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Funerals of mafia victims, 1963-2012: the construction of a new civil religion

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Political and criminal violence are an integral part of recent Italian history. Killings and mass murders have moulded everyday life and the collective memory of the Italian people, changing the shape of public life. Veneration of the dead has taken on a symbolic function and become part of a new 'civil religion', which has redefined Italy's national identity. Scholars are currently examining the role of mafia victims in this phenomenon, concentrating in particular on the bombings that took place in 1992. Following the crisis that marked the end of the First Republic, symbolic ties to figures like Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino became an essential aspect of redefining democratic mobilisation. Nevertheless, when examined from a long-term perspective, the relationship between the Italian population and the celebration of mafia victims is more complex than it may at first appear. This article aims to analyse the contradictions inherent in the issue, focusing on the funerals of mafia victims in order to examine the relationships between political and institutional bodies, the Italian population as a whole, and the local community, in the celebration of the dead. Through this analysis, it seeks to consider both the achievements and failures in the construction of this new 'civil religion' in a contemporary society.

Keywords: mafia; funerals; politics; Sicily; First Republic; violence

Introduction

Italy's transition from the First to the Second Republic, sparked by the crisis of 1992–1994, is a topic currently of great interest to historians. Their investigations concentrate both on the legacy of Italy's first 50 years as a republic and the founding principles upon which, with no shortage of contradictions, the nation has been rebuilding itself since 1994 (Colarizi and Gervasoni 2011, Crainz 2013). Recently, historians have increasingly focused on the cultural and moral references used in these mobilisation efforts, and have identified the values of the fight against the mafia as one of the cornerstones upon which Italy's civil fabric has been reconstructed. At the same time, it has been incorporated by state institutions as one of the key elements underpinning the ethics of republican Italy. References to mafia victims have played a significant role in anti-mafia language and in the various approaches taken to combat the phenomenon. Those who died in this endeavour have been elevated to national hero status, celebrated as 'patriot martyrs', and used symbolically as a guide for the population as a whole.

This article looks in depth at these topics, reflecting upon the role of mafia victims in the construction of a 'civil religion' of the Second Republic era. It does so from an unusual viewpoint: the celebration of mafia victims in state funerals. The aim of investigating this ritual of republican

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Italy is to study the mediation between the local community, the national population, and the political and state authorities in their handling of the public mourning, and, at the same time, to analyse the different languages that made up these highly symbolic moments. Using these funerals as a focal point also allows the dynamics of the 1992 crisis to be examined in terms of long-term continuity and discontinuity.

The main sources used for this study are local and national periodicals from the era, accompanied by references to the broadcast media. These sources prove particularly useful for charting the evolution of the language used and the public portrayals of the events from both the centre and the periphery during the period under investigation. Since it would be impossible to examine the entire sequence of funerals held for mafia victims, this article focuses only on a selection of the most prominent events. It considers the funerals of the officers who died in the Ciaculli massacre (1963); the magistrate Pietro Scaglione (1971); the communist leader Pio La Torre (April 1982); the prefect Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa (September 1982); and the funerals that followed the Capaci and Via D'Amelio bombings in 1992. Finally, the state funeral held in 2012 for the trade unionist Placido Rizzotto is also mentioned, and used to draw some conclusions.

Civil religion in the Second Republic: some historiographical considerations

The main result of the collapse of the First Republic between 1992 and 1993 was the unleashing of a crisis in the nation's political and cultural ties, with effects both on the main parties and their ideologies and on unifying values like anti-fascism, which had been used as an ethical glue to bind the social fabric together (Colarizi 2008). A new political landscape emerged at the end of this two-year period, featuring new protagonists and new alliances, in the wake of an attempt to redefine Italy's collective identity based on the myth of a civil society that was finally free from the oppressive protection of the parties and associated cultural values on which it had been built (Crainz 2013, Colarizi and Gervasoni 2011).

In this context, as Giovanni De Luna states:

> The political class that emerged from the collapse of the First Republic was called upon to carry out a comprehensive 'refounding' job [...]. This involved renewing an entire symbolic machine, the combination of ritual practices on which a political system's legitimacy is based. The crisis of 1992–1994 destroyed not only the old parties, but also the 'constitutional pact' inherited from the struggle against Fascism and the Resistance which, at least for the 30 years between 1960 and 1990, had shaped Italy's civil religion. To start again, this void needed to be filled, and a tradition needed to be reinvented. (2011, 9–10)[1]

When it comes to the concept of 'civil religion', as well as Robert Bellah's classic work (1967), which revolves around the United States, it is worth recalling the words of Emilio Gentile (2001), who tends to distinguish between 'political religion', in other words the sacralisation of politics into an authoritarian or totalitarian system, and 'civil religion', a category that is used to define the combination of myths, symbols and rituals that appertain to the religious sphere, but which are applied in the context of 'free competition for the exercise of power'. However, this distinction should not be seen as unequivocal; the languages overlap and intermingle in myriad ways (Gentile 2001, xiii). The debate among historians studying Italy in this way is expanding (Rusconi 1999, De Luna 2013). Scholars have identified a religious dimension within the political system deriving from Catholicism's unusually prominent role in the public sphere, and argue that further study is required to understand the historical form this dimension assumes.

For the purposes of this paper, we must return once again to De Luna, whose work *La Repubblica del dolore* shows how the civil religion of the Second Republic is essentially

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based on grief. This clearly has its roots in earlier Italian history; the way the country has been narrated has never strayed far from the religious dimension of martyrdom. Every regime, from the liberal state to the republican era via the unusual political religion of the Fascist regime, has sought to claim legitimacy from the spilling of blood, presenting it as a means of restoring national spirit. In the Second Republic, according to De Luna, an attempt has been made to construct 'a new founding pact' (2011, 16) based on the commemoration of a vast array of deaths that occurred in the 50 years following the war. Whether victims of terrorism, mafia, or natural disasters, they have been used as new moral benchmarks around which to unify the Italian population. As far back as the 1980s, this grief spurred activism amongst victims' family members that was strong enough to go beyond traditional political groupings, forming new alliances based on the importance of family and membership of associations (Turnaturi 1991).

On the same topic, De Luna highlights two elements that are useful with a view to reflecting more generally on the subject. On the one hand, he underlines the importance of the 'victim paradigm': victims arouse unanimous compassion as they die not through choice or through a 'heroic' act, but through an unfair twist of fate. They are normal, non-divisive figures, casualties of a larger event such as an act of terrorism, free from political partisanship, to whom everyone can relate. Indeed, their deaths underline the inherent problems of a political system.

As De Luna puts it:

> Many of the forces at work in our world of victimhood are the result of the as-yet-untangled knots of a relatively recent past, the bombings of the 1970s and the numerous unresolved mysteries that still today weigh upon the functioning of our state institutions like a dark, suffocating cloak. The lack of truth and justice surrounding episodes that have profoundly influenced our history means too many wounds have been left open. (2011, 16–17)

On the other hand, De Luna emphasises the divisions that run through the activism of 'those who remember'. He highlights an extensive web of individual associations, dominated by familist forces that lead to competitive mourning, where people constantly claim that their grief outweighs other people's, exacerbated both by the invasive power of the media, which increases the weight of emotions, and by the weakness of politics and of groups that promote working together.

Mafia victims have received significant attention in the construction of the 'pantheon' of memories used as a glue to constitute 'civil religion' in the Second Republic. In this more specific area, it is worth examining the research undertaken by Marcello Ravveduto (2010) and Deborah Puccio-Den (2007) into the ways these figures were elevated to heroes, or patriot martyrs. The lack of political neutrality of those who died for the anti-mafia cause entails a departure from the 'victim paradigm', and they are seen as being aware of their sacrifice, which is interpreted as a patriotic gesture. As Ravveduto observes, such victims draw on a cultural construction with strong roots in the Italian patriotic tradition, making them easy to assimilate into the collective imagination. Mafia victims, like the patriots of the Risorgimento or those who resisted Fascism, represent the combination of the Greek figure of the hero, bearing witness to truth, and the Christian figure of the martyr, someone who, like Christ, gives their life to prove their faith. Unlike other victims, their behaviour is not anonymous, but recognised and recognisable. As a result, devotion to them is based around rituals dominated by recalling their actions, and particularly their names. A typical example of this is the *Giornata della memoria* held every year on 21 March, organised by the organisation Libera Contro Le Mafie, where the names of mafia victims are read aloud in a collective liturgy that aims to bring reconciliation to a wounded community. However, Libera's role here appears to have numerous consequences in the construction of the public view of the anti-mafia movement – the list of names creates legitimacy, distinguishing positive victims, the 'right' ones, from negative victims, who sink into oblivion. As a result, it therefore institutionalises memory.[2]

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These two categories, the victim paradigm and the martyr, are essential to the subject under consideration, as the image of the anti-mafia operations is built around them. The 'anti-mafia mythology', as Nando Dalla Chiesa terms it, ended up developing entirely 'around a halo of heroism/victimhood' (2014, 86). I would like to add to this the idea that the language of war played an important role in this conceptual construction. Although war is an inappropriate way of describing the relationship between the mafia and the state, this category of language influenced the public's perception of events, particularly from the end of the 1970s onwards. The parallels drawn with the years of terrorism and bombings certainly had an influence here, and the state representatives who died in this conflict with the forces of Cosa Nostra were presented as engaged in a war, with the country's salvation at stake. There are many examples of this. Following Dalla Chiesa's murder, the Movimento Sociale Italiano requested the declaration of a state of war within the country (*Il Secolo,* 5 September 1982), while 'Palermo like Beirut' was the front-page headline used by the Communist daily *L'Unità* (30 July 1983) to report the news of the killing of the judge Rocco Chinnici, drawing an analogy with the war being fought in Lebanon at the time. Images of military conflict came even more naturally with the 1992 bombings. After Capaci, the sociologist Pino Arlacchi wrote 'we're losing the war', (*La Repubblica,* 25 May 1992), and Enzo Biagi wrote in the *Corriere della Sera*, following the Via d'Amelio bombing, 'How many deaths will it take before we realise we're at war?' (20 July 1992). The journalist and writer Enzo Deaglio, meanwhile, chose the images of a 'theatre of war' and 'battlefields' to describe Sicily in 1982–1993 in his book *Raccolto rosso* (1993).

It was in the public narrative that the conflict between the state and the mafia, at least during this particular period, seemed like war: the victims of this conflict were therefore patriots, and mourning their death inevitably became a public event, as their sacrifice helped to define the identity of the community itself. It was this that inspired me to analyse here the way grieving developed. Examining the state funerals provided a starting point for reflection on the topics that emerged: the relationship between the community and state institutions; the celebration of victims and heroes; the symbolic/ritual mechanism produced; the role of families; the distinction between the First and Second Republic and all of the moral, political and cultural models that ensued.

From Ciaculli to Scaglione (1963-1971)

The first state funerals for mafia victims were those held for the officers who died in the attack in the Ciaculli suburb of Palermo on 30 June 1963 (Dickie 2012, 324–335). This is significant in itself, as it shows how the previous victims, members of the trade union movement who were involved in the battle for land after the war, including names such as Accursio Miraglia, Epifanio Li Puma and Placido Rizzotto, were excluded from this institutional ritual (Paternostro 2014). The scarce attention they received from the state institutions meant that the systematic nature of their killings and the inability of the justice system to pursue those responsible went undocumented, and in general these figures did not receive any recognition at all – they were demoted to unfortunate victims, or even remembered as agitators, bordering on illegal (Santino 2000). The ideological battle of the post-war period was strongly influential here – as symbols of the trade union and peasant movement, these figures were incorporated into the plethora of narratives about left-wing political forces, opposed and indeed forgotten by the majority of the public, reiterating the divisive form the fight against the mafia took on in those years.

The Ciaculli bombing marked an initial turning point, a result both of the dynamics of the attack and the political context in which it took place. The massacre was in part a chance affair, as the TNT hidden in the car discovered by the seven public security officers who died in the

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explosion was apparently not meant for them. However, it represented the apex of an escalation of violence in what was labelled the First Mafia War, where the clans fought in broad daylight in a dramatic sequence of attacks (Lupo 1996). The death of the young police officers, their bodies ripped to shreds by the explosion in a real-life embodiment of the victim paradigm, saw violence that had been increasingly out of control reach breaking point, shattering the idea that the mafia helped to maintain order, a pervasive narrative that had led to a lack of concern among the public. A sense of the trauma is conveyed by the journalist Franco Nasi, who wrote 'The mafia is now killing indiscriminately' (*Il Giorno,* 2 July 1963). The language used to refer to the seven dead men is similarly symptomatic: they were hailed in writing as *i caduti*, or 'the fallen' (*Il Popolo,* 3 July 1963 and *Giornale di Sicilia,* 1963), using terminology that made explicit reference to war imagery in connection to the mafia for the first time. As a result, the topic broke the silence traditionally reserved for it, with the term 'mafia' appearing in newspapers that had for a long time forgotten its existence, and made an impression on the public debate. Indeed, the editor of *Il Giorno*, Italo Pietra, stated that the fight against the mafia should be one of the priorities for the new government under Giovanni Leone (7 July 1963).

The city responded with impressive attendance at the funeral, reflecting the enormity of the event; reporters described a crowd of 100,000 people making their way through Palermo. Sandro Osmani, a journalist at the Roman newspaper *Il Messaggero,* reported incredulously that 'It was a seemingly endless procession' (3 July 1963). The day after the funeral, the reporter from the *Giornale di Sicilia*, a publication known for reflecting moderate public opinion on the island, wrote:

> Our cathedral could not house the entire city yesterday, and the crowd that could not get into the temple went back out onto the streets, followed the procession, cried from the balconies, threw flowers from all angles, and kneeled down in the streets. (3 July 1963)

Leaving aside the overblown rhetoric, this passage provides us with an important piece of information. Regardless of the impact on public opinion throughout Italy, the event that took place was all about Palermo, and was observed as such by those on the Italian mainland, reaffirming the local dimension to which the mafia was confined. This is apparent, for example, in the feeling of estrangement in the words of Franco Nasi, a reporter for *Il Giorno*: 'people were tightly packed along the sides of the street, many of them crying, in a choral spectacle typical of Mediterranean populations' (3 July 1963).

Another aspect to consider is the involvement of the state institutions in the funeral, where the state gave the impression of possessing the necessary attributes to respond to mafia violence. The new political era, which saw a shift towards the centre-left, appeared to have introduced reforms in this area, bringing the Partito Socialista Italiano, with a history of fighting the mafia, into governance. One initial, tangible step was the launch of the first Anti-Mafia Commission, which began work at exactly the same time as the Ciaculli bombing (Renda 1998, 360–395). As the funeral was being held for the seven victims, the public security forces were already starting to make large numbers of arrests. The state therefore seemed to possess the strength required to react, and its representatives worked hard to give this impression. At the funeral on 2 July the Ministry of the Interior, Mariano Rumor of the Democrazia Cristiana (DC), represented the government at the front of the funeral procession, fully legitimised to speak for the city in mourning.

The atmosphere at the funeral of the chief prosecutor Pietro Scaglione on 6 May 1971 provides a useful comparison here, as it was in stark contrast to the funeral for the Ciaculli bombing, reflecting the enduring difficulty of maintaining a shared perspective for all mafia victims. Unlike the 1963 attack, the attack on Scaglione appears to have been carefully targeted and meticulously organised. However, the magistrate was tainted on one hand by his relationship with Bernardo Mattarella of the

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DC, who was suspected of collusion with mafia circles, and on the other hand for his handling of the arrest of Luciano Leggio, which ended, in late 1969, with the mafia boss's sensational escape.[3] Scaglione's reputation was tarnished further by the stereotypical view that the mafia did not attack the upper echelons of the state unless there were unspeakable relationships at play, an illusion shattered only by the series of attacks that occurred in the late 1970s (Lupo 2010, 117–118). The Anti-Mafia Commission itself was also the mouthpiece of a campaign against Scaglione, led by the vice-president of the inquest body, the Communist Girolamo Li Causi, who even the day after the attack again reiterated the magistrate's responsibility for it (*Paese Sera,* 5 May 1971).

This atmosphere was also felt at the funeral. Although institutional representatives played a significant role, the word 'mafia' was not spoken at any point during the service. Scaglione instead came to be defined as the victim of 'social anarchy', a hot topic in an Italy that was marked by widespread social tension and civil unrest (*L'Unità,* 7 May 1971). For the memory of the prosecutor to be celebrated, the dynamics of the crime first had to be censured. Nevertheless, the controversy did not reduce the city's participation in the funeral; on the contrary, it appeared to strengthen the resolve of the local community. Palermo commemorated the death as its own, laying claim to it as a result of the distance kept by the rest of Italy, thus accentuating the perceived gap in the consequences of the mafia on a national scale. These feelings were communicated particular strongly by the *Giornale di Sicilia*, which published a series of articles paying homage to the figure of the magistrate and blaming national policies for his inability to halt the violence of the clans (7 and 8 May 1971).

Reflecting more generally on the event, it is worth mentioning a change that would become increasingly important later on, relating to the role the relatives of mafia victims played in the funerals. Elda De Mauro, the wife of the journalist Mauro De Mauro, who had died the previous year at the hands of the mafia, was in the front row of Scaglione's funeral procession, marking the start of the formation of a community of grief, where the bereaved family was expanded to include the relatives of other victims, forging a community grounded on spilled blood. The members of this 'family' saw themselves as sharing a common fate, and the group grew ever larger as the killings continued. Blood was the key element here – sharing the same blood as the 'martyrs' earned the relatives recognition and respect. This legitimacy gave them an important mediating position with public representatives, and many of them did not shy away from this role. From the mother of Peppino Impastato to Vito Schifani's widow, the relatives of mafia victims were often heavily involved on the public stage, and therefore helped to shape anti-mafia languages. This was all connected to the increasing activism from victims' relatives mentioned above and helped to redefine the ways people formed groups and became mobilised beyond traditional political divides.

1982: the year of change

In 1975 the mafia killed the police officer Gaetano Cappiello, followed by the *carabinieri* lieutenant colonel, Giuseppe Russo, in 1977. This was the precursor to an increasingly widespread violence targeting state institutions, with the victims gradually becoming more and more senior. The stand-out names were the head of the flying squad Boris Giuliano and the judge Cesare Terranova, both killed in 1979, and the president of the Sicilian regional government Piersanti Mattarella and the public prosecutor Gaetano Costa, who were assassinated in 1980 (Lupo 1996, 290–301). This sequence of killings was grounded partly in the internal rivalry within Cosa Nostra, and partly in the need to respond to growing anti-mafia activity from the Sicilian public security forces and judiciary, accompanied by the first signs of renewed social and political unrest. The years of terrorism also played a role, consolidating the practice of the use of violence.

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Mourning, grief and funerals became an increasingly everyday occurrence, and the first thing Palermo's newly appointed police commissioner did in November 1981 was to greet mafia widows (*Giornale di Sicilia,* 26 November 1981).

This process reached breaking point in 1982, in a qualitative shift that allows us to identify what changed and what remained the same in the handling of public mourning and the narrative used for mafia victims. One constant, the anti-mafia feeling that divided the community down well-established ideological lines, was visible in the funeral of the Communist leader Pio La Torre, the man behind the anti-mafia law that would bear his name, and his colleague and fellow party member Rosario Di Salvo, held on 2 May 1982 (Deaglio 1993). La Torre's seniority meant leading representatives from the state institutions attended the funeral, from the president Sandro Pertini to Mario D'Acquisto, the DC regional president. The street protest, however, was as 'red' as the banners that dominated it, coloured with the symbols of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) and representing its entire structure, from the secretary Enrico Berlinguer to the Sicilian Communist mayors, who wore their green, white and red sashes (*La Stampa,* 3 May 1982). The proximity to Labour Day, 1 May, increased the tension; the way mourning took the place of celebrations created an analogy with the events in Portella della Ginestra 35 years earlier.

The political element gave the funeral the appearance of a party event, helping to stir unrest among people who had harboured splits and divisions for a long time, and the tension threatened to boil over. Pertini, a respected president who had a high regard for the Communist movement, was welcomed with applause, but Salvatore Lauricella, another Socialist, and president of the Sicilian Regional Assembly, was not so lucky. Protests then broke out when D'Acquisto was invited onto the stage: the Communist leaders tried unsuccessfully to contain the protestors, clearly struggling to manage the crowd. Commenting on the events, the journalist from *Il Tempo,* Luigi Gambacorta, wrote: 'this is another sign of how the recent crimes, added to the others, have hollowed out people's souls, making a unified battle against the clans more difficult' (3 May 1982).

Some more pressing points to reflect upon arose at the funeral of Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa and his wife Emanuela Setti Carraro, held four months after La Torre's, which amplified the Via Carini massacre's role as a watershed moment in terms of the dynamics and languages of the fight against the mafia. The attack on Dalla Chiesa led to an acceleration of the trials already underway, helping to establish a qualitative shift in an anti-mafia movement that was increasingly moving outside traditional political boundaries, on the back of a wave of action from parts of the judiciary, the law enforcement agencies and Basic Christian Communities (Santino 2000). The mafia victims already played a fundamental role in the construction of this movement, as they were an essential ingredient in the creation of a unifying ritual. However, it was only after the murder of Dalla Chiesa that the first true wave of emotions – to borrow an expression from historian Francesco Renda (1998, 405) – was unleashed, powerful enough to force parliament to convene an emergency session to approve the La Torre-Rognoni law. Dalla Chiesa played a decisive symbolic role; his death connected local trials to a wider national feeling around the issue of terrorism.

These mechanisms were revealed in practice during the funeral, held in Palermo on 4 September, less than 24 hours after the attack. To understand the events that took place during the funeral and the impact they would have on the overall debate, it is important first to consider the climate in which they occurred. Although the Dalla Chiesa affair became a divisive political issue in the days that followed, in the immediate aftermath of his death he was exalted from all sides, with the 'fallen' general treated as a hero, martyr and a national symbol (Dalla Chiesa 1984). It is the symbolic aspect that concerns us here. After the deaths of Mattarella, La Torre and the others, the public continued to see the mafia as a regional issue, despite their prominent positions of these figures. Dalla Chiesa, however, gave the mafia question national scope (Santino 1982).

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The general had been called urgently to Palermo after the killing of La Torre as a symbol of the state's reaction, and it was the symbolic weight of his killing that dominated the debate. This was highlighted by the author Leonardo Sciascia, who wrote that the general was killed precisely because he had been elevated to a mythical status (*Corriere della Sera,* 5 September 1982), a claim supported by the brother of Emanuela Setti Carraro, who said his sister 'was killed because she symbolised an Italy that believed in the general' (*Oggi,* 15 September 1982). Furthermore, the sociologist Francesco Alberoni wrote in *La Repubblica* (11 September 1982): 'This time the mafia has attacked a popular hero and has set in motion not admiration, but hatred and desire for revenge. As long as the myth of Dalla Chiesa remains alive, this feeling will remain alive too, and the political class will be forced to act'.

Dalla Chiesa was therefore painted as the hero and martyr that he had initially embodied, a narrative based on stylistic features rooted in the Italian public imagination since Risorgimento times. Take, for example, the way Alberto Mario Banti (2000, 96) describes the figure of the hero in the Risorgimento literary canon: 'A man that always has military qualities; a leader [...], with a recognised role of political or moral leadership within his community. He is driven by intense patriotism [...]. He fights courageously, for as long as his strength allows, but is inevitably destined to die'. This is how Dalla Chiesa was framed, a man who, as a result of his faith in a superior good – his country – returned to the battlefield despite being destined to die due to his isolation and his virtue, which did not fit with the representatives of the state in which he himself believed.

The dominant forms of language used at the time provide a good example of this. Chiara Valentini, writing for *Panorama*, called the general 'The man who was meant to die' (13 September 1982), while in *Il Manifesto* the journalist Sandro Medici wrote 'Both man and symbol, the *carabinieri* officer lived with the chance that he would make the ultimate sacrifice. Dalla Chiesa was aware of this, indeed it was one of the reasons for his symbolic power, the fact that he nevertheless fought on the front line' (5 September 1982). A cartoon dedicated to the murder published in *La Discussione* (13 September 1982), the DC's political newspaper, was also significant, depicting a bloodied Sicily enclosed by a crown of thorns, a clear reference to the topic of martyrdom. These portrayals have a recurring backdrop of isolation mixed with sacrifice, and the references on which they draw are clear. The first is the interview Dalla Chiesa gave to Giorgio Bocca in August 1982, when, almost prophetically, he stated: 'Powerful people are killed when a fatal combination occurs: they become too dangerous, but can be killed because they are isolated' (*La Repubblica,* 10 August 1982). The second is the debate, which turned into a bitter dispute after his death, on the powers requested by Dalla Chiesa, who wanted to coordinate the struggle against the Sicilian clans with a wider mandate than that available to a mere prefect. These powers were never granted, and were given instead to the director of SISDE, the Intelligence and Democratic Security Service, Emanuele De Francesco, who was appointed High Commissioner for the Fight Against the Mafia following the crisis that stemmed from the murder.

However, the portrayal of Dalla Chiesa was not based only on himself; his image was brought into sharper focus by the depiction of his murdered wife. Young, from a good family, and a Red Cross nurse, Setti Carraro epitomised Banti's definition of the typical Risorgimento heroine, full of domestic virtues and devoted to the hero. Her mother's statement regarding her death illustrates this perfectly: 'My daughter knew she was going to war [...] but she had a sense of duty and patriotism' (*Oggi*, 15 September 1982). One thing seemed to be missing from this portrait: Setti Carraro was a wife, and therefore not a virgin, but nor was she a mother. But the news spread immediately (*Il Messaggero,* 5 September 1982) that Emanuela was pregnant when she was killed, and therefore carrying the hero's child, a child of the nation, in her womb. The dynamics of the double murder completed the portrait of the perfect martyr. As Sergio Sergi wrote in *L'Unità*: 'The general lay

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crouched in a small runaround car, having thrown himself in vain to protect the body of his young wife' (4 September 1982). This image, although not necessarily realistic, became iconic of the ultimate sacrifice and, as such, was later immortalised both on his commemorative plaque and in the collective imagination.

However, the depiction of Dalla Chiesa has more than one dimension. One component that at face value appears contradictory, and which was used throughout the construction of the narrative, is of him as a 'victim', in the sense highlighted by De Luna. This implication actually humanised the figure of the general, and, at least in the days immediately following his death, helped to further reinforce his strength in the public perception. This dimension in part stemmed from the inevitability of him dying without being able to fight back, a status essentially proved in the murder itself, in which the husband and wife were isolated and defenceless. But his depiction as a victim was predominantly built through another means – invading his private life. The newspapers depicted the couple's apparent intimacy, spiced up with anecdotes and romanticised descriptions, and so helped to shift the heroic image to an everyday one with whom everyone could identify. There are numerous examples: from the story of the first time the pair met, sealed by exchanging a red carnation which, according to Marina Pino in the *Giornale di Sicilia*, 'set the love story in motion, without the two protagonists even realising it' (4 September 1982), to the characteristics given to Setti Carraro: her 'ultimate joy in the general's life' (*Epoca,* 17 September 1982); the young 'fresh-faced' Red Cross nurse; a daughter who had never rebelled and who had dedicated her short life to others, as Valentini again wrote in *Panorama* (13 September 1982). Not to mention the portrait drawn of Dalla Chiesa in the glossy magazine *Oggi*, which stated: 'The image of the upright general concealed a man who in private was highly sensitive, sweet and understanding' (15 September 1982).

Both categories of hero and victim were exploited in the days following the funeral (Piotti 1989). In criticisms of the DC, the accent was placed on the idea of a hero abandoned by the state institutions, while in response to this offensive, others focused on the role of the victim, exaggerating the private affairs of the general and his wife to reduce his symbolic image. However, the day after the attack, the intersection of these two constructs held firm, and the tensions it provoked poured out at the funeral. Politicians were seen as having sent the hero to die, thereby creating an innocent victim, and so lost their legitimacy to represent the wounded community. The rift, which manifested itself in public protests, featured two main players. The first was the family of the victims. The second was Cardinal Salvatore Pappalardo, and therefore by extension the local Church, which ended up taking up innovative anti-mafia positions, forging a new connection with the affected community. As Alfonso Madeo wrote in the *Corriere della Sera*: 'Pappalardo represents the shift from obscurantism in the [Ernesto] Ruffini tradition to the radiant and fervid precision of the establishment of a new Church' (6 September 1982).

The leading role of these two camps was evident from the eve of the funeral: they came into open conflict with institutional representatives, from Dalla Chiesa's daughter, Rita, who theatrically had the wreath of flowers sent by the Sicily Region removed from her father's coffin, to Setti Carraro's brother, who shouted 'It was you lot in Parliament that killed him' at the minister Virginio Rognoni (*Avanti!,* 5 September 1982). The family suffered as a result of this institutional spectacle, and the following day organised a family funeral in Milan. As Dalla Chiesa's other child, Nando, put it: 'We're leaving Palermo for Milan, where we wanted to hold "our" funeral, so at least we won't feel guilty for our mourning' (Dalla Chiesa 1984, 130). Pappalardo, meanwhile, only greeted the president, ignoring the other state representatives present, and above all gave a famous sermon in which he compared Palermo to Saguntum, the town conquered while the Romans sat and talked.[4] In his homily he described the husband and wife as 'chosen spirits', to

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whom the gates of paradise would be opened. The strength of the position Pappalardo acquired is clear. The following day, all the newspapers opened with his words, he gained a national profile, and from that moment on he was known as the anti-mafia cardinal (Dino 2008, 172–180).

It was therefore the centrality of the funeral that highlighted the rift, the moment when private and public grief came together, making the death a social event, a crucial step for assessing the strength of the community and its connection to the authorities. Having been delegitimised by the family of the victims and the representative of the local Church, the politicians present became the objects of a protest that, although it did not reach the extremes of the funeral held for Paolo Borsellino's bodyguards, nevertheless foreshadowed its dynamics. One of the most traumatic events was the throwing of coins at the minister Rognoni, pre-empting the events of 1993 directed at Bettino Craxi in the middle of the *tangentopoli* scandal. The Communists, meanwhile, were spared the protests. Although they were seen as having a licence to fight the mafia, reaffirmed with the death of La Torre, this now appeared faded, eroded by the dialogue between the PCI and the DC at a regional level, which led to governments based on 'autonomist solidarity'. As we have explored above, the PCI lost its leading role in protests to movements that were increasingly outside its control. The only figure openly applauded was President Pertini, who was seen as being on a higher level, a symbol of national unity and therefore the guarantor of the possibility of future reconciliation.

1992: the year of slaughter

The years between 1982 and 1992 contained a series of contrasting events. The state reacted to Cosa Nostra's offensive through new legislation and the Anti-Mafia Pool. These were the years of the Maxi Trial, which divided Palermo, new high-profile killings, the official recognition of Cosa Nostra by the judiciary, the 'Palermo Spring' and the rifts in the city, ending with the disbanding of the Anti-Mafia Pool and the growing isolation of its leading figures (Schneider and Schenider 2009 and La Licata 1993). They were also the years when the First Republic unquestionably came to an end with the start of the *mani pulite* era, marked by the arrest of the Socialist Mario Chiesa on 17 February 1992.

However, the attacks in Capaci on 23 May and on Via D'Amelio on 19 July and the dramatic television reporting that followed, reaching Italians' homes through special news broadcasts, brought this period to a tragic end. The distance between the 'palace', in Pasolini's use of the term, dozing in a lethargic celebration of a complex presidential election, and the 'real country', seemed to explode with the TNT in Capaci, as evoked in the dramatic cinematic sequence in Paolo Sorrentino's *Il Divo.* The bombing was such a major event that it 'forced' parliament to elect a new president in a short space of time, as if it were filling a dangerous power vacuum (*La Repubblica,* 24 May 1992). The violence of the attack, a dramatic, colossal event further intensified by the media, which instilled a warlike scene in the public imagination, helped to define the symbolic 'martyrdom' of Giovanni Falcone, whose tale seemed to have a religious quality to it, from the 'purgatory' of the humiliation he suffered in the final years of his life through to his 'resurrection' to the top of the anti-mafia pantheon, a secular saint who seemed to embody the image of an ideal state. Those who accompanied him in his martyrdom intensified the evocative strength of his image: his wife, Francesca Morvillo, another 'heroine' devoted to her man, his 'courageous wife', as the *Corriere della Sera* called her (25 May 1992), and his bodyguards, 'guardian angels' who were killed while doing their duty. Again, the heroic image was balanced with that of a victim, presented through intrusive sentimental stories: 'The Trapani-Palermo motorway also witnessed a sacrifice of love' as Giulio Nascimbeni, among others, wrote in the *Corriere della Sera* (24 May 1992). This aspect would

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become even stronger with the passing of time, once the judge's life made its way onto the big and small screen.[5]

This tension came across at the funeral, which was attended by an enormous number of people. Although Palermo was the setting, this time the event's significance was not confined to the city, but instead had taken on a national importance, thus deepening the rift between the community and its representatives. 'The state was welcomed to Palermo with shouts, coins and insults' commented *La Repubblica* (25 May 1992), giving a sense of the distance between the people and the politicians. The images of the funeral, broadcast live throughout Italy, vividly portrayed the atmosphere that the newspapers could only summarise in near-identical headlines: 'Tears and anger at the Palace' (*Giornale di Sicilia,* 25 May 1992); 'Anger against the Palace in Palermo' (*Corriere della Sera,* 25 May 1992); 'Anger and protests at Palermo funeral' (*Il Giornale,* 25 May 1992).

These divisions peaked with the dramatic heightening of tensions following the Via D'Amelio attack. At the family's request, a private funeral was held for Borsellino, so it was only the magistrate's bodyguards who received a state funeral, held in Palermo Cathedral on 21 July. This occasion produced an uncontrolled and emotional explosion of street protests, leading to the well-known scene, repeated incessantly in future television and film portrayals of the event, where the crowds, kept away from the cathedral, managed to get past the security cordon put in place by the police, and headed towards the government offices. The protest featured moments of high tension, including some directed at the newly appointed president, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro.

The *Corriere della Sera* (22 July 1992) reported the events as follows:

> The images of the president stumbling over the doorstep while cleaning the dirt from his trousers, picked up from the kicks he had received, the secretary general of the president of the republic [...] holding a tissue to his mouth where he had been punched, the incumbent of Palazzo Chigi covering his ears so as not to hear, the prefect [Vincenzo] Parisi with cheeks red from being slapped: these images (sensibly blurred by the TV cameras) show the change provoked by the war with the mafia. Sicily is exhausted, exasperated and angry. The state now risks being seen alongside Cosa Nostra as a new enemy.

The new element here, which found fertile ground in the combination of the social and political situation with the emotion of the moment, was the gaping rift between the 'gut feeling' of the people and the symbols of time-worn power. When Scalfaro was openly challenged, the state, through its representatives, seems to have been seen as a 'traitor' which, in the spirit of the Risorgimento canon, is the person opposed to the 'hero', in this case Borsellino.

It was a third party who ensured that the otherwise increasingly remote possibility of mediation between these two sides remained an option: the community formed around the grief of the families. In her dramatic appeal from the pulpit, which has become another iconic image of the 1992 crisis, the widow of Rosario Schifani, one of Falcone's bodyguards, turned not on the institutions but on the *mafiosi*, asking them to get on their knees to be pardoned. And, even more significantly, Borsellino's family asked Scalfaro to attend the magistrate's funeral, held the day after the angry protest (*Avvenire,* 23 July 1992). It was therefore the relatives of the victims who, through the legitimacy they had been granted, recognised the role state institutions could play, and allowed a form of reconciliation, albeit complex, to begin.[6]

Conclusions

On 23 and 24 May 2012, the Italian president, Giorgio Napolitano, travelled to Sicily, following a particularly significant route in terms of its symbolic intensity. Napolitano attended the

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commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the massacres that killed Falcone and Borsellino, travelled to the upland area of Portella della Ginestra in memory of the bombing on 1 May 1947, and finally attended the state funeral of Placido Rizzotto, the trade unionist from Corleone, following the discovery of his remains 64 years on from his death. By symbolically connecting the murders of the period immediately following the Second World War with the years of terror, Napolitano carried out a salvage operation on historical memory, combining the various eras of the fight against the mafia into a single scar. In so doing, he elevated this struggle, in its various forms, to a key Italian ethical value, a new resistance movement that could be recalled and used to produce cultural models to unite the nation (Cruciani, Del Rossi and Claudiani 2014).

Once again, the blood of those who died took centre stage: the 1947–1992 period, with its martyrs, was identified as a 'waged war', creating a 'before' that could be separated from an 'after', where mafia violence has been defeated, or at least contained.

Here too, the state funeral had a significant symbolic function. The event used Rizzotto's body to return to a period of time that had been excluded from the Italian population's shared narrative, and celebrated the south's own Resistance movement, thereby bridging that gap with the experience of northern and central Italy during the Second World War. The combined presence of leading institutional figures (the president was joined by Annamaria Cancellieri, the minister of the interior, and Rosy Bindi, the president of the Anti-Mafia Commission), trade union representatives (the secretary of the Italian General Confederation of Labour, Susanna Camusso), the victim's relatives and representatives of the anti-mafia movement (including the president of Libera, Fr. Luigi Ciotti) around Rizzotto's coffin, appeared to repair the rift that formed during the 1992 funerals, thereby reopening the channels for mediation.

However, despite this step, it is nevertheless important to investigate whether these values have successfully been transferred into a unifying 'civil religion' capable of strengthening the fabric of the community.

> We must acknowledge that we have failed completely. Feeling Italian, recognising oneself in a value that does not equate to everyone enjoying the same wellbeing, and founded on community spirit, is today a feeling that does not arouse passion, while other choices establish themselves in a world increasingly marked by a drift into nepotism, aggressive egoism, and impulses that waver between resentment and passivity.

These are, once again, the words of Giovanni De Luna (2011, 9), taking stock of the building of a collective identity in the first decade following the crisis of 1992–1994.

A similar concept is expressed by Guido Crainz (2013, vii), who wrote:

> The degradation of a political system and a 'partocracy without parties' that has gone beyond any form of guardianship; the inconsistency and almost complete dismantling of any reforming force worthy of the name; the intricate processes that for some time have scarred the body of the country and made the 'founding myth' of the Second Republic useless: a virtuous civil society held prisoner, the victim of a corrupt political class.

It is easy to agree with these positions: civil religion in the Second Republic appears, in these authors' view, to be a construct dreamt up by the state institutions, exploiting the widespread resentment against the trajectory that republican Italy's history has taken and the shift in values towards the central role of the individual, to the detriment of the community.

Various contradictions are even apparent when it comes to one of the most positive outcomes of this muddling of values: the emergence of widespread anti-mafia sentiment. A change in the public perception of criminality has occurred, whereby the values of the anti-mafia movement are seen as being of central importance by the state institutions, and used as a model for mobilisation.

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However, these values still retain a deep-rooted divisive force, one which has built up over time. The growing void of political power over the last 20 years has therefore opened the door to mistrust, hostility and a lack of consensus and legitimacy. Symbolically, this reappeared during Rizzotto's funeral: although representatives of state institutions and associations were in attendance, the party leaders were conspicuous by their absence.

Napolitano's 2012 operation, connected to a wider politics of memory pursued during his time in office, in the wake of presidential interventionism in this field that goes back as far as Pertini, therefore seems to have been a laborious attempt to legitimise Italy's institutions, an effort to fill the void of political mediation and reduce the community's fragility. And while Italian politics shows a growing inability to take a stand on various issues, there are also questions to be asked of those who are filling the gap. On the one hand, the building of a civil religion appears to be increasingly delegated to the narrative told by the media, which play a decisive role in turning grief into a spectacle (De Luna 2011). On the other hand, the positive aspects of the anti-mafia groups are overshadowed by a lack of solidarity between them[7] and a failure to agree on a shared narrative (Dalla Chiesa 2014, Forgione 2016).

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Diego Gavini completed his PhD in Contemporary History at the University of Rome Tor Vergata in April 2016, with a thesis entitled 'The First Anti-Mafia Committee in the Italian Republic (1962–1976)'. In 2015–2016 he was part of a research group financed by the University of Rome Tor Vergata investigating 'Religious Devotion in the Mafia and Anti-Mafia'. In 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 he hosted a workshop at the university entitled 'Global Mafia in the 20th Century: Representations, Stereotypes and Sources'.

Notes

1. Quotations here, and below, translated by Ian Mansbridge.
2. The list does not include controversial figures, such as the Sicilian politician Salvo Lima, with links to clans, who was killed on 12 March 1992, or relatives of *mafiosi*, even those with no connections to criminal activity, who were assassinated in revenge attacks linked to *pentitismo* (for example the family members of Tommaso Buscetta and Marino Mannoia, who both collaborated with the authorities). It does, however, include the name of Giuseppe Di Matteo, who was also the son of an informant, and was killed at the age of just 14; his story appears to be more edifying in the construction of the anti-mafia image.
3. Camera dei Deputati, V Legislatura, Doc. XXIII n. 2, Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia in Sicilia (legge 20 dicembre 1962, n. 1720), Relazione sulla indagine svolta in merito alle vicende connesse alla irreperibilità di Luciano Leggio.
4. The text of the sermon is printed in *Segno,* Vol. VIII, no. 7–10, July–October 1982, 149–150.
5. In particular the film *Giovanni Falcone* directed by Giuseppe Ferrara (1993), *Excellent Cadavers* by Ricky Tognazzi (1999), the documentary *Excellent Cadavers* by Marco Turco (2004), and the TV series *Giovanni Falcone – L'uomo che sfidò Cosa Nostra* directed by Andrea and Antonio Frazzi.
6. In subsequent years, various mafia victim family members maintained their public role, although they followed different paths (see Santino 2000 for further details). In the process, some abandoned their traditional role of mediating between the anti-mafia world and the institutions, and instead took on roles as spokespeople for campaigns and protests against the political sphere. One example of this is Paolo Borsellino's brother, Salvatore, the founder of the Agende Rosse movement, who campaigned against the so-called 'negotiations' between the Italian state and the mafia that allegedly took place between the Capaci and Via d'Amelio attacks. See, however, Fiandaca and Lupo 2014.
7. One example of this is the recent tensions that emerged within Libera, and the arguments around its handling of assets confiscated from the mafia. See www.huffingtonpost.it, 1 December 2015; *La Repubblica*, 1 December 2015; *Panorama*, 14 January 2016.

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Italian summary

La violenza politica e sociale rappresenta una parte integrante della recente storia italiana. Omicidi e stragi hanno avuto un impatto profondo sulla vita quotidiana e sulla memoria collettiva del popolo italiano, cambiando le forme di partecipazione alla vita pubblica. Il culto dei morti è diventato una manifestazione simbolica e una parte integrante di una nuova 'religione civile' che sta ridefinendo l'identità nazionale.

Sotto questa prospettiva, le ricerche hanno messo in evidenza il ruolo delle vittime di mafia, con particolare riferimento alle stragi del 1992. Di fronte alla crisi della 'prima' repubblica, il legame simbolico con figure come quelle di Giovanni Falcone o Paolo Borsellino è diventato essenziale nel ridefinire le forme della mobilitazione democratica e civile.

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Nonostante ciò, la relazione tra comunità nazionale e celebrazione delle vittime di mafia è più complessa di quanto potrebbe apparire, se esaminata in una prospettiva di lungo periodo. Questo articolo si propone di analizzare tali contraddizioni, ponendo l'attenzione sui funerali delle vittime di mafia, con lo scopo di esaminare le mediazioni tra esponenti politici e istituzionali, comunità nazionale e locale nella celebrazione dei morti. Attraverso questa analisi si vogliono trarre delle conclusioni relative ai successi e ai fallimenti nella costruzione di questa nuova 'religione civile'.

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