



EDITORIALE

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This special number was born from the conference on Afghanistan held at the University of Calabria on the 23rd of November 2021 and contains mostly papers written by Afghan researchers and scholars who participated in it.

The conference was built thanks to the effort of the Afghan scholars and researchers themselves and of various professors of the University of Calabria, such as professor Vingelli, Corradi, D'Agostino, Della Corte and Fedele, of the Department of Political and Social Sciences, and professor Leccese and Ventura of the Department of Culture, Education and Society.

Unfortunately, this is the first issue of the journal to be published following the death of Professor Ventura, founder, inspirer and father of the journal as well as its scientific director from the beginning until this summer, when his guide was lost.

Aware that it is almost impossible to summarise in a few lines his dedication to the study of complex realities such as Afghanistan, his generosity towards his neighbour and his open-mindedness, I would nevertheless like to open this issue by recalling how Alberto knew how to combine the depth of historical and theological analysis with a practical commitment to the most practical and tedious issues, from which he never shied away.

An example of this commitment was during the preparation of the conference, which took place during the period when strict regulations regarding covid and green pass possession were in force. His personal involvement was crucial in validating the green passes of the Afghan scholars who were to attend the conference; documents written in Persian and dated in the Islamic calendar.

Since the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, he has participated in numerous public initiatives and programmes in which he was asked to explain to the



general public what was happening in this country whose reality is often unknown to most.

He did so with the capacity for synthesis and simplification of great scholars and communicators, capable of conveying and making complex issues, understood through a lifetime of study, understood by non-experts.

He welcomed exiled Afghan scholars to his study, putting them at ease, and showing them his most precious books, of which he was most proud. I would therefore like to leave room for the testimonies of these men and women who knew him during such a difficult time in their lives and for those of his colleagues who cooperated with him in organising the conference.

«Professor Ventura's name and memory should be honoured. He was a committed and profound thinker who, with a human perspective and scientific commitment, held a seminar on Afghanistan studies at the University of Calabria with the collaboration of Prof. Vingeli and other colleagues in the year 2021 on the critical situation in Afghanistan with a sense of human responsibility. Ventura was a committed, ethical and dignified person. May his memory be cherished». — *Musa Akbari*

«Professor Alberto Ventura. He was one of the prominent and famous professors at the University of Calabria. I met Professor Ventura at the beginning of my coming to Italy in September 2021. The background for this acquaintance was provided by Professor Giovanna Vingelli, who is one of the university's professors of political sociology. Professor Ventura was a professor at the Faculty of Culture of the University of Calabria and had many studies on mysticism. He also had knowledge and studies about the ideas and ideals of Talibanism. Professor Alberto Ventura and Professor Vingelli cooperated a lot to organize a seminar about Afghanistan. Professor Ventura was a decent and compassionate person, especially for the immigrants, and he always tried to provide them with cooperation and education. I ask God for forgiveness and eternal peace for him». — *Abdullah Zakawat*



«By completing the article, I want to pay tribute to the memories of a great person I had the opportunity to meet briefly. When I first met Professor Alberto Ventura, I had just left my country and was still struggling with the anguish of being away from it and the sense of hopelessness. This was a pivotal time in my life. He and his colleagues at the University of Calabria demonstrated to us that there is still hope and that there are people out there with ears to hear and eyes to see human suffering. With their assistance, my friends and I were able to glimpse a new horizon in front of us. Rather than remaining silent, we spoke at the university about the state of my country and its people, and fresh rays of hope were unlocked, encouraging us to work harder and remain optimistic. Unfortunately, life prevented me from getting to know him more; nonetheless, in the few time I did have the chance to meet him, I discovered that he was an honourable, knowledgeable, and humble person. May his memory always be cherished». — *Saleha Yaqubi*

«Alberto had the ability - rare among Italian academics - to combine research and teaching work with political and social intent. I remember him being clear and determined while organising the conference with colleagues from Afghanistan, in the campaign for the freedom of the Kurdish leader Ocalan - he signed immediately and helped me collect dozens of signatures at the University of Calabria. He knew how to be on the right side. His contribution was also fundamental in the construction of the Centre for Interreligious Coexistence». —*Maria Laura Corradi*