FONDAZIONE BRUNO KESSLER
MAGAZINE

A journey through Bruno Kessler's papers

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With a new research project, we also begin a journey through the papers of Bruno Kessler, in the company of historian Camilla Tenaglia, from FBK-ISIG (Italian-German Historical Institute)

December 5, 2022. Just now, at the vending machine, I was asked, "So you're starting today?" "Yes," but I've been working on it for months. Historical research is a job that you never really know when it starts, because when it starts it has actually been in your head and in your papers for a long time already. After all, I'm actually starting today. New (old) office, new (child) research, but above all my time that yes will be for the first time spent studying this.

"This" is the life of Bruno Kessler. President of the Province, President of the Region, Member of Parliament, Senator, representative of the Christian Democrats, inspirer of the University of Trento and the Trentino culture system, architect of the first Provincial Urban Plan, hunter. Kessler is the figure who perhaps best characterized the years of the twentieth century that shaped the Trentino we know today.

Why study the figure of Kessler today? Well, in part because we have only recently had free access to his private archives and so can really put the narrative that has been there so far to the test of documents. As a historian and as a citizen, as a citizen of Trentino above all, I cannot, however, disregard today's times. Does Trentino today still have something to say, can it still be a laboratory of policies and politics for the rest of Italy? Now, the right answer to this question I think is that it certainly would like to, but perhaps it does not have the strength. I don't think history is a teacher of life, I do think, though, that it gives us the tools to read the present and perhaps even to help us see the future. With this in mind, reconstructing the biography of one of the fathers of contemporary Trentino is not a futile exercise, but a first step to see where his insights have taken us.

So I'm starting today. I begin the real journey, the one I have so far only dreamed of and traveled for very short stretches. I begin to enter Kessler's life through his documents. The results will come later, in months, years. But the trip will be wonderful. And so, maybe it's worth sharing it. I thus ask you to come along, as I believe that there will be stories among those papers and that those stories will eventually give us a little piece of History, the one with a capital H.

Each month I will try to bring to this blog the best stories, both those of the papers and those of the historian who works with papers, because it seems almost needless to say one would not be without the other and, more importantly, vice versa.

PERMALINK

https://magazine.fbk.eu/en/news/a-journey-through-bruno-kesslers-papers/

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