

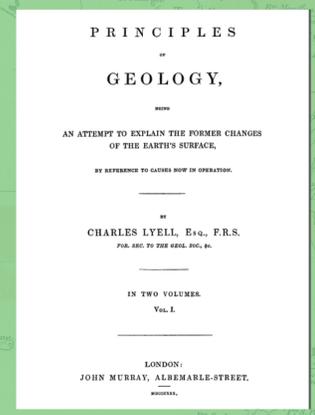
THE "GEOITALIANI" PROJECT: HISTORY OF GEOLOGY AS A KEY FOR THE SPREADING OF SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE IN ITALY

Argentieri A. (1),(4), Console F. (5), Doglioni C. (3),(4), Fabbi S. (3),(4), Pantaloni M. (2), (4) Petti F.M. (4), Romano M. (3),(4), Zuccari A. (4)

(1) Provincia di Roma- Dipartimento IV- Servizio Difesa del Suolo; (2) ISPR- Servizio Geologico d'Italia; (3) Sapienza- Università di Roma, Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra; (4) Società Geologica Italiana (storioageoscienze@socgeol.it); (5) ISPR- Servizio Biblioteca e Documentazione

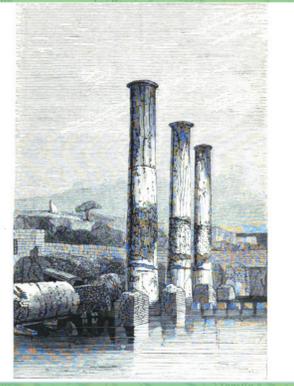
A NEW SECTION OF THE ITALIAN GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

"The geologists of Italy preceded... the naturalists of other countries in their investigations into the ancient history of the earth, and still maintained a decided pre-eminence." ("Principles of Geology", 1st edition, 1830).



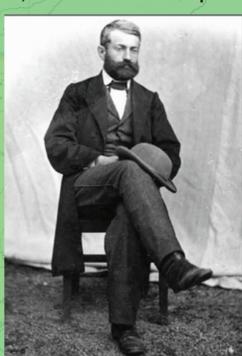
Sir Charles Lyell's tribute to forerunners in Earth sciences field seems today neglected by Italian society, whose relationships with geoscientific community in the last decades have been compromised by several tragic events.

In such a context, promoting public awareness and understanding of Earth sciences importance is thus a crucial issue for a 'geologically young' country, constantly facing the consequences of natural hazards.



View of the Temple of Serapis at Pozzuoli in 1836, reported in the frontispiece of Lyell's Principles.

Italy can be considered, in all respects, one of the founders country of modern geology, through the work of excellent geoscientists who contributed to the development of modern and lay scientific thought. After the unification of the Kingdom, many of these prominent figures were called to holding public office on account of both the virtue of patriotism, and the technical expertise.



Quintino Sella

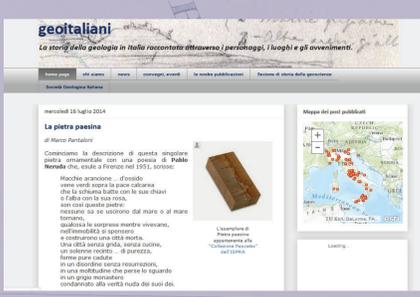


Giovanni Capellini

The recovery of their own roots may enable the Italian geological community to renew the driving role played in the history of Italy, from the initial structuring of the unified state until the second half of the twentieth century, when our predecessors made a decisive contribution to the advancement of geosciences at the international level. In light of this and within the framework of these purposes the Italian Geological Society established on December 2012, the History of Geosciences Section.

GEOITALIANI SPREADING OVER WEB PLATFORMS

For a diffusion of the project on web platforms, in March 2013 the GEOITALIANI blog has been activated, which hosts texts and insights enriched by historical images and/or multimedia content.



The goal of the blog is to reconstruct the history of Earth Sciences in Italy through the memory of scientific figures which have worked in these fields: from pioneers in natural sciences and by the founding fathers of modern geological disciplines, up to those who conducted the Italian geosciences towards the twenty-first century.



Since its activation, GEOITALIANI has been consulted by more than 45.000 visitors from Italy and all over the world. Social networks (Facebook: www.facebook.com/geotitaliani; Twitter: @geotitaliani) represent strategic communication tools, reaching younger audience and trespassing boundaries of the geological community: the majority of the almost 950 Facebook followers are indeed "non geologists", actively involved in general discussion.



In addition to the commemorations of figures from the past, the topics addressed range from the description of historical events, of localities characterized by geological or geomorphological peculiarities, to comment and reflections on the role of geology and dissemination of our discipline.

More than 20 contributors submitted posts, articles, memories and pictures to the GEOITALIANI blog; until now about 120 articles have been published. The publication on social web platforms is aimed at a wide audience to introduce, even beyond the confines of Earth Sciences specialist, the role of geoscientists in the Italian economic, political, cultural.

OLD GEOLOGICAL MAP DIGITIZATION PROJECT



Geological Map of the Province Venete by prof. Taramelli Torquato. Pavia, 1880 (scale about 1:600000). (handwritten map stored in the ISPR library)

Precious information come from the historical archives of both the Italian Geological Society and the library of the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), which represent the principal collections of original bibliographic and cartographic material (about 50.000 maps) belonged to the Geological Survey of Italy.



Chorographic maps of the 'Stato Pontificio' drawn by Gaetano Spinetti and incised by Alessandro Moschetti (scale 1:296000, between 1831 and 1846).

Digitalization process of about 1.000 historical maps, catalogued according to the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Cartographic Materials, has almost been completed. The download of the maps is available at: opac.isprambiente.it

ORGANIZATION OF MEETINGS AND CONGRESSES

The organization of meetings and congresses is another central objective of Geotitaliani Project, with the aim to disseminate, discuss and explore the issues addressed within the History of Geosciences section.

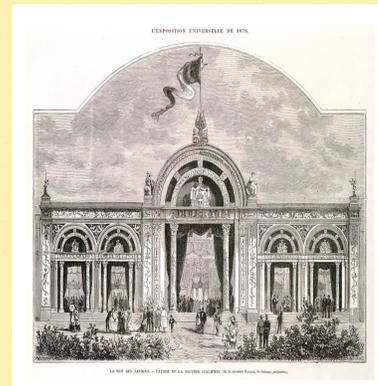
On the occasion of the centenary of the First World War, the History of Geosciences section is organizing a congress which will be held at Trento (MUSE, Museo delle Scienze) on summer 2015, in collaboration with ISPR, Sapienza University of Rome and MUSE.



The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss and better understand the fundamental and crucial role played by the geological knowledge in the First World War, with field trips planned to visit and experience the intimate contact between soldiers and geological outcrops.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

In addition to outreach activities for wide and varied audiences, project members carry out original research activities in order to contextualize, in the light of current Earth sciences knowledge, the major contribution and the thought of scientists of the past.



Facade of the Italian pavilion at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1878. The universal exposition was a significant event for geology as a whole and in particular for the Italian one (from Console and Pantaloni, 2014)

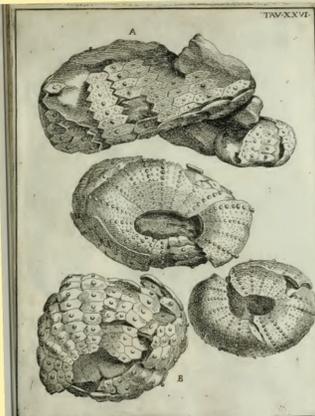


Illustration made by Agostino Scilla (1629-1700) to show sea urchins compressed and fractured in different ways according to their orientation in the embedding sediment (see Romano, 2013).



Boot tracks from the floor of a tunnel in a First World War fort (Valmorbiawerk) in the Trentino Alto Adige region. The tracks belong to the right and left boots of the same person. The layout and the shape of the tracks perfectly match the mountain footwear used by the Austro-Hungarian army. The succession of events during the building of the Valmorbiawerk indicates that the tracks could have been imprinted between spring 1914 and May 1915 (from Avanzini et al., 2011).

Several prominent figures of the past, which have given fundamental contribution to the Earth sciences, have been analyzed in detail and the results of the research have presented on national and international journals.

Geological interpretation and readings of the territory, all aspects that we now take for granted, actually represented epochal progress at the time of their first appearance, considering the extremely embryonic state of geology until relatively recent times.



Quintino Sella bronze monument, in Turin, realized by Cesare Reduzzi in 1893 (from Pantaloni, 2014).

History of Geosciences section members also cooperate with the Institute of the Italian Encyclopedia as authors of geoscientists biographies published in the Italians Biographic Dictionary (www.treccani.it).