

However, according to Dipper, the path of the two countries towards ‘modernity’, a concept that is considered more controversial in German than in Italian historiography, is studded with apparent similarities that do not stand up to close historical examination. Beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, the author convincingly highlights how the Enlightenment in Italy failed to achieve the popular impact that its German equivalent enjoyed. For Dipper, the process of building the nation state has encountered many more obstacles in Italy than in Germany, while the two authoritarian regimes of Fascism and Nazism had very different effects on their respective societies, thus influencing the postwar years of the two countries in different ways. Together with Dipper’s essays on the great steps towards modernity, already known to scholars, this volume includes contributions addressing other issues, including ‘Unversehens in Feindesland: Deutsche und Italiener 1943 bis 1950’ (‘Unexpectedly in Enemy Territory: Germans and Italians 1943–1950’). Between 1945 and 1947 many of the Italians in Germany, and many Germans in Italy, who were waiting to be transferred to their homeland expressed the desire not to return to their country of origin. In several cases, contacts and political and economic relations were established during this period that were to be strengthened after the Italian political stabilisation in 1948 and the establishment of the German Federal Republic. In this essay, the comparative study of the history of relations between the two countries enables the author to undermine one of the most established views on the role of the immediate postwar period: that of the end of the Second World War as a ‘Stunde Null’, or ‘zero hour’, for politics, economy, society and culture.

Ferne Nachbarn is undoubtedly a successful scholarly compilation. It is an indispensable book for anyone interested in the history of the two countries and their relationship. At the same time, from a methodological standpoint, the book offers proof of how comparative history can be a valuable tool to shed light on the fractures and specificities hidden beneath the façade of superficially similar developments.

Filippo Triola

University of Trier

filippo.triola@gmail.com

© 2019 Association for the Study of Modern Italy

doi:10.1017/mit.2019.31

Agli albori delle democrazie moderne. Filippo Mazzei (1730-1816), edited by RENATO PASTA, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018, 217 pp., €38.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-9359-149-2

This book, edited by Renato Pasta, provides a stimulating synthesis of the thought of Filippo Mazzei, a multi-faceted merchant, physician and traveller from Tuscany. Originating from the conference held in 2016 to celebrate the bicentenary of Mazzei’s death, the volume begins with a biography, then carries the reader through the transition in international and economic history in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a transition that would launch Europe into a new socio-institutional dimension. Clearly, this was not an instantaneous process, but an enduring one, destined to culminate at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The volume presents ten essays which outline Mazzei quite clearly as a versatile man and a cultural mediator between Europe and America. He was an active protagonist of the American Revolution and an attentive observer of the French Revolution, as well as becoming a point of

reference for the Polish king Stanisław August Poniatowski, at a rather special time for his country. Mazzei found himself operating in a particularly complicated international context, managing to extricate himself from markets which were unstable due to political unrest. One of the contemporary debates he took part in was the discussion about monetary theory and inflation, which had engaged the most important economists and thinkers of the time. According to Mazzei, the excessive use of paper money was a symptom of the economic instability which had become rife on both sides of the Atlantic. He clearly emerges from his essays as a man attentive to the political economy and economic policy which informed his analysis of the world around him.

For historians of the *ancien régime* Italian states, the study of a personality such as that of Filippo Mazzei becomes particularly significant after his return to Peter Leopold's Tuscany, to which he brought the experiences acquired during his diplomatic and trade activities, together with an aspiration towards progress and modernisation. Relationships with renowned figures such as Condorcet, Lafayette and Jefferson prompted the development of the concept of egalitarianism in Mazzei's thought. In the period of enlightened despotism, he questioned the efficiency of the English model compared to the American one, which placed the citizen at the centre of the political system. Social ascent thus became an essential element of human action. In such a vision, which Mazzei understood as practical and not utopian, a fundamental value was assigned to factors such as the enhancement of productivity and knowledge, the separation of State and Church, and rationality with respect to superstitions – and with respect to property. The latter can be defined as a cornerstone of Mazzei's thought, which saw in popular participation and progressive inclusion two key elements to ensure a modicum of control in relations between rulers and subjects. Pasta is correct to identify in Mazzei's attention to literacy a variable explaining economic growth, consequential development, and natural progress.

The Tuscan experience was meaningful for Mazzei because he actively participated in a movement of political-institutional reform in line with his thinking. During his period in Tuscany, he actively encouraged commercial relations between the Grand Duchy and Virginia, thus promoting an international dimension for the Tuscan economy, in an attempt to free it from its role as an *ancien régime* economy.

This also informed Mazzei's commitment to the reorganisation of health provision in Tuscany and the system of assistance to the poor (*Riflessioni sui mali provenienti dalla questua e su i mezzi per evitarli*). With the solid bases provided by the studies of Beccaria, whose ideas Mazzei also tried to export in America, this work paid particular attention to poverty, a problem which a modern state was bound to have to confront.

Economic liberalism was an area of complete agreement between Mazzei and the Grand Duke, in particular on the removal of customs barriers on grain and the subsequent opening of external and internal markets, and on the suppression of the corporations. This last measure must be seen as a key step in transitioning from a city economy to a regional dimension. All this is in addition to the restructuring of community institutions and the different attempts to distribute land, in order to foster the creation of a yeoman-type property ownership. Liberating land from the yoke of ancient laws would, Mazzei believed, lead to the development of agriculture governed by physiocratic thought (the belief that agriculture was the source of all wealth, that its produce should be highly priced, and that it should operate in the context of free trade). For Pasta, these theories on the development of agriculture contrast with the model of land ownership founded on sharecropping. However, this is difficult to postulate, since significant studies of economic history by Francesco Galassi have generated new research questions on sharecropping. New economic history allows for study of land management in Tuscany, to assess the efficiency of the farms and individual production units.

In conclusion, it should be highlighted that the volume falls squarely within international historiographical debates, but also opens up new research scenarios, in particular on the economic policy of the *ancien régime* Italian states and on how the institutions dealt with the structural changes brought about by the late eighteenth-century revolutions.

Giacomo Zanibelli

Carlos III University of Madrid

giacomo.zanibelli@gmail.com

© 2019 Association for the Study of Modern Italy

doi:10.1017/mit.2019.17

Pietro Mignosi, *L'eredità dell'Ottocento*, with an afterword by ROSANNA MARSALA, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018, 144 pp., € 20.00 (paperback), ISBN 9788893591706

The volume is part of a series published by Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, devoted to the reprinting of every book edited by the renowned liberal antifascist Pietro Gobetti (1901–1926), which are now extremely difficult to find on the book market. The aim of the series is to protect and promote Gobetti's editorial work and to transmit it to new generations.

This volume contains an anastatic printing of Pietro Mignosi's *L'eredità dell'Ottocento* (*The Heritage of the Nineteenth Century*, 1925) with an afterword by Rosanna Marsala and Pierangelo Gentile and a short biography of the author. Piero Mignosi, a Sicilian Catholic thinker, poet and critic, chose to publish most of his essays with Gobetti in an attempt to escape his provincial environment. His initially problematic, then cordial relationship with Gobetti is documented by the letters they exchanged, still unpublished, which are quoted in the afterword.

L'eredità dell'Ottocento opens with an introduction (initially conceived as a separate essay) attempting to trace the origins of Italian Romanticism in the eighteenth century, particularly as regards the question of imagination, as theorised by Giambattista Vico and Gian Vincenzo Gravina. While postulating Vico as a forerunner of Romanticism was not a particularly original stance at the time, Gravina was rarely included in the discussion. In the ensuing chapters, Mignosi identifies Giosuè Carducci as the chronological limit of Italian Romanticism and as the founder of a truly spiritual poetry – capable of generating '*una realtà unitaria di sensibilità e di coscienza*' (p. 31) – which counterbalances the indecisive and unoriginal Christianity of Manzoni (in this sense, he interprets Carducci as anti-Manzoni). Obsessed with the spiritual values of literature, Mignosi then argues that all nineteenth-century Italian 'laical' (*areligiosa*) literature has a concealed leaning towards the divine, but is incapable of transforming its sentimental dimension into a fully religious one. Giovanni Pascoli and Gabriele d'Annunzio's works can therefore be read as misunderstandings (*equivoci*) – sterile literary experiments that do not solve the problem of the sentimental and leave their promises unfulfilled. Mignosi identifies a 'mystical' trend in some modern thinkers like Croce and Papini. He seems to find a good example of modern epic writing in the work of Giovanni Verga, praised for 'correcting Manzoni' (p. 56). Towards the end, Mignosi indicates a return to Leopardi as the most promising direction for modern Italian literature.

The essay, though useful as an insight into (shyly) antifascist culture and the canonisation of nineteenth-century authors such as Leopardi and Manzoni – a topic of the utmost interest, given that the Fascist regime appropriated their legacy – is very difficult to read: as Rosanna Marsala