A SHORT HISTORY
OF THE VETERINARY MEDICINE SCHOOL OF TURIN

Patrizia Peila, Marco R. Galloni

(Italy)

Abstract. The Veterinary School of Turin, first of its kind in Italy and fourth in the world, was founded in 1769, by Giovanni Carlo Brugnone, at the behest of King Carlo Emanuele III. From the beginning, the School had close relations with the military world and its fate was often linked to political events. At first located in the hunting lodge of the Royal Castle of Venaria, the School had many subsequent locations including: the Valentino Castle in Turin, the Mandria of Chivasso and the Castle of Fossano. In 1859, it was moved to Via Nizza, Turin, where it remained until the end of twentieth century, when it was transferred out of town to its current headquarters in Grugliasco (Turin). The School became the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Turin in 1934; at the end of the last century it received a visit by the EAEVE (European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education) and in 2002 was included in the list of approved institutions. In 2012, it became the Veterinary Science Department.

The history of the Veterinary School of Turin began in 1764, when the King of Sardinia Carlo Emanuele III, for both Cavalry requirements and livestock care, decided to establish a veterinary school, and one similar to the French example which had been in existence since 1762.

So at the expense of the Treasury, he sent the surgeon Giovanni Carlo Brugnone (Figure 1), to Lyon to study at the Veterinary School founded by Claude Bourgelat. Back in his homeland, Brugnone was nominated director of the Veterinary School of Turin with royal licenses issued on September 1st, 1769 and had the task of setting up this institute. For this purpose, he received some rooms in the hunting lodge of the Royal Castle of Venaria. The course included teachings such as the
anatomy of the horse (but also of other animals), the practical teaching of shoeing, the study of diseases of horses and of other livestock; fundamentally no previous studies were required for attending it.

Brugnone was the director and the only teacher of the School for twenty-four years and wrote in 1774 the first book of Italian veterinary medicine, “La mascalcia, o sia la medicina veterinaria ridotta ai suoi veri principi” (Figure 2).

The School, which depended on the Ministry of war, trained mostly good military farriers, while it received little success among the civilians, except for a few students, like Francesco Toggia senior, who became a skilled professional.

Vittorio Amedeo III, who succeeded Carlo Emanuele III, transferred in 1793 the School to the Mandria of Chivasso, a location already known for its horse breeding farm for the army and he charged Brugnone with setting up the necessary structures for teaching and doing exercises. The king also founded the Royal Army Hospital in Trino Vercellese and entrusted it to Toggia senior, who gave clinical lessons, while the hospital had no declared educational purposes. In the troubled historical period of French domination in Piedmont, the School did not record any progress in the teaching of science, so when King Carlo Emanuele IV was exiled in Sardinia, it was closed down.

In 1800, both School and hospital moved to the Valentino Castle in Turin. The Subalpine Veterinary School, reformed by the French, was combined with the University with doctor Michele Francesco Buniva as director; meanwhile the hospital depended on the Magistrate of Health and was managed by Toggia, while Brugnone was ousted from all positions. Offended by this outrage, Brugnone, taking advantage of his friendship with the French General Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, ensured that both Buniva and Toggia were removed from their respective positions and with the School still depending on the Magistrate of Health, he regained management of it. He would continue to pursue this until 1813, when the School was closed, because it could not effectively prevent the spread of rinderpest but also because of the poor education of graduates.

After a suspension of its activity from 1814 to 1818, and the restoration of the Savoy monarchy, the School opened again in Venaria and had as its head the Magistrate of the Reform, whose “Manifest” in 1822 pro-
vided new rules, as a higher level of education needed to be made in order to attend it. King Vittorio Emanuele I dismissed Brugnone for having collaborated with the French invaders and chose as director one of the best graduates of the School itself, Carlo Lessona. This professor, as a member of both Turin Academies of Agriculture and of Medicine, author of many publications concerning above all hippology, raised the fate of the School after the Napoleonic domination and founded in 1838 the first Italian journal of veterinary science: “Annali di Veterinaria”. In the teaching staff, we find the professor of anatomy Carlo Giorgio Mangosio, one of the Brugnone’s sons-in-law, and graduate in both surgery and in law, as well as among the first scholars of veterinary legal medicine, of which he wrote a treaty. In 1834, at the behest of King Carlo Alberto, the School, under the direction of Ministry of War once again, moved to Fossano Castle. The reasons were officially documented as a necessary precaution to the onset of glanders among the horses owned by the royal family, due to the high number of sick animals in Venaria as a consequence of the scientific study of the disease, but in reality the King was worried about certain pamphlets of the “Giovine Italia” - a revolutionary secret association - that had been circulated among students. From 1838 and for seven more years the School was directed by the Major of Cavalry Agostino Morelli di Popolo. The rearrangements of the School were not yet finished: in 1841, the School went back for the third time in Venaria and occupied a building in the main square of the town that nowadays is commonly known as the veterinary infirmary. A large riding hall was also probably used by the School, where today we can still see some paintings on the wall, depicting the anatomy of a healthy and sick horse. This was a period of intense scientific and practical activities; because of the large number of animals to be treated, even an itinerant clinic was organized - something frowned upon by local veterinarians. In 1847, King Carlo Alberto, changed the School title’s to the Agricultural-Veterinary-Forestry Institute. This was undertaken in order to meet the need shown by the Agricultural Association for an agricultural reform in which not only veterinary medicine, but also agriculture and forestry were taught. This new institution depended on the Interior Ministry and was located in Venaria, and directed by the Major of Artillery Emilio Bertone di Sambuy. The war events of 1848-49 induced King Vittorio Emanuele II
to abolish the School in 1851, so once again for the second time it was re-
located to the Valentino Castle in Turin, in problematic cohabitation with
the soldiers of the Royal Pontoon Corps and headed first by the Ministry
of Agriculture and later on the Ministry of Public Education. At that time,
the Count Giovanni Battista Ercolani (Figure 3), from Bologna, was in the
teaching staff; a pathologist but also a politician, exiled after the fall of
the Roman Republic, he went to Tuscany, but unexpectedly then had to
leave Florence and took refuge in Turin. It was here that, in 1851 and again
in 1854 he published, the two volumes of his “Ricerche storico-analitiche
sugli scrittori di veterinaria”, both the outcome of his historical research
activities, which had begun in libraries back in Florence.
In 1852 Ercolani founded the first scientific journal of the School, the
“Giornale di Veterinaria” (later, the “Giornale di Medicina Veterinaria”) and
directed it until 1858. By 1859, this journal had become the official or-
gen of the Italian and Royal Veterinary Society and Academy and had as
its director professor Francesco Papa, known for his defense of the profes-
sion from empiricism: at that time, many farriers and people not properly
educated pretended to be veterinarians and the category was annoyed
by this.
That same year, Ercolani became the director of the School, which finally
moved to the more suitable seat of Via Nizza 52 in Turin (Figure 4) and the
following year founded another journal of the School, “Il Medico vet-
ernario”, which, 1889 became the “Moderno zoootro”, the official organ of
the Italian Veterinary National Association, with the surgeon prof. Roberto
Bassi (Figure 5) as director.
With the “Regulation for the veterinary schools of Milan and Turin”, approved in 1860 by decree signed by the Minister of Public Education Terenzio Mamiani, the "Royal School of Veterinary Medicine" became the "Royal High School of Veterinary Medicine" which to the great satisfaction of Ercolani, was placed among the university courses, Ercolani being someone who had always fought for this recognition.

Three years later, Ercolani returned to Bologna, due to a serious family bereavement and taking his place was professor Telesforo Tombari, who would be director until 1867, when he was succeeded by Felice Perosino, professor of anatomy and also the head of the military veterinary service. Under his direction, from 10 to 12 September 1869, the celebrations for the first centenary of the foundation of the School took place and included an agro-zoo-technical exhibition and the first national veterinary congress.

The school of Ercolani had a brilliant pupil in Sebastiano Rivolta, first great Italian master in the field of mycology and its role in parasitology. He became professor of pathological anatomy and was one of the first followers of the theories of Pasteur about microbiology; in his work, he identified the cause of the African glanders in collaboration with the Captain of Veterinary Military Corps Ignazio Micellone. Rivolta transmitted his knowledge to his pupil, Edoardo Bellarmino Perroncito (Figure 6), widely known because in 1879 he obtained the chair of Parasitology - the first established in the world - at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, but also for the outcomes of his research on the pernicious anemia of miners of the Gotthard tunnel and on the related methods of treatment to eradicate the Ancylostoma...
duodenale, a widespread parasitic worm which caused the serious disease. His passion for the study of parasites was expressed in a collection of 851 samples that would make up the Parasitology Museum of the School (Figure 7), today preserved in a special room named “Perroncito’s Museum”, inside the Veterinary Sciences Museum. In the twenties, Armando Boccolari-Segolini, assistant professor of Ettore Ravenna, the eminent pathologist who succeeded Perroncito in the direction of the Institute of pathological anatomy, compiled and published the catalog of this parasites collection. Domenico Vallada succeeded prof. Perosino in 1872 as School director; professor of pathology, hygiene and animal husbandry, he wrote “La Scuola Veterinaria del Piemonte: saggio storico sulla medesima dall’epoca di sua fondazione (1769) a tempi attuali (1872)”, a valuable source of information for reconstructing history of the School. In 1884, the School had as director Guido Bizozzero, professor of pathological anatomy of the Royal University of Turin and hygienist, engaged in the advancement of health education and famous as the discoverer of the blood platelets. His time as director lasted only five years, because the teachers of the School contested his legitimacy, due to the fact he was a doctor, not a veterinarian, and so he was replaced by the surgeon Roberto Bassi. It would be the new “Single Regulation for all Italian veterinary schools”, signed in 1891 by the Minister of Public Education Paolo Boselli, which finally prescribed that the director was to be elected. The first one was Roberto Bassi, who kept the charge up until 1908, except during four years, in which Perroncito replaced him. In a Paolo Emilio Morgari’s painting (Figure 8), dating 1907 and now preserved in the Veterinary Sciences Museum, we can recognize this professor by his long white beard, as he gives a lesson about horses, standing before the pavilion of surgery of the historical headquarters of Via Nizza. Lorenzo Brusasco, one of the best clinicians and pharmacologists of his time, succeeded Bassi as director.
He was engaged in the reorganization of the Italian veterinary schools and considered they should be recognized as a part of the university and only students who had an appropriate level of education should attend the lessons. The management of the School was then taken over, from 1911 to 1913, by professor Ferruccio Faelli, who dealt with the breeding of both dogs and the Piedmontese bovine and from 1914 to 1915, by Umberto Zimmerl, professor of anatomy as well as an excellent writer of treaties, still used by students today. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the basic rules of Italian public veterinary practice were approved; the School depended on the Ministry of Public Education until 1923, when it came under the new Ministry of the National Economy and became the "Royal Institute of Veterinary Medicine". Since the end of the nineteenth century, the scientific progress and the opening of new fields of research had led to an increase in teaching subjects in the veterinary schools, so, for example, in the academic year 1899/1900, a new course for the health police and inspection of meat for slaughter was initiated in Turin and held by a pupil of Perroncito, Giovanni Mazzini. He fought for the defense of the profession from empiricism, as professor Papa had already done: the Crispi-Pagliani law of 1888, establishing the veterinary practises, had only partially met the wishes of the category. Mazzini was also the founder, in 1913, of the Zooprophylactic Institute of Piedmont, Liguria and Valle d’Aosta. In this period, the School had in its teaching staff the main protagonist of the contribution of veterinary medicine to the Great War; Guido Finzi. He was professor of veterinary clinic at the School from 1913 to 1926 and also directed it for two years. During the conflict, he managed the Military Laboratory for producing the polyvalent anti-pyogenic serum “Lanfranchi-Finzi”, prepared in collaboration with his master, prof. Alessandro Lanfranchi. Even if prepared for the treatment of purulent wounds of military quadrupeds, the serum turned out to be useful for soldiers too. In the first post-war period, the need of a new building for the School was felt, but, in the meantime, the surgical pavilion was widened and inaugurated by 1924 and by 1932, two years after the School was brought under the Ministry of National Education again, a dog pound and a library were built. From November 1st, 1934, the School became the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Turin. Its first dean was Pietro Ghisleni, an eminent professor of surgery and expert in veterinary legal medicine, who had also been the director many times. The Faculty dedicated a room to him in its Grugliasco headquarters. During the Second World War, the Faculty was bombed in 1943: some buildings were completely destroyed and the Museum of Anatomy too (Figure 9).
The following year, the Faculty suffered a serious loss: Paolo Braccini, professor of animal husbandry, was shot by the nazifascists because he was a partisan; he was awarded a gold medal for military valor and in 2014 both Department and the Municipality of Grugliasco decided to dedicate the square in front of the entrance to the University campus to him.

In 1952, when Giovanni Bisbocci, professor of pathological anatomy, was dean, the first woman graduated at the Turin Faculty: Anna Vigone (Figure 10). The Museum preserves instruments, books and documents which were donated by Adele Rovereto after her mother’s death.

Among post-war masters, we remember those to whom the Faculty has dedicated rooms in its current headquarters. Giovanni Godina, professor of domestic animals anatomy, histology and embryology, devoted himself for a long time to the in vitro cultures of cells and tissues, with the use of microcinematography, a field in which he was considered an eminent scholar. Bruno Micheletto was an eminent surgeon and pathologist, who studied mainly skeletal diseases. Franco Monti, professor of veterinary clinic, was dean when on October 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1969, the Veterinary Medicine Faculty of Turin celebrated its bicentenary with the participation of many representatives of other faculties from all over the world. Pietro Sartoris was professor of surgical clinic, a pioneer in the field of obstetrics and gynecology and favoured the veterinary radiology.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, the Faculty gradually became less and less suited to the demands of teaching and research, so a new venue was sought. The displacement of the Faculty to the campus of Grugliasco began in 1996 and was completed in 2000. In addition to the classrooms and laboratories, in the current headquarters of the Veterinary Science Department a hospital and stables for the breeding of various animal species were added. In this way, the Department responds better to the needs of teaching and research, even allows to adequately address the so-called “third mission”, i.e. the dissemination of scientific knowledge outside the academic environment. The Department was visited and examined by the EAEVE (European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education) Committee on November 1999 and approved on 2002.
Conclusions
As we have seen, the Turin Veterinary School was created at the behest of a king for military needs, initially teaching little more than horse shoeing, but subsequently increasing the scientific level of the courses. The historical events led to it movement to different locations and to its dependence on different ministries that influenced its very evolution. However the quality of teaching grew progressively, with veterinarians graduating both for the military and the civil environment, to which they have acquired an important role in the health of animals, but also in humans.
Various teachers can be remembered for their research, sometimes with scientific and social results of great importance. The publication of the first journal of veterinary medicine in Italy and then others, still testifies to the fervor of studies at the school. It cannot be forgotten that until 1997 this was the place where veterinary officers were trained, it being the Military Veterinary Academy at the same time.
Last but not least, the attention of the School for the formation of Museums, such as those past museums of anatomy, pathology and parasitology and the Veterinary Sciences Museum today, teaches us that the life of a scientific institution is also based on the conservation and awareness of its historical memory to strengthen the image of the present.

References
V. CHIODI, Storia della Veterinaria, Edagricle, Bologna. 1980

Doctor P. PEILA, Vet. Sc. Museum curator, University of Turin, Largo Braccini, 2 – I-10095 Grugliasco (TO), patrizia.peila@unito.it
M. R. GALLONI, associate professor, Vet. Sc. Dept, University of Turin, Largo Braccini, 2 – I-10095 Grugliasco (TO), marco.galloni@unito.it