IL GIALLO ITALIANO
A MINI CONFERENCE in ITALIAN on the theme of the ITALIAN CRIME FICTION

Saturday 27 April 2013 (10:00-13:00; registration from 9:30)
University of York, King’s Manor, York, YO1 7EP

This mini-conference will continue on a series of events dedicated to Italian language in York held in the last few years and in particular the previous mini-conference event dedicated to Italian language organized by LFA/L&LS in 2012. The talks are conducted in simple Italian and target an audience ranging between university students and adult learners of Italian from intermediate to advance level.

Conference programme

9:30 – 10:00
Registration and arrival (light refreshments: tea and coffee)

10:00 – 10:45
Il giallo Italiano: dalla censura del periodo fascista al successo odierno
Dr Giuliana Pieri, Reader in Italian and the Visual Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London

10:45 – 11:30
Rappresentare la città: il giallo degli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta
Francesca Ponzini, PhD Candidate, Royal Holloway, University of London

11:30 – 11:50
Break (light refreshments: tea and coffee)

11:50 – 12:35
Il ‘Caso Camilleri’ e la straordinaria popolarità del commissario Montalbano
Dr Lucia Rinaldi, Teaching Fellow in Italian, University College London

12:35 – 13:00
Questions and closing remarks
Talks:

Dr Giuliana Pieri, Reader in Italian and the Visual Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London
Title: *Il giallo Italiano: dalla censura del periodo fascista al successo odierno*

This paper will provide a historical overview of Italian crime fiction, from its relatively late and slow start to its national and international success in the 21st century. In the first half of the 20th century in Italy, the so-called *gialli* (which take their name from the distinctive yellow cover of the crime series by the Milanese publishing house Mondadori in the 1930s) consisted in vast quantities of British, French and American detective and noir novels in translation. The immense popularity enjoyed by this genre led Italian novelists to try their hand at writing their own crime fiction during the 1930s and the early 1940s. Italian readers, however, still showed a marked preference for foreign crime fiction; a trend that continued in the immediate post-war decades. Despite this xenophilia, Italian crime fiction has been growing steadily in importance and, since the late 1980s, has been enjoying unprecedented popularity. The success of the *gialli*, now a short hand term for any type of detective fiction and more widely any story which has a mystery element, has transformed the Italian literary scene at the turn of the new millennium and has been sustained by a number of prestigious Italian publishing houses and increasing critical interest. Detective novels, procedural novels, noir fiction, and true crime writing are all testimony to an unquenched appetite of the Italian public for home-grown crime fiction which extends also to cinema and television. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of this phenomenon, to introduce the audience to a number of Italian crime writers who are less known in the UK, and to begin to explore some of the peculiarities of the Italian tradition.

The two following papers will address two crucial moments in the development of postwar crime fiction by looking in detail at the establishment of a proper home-grown tradition in the 1950s and 1960s and by focusing on the Sicilian writer Andrea Camilleri, who is well-known to British and American audiences through translation and the TV series of Inspector Montalbano.

Giuliana Pieri is Reader in Italian and the Visual Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her main research interests are in the fields of post-war Italian crime fiction, Anglo-Italian artistic and cultural relations and the visual arts in Italy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has also published a number of studies on Italian crime writers, including Scerbanenco and contemporary crime writers (Camilleri, Lucarelli, Fois), including the volume *Italian Crime Fiction* (2011).

Francesca Ponzini, PhD Candidate, Royal Holloway, University of London.
Title: *Rappresentare la città: il giallo degli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta*

This paper will provide a historical overview of the development of a proper home-grown crime fiction tradition in the 1950s and 1960s. After the Second World War many changes took place in Italy and the country finally became modernised and urbanised. The economic miracle and the latest development of technology deeply transformed society, especially in the biggest Northern cities. Gradually, the traditional notion of Italian small and peaceful towns left place to the awareness of the new dimension of cities, which eventually grew to be more and more similar to the American ones.

Within this framework, the emerging Italian crime fiction tradition slowly turned into an effective and wide-ranging mean to describe and discuss all these changes taking place. Alongside the influence of the hard-boiled tradition, who reached its pinnacle during those years, the Italian giallo developed its own peculiar features, when becoming a way to portray the society and its issues. The description of environments pooled with the attention paid to small details drew readers’ awareness to problems and issues brought up by modernity and by the advent of mass culture. Crime fiction writers, who analysed in depth the problematic aspects of those years, gathered the first signs of shadows in this great economic and social development. Through their novels, the city context started to be extensively represented and its deep and contradictory currents clearly emerged.

Event organized by:
Languages for All, Department of Language and Linguistic Science
The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of this phenomenon, by presenting the audience some example taken from Giorgio Scerbanenco’s novels.

**Francesca Ponzini** earned her BA in Italian Contemporary Literature at The University of Milan with a thesis on Italo Svevo’s short crime story ‘L’assassinio di Via Belpoggio’. She gained an MA at the same university focusing on Luigi Malerba’s novels ‘Il serpente’ and ‘Il protagonista’. She is currently a third year PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London. The aim of her thesis is to scrutinize Italian popular crime fiction from 1950 to 1972. Those years were crucial for the development of this genre: scholars became conscious of its importance and writers started to build up a national tradition, far from the mere imitation of Anglo-American models.

**Lucia Rinaldi, Teaching Fellow in Italian, University College London**

**Title: Il ‘caso Camilleri’ e la straordinaria popolarità del commissario Montalbano**

This paper will focus on the famed Sicilian crime writer Andrea Camilleri, who is well-known to British and American audiences through translation and, particularly, the TV series of Inspector Montalbano, recently broadcast also by BBC4. Camilleri has sold millions of copies of his Montalbano novels in Italy and abroad; they have been translated in more than 30 languages, while the rights of the TV adaptations have been acquired by networks all around the world. An Italian fictional detective has never before gained such popularity both at home and beyond the national borders. Nonetheless, while Camilleri’s worldwide success has finally drawn attention towards Italian crime literature, in Italy it has also attracted pointed criticism by academics and members of the cultural elite who tend to shun the writer and dismiss his works as low-brow forms of narrative. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of what is now defined by literary critics as ‘the Camilleri case’; contextualize the Sicilian author’s success and examine the reasons for the immense popularity of his leading character; to introduce the audience to some of the intriguing outputs generated by the Montalbano phenomenon while analysing its perception in Italy and abroad.

**Lucia Rinaldi** is Teaching Fellow in Italian at University College London. Her research interests are twentieth-century Italian literature and culture, in particular crime and noir fiction. Her publications include: Andrea Camilleri. A Companio (2012); Assassinations and Murder in Modern Italy. Transformations in Society and Culture, co-edited with S. Gundle (New York and Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2007); and studied on the city in contemporary crime fiction and the narrative of Marcello Fois.
SERATE D’ARTE ITALIANA
A series of lectures in ITALIAN on the theme of Italian Art
University of York, King’s Manor, York, YO1 7EP

Wednesday 12 June 2013
19:00 - 20:00
Immagini e parole della politica: la città di Siena nel Trecento
Dr Michele Luigi Vescovi
Lecturer, Dept. History of Art, University of York
An illustration of the frescoes of the ‘Buon Governo’ in Siena and how they offer a fresh insight into the civic life of a medieval city, depicting ideas on the contemporary political situation.

Wednesday 19 June 2013
19:00 - 20:00
Chiome scomposte. L’interesse per le capigliature nell’Italia del Quattrocento, da Donatello a Botticelli
Dr Emanuele Lugli
Lecturer, Dept. of History of Art, University of York
An overview of Renaissance Italy hairstyles as seen through the work of Fiero della Francesca, Pollaiuolo and Francesco di Giorgio and how the style of the hair could be seen as one of the tools to unravel the culture of the period.

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Languages for All, Department of Language and Linguistic Science
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