

California', play a significant role in preserving their cultural inheritance, and in assuaging the trauma of their displacement. Transforming their surrounding landscapes, both Forestiere and Rodia have engraved their memories in their environment and thereby left a lasting trace of the daily-life history of an ethnic group.

Contrary to Andrew Rolle's claim that 'In the first years of their arrival immigrants were too busy searching for a status to write much of anything' (Rolle 1975), Sciorra shows in his essay, 'Vincenzo Ancona's Sicilian Poetry', that a potentially rich vein of Italian-American vernacular writing exists. Sciorra analyses the vernacular poetry of a Sicilian immigrant whose pain and longing for his home country inspired a staggering amount of verse and songs.

The dynamic and celebratory Valtaro Musette tradition is the subject of Marion S. Jacobson's essay. The successful 'accordion-centered' northern Italian music shows, on the one hand, the establishment of a musical genre able to cross cultures, and on the other hand the reaffirmation of cultural diversity between northern and southern Italy.

Public memory is the focus of Joan L. Saverino's essay, 'Imaging the Italian American in Reading, Pennsylvania'. Material culture, in the form of monuments, artefacts or landscapes, has associated meanings that may vary between individuals and ethnic groups. It can be transformed into sacred objects when serving the need of a group. Saverino's case study shows the ability of Italian Americans to use resources to control public memory. By altering a national symbol in a public display, Italians confirmed their ethnic identity and their participation 'in the civic life of the city' (p. 162).

All the contributions in Sciorra's volume are well documented and valuable, providing a variety of sources and bibliographical references. The strength of Sciorra's collection is in its contributors' passion to display the changing nature of Italian American culture and identity without succumbing to banal nostalgia.

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**Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe: Comparing Cultures of Remembrance, c.1790–1840**, by Eveline G. Bouwers, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 325 pp., ISBN 978-0-23-29471-4

Across Europe, one can easily see visible reminders of the nineteenth-century fashion for commemoration: statues, memorials, monuments and pantheons abound and prove that the

memorialising trend was transnational in nature. These remnants of the nineteenth-century desire to remember the past, the 'statumania', have been much studied in recent years but generally in a national context, embedded in local issues and geographies. This book is therefore to be welcomed as it admirably adopts a transnational approach to studying one element of the memorial culture, namely the public pantheon. Showing impressive linguistic versatility Bowers compares pantheons in France, England, Italy and Germany using an interdisciplinary and comparative framework to prove her central thesis that the four pantheons studied in this book were 'partisan interpretations of a selectively retrieved past' (p. 224). She further argues that the origins of the pantheons were more political than national, and more elitist than democratic. The four examples chosen are the British House of Commons-sponsored commemorative sculptures for Westminster Abbey; the Napoleonic pantheon in the church of Sainte-Geneviève (renamed the Panthéon); Ludwig I of Bavaria's Walhalla; and Canova's pantheon in Rome.

In her study of the four pantheons, Bowers pays particular attention to factors relating to the Age of Revolution and takes into account the influence of attitudes towards royal absolutism, challenges to established ecclesiastical power, the recovery of classical tradition, the fashion for monuments, changing attitudes towards death, and growing national awareness – all of which, the author argues, led to an unparalleled politicisation of the *exempla virtutis*. Her interesting central thesis is that rather than viewing the pantheons as elements of the 'collective imagination' (as has often been the case in the study of memorials) these should instead be viewed as the efforts of 'a small partisan group facing the unravelling of traditional power structures' (p. 10).

Of interest to Italianists is of course the section on the Italian pantheon and here Bowers has chosen the not immediately obvious example of Canova's pantheon in Rome. Between 1809 and 1820, Canova led a project to commission busts and herms of illustrious Italians to be placed in the pantheon in Rome. In 1820, the secular nature of the venture fell foul of church authorities and the sculptures were transferred to the Capitoline Museums where they slipped into oblivion. But even when they were in situ in the pantheon, they had, as Bowers admits, very little public resonance. Few contemporaries paid attention to Canova's project, which must be viewed as a self-serving venture by the sculptor, motivated by his own particular needs in the early decades of the century. The study of Canova's choice of illustrious Italians for the pantheon throws up some interesting points on the regional distribution of the 'illustrious' and his preference for cultural rather than political or scientific figures. However, the low profile of this Italian pantheon contrasts sharply with the German example, described in the book as 'the most spectacular pantheonic imagination that Revolutionary Europe would ever witness' (p. 160). Canova's project was instead very limited and could not in any way be considered a national or a significant pantheon.

It could be argued that Santa Croce in Florence was a much more powerful Italian example, one that is regrettably not discussed in depth here. When Italians were looking for their own 'Westminster Abbey' it was in fact to Santa Croce that they turned: Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi, for example, said that France had a pantheon and so too did Bavaria, and 'we Italians, we have Santa Croce'. Santa Croce superseded Canova's pantheon, which was not just deemed inadequate but was in fact barely noticed. Although Canova's project is an interesting venture, the international rivalry that fuelled the development of the Italian pantheon, the influence of romanticism and the importance of Santa Croce in the nineteenth century are three areas that could have received greater emphasis.

Bowers' work, however, does place the Italian nineteenth-century cult of the illustrious firmly in a European context. It also shows how, in Canova's case, art and public display could

be used for self-promotion and the forwarding of a particular view of Italian nationhood. Indeed, as Bouwers has admirably demonstrated, pantheons were all about choice: the choice by elites across Europe to address the diminishing power structures. She neatly summarises the use of the culture of remembrance to come to terms with the loss of state sovereignty, to highlight the appropriation of cultural heritage, to counter the attack on the prevalent political and cultural system, or to structure the counterattack on domestic upheaval. This cross-European study into pantheons investigates the momentum behind memorialisation in a different light from the normal national framework of local concerns. Indeed, the beauty and value of this book is its identification of trans-European trends while at the same time juxtaposing the differences and national quirks and approaches: the German pantheon honoured women, while the others did not; the Italian pantheon preferred cultural rather than political remembrance; the British pantheon was funded by Parliament and therefore represented the views of a larger collective; the French pantheon was more retrospective than prospective in its glorifications. Ultimately, this book shows how the pantheonic ideal was adapted in a variety of contexts across Europe through enlightening transnational comparison and patterns of transfer.

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**Italian Crime Fiction**, edited by Giuliana Pieri, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2011, 159 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-7083-2432-5

This volume is the first study in English to focus on Italian crime fiction. It provides not only an analysis of this literary genre from a historical perspective but also a thematic approach on specific aspects including the representation of space, gender and the post-war Italian tradition of *impegnò*. The study includes an introduction by the editor Giuliana Pieri, seven chapters by an excellent team of contributors and a very clear and useful annotated bibliography by Lucia Rinaldi.

In her Introduction, Pieri explains the importance and the essence of this study:

The chapters in this book, in highlighting the contribution of Italian crime fiction to the most important social and often political debates of the time, as well as showing the literary and stylistic innovations brought about by Italian crime writers, argue strongly in favour of reinserting Italian crime fiction into the nation's literary canon. (p. 3)

By making reference to a series of well-established literary critics and authors including Antonio Gramsci, Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco and Giuseppe Petronio, all of whom approached Italian crime fiction without the systematic and typical indifference and suspicion of the Italian academic and literary establishment, Pieri explains that it is impossible to assess the literary texts of today using the criteria of the past. In other words, this volume makes clear that genres have become points of reference in terms of themes and structures which authors can use for a variety of purposes. Consequently, the distinctive trait of a literary text is not the genre to which the text belongs. This fundamental aspect must be combined with the increasingly civil, moral, ethical and philosophical significance of Italian crime fiction, especially in the way it is reflected in the