

## Editorial

This editorial is the first opportunity to explain how our Institute has changed and the perfect occasion to declare our intentions: how we conceive the IISG, what we are doing, and why Villa Sciarra is increasingly becoming the primary seat of German Studies in Italy. An institute open to all Germanicists but also, or therefore, open to the world. We want to make Villa Sciarra a research center capable of keeping up a good relationship with all that is happening in the field of “German” studies in a truly international way. We want to make our scientific production known not only within Italy or within German-speaking countries (something which has a limited audience, if only because of linguistic limitations), but, in consideration of an inescapable globality or process of globalization, the world over – and naturally vice versa: to enrich the field of Italian German-studies with knowledge and relationships which up until today have manifested themselves, for the most part, in only an episodic manner.

Having said this, we want to call attention to two aspects which have always been present in the history of the organization, but which we feel must be brought back to the fore together with our specifically Germanistic activities; that is, the attention given to the Nordic world as well as an ever greater openness to other disciplines concerned with German-speaking countries and the Scandinavian peninsula. In other words, history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, musicology, politics – everything that could possibly be considered German or Scandinavian culture, excluding only work within the applied sciences. As, in any case, the journal has been from its very beginnings, as evidenced by the recently reprinted first issue which contained contributions from Delio Cantimori and Johan Huizinga.

### Research, internationalization and interdisciplinarity

These are our intentions or, if you will, our programmatic declarations. These declarations are possible not only because the world has changed with the new millennium, but because everything has changed



in our own little part of the world: the Italian Institute of German Studies has a new statute and new institutional responsibilities.

The element of greater discontinuity is, precisely, of an institutional character: we have become one of the twelve centers of research of national interest recognized and financed by MIUR (the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research). The first consequence is that research is no longer exclusively delegated to the contributions of individual scholars the center previously published in the form of essays for the journal or as monographs in the series of the IISG. In addition, the center is no longer only called upon to organize conferences and to publish the related acts. Today we must prepare a three-year plan which foresees the participation of many researchers and the promotion of young scholars. We must also have permanent scientific and technological researchers, just as at other centers. The projects that are approved will either be entirely or partially financed by MIUR in addition to ordinary funding. However, as regards research, our planning cannot limit itself to that of only national interest, we must address our projects to Europe as well – something we are, in fact, already doing.

### The three-year research plan

Over the coming years, the Italian Institute of German Studies plans to investigate the places, ways and protagonists of the cultural translation of German-speaking and Nordic countries within 20<sup>th</sup> century Italy. We therefore want to study and describe both the results and the consequences of the reciprocal exchanges between the national cultures. To this end, four projects have been activated, first and foremost that dedicated to German culture in 20<sup>th</sup> century Italy. Institutions, research, translation. These are the project's three parallel lines which contribute equally to the research, cataloguing, comprehension and analysis of German cultural references in Italy:

1. The Italian Institute of German Studies and German culture in 20<sup>th</sup> century Italy;



2. The history of Italian German-studies: genealogies, practices and schools;
3. The reconnaissance, study and analysis of the tradition of German language texts in Italy (1900-2000).

These three threads, moreover, are intended to produce a series of digital archives to be available on-line: the archive of the Italian Institute of German Studies – this will contain documents and letters of great cultural value currently kept in the Institute; an index list of the diffusion of German and Nordic culture in Italy that will be available on-line to the scientific community; and finally, the critical elaboration of the collected data – themes, questions and problems related to the image of German and Nordic culture in Italy in the past century, which will also study the function of publishing in the process of the transfer and circulation of cultural products. Within the area of the three-year plan, we have also begun other research projects. In this center alone we can mention:

1. Science and mysticism in German culture at the end of the century;
2. Method, hermeneutics and tradition in transnational law;
3. Media and intercultural relations between Italy and Germany: cinema and literature.

As the necessity of reconsidering literary history from a transnational perspective has generated a growing interest in the phenomena of *literary transfer*, and recent research has demonstrated the importance of literature in translation for the development of national literary systems, the Institute has begun a five-year FIRB (Basic Research Investment Fund) project (2012-2016), which will lead to the creation of the first digital data bank of translations of German literature in Italy, consolidating the bibliographic role and that of cultural observatory traditionally carried out by the Italian Institute of German Studies; at the same time it will make actual *maps* available to future research which will allow one to reconstruct the paths taken by German-language literature in the history and geog-



raphy of Italian culture. In addition, the first organic history of literary transfer from German-speaking countries to Italy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be published that considers German literature in translation as a system within the Italian literary system and which hypothesizes that, as such, it has its own relative autonomy and, precisely, its own *history*.

### Internationalization

Beyond research in a strict sense, the most important project is dedicated to the *promotion of German language and German culture in North Africa and throughout the Mediterranean in general*. With its library and its activities, Villa Sciarra is an outpost of German culture in the middle of the Mediterranean; therefore, it is a bridge between African countries and German-speaking countries.

While by no means excluding travel to Germany or to Austria, the center could be an intermediate, if not propaedeutical and maybe even in part equivalent, destination in the formation of North African Germanicists. After all, with ever greater frequency the field of German studies must confront an intercultural dimension, and from an intercultural point of view, an exchange project with Italy could be a greatly beneficial experience for he or she entering into the study of Germanic languages and literatures in as much as it is based upon a process of contrastive or comparative learning. In the methodology and critical-interpretive realm, as in the horizon of *Cultural Studies*, German Studies cannot do less than confront a diversified international panorama. In North Africa – bearing in mind all that has happened – the field of German Studies as well is experiencing a great change; it is sufficient to consider the over 400% increase in the number of students. In countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt the promotion of the German language, not only as regards the development of political and economic relationships with German-speaking countries, has become a real necessity of primary importance. Therefore, the IISG intends to contribute to the promotion of the development of a common space oriented to linguistic exchange and to the development of contacts between Germanicists and DAF



teachers in the area of trilateral cooperation with all the interlocutors of institutions involved. The IISG's goal is also that of expanding cooperation between Germany, Italy and the greater Mediterranean realm within the context of European politics. The exchange of ideas and experiences in Rome, where Italian and German institutions and organizations have their respective centers, can find a significant meeting point through both the exchange of teachers and students as well as cooperative programs between the countries concerned.

The additional aim of the Institute is to finalize collaboration and data supply agreements with universities throughout the Mediterranean, above all in Arabic-speaking countries where language departments host German and Nordic languages, but have little bibliographical tools. Over the decade to come, the Italian Institute of German Studies can assume a determinate role as an interface between continental Europe and the Mediterranean realm within the field of German Studies.

Within 2012 the organization of a conference is expected – which could be defined as a “joint conference” – in which government and university representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia will be present together with their German, Austrian and Italian counterparts. The contacts are already at a very advanced state, and there have already been trips and meetings in North Africa, Germany, Austria and Europe.

## The Home of German Studies. Services

### 1. The library

Our library houses close to 70,000 volumes in German – about 70% of the collection – and in the Nordic and Dutch languages. We possess notable holdings of history and philosophy in these languages and a collection of some four-hundred periodicals, some of which have uninterrupted runs from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>.



The recent cataloguing of the library by the Italian National Library Service, though incomplete – having covered only 20% of the entire collection, only a small fraction of which were the antique holdings – has confirmed that our patrimony is to a large degree unparalleled in Italy: almost 50% of the books in our modern collection are unique, with an even greater percentage as regards our early holdings. Naturally, the completion of the cataloguing and the digitization of the “unique” works would represent an enormous advantage in terms of the utilization of our bibliographical resources. The first step foresees finishing the cataloguing of the holdings to enable digitization. Considering the difficulty of finding the resources to digitize the entire collection quickly, the project’s goal – which is part of the three-year plan – is to find innovative technologies in order to meet two objectives: a quick digitizing process so that the Institute may implement digitization-on-demand, thus limiting it to titles requested due to their presence in the catalogue; and a low-resolution digitizing so that they may also be enjoyed by users without access to broadband or those users employing the internet on a mobile device.

It is our intention to develop web tools capable of integrating the Institute’s site to allow users to request digital content and consult holdings – beyond inquiries via web of the catalogue, already possible for the portion of the completed catalogue. The website would also create a virtual library of rare material relative to the institutional discipline of the center. Additional objectives of the digitization project include hiring or training personnel capable of autonomously developing the process, and the exportation of the digitization process to other libraries specialized in the institutional disciplines of the IISG, with the goal of creating a large portal that in digital form will contain a unique bibliographical patrimony, but one free from territorial limits.

## 2. German Studies. The journal

When we took office (September 2011), the last edition to have been published by the former management was that of 2009. In reality how-



ever it was only the yearbook of Italian Germanicists. The journal as such had not been published since 2008. By December 2011 we had published the edition reassuming the three “numbers” of 2010. In April 2012, both in order to cover 2011 but also to remind ourselves of where we come from, the facsimile of the first issue ever published, that of 1935, saw the light of day. And now this, which is the first issue of the new series, a series that will appear biannually and, above all, punctually in June and November in volumes of 300-350 pages.

The structure of the journal, in as much as it is the organ of the Institute, mirrors our programmatic intentions and foresees an “Editorial” followed by a space entitled “Compass and Review”, which will follow the movement of events, institutions or cultural realities in the world of the German language in order to orient and trace themes of contemporary interest; in the current issue a large space is dedicated to the anniversary (1812) of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, and therefore to the Brothers Grimm. A regular space will also be dedicated to Scandinavian cultures, which in the past perhaps were not adequately covered. In the current issue there is a review of Danish noir within the context of the larger phenomenon of Nordic detective fiction, and a second contribution dedicated to Andersen. Following the main body of the journal which is dedicated to the traditional publication of essays from both Italian and foreign Germanicists, the second part hosts a space dedicated to “German Studies throughout the world”: a movement towards enlarging the international dimension, but also an attempt at offering readers information related to our disciplines, the way in which they are taught, where, and with what results. What is being studied and what is being translated in countries like Ireland, for example, with which we are concerned in this issue. Coming next is the section “In Progress” or rather, the material born out of the research we are currently conducting. The journal concludes with a “Pastone” (as they used to say in the dailies when referring to the jumble of news pieces condensed into one “piece” on the front page) which collects and recounts all that has happened in the field of German studies, not only in Italy, in the six months preceding publication of the journal: conferences,



debates, interviews, books, and notices of the most varied types and of interest to the entire community of Germanicists. This year there will be no reviews, but next year the Observatory of German Studies of the University of Trento will enter into collaboration with the Institute of German Studies, contributing in a significant way to making Villa Sciarra the center of German Studies in Italy.

### 3. The books of Villa Sciarra

Having to give priority, within the context of editorial activity, to the journal, and considering the slender economic means at our disposal, we reflected upon the problem of continuing to print books. When we realized that almost 40% of the cover price (which was also true for the journal) was taken by Herder Books for distribution, we decided to discontinue collaboration and opt instead for on-line distribution, convinced that 40% in savings will give us the possibility of carrying out our editorial activities without considerable additional costs to the center.

We have also simplified the structure for our book series, reducing it to two: essays (including conference acts) and the texts, obviously all adequately translated and edited. For this series and for its translation costs, we have asked for European financing. For the essay series (as well as for the journal) we found ourselves having to salvage those pre-existing ones; we will therefore begin with the acts of the conferences. In 2012 the following titles are foreseen:

– *Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann e il romanzo moderno*. Acts of the international conference of 2005. Edited by Elisabeth Galvan.

– *Three-dimensional Ibsen: politics, feminism and the stage*. Acts of the international conference of 2006. Edited by Laura Caretti.

– *Fascismo e nazionalsocialismo in Italia e in Germania: il dibattito storico-politico e la rappresentazione mediatica dopo il 1980*. Acts of the international conference of 2006. Edited by Lutz Klinkhammer.





– Lorenzo Mirabelli, *Centotre anni di bibliografia in lingua italiana su Thomas Mann (1908-2011)* in collaboration with AISMANN/Italian Association of Mannian Studies.

– *Il teatro di Heinrich von Kleist. Interpolazioni, messe in scena, traduzioni.* Acts of the conference on Heinrich Kleist of 2011. Edited by Luigi Reitani.

#### 4. Villa Sciarra: Home of German Studies

Villa Sciarra: Home of German Studies. We mean this literally as the center is both available for conferences, seminars, meetings, and book presentations, but also the permanent seat of scientific societies. Both the Thomas Mann Gesellschaft and the Walter Benjamin Gesellschaft have their seats in the Villa Sciarra to this day. Naturally we also hope that the AIG (Italian Association of German Studies) will choose to make Villa Sciarra its home.

#### The Italian Institute of German Studies

We are no longer the institute founded in 1931 by Giovanni Gentile, inaugurated in 1932 in the presence of Benito Mussolini, and governed over time, and through history's storms, in a substantial continuity of intents and purposes, or rather, diffusion and support of research in the area of German Studies, by Giuseppe Gabetti, Rodolfo Bottacchiari, Bonaventura Tecchi and Paolo Chiarini. Naturally, we are more than proud of our tradition, but from the point of view of the rules which govern us and, by and large, from the point of view of institutional characteristics – independent of our will – we have become another entity.

The architecture of the administrative organs have also changed. As other research centers (the statute indeed has the same framework for all), the IISG now is governed by an administrative board composed of three members: the president, Fabrizio Cambi, and two councilors: Sergio Belardinelli and Giorgio Manacorda, who is both



the senior councilor and the vice-president nominated by the CDA (board of directors).

The statute foresees a scientific board that will supervise research activities with the support of the head of research, Dott. Bruno Berni, who is also chief librarian of Villa Sciarra. After a long and complex procedure guaranteeing it transparency, the scientific board today is made up of Fulvio Ferrari, coordinator; Andrea Landolfi, secretary; Luigi Cimmino, Fulvio Longaro, and Martina Nied.

That statute also foresees a director who must be recommended by the president and unanimously approved by the board of directors. The new director is Dott.ssa. Renata Crea.

With this new institutional structure, and with the scientific and cultural activities which have been launched up to this point, we believe that the IISG will increasingly become the reference point in Italy for the institutions of German-speaking countries and Scandinavia.\*

Sergio Belardinelli

Fabrizio Cambi

Giorgio Manacorda

\* “German Studies” publishes contributions in Italian, German, English and French. In the English version only Italian essays are translated in order to better acquaint readers with the state of German Studies in our country.