

Antonio Serra<sup>38</sup> and for his first work *Moneta e prezzi* (Money and prices, De Viti de Marco 1885).

#### 4. School rivalries

As we have seen, the main Italian followers of Emil Sax were Ricca-Salerno and Graziani, both devoted pupils of Luigi Cossa. We also noticed that Cossa, famous for his impartial judgment, was by no means fair in his attribution of the priorities we have been dealing with here. Forcing things a little, we may say he carried out a kind of boycott to the advantage of his pupils, and that his pupils themselves were at least one-sided in their reconstruction of the priorities. This seems to have been particularly the case with Pantaleoni, and to a lesser extent with De Viti de Marco. What can have justified behaviour of this kind?

It is quite likely that the regrettable episode involving Pantaleoni, Menger and the Austrian School played a role in this history<sup>39</sup>. Briefly, Pantaleoni made a very serious charge of plagiarism against Menger, already in 1887<sup>40</sup>, and he continued this in the *Principi di economia pura* of 1889, where he wrote that Menger's *Grundsätze* was "one of the most audacious of plagiarisms of the publications of Cournot, Gossen, Jennings and Jevons" (1889:133). In the same book he also accused Böhm-Bawerk and Sax of not knowing "at all the greater part of what has been written ... outside of Germany ... Hence it happens, every now and then, they announce *urbi et orbi* they have rediscovered America" (1889: 86). Pantaleoni had attacked Sax on other occasions too, accusing him mainly of not being the innovator he made himself out to be<sup>41</sup>. These accusations provoked a sharp rejoinder from Böhm-Bawerk (1891), which Pantaleoni responded to by suppressing the most cutting phrases directed against the Austrian School in the English

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<sup>38</sup> On this work of De Viti de Marco (1891) see Mosca (2005).

<sup>39</sup> The events are recounted in Magnani (1996: 16-17 and 2003: 47-48) and accurately reconstructed in the article *Il principe e il plagio* (The prince and the plagiarism, Nuti 1998).

<sup>40</sup> Pantaleoni wrote: "Menger's treatise is copied out of Jevons, and his *Methode der Sozialwissenschaften* copied from Cairnes" (1887: 78).

<sup>41</sup> In a letter to Loria of 1889 Pantaleoni spoke out against Sax in these terms: "But is it possibile that Graziani cannot hear all the base vulgarity and limitless hubris in that charlatan and braggart Sax? To listen to him only Sax exists. He is the beginning and end of economics; he must be adored; we must have recourse to his works and quote them, just as he himself only quotes himself". Letter to Loria of 1889, accompanying the *Principi* (Fiorot 1976: 471-472).

translation of his book<sup>42</sup>, as well as writing a quite complimentary preface to the Italian translation of Menger's *Grundsätze* (Pantaleoni 1909).

But let us return to our problem of the priorities. Cossa recalls that Pantaleoni's "often quite baseless and captious points against the Austrian school have ... exposed him to some rather damaging rejoinders" ([1892] 1893: 508). It would be hardly surprising if in reaction to those points, which Cossa without hesitation believed "baseless and captious", the school of Sax's Italian followers felt so resentful they would not allow recognition to Pantaleoni's primacy.

It does not end here: in 1898 Pantaleoni wrote a review of Cossa's *Histoire des doctrines économiques* in which he vehemently attacked its author (Pantaleoni 1898)<sup>43</sup>. This is only one of the many manifestations of Pantaleoni's lack of esteem for Cossa. Magnani (2003: 63) recalls that already in 1882 he had chosen the University of Camerino rather than go to Pavia<sup>44</sup>; and in addition he cites the many occasions on which Pantaleoni severely censured Cossa's teachings<sup>45</sup>. Knowing that Sax's Italian followers were also Cossa's pupils, we believe that this critical attitude of Pantaleoni's perhaps played a part in provoking the anti-nationalism we mentioned previously. But this is still not the end of the affair: the relationship between Pantaleoni and Ricca-Salerno was not one of the best, either; against him, too, Pantaleoni made repeated charges of plagiarism<sup>46</sup>. Nor did Pantaleoni have a great opinion of Graziani: "from Graziani's brain – he wrote to Nitti in 1898 – not even one idea has yet sprung forth"<sup>47</sup>.

We should also recall the very close friendship between Pantaleoni and De Viti de Marco going back to when they were at university together (De Viti de Marco [1925] 1927: 41), an association Graziani was thinking of in his negative criticisms of De Viti's words

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<sup>42</sup> In the note against Böhm-Bawerk and Sax this time Pantaleoni restricts himself to affirming that they are "apparently unacquainted with the greater part of what has been written ... outside of Germany" (Pantaleoni [1889] 1898: 63).

<sup>43</sup> In the debate between Cossa and Pantaleoni on method in the history of economic thought see Mosca (2005).

<sup>44</sup> See the letter of Pantaleoni to Loria of November 3rd. 1882 in Fiorot (1976: 450-451).

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Pantaleoni writes to Sitta in 1891: "I am sorry to see Cossa bagging the best young economists for himself" (Stefani 1948: 343).

<sup>46</sup> The episode is recounted in Magnani (2003: 253-254). Of his bad relationship with Ricca-Salerno Pantaleoni writes in a letter to Colajanni of December 5<sup>th</sup>. 1897: "I know almost all of them, and except for Ricca-Salerno, I don't believe I have a bad relationship with any" (Ganci 1959: 335).

<sup>47</sup> Archivio Fondazione Einaudi, Fondo Nitti, *Carteggio, Pantaleoni*, 6/1/1898; quoted in Barbagallo (1984: 89).

commemorating the death of Pantaleoni<sup>48</sup>. We should not forget, either, that they were also closely linked to Ugo Mazzola: the three of them in 1890 took over the editorship of the *Giornale degli Economisti*. And in fact we have noticed the way Mazzola was determined to have his colleagues' priorities duly recognised, he also having expressed opinions on the Austrian School in tones similar to Pantaleoni's<sup>49</sup>.

A further aspect of the distance between the two groups lies in the fact that Pantaleoni, De Viti de Marco and Mazzola interpreted marginalism quite differently from Cossa, Ricca-Salerno and Graziani; the latter, in varying degrees, considered its revolutionary significance as relative.

## Conclusions

It has been pointed out elsewhere how the School rivalries set out here had lasting effects on the development of the theory of public finance in Italy:

“It is to the great merit of Ricca-Salerno that he realised the importance of Sax's introduction of marginal analysis in public finance as soon as the *Grundlegung* was published in 1887; unfortunately, the drawback was that most Italian authors followed the Austrian 'vulgate', instead of the better De Viti de Marco's version. Perhaps university rivalries were in part responsible for that, in so far as the first Italian followers of public finance marginal analysis were Ricca-Salerno and his pupil Graziani. Both these men accepted, and helped to spread, Sax's original version, including the cumbersome definition of public goods and services” (Fossati 2003: 109).

Whether held to be good or bad, Sax's influence on Italian economic thought was very great indeed. He is still cited in the Italian manuals of public finance<sup>50</sup>.

And as a matter of fact we should be careful not to give too much importance to these rivalries. Pantaleoni himself, in a review published in the *Economic Journal* in 1891, puts all the protagonists examined here into the same class: “In public finance – he writes – De Viti, Mazzola, ... Ricca-Salerno, and Graziani have created a literature which cannot

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<sup>48</sup> In a letter of June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1925 to Loria, Graziani considered De Viti's obituary good: “if he did not have the renewal of the Italian economic school begin with Pantaleoni” (Allocati 1990: 116-117).

<sup>49</sup> Mazzola in fact points out that in the “Austrian School ... beside its merits ... it has to be noted with regret the late, incomplete and almost disrespectful recognition of the prior merits of Gossen, Jevons and the others” (1890 : 28-29).

<sup>50</sup> Sax is cited as initiator of the voluntary-exchange theory in Cosciani (1977), Petretto (1987), Brosio (1993), among others.