HOMMAGE TO FRANCESCO BERLINGIERI
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since resigned as President, but has retained all his virtues and qualities, which is why he is an unusually admired and loved person.

Talking about elements or constituent parts, it is a fact that the Berlingieri family has been a girdle of the CMI, not for decades but for more than a century. At the CMI Conference in Paris in 1900, three years after the creation of the CMI, Francesco Berlingieri, a young maritime lawyer from Genoa, was a member of the Italian delegation. At the Conference in Copenhagen in 1913, Francesco Berlingieri headed the Italian delegation, whereas Giorgio Berlingieri, a young maritime lawyer from Genoa, was a member. In 1959, at the Rijeka Conference, Giorgio Berlingieri was a member of the Italian delegation, as was Francesco Berlingieri, a young maritime lawyer from Genoa. In 1977 at the Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Francesco Berlingieri was the President of the CMI, serving from 1976 to 1991, and Giorgio Berlingieri, a young maritime lawyer from Genoa, a member of the Italian delegation.

The agile reader will have realised that the Berlingieris are not wasting names. Hence, among them, there are as far as the CMI is concerned two Francesco and two Giorgios. Among them again, “our” Francesco, as well as his father and grandfather have been Presidents of the Italian MLA and active within the CMI and Giorgio, a son of the present Francesco and the current president of the Italian MLA has recently been elected an Executive Councillor of the CMI. I note in passing that there was a famous cartographer by the name of Francesco Berlingieri in Florence already in the 15th century. We can only guess what the name of his son was.

Since I have not met the first Francesco and the first Giorgio related to the CMI and do not know much of their work, I note that at least in a modern perspective, there is no doubt that the Francesco Berlingieri who is the “honouree” of the essays in this book, has been truly outstanding and of immeasurable value for the work of the CMI and the reputation of the CMI, whose President ad Honorem he is.

Unification of maritime law is the object of CMI. There are many ways in which the work and influence of an individual in that regard can be measured. One is to look at the international conventions to which he – you will have guessed that I am talking about Francesco Berlingieri – has made significant contributions. At the risk of missing some, the mere reading of the list of international maritime law conventions in the latest CMI Yearbook and recalling Francesco’s widespread activities and fields of interest, suggests that at least 16 conventions have benefitted from significant contributions from him. A connoisseur would probably be able to trace his imprints in all of them. He would himself be the best connoisseur, but far too modest to tell us the true extent of his contributions.

In view of all this, I am very pleased indeed to congratulate Francesco to his 88th birthday and with this book, Essays in Honour of Francesco Berlingieri.