

- Obituary -

FEDERICA LETIZIA CAVALLO

(10 February 1973 – 16 September 2023)



After just over a year and a half of painful battle against unsurmountable cancer, Federica Letizia Cavallo left us on Saturday 16 September, in Venice. She spent the last days of her stay in the hospice of the San Raffaele Arcangelo hospital in Fondamenta della Madonna dell'Orto, a few steps from her beloved Venetian home in Campo del Ghetto Novo. Trained as a geographer at the State University of Milan, her desire to explore the complicated accumulation of relationships between the stories of people and places and to understand the diversity of cultures, was evident from then on, starting her 'grand tour' from the shores of island dearest to her, Minorca, and from there continuing in search of other microcosms delimited by water.

Federica concluded her PhD in Environmental quality and regional economic development at the University of Bologna in 2006 with a thesis dedicated to the concept of insularity applied to the case study of Menorca ('Islands at the crossroads: Menorca between Balearization and territorial values'). Subsequently, she carried out intense teaching activities, managing to effectively stimulate students' attention to territorial issues and always inviting them to retain their awareness of the most urgent challenges in a rapidly changing world.

Following her initial interest in the theme of insularity, which was constantly explored until the first symptoms of the disease appeared (which prevented her from completing her carefully planned research on the island of Socotra), she activated a research trajectory on wetlands with seriousness and passion, enriching it with in-depth studies on reclamation landscapes, producing significant monographs and articles in highly appreciated journals and miscellaneous volumes.

Federica held the role of associate professor of Geography in the Department of Economics of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where she taught courses in Geography, Geography of Tourism, Territorial Development and Tourist Sustainability, Geography and Environmental Policy. More recently she dealt with Venice and its lagoon, investigating the Venetian aquapelago, with its ancient agricultural production, paying particular

attention to what remains of lagoon viticulture and olive growing. And this research allowed her to come into contact with the precious human asset of the last greengrocers and winemakers of the lagoon, giving back, not only to the academic world, but to the protagonists of that decline themselves, a useful tool to overcome the amnesia that disperses everything.

Her methodological approach followed the most up-to-date tenets of Cultural Geography, integrating the traditional interpretation of water landscapes by adopting more refined views in order to effectively interpret the most complex and urgent issues raised by the rapid changes and dense hybridisations triggered by globalisation. Federica's contribution can be summarised in having gone beyond the objectivity of geographical space, always seeking the deepest stratifications of meaning that ensure the uniqueness of places, of every place, even marginal ones, educating her students to the sympathetic logic of respect and listening.

Federica was an active member of *Shima's* editorial board from 2019-2023 and her contributions and advice were warmly appreciated by the editorial team. She co-edited the well-received theme issue on Venice and its lagoon (v15n2) which was subsequently translated into Italian and published as *Arcipelago delle maree* by Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina in 2023. She will be sadly missed.

Francesco Vallerani, for the *Shima* Editorial Board

October 19th 2023