

First I would like to express my extreme pleasure to be here with you today to attend the Opening Ceremony of the 2015 ---2016 Academic Year. My thanks are extended to Prof. Mario Panizza for his kind invitation to Alexandria University that I have the honor to present.

Roma Tre

Roma Tre University is one of the acknowledged points of reference both in the Italian and the international universities. It is renowned with its wide-range courses and innovation that focuses on the quality of the teaching and the introduction of the young into the working world.

Alexandria University

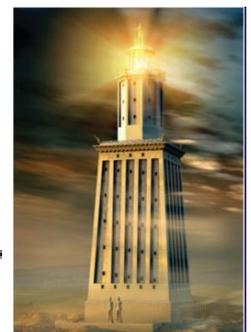
As being presented, I come from Alexandria University.



Alexandria University is a public research and education university in Alexandria, Egypt. It was established in 1938 as a satellite of Fouad University (the name of which was later changed to Cairo University), becoming an independent entity in 1942.

Recently, it has been widely reported that Polish archaeologists have unearthed thirteen lecture halls that once belonged to the ancient Alexandrian University in ancient Egypt, dated of about 30 BC (BC before Christ) to the discovery. This date corresponds very well with the well-known Mouseion, Alexandria's famous ancient University. Theon is the last known director of the Mouseion,

The lighthouse of Alexandria “Pharos of Alexandria” forms the main part of Alexandria University logo. This lighthouse was built by the Ptolemaic Kingdom between 280 and 247 BC. It is about 120 and 137 m tall. It was one of the tallest man-made structures in the world for many centuries, and was regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was badly damaged by three earthquakes between AD 956 and 1323; it then became an abandoned ruin.



Alexandria university in numbers:

Alexandria University (AU) is the second oldest and the second largest in Egypt after Cairo University. It is a mega university, has about 189,870 students (165237 undergraduates and 24733 postgraduates). The faculty members are about 6151, and the total number of administrative staff is about 16770.

AU has 20 faculties (undergraduate and postgraduate programs) and 3 research institutes granting only postgraduate degrees. They cover all fields of sciences and humanities with almost all subspecialties.

Alexandria University has a role towards African region, the Arab region, the Mediterranean region, Far East and the world. There is a branch for AU in Matrouh governorate (west of Alexandria), and 2 off-site campuses in Southern Sudan and Chad.

There are several centers of excellences, of which are: Alexandria Centre for Maritime Archaeology & Underwater Cultural Heritage, Nile basin studies, Centre for Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language, Stem Cell Research Centre, Nano technology centre and centre for education for sustainable development.

There are 9 University hospitals with 4500 beds treating about 1.5 million patients per year. There are about 400,000 admissions ranging from minor to ultra-major operations e.g. transplantations and open heart surgeries.

Alexandria University shares research projects with universities in Italy in different disciplines. We share 9 Tempus projects, 7 projects under ERASMUS MONDUS scheme, 2 projects under the ENPI, and 5 FP7 projects. This research and education projects cooperation strengthen our links and relationships with Italy throughout a hybrid of Egyptian–Italian cultures and values, which provide best prospects to endorse the achievement of AU goals.

AU has 9 MOU with different Italian Universities; 2 of them are active, with Palermo University and Politecnico de Melano.

Italians in Alexandria

There are many commonalities between Italy and Egypt. Alexandria and Rome have a long history dated back to the beginning of the millennium. Italian community was the second European community in Alexandria after the Greek during the nineteenth century and till the Second World War.

Evidence of the Roman era is still visible today at sites such as Pompey's pillar and Kom El Dikka .



The Italians played a remarkable part of the development of Alexandria city and in its urban growth and morphology, mainly in:

- Architecture made by: Antonio Lasciacs, responsible for many properties in the former Place des Consuls later renamed Mohamed Ali Square, Mario Rossi who designed important churches and mosques, and Guisepp Alessandro Loria.
- Education; where Italians founded a number of schools, e.g. faculty of Agriculture in Alexandria University and Don Bosco technical school which is still up till now has the good reputation in this field of vocational education,
- Economic activities; where Italians founded the first Italian-Egyptian Bank (Banco Italo-Egiziano) in 1922 and the commercial Bank.
- Culture; The intermingling of Italians with the native people in Alexandria had affected the Arabic language of Alexandrians, where a number of words borrowed form Italian language are still used till now; e.g. Battista, Biciclette, posta, and punto.

Enhancement of Cultural Heritage and the Role of Education as a Process of Inclusion and Pacification

Cultural Heritage is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also mode of life, fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.

It is a fact that our world is in the grip of profound transformation, as globalization makes the planet an ever-smaller place. Revolution in telecommunications and social media has created bonds across the continents. On the other hand, profound unease continues, and many social, economic and political problems erupted. These enormous challenges are worked out in practically every arena: literature, visual art, music, costumes, ritual and objects of everyday use. Our cultural heritage including language and religion is severely threatened in many ways in this globalized world. That's why heritage should be directed towards establishing particular national narratives in

reaction to the influence of globalization on one hand, and the local on the other. This is the only way for a society to perceive its present and its identity.

Egypt, for example, faces a huge cultural challenge either from radical groups or religious extremists. For the time being EGYPT– after a popular uprising and new political regime - devotes all possible efforts to enhance cultural heritage and tries to find possible solutions, where the creative diversity of its people is linked with the universals of a common humanity. We think that “Heritage” must be understood not only as a potentially democratic phenomenon, but also as possibility for promoting social change. The goal beyond the processes like “Inclusion and Pacification” should achieve the social justice and the wider human rights framework. In the developing countries like my country, the challenge not only to raise the standard of living but how to secure the urgent and different needs for the new generations who are increasing in their numbers exponentially. This dilemma, if not faced scientifically, politically, and economically will lead to social conflicts and will threaten our national identity.

Indeed, Egyptian cultural heritage is in a crisis that could be seen in various manifestations, such as behavioral deterioration, absence of critical thought, diatribes increase that have no input in the development of the community, intolerance toward the ones who are different in their culture, gender, education or religion. Two years ago, people were divided into a group that supports the concept of a civil state, and another group that calls for a religious one. What made matters more complicated is the absence of commination and dialogue between both groups. The majority of the Egyptian people came out on the 30th of June 2013 revolution to support the civil state and ensure that Egypt will be as ever moderate and will never be an extremist religious state. However, it should be clear that the civil state does not oppose religion; it rather acknowledges the freedom of belief and religion with all their creeds, opinion, diligence, beliefs, and differences. In Egypt, the civil state is an institutional state that relies on authentic Islamic principle as means for decision making and running the affective of the country. It also issues its decision in accordance with the people's best interest which changes to adapt to the circumstances and the changes of time.

The role of “education” is extremely important and necessary. In a situation like this, the educational institutions are among the most important influential rearing institutions in society, where children learn basic knowledge shaping their values and altitudes. In universities or higher education institutions, individual's characters are supposed to form and mature, and through which a number of options are made available so that he/she can decide what best suits him/her.

In education, there is an urgency to develop a critical culture in which heritage is approached and understood as a dialogue between past and present. “Pacification” as well should be implemented gently by providing the moral guidance with inclusion of all diversity of students to convert communities’ behavior to cultural values and norms fairly and on an equal footing. Thus, education will lead youth to be more open to plurality

and more accepting of the other opinion, would believe in rationality and scientific approach, would have an amount of scientific culture, would be a person of great historical and cognitive knowledge and would be well informed of what is happening around the world.

Women are the custodians of culture and transmitters of values for future generations. **The recognition of their critical creative and positive contributions in shaping the culture of the country has been too long underestimated.** Their empowerment through education and human rights and logic explanation of religion, is an enormous force for the positive transformation and renewal of both the cultural paradigm and the development process. Currently the percentage of females is approximately 51% of the total enrolled students in higher education institutes in Egypt. In Alexandria University, the percentage is above the national level (54%). Regarding Au faculty members, we used to have male prevalence; but this is no longer present except at the top of the pyramid at the rank of full professors. Balance shifts towards females as we go down where by 66% of demonstrators and assistant lecturers are females. AU council has 7 female deans and 16 male deans; and the first female University president in the **Middle East** was the president of Alexandria University (2009 – 2011).

Among the organizations that could also play an important role in development and cultural diversity are media organizations, especially the platforms that reach people in their homes, such as televisions; but unfortunately many TV programs currently encourage negative values. The media is a complementary means of education alongside educational institutions; mass media can play a role in the dissemination of values that promote dialogue, acceptance of others and acceptance of differences. It has to stimulate intellect through the content they provide.

In our recent time, many countries are living in turmoil mainly because of social conflicts. It is our role as intellectuals and educators to minimize the negative factors and maximizes the positive. This could be achieved through enhancement of cultural heritage and good education. This will lead on the long run to the great value of inclusion and pacification in the society. Cooperation between universities and collaboration across borders can be also a great mean for “pacification”. Staff and student exchange has a great role in sharing experiences and reinforcing dialogue, which narrows the gap between cultures and civilizations. Out of this, AU has recently launched an initiative to sponsor short term travel (6 months) of our junior faculty members to travel and learn all over the world and do joint research in all disciplines. This initiative is called “AlexGYR” (Alexandria Global Young Researcher). The main aim is exposing our junior staff to other cultures and promoting acceptance of the others.

We believe that the best way to combat extremism is by exposure to cultural heritage from different counties. We believe that together we are better and stronger in face of **extremism and terrorism.**

Thank you