

THE SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY OF CRA-UCEA

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Key terms: climatology; geology; meteorology; seismology; volcanology

The “Ufficio Centrale di Ecologia Agraria” (UCEA), an institute belonging to the Council for research in agriculture (CRA) possesses an important meteorological and geophysical library. The CRA-UCEA library comes from meteorological and geophysical collections once belonged to the “Collegio Romano Astronomical and Meteorological Observatory”, whose original institution dates back to the 1570s by the Jesuits. But only in 1880 such collections became the core of the CRA-UCEA library: when the “Regio Ufficio Centrale di Meteorologia” -the first “Central Meteorological Office” in Italy, and forerunner of CRA-UCEA- was transferred to the Collegio Romano premises already hosting the “Observatory”. Since then, the library has been enriched with a great many books and periodicals (both national and international) on meteorology, climatology, aerology and agrometeorology. In 1887 the “Regio Ufficio Centrale di Meteorologia” took over the responsibility of the “Italian National Geodynamic Service” too. As a consequence, a lot of Italian and international books (some of which published in the 17th and 18th centuries) and periodicals about seismology, volcanology and geology were acquired by the library.

Since 1940 the activity of the “Ufficio Centrale di Meteorologia” has been the meteorological and climatological research applied to agriculture. Consequently, the library has concentrated its interest in the field of atmosphere sciences and agrometeorology.

The library has also original manuscripts (19th and 20th centuries), unpublished correspondences (19th and 20th centuries) and interesting miscellaneous collections, e.g. more than fifty volumes containing memoirs and papers on meteorology and geophysics, written by the greatest Italian scientists of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Domenico Ragona, Pietro Tacchini, Luigi Palazzo, Giuseppe Mercalli, Mario Baratta, Alfonso Cavasino, Ludovico Marini, Emilio Oddone, etc.

Although, early in the 1940s, the Ufficio Centrale di Meteorologia transferred some of its geophysical and geological collections to the National Research Council, the library still hosts books and periodicals on seismology, volcanology and geology of high scientific and historical interest. In fact, comprehensive works, special memoirs, historical papers, noteworthy miscellanea and very specialized reviews constitute what is left of its geophysical and geological section.

Finally, the geophysical and geological section of UCEA library hosts very rare books, i.e. volumes of the 16th century, precious manuscripts, like the “Ufficio di Meteorologia” historical seismic observations and the scientific correspondence of Pietro Tacchini and Luigi Palazzo .

A CRA-UCEA project will carry out the computerization of the library and the on-line catalogue.