pathology and Clinic of Tropical Diseases and to the Tropical and Subtropical Experimental Pathology: at his death the *Tropical Clinic Handbook* was being printed. The main spokesman for the research was the “Italian Archive of Colonial Medical Sciences.” The magazine was created by Raffaele Onorato in 1920 at Tripoli and from 1927 directed by Franchini.

¹⁴ Franchini in 1934 participated in the V International Congress of Medicine in Rosario di Santa Fe (4th–11th September) and lectured in the main Universities of Argentina.

¹⁵ The conference title was: *The Italian colonies of East Africa seen from the sanitary, hygienic and prophylactic side* see: “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia,” 5th July 1935. See also the article the day after the conference in “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia,” 9th July 1935. Franchini also lectured in Ferrara (“Gazzetta dell’ Emilia” of 11th December 1935) and Rovigo (“Gazzetta dell’ Emilia” of 13th March 1936). For the birth and development of tropical medicine in Italy between late 19th century – mid 20th century see: C. Bonelli, *Clima, razza, colonizzazione. Nascita e sviluppo della medicina tropicale in Italia*, PHD in History, Anthropology, Religion, XXXI Cycle, University of Rome La Sapienza, 2018–2019, https://iris.uniroma1.it/retrieve/handle/11573/1408620/1474497/Tesi_dottorato_Bonelli.pdf [accessed: 7.07.2021].

¹⁶ “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia”, 21st April 1936; *Regime fascista e società modenese: aspetti e problemi del fascismo locale, 1922–1939*, Atti del convegno di studi storici, Modena 28th–29th novembre 1991, eds. L. Bertucelli, S. Magagnoli, Modena 1995.

The events of the Museum after Franchini's death: the transfer to the seventeenth-century Este Villa Pentetorri in 1940

After Franchini died suddenly on 3rd July 1938, he was replaced by Paolo Croveri who since 1936 taught at the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases and Parasitology at the University of Turin. After Croveri died suddenly on 13th December 1939, he was replaced by Giovanni Serra who worked in various hospitals in the Belgian Congo and obtained free teaching in the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases in 1937.

From 1940 the Clinic had a significant development: shortly after Franchini's death the creation of a permanent role at the Medical Faculty was approved, by Royal Decree of 1st December 1938, thanks to a Convention stipulated between Universities and some institutions. In the inaugural speech for the academic year 1939–1940 the Rector Ruggero Balli remembered that the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases and Parasitology, with the attached Museum, donated by Franchini's heirs to the University, was transferred at the Este Villa Pentetorri. The Villa was wanted in the mid-seventeenth century by the Este Duke Francesco I (1610–1658, Duke from 1629 to 1658) as a suburban delight reserved for the pleasure of the Crown Prince Alfonso (1634–1662, Duke from 1658 to 1662) and was designed by the architect Gaspare Vigarani outside the then Porta Castello at the north of the city.¹⁷ In 1866 the ducal Villa Pentetorri was purchased by Elia Rainusso and at his death, in 1906, was bequeathed to the “Pio legato Rainusso” and became property of the Opera Pia Rainusso¹⁸. The Rector Balli declared that the Villa have been transferred for free use to the University for thirty years.

At the beginning of May 1940 the Institute for Tropical Diseases with the Museum and the laboratories was transferred to the Este Villa Pentetorri Rainusso where Giovanni Serra held the inaugural lecture at the end of his course.¹⁹ The inauguration, approved by Benito Mussolini, took place on 15th November of the same year, in the presence of the Undersecretary of State for National Education Riccardo Del Giudice.²⁰ The Rector Balli, in the inaugural speech of the academic year 1940–1941, always in the presence of Del Giudice, specified that the Villa, in memory of Elia Rainusso, was granted by the Administration of Pio Lascito Rainusso of Santa Margherita Ligure in free use for thirty years at the University. Guido Corni become Honorary Governor of Italian Somalia “for his colonial passion” and to “honor the memory of the late Professor Giuseppe Franchini, first director of the Institute” decided to “give life of a Foundation that would allow the renewed Institute to be adequately equipped, proposing to enhance its development in harmony with the needs of the Fascist Empire.”²¹ The memory of all was fixed in three plaques placed in the lecture hall to commemorate

¹⁷ M. Canova, *La villa ducale delle Pentetorri* [in:] *Natura e cultura urbana a Modena*, Modena 1983, pp. 183–215.

¹⁸ *Annuario della Regia Università di Modena per l'anno accademico 1939–40*, Modena 1940, pp. 7–8.

¹⁹ “Gazzetta dell' Emilia”, 9th May 1940.

²⁰ “Gazzetta dell' Emilia”, 13th and 15th November 1940, and 10th December 1941: *The Villa Pentetorri. Ancient Estensi splendors and today scientific glories*.

²¹ *Annuario della Regia Università di Modena per l'anno accademico 1940–41*, Modena 1941, p. 6.



Fig. 7. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Zoology Collection. Dangerous Scorpions. Photo G. Roli



Fig. 8. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Indigenous Medicine Collection. Medicinal plants used by indigenous people. Photo G. Roli

the Guido Corni Foundation, Pio Lascito Rainusso and other benefactors of the Institute. In the inaugural speech of the renewed Institute of Tropical Diseases the Rector Balli, after recalling the importance of the colonial pathologies's studies, specified that the Institute had “the purpose of scientifically preparing medical youth for the Clinic of Tropical Diseases.”²²

Serra in the same year 1940 founded the periodical “Annals of Tropical Pathology and Parasitology” and he was also director; from 1940 to 1942 he was professor in the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases of the University of Modena. With Guido Corni he founded the biennial Institute and School of Specialization for doctors of the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases.

The “Gazzetta dell’ Emilia” dated 27th February 1941 recalled that “in the Villa Pentorri the laboratories, the doctor’s office, the museum, the library, the lecture hall, the

²² *Annuario della Regia Università di Modena per l’ anno accademico 1939–40*, Modena 1940, pp. 39–47: speech by the Rector for the renewed Institute of Tropical Diseases.

Fig. 9. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Indigenous Medicine Collection. Inorganic substances used by indigenous Cyrenaicans in medical and hygiene practices. Photo G. Roli



Fig. 10. Museum of Tropical Medicine. Tropical Pathology Collection. Wax cast depicting the face of an adult individual suffering from nodular leprosy. Photo G. Roli



offices” had found appropriate arrangements and that the library, rich in valuable volumes, of about 60 foreign, and 50 Italian scientific journals, above all the numerous publications of the Institute’s professors, collaborators, and students. Moreover the Museum was increased thanks some “donations of private collections (general Testi and professor Sarnelli) of the conspicuous pathological anatomical material of all tropical affections, of animals and plants offered by the Agrarian offices of Eritrea and Somalia and by the Royal Estates of Castel Porziano, Sant’ Anna Valdieri and Tombolo.”

On 17th November 1942 the Pio Istituto Rainusso of Santa Margherita Ligure filed a lawsuit against the University of Modena, which was accused of having expropriated the Villa: on 5th March 1943 the Pio Istituto won a lawsuit in the Council of State, to which the Institute appealed after the Modena Court in the first instance had given reason to the University.²³

²³ S. Fari, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

Subsequent transfers of the Museum and Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Diseases

After the University lost the lawsuit, in the same year 1943 the Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Diseases together with the Museum, directed by Giuseppe Acanfora, director from 1st November 1942 of the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases, had a further transfer to the building of the Foro Boario, in Berengario street,²⁴ where Acanfora had at his disposal a hospital ward as well as spaces for the Museum, the library, classrooms and laboratories. This transfer, however, saved the Museum's from destruction: the Villa Pentetorri Rainusso was in fact destroyed by a terrible bombing of 13th May 1944 which caused numerous damages to other Modena monuments.²⁵

At the end of the war and of the Italian colonialism, starting from 1945 the Clinic of Tropical and Subtropical Diseases was gradually adapted by Acanfora to more specific needs determined by infectious diseases. Starting from 1st November 1951 the Clinic was transformed into the Clinic of Infectious and Tropical Diseases, the School of Specialization in Colonial Pathology into a School of Specialization of Infectious and Tropical Diseases. Since 1951, after the transfer to the new Polyclinic, designed by Ettore Rossi and inaugurated in summer 1963, Acanfora organized scientific books and educational material with the Museum collections, fundamental for the establishment of the new Clinic which was properly placed in the Polyclinic with the laboratories. In 1976 Acanfora was replaced in teaching and in the direction of the Clinic, which became only for Infectious Diseases, by Franco Squadrini.²⁶ Thanks to this professor the collections of the Museum of Tropical Medicine, together with ten original showcases from the Museum in the Villa Pentetorri Rainusso, were transferred to the Institute of Comparative Anatomy at that time located in the University buildings of the Medical Clinics facing Berengario street, to be studied.²⁷

Conclusions

For the redevelopment project of the Sant' Agostino complex, the area of the University buildings facing Berengario street is involved in the Ago Modena Fabbriche Culturali project, financially supported by the Modena Foundation (www.agomodena.it), and the collections of the Museum of Tropical Medicine have been temporarily transferred to the last room of the Museum of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy in the University Building which houses the Rectorate. After the recent enhancement of the Museum of

²⁴ F. Stagi, P. Curti, *Il Grande Porticato di Piazza d'Armi*, Modena 2008.

²⁵ M. Canova, *op. cit.*, p. 215, note 103, ill. 316.

²⁶ F. Squadrini, *Nascita vita della Clinica delle Malattie Infettive e Tropicali dell'Università di Modena*, "Bollettino della Società Medico Chirurgica di Modena" 1992, Vol. 107, No. 1, pp. 63–67. In 1995 Squadrini retired, and he was replaced by Bruno De Rienzo (1996–1997). From 1st November Roberto Esposito, who ran the Clinic since 1999, ceased due to age limits and since 2011 has been replaced by the current director Cristina Mussini.

²⁷ F. Lombardo, R. Maramaldo, *La collezione Franchini*, "Museologia Scientifica" 1993, Vol. X, No. 1–2, pp. 13–20.

Tropical Medicine with a significant exhibition²⁸ and conferences within the Museum System, thanks to the writer, the Museum was named after Giuseppe Franchini and correct evidence was given to its the three collections or sections: the first of Zoology, the most conspicuous, which includes several branches of parasitology with varied specimens of insects, worms, arachnids, molluscs related to the etiology and epidemiology of exotic diseases. It also contains an important collection of poisonous animals, especially reptiles from all parts of the world, coming mainly from Africa and America. A second collection or section refers to indigenous medicine with the medicinal plants used by indigenous people, connected to the research activity of one of Franchini's main collaborators, the lieutenant doctor Tommaso Sarnelli, and a third collection or section concerns tropical pathology with the casts of numerous patients with various tropical affections. The photographic images of all the countries, in which Franchini, his colleagues, his students and his successors had traveled, that where the Museum's fourth collection or section, can now only be retrieved from Franchini's publications.

The future of the Museum of Tropical Medicine Giuseppe Franchini could be its rearrangement in the Sant' Agostino complex, returning in the University buildings facing Berengario street, after their restauration, in contiguous spaces to the recently restored eighteenth-century Anatomical Theater and to the nineteenth-century Anatomical Museum,²⁹ as part of the project Ago Modena Fabbriche Culturali. This project involves the rearrangement of some of the University Museums in the spaces of the University buildings facing Berengario street, built by the University of Modena between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to house the University Medical Institutes Clinics.³⁰

The history of the Museum is an indispensable first step for the challenge that will have to be faced, in view of a modern and involving rearrangement, first of all to interpret its

²⁸ "Medicament or poison? Tradition and therapeutic uses of plants in the Franchini Collection" Exhibition curated by Elena Corradini, Stefania Benvenuti, Rita Maramaldo and Ciro Tepedino inaugurated in the Anatomical Theater on 14th September 2018 on the occasion of the Philosophy Festival, http://www.festivalfilosofia.it/index.php?mod=ff_eventi&id=24482&indietro=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.festivalfilosofia.it%2Findex.php%3Fmod%3Dc_menu%26id%3Dprogramma-completo%26anno%3D2018%26pageid%3D20210420154458&anno=2018&orario_id=15062 [accessed: 15.04.2021].

²⁹ E. Corradini, *Nascita e sviluppo dei Musei Anatomici di Modena tra Settecento e Novecento: il Museo Ostetrico, il Museo Anatomico, il Museo Etnografico Antropologico, il Museo di Medicina Tropicale*, "Journal of History of Medicine. Medicina nei secoli. Arte e Scienza" 2015, No. 27(2), pp. 441–478; *Il restauro del Teatro Anatomico*, Modena 2018; E. Corradini, *Il Teatro Anatomico e il Museo Ostetrico Antonio Scarpa del Polo museale dell'Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, IX Congresso in Sardegna di Storia della Medicina*, 12–13 April 2019, Cagliari [in press].

³⁰ The first of the three buildings facing Berengario street that will host the University Museums was built, in contiguity with the Anatomical Theater, by the will of the Estense Government along the Foro Boario street (now Berengario street) between 1836 and 1840 on a project by Luigi Pagliani, pupil by Giuseppe Soli. For many years, even after the unification of Italy, this building remained the exclusive seat of the Medical Faculty. The project for a second building, which was built between the previous one and the building of the Sant' Agostino Hospital, dates back to the end of 1861. The construction, approved by the Municipal Ornato Commission on 2nd January 1862, started in the summer 1862 and ended at the end of 1863 to host the laboratories of Experimental Physiology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Pathological Anatomy. In 1909 the prospect of the two buildings facing the then Foro Boario street (now Berengario street) was completed, based on the design of the engineer Giuseppe Coppi, with the elevation, in the center, of the portion of the building that housed the Medical Clinics.

collections scientifically and in a multidisciplinary way, linking them, through a working group, to studies and researches on Tropical Medicine, on parasitology and in particular on infectious diseases which, due to the Covid pandemic, at the present time are of predominant interest all over the world. Secondly, it is necessary a critical reading of the historical context, decisive for Museum's realization and its progressive expansion, testimony of specific instances related to the propaganda of colonial politics in which Italy was protagonist, at the behest of the Duce Benito Mussolini in the Fascist period, in particular during the first half of the last century. Lastly, the Museum should narrate the relationship between civilizations, giving a voice also to new citizens and heterogeneous communities, to facilitate their social inclusion through direct dialogue with them through common initiatives.

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