

entire families, and which became one of the few options available for married women with children, with low educational background, who were pushed by the family of origin and by their reproductive tasks after marriage to take up homework. Young women generally learnt shoemaking as unpaid apprentices, from older women, through a gendered form of labour socialisation. Homeworkers abstained from taking up formal factory work outside the home, due to occasional bad experiences in the factory (power hierarchies and sexual harassment), but also because they had witnessed male factory workers' alienation. Homework, instead, was associated with the perception of being autonomous from the bosses, managing one's own labour time in the safe space of the home. However, according to the author, due to the low-paid piece rates and the intensity of the tasks, homeworkers ended up in a cycle of self-exploitation, which forced them to adopt a very tight schedule in order to combine productive and reproductive work. Care tasks (cleaning, childcare, cooking) occupied most of the day, so that homeworkers often took up piecework shoemaking at night, working up to 14 hours a day. With the economic crisis of 2008, and the on-going global outsourcing of shoe production, home-based shoemaking practically disappeared from this region, further marginalising women's contribution to the success of fashion items *Made in Italy*.

The volume has the merit of highlighting an under-researched aspect of women's labour in Italy. The economic and sociological analyses are rich and supported by a wide range of statistics, policy documents and historical material. The author's thesis of homeworkers' subalternity to capital, patriarchy and the state, however, means that women's life narratives, while evoked in the title of the volume, are less prominent within the book. Women's affective investments in productive and reproductive work are often equated with alienation and limited life choices, so that our understanding of homeworkers' subjectivity and agency remains limited. The interviewees' quest for autonomy through homework, or the fact that they encouraged their daughters to study and to 'emancipate themselves from any form of dependency from the male gender', are thus cast into the background, whereas they are deserving of further investigation.

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Food and Foodways in Italy from 1861 to the Present, by Emanuela Scarpellini, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, ix + 264 pp., \$100 (hardback). ISBN 978-1-137-56960-8.

In this book, Scarpellini deftly shows that meals are especially compelling lenses through which to better understand social relations, evoke ethnic and national imaginaries, and explore cultural and technological change through time. From an aristocratic Sicilian feast at the time of Italian unification in the 1860s to an intimate Piedmontese dinner during the country's great industrial transformation one century later, Scarpellini highlights that rich descriptions of food production, acquisition, preparation and service can give important insights into the economic and social history of Italy. Reconstructed from oral histories, archives, literature, and print media, these sumptuous narratives (describing historical meals at times quite sparse) are astutely complemented

by rich sociological, historical, and demographic context. Food and foodways are shown to be, at the same time, universal and culturally-specific artefacts: ‘everything converges in the act of eating – the agricultural, industrial, and commercial conditions of a given place; traditional customs and religious beliefs; differences in social and economic background, gender and age; taste preferences and culinary art; geographical characteristics, cultural identity, public policies, and more’ (ix).

Chapter 1 explores the luxury of aristocratic dining in an era of great social transformation and the nobility’s relative decline. The two decades following unification in 1861 saw a rigid social hierarchy become more implicit while the elaborate rules codifying how to eat, what to eat and when, became even more rigid in an effort to maintain exclusivity. Public-private space, cutlery, and table manners all reinforced the social order, even while the idea of the nation began to replace the old local cultural and culinary imaginaries. But the lavishness of the haute feast stood in stark contrast with the rest of ‘poor and backward Italy’. Chapter 2 describes the nature and culture of peasant provisioning and consumption until the turn of the twentieth century. Hunger was the tie that bound rural Italy together, where more than two thirds of the country’s population engaged in a diversified form of agriculture, and food (despite or perhaps because of its scarcity) maintained its central role in daily life. Scarpellini highlights that the customary division of labour between the sexes, the modes of oral transmission of traditional knowledge, and the creative adaptive capacity were left unchanged, even as hard times encouraged a great emigration to urban cities, Europe, and the Americas beyond. Chapters 3 and 4 trace the evolution of Italian food and foodways through the two World Wars. Alongside rapid industrialisation and urbanisation came the tropes of modernisation and progress as well as reforms in nutrition and public health; the urban working class however, like their rural counterpart, continued to experience the bitter reality of poverty and malnutrition. Wartime provisioning spurred the advancement of a food industry (still semi-artisanal) producing processed, canned, scientifically-advanced fare. While technological innovations altered the culinary marketplace, Fascist discourse and practices elevated authentic, traditional food as a key marker of Italian identity and patriotic values. As Scarpellini notes, ‘Italianness, colonialism, praise of “natural” national virtues like parsimony and moderation..., gender divisions, the cult of the family, even racism – everything emerged at the table’ (p. 96).

The post-Second World War era, however, was a period of historical amnesia regarding the recent past: the war, dictatorship, rationing, propaganda, and hunger all forgotten. Chapter 5 explores Italy’s leap into the future. Referring to this time as the great transformation, Scarpellini details rapid advancement in the manufacturing and service sectors, at the expense of traditional rural agriculture. The economic miracle saw ‘American’ lifestyles become fashionable, while new technologies and newly acquired wealth revolutionised production, provisioning, and preparation practices. But 1973 ushered in a new phase, marked by political crisis, social fragmentation, and criticism of the consumer society (p. 141). As shown in Chapter 6, as the ‘Italian dream’ became reality – with ever more food gracing Italian dinner tables and consumption continuing to increase – globalisation brought with it new diseases of affluence, culinary and cultural homogenisation and, reciprocally, resistance to it. Regional gastronomic traditions began to take on new prominence and, as the author argues, Italy accentuated its unusual combination of many different food cultures in the same place. Chapter 7 brings us to the present, highlighting the simultaneous localisation and globalisation of Italian cuisine and the ambivalent effects of neoliberal restructuring (from GIs to GMOs).

In all, Scarpellini has provided a sweeping and engaging account of Italian food and foodways spanning more than 150 years. Very well versed in the existing body of literature on Italian

culinary culture (especially the work of Montanari, Helstosky, Dickie, and Cinotto), the book brings a breadth of scholarly analysis into one convenient, concise, and compelling manuscript. While the expansive scope of the project prevents detailed accounts of any particular era, or any particular aspect of culinary culture or consumption, its generality makes it excellent for introductory courses in Italian history, culture, or cuisine. The book's primary contribution is the author's expertise in and attention to material culture, and her sensory-rich reconstructions of historical meals skilfully work to bring the reader right up to the table in a pedagogically effective way. Rich in both qualitative and quantitative evidence, and abundant (if somewhat shallow) in relevant insights from leading social theorists, the book expertly reveals how the food and foodways of a given time and place are a comprehensive social and economic microcosm complete with universal elements and thoroughly local characteristics. It will certainly appeal to food studies scholars, culinary and cultural historians, and aficionados of Italian fare alike.

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Challenging the Mafia Mystique: Cosa Nostra from Legitimation to Denunciation, by Rino Coluccello, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, vii + 260 pp., £68.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-137-28049-7

The provocative thesis and substantive variety of writings examined make Rino Coluccello's *Challenging the Mafia Mystique* a welcome contribution to the relatively few books that specifically analyse representations of the Mafia in Sicily, as crafted in an extensive body of literature. The overarching argument elaborated in the study maintains that in the very first material signs of the Mafia, traced back to the brigands in the eighteenth century as proto-mafiosi, such features as honour, loyalty, and *omertà* are made manifest in various writings, both fabricating and legitimising the Mafia mystique until the 1950s, when works by Danilo Dolci and then Leonardo Sciascia mark a turning point toward denunciation of the Mafia as the dominant trend among intellectuals and the general public alike. This thesis structures the chronological organisation of the nine chapters and determines the choice of source texts analysed, which are selected to illustrate what Coluccello considers the main tendencies of the historical period. Conceiving of literature in its broadest sense, the author discusses a range of representations of the Mafia in Sicily, produced in travel writings, plays, novels, and parliamentary inquiries, as well as works in cultural anthropology and sociology. A substantive bibliography and index provide useful information for readers.

Among the strengths of Coluccello's study is the way he traces both the historical, changing elements constituting the Mafia and its relations with the ruling elite, and the cultural discourses that make up its idealised image as an honourable society whose beliefs, codes, and practices ostensibly bear Sicilian values. The opening chapter creates a detailed picture of the social and economic conditions in Sicily during feudalism, highlighting the collaboration between the criminal bands, the nobility, and elements of the state, which is