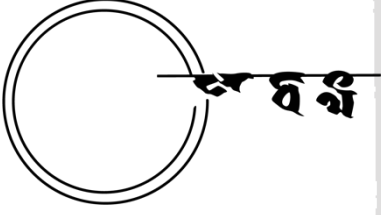


## Prefatory words



In the summer of 2020, the idea of presenting a volume of studies in Iranian philology to Mauro Maggi began forming in the minds of some of his colleagues and former students in Rome and Naples. This collective effort promptly coalesced to bring the initiative to fruition.

Born in Como on 4 August 1957, Mauro Maggi embarked on his academic journey by studying Classics and Indo-Iranian philology at the Università degli Studi di Milano. Graduating magna cum laude in 1986 with a dissertation on Tumshuqese morphology, he laid the foundation for a groundbreaking academic journey, leaving an enduring mark on Iranian philology and linguistics. Mauro Maggi continued his education at the Istituto Universitario Orientale (Naples), enrolling in the doctoral program in Iranian studies in 1988. Under the guidance of his soon-to-be teacher and cherished friend Ronald E. Emmerick at the Universität Hamburg, Mauro Maggi delved into the intricacies of Khotanese language and literature. In 1992, he earned his doctorate from the Istituto Universitario Orientale, defending a thesis on Khotanese accent. From 1992 to 1999, Mauro Maggi served as the head of the library at the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Rome, in 1995 converted into Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente). During this period, he was also adjunct lecturer in Iranian philology at the Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza, visiting professor of Iranian studies at the Università degli Studi di Bologna, and post-doctoral researcher at the Collège de France in Paris. In 1999, the next chapter in Mauro Maggi’s academic journey unfolded as he became associate professor of Comparative history of Indo-Iranian languages at the Istituto Universitario Orientale (from 2002 Università degli Studi di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’), and from 2008 of Iranian philology at the Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza. In 2019, he was appointed full professor of Iranian philology at the same university.

Mauro Maggi’s scholarly achievements have been acknowledged through prestigious scholarships, including those from Fondazione Confalonieri (Milan), and the Pacific Cultural Foundation (Taipei). Actively engaged in learned societies such as *Sodalizio Glottologico Milanese*, *Societas Iranologica Europaea*, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, he has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to scholarly collaboration. Professionally, Mauro Maggi has held key positions, contributing as a member of the Council of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* and as the founding member, vice-president (2003–2005), and president (2005–2006) of the *Centre for Buddhist Studies* at the Università degli Studi di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’. He served as a visiting associate researcher at the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (New Taipei City) and is currently a member of the editorial board of the *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for*

*Advanced Buddhology* at Soka University (Tokyo). His administrative roles have included heading the second-level program in Linguistics of Asia and Africa at the Università degli Studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (2004–2008) and later steering the first-level program (2011–2014) and second-level program (2014–2015) in Oriental languages and civilizations at the Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza.

Mauro Maggi's expertise extends across diverse areas, including Indo-Iranian linguistics, the history of the Iranian languages, Buddhist texts from Central Asia, early and sub-standard New Persian, and modern Iranian dialects. However, the field he chose and grant him worldwide recognition is Khotanese. To the elucidation of the Khotanese language and its texts Mauro Maggi has in fact devoted the best part of his research activity, and his substantial contributions span the entire spectrum of this field, encompassing text editions and translations, the development of palaeography and orthography, the exploration of literary traditions, and both synchronic and diachronic investigations into language structures and etymology. However, those who have the pleasure of knowing him personally are aware that what is found in his published works merely scratches the surface of a broader knowledge rooted in patient learning, diverse interests, and industrious activities that extend well beyond his primary research focus. For these reasons, the creation of a volume honouring his scientific figure did not come as a surprise, and the enthusiastic participation of so many of Mauro Maggi's colleagues and former students serves as a clear testament to the profound esteem and friendship we all hold for him. Yet, a collection of scientific works might not be deemed the ideal platform for expressions of affection and gratitude. In line with our dedicatee's inclination towards conciseness, these brief lines below serve as a modest token of appreciation.

Throughout his career, Mauro has been nothing short of a beacon of intellectual rigour, moral uprightness, and reserved dignity. These qualities not only define a brilliant mind but also exemplify a person of exceptional moral integrity. Mauro's publications stand as a monument to the difficult art of patient reflection and thoughtful inquiry. Every facet of his work undergoes a rigorous process of consideration and reconsideration, with each aspect evaluated with precision. No stone is left unturned, no assumption remains unexamined: the willingness to explore alternatives, entertain diverse perspectives, and engage in a genuine dialogue with opposing viewpoints is a hallmark of his intellectual process. This blending of linguistic and philological skills has left a mark on his students and colleagues. Those who had the pleasure of learning from him certainly recall the many, sometimes exhausting, hours spent in exploring seemingly trivial words or concepts, which ultimately reveal hidden layers of significance. In these moments, it is not uncommon that another powerful tool in Mauro's arsenal comes to light: his silence, which is not an absence of engagement but a deliberate embrace of thought and an indirect invitation for his collaborators to let their own ideas percolate and take shape. Mauro's vibrant patience is not merely a virtue but a measured choice to eschew the shallow in favour of enduring depth and substance.

Not only is Mauro rigorous in addressing scientific issues, but also in his attention to the formal aspects of publication, showcasing an acute awareness of the importance of precision in language, structure, and presentation. Each article, editorial, or book is a carefully crafted piece of scholarly art, where not only the content but also the form is considered with the utmost care. Every sentence is not just a conveyance of information but a deliberate construction that guides the reader with precision through the complex landscape of scientific knowledge.

Mauro's moral integrity extends to every aspect of his life, approaching each with an impartiality that is both admirable and rare. In a world that often teeters on the edge of compromise, Mauro stands firm with an implacability that, at times, borders on intransigence. Ultimately, it is a relief for us to be able to count on his impartiality and standards of conduct. His dedication to principles over convenience is as much a hallmark of his own choices and of how he navigates interpersonal relationships, research, teaching, and institutional complexities.

It is no exaggeration to say that such moral foundations turn his research and teaching almost into sacred endeavours. Never protective of his knowledge, Mauro readily shares, listens, and entertains even the most unconventional ideas. Students quickly recognise him as an authoritative and attentive teacher, always ready to lend an ear and listen deeply. Despite his serious and reserved demeanour, Mauro effortlessly connects with them, adept at conveying complex content in a simple and effective manner. Whether undergraduates, doctoral students, or seasoned scholars, those who have delved into their studies with him continue to receive precious insights. Mauro's caring attitude to his students has also translated in helping them locate research funding, often devoting much time to support them in the application process, well aware of the scarcity of resources and opportunities Italian academia has to offer in that respect and unwilling to let his disciples give in due to lack of material support.

Mauro demonstrates respect and, when necessary, offers guidance, extending advice beyond academic matters, viewing the person as a whole human being, and with genuine capacity for affection. As someone who shuns from self-deception and never avoids confronting his own fragilities and limitations, Mauro embodies authenticity and truthfulness. Numerous anecdotes attest to this, with many having exemplary memories of his kindness. For instance, Mauro's homes, in various locations from Lanuvio to Frosinone and Florence, have always been open and welcoming to friends and colleagues in need of support, be it logistical or moral. Behind his composed demeanour, Mauro harbours a great sense of humour, using it to occasionally poke fun, never biting or offensive.

In the end, he has been able to recreate the profound teacher-student relationship he experienced with his teacher, Ronald E. Emmerick, passing on the mantle of knowledge to his own pupils. Through his mentorship, Mauro has not only conveyed scientific wisdom but has also fostered the same spirit of scholarly dedication and intellectual camaraderie that defined his own learning journey.

In conclusion, this collection of works stands as a symbol of gratitude from those inspired and influenced by his work. In offering this volume, we pay homage to Mauro as a colleague, a cherished teacher, and friend with whom we routinely share the joy of new discoveries. May his legacy, fortified by his empathic teaching and human kindness, endure for many years to come.

7th March 2024

Gerardo Barbera  
Matteo De Chiara  
Alessandro Del Tomba  
Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā  
Federico Dragoni  
Paola Orsatti

