



COLETTI, ALESSANDRO

COLETTI, Alessandro (b. Trieste, 1928, d. Rome, 1985), Italian scholar of Iranian languages and general oriental subjects, co-author with his wife, Hanne Grünbaum, of the most comprehensive Persian-Italian dictionary (1978) published in modern times. Coletti was trained in law at the University of Bologna, then taught literature in Italian secondary schools in Egypt, where he also learned classical Arabic. In 1973-74 he served as joint attaché at the Italian Cultural Institute in Tehran, where he improved his knowledge of modern and classical Persian and Kurdish; the first two fascicles of his comparative dictionary of the Kurdish Mokrī dialect appeared in 1984-85. During a research trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan in 1975 he learned Pashto and Urdu; five years later he published a Pashto grammar, and in 1985 the first fascicle of his projected Pashto-Italian dictionary appeared. He retired from teaching in his fifties, in order to dedicate his last years to the preliminary editorial work for a comparative lexicon of Iranian languages, of which only the first fascicle appeared (1984).

Despite Coletti's impressive activity in preparing grammars, dictionaries, translations (including poetry), and minor grammatical studies (on Baluchi folk songs of Mirjava and on the Jewish dialect of Kermān), his rather romantic attitude toward Persian and oriental studies and his naive approach to the description of languages isolated him from the official academic world. Most of his works were printed at his own expense and were never widely circulated; copies of all of them, as well as his unpublished notes, are held in the libraries of the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente in Rome



and the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples.

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(Adriano Rossi)