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HISTORICAL
COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF THE
ASSOCIATIVE
MANAGEMENT OF
IRRIGATIONAL
WATER IN JAPAN
AND IN ITALY
(1900-1945)

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Storia dell'Idraulica

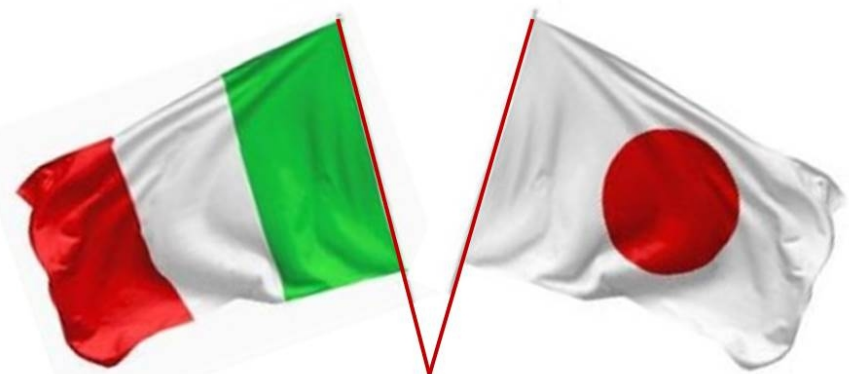
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Seen from Japan!



... disciplined coordination of all the hydraulic works within the same catchment area is a fundamental premise for a better and shared management of water...

Editorial

Seen from Japan! On the 12th of December 2016, we were given the following news on our website www.cic.cr.it

"Filippo Dornetti, Italian researcher working at Keio University, Tokyo singled us out as "a virtuous example of associative management of water" including us in a comparative study with Water Associative of Imagami Village (*Imagamiraku Futsū-IFSK*), an institution also founded in the second half of the 19th century by four local communities, with the aim of realizing the Imagami Otoshi Canal, deriving from the River Tone for both irrigational and high water floodway purposes.

We were not only judged in a most flattering way but the project established among its aims, to analyse and present these two realities as useful examples as new projects for decentralization of the associative management of the waters used in agriculture, with special attention given to the developing nations.

In the presentation of the project, it is interesting to note the many similarities identified in our territory with that land so far away and technologically advanced, yet evidently remained similar in the Irrigation management that also in Japan, is called upon to move with the rhythm of the water.

One particular step needs to be underlined in the affirmation "*The irrigated areas in Japan and in the Po Valley, in Italy, are universally known for their high level of control and the*

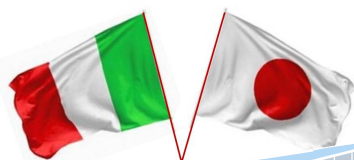
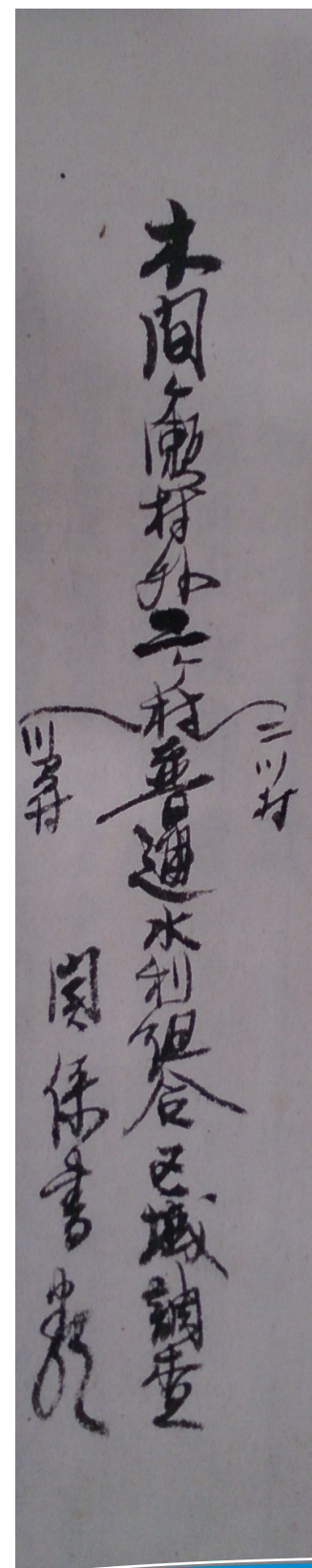
exploitation of hydraulic resources"

It is that effect of hydraulic resources exploitation that our Irrigation is known for even in faraway Japan which deserves some consideration, though a little bitter, thinking of who, in Lombardy and now in the European Union are angered, considering the Ancient Irrigation almost as a damage instead of a resource especially for those territories who return water that once in the river is destined to reach the sea in a few days!

We would publically like to thank the researcher and Japanese university for their attention, which we return from this very moment with the utmost willingness, in the hope of being able to make a contribution to the numerous irrigation managements outside Italy (but also within the nation) who aim at reaching our efficiency which evidently is noticed worldwide.

Now that the study has come to an end, it is with a deeper recognition that we publish an ample synthesis this Italian researcher has wished to donate to us and we in turn in new and thankful terms wish to share with all our readers.

The Editorial Office



Notes for a historical comparative study of the associative management of irrigational water in Japan and in Italy (1900-1945)

Since 1980, in more than seventy countries, policies of devolution in the management of irrigation towards irrigation consortia have been initiated. Nevertheless, though this process is happening it is not without criticism: among the most common problems the new consortia must face include financial difficulties, ambiguity in the consortium legal status and a lack of initiative spirit on the part of the organizers. Therefore, it is important to gather and compare the histories of water consortia that already exist and even though geographically far apart, act as models for the “younger consortia”. Italy and Japan offer numerous ancient and well-praised examples in this field: it was decided to work on the consortia experiences of these two countries in the first half of the 20th century, carrying out in particular, a comparative study between the Consorzio Irrigazioni Cremonesi (CIC), set up in 1883 in Italy and the Irrigational Consortium of the Municipalities of Kimagase, Futagawa and Kawama (*Kimagase Futagawa Kawama mura futsu suiri kumiai* abbreviated to CKFK) in the province of Chiba, Japan, active since 1915. The present work is based on diverse ar-

chive sources. For the Italian case, studies were made in the Consortium Archive (*Archivio del Consorzio*) concerning the increase in irrigation in the cremonese territory, documents conserved in the Cremona State Archives (*Archivio di Stato di Cremona*). Concerning the Japanese Consortium, consultation in the family estate of Hizuo Someya, the village of Nakazato-Abe (Nakazato-Abe, Someya Shizuo ke bunsho), found in Noda Local History Museum in the province of Chiba (Nodashi kyodo hakubutsukan). Shizuo is the grand-nephew of Someya Ryusaku (1876-1959), an important landowner and philanthropist resident in the municipality of Kawama. Ryusaku and as well as being the Mayor of the Kawama Prov-



ince, was also a member of the CKFK. It is for this very reason that among his personal documents information concerning the management of the consortium can be found. The CIC is a voluntary Irrigational Consortium of 59 *Comuni* that built



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and still today manage the "Pietro Vacchelli" Canal, with the main aim of providing water in the Cremona province, which has historically been short of water. The canal takes water from Marzano di Merlino (LO), on the left bank of the River Adda, with the main aim of increasing the availability to other minor canals but also to the Naviglio della Città di Cremona and Naviglio Grande Pallavicino, from which numerous other aqueducts crossing the Cremonese countryside among the Serio, Po and Oglio rivers branch out.

In the Italian case it is unique to point out that the initiative of the *Comuni* was made possible thanks to a specific

law (N° 1387 of 29 May 1873) which united the consortium of landowners, already stipulated in the regulation, to those Irrigation Consortia of the *Comuni* and Provinces, independent or associated among each other and even with other private bodies, with the evident aim of overcoming difficulties deemed insurmountable by the initiative of independent farmers in similar enterprises, notwithstanding the undeniable advantages generated by the guaranteed Irrigation.

The CKFK was founded in 1915 as a Consortium of farm owners within the territory of the three *Comuni* of Kimagase, Futagawa and Kawama, with the aim of confronting and solving the

management, and above all the maintenance of the drainage system of the rice fields water. The *Comuni* were part of the Higashi Katsushika territory (today part of the Noda district, province of Chiba), a strip of land between the rivers Tone and Edo, 40 kms from Tokyo. The foundation of the Consortium took place during a general reorganization of the local hydraulic network and the adjacent stretch of the river Tone.



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efficient to guarantee a financial autonomy was achieved only with the 1903 balance sheet. This unexplainable reluctance on the part of the Cremonese farmers continued to slow down the process of water assignation, which in the meantime had increased in the public concession from 25,00 to 37,00m³/s, leading to the depletion of the nominal availability only in ...1990!

On the other hand, but no less important, were the difficulties faced by the CKFK, which in the 1930s, had to face up to frequent and intense risks of canal flooding with consequent increases in standard and extraordinary expenses to safeguard the farms provided for.

The two case studies selected without doubt have contributed to the development of local agriculture yet were amassed with difficulties in the realization of the statutory objectives in the first half of the 20th century.

The CIC faced an unpredictable difficulty in the assignation of the precious water of the river Adda, so following a delay and the possibility of reaching a level of current revenue necessary for the reimbursement of costs for the Irrigational Service, suf-

In both these historical examples, we can find similarities and experiences that can provide indications and successful ideas for facing the difficulties and obstacles that afflict the newly founded water consortia .

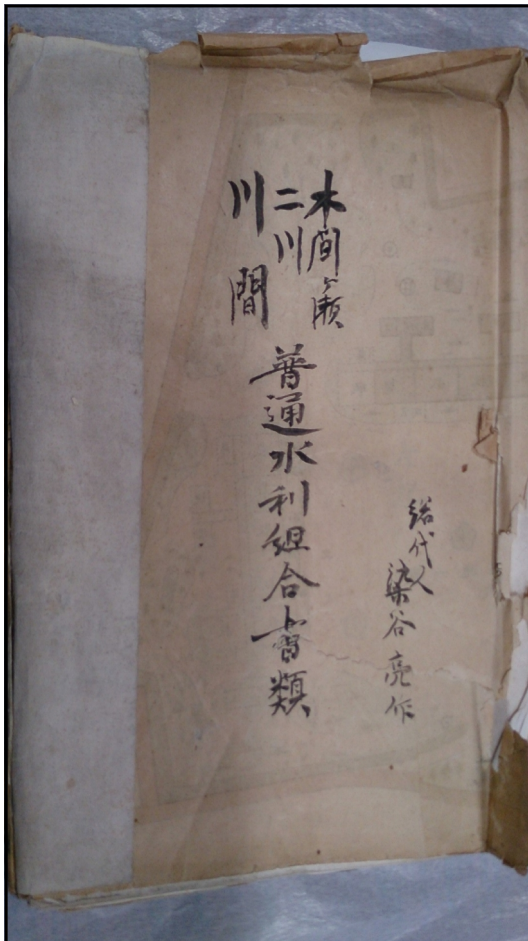
What can the proposed solutions of the CIC and CKFK Consortia teach us?

Studying the documentation available, it is possible to establish that these two consortia, even though in very different geographical and legal contexts, also provide important



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positive aspects in common. In both cases, maintenance costs were mainly covered by the levy of the participation quota in the situations of substantial financial tolerability, even if the Japanese Consortium obtained an important state subsidy in 1930. That was possible as both organizations were recognized as adequate powers of *governance*: unlike many Consortia founded recently in developing countries. The



Ancient document of CKFK

CIC and CKFK were authorized to collect the participation quota, with disciplinary and if necessary, sanctioning powers on the associates. In this way, both authorities were able to efficiently fight against unequal use of the common water managed. In the case of the CIC the irrigation water; the correct drainage of the rice fields that became hydraulic water protection in the case of the CKFK.

Management equilibrium was founded also by the fact that, in both cases, the administration was carried out by an elected Assembly provided with a high degree of autonomy which allowed more shared decisions and making difficult choices easier such as an increase in consortium quotas which were particularly necessary during the 20s due to the increase in labour in both Japan and Italy. The above-mentioned difficulties of the Consortia need not be explained due to organizational e financial deficiencies but rather due to socio-cultural and exceptional territorial difficulties.

The two Consortia emerged a few years after the approval of fundamental laws made their existence possible, paying for their uniqueness within the panoramic management of the waters. This uniqueness still produces difficulties as similar consortia have not been founded due to the legal modification that followed.

The CIC were the last to arrive both in time and along the water route among those who extracted water from the river Adda and consequently faced the "claims" of those who boasted the right to the water and



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those who used it. In those days a single law on the exploitation of river water did not exist. This problem is made clear in the long contentious procedure between the CIC and the Rivolta d'Adda Municipality, administrator of the Roggia Rivoltana (irrigation ditch), that began in the 19th century and continued until the 1920s. The disagreement was based on the legitimacy on the derivation of the river Adda water on the part of the Rivolta Municipality.

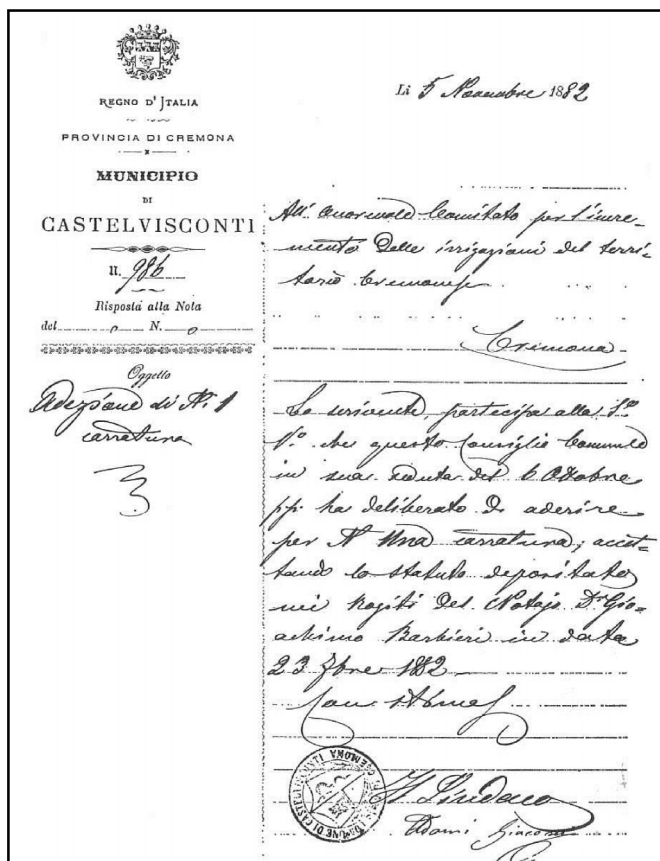
Italian Consortia is the following: a disciplined coordination of all the hydraulic works within the same catchment area is a fundamental premise for a better and shared management of water.

It is interesting that in both cases it was the consortium itself that took note of the possible causes of criticism and turned to the authorities proposing concrete plans to resolve the situation.

Concerning the Italian situation, it was the Lago d'Iseo Regulation, set up in

In the case of the CKFK, the excess of water that often made draining problematic, came from the discharge activated by the local drainage Consortium: coordination of drainage activities was lacking. The CKFK should have carried this out during the flooding of the rice fields, and the discharge of drainage, in order to maintain other land dry, was added to other water which was already at its limits. Japanese legislation separated these roles in two diverse organizations making the regular use of the territorial water difficult. In both cases therefore, the problem emerged due to uncoordinated management (even if not in conflict) of the water from the same catchment area.

A first lesson to be learnt from the Japanese and



Adhesion to CIC of the Castelvevisconti Municipality(CR)



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1929 and strongly desired by the Cremonese and the sub-lake stretch of the river Oglio, emissary along which

CONSORZIO DEI COMUNI
PER L'INCREMENTO DELLE IRRIGAZIONI NEL TERRITORIO CREMONESE

Certificato N. 13

del deposito nelle casse della Società Cooperativa Popolare di Mutuo Credito in Cremona, quale Consorzio onorario del Consorzio, di numero 13

Obbligazioni del Prestito Consorziale 27 Aprile 1901 del complessivo valore nominale di Italiane Lire 100.000.000.000

fruttifere il quattro per cento col godimento dal 1° Ottobre 1901 appartenenti al signor Marconi Orsola del Comune Casalnuovo

le quali Obbligazioni sono così contrassegnate:

Sorte	Numero
Prima	101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200

Cremona li 11 Novembre 1901

Il Presidente del Consorzio
Per il Società Cooperativa Popolare di Mutuo Credito in Cremona
L'Amministratore - Il Direttore - Il Cassiere

development as the increased and more efficient hydraulic availability but even as a means of keeping the peace among the various claimers: an example which could lead to similar benefits in many other parts of the world!

Referring to the Adda and the CIC in particular, the Lake Iseo Regulation was quickly utilized and in 1931 the Cremonese struck again, lead by the lawyer Giovanni Vacchelli. He founded the Adda consortium that allowed the regulation of Lake Como assuring a



greater quantity of water within one fair legislation. Thanks to the activities of the Oglio and Adda Consortia, the CIC was able to understand that the uncontrolled and unpredictable shortage of summer water due to the grass roots indiscipline or those who took advantage has been resolved, habits which rarely disappear spontaneously.

The Japanese case saw Mr. Rūysaku Someya, landowner and member of the Consortium Assembly, founded the Association for the promotion of Irrigation (Nōgyō suiri kisei dōmeikai)

the disputes for the water boast a thousand year long story! During the driest periods the Brescian water consumers considered they had the right to dam completely the river bed in order to divert all the water leaving the Cremonese ... without !

Lake Iseo Reservoir regulation

Managed by the Oglio Consortium which has the power to supervise an equal distribution of the water. It became a powerful means of irrigational





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Cremonesi**

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in 1936. He proposed the construction of a new and more powerful drainage canal in cement to be built



in 4 years and that would solve the problem of water mobility for the local drainage.

Considering even the interest in the project on the part of the authorities, the outbreak of the Japanese-Chinese War in 1936, followed the year after by the great flooding of the river Tone that hit even the Higashi Katsushika territory put a halt to the project. It was never reconsidered.

The analysis of these Consortia, even though distant and different, has shown that the initiative given rise by

those who live the problems linked to the use of water day by day is indispensable to find effective and truly improved solutions, able to lead to a more sustainable use of a natural common resource and solve never-ending conflicts.....and who knows "peace among the people".

*Filippo Dornetti, Italian researcher
Keio University, Tokyo*



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