

preached. Each exhibited a neglect or carelessness in their relationships to women that contradicted their public advocacy of strong nuclear families and the elevation of women's status in the new Italy. Finally, Linda Reeder argues that by the late nineteenth century, new scientific theories began to redefine the bad husband as degenerate and resistant to the domestic harmony that was requisite to a healthy nation.

The final two essays address sexual deviancy, a category that was broad and malleable during the nineteenth century and included behaviors discussed above such as homosexuality and adultery. Pietro Gibellini and Edoardo Ripari analyze the sonnets of Giuseppe Gioachino Belli as tricky but useful documents of the illicit sexual practices of the Roman lower-classes such as prostitution and homosexuality. In her exploration of infanticide, Silvia Chiletti finds an increasing divergence between legal theory, which held that only 'honest' women could employ the concept of 'honor' to excuse their crimes, and the courts, which increasingly absolved even prostitutes for killing their offspring. This trend toward the acquittal of infanticidal mothers typified not only Italy but Europe more generally at the turn of the twentieth century.

As is clear from this all too brief overview, Babini, Beccalossi, and Riall are to be commended for putting together such a rich and varied collection of essays. Future research should extend the transnational approach to the many other European and American nations that had diplomatic, artistic, feminist, scientific, and other exchanges with nineteenth-century Italy. It would also be useful to explore further the complicated relationship between the new history of sexuality and other more traditional political (touched on in this volume), economic, and social approaches to the same era. As a pioneering model for subsequent research, *Italian Sexualities Uncovered* constitutes an essential step toward the incorporation of sexuality into the larger narrative of modern Italian history.

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Con Pertini al Quirinale. Diari 1978–1985, by Antonio Maccanico, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2014, 600 pp., €36.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-15-25099-5

The book *Con Pertini al Quirinale* is a collection of Antonio Maccanico's diaries covering the period 1978–1985 when he served as general secretary in the Office of the President of the Republic Sandro Pertini. Elected shortly after Aldo Moro's kidnapping and killing to replace Giovanni Leone who resigned for his alleged involvement in a bribery scandal, Pertini faced the daunting task of restoring the prestige of the institution representing the head of the Italian state. Socialist deputy and member of the Constitutional Assembly, Pertini was chosen because his prominent role in the Resistance made him the embodiment of the foundational values of the Italian Republic. Although Pertini's moral stature earned him unanimous and unconditional praise among the population, making him the most popular president in the history of the Italian Republic, his flamboyant character and dialectical exuberance constantly put him at the risk of

making *faux pas*. It was in those moments that Maccanico's constant presence at Pertini's side proved decisive in preserving the President's image.

A distinguished civil servant with proven domestic and international experience, Maccanico had represented Italy in the preparatory convention for the direct election of the European Parliament. After leaving the Quirinale in 1987 he was briefly president of the merchant bank Mediobanca, while in the 1990s he became a prominent figure of the Centre-Left coalition serving as Minister of Post and Telecommunications, and Institutional Reforms.

Maccanico's diaries cover seven years marked by many dramatic events like the terrorist bombing of Bologna's train station, the discovery of the P2 lists, the execution of the journalist Mino Pecorelli, the Ambrosiano scandal and Roberto Calvi's death. The Diaries also describe the crucial transition in the history of the Italian republic sanctioned by the decline of the Democrazia Cristiana (DC). Because of the electoral weakening of the DC Pertini swore in the first two Prime Ministers coming from a different party, Giovanni Spadolini from the Partito Repubblicano Italiano (PRI), and the leader of the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) Bettino Craxi. The Diaries provide interesting insights on both executives.

Both Maccanico and Pertini had positive views about Spadolini, praised for his efforts at mediation between the main political parties and his respect for the institutions. Maccanico's views are particularly interesting as he himself was a supporter of the PRI. This affiliation derived from the close ties he had with the PRI leader Ugo La Malfa, in Maccanico's words 'the person who, along with my father and my uncle Adolfo, had the most important influence on my moral and intellectual formation' (p. 60). Maccanico describes the struggle of the PRI after Ugo La Malfa's death in 1979 and his constant effort to reconcile the divisions between the main PRI leaders Spadolini, Giorgio La Malfa and Bruno Visentini.

Pertini's and Maccanico's relationship with the Socialist leader Bettino Craxi was more complicated. Craxi's disrespect for the presidency (p. 379) and his 'arrogance' (p. 511) often drew heavy criticism from Pertini. However, Pertini's judgement towards the leader of his own party was never entirely negative. For his part Maccanico lucidly observes that Craxi's centralist style risked polarising politicians and voters between 'craxiani' and 'anti-craxiani'. Maccanico implicitly warns against the risk of transforming politics into an empty confrontation between a faction uncritically abiding by the political view of the leader and the other criticising him 'without a clear idea about what to do' (p. 436). Such thoughts are particularly relevant in modern Italian politics. For example a similar phenomenon occurred under Silvio Berlusconi and nowadays with Matteo Renzi.

While the DC headed towards a slow albeit constant electoral decline, the other main political party, the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI), was left devastated by the sudden loss of its undisputed leader Enrico Berlinguer. The diaries describe Pertini's deep emotion and his decision to accompany Berlinguer's coffin at the funeral. Maccanico also analyses the crisis of the PCI and the unsuccessful attempt to fill the enormous leadership void left by the Sardinian leader.

The judicial power was also affected by Italy's profound institutional crisis. In this regard, Maccanico devotes many pages to the false accusations that led to the removal of the head of the Bank of Italy, Paolo Baffi, and his collaborator Mario Sarcinelli. According to Maccanico the unfounded accusations against Baffi and Sarcinelli were a retaliation of the DC leader Giulio Andreotti for the Bank of Italy's hard stance against the controversial banker Michele Sindona.

In this overall picture of moral decline, Maccanico is well aware of the fact that the widening gap between the 'institutional degradation and improvisation of the political forces' (p. 59) and Pertini's respectability risked raising expectations of 'miraculous solutions by the President' (p. 79) to preserve the stability of the system. This observation allows drawing a parallel between Pertini's figure and that of Giorgio Napolitano, whose personal prestige was decisive in steering Italy past the political and

economic turmoil triggered by the Eurozone crisis. A man of the left like Pertini, Napolitano embodied unifying civic values common to the entire country. In this sense, as summarised by the historian Paolo Soddu, careful editor of these Diaries, with his presidency Pertini 'left the country an extraordinary heritage, the reinvention of the presidency, a fundamental resource for all the following heads of state, both those who will accompany the self-destructive fury of the parties, and those who had to face the manifest effects of the systemic crisis' (p. 44). For this reason Maccanico's diaries are fundamental reading not only for historians and political scientists, but also for those observers who want to get a full understanding of the still unresolved crisis of the Italian political system.

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Stars and Masculinities in Contemporary Italian Cinema, by Catherine O'Rawe, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 230 pp., £70.00 (hardback), 978-1-137-38146-0

With this engaging and informative work Catherine O'Rawe makes an important contribution to Italian Film Studies. One of the latest titles in Palgrave Macmillan's Global Masculinities series, *Stars and Masculinities in Contemporary Italian Cinema* brings much needed new insight to the study of contemporary film by addressing the particular anxieties surrounding Italian masculinity. As O'Rawe notes in the book's introduction, little critical attention has been devoted to the analysis of male stars and constructions of masculinity in Italian cinema, despite the much-noted dominance of the field by male directors and male-driven plotlines. She rectifies that lacuna here with sharp analysis of a wide range of current stars and productions from the year 2000 on. Exploring topics often glossed over, such as acting, sound, corporality, fan culture and manipulations of race, O'Rawe situates her study in the context of a larger 'cultural discourse concerning the supposed crisis of Italian masculinity' (4). She engages this popular trope to argue that the crisis might ultimately be productive as it paves the way for emergent modes of Italian gender performance.

O'Rawe's text is divided into two parts. The first, 'Crisis and the Contemporary Italian Man', analyses films set in a contemporary Italy rife with wounded emotional men and their nagging or absent female partners. Chapter 1 focuses primarily on actor Riccardo Scamarcio and his tenuous transition from teen heartthrob to serious actor, particularly in relationship to his own physicality. Proposing the idea of an informed reciprocal gaze between Scamarcio and fans, O'Rawe argues not only for the importance of the actor's early female teenage fan base, but also for his self-awareness as heartthrob, productively manipulated in a film like *L'uomo perfetto* (Lucini, 2005). Chapter 2 then turns to mainstream comedies and their fascination with the middle-aged everyman, frightened by the looming spectres of monogamy, paternity and precarious employment. This chapter is particularly engaged with the release of anxiety, in comedies such as *Posti in piedi in paradiso* (Verdone, 2012), through liminal experience: the inhabitation of