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Academic Emotions and Emotional Academics:

The Vitelli-Schiaparelli Family, 1880s–1940s[1]

Abstract: This article demonstrates that emotions mattered to academics and academia more broadly. As demonstrated by the case of the Vitelli-Schiaparelli family, emotional connections affected every stage of academic production and life, involving extended families and circles of friends. In the face of conflict, these connections defined expectations, at once exacerbating antagonisms and providing a ground to overcome them. Crucially, they led to the conflation of work and life, elevating academia as an environment and its members above others – at least in terms of their self-perceived moral value – sometimes enhancing people's lives and purpose, and at other times devastating them.

Keywords: emotions, academia, emotional communities, familial, professional

On 3 November 1902, the young Italian philologist Camillo Vitelli (1877–1902) shot himself in the chest in the reading room of the Philological Seminar at the University of Göttingen.[2] As the *Göttinger Tageblatt* reported, "it is assumed that melancholy

DOI: https://doi.org/10.25365/oezg-2026-37-1-8

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Accepted for publication after external peer review (double blind)

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1 I thank Cristina Schiaparelli who opened her family's private archives to me, allowing me to interpret them as I saw fit. I would also like to thank Luciano Vitelli (no relation to Girolamo), who scanned, indexed and transcribed these archives free of charge, facilitating my work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This piece is dedicated to the late family members of Cristina and Luciano, whose lives I wish to honour by engaging with these documents. My thanks also go to Steven Gill, Barbara Keys, the late David Konstan, Daniel Laqua, Maria Elena Paniconi, Elisabeth Piller, Barbara Rosenwein and Valeria Vanesio, as well as this issue's editors and blind peer reviewers who commented on drafts of this article at various stages. Any mistakes are, of course, my own.

2 Göttingen University Archives (henceforth UniA GÖ), Kur., 2276, Document 1, dated 4 November 1902. For the most comprehensive study of Camillo Vitelli, see Marcello Gigante, Requiem per Camillo Vitelli, 2. edn., Santa Croce del Sannio 1997, which also contains a full bibliography of his works.

put the weapon in his hand".[3] Having suffered from mental illness for a long time, in his final message to his father – the renowned Greek philologist and papyrologist Girolamo Vitelli (1849–1935) – Camillo himself attributed his decision to end his own life to "these diseases that do not forgive and leave [people] wretched (*disgraziati*) and unable to work".[4] Rather than assessing the validity of this medical diagnosis, this article examines Camillo's case to offer a historical perspective that illuminates the complex bundle of emotional dynamics that shaped European academia and knowledge production from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. Emotional connections, often involving extended families and circles of friends, led to and were led by, the conflation of work and life, and the sentimentalised notion that academia was a vocation, a calling to a higher cause, and was thus inherently imbued with high moral values and sacrifice. Crucially, their effects were felt throughout the entire cycle of academic production, dissemination and the academic experience as a whole, as well as on knowledge production itself and the perception of academia as a morally elevated realm of society, for decades to come.

Before delving deeper into the details and addressing the broader historiographical, theoretical and methodological issues that will be explored through the history of the Vitelli-Schiaparelli family, it may be useful to provide a concrete example of what such an analysis of emotions might entail. In addition to writing to his father, Camillo also penned a farewell note to Wilhelm Meyer (1845–1917), his PhD supervisor – *Doktorvater* in German, a term reflecting the quasi-paternal role expected of a mentor. In this note, he announced his intention to "leave the banquet without too much bitterness (*amarezza*), to say it as Lucretius would", emphasising the importance of one's feelings when conducting academic work and establishing an emotional connection with Meyer by referring to their shared subject of study. He then asked Meyer to return the books he had borrowed and wished him "a long life, cheered by the joys of study (*gioie dello studio*)" – a rhetorical expression implying that intellectual endeavour would automatically yield a specific emotional outcome. He left him W. M. Lindsay's edition of Plautus's *Captivi*. This symbolic and sentimentalised object – his own copy of a book they both knew well – was intended to convey gratitude to the recipient and appreciation for a literary canon they both cherished.[5] In a postscript, he added greetings to some of the great classi-

3 Göttinger Tageblatt, 5 November 1902. I thank Rolf Kohlstedt (City Archive of Göttingen) for finding and sending me this newspaper clipping and Elisabeth Wielander for her help with the translation. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

4 See correspondences in Archivio Privato Schiaparelli di Cerrione (BI) (henceforth APS), and the last letter from Camillo to his father, undated.

5 Plautus's *Captivi* is a satirical take on imprisonment, celebrating fatherly affection and ending with a form of liberation. I thank Valeria Vanesio for drawing my attention to this aspect.

cal scholars of his time: Karl Dilthey (1838–1907), Friedrich Leo (1851–1914) and Eduard Schwartz (1858–1940), the most prominent members of a community that he admired and was proud to belong to.[6] He specifically cited the Latin poet Lucretius, who, according to legend, was plagued by a folly that ultimately led him to commit suicide, yet which never impaired his intelligence or his ability to work.[7] He carefully crafted his final moments to make these connections explicit, paying close attention to every detail in order to express his feelings towards his peers and his field of expertise. In doing so, he captured the essence of a time and place that he had admired for its intellectual and moral values.

The setting that Camillo chose for his final act – the reading room at the Philological Seminar – was also meaningful. As his grief-stricken father later pointed out to one of his own mentors, Alessandro d'Ancona (1835–1914), "Camillo died surrounded by his beloved books".[8] Like many scholars of that time and later, he treasured books, libraries and archives in both a practical and aesthetic sense, and chose to live – and end – his life among them. The city itself, Göttingen, a quintessential site of learning, held high symbolic and emotional value. More than a century later, walking in Camillo's footsteps still evokes the vibrant intellectual milieu in which he studied and died. The "Lagarde Haus" on Friedländer Weg 11, where the Philological Seminar was located at the time, remains virtually unchanged, with a wooden spiral staircase leading up to a small library on the first floor.[9] Like many other buildings on Lange-Geismar-Straße and in most of the centre of Göttingen, the house where Camillo lodged and the streets where he worked and lived survived the Second World War largely untouched. Countless plaques commemorate the places where more than forty famous researchers and Nobel laureates spent their days.[10] Surrounding Camillo's unmarked grave are many tombs and memorials celebrating their achievements.[11]

6 APS, copy of letter from Camillo to Wilhelm Meyer, undated.

7 Jerome's account reads "The poet Titus Lucretius is born. He was later driven mad by a love philter and, having composed between bouts of insanity several books (which Cicero later corrected), committed suicide at the age of 44)." Although later dismissed, the legend surrounding Lucretius's life and suicide would have been well known and widely accepted during Camillo's lifetime.

8 Letter, dated 11 November 1902, from Girolamo Vitelli to Alessandro d'Ancona, cited in Marcello Gigante, Girolamo Vitelli e la nuova filologia [Girolamo Vitelli and the New Philology], Santa Croce del Sannio 1986, 57.

9 I thank the staff of the Academy of Sciences for kindly allowing me to visit their premises on 10 May 2019.

10 For a list of plaques erected since 1874, see www.stadtarchiv.goettingen.de/texte/gedenktafeln.htm (24 March 2021). This past is also present in the city branding. See for instance https://www.goettingen.de/life/goettingen-in-one-minute.html?lang=en (24 March 2021).

11 Camillo Vitelli is buried at the Stadtfriedhof on Kasseler Landstraße 1, sector 22, number 149. I thank the cemetery staff for locating his grave and for showing it to me on 10 May 2019. Images of the tombs and memorials dedicated to the famous scientists who are buried there can be found at www.mein-goettingen.de/kultur-wissenschaft/der-stadtfriedhof-erholung-und-kunstgenuss/ (24 March 2021).

Camillo's Göttingen was a city of eminent last names, unparalleled academic vigour and a spirit that attracted foreign scholars, just as it had done for generations. However, it was also a place where some did not survive: Camillo's file is one of many chronicling untimely deaths by suicide or duel.[12] Academia was undoubtedly a place where intense relationships and emotions flourished, revealing much about the times in which they were experienced and the factors that determined the nature of academia, what academics did and what academic knowledge was in this period.

Understanding the emotional context in which Camillo lived and died is relevant to a number of ongoing debates. Besides contributing to the growing body of literature on the history of philology and academia in general,[13] this article, from the perspective of the history of emotions, brings together a wide range of discussions on the history of knowledge-production and dissemination systems, as well as on the international and transnational dynamics that have shaped their development from the nineteenth century to the present.[14] It also frames knowledge production in academia as a form of 'emotional labour', which shaped both its practice and perception as a non-commercial, morally elevated endeavour while affecting the physical, mental, social and financial conditions of the those involved to this day.[15]

This article approaches academia as a transnational 'emotional community'. Building on Barbara Rosenwein's landmark conceptualisation of groups and systems of feeling with a shared language, set of references and sensitivities,[16] it also draws on the work of Charlotte Lerg and others, who have emphasised the usefulness of academia as a unit of analysis, especially when taking into account the cultural, economic and political contexts in which its history unfolded.[17] The article emphasises

12 Ute Frevert, Men of Honour. A Social and Cultural History of the Duel, Cambridge 1995.

13 Hilde de Ridder-Symoens/Walter Rüegg (eds.), A History of the University in Europe, 4 vols., Cambridge 1992–2011; Ingo Gildenhard/Martin A. Ruehl (eds.), Out of Arcadia. Classics and Politics in Germany in the Age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Wilamowitz, in: Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Supplement 79, University of London 2003; Giuseppe D. Baldi/Alessandro Moscadi, Filologi e antifilologi. Le polemiche negli studi classici in Italia tra Ottocento e Novecento [Philology and Anti-Philology. The Polemics in the Classical Studies in Italy in the 19th and 20th Centuries], Firenze 2007; Luciano Canfora, Le vie del classicismo [The Paths of Classicism], Roma-Bari 1989; Marino Berengo, Cultura e istituzioni nell'Ottocento italiano [Culture and Institutions in the Italian 19th Century], Bologna 2004. For recent work on the colonial aspects connected to philological endeavours, see Siraj Ahmed, Archaeology of Babel. The Colonial Foundation of the Humanities, Stanford 2020.

14 Martin H. Geyer/Johannes Paulmann (eds.), The Mechanics of Internationalism. Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War, Oxford 2008; Peter M. Haas, Epistemic Communities. Constructivism and International Environmental Politics, London 2016.

15 Arlie Russell Hochschild, The Managed Heart. Commercialization of Human Feeling, Berkeley 1983.

16 Barbara H. Rosenwein, Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages, Ithaca 2006.

17 For an overview, see the introduction by Thomas Adam and Charlotte A. Lerg, Diplomacy on Campus: The Political Dimensions of Academic Exchange in the North Atlantic, in: Journal of Transatlantic Studies 13/4 (2015), 299–310, https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2015.1088327.

how academia was perceived and presented by its members as a realm separate from the rest of society, away from commercial concerns and instead defined by universalist notions of quasi-religious, transcendent truth-seeking, which elevated academia morally. Spanning science and the humanities and operating in spaces and through rituals that merged work and personal life, it was permeated by the expectation that people would pursue it as a vocation through selfless sacrifice, fostering – and fostered by – a network of connections that blurred the boundaries between the professional, the personal and the familial. While this 'emotional community' may not have completely overlapped with the academic one, it certainly extended beyond it, encompassing family members and relations who actively participated in and shaped academic production and experience as a whole.

In order to explore the influence of academia as a transnational emotional community on scholarly production and dissemination, this article examines correspondence from the Archivio privato Schiaparelli di Cerrione (BI) in northern Italy that has not been studied before.[18] Specifically, it analyses the renowned Vitelli-Schiaparelli family, of which Camillo was a member, to gain insight into European academic practices from the 1880s to the 1940s.[19] The Vitelli-Schiaparelli family is the ideal case study due to its extensive geographical and chronological scope, the abundance of surviving archival sources illuminating its history, and the broad range of its interests. Indeed, the family embodies how members of the 'republic of letters' continued to operate across borders in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[20] In addition to Girolamo and Camillo Vitelli, the family also included Girolamo's daughter, Maria Vitelli (1878–1957), who married palaeographer Luigi Schiaparelli (1871–1934), and further relatives, such as world-famous astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835–1910), Egyptologist Ernesto Schiaparelli (1856–1928) and

18 Although this contribution does not focus specifically on letter-writing, it is helpful to consider letters in relation to various forms of mediation, such as the notions, practices and dynamics of confidentiality and relationship-building). Janet Gurkin Altman, Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form, Columbus 1982. It is also important to take into account how these might have changed over time. See, for instance, Rebecca Earle (ed.), Epistolary Selves. Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945, London 1999; Anita Auer/Daniel Schreier/Richard J. Watts (eds.), Letter Writing and Language Change, Cambridge 2019.

19 On the Vitelli-Schiaparelli family, see Donato Morelli/Rosario Pintaudi (eds.), Cinquant'anni di papirologia in Italia [Fifty Years of Papyrology in Italy], Napoli 1984; Anna Angeli/Livia Marrone, Girolamo Vitelli. Un insigne ex-alunno del Liceo Classico Vittorio Emanuele II di Napoli [A Distinguished Former Pupil of the Liceo Classico Vittorio Emanuele II of Naples], in: Papyrologica Lupiensia 25 (2016), 7–39.

20 The term "Republic of Letters" is usually associated with the Enlightenment, although subsequent iterations of this concept continued in various forms of intellectual cooperation. Dena Goodman, The Republic of Letters. A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment, Ithaca 1996; Koen Scholten, Rethinking the Republic of Letters. Memory and Identity in Early Modern Learned Communities, Amsterdam 2025; Martin Grandjean/Daniel Laqua (eds.), Intellectual Cooperation at the League of Nations Shaping Cultural and Political Relations, Geneva 2025.

fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973). In terms of emotional connections, this community also included an extensive network of colleagues, such as philologists Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931), Paul Fridolin Kehr (1860–1944) and Medea Norsa (1877–1952), who were part of an even wider transnational emotional web. The Archivio Privato Schiaparelli contains hundreds of communications detailing all aspects of the correspondents' professional and personal lives. Taking a closer look at this private correspondence, these communications are analysed in terms of the language used to describe emotions and feelings,[21] as well as the practices, styles and rituals through which these emotions were engendered and the "moral economy" – or the set of dynamics through which people attributed particular values to specific objects, ideas and practices – that governed academia in this period.[22]

In academia, emotions were highly valued. It mattered whether one experienced 'joy' – with all the implied suffering and sacrifices this entailed – during and about academic work; whether students and colleagues harboured some form of 'love'; and whether moral standards were met. These factors determined what ultimately felt – and thus counted – as fulfilment of one's vocation and achievement of academic success. Subject-specific academic content, such as literary references, served as a means of expressing feelings and establishing or reaffirming emotional connections. Particular practices and rituals, such as involving one's family or inviting someone to one's home, signalled and determined inclusion or exclusion. The personal and the familial became intertwined, as did roles such as father and mentor, son and mentee. These dynamics influenced, and sometimes defined, who could participate in academia, in what capacity, and whether they would receive logistical and moral support. They affected the economic and financial management of academic endeav-

21 Emotions and feelings are understood as biocultural entities that changed across time and space and can be examined by looking at how they were expressed, regulated, encouraged or negotiated. See Rob Boddice, The History of Emotions, 2nd edn., Manchester 2024; also Ute Frevert, Emotions in History – Lost and Found, Budapest 2011; Jan Plamper, The History of Emotions. An Introduction, Oxford 2012; Susan J. Matt/Peter N. Stearns (eds.), Doing Emotions History, Chicago 2014.

22 Monique Scheer, Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion, in: History and Theory 51/2 (2012), 193–220; Benno Gammerl, Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges, in: Rethinking History 16/2 (2012), 161–175; Tonino Griffero, Atmospheres. Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces, translated by Sarah de Sanctis, London 2010; Douglas J. Davies, Ritual, Values, and Emotions, in: Douglas J. Davies, Emotion, Identity, and Religion. Hope, Reciprocity, and Otherness, Oxford 2011, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199551538.003.0003. On the "moral economy", see E. P. Thompson, The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century, in: Past & Present 50/1 (1971), 76–136. On transcending the limits of Thompson's definition of the "moral economy", see Didier Fassin, Les économies morales revisitées [The Moral Economies Revisited], in: Annales HSS 64/6 (2009), 1237–1266; Norbert Götz, Moral Economy. Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects, in: Journal of Global Ethics 11/2 (2015), 147–162; Lorraine Daston, The Moral Economy of Science, in: Osiris 10 (1995), 2–24.

ours, often resulting in them being either unpaid or supported by expected acts of kindness. They guided a scholar's choice of subject and topic, if and how they could develop these interests through research, conferences, peer review and publications, how the latter would be disseminated and their effect on individual reputation and prospects. Indeed, emotions influenced the growth of certain types of scholarship, projects and fields in each academic centre and period, as well as the overall experience of being in academia.

Imperial competition and the political tensions that culminated with the First World War highlighted the tension between the universal, morally elevated values that – at least in rhetoric – defined academia as a transnational emotional community and the national allegiances of its members. As in other areas I have examined elsewhere,[23] emotions mattered here too, as people associated foreign colleagues with their nations, interpreted alignments as forms of either 'friendship' or 'betrayal', or as a sign that others had either remained steadfast or 'lost their mind', succeeding or failing to live up to the expectations of their emotional community. In this context, academics often expressed their positions in the form of sentiments – either amicable or antagonistic – which rekindled or interrupted relations and academic collaborations accordingly. After the end of the conflict, notions of universal values and the higher purpose of advancing a field of study were used to express frustration, seek healing, resume or sever ties. During the Second World War, the feelings and moral values that had long characterised academia as an emotional community motivated some to continue their academic work in the face of adversity. Arguably, the emotional dynamics of the period under investigation continued to influence what academia was and what academics did or did not do for decades to follow, with effects that are still felt today.

1. Academia as an emotional community

Camillo's references to particular feelings and emotional practices were not unique to him, but had long been widely shared, learnt and reinforced. As early as 1875, his father Girolamo confided to his mother Maria Vittoria: "I work a lot, the students rather love me [*mi vogliono abbastanza bene*], my superior and colleagues as well – what this will be good for in the end, I don't know."[24] By age twenty-six, as a junior member of the academic community in Florence, he had already internal-

23 Ilaria Scaglia, The Emotions of Internationalism. Feeling International Cooperation in the Alps in the Interwar Period, Oxford 2025.

24 APS, lettere e cartoline di Girolamo Vitelli 1875–1906 e di Camillo (1902). See also letter dated 24 March 1875, from Girolamo to his mother Maria Vittoria Cassella.

ised two key notions: first, the importance of his relationships with students and peers, and the necessity of being and feeling *loved* and appreciated within that circle. Second, he recognised that any academic endeavour must produce a tangible product or result, whether in terms of career progression or intellectual/moral value. Academic work and success thus had both relational and moral implications that were imparted by profession and family alike and disseminated through multiple channels and settings.

The distinction between the professional and the familial was blurred. In the letters exchanged during the years leading up to Camillo's untimely death, father and son often referred to their shared interest in philology, exchanging manuscripts and detailed views on their interpretations.[25] The Classics had become an integral part of the relationship between father and son, providing a common ground on which it could flourish. Shared professional experiences also united them through an inextricable bond. Both Girolamo and Camillo Vitelli had studied at the Scuola Normale di Pisa. They both undertook specialisation courses in Germany: the father in Leipzig,[26] the son in Göttingen. They even published in the same journal, the elder on Greek philology and the younger on Latin philology. The two Vitelli entries at the end of the table of contents of three consecutive issues convey a sense of continuity and closeness between father and son.[27] They both expected to find a set of specific emotional outcomes in their work: refuge, solace and purpose, their emotional connection shaping their research and writing process every step of the way.

After the devastating loss of his beloved son/mentee/colleague, Girolamo looked at his academic endeavours as a means of finding some distraction and motivation to carry on. He immediately tried to publish Camillo's unfinished studies, an act that expressed collegial respect, fatherly love and grief – or at least his best attempt to process it.[28] He then travelled extensively, most notably to Egypt in 1904, 1906 and 1909, where Ernesto Schiaparelli – who had recently become part of his extended acquired family – was leading the Italian Archaeological Mission (Missione Archeologica Italiana, MAI). There, Girolamo shifted his scholarly interest to the Greek papyri he had collected on behalf of the Papyrological Institute of Florence, which he had founded in 1908 and directed until his death in 1935.

25 See correspondences in APS, lettere e cartoline di Girolamo Vitelli 1875–1906 e di Camillo (1902).

26 Rosario Pintaudi, Girolamo Vitelli studente a Lipsia [Student in Leipzig], in: Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa 3/12 (1982), 561–588.

27 Studi italiani di filologia classica, vols. 8–10, Firenze, 1900–1902.

28 On Girolamo Vitelli's coping with his son's death, see Alessandro Capone, Dalla corrispondenza Dziatzko-Vitelli. Terenzio, Lucano e la morte del figlio [From the Correspondence Dziatzko-Vitelli. Terenzio, Lucano and the Death of the Son], in: Papyrologica lupiensia 16 (2007), 69–79.

Instrumental in Vitelli's endeavours was his student and assistant, Medea Norsa (1877–1952). Her presence in his life transcended the boundaries between students and colleagues, friends, and family. Her experience may help us understand the intangible yet powerful emotions of academia in this period.[29] After enrolling in Vitelli's philology course at the University of Florence during the 1901–1902 academic year, Norsa quickly emerged as one of his most capable students. After graduating in 1906, she was welcomed by Vitelli into his "cabinet of papyri" (*Gabinetto dei papiri*) and became his closest assistant. The solemnity of this event deserves to be noted. Its significance was captured by one of her peers, who later wrote: "I still recall the moment (December 1906) when Girolamo Vitelli, solemnly descending from his Florentine chair in the great auditorium of the Faculty of Letters, approached the first desk on the right where the newly graduated Medea Norsa, always ecstatic, used to sit, to tell her: 'I have received your note; you can enter the *Gabinetto dei papiri*; I will be very glad to welcome you.'"[30] The aura exuded by figures such as Girolamo Vitelli and the quasi-religious relationships, rituals and experiences associated with them cannot be overestimated. Without taking this into account, it would be impossible to explain Norsa's choices in subsequent years. Although her position remained precarious until the end of her life – her only permanent appointment was as a high school teacher in her native Trieste, while her heart was in Florence, where she held a long series of temporary assignments all connected to her mentor – her status as one of the most distinguished scholars of ancient Greece of her time was recognised internationally. She accompanied Vitelli everywhere, both domestically and abroad, and also travelled to Egypt on his behalf to purchase papyri for later study by the Institute. She shared publications, long hours of study and extended holidays with him. Much has been written about the nature of their relationship. While scholars remain uncertain whether it was filial, romantic or something else, the fact remains that it was profound and transcended any label. The obituary Norsa wrote after Vitelli died in 1935 remains the most reflective and moving portrait ever drawn of this complex figure. And the letters she penned to Vitelli's family, which are still preserved in their private archives, convey the full extent of her despair: "With Professor Vitelli died the best part of me", she said after his funeral. "Having lost almost all of the people in my family, I had concentrated all of my affection on him." "Do say many nice things to your mother from me. If only this great pain had been spared us!",

29 The most comprehensive collection of materials on Medea Norsa can be found on the website of the Istituto Papirologico Medea Norsa, http://mnorsa.altervista.org/2017/medea-norsa-contenuti-biografici/ (24 May 2019).

30 Achille Vogliano cited in Gino Bandelli, Medea Norsa. Gli anni giovanili [Medea Norsa. The Youthful Years], in: M. Capasso (ed.), Hermae. Scholars and Scholarship in Papyrology, Pisa 2007, 213.

she added, using the plural "us" to suggest that she belonged to the most intimate community of mourners.[31]

Such emotional communities and dynamics, which often involved a large number of people in various capacities, influenced every aspect of academic and non-academic life. Most notably, they guided the choice of subjects, archival visits and conferences, networks for producing, peer-reviewing and publishing knowledge, and the overall boundaries of what counted as academia. Girolamo Vitelli's family provided a steady source of emotional and logistical support in all areas of academic work and life. The postcards he sent from the many places he visited conducting research or attending conferences are filled with expressions of gratitude for luggage found neatly packed, and greetings to and from the numerous friends and relative-colleagues he met along the way. Girolamo also involved his family while engaging in his professional relationships. For instance, in a postcard to his daughter Maria, he advised her that the more they will do to please "the Wilamowitz" and his wife Marie Mommsen – the eldest daughter of Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), the renowned classical historian and Nobel Prize laureate – "the better".[32] This fatherly advice highlights the frequent overlap between professional and familial relationships, as well as their complexity. Despite their closeness, figures such as Wilamowitz and institutions like German academia had to be wrestled with and impressed through emotionally charged rituals.

The case of palaeographer Luigi Schiaparelli, who in 1904 married Girolamo's daughter Maria, further clarifies the nature of these affective entanglements and their impact on academic life and endeavours. As with his son Camillo, Girolamo shared his professional network with his son-in-law. Like his father-in-law, Luigi received tremendous support from his family. His parents, siblings and spouse, and sometimes even his aunt, helped him with the logistical demands of his extensive travels by sending him anything from warm clothing to medicines by post, and providing him with steady advice and encouragement.[33] If academic endeavours include all the

31 APS, lettere e telegrammi di condoglianze per la morte di papà (1934) e del nonno Vitelli (1935) [Letters and telegrams of condolences for the death of dad (1934) and grandfather Vitelli (1935)]. Letter, dated 12 September 1935, from Medea Norsa to Anna Schiaparelli.

32 APS, lettere e cartoline di Girolamo Vitelli 1875–1906 e di Camillo (1902) [Letters and postcards of Girolamo Vitelli 1875–1906 and of Camillo (1902)]. Postcard dated 11 May 1900, from Girolamo Vitelli to his daughter Maria. Vitelli's friendship with renowned philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931) and his wife Marie Mommsen, the eldest daughter of the famous classical historian and Nobel Prize laureate Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), is documented in their extensive correspondence. See Rosario Pintaudi/Cornelia Römer, Le lettere di Wilamowitz a Vitelli [The Letters from Wilamowith to Vitelli], in: Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa 3/11 (1981), 363–398.

33 APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 1, corrispondenza tra papà e la mamma con la zia e le nonne di Cerrione 1880–1904 ed altre [Letters Luigi Schiaparelli. Folder 1, correspondence between father and mother with aunt and grandmothers in Cerrione 1880–1904 and others].

activities necessary to bring them about, then academia in this period was a collective professional/familial collective endeavour imbued with emotions.

Yet despite this robust material and affective network, financial concerns continued to preoccupy Luigi for many years as his position remained precarious and he travelled constantly from place to place. In a joint obituary written in his honour years later, scholars Ephraim Emerton, George La Piana and Edward Kennard Rand noted that "he would often pass the day without food, lodging in osterie of the humblest sort".[34] He travelled extensively, and the distance from his wife and family weighed heavily on him. In a letter to his wife from June 1908, he called it a "true torment"; in another missive later that year, he remarked, "How ugly is this life of involuntary separation!".[35] Clearly, academic endeavours involved emotional relations and experiences that cannot easily be separated from their professional aspects. Crucially, they implied a degree of personal and financial sacrifice, which was considered the appropriate price for the anticipated aesthetic and emotional rewards. As German historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831) described, German academia was imbued with a mixture of "enthusiasm" (*Begeisterung*) and "bliss" (*Seligkeit*).[36] However, this effervescent atmosphere extended to all disciplines, from history to the natural sciences, and also implied forms of "emotional labour" that became inevitably attached to the roles of "student" and "professor".[37] Similarly, in terms of social background, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century academia was undoubtedly wealthier and more exclusive than its twenty-first century counterpart; yet, historically speaking, it was unprecedentedly mixed, with "a very large number […] from lower classes" entering it for the first time.[38] While many came from a "nucleus of academic families", they often endured a "difficult lifelong economic struggle", especially when confined to lower-paid roles within the profession.[39]

Looking at the case of Luigi Schiaparelli with this background in mind sheds light on neglected emotional and material aspects, and on their effect on scholarly production in this period. An exchange between Luigi Schiaparelli and his family during the same summer when he was forced to be away from his wife illuminates the challenges of dealing with financial difficulties and high-class expectations

34 The Morgan Library & Museum, E. A. Lowe Offprints, Box 016, Ephraim Emerton, George La Piana, and Edward Kennard Rand, "Luigi Schiaparelli, In Memoriam" (record ID 181111), typescript; underlined in the original. I thank The Morgan Library & Museum staff for scanning this document for me free of charge.

35 APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 2, lettere e cartoline alla moglie Maria Vitelli 1906–1915 [Letters Luigi Schiaparelli. Folder 2, letters and postcards to his wife Maria Vitelli 1906–1915]. Letter dated 26 June 1908.

36 Walter Rüegg, Themes, in: id. (ed.), A History of the University in Europe, Cambridge 2004, 15 f.

37 Ibid., 17–21.

38 Matti Klinge, Teachers, in: Rüegg (ed.), History of the University, 2004, 123–162, 133.

39 Klinge, Teachers, 2004, 143–145.

simultaneously. When asked to attend a conference in Berlin, Luigi explained his reasoning for accepting the invitation: "You will understand how I find myself torn between my desire to be with you and my need to go forward with my work", he wrote to his wife. Referring to the invitation as "too honourable" to turn down, he also mentioned his parents' views on the matter. "Naturally, my father advised me to accept right away, right away", while his mother gave him a "little talk" in which she reminded him that he needed to build his career and "make himself known". And so, "to Berlin, to Berlin without hesitation whatever the cost […]". Although he said he was "very happy" (*lietissimo*) about going, the letters he wrote continuously to his family, especially his spouse, reveal the doubts and hesitations of a young scholar just entering the larger and prestigious academic arena of his time – particularly "learned Germany" (*dotta Germania*), as he referred to it in a message he sent after the conference.[40] While a degree of individual ambition and the pursuit of a prestigious career might explain part of this rhetoric, his words make clear that more than mere progression on a financial or professional ladder was at stake. At a time of increased mobility and internationalisation, he was striving to become part of an international community of friends and colleagues whose identity and emotional bonds were comparable to those of family and nation, with all the contradictions, antagonisms and sacrifices that entailed.

2. An "emotional community" between nationalism and internationalism, war and peace

The tension between academia's commitment to universal values and truths and its growing links with the state came to a head as the First World War approached. On the one hand, academia had become increasingly international throughout the nineteenth century.[41] Indeed, Germany was one of the main centres where scholars from various countries travelled to meet and, as historian Notker Hammerstein aptly described, for "the sealing of friendships".[42] On the other hand, as tensions increased, the "*res publica litteraria* collapsed", to borrow another of Hammerstein's poignant phrases.[43] The professionalisation of university careers, often accompanied

40 APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 2, lettere e cartoline alla moglie Maria Vitelli 1906–1915. Letter dated 28 June 1908.

41 Notker Hammerstein, Epilogue. Universities and War in the Twentieth Century, in: Rüegg (ed.), A History of the University, 2004, 637–672, 639.

42 Ibid., 640.

43 Ibid., 641. The Latin term *res publica litteraria* refers not only to the Roman but also to the Enlightenment tradition, which emphasised the cosmopolitan aspect of such exchanges. By the 1920s, this was being challenged by nationalist views, although there were also internationalist formulations that

by greater engagement with state authorities, turned professors into official representatives of their nations and their vocation into devotion to the state.[44]

The Vitelli-Schiaparelli case is revealing in this context. Its German connections were especially strong and came under heavy scrutiny. According to existing alliances, Italy was expected to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers; its intervention on the opposite side was perceived as betrayal. Additionally, classical scholars – more than their colleagues in other fields – became embroiled in the political disputes of the time. Although they had previously acted internationally and presented their endeavours as "supranational", as the conflict approached, they disproportionately crafted and signed nationalist – and sometimes even militaristic – declarations.[45] Of all fields, philology was one of those most closely associated with the fulfilment of linguistic and nationalistic projects. Consequently, it became a contentious battleground, with Vitelli-Schiaparelli's closest associates – Wilamowitz, Meyer and Schwarz – playing an active role. While some of their colleagues/friends, such as Diels, tried to maintain internationalist aims, the majority of philologists did not.[46] This point should not be exaggerated. Similar dynamics can be identified in other fields and beyond the academic realm. In fact, debates over what constituted the social sciences or the humanities – embodied by figures such as Dilthey – were ongoing in this period.[47] Scientists such as Max Planck and Albert Einstein became especially engaged in international cooperation, alarmed by the tensions within their own fields and striving to overcome them.[48] Germany's status of a meeting point was compromised in a much broader sense.[49] Although many enacted official boycotts of German scholars after the war, they sometimes continued to engage in personal and/or professional contacts with them.[50] In many cases, uneasiness with foreign colleagues continued and sometimes accompanied them until the end of their lives.[51] But academic philology, with its inevitable connection to language and nation, is especially useful for illuminating the specific aspects in which these dynamics played out.

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permitted the coexistence of national identity and international cooperation. See Scaglia, The Emotions of Internationalism, 2025; Glenda Sluga, Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism, Philadelphia 2013; id./Patricia Clavin (eds.), Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History, New York 2016.

44 Rüegg, Themes, 2004, 7.

45 Hammerstein, Epilogue, 2004, 641 f.; see also Marie-Eve Chagnon/Tomás Irish (eds.), The Academic World in the Era of the Great War, London 2018, esp. the essay by Elisabeth Piller.

46 Luciano Canfora, Intellettuali in Germania: tra reazione e rivoluzione [Intellectuals in Germany: Between Reaction and Revolution], Bari 1979.

47 Klinge, Teachers, 2004, 465.

48 Canfora, Intellettuali in Germania, 1979, 68.

49 Hammerstein, Epilogue, 2004, 644.

50 Ibid., 643 f.

51 Canfora, Intellettuali in Germania, 1979, 137–173.

Members of the Vitelli-Schiaparelli family increasingly interpreted emotional bonds and academic collaborations to signify their position amid a volatile situation. Vitelli associated individuals with their country of origin, distancing himself from his German colleagues and strengthening his Anglo-Italian connections instead. Writing to Idris Bell (1879–1967) of the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum in 1914, he commented how "this enormous (*immane*) war has suspended everything, even in Italy", although he added that "fortunately and I hope forever, the relations between our countries have not been interrupted".[52] He continued by celebrating "England's traditional and constant friendship" and the amicable "sentiments" of the English people and government towards Italy, wishing for this to remain unchanged.[53] In December 1914, he wrote to Bell again, expressing his concern for the "many German friends who have lost sons, brothers etc. in this war, which shows no sign of ending". He then immediately followed this expression of empathy with a damning indictment: "After all, it is impossible to talk about it with these German friends of mine: they see the question from an overly exclusive German point of view and end up being unjust towards everyone."[54]

Like his son Camillo, Vitelli often used shared expertise in a specific field – in his case, ancient Greek language and literature – as a vehicle to express and engender feelings. Quoting the original text in ancient Greek without translation conveyed how this script and tongue united experts through a common bond. Tellingly, he ended his note to Bell with "αἴλινον αἴλινον [εἰπέ] τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω", without specifying that this was taken from Aeschylus's tragedy *Agamemnon* or translating it as "[Sing] out the song of sorrow, song of grief, but may the good prevail!)".[55] The choice of a line from the chorus, which was traditionally responsible for expressing shared feelings, implied a constellation of emotions such as "sorrow" and "grief",

52 British Library Western Manuscripts, Idris Bell papers, vol. XXVI, (Add MS 59531), ff. 153–183 Girolamo Vitelli, classical scholar: Correspondence with H. I. Bell: 1908–1930 (henceforth, BL, Bell papers). Letter dated 25 October 1914, f. 153. On Vitelli's other English connections with Bernard Pyne Grenfell (1869–1926) and Arthur Surridge Hunt (1871–1934), see Rosario Pintaudi, Grenfell-Hunt e la papirologia in Italia [Grenfell-Hunt and Papyrology in Italy], in: Quaderni di Storia 75 (2012), 205–298.

53 BL, Bell papers, letter dated 25 October 1914, f. 156.

54 BL, Bell papers, postcard from Vitelli to Bell dated 4 December 1914, f. 157.

55 Aeschylus, Agamemnon, v. 121. BL, Bell papers, postcard from Vitelli to Bell dated 4 December 1914, f. 157. I chose this particular translation by Ian Johnston because it renders the lament αἴλινον with two different nouns (sorrow and grief), emphasising the impossibility of equating emotions and words across time and space while still conveying the general meaning. Aeschylus, Agamemnon. A Dual Language Edition, edited by Herbert Weir Smyth, with a parallel verse translation by Ian Johnston, Oxford 2017, www.faenumpublishing.com/uploads/2/3/9/8/23987979/aeschylus_agamemnon_a_dual_language_edition_-_johnston.pdf (16 January 2024). I thank Maria Grazia Leone of the Liceo Classico Quintino Sella in Biella, who went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that, decades after her teaching, her students would have the tools and inspiration to tackle ancient Greek quotes and literary references.

which were felt and expressed in the tragic circumstances of any conflict, be it the Trojan War or the First World War. Vitelli later used a shortened version of this quote, "τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω" (may the good prevail), as a closing sentence for his wartime missives. However, his tone became increasingly exasperated, and the meaning of the verb became closer to military victory – a sentiment adopted by many writers and artists as a triumphant Νίκη/*Nike*.[56]

Over time, Vitelli's conflation of the scholar and the nation grew stronger, as did his reference to both individual and collective emotions to explain relations among academics, peoples and states. In April 1915, when Italy had yet to enter the conflict, he wrote to Bell from Italy, noting that "so far, we have only felt its painful echo". He nonetheless presented Italy's participation as inevitable. "My wish is that our interests will not be in conflict with the those of the nation that has always been our friend and nobly helped our *Risorgimento* in its time", he wrote, adding that "with our German philologist friends, one cannot reason nowadays: their vision is obscured when it comes to anything that is not German".[57]

After Italy became fully engaged in the war in 1915, Vitelli shared his personal and national sentiments with Bell: "I wish to express to you the heartfelt gratitude (*viva riconoscenza*) that I, an Italian, feel for the great nation that, today as in the past, has shown that it understands and appreciates our honest and civil sentiments (*i nostri sentimenti onesti e civili*)." He reassured his correspondent that the Italian army, which now included his son Serafino, would fulfil its "painful duty" (*penoso dovere*), guided by a "spirit of humanity and military firmness" (*spirito di umanità e militare fermezza*). He then presented the German situation as an emotional problem that could only be solved by the violent experience of military conflict: "It is painful that the Germans have lost all equanimity and […] humanity. And it is not our fault that one has to resort to force to bring them back to their senses (*rientrare in sé*)."[58] He would later remark that "the Germans have really lost their minds (*perso la testa*). And it is painful (*penoso*) for us that the learned ones in universities (*i dotti delle Università*) have lost it together with everyone else."[59] For him, as for many others at the time, war was the result of passions gone awry. Intellectuals should rise above the masses and be mindful of the higher responsibilities and expectations of their calling. Emotional management, physically enforced, if necessary, was the only solution.[60]

This process, however, would take time and might never be completed. Despite his stance on Germany and the German people, Vitelli continued to praise their

56 See for instance BL, Bell papers, letter from Vitelli to Bell dated 24 April 1915, f. 160.
57 BL, Bell papers, letter from Vitelli to Bell dated 24 April 1915, f. 160.
58 BL, Bell papers, postcard from Vitelli to Bell dated 30 July 1915, f. 161.
59 BL, Bell papers, postcard from Vitelli to Bell dated 15 April 1916, f. 162.
60 On this point, see Scaglia, The Emotions of Internationalism, 2025.

philological tradition and was harshly criticised for it. At the same time, even after the war, he remained ambivalent about reconnecting with his German colleagues/friends.[61] The relationship between the entire Vitelli and Schiaparelli families and the German historian and archivist Paul Fridolin Kehr vividly illustrates these emotional dynamics. As the leader of the Göttingen Papal Documents Project, which aimed to compile all papal letters and documents up to 1198, Kehr had employed Schiaparelli for years to retrieve and copy Italian materials scattered throughout the peninsula in dozens of repositories. As the Director of the Prussian Historical Institute in Rome, he also often corresponded with him. From their earliest correspondence, it is clear that the two scholars worked closely together, communicating frequently and going on long archival trips.[62] Kehr also served as a mentor to Schiaparelli, encouraging and guiding him at various stages of his career. "I have no doubt of your ultimate success", he wrote to him from Göttingen in 1897, reassuring him that he would find a permanent post and offering to help him with the process.[63] Luigi eventually found one, first at the Istituto Storico Italiano in Rome and then at the University of Florence. Although their collaborations slowed down over time as they pursued their own projects, their friendship – much more than a mere networking endeavour – endured for years.[64]

The onset of the First World War, however, took a toll on their personal and professional relationship. Wartime emotions overtook pre-existing feelings: the last postcard from Kehr to Schiaparelli, dated late December 1914, made it clear where the German scholar's sympathies lay: "It pains me immensely that I can no longer go to war."[65] Their correspondence does not seem to resume until 1919, when Kehr wrote to Schiaparelli in response to a postcard he had sent him shortly after the end of the conflict, and expressed his joy at learning that he was well. "It is a true miracle we were able to emerge healthy from these years of suffering and deprivation", Kehr wrote. He continued by listing many mutual friends and fellow scholars who had died, including Wilhelm Meyer, and described them as "victims of the blockade". He then added a poignant reflection: "The old have weakened, the young have died, this is what remains of our generation in the field of historical studies." Having had

61 See, for instance, Ettore Romagnoli, Minerva e lo scimmione, Bologna 1917, "Prefazione", www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/32585/pg32585-images.html (22 January 2024).

62 For an example of the division of labour between the two on one of these trips, see APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 3, Lettere del Prof. Kehr a Luigi Schiaparelli 1896–1919 [Letters from Prof. Kehr to Luigi Schiaparelli 1896–1919]. Letter dated 23 December 1896 from Paul Fridolin Kehr to Luigi Schiaparelli.

63 APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 3, Lettere del Prof. Kehr a Luigi Schiaparelli 1896–1919. Letter dated 18 December 1897.

64 See Archivi di Stato di Firenze (hence ASF), fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, correspondence in envelope 3.

65 See ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, postcard from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 29 December 1914.

his scholarly plans "ruined" by the war, he was now hoping to revitalise "the ancient relations of friendship and scientific collaboration, without which these endeavours cannot be continued and completed".[66] If all emotional ties among people and intellectuals had been compromised, the architecture of universities and academia in this period meant that broken friendships equalled interrupted collaborations and, consequently, the end of knowledge production as people had known it after decades of internationalisation.[67]

Announcing an official trip to find out "whether studies could survive the war of weapons and prejudices", Kehr reached out to his closest Italian friend. "You will be the first to whom I turn to hear your thoughts and judgments, and to benefit from your advice. I am certain that you will always give me a candid response, even if it is painful."[68] Kehr attributed high moral value to "our studies" and to the emotional bond among their practitioners. Echoing contemporary internationalist rhetoric and ideology, which emphasised emotions as a key ingredient for maintaining peace and security, he set out to improve relations with foreign scholars, and thus nations.

However, this was easier said than done. In early September 1919, Girolamo remarked that, just like Kehr, he was sorry that "our studies" had suffered and still suffered because of the war. "But those gentlemen could have said something at other times when instead they were the first to push those who governed down a bad path!"[69] Although Kehr and Schiaparelli did resume their epistolary exchanges, their letters from this period are not preserved in the Schiaparelli family's private archives, but instead are part of a set of professional correspondence gifted to the Archivi di Stato di Firenze after Schiaparelli's death.[70] Perhaps this is a sign of their affective distancing.

The first of Kehr's post-1919 letters to Schiaparelli expressed great frustration. "The little people (*il popolino*) are good and kind, but the intellectuals (so-called) […] are – ," with an en-dash presumably taking the place of an epithet. The paragraph ended with the harsh statement "it is better not to say what I think". The ending of the letter, however, conveyed an alternative set of feelings: "Believe me,

66 APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 3, Lettere del Prof. Kehr a Luigi Schiaparelli 1896–1919. Letter dated 23 August 1919.

67 Tomás Irish, The University at War, 1914–25. Britain, France, and the United States, Basingstoke 2015.

68 APS, lettere Luigi Schiaparelli. Faldone 3, Lettere del Prof. Kehr a Luigi Schiaparelli 1896–1919. Letter dated 23 August 1919.

69 APS, lettere e cartoline del nonno Vitelli 1907–1933 [Letters and postcards of grandfather Vitelli 1907–1933]. Postcard dated 6 September 1919, from Girolamo Vitelli to his daughter Maria.

70 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3. The Kehr correspondence includes 65 postcards and 53 letters spanning a period from the early to mid-twentieth century. I thank Archivist Francesca Fiori for facilitating access to these materials, and Steven Gill for photographing them so that they could be included in this study.

today more than ever, I feel the desire to see in person [literally to "press the hand" (*premere la mano*) of] one of the few friends I have left in Italy."[71] The physical metaphor of pressing the hand, the emphatic "more than ever" and the explicit labelling of their relationship as one of friendship conveyed the longing to rekindle their friendship and the difficulties of doing so in a period still defined by the conflict that had just ended. Almost a year later, Kehr's subsequent letter implied that their communications had become less frequent.[72] The next letter, dated 28 March 1922, began "For more than a year, I have not heard anything from you". While the postal service – "no longer what it used to be" – might have been to blame, underlying tensions were palpable.[73] Kehr sarcastically commented on the blockade "implemented by nations more civilised than ours", lamenting how "means are tight and prices have increased enormously" – the consequences of hyperinflation would have been especially harsh for people on a fixed income like himself. However, he then resorted to a form of nostalgia that he assumed his correspondent would share: "How beautiful those bygone times were!"[74] In 1923, he once again decried the terrible consequences of war, as embodied by one of his children, who had been unwell for a long time: "These little creatures still suffer to this day from the suffering of war and the misery that still oppresses us." Nevertheless, he insisted that "work must continue". In fact, he explained that "in this terrible struggle against misery and social and political contrasts, the only consolation left to me is work".[75] The moral value attributed to academic work – and the vocation and sacrifice it traditionally demanded – now served as a catalyst to pursue it during hard times.

It was only in 1927, when his ailing wife stayed with the Schiaparellis in Florence for a lengthy medical treatment, that Kehr's prose seemed to be free of any lingering ambivalence towards the country to which his colleague/friend ultimately belonged.[76] By 1929, his invitation to Schiaparelli to repeat an archival trip they had taken together thirty years earlier was full of unbridled enthusiasm, reminiscent of their pre-war exchanges.[77] Yet a more complex future awaited him. With the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany, Kehr would find himself "navigating difficult waters";[78] the fate of the very archival treasures he cared about embodied the very tangible

71 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, letter from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 3 March 1920.
72 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, letter from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 7 February 1921.
73 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, letter from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 28 March 1922.
74 Ibid.
75 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, letter from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 5 June 1923.
76 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, letter from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 17 April 1927.
77 ASF, fondo Luigi Schiaparelli, envelope 3, letter from Kehr to Schiaparelli dated 16 March 1929.
78 Treasures of the MGH Library and Archive, no 11. Paul Fridolin Kehr Navigating Difficult Waters, www.mgh.de/en/blog/post/treasures-mgh-library-and-archive-no-11-paul-fridolin-kehr-navigating-difficult-waters (5 February 2024).

consequences of the history and emotions discussed: some were preserved, retraced and returned, while others were lost forever.[79]

A similar set of contradictions characterised Girolamo Vitelli's experience during the same period. As with Kehr, Vitelli's work was always embedded in meaningful personal and professional relationships across borders, but it also implied a certain amount of competition by default. Politically, he was a strong interventionist at the beginning of the First World War, and he remained critical of the political stance of his German colleagues afterwards. With the rise of fascism, he approved of some of its policies. Much to the dismay of his contemporary Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), in 1925 he refused to sign the *Manifesto of the Anti-Fascist Intellectuals*, although he did not endorse Giovanni Gentile's *Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals* either.[80] In subsequent years, he spoke in support of freedom of culture, research and teaching, once again linking academic endeavours to higher callings and values. Most notably, in 1933, he refused to swear fidelity to the regime as a member of the Accademia dei Lincei and was thus ostracised.[81] This was not an unusual contradiction, but rather revealed how many saw their role as facilitators of international endeavours, even – and sometimes especially – when the people involved were proud nationalists or opposed the Versailles Treaty or the League of Nations, or when they themselves were sceptical of internationalist views.[82]

Personal and national rivalries also permeated international academic activities at this time, especially in philology and archaeology. As early as 1900, Vitelli urged Italy to join the ranks of the "civilised countries" (*paesi civili*) collecting scientific material in Egypt and elsewhere.[83] In 1903, he complained that "the market […] had been spoilt by the English and Americans who buy everything, even worthless items, at fabulous prices", and noted that "English, Americans and Germans have realised that it is worth excavating" rather than competing in the manuscript market.[84] The following year, when discussing a potential excavation site, he was surprised that the English had not already exploited it, adding that "if we do not take care of it, they

79 Frederick Whitling, "When the House is on Fire". Cardinal Mercati, Paul Kehr, the Pius Stiftung and the Case of Madam Ludwig, in: Amsterdam Museum Journal 1 (2023), 188–205. https://assets.amsterdammuseum.nl/downloads/When-the-House-is-on-Fire_Frederick-Whitling.pdf (5 February 2024).

80 Girolamo Vitelli's relationship with fascism has been the subject of heated debates. For a useful summary and bibliographical references, see Angeli/Marrone, L'insigne Girolamo Vitelli, 2016.

81 For helpful reflections on this point, see Luciano Vitelli, L'insigne Girolamo Vitelli. Un figlio di Cusano Mutri, place of publishing 2021 (self-published).

82 See Glenda Sluga, Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism, Philadelphia 2013; id./Patricia Clavin (eds.), Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History, New York 2016.

83 Morelli/Pintaudi, Introduzione, 1984, 15 f.

84 Letter from Vitelli to Villari (#17), dated 27 January 1903, in: Morelli/Pintaudi (eds.), Cinquant'anni, 1984, 63–66.

will" and "we are going to remain in the halfpenny place" (*resteremo con un palmo di naso*).[85] The imperative to obtain government funding to continue operations influenced political stances both domestically and abroad. And the race to secure funding and papyri to work on was fierce, especially when the prizes were *inediti* (new, unpublished manuscripts) by famous authors, or texts whose discovery and publication could bolster the reputation of any scholar, school or nation.

Ironically, in this competitive environment, the greatest source of pride and achievement was the admiration of scholars from prominent countries on the international stage. Failing to realise this paradox would make it impossible to understand the decisions made by individuals such as Camillo and Girolamo Vitelli, Luigi Schiaparelli and Medea Norsa, or the complex, contradictory nature of the "emotional community" known as academia. Perhaps no case epitomises this phenomenon better than Norsa's. After Vitelli's death, she was dismissed from her university post, although she continued to direct the Institute pro bono and remained active until her death.[86] Discriminated against because she was partially Jewish – although allowed to work because her mother was 'Aryan' – she was left homeless during the Second World War and then forced to move to a convent. Nevertheless, she continued to engage with international scholars.[87]

As Marcello Gigante noted, for figures such as Medea Norsa, "international fame" served as a "consolation" in the direst of circumstances.[88] Or, as Norsa herself poetically captured, work shed a "ray of light" in the surrounding "fog".[89] It was this emotional dynamic that drove her to work under the bombings, feeling two stone lighter and "rather depressed".[90] It was also this dynamic that made her reluctant "to ask for what [she] had never asked before" – some financial compensation for serving as Director of the Institute.[91] Or that after the bombing of her house and the loss of her only relative, she lacked "the strength" (*la forza*) to salvage anything from the rubble. This prompted her to arrange for someone to collect her remaining books. When she was forced to sell them, she chose the venerable Biblioteca Laurenziana as the buyer.[92]

85 Letter from Vitelli to Breccia (#43), dated 14 January 1904, in: ibid., 125.

86 On the later part of her life, see the paper by Rosario Pintaudi, Medea Norsa, http://mnorsa.altervista.org/biblioteca/Medea_Norsa_by_Pintaudi.pdf (24 May 2019).

87 Pasquale Massimo Pinto, Introduzione, in: id. (ed.), Harold Idris Bell–Medea Norsa. Carteggio 1926–1949, Bari 2005, 5–42.

88 Marcello Gigante, Preface, in: Morelli/Pintaudi (eds.), Cinquant'anni, 1984 1–8, 7.

89 Letter from Norsa to Breccia (#404), dated 19 December 1944, in: Morelli/Pintaudi (eds.), Cinquant'anni, 1984, 792.

90 Letter from Norsa to Breccia (#378), dated 8 November 1942, in: ibid., 740.

91 Letter from Norsa to Breccia (#380), dated 5 December 1942, in: ibid., 745.

92 Letter from Norsa to Breccia (#399), dated 19 March 1944, in: ibid., 781; and letter from Norsa to Breccia (#400), dated 1 April 1944, in: ibid., 783.

Taking an emotional approach to the academic community may help to shed light on seemingly inexplicable documents, such as the note she wrote to her fellow philologist and Egyptologist Annibale Evaristo Breccia (1876–1967) on 20 November 1944. At the time, she was still dispossessed and frugally sheltered at a local convent.

> "Saved the skin. Lost everything else. Hosted by the Suore Mantellate […]. I would like to receive news from you and yours. Should I send you the article for the Rossellini volume? The Florentine volume is in press."[93]

Sacrifice and emotional academic labour formed the core of her identity and her work within and outside academia.

Emotions also add an extra dimension to the people and places most closely associated with academia, even when they seem to be absent. Norsa's status as one of the most prominent scholars in her field was never recognised in Italy. As early as 1930, Breccia pointed out this fact, noting "the tireless, talented and too modest assistant of Girolamo Vitelli" and lamented the fact that she had not been acknowledged as a "scholar foreigners envy us for".[94] One of her students, the prominent philologist Dino Pieraccioni (1920–1989), also remarked on this injustice. At her funeral, he lamented that "there was no official communication, no obituary, no academic speech. Even her coffin was denied the opportunity to pass through the entrance of the old university again […] where she had spent her life as a scholar and where, typically, when a full professor dies, the rector and a teaching member of the department (*facoltà*) would pay tribute to the deceased colleague in front of everyone."[95] In places such as Florence – Italy's Göttingen – which is often associated with emotional academics and academic emotions, the absence of emotional expressions and rituals was sometimes more significant than their presence.

3. Conclusion

The importance of emotions does not lie in their genuineness or in how certain one can be of what other people felt. We may never fully comprehend Camillo's final steps, and Medea Norsa's innermost thoughts are forever entombed alongside her in Florence's Trespiano cemetery.

Nevertheless, this article has demonstrated that academics often expressed emotions and referred to emotions to explain and justify their actions. Crucially, it has

93 Letter from Norsa to Breccia (#402), dated 20 November 1944, in: Morelli/Pintaudi (eds.), Cinquant'anni, 1984, 787.
94 Cited in Pasquale Massimo Pinto, Introduction, 2005, 18.
95 Cited in ibid., 34.

shown that contradictory and complex emotional dynamics were central to the production of scholarship. Much more should – and hopefully will – be written about aspects that have not been examined in depth here, such as gender. A much larger collaborative project would be needed to trace who belonged to the academic community at different times and in what capacity. New technologies and analytical tools could help identify different, overlapping networks and assess the effect of various connections on scholarly production over time and across space. As a starting point, this article has established that emotions determined who could and would be active and how much they would be paid, if anything; that they mobilised family members and friends; and that they influenced key research processes, from selecting topics, mentors and collaborators to taking archival trips, attending conferences, peer reviewing and publishing. They defined rituals of belonging, validation and remembrance. They established the status of particular cities (such as Göttingen and Florence), spaces (such as scholars' homes and archival reading rooms) and objects (such as books and letters), thereby determining where and how academia and academics would live, where and by whom knowledge would ultimately be produced, and thus what it would come to represent.