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Studies

University and urban society. A prosopographical database of the Paduan “*Studium*” in the Middle Ages (1222-1405)

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Abstract: This article presents and discusses the work and the methodological issues of the project PADU-A (Prosopographical-Access-Database of University-Agenda. Towards a database of students and professors of the first two centuries of the university). The project consists in the realization and exploitation of a prosopographical database, with the aim of producing an advancement in the knowledge of academic population that animated the university of Padua in the years 1222-1405. After having recalled briefly the history of this important *Studium*, the article firstly presents critically the available sources and the challenges they pose to the researcher and to the realization of a database. Secondly, it illustrates the structure and functioning of the database in connection with the sources' features. Finally, it presents some research possibilities based upon the data collected and their analysis, with the appropriate methodological approach and precautions.

Keywords: university, prosopography, database, social history, urban history, Middle Ages, Padua

Rezumat: *Universitate și societate urbană. O bază de date prosopografică referitoare la “studium”-ul din Padova în evul mediu (1222-1405). Acest material prezintă și discută realizarea și aspectele metodologice asociate proiectului PADU-A (Prosopographical-Access-Database of University-Agenda. Towards a database of students and professors of the first two centuries of the university). Proiectul vizează constituirea și valorificarea unei baze de date de tip prosopografic, care are drept scop o mai bună cunoaștere a “populației academice” care a frecventat și animat Universitatea din Padova între anii 1222-1405. După o prealabilă parcurgere succintă a istoriei acestui important “studium”, articolul de*

față prezintă în premieră și în manieră critică sursele disponibile și problemele ridicate de acestea atât în raport cu mediul de cercetare, cât și față de construirea bazei de date. În al doilea rând, este ilustrată structura și funcționarea bazei de date în relație cu particularitățile izvoarelor. În cele din urmă, studiul expune câteva perspective de investigație bazate pe datele colectate și pe analiza acestora, având în vedere nu doar abordări metodologice adecvate, ci și o serie de măsuri de precauție.

Cuvinte-cheie: Universitate, Padova, studenți, evul mediu, prosopografie, bază de date.

1. *Introduction: for a history of Paduan academic people*

The institutional history of the university of Padua is quite known. “Established” in 1222 by a group of students coming from Bologna, where the control imposed by the commune was considered excessive, it lasted until the present time, differently from other universities created “by migration” in the same period in Italy. Among the reasons of this success, there is the existence of a suitable environment in Padua, made by schools of jurists and a considerable cultural life, and the connections between local intellectuals and scholars with the *Studia* placed elsewhere.¹ So, while the development of the university was suspended during the *signoria* of Ezzelino da Romano (1237-1256), the intellectual life was not.² In this way, in the 1260s a sort of “resurrection” took place, with the support of powers interested in the development of a high-level instruction institute. The commune of Padua, in the first place, included in the urban legislation some norms concerning the safeguard of students and the activity of professors. Secondly, in 1264 the papacy recognized the procedure for obtaining the *licentia docendi* and the related granting power to the Paduan bishop.

¹ See Girolamo Arnaldi, *Le origini dello studio di Padova. Dalla migrazione universitaria del 1222 alla fine del periodo ezzeliano*, in “La Cultura. Rivista di Filosofia, Letteratura e Storia”, 15 (1977): 388-431, and Antonio Marangon, *Ad cognitionem scientiae festinare. Gli studi nell’Università e nei conventi di Padova nei secoli XIII e XIV*, ed. by Tiziana Pesenti (Trieste, 1997). For a broader point of view, Ronald G. Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge-New York, 2012).

² For Ezzelino and Padua, see Sante Bortolami, “*Honor civitatis*”. *Società comunale ed esperienze di governo signorile nella Padova ezzeliniana*, in G. Cracco (ed.), *Nuovi studi ezzeliniani* (Roma, 1992), pp. 161-239.

It is then in this decade that we can consider fully established and working the *Studium*, the main discipline of which was undoubtedly law, followed by the family of arts and science, including grammar, philosophy and medicine.³ Only in 1365 the already existing school of theology was associated to the *Studium* by papal privilege, also thanks to the support given to the petition by the *signore* of Padua, Francesco I da Carrara.⁴ This new family *signoria*, established in 1318, did not entail another interruption of the *Studium* development; on the contrary, the lords contributed to it, especially by promoting the enrolment of famous professors of law, arts and medicine. Neither did the annexation of Padua to the Venetian territory in 1405 – with the end of the da Carrara lordship – had negative consequences. By forbidding the subjects to attend other universities, also Venice contributed to the fortunes of the *Studium*.⁵

But what about people who animated it? Historians have devoted some investigations to students and professors of Padua. Furthermore, in many cases this *Studium* results as one of the most important places of the activity of famous professors, investigated from various points of view, so that Padua is seen “in context”, as a brick of a specific research. More difficult and less attempted appears to be a comprehensive study of the Paduan academic population and of its evolution during the 13th and 14th centuries.⁶ The main reason for that is the nature and availability of sources, which make hardly feasible an exhaustive prosopography of Paduan scholars – as we will see. However, the new approaches and techniques in the field, especially the digital ones, allow now to go beyond these limits.

The prosopographical research developed by historians in Italy and Europe – including a significant number of projects of academic history of the Middle Ages and Early Modern times – is growing, and the technical progresses in organizing and managing such activities, as well as the greater availability of people skilled in digital humanities in and around academia,

³ On the latter group, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Arts and Science at Padua. The Studium Before 1350* (Toronto, 1973).

⁴ Donato Gallo, *Università e signoria a Padova dal XIV al XV secolo* (Trieste, 1998).

⁵ For its history between the 13th and 15th centuries, see Donato Gallo, *L'età medioevale*, in P. Del Negro (ed.), *L'Università di Padova. Otto secoli di storia* (Padova, 2002), pp. 15-33, and its bibliographical references. For some recently edited sources, Donato Gallo, *Dalle origini dello Studio alla caduta della signoria carrarese (1222-1405)*, in P. Del Negro, F. Piovan (eds.), *L'università di Padova nei secoli (1222-1600). Documenti di storia dell'Ateneo* (Treviso, 2017), pp. 13-114.

⁶ This doesn't mean that no research has been conducted on the topic: see for example Pietro Posenato, *Dottori e studenti del primo Trecento a Padova*, in “Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova”, 3 (1970): 31-89, and Sante Bortolami, *Studenti e città nel primo secolo dello Studio padovano*, in F. Piovan, L. Sitran Rea (eds.), *Studenti, Università, città nella storia padovana. Atti del convegno, Padova 6-8 febbraio 1998* (Trieste, 2001), pp. 3-27.

are impressive. For that reasons, the present time is particularly suitable for resuming a prosopographical approach to the history of the Paduan *Studium*. With these premises, in 2016 Donato Gallo launched the research project PADU-A, hosted at the Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World of the University of Padua.⁷ At the beginning of 2017 the project took the first steps, with the realization of a prosopographical database for the years 1222-1405.

The main purpose of this article is to present and describe the work in progress, and to discuss the related problems and challenges concerning the nature of the available sources and their relation with the systematic way of recording data that characterizes the use of databases. After having presented and exemplified the sources, the contribution will firstly focus on the methodology used to organize the database and to input data according to some specific standards as well as to the nature of the information provided by the sources. Secondly, some research approaches and possibilities will be illustrated, also to show in practice the chances offered, and the limits imposed, by the documentary corpus available.

2. *The sources for the prosopographic analysis of the Studium*

One of the features of Paduan academic history is the nature of the written sources. From the institutional point of view, the city statutes of Padua (since 1262) and those of the jurists' *universitas* (reviewed in 1331) let us to know the normative aspects of academic life in certain moments.⁸ Instead, the most important serial writings for the prosopography of the medieval *Studium* - the registers of *matriculae* - are missing, and this seriously compromises the knowing of academic population.⁹ Actually, some registers are available, like the *matricule* of the city's *collegium* of judges, containing information about *doctores* or *licentiati* in law who were admitted in the association, and the small series of acts of the *collegium artistarum*, the association of doctors in arts and medicine. But these registers only provide

⁷ The title of the project is: "Prosopographical-Access-Database of University-Agenda. Verso una banca dati di studenti e docenti nei primi due secoli dell'Università" (Towards a database of students and professors of the first two centuries of the university).

⁸ Andrea Gloria (ed.), *Statuti del comune di Padova dal sec. XII all'anno 1285* (Padova: Sacchetto, 1873); Heinrich Denifle, *Die Statuten der Juristen-Universität Padua vom Jahre 1331*, in "Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters", 6 (1892): 309-562.

⁹ Siraisi, *Arts and Science*, *op. cit.*, p. 18, estimates the number of Paduan students at 2.000 at least. The hypothesis is based upon the agreement with the city of Vercelli, in 1228, for the migration of students from Padua to establish a new university there.

some additional data. As for writings produced outside the *Studium* and the *universitates* of students, we lack other kinds of precious documents, for instance communal acts concerning the employment and payment of professors and their salary.¹⁰

How can we look inside the Paduan academic history and its people, then? Fortunately, we have a considerable number of notarial acts that contain useful information and show professors, students and someone of the university's "personnel" in action in the society. These acts have been selected and summarized in the 19th century by Andrea Gloria, who published them in three volumes entitled *Monumenti della Università di Padova* (Figure 1).¹¹ These precious publications contain summaries and some complete transcriptions of notarial acts kept in various Paduan archives, and of some other kinds of documents (also published elsewhere) containing information about people who surely or probably attended the Paduan university and graduated or taught there. Furthermore, the author published the biographical profiles of the people concerned. In most cases, Gloria just provided the few information available about those who are only mentioned in the edited documents; in some other cases – usually, the famous people – he added data from other sources. The *Monumenti* represent then the most important source of data for a prosopographical census, despite some transcriptions should be taken carefully and compared with more recent editions, and although other documents must be taken into account to expand the number of people and the data recorded by Gloria.¹²

¹⁰ This type of documents is largely used, for example, for the history of the university of Perugia: see Carla Frova, Stefania Zucchini, *Onomasticon: una banca dati per la storia dell'Università di Perugia*, in "Annali di storia delle università italiane", 21/1 (2017): 117-134, in particular pp. 122-123. For an overview of Paduan communal sources between the 13th and 14th centuries, see John Kenneth Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester; New York, 1966).

¹¹ Andrea Gloria (ed.), *Monumenti della Università di Padova (1222-1318)* (Venice, 1884); Andrea Gloria (ed.), *Monumenti della Università di Padova (1318-1405)* (Padua, 1888), 2 volumes. On Andrea Gloria, see at least Laura Cerasi, *Gloria, Andrea*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 57 (Roma, 2001), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-gloria_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-gloria_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (30.04.2019), and Antonio Rigon, *L' "imperio delle fonti". Edizioni documentarie e ricerca storico-medievistica nell'Università di Padova da Andrea Gloria a Paolo Sambin*, in "Padova e il suo territorio", 17, 100 (2002): 57-59.

¹² In particular, documents that are kept in non-Paduan archives can provide relevant information about foreign people who graduated there and then came back home: see for instance Federico Martino, *Un dottore di decreti arcivescovo di Messina. La laurea padovana (1281) di Guidotto d'Abbate*, in "Rivista internazionale di diritto comune", 4 (1993), 97-120. The journal "Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova" – published by the Centro per la Storia dell'Università di Padova (CSUP) – often publishes articles containing the edition of single documents or group of acts concerning academic people.

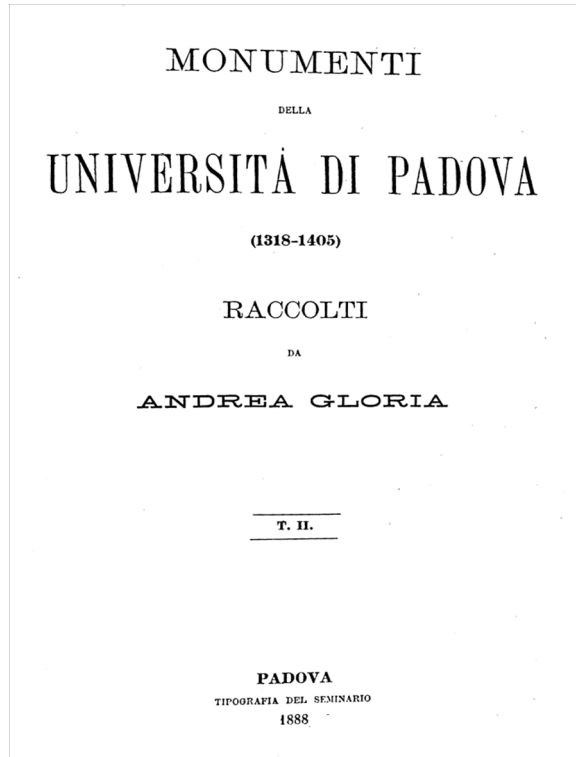


Figure 1. Frontispiece of Gloria (ed.), *Monumenti (1318-1405)*, vol. II.

Most part of the *Monumenti*'s documents are minimal summaries of notarial acts, often including only the place, the date and the actors. Here an example:

*1373. 17 Novembre – Pad. in contr. S. Canciani in domo habit. sap. viri d. Bartolamei de Capite vace legum doctoris fil. q. nob. viri d. Francisci Paradixii – pres. sap. viro d. Michaele de Marostica legum doctore fil. q. d. Martini – (Marost. Ott. T. IV p. 423).*¹³

¹³ Gloria (ed.), *Monumenti (1318-1405)*, vol. II, p. 100 (Figure 2): “1373, November 17th – At Padua, in San Canziano quarter, at the home of the wise man *dominus* Bartolomeo Capodivacca, law doctor, son of the late noble man *dominus* Francesco Paradisi – at the presence of the wise man *dominus* Michele from Marostica, law doctor, son of the late Martino – (from the acts of notary Otto from Marostica, vol. IV, p. 423)”. Marostica is a town placed north of Padua, nowadays in the province of Vicenza.

In this case, we only have a chronological and geographical reference of the action, and the names of two law doctors and of their fathers. The symbols “-” interposed indicate the portions of text omitted by Gloria: those revealing the juridical action. Why did the scholar restrict so much the set of information provided in this summary? Probably because he considered most part of the juridical actions not relevant to the academic or cultural life of the actors involved. Anyway, his main interest was to certify the existence at Padua of doctors, students and professors in a certain moment. More in general, it was impossible to provide all the documents’ elements (if not complete transcriptions) for all the acts, because of their high number, unless he would have devoted his entire life to this work. The selection of elements was necessary, in order to publish a great number of documents (and biographical profiles) in a reasonable time span. Summaries like the one presented above, in fact, appear 10-15 times in each page of the hundreds that constitute the documentary parts of the *Monumenti* (Figure 2).¹⁴

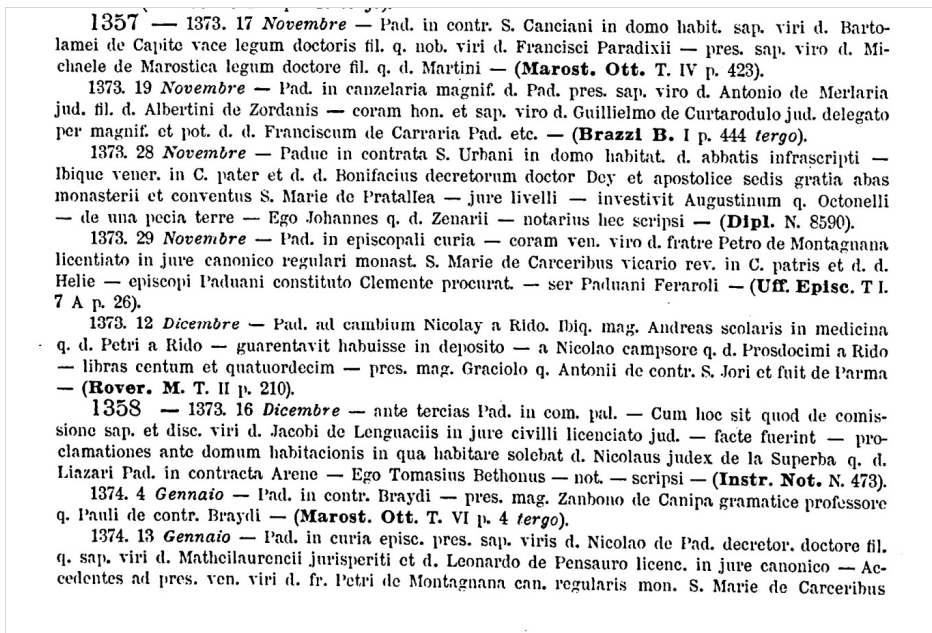


Figure 2. One third ca. of page 100 of Gloria (ed.), *Monumenti* (1318-1405), vol. II.

The huge amount of basic data provided can be used for quantitative analysis mainly, since the documentary corpus offers an overview of individuals somehow connected to the *Studium*, often mentioned more than

¹⁴ The summaries are grouped under sequential numbers (e.g. 1357 and 1358 in Figure 2), according to a logic that is not clear.

once over time. But a qualitative approach must not be set aside, if one considers that the elements selected by Gloria show some important aspects of the individuals' life, such as the family to which they belonged and their kinship. The example above, for instance, reveals that Bartolomeo belonged to the important Paduan family of the Capodivacca dei Paradisi, and that he was son of a *dominus*: he was then an upper-class man. We can do the same with many other people: in other words, we can investigate the connections between the social configuration of Padua and the *Studium*.¹⁵

In other cases, Gloria includes the juridical action in the summary, even when it wasn't connected to the *Studium* activity:

*1373. 12 Dicembre – Pad. ad cambium Nicolay a Rido. Ibiq. mag. Andreas scholaris in medecina q. d. Petri a Rido – guarentavit habuisse in deposito – a Nicolao campore q. d. Prodocimi a Rido – libras centum et quatuordecim – pres. mag. Graciolo q. Antonii de contr. S. Jori et fuit de Parma (Rover. M. T. II p. 210).*¹⁶

In this case, we get to know the existence in 1373 of a student in medicine, master Andrew, who received a sum from a money-changer.¹⁷

This way of summarizing has the advantage of presenting a huge number of basic data in about 500 pages, for a period of almost two centuries. But the “minimalism” of the information provided represents an indisputable limit, since in many cases it prevents from examining in depth the actions described in the original acts. Fortunately, most of the latter are available in the archives, so that one could verify their juridical contents (and Gloria's transcriptions). Nevertheless, such an activity would require a labour-intensive archival campaign, the benefits of which appear to be uncertain. In any case, the examination of the documents provided by the

¹⁵ Anyway, Bartolomeo is quite renowned, since he was a quite important jurist: see Onofrio Ruffino, *Capodivacca, Bartolomeo*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 18 (Roma, 1975), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-capodivacca_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-capodivacca_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (30.04.2019).

¹⁶ Gloria (ed.), *Monumenti (1318-1405)*, vol. II, p. 100 (Figure 2): “1373, December 12th - At Padua, at Nicholas from Rio's money-changing bank. In which place, master Andrew student in medicine of the late Peter from Rio - declared to have received in deposit - from Nicholas money-changer of the late *Prodocimus* from Rio - one hundred and fourteen pounds - at the presence of master *Gratiolus* of the late Antony from Saint George quarter, who was from Parma (from the acts of notary Marsilio Roverini, vol. II, p. 210)”.

¹⁷ The latter, Nicholas from Rio (nowadays Rio di Ponte San Nicolò), is the namesake of a professor in medicine, in activity in the same period: see Claudio Caldarazzo, *Rio, Nicolò da*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 87 (Roma, 2016), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nicolo-da-rio_res-fd449997-3c9e-11e7-a2fd-00271042e8d9_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nicolo-da-rio_res-fd449997-3c9e-11e7-a2fd-00271042e8d9_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (30.04.2019).

Monumenti and the recording of their contents would represent a preliminary step, which constitutes a research activity itself.

When approaching to the *Monumenti*, in fact, one must be also aware of the methodology adopted by Gloria, in order to discern the information usable for a prosopography of the Paduan *Studium*: indeed, not all the documents selected by the scholar are useful. Gloria also published acts that demonstrated that certain people *did not* belong to the university – as a reply to other scholars who thought the opposite – or acts that don't bear enough elements to consider the people concerned as surely belonging to the group. For instance, Gloria considered as probable students those foreigners that where not socially qualified in the sources (e.g. as merchants), just because they lived in Padua without being Paduan. Therefore, when approaching this essential collection of documents, one should evaluate the information quality, act by act and person by person. Data input in a prosopographical database is not a mere process of data transfer from paper to a digital support, then.

3. *The database PADU-A*

The richness and quality of data provided by the *Monumenti* are particularly suitable for the realization of a database of people belonging or somehow connected to the *Studium*, which is the main purpose of the above-mentioned project PADU-A. The database is a classic relational one, realized in MySQL on localhost, managed via PHPMyAdmin on a Linux Ubuntu machine.¹⁸ Data input forms have been realized in LibreOffice Base, in which information is added or modified and immediately and automatically updated in the MySQL database on localhost.¹⁹

The database structure has been realized considering the quality of sources and organization of data contained in the *Monumenti* and in other published and unpublished documents, already known at the beginning of

¹⁸ For the basics of relational databases – that cannot be explained here – please refer to the many guides online, among which the one realized by the team of Nodegoat: <https://nodegoat.net/blog.p/82.m/20/what-is-a-relational-database> (30.04.2019). As for MySQL, refer to the official site; the latest documentation is available here: <https://dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/> (30.04.2019).

¹⁹ LibreOffice has been developed by The Document Foundation as a fork suite of Apache Open Office. Information about the connection of LibreOffice Base to external databases can be found in The Document Foundation, *Base Handbook. Managing Your Data* (2013), pp. 22-32, accessible at <https://documentation.libreoffice.org/en/english-documentation/base/> (30.04.2019), and of course in many other guides online.

the project.²⁰ The purpose was to have a system ready to record any kind of documentary or literary source (published or not) and the related data. For instance, a document of the State Archive of Vienna, containing the “publication” of an excommunication, provides information about 31 Paduan scholars: professors and their students.²¹ Obviously, for having the possibility of recording this kind of sources and its information, the database offers some fields to input the archival references, in addition to the bibliographical ones. As for the latter, the database presents all the fields necessary to cover various kinds of publications: monographs like the *Monumenti*, but also journal articles, book chapters and so on.

The first step was indeed the organization of the database in order to manage the relationship between sources and individuals, the two pillars of its structure, that is connecting each information to each person concerned. To this end, two aspects regarding sources should be stressed. In the first place, the single source for data has been conceived as a complex object, composed by one “trunk” and many “branches”. The trunk is the basic bibliographical or archival information: the reference to the book (author/editor, title, year, etc.), or to the article (author, journal, issue, etc.), or to the archival unit (archive, series, unit, etc.), and so on. The branches are the document numbers and pages in which the single information appears: in case of an edition in book, like the *Monumenti*, one can record the serial document number, its pages and the page in which the single information appears. These two elements – trunk and branches – are recorded into two separate and related tables, since the trunk is univocal (parent table) while the branches are multiple (child table). In this way, the book or article or archival series is recorded only once (in one row of the first table), while the pages and folios are recorded as many times as necessary (in n rows of the other table).

But how are the two tables connected? A connection is obviously required to join each branch to its trunk, so as to create what we could call “data-source”, that is the complete bibliographical or archival reference from where every single information is taken. The connection is realized through their unique identifier (ID, expressed in numbers), as it happens in any relational database. In the child table, a specific field receives the ID of the trunk, so that each row is populated by the content fields (document no.,

²⁰ The following explanation concerns the basic aspects of the structure and operation of the database, with the aim of illustrating how the sources’ contents can be recorded. It does not include some technical issues necessary for the database to work.

²¹ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien, Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Allgemeine Urkundenreihe, no. 1861.

pages, etc.) and by two ID fields, that of the branch and that of the trunk: this is what is called a one-to-many relationship.²²

The data-source ID (that of the branch) is then used to reference each data input in the database. The second step was exactly to build the complex structure of tables concerning individuals, in order to allow the recording of various kinds of information referenced by the data-source ID. Information about people can be unique, like the standard name assigned to each individual, or repeatable, like all the mentions concerning one person's degree in the sources. That's why data concerning people is recorded in various tables. The parent one, called "academic people", only contains the rows (fields) ID and "Standard name", which is to be filled with a unique name – in Italian, based on the Latin variants and/or the historiographical tradition – that can be changed in every moment without affecting other data sets.²³ The child tables host information on geographical origins, Latin names, social status, academic position and degrees of the people recorded. These tables are included in the main data input form (Figure 3).²⁴

²² A relationship between tables can be established, in our case, using PhPMyAdmin or LibreOffice: in both cases the MySQL database will record it.

²³ It is the case of people variously named in the sources: at some point of the census, one may decide to change the previous standard name into a more appropriate one, without any change in other tables, since the ID of the person in the parent table remains the same.

²⁴ Referring to Figure 3: the first large table of the form, under "ID Source", includes information on the geographical origins of the person; above it, on the right corner, the family name; "nomi" includes the name variants in Latin; "qualifiche" the social status and roles (e.g. *dominus, sapiens vir, iudex, abbas*, etc.); "titoli universitari" the academic degrees (e.g. *doctor* and the discipline, if available); "ruoli accademici nello Studio di Padova" the academic positions in the *Studium* (e.g. professor, student, *rector*, etc. and the discipline, if available); "Associazione / Collegio" the association(s) and or *collegia* to which the person belongs (typically: students associations like "citramontani" and "ultramontani" or the Paduan judges *collegium*); "Corso" the sporadic data about the single courses held by professors or attended by students. The tables at the bottom concern the "events" data set, which will be explained forwards in the text; those at the top of the form, under the first line, show the data-source selected.

The form displays the following data tables:

ID	ID_SOURCE	ID_INDIVIDUO
10	10	29
15	29	29
18	29	29
21	29	29

ID	Nome di battesimo	Particella	Elemento Onomastico 1	Particella	Elemento Onomastico 2	Toponom	Note	id_source	id_indiv
60	Raymerius					de Forlivio		10	29

Qualifica (fonte)	Qualifica ITA	Chierico	Ente	Note	id_nome	id_source	id_individuo
spectabilis vir					60	10	29

Titolo (fonte)	Titolo standard	Data atesta...	DataMin	DataMax	Luogo cons	Data cons	Evento (ID)	Area disc	Disciplina	Sub-disciplina	Disc dedotta	Note	id_ind...	id_no...	id_sos...
eximius legum doctore	dotto	07/06/1351	07/06/1351	07/06/1351					Diritto	Diritto civile			29	60	10

Ruolo (fonte)	Ruolo standard	Dedotto	Data attestazione	Data min	Data max	Area disc	Disciplina	Sub-disciplina	Disc ded...	Note	id_indiv...	id_nome	id_sourc
professore		✓	07/06/1351	07/06/1351	07/06/1351	Diritto	Diritto civile		✓	professore in quanto cc 29	60	10	

AssITA	AssDed...	NoteAss	DataAss	DataAssMin	DataAssMax	id_attn...	id_in...	id_sou...
						60	29	10

Legens	Corso (fonte)	Corso	Tipo corso	Note

ID evento	ID_INDIVIDUO	ID evento	Funzione	Dedotto	ID_INDIVIDUO
5	29	5	promotore		29
6	29	5	commissario d'esame		29
8	29				

Conferimento licenza a Jacopo di Martino della Porta

Figure 3. The data input form “academic person”.

Before starting to fill this form’s fields a previous step is required, that is the creation of the data-source by joining the trunk to the branch.²⁵ Once created, the data-source ID is typed in the first empty row of the table at the left upper corner in Figure 3, which is an intermediate table between the source and the person.²⁶ The system automatically fills the proper rows (fields) of all the child tables concerning the person with the data-source ID, so that each data subsequently typed will be connected to the source (e.g. book+page) in which the information appears. The same *modus operandi* is used for other forms, devoted to recording the domicile of academic people (usually, the quarter in which their home was), their intellectual production (treatises, *summae*, *glossae*, etc.), the codices they owned, and so on. Data like these are quite rare, nevertheless they deserve to be recorded in order to allow some in-depth analysis of some individuals or groups (e.g. some jurists in a certain period).

²⁵ This step is made in another form, that will not be described here.

²⁶ Since more people could be mentioned in one data-source and vice versa, a one-to-many relationship between the table “academic person” and the child sources table could not manage this complexity. A many-to-many relationship is required, to be established through an intermediate table that hosts only the data-source IDs and the person IDs. As can be noticed in Figure 3, the left column contains different values (data-source IDs), the right one always the same value (the person ID), since the form shows all information concerning only one person.

Apart from that, PADU-A deserves a particular attention to the social relationships between academic individuals. The database records both the familiar ties – only those between academic people – and the social and political relations of academic individuals with other scholars, as well as with other people. Let's see a couple of examples. As for the kinship, in 1348 we find in the sources Bonincontro di Giovanni di Andrea from Bologna, qualified as law doctor. In the onomastic system of the period, the name was usually composed of the given name and the father's name (patronymic), thus we know that Bonincontro was the son of Giovanni, son of Andrea. Since Giovanni himself was a doctor, mentioned in the sources since 1308, he is already among the academic people recorded in the database. Their kinship must be then recorded, since they are both academic individuals. In a form different from that of Figure 3, the information is recorded for both: for Bonincontro, the field "type of relationship" is filled with the standard value "son of" and the field "person ID" with the unique identifier of Giovanni; vice versa, the latter is qualified as "father of" Bonincontro.²⁷

The same system is used for the social and political relationships, which emerge more and more frequently since the middle of the 14th century, when certain doctors are qualified as vicars or legal representatives (*procuratores*) of people at the top of society, namely the bishop and the *signore* of Padua. For instance, Bartolomeo dei Piacentini from Parma was vicar of the *signore* Jacopo da Carrara in the 1350s. The choice of considering also relationships external to the academic world implies the necessity of recording also non-academic persons, that is those who had direct or indirect ties with the *Studium* or with the scholars. It is the case of the bishops and *signori*, since they chose the doctors as representatives and because the prelate was the *Studium's* chancellor without being an academic individual. But also, other important non-academic people are mentioned in the source, like the notaries associated to the *universitates*: despite they were not scholars, they deserve to be recorded, to kept open some possible research axes.

Furthermore, academic and non-academic individuals could take part to some events of the academic life, the most important of which are recorded in the database, through the form "events" (Figure 4). For each event, a description is provided, and the list of participants is displayed, once their participation is recorded in the form "academic person". The most important event type is undoubtedly the graduation (*licentia* or *doctoratus*), that is maybe the act that contains the greatest number of useful data about

²⁷ Standard values have been previously created in a specific table, from which the form obtains the values themselves.

a group: the students who graduated, the board of professors, the witnesses (usually students), the vice of the bishop-chancellor.

The screenshot shows a web-based data entry interface for a database. The main title is "Conferimento licenza a Jacopo di Martino della Porta". The interface includes several sections:

- Navigation:** Buttons for navigation: <-- PRIMO, <-- PRECEDENTE, SUCCESSIVO -->, ULTIMO -->, and a "NUOVO" button.
- Event Details:**
 - ID:** 5
 - ID FONTE (source):** 9.5
 - Abbreviazione:** Gloria 1884
 - App. n.:** 672, **Doc:** 103, **pp. doc:** 103, **p. notizia:** 103
 - ID SOURCE:** 9
 - Date:** 13/08/1351
 - Unita arch:**, **Sottounità:**, **cc. atto:**, **c. notizia:**
- DESCRIZIONE:**
 - Conferimento grado accademico:**
 - Luogo:** Padova, nel palazzo episcopale (atto notarile)
 - Data:** 13/08/1351
 - Regesto:** Alla presenza dei rettori, dei promotori, dei dottori di legge e di decreti (probabilmente commissari d'esame) e degli studenti testimoni, il vescovo Ildebrandino conferisce a Jacopo di Martino della Porta la «licentiam plenam et liberam» di ricevere «honorem et titulum doctoratus et magisterii in scientia» del diritto civile perché ritenuto degno e idoneo
- UNIVERSITARI:**
 - Table 1:** Lists individuals with columns: id_individuo, NomeStandard. Entries include Alarano / Aleramo marchese di Ceva, Aldrigo / Albrigo da Montagnana, Arsellino di Ranieri Arsenti da Forlì, Bartolomeo de Canibus da Milano, and Bartolomeo dei Piacentini da Parma.
 - Table 2:** Lists witnesses with columns: Funzione, Dedotto, id_individuo, id_evento. Entry: testimone, Dedotto, 47, 5.
- ALTRE PERSONE:**
 - Table 3:** Lists other persons with columns: id_altrapers, NomeStandard. Entries: Ildebrandino Conti vescovo di Padova, 2. not. Nicolò di maestro Bartolomeo.
 - Table 4:** Lists other roles with columns: Funzione, Dedotto, id_altrapersona, id_evento. Entry: cancelliere dello Studio, Dedotto (checked), 1, 5.

Figure 4. The data input form "events".

4. Research possibilities

The above-described wide approach to the information provided by the sources represents a way of bypassing the absence of recurrent administrative writings and one of the best ways of taking advantage of the available sources. In other words, the focus is brought to the university as a part of urban society, and to its protagonists as social actors, not only as academic individuals. Anyway, the typical prosopographical approach, which tends to stress quantitative aspects, is not denied. On the contrary, it is the first pillar of research, through the analysis of students, professors, doctors and their geographical origins, social status, etc. However, the result cannot be a representation of *all* students and professors of the *Studium* in a certain period, but only of *a part* of them, since we miss the students' *matriculae*, and regular writings mentioning the enrollment of professors.²⁸

²⁸ The database also records the rare information about the *Studium's* assistant staff, like the janitors (*bidelli*) or the copyists.

Despite that, some general observation can be proposed using partial data, keeping in mind that what can be represented, on a large chronological scale with irregular sources, are trends. That's why the discussion will also include some methodological aspects concerning the examination of the recorded data. What follows is a couple of research possibilities with some connected precautions, concerning the geographical origins of scholars and their social and political relationships.

The analysis of academic individuals' places of origin provides some elements about the attraction exerted by the Paduan *Studium*, to be potentially compared with other universities.

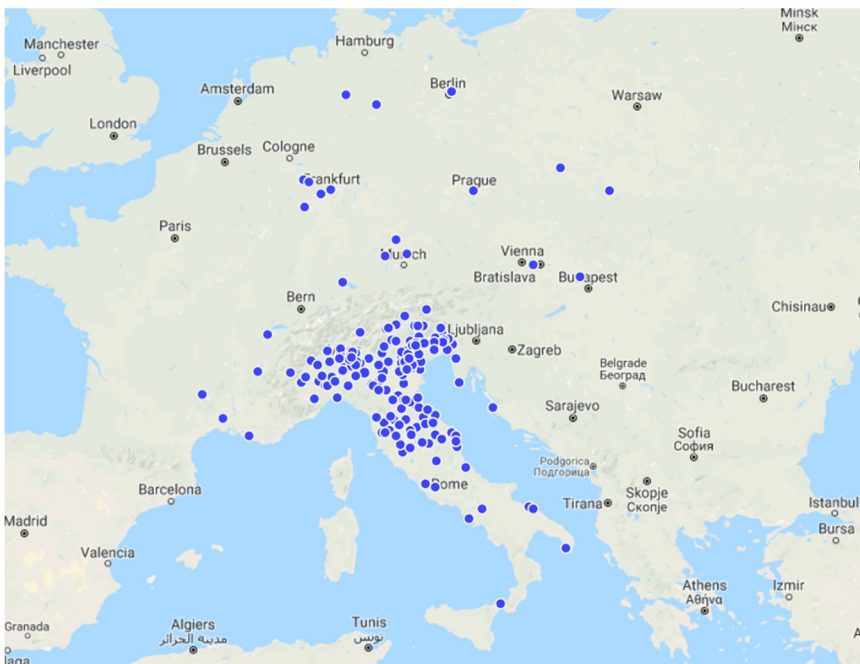


Figure 5. The origins of Paduan academics (1222-1380).

The map representing the origins of Paduan scholars between 1222 and 1380 ca., despite its incompleteness, shows two important phenomena (Figure 5).²⁹ In the first place, the university of Padua mainly had a macro-regional characterization, at least until the end of 14th century. Most part of academic people came from central and northern Italy, more or less

²⁹ The map only includes specific locations, that is cities or villages (points in the map) that has been possible to identify. Generic origins provided by the sources, like "Spanish" or "German", are not represented in this map; however, such cases are infrequent.

corresponding to what is usually called ‘communal Italy’. This correspondence is part of a greater phenomenon, the sharing of urban communal culture, and of a different approach to high-level instruction in southern Italy. It must be stressed, in fact, the Frederick II established the university of Naples just two years after the birth of the Paduan one, in 1224, with the purpose of offering to southern people (and obliging them to attend) a *Studium* in the kingdom of Sicily, in particular for the juridical knowledge.³⁰ Anyway, some southern people chose Padua to attend the university or to teach, like Bartolomeo di Lio from Benevento (not far from Naples), professor of law in the 1280s.³¹

The geographical concentration on communal Italy also indicates that Padua was, within certain limits, a rival of Bologna. Excluding most of the people, who came from Padua itself and the nearest locations, scholars came above all from Milan, Cremona, Mantova and Florence. If one considers that Bologna was closest or at the same distance of Padua, it is clear that some academics chose intentionally the second one. It is also to be stressed that some students and professors came from Bologna itself. Anyway, despite we cannot calculate the number of scholars of the Paduan *Studium*, it is undisputed that Bologna hosted a greater academic population. Nevertheless, Padua could be more attractive: in 1307 the bolognaise students asked the city councils to act for having Jacopo Belviso back in their *Studium*, where he taught previously, since he was a very good professor of law.³²

The second phenomenon to be stressed is that the number of scholars coming from outside Italy appears to be very limited in the map. They were all students, for the most part coming from Germanic and central Europe and playing an ecclesiastical role – canon, priest, etc. – or owning a noble title, especially that of count. It is evident that moving to Italy – and above all living there – required consistent economic means and a personal position compatible with the long-lasting academic life as student. Prague appears to be the city that had the strongest ties with Padua in that period.

³⁰ See Fulvio Delle Donne, *Per scientiarum haustum et seminarium doctrinarum. Storia dello Studium di Napoli in età sveva* (Bari, 2010).

³¹ Note that in that period Benevento was an *enclave* of the papal state in the kingdom of Sicily, under the protection of the Angevin kings.

³² Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Comune e Governo, Riformagioni e provvigioni del consiglio del Popolo e della Massa, 166, folio 140 (I wish to thank my friend and colleague Daniele Bortoluzzi for having found the original writing, mentioned in some publications that provide outdated archival references). Jacopo was finally asked to come back in 1308, when he was teaching in Perugia: see Severino Caprioli, *Belvisi, Giacomo*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 8 (Roma:, 1966), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giacomo-belvisi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giacomo-belvisi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (30.04.2019).

Anyway, the map should be used carefully for analysing such phenomena. In the first place, the sources contain data about the origins of 70% ca. of academic individuals (including the *Studium*'s staff). Secondly, the availability of information increases progressively when moving along the timeline: the most part of known origins concerns the 14th century, and it is impossible to analyse the evolution of origins because of the scarcity of data on the previous century. This reflects the growing attention for this aspect in writing the notarial acts, as well as the mere increase of available documents for more recent periods.

When considering the first serial sources for the history of the university of Padua, things change considerably. The *Acta graduum academicorum Gymnasii Patavini* (since 1406 onward) testify of a greater number of non-Italian students, comparatively. This surely reflects the growth of foreign students in Padua, but it is also a matter of sources: the serial documents offer a more realistic representation, that can be carefully extended to the previous period, at least to the second half of the 14th century. In that period, in other words, the number of foreign students was probably much higher than the one represented in the sources.

The difficulties concerning the origins of scholars are counterbalanced by some other possibilities offered by the same documents. As said, notarial acts offer some additional information about social statuses and relationships, that are recorded in the database. Through their analysis we can know the Paduan academic world from different points of view, for instance that of family ties between scholars and their incidence over the academic population. In 30% ca. of the kinship recorded, the individuals concerned were all professors in Padua, which means that the *Studium* was also carried out by some "teaching dynasties". Most of them came from outside Padua: the jurists Arsendi from Forlì (the famous Raniero and Argentino), Malombra from Cremona (Niccolò and the renowned Riccardo) and Mattarelli from Modena (Niccolò, Francesco, Antonio, Giambono). Instead only two Paduan families created a "dynasty", the jurists Buzzaccarini (Buzzaccarino and Folco) and the famous professors of medicine Santasofia (Niccolò and his sons).³³ The greater number of foreign families is mainly due to the prohibition for Paduan citizens to be enrolled and paid as professors, at least since 1276. A prohibition that could be infringed, clearly.³⁴

³³ The whole literature on the most important individuals mentioned here is too abundant to be remembered. As a starting point, one may refer to the online edition of the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, <http://www.treccani.it/biografie/> (30.04.2019).

³⁴ The phenomenon was already known in historiography. See for instance Siraisi, *Arts and Science, op. cit.*, p. 28.

If we open the analysis to other academic positions, we find some other interesting phenomena concerning family ties in the *Studium*. In the first place, it must be stressed the academic advancement realized from one generation to another, like it happened to the Paduan Mezzabati in the last decades of the 13th century: the professor of law Aldobrandino was son of the judge and *legum doctor* Ugo Denario, who never taught. In the second place, some ties between scholars reveals that the migration of the elder entailed that of the family, or at least of one son. Indeed, in the 1350s we find the doctor Alessandro di Giovanni from Antella (Florence), and his son Filippo, who was student – both in civil law –; or the professor Rolando dei Bracchi from Modena and his son Engiramo, student. What is particularly interesting is the case of Bertolino and Jacopino from Cornazzano (Parma): in 1283 the first is mentioned as professor, the second as student “in the school” of the first. Such family trajectories testify of a *modus operandi* in the academic migration that entailed the expectation of taking root in the host city and society, where a professor or doctor could stabilize with his family, also working outside the *Studium*.

That chance was undoubtedly increased when a scholar succeeded in establishing important political ties. In the cities, local jurists were traditionally used as legal advisors by politicians, but in some Paduan cases the ones that obtained their doctoral degree there, even when foreigners, established durable ties with the most important urban powers in the 14th century: the bishop and the *signore* Francesco da Carrara. Some doctors appear in the sources as vicars of the prelate, like Angelo from Castiglione Aretino (Tuscany), or of the lord, like Giovanni Salgardi from Feltre (Veneto) or the Paduan Jacopo Turchetto. They accomplished “ordinary” actions, namely representing the bishop or the lord in some juridical act, but could also be charged of important political tasks. For instance, in 1370 the already mentioned Argentino Arsendi, as representative of Francesco da Carrara, secured an alliance between the Paduan lord, the pope and other subjects. The fact that these doctors achieved such positions demonstrates the chances of career offered by the *Studium*, but also the upward social mobility that could be obtained through taking root in a hosting city.

Such approach to the sources and their contents shows some interesting features of the academic population that can be fruitful for the study of society and politics in general. It is then possible to create a bridge between cultural and intellectual history, on the one side, and the socio-political one, especially for what concerns the urban world.

5. To conclude: towards 2022

Those exposed in the previous paragraph are only some of the possible research approaches and possibilities to analyze the mass of data that is being collected. Despite the peculiar nature of sources and the related contents that can be recorded, at the end of the census new answers can be provided to old and new questions, so has to spread a different light to the history of the university of Padua and the urban society. Moreover, the Paduan academic history and historical population can be compared to other cases, especially considering the growing number of digital and online databases of academic history.³⁵ The *Studium* of Padua will soon join other prestigious universities that also developed such tools. Since the beginning, the project PADU-A was expected to evolve into an online database, and the celebrations for the 800 hundred years of the university are making it possible. The synergy between the Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World, the Center for the History of the University of Padua and the Center for the University Museums has produced an ambitious project, as a contribution to the celebrations: an online database of students and professors from the birth of the *Studium* in 1222 to the 20th century.

The project is currently ongoing, animated by a team of professors, post-docs and students. The tool chosen to realize it is Nodegoat, a web-based data management, network analysis and visualisation environment.³⁶ Developed by Pim van Bree and Geert Kessels since 2011, this platform has been chosen by many research projects, among which the ones of academic history that are connected each other through *Heloise – European Network on Digital Academic History*, in the purpose of realizing an integrated database.³⁷ The Paduan project aims at becoming part of it, once its database will be published and data will be become accessible for scholars interested in realizing in-depth analyses of the academic population from the Middle Ages to the end of the 20th century. Of course, this wide chronological span poses significant challenges for managing different information on different periods, as well as a different availability of sources between the medieval-

³⁵ Please refer to the thematic section of “Annali di storia delle università italiane”, 21/1 (2017).

³⁶ See <https://nodegoat.net/> (30.04.2019). The map of Figure 5 has been realized in the Nodegoat environment.

³⁷ Francesco Beretta, Thomas Riechert, *Collaborative Research on Academic History using Linked Open Data: A Proposal for the Heloise Common Research Model*, in “CIAN-Revista de Historia de las Universidades”, 19, 1 (2016): 133-151; see also <http://heloisenetwork.eu/> (30.04.2019). Nodegoat is already used by the project *Repertorium Academicum Germanicum. Die graduierten Gelehrten des Alten Reiches zwischen 1250 und 1550*: <https://rag-online.org/> (30.04.2019).

early modern times and the 19th-20th centuries. The solutions and *modus operandi* adopted, that implies important methodological issues, will be discussed in a future publication.