

Statistics at Ca' Foscari: Debate, Research and Teaching

1. Collection of statistical data for the administration of the Kingdom of Sicily.

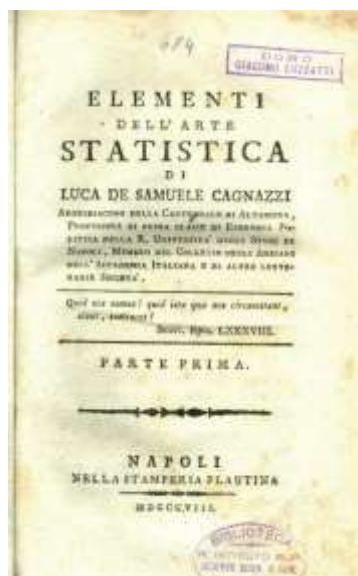
Volume from the Francesco Ferrara Collection, 1658



Collection and analysis of information and statistical data has always been one of the tools used by states for managing economic resources and the collective life of nations. Displayed here is a 1658 volume on the statistical data collected by the Kingdom of Sicily concerning the number of households, called “fires”, aggregated by country, by their composition (males, females, young people, elderly people), by their properties (land, animals) and tax revenue. The volume comes from the personal library of Francesco Ferrara.

2. Luca Cagnazzi de Samuele, The first Italian essay on statistical science, 1808.

Volume donated by Luzzatti.



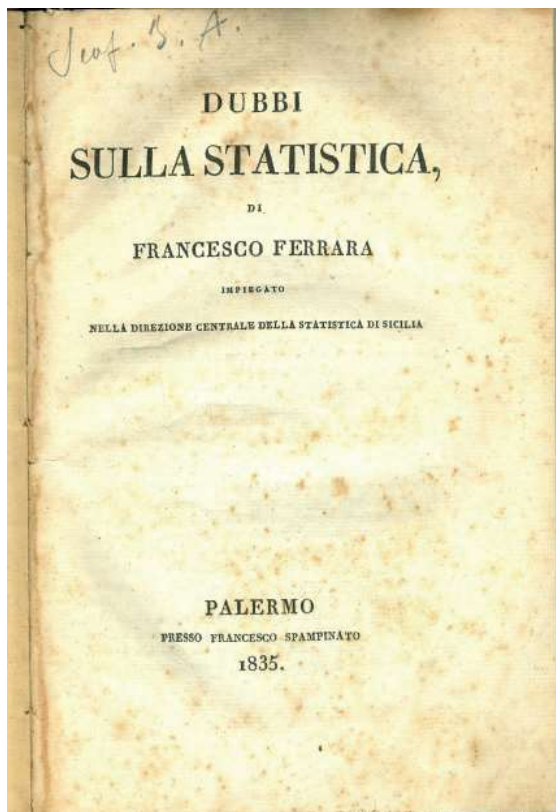
Mathematician Luca Cagnazzi de Samuele (1764 -1852) was the first in Italy to study with the general principles and the matters of method of new Statistical Science. Cagnazzi defined the it as “perfect knowledge of the actual state of things that the welfare of society and their components concern”. This rare first edition of the first Italian essay on Statistics is made up of broad ideas about the “state of the economic sciences” and it exposes the goals and the limits of the new science, marking the definitive scientific and methodological separation from the preceding generation.

3.The rules for the collection of official statistical data by the statist Melchiorre Gioia, 1808



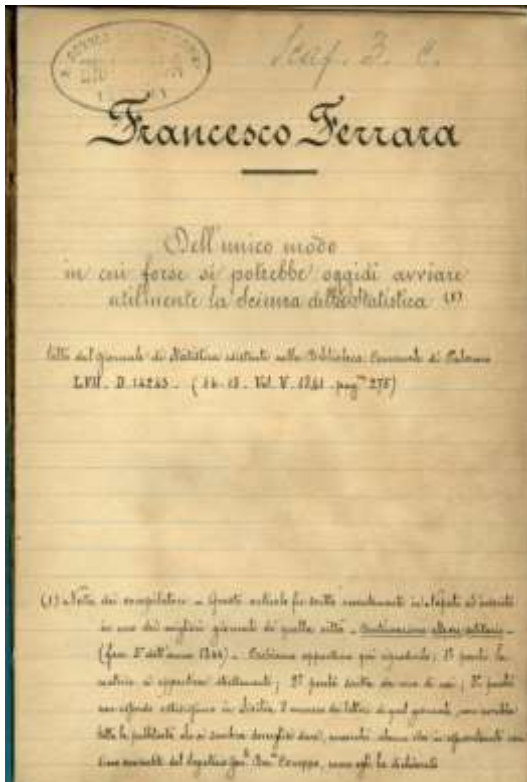
Melchiorre Gioia (1767 -1829) was appointed director of the Statistics Office of the Italian Ministry of the Interior in February 1807, which was newly founded in March 1808. He published The Statistics Tables, or rather Norms, to describe, calculate and classify all the private and public objects of administration displayed here, to be used for the collection and management of official statistics, in a diagram as an action guide for the administrator.

4.The young Francesco Ferrara comments on the debate on Statistics, 1835



Twenty-five-year-old Francis Ferrara (1810 - 1900) took part in the debate on the new discipline Statistics with these “Doubts” in 1835, in which he deals with the methodological relations between statistics and economics, arguing against Melchiorre Gioia’s take on statistics. For Ferrara “the first principles of public action must be inferred from economic science, not from statistics, whose role is secondary and implicitly ancillary” (DBI).

5. The statistical science for Francesco Ferrara: 1841



In 1836 Ferrara, future first director of the Royal High School of Commerce in Venice which would later become the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, founded the "Journal of Statistics", in which he wrote numerous articles. Displayed here is a handwritten copy of one of his articles that appeared in this newspaper in 1841: "The only way that we could perhaps usefully launch Statistical Science nowadays."

6. The first official lecture ("inaugural address") held at Ca' Foscari on December 3rd, 1868:

Luigi Bodio, "Della Statistica"



During the early days of the Royal High School of Commerce in Venice (later Ca' Foscari University of Venice), established on 6th August of 1868, the director Francesco Ferrara appointed Luigi Bodio as the Chairman of Statistics (1840 -1920). He entrusted him to conduct the very first lecture for the official opening of the first year of teaching, held on 3rd December 1868, on the subject of Statistical Science.

7.Course programme held by Luigi Bodio:

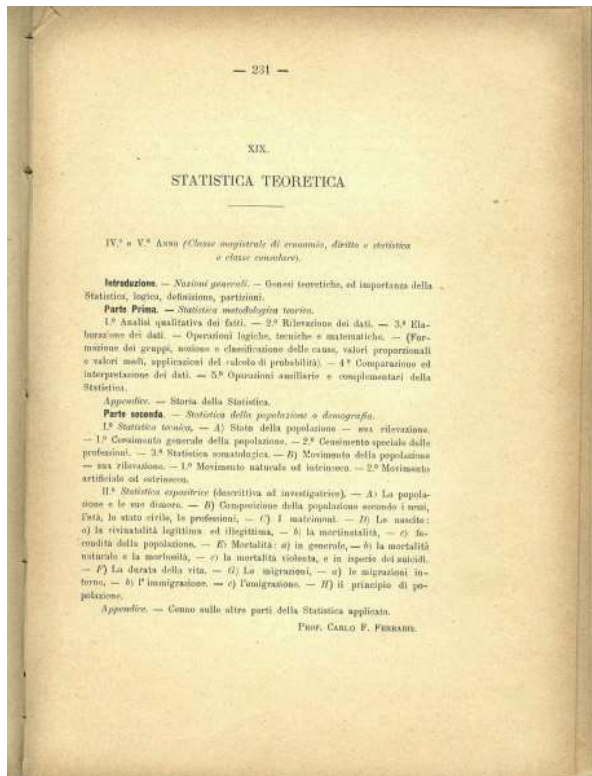
Commercial Statistics, 1871



Luigi Bodio, who is considered one of the founders of Italian statistics, after having taught at Ca' Foscari from 1868 to 1871, went to manage the Royal Office of Statistics in Rome in 1872. From 1876 he was an editor of the "Statistical Archive" alongside Cesare Correnti and Paolo Boselli. In 1885 he became the first Secretary General of the International Institute of Statistics, and in 1909 became its President. In 1900 he was appointed as a Senator. In 1996 the Center for the International (ICstat) Statistics Cooperation was named "Luigi Bodio", in recognition of the devotion and drive he gave to the statistics cooperation.

8.Course programme held by Carlo Francesco Ferraris:

Theoretical Statistics, 1898



Carlo Francesco Ferraris (1850 -1924) was appointed as Chairman of Theoretical Statistics in 1891, and again from 1896 to 1906. Collaborator of Bodio in the general directorate of statistics from 1874 to 1876, he was a university lecturer of Science of Administration and Statistics in Rome, Pavia and Padua. He became a member of the Superior Council of Statistics in 1880-1883 and Rector of the University of Pavia from 1891 to the 1896. He was also a member of the Superior Council of Public Education in 1893-1913, Minister of Public Works in 1905, and finally, Senator in 1913.

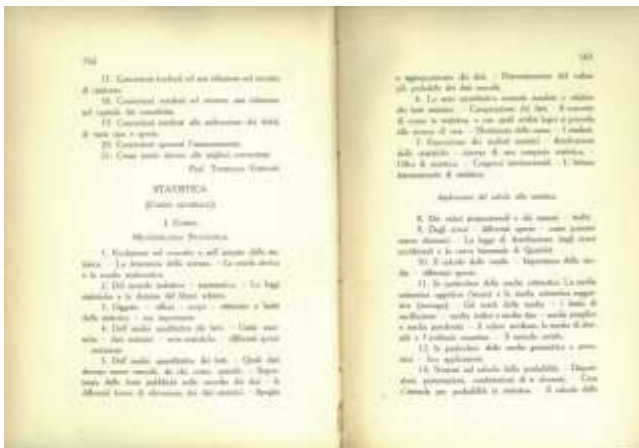
9. Carlo Francesco Ferraris' studies on Statistics, 1880.

Volume donated by Luzzatti



This volume, which collects various essays by Ferraris, is dedicated to Angelo Messedaglia, whose studies are referred to by Ferraris. Following the Bonghi rule, the teaching of statistics in 1875 had become mandatory for political economics lecturers. For Ferraris, statistics is a “methodical science” and an applicational one, which aims to observe facts, following in the footsteps of Messedaglia’s studies. It is therefore a “rigorously inductive [science], made with rules, neither casual nor arbitrary” (DBI).

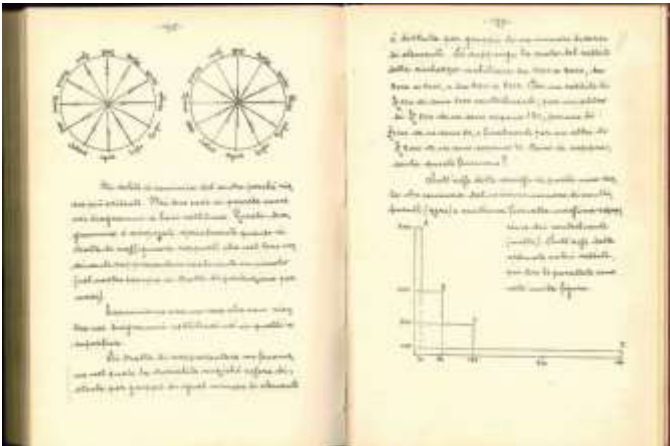
10. Course programme held by Giacomo Luzzatti: Statistics, 1921



To Ferraris, after a brief period in which Ghino Valenti was entrusted as the Chairman (1906 - 1907), Giacomo Luzzatti succeeded him in 1907. At first he was in charge of the courses of Theoretical Statistics, then of Statistics, Methodological Statistics and Economic Statistics until 1925. Giacomo Luzzatti had been a student of Luigi Bodio and he graduated to the Royal High School of Commerce in Venice (later Ca' Foscari University of Venice) in 1874.

11. The pie charts

Lecture materials by Giacomo Luzzatti on Statistical Methodology, 1915



Displayed here is a volume of “summaries” of Giacomo Luzzatti’s Statistical Methodology lectures. The lecture materials are handwritten and then reproduced in several copies with a lithographic procedure. The volume is open to the graphical representation of the circular base diagrams: “the vector rays correspond to ordinates and the arches or angles correspond to abscissas of the rectilinear diagram. On the rays, the lengths of vectors are measured corresponding to the numerical values of the facts that we want to represent [...] measured starting from the periphery (fig. 1) or from the centre (fig. 2).”

12. Felice Vinci and the Statistics Laboratory, established in 1925



Felice Vinci (1890 -1962) was called to Ca' Foscari in 1925 as permanent teacher of Methodological, Demographic and Economic Statistics, where he established the Laboratory of Statistics and was the first director. He filled these positions until 1929 when he moved to Bologna to direct the new School of Statistics at the University (1930 -1934). Felice Vinci, founder of the “Italian Journal of Statistics” in 1929, is considered to be one of the first Italian statisticians to set up the statistical methodology on a strictly logical-mathematical basis. The exposed volume is the first one in the series of Studies of the Laboratory of Statistics. In 1930 Albino Uggè (1899 -1971) succeeded Vinci, and took on the position of director of the Laboratory of Statistics until 1952.