

« For the attainment of the Italian
tongue, in its greatest purity and
perfection »

**Pedagogical methods and literary
tradition in the Italian grammar books
of Angelo Vergani (1791-1806).**

Norma Romanelli
Université Paris Diderot

1791

1806

A
NEW AND COMPLETE
ITALIAN GRAMMAR.

CONTAINING

A short INTRODUCTION to the Italian Pronunciation.

Plain and concise RULES and Observations upon the nine Parts of Speech, exemplified and sanctioned by Passages taken from the best Italian Writers; such as Boccaccio, Bembo, Petrarca, Tasso, Ariosto, Metastasio, &c. to which are annexed instructive and entertaining Exercises.

A short APPENDIX on Italian Orthography.

A VOCABULARY, English & Italian, and a Number of Phrases which very frequently occur in Conversation.

A select COLLECTION of smart Repartees, Witticisms, &c. in Italian.

A Collection of elegant and interesting ITALIAN LETTERS, upon various Subjects.

Specimens of ITALIAN POETRY, with the Rules thereof.

A TABLE, which presents in one Point of View, a clear and succinct Method of declining every Noun and Pronoun, and of conjugating every regular Verb.

An alphabetical LIST of the irregular Verbs, conjugated in those Tenses in which they vary from the regular ones.

A TRANSLATION, as literal as possible, of the Italian Passages quoted in the Course of the grammatical Rules and Observations.

The whole laid down in a clear and methodical Manner,

AND INTERSPERSED WITH

MANY USEFUL NOTES,

Calculated for the Attainment of the ITALIAN TONGUE, in its greatest PURITY and PERFECTION.

By A. VERGANI,

TEACHER OF THE LATIN, ITALIAN, AND FRENCH LANGUAGES.

*Nisi fundamenta fideliter jeceris, quidquid
superstruxeris corruet.* QUINT.

BIRMINGHAM,

PRINTED AND SOLD BY THOMAS PEARSON,

SOLD ALSO BY R. BALDWIN, FATER-NOSTER ROW,
LONDON.

MDCXCXI.

GRAMMAIRE
ITALIENNE,

SIMPLIFIÉE

ET REDUITE A XX LEÇONS,

Avec des Thèmes, des Dialogues, et un petit
Recueil de Traits d'histoire en Italien, à
l'usage des commençans;

PAR VERGANI,

Professeur au Collège de la Marche, et Auteur de
la Grammaire Anglaise simplifiée, et d'autres
Ouvrages Élémentaires.

QUATRIÈME ÉDITION,

Corrigée et considérablement augmentée.



A PARIS,

Chez L'AUTEUR, quai de l'Horloge du Palais, n°. 59,
près l'arcade de la Cour de Lamoignon.

1806.

X 1100.

Angelo Vergani (fl. 1791-1811)

An Itinerant master

Florence-Rome-Paris-London



Accademia dell'Arcadia (Rome)

By **A. VERGANI**,
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English edition (1791)

Limited diffusion of Italian Language in Italy

« I must acknowledge, though with concern, that the Italian language is studied more out of Italy, than in it. In Italy the Latin language is spoken in the schools, in preference of the mother tongue of the country ».

Giovanni Gherardini (1843): « a quali segni riconoscono pur gli stranieri essere una nazione questa nostra Italia se non alla perfetta comunanza della lingua scritta, grammaticale, letteraria ?»

Deploring the use of Latin

« The Latin language is that in which we publish the Acts of our Academics, many Treatises of Philosophy, of Physic, of the Mathematics, and of almost all the Arts and Sciences ».

«Vallisneri, Muratori, Algarotti, Spallanzani, Beccaria have latterly written with the universal approbation of Europe on Medicine, on natural Philosophy, on Mathematics, in the Italian language ».

Rejoicing at the end of obscurantism in Italy

« The Italians begin to think, the unhappy days being for ever past, when Galileo languished in the prisons of the Inquisition, for no other crime than for having clearly demonstrated the motion of the earth ».

Horizon de rétrospection

Grammar authorities: Buommattei and Gigli

« By the help of Buommattei, which has always been my guide, and which will be esteemed as long as the Italian tongue shall exist I venture to lay before the public these rules upon our language exemplified and sanctioned by passages taken from our best writers such as Boccaccio, Petrarca, Tasso » (p. xxi)

« I shall follow in the display of the verbs the method of Gigli which is to show by columns what is correct, obsolete, poetical and vulgar »

First regular Conjugation in Arc.

INDICATIVE MOOD.

I. PRESENT TIME.

	Correct.	Obsolete.	Poetical.	Vulgar.
I speak	<i>Io parlo</i>	—	—	—
Thou speak'st	<i>tu parli</i>	—	<i>parle</i>	—
He speaks	<i>egli parla</i>	—	—	—
We speak	<i>noi parliamo</i>	—	—	<i>parliano, par-</i> <i>liamo</i>
You speak	<i>voi parlate</i>	—	—	—
They speak	<i>eglino parlano</i>	—	—	<i>parlono</i>

Literary canon

« The beauties of Petrarca, Tasso, Ariosto, and particularly of our unparalled Metastasio » (p.X-XII).

Criticism : a writer using the latinizing word order of Boccaccio's prose « would be ridiculed and considered as an affected and pedantic writer »

French editions

*La Grammaire italienne **de Veneroni** simplifiée et réduite à vingt leçons ... par A.M. Vergani (1799,1801)*



La Grammaire Italienne simplifiée et réduite à vingt leçons ... par Vergani (1806)

“Veneroni’s grammar is too diffuse and too complicated. It is in the drawing to remedy these inconveniences that I have reduced to twenty lessons all the rules which are scattered in a large volume, and added others which are no less essential” (Vergani, 1799).

Avertissement (1806)

« This fourth edition differs so much from the Italian Grammar of Veneroni, that we can look at it as an absolutely new work »

No ideological position

No relation with Italian grammaticography

Common points

Declined articles and nouns

◉ 1791

First Article used before the masculine nouns beginning with a consonant.

Sing. Nom.	<i>Il maestro</i>	the master
Gen.	<i>Del maestro</i>	of the master
Dat.	<i>Al maestro</i>	to the master
Acc.	<i>Il maestro</i>	the master
Voc.	<i>O maestro</i>	O master
Abl.	<i>Dal maestro</i>	from or by the master.

◉ 1806

Singulier.

Nom. Le livre , il libro.

Gén. Du livre , del libro.

Dat. Au livre , al libro.

*Abl. Du livre , } dal libro.
ou par le livre , }*

Dans le livre , nel libro.

Avec le livre , col libro.

Pour le livre , pel libro.

Sur le livre , sul libro.

Exercices

1791: filling the gap – interlinear model

PRAXIS UPON ARTICLES.

WITHOUT	a ² friend	the world.	is but a
<i>Senza</i>	<i>amico m.</i>	<i>mondo m.</i>	<i>non è che</i>
wilderniefs.			
<i>deserto m.</i>			

Exercices

1806: text to be translated into Italian

THÈME II.

1. La physionomie est le miroir de l'ame.

VOCABULAIRE.

1. Physionomie, *fisionomia*, f. cst, é.

Differences

1791

- « *Plain and concise rules and Observations upon the nine parts of Speech* »: a canonical division of grammar content.
- Literary examples, poetical forms

1806

- « *XX lessons* »: focusing on specific aspects of grammar.
- *Exempla ficta*

1791: literary examples to illustrate the use of demonstrative pronouns

² We always make use of *Que'*, *Quei*, or *Quegli* instead of *quelli*, when followed by a noun, or pronoun. Exam.

Que' duo pien di paura, e di sospetto. (Petr.)

Ecco quei che le carte empion di sogni. (Idem.)

E spero un giorno

D'involar quegli allori alle tue chiome

Colà sull' ire istesse,

Che il timor de' mortali offre al tuo nome. (Metast.)

1806: exempla ficta to illustrate the use of demonstrative pronouns.

* On dit *quel* pour *quello* au singulier, et *quei* ou *que'* pour *quelli* au pluriel, lorsque le nom suivant commence par une consonne, à moins que ce ne soit une *s* suivie d'une autre consonne. Ex. *Quel libro*, ce livre, *quei* ou *que'* *libri*, ces livres. Lorsque le nom commence par une voyelle, comme *amico*, *onore*, *ami*, *honneur*, on dit au singulier *quell' amico*, *quell' onore*, et au pluriel *quegli amici*, *quegli onori*.

Linguistic model

1791: -o form

2. IMPERFECT.

	Correct.	Obsolete.	Poetical.	Vulgar.
I was ⁵	<i>era, or ero</i>	—	—	—
Thou wast	<i>eri</i>	—	—	—
He was	<i>era</i>	—	—	—
We were	<i>eravamo</i>	<i>savamo</i>	<i>eramo</i>	—
You were	<i>eravate</i>	<i>savate</i>	<i>erate</i>	<i>eri</i>
They were	<i>erano</i>	—	—	<i>erono</i>

expressed or understood.

⁵ Some rigid grammarians think, that the first person of the imperfect should end in *a*, as *io era, io aveva, &c.* and that it is a fault to say *io ero, io avevo, &c.* though custom begins to be in its favour, at least in common conversation and familiar writings. For my part, I should think it necessary for the sake of avoiding all doubt, that the first person of the imperfect tense, when the pronoun is omitted, should always end in *o*: this is my custom, but

Siegua ognuno il suo stile, io siegno il mio. (Metast.)

1806: -a form

Imparfait.

J'avois , *io aveva.*

Tu avois , *tu avevi.*

Il avoit , *egli aveva.*

Nous avions , *noi ave-
vamo.*

Imparfait.

J'étois , *io era **.

Tu étois , *tu eri.*

Il étoit , *egli era.*

Nous étions , *noi era-
vamo.*

* Quelques-uns disent *avevo, ero*, au lieu de *aveva, era*, et se servent de la terminaison en *o* pour tous les verbes, à la première personne de l'imparfait; comme, *compravo, vendevo, servivo*, j'achetois, je vendois, je servois; mais cette manière n'est guère en usage chez les bons auteurs.

Conclusion

New and complete Italian Grammar (1791) : an ambitious début.

- ◉ **Strong ideological position**
- ◉ **The authority of Buommattei and Gigli**
- ◉ **Literary examples to elucidate grammar rules**

Grammaire italienne simplifiée et réduite en XX leçons (1806) : functional essentiality.

- ◉ **No ideological position**
- ◉ **Exempla ficta**

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