

Migration also had a substantial impact on the economic fabric of the region. Calabrese's examination of these changes highlights that, 'with more cash circulating, wages increased ..., a largely barter economy shifted to one relying on cash, making the region more capitalistic' (p. 46). Alongside the emotional cost of migration, remittances from abroad and the fact that, in the absence of their husbands, the wife was commonly the acting head of the household, enabled women to take on 'a greater legal and economic role' (p. 51) in their everyday activities, even whilst the law formally continued to limit their agency within precise boundaries.

Calabrese also pays significant attention to Church, state, and community. Her analysis of the role and mechanisms of the state in Basilicata demonstrates not only its proximity to the individual, but also that women knew how to engage with it. Indeed, documents demonstrate that 'women turned to state officials when in need' (p. xxx) and that the state worked effectively to address their concerns and to ensure spouses abided by their duties to the extent that was possible. Furthermore, the region of Basilicata was made up of small communities in which the Church played a crucial role: on the one hand, it helped shape a sense of community and promoted mutual support; on the other, it kept a watchful eye over the behaviour of the individual. This was particularly relevant in a society like Basilicata's, 'an honor culture centered around the values and actions that guided a person to behave in a certain way in order to earn respect and status in the community' (p. 112). Calabrese powerfully reinforces this point in her examinations of cases of prostitution, infidelity, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, infant abandonment and infanticide, demonstrating that honour and issues revolving around its preservation were complex and multifaceted.

The book additionally dedicates a chapter to the female migrants who made up some 20 per cent of all emigrants, and also covers the issue of illegal emigration – compelling evidence itself of the needs and desperation of so many.

Italian Women in Basilicata provides a significant contribution to scholarship, revealing how migration changed gender roles and stereotypes and moulded society. In addition, Calabrese's use of archival sources such as records of requests by women (in the form of, for example, passport applications and petitions to find relatives abroad), court records from the *Corte d'Assise*, and government bulletins, statistics, newspapers and secondary sources, makes this a strong and convincing study.

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La paternità nell'Italia fascista. Simboli, esperienze e norme, 1922–1943

**by Martina Salvante, Rome, Viella, 2020, 256 pp., €27.00
(paperback), ISBN 978-88-3313-265-5**

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Martina Salvante's book provides an all-round analysis of paternity in Fascist Italy. The book is divided into three parts, each addressing a specific aspect of the topic. Each

part is divided into chapters, and chapters into sections, offering an organisation of the material that is easy to navigate. The book's subtitle – *Simboli, esperienze e norme* – describes well the focus of this work, which covers the 20 years of Fascist rule, from 1922 to 1943.

The first part, '*Padri immaginati*', comprises two chapters, one on Mussolini as a family member, and the other on Catholicism and paternity. The first chapter, '*Mussolini familiare*', examines how Mussolini's family of origin and its domestic dynamics impacted and shaped his role as a patriarch and, later on, as a political leader. The second chapter explores the role of Catholicism in paternity, providing a short but effective introduction to the Catholic Church's public intervention on matters of reproduction – and, more generally, the family's societal role and structure – and then focusing on the complex relationship between the Church and the Fascist regime. This first part functions as an introduction to the topic of patriarchy in Italy, addressing two core themes that directly influenced the development of the policies on paternity in Fascist Italy: the figure of Mussolini and that of the Catholic Church.

The second part, '*Leggi e sussidi*', is divided into two chapters. The first addresses the impact of the First and the Second World Wars as a driving force for the development of state support to soldiers' families and, more generally, of family law. The second explores the codification of paternity into the national law. While at first the connections between these two chapters may seem unclear, the analysis of the creation of a socio-economic support system for the families of fallen soldiers shows Salvante's perspective on the matter. The chapters demonstrate how war shaped the legislation and how the role of the man within the family was progressively codified in the Kingdom of Italy. The main legislative steps are retraced and quoted in the second chapter, '*La paternità codificata*', which outlines well how the legislation on the family, and specifically on paternity, evolved and changed during the years of Fascist rule. Particularly interesting is section 4, '*Padri alla sbarra*', addressing violations of paternal obligations such as family support, and illustrated with compelling examples.

The third and final part, '*All'ombra della dittatura*', focuses specifically on paternity under the Fascist regime. It addresses many different aspects, from the discrimination and repression of certain practices and categories of men ('*Maschilità da censurare*'), to the demographic campaign and the role of paternity in Italian society ('*Il padre prolifico*'), and the role of the paterfamilias ('*Il capofamiglia nello Stato totalitario*'). The first chapter is well structured and divided into clear categories of analysis – '*gli oppositori politici relegati al confino, i coloni italiani che allacciavano rapporti con le donne autoctone e, infine, gli ebrei*'; ('political opponents who were condemned to internal exile, Italian settlers who formed relationships with native women, and finally, Jews', p. 127). Particularly interesting is the use of letters sent to the authorities and archive material, which provide insights into the impact of Fascist policies on real life and families. The final two sections ('*Il padre ebreo*' and '*Censimenti e discriminazioni*') open questions that for the most part remain unanswered. It is unclear why the author includes the policies against Jewish men and fathers in Nazi Germany (p. 154) and what is the significance of the census that concludes the first chapter of the final part of the book. While overall Salvante's final analysis of paternity under the Fascist authoritarian rule enriches the book's contribution to the study of the family under the Fascist regime, more information on these aspects – the parallel with Nazi Germany and the use and/or role of the census – would have strengthened the argument of this section. Although under-explored, these topics open a research path that could potentially lead to new interpretations and additional perspectives on such a crucial topic for the understanding of the development of modern Italian society.

The second chapter of part three, '*Il padre prolifico*', explores the demographic campaign from the male perspective, and specifically the impact it had on Italian men and their role within society as fertile men. This offers a good overview of the topic, which contributes

well to the overall image of paternity in Fascist Italy. The final chapter focuses on the man as the head of the family and on how the totalitarian state shaped his role within the family and society. It offers a detailed progression on how the role of the father changed within the Fascist state and how it was influenced by Catholicism, connecting the elements explored in the first part of the book.

Salvante's work offers a well-researched and structured analysis of paternity in Fascist Italy that would have benefited from an expansion of some sections that lack the depth that characterises most of her research. Perhaps this has more to do with the structure chosen than the research itself, with some sections resembling paragraphs whose inclusion in the table of contents creates expectations that are not fully met. This flaw is, however, compensated for by the solid research and archive material that provide new insights on the evolution of the roles of men and paternity in Fascist Italy, whose impact in shaping modern Italy is still visible today.

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Mussolini in Myth and Memory: The First Totalitarian Dictator

by Paul Corner, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2022, 192 pp., £20.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780192866646

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Rarely has a book on Fascist memory been so timely. Three days after the publication of Paul Corner's latest book, *Mussolini in Myth and Memory: The First Totalitarian Dictator*, Giorgia Meloni's far-right party Fratelli d'Italia won the Italian general election. *The New York Times* immediately diagnosed the 'deliberate amnesia' of the postwar process, positioning Meloni's victory as the outcome of Italy's failure to work through its Fascist past. Thirty-three days after Meloni's victory, on the centenary of the March on Rome, antifascists gathered in Mussolini's hometown of Predappio to mark the 78th anniversary of the town's liberation by partisans in a demonstration designed to upstage the one organised by neofascists who uphold and revere Mussolini's myth each year.

In *Mussolini in Myth and Memory*, historian Paul Corner interrogates the myth of a leader and a regime directly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of its own citizens that endures in the constitutionally antifascist Republic today. The book examines the power of this far-right nostalgia – a longing to return to a simpler past as expressed in rose-tinted recollections of the regime – a phenomenon Corner describes as 'an illusion about the past [that] offers solace in the present and hope for the future' (p. 156). In Chapter 1, Corner declares 'dictatorships and dictators seem to be making a comeback in public perception' (p. 2), identifying the myth of the benevolent dictator that has played a part in the rehabilitation of authoritarians the world over, from Mussolini to Ceaușescu. Here, he tackles the self-serving 'engineered amnesia' (p. 14) of the antifascist Republic that created a binary between Italians and Fascists – victims versus perpetrators