

*totocalcio*) gave the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) a constant and abundant budget of resources that would finance all sports. As a consequence, the principle of autonomy of sport from politics had a semblance of verisimilitude. It was argued, generally, that the break with the Fascist overpoliticisation of sports had been accomplished. Was it really a neat break? Sbeti is not explicit about this (see for example p. 60). On one hand, he analyses the transition mostly by emphasising the departure from the Fascist model of constant patronage and interference. On the other hand, the narrative per se highlights how political demands shaped the field of international (and national) sport. This is exemplified by the third chapter (pp. 303–423) about sport in Trieste and the (very delicate) relations with France during the Tour de France in 1950. In Trieste (Free Territory of Trieste, TLT), a city divided between the Allied troops (Zone A) and Tito's army (Zone B) until 1954 (the London Memorandum), the administration of sports clubs was run according to the political agenda of Italy and Yugoslavia. Sport and especially professional soccer in Trieste became instruments for the Italian and Yugoslavian sides to affirm that the city belonged to one or the other state. The history of sport in Trieste gains meaning only if it is placed within the context of the Cold War, while the history of sports diplomacy with France must be seen in the intricate context of relations between the two countries throughout the twentieth century. France did its best for years to hinder Italy's return to international competitions, since it considered Italy to be an enemy country on a par with Germany. Emotions ran high especially in cycling after 1945, because the dominance of the Italian cyclists Fausto Coppi, Giuseppe Bartali and Fiorenzo Magni was overwhelming. Their participation meant economic income to the organisers of the races in France but also irrepressible resentment from the French fans because of the Italians' evident superiority. During the 1950 Tour de France the hostility of the French manifested itself in physical aggression against Bartali, who withdrew from the race, together with the entire Italian team. The sporting crisis provoked a diplomatic crisis, which politics resolved (p. 376).

Sbeti's research is accurate and thorough. As stated in his concluding remarks, his book 'aims to serve as a starting point for scholars who will deal with this subject in the future' (p. 431). A critical remark is, however, in order here. *Giochi diplomatici* is quite Italo-centric. Against the backdrop of the latest studies in 'global sports', it would have been advisable to pay more careful attention to the comparative dimension, especially with post-1945 Germany, where, as in Italy, 'sovereignty in sport' was a crucial political objective. From a comparative view, the Italian peculiarities would then have emerged more clearly and convincingly.

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**Fame di guerra. L'occupazione italiana della Grecia (1941–43)** by PAOLO FONZI, Rome, Carocci, 2019, 215 pp., €24.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-430-9948-1

*Fame di Guerra. L'occupazione italiana della Grecia (1941–43)* covers the Italian invasion of Greece, society under occupation, and repression of resistance from October 1940 to September 1943. It is organised sequentially with clearly defined chapters on many aspects of occupation policy and with a focus on the devastating famine which stemmed primarily from the Axis occupation.

While the country's domestic supply of wheat was restricted to the German and Bulgarian zones of north-east Greece, Italy was responsible for the provision of food for most of the country (p. 32).

Until recently, Italian historiography lacked much serious analysis of this episode. In his comprehensive analysis, Paolo Fonzi explains that this was partly because the invasion was remembered as an 'embarrassing war': 'The decision to invade was based on a strategic plan which was full of contradictions and led inevitably to one of the most catastrophic defeats undergone by the Italian army' (pp. 17–22). Following the military debacle of the invasion, the ill-fated occupation of Greece led to widespread suffering which few returning soldiers could forget. But theirs were 'forbidden stories' (p. 7) which did not fit with the official version of events promoted by the Italian armed forces. They were anxious to cover up the details, especially any reference to the 'army of lovers', as the Italians were known in Greece. In 1953, a film of the same name, *L'armata s'agapò* (using the Greek for 'I love you', *s'agapò*), was proposed in the journal *Cinema Nuovo*. Notoriously, the Military Tribunal of Milan responded with the trial and detention of the author and editor for 'contempt of the Armed Forces' due to the fact that the script called into question Italian behaviour, *gallismo* (macho pride), and the injustice of military rhetoric (pp. 7–8). Another writer argued that ordinary soldiers and the Greek population shared common characteristics, notably psychological alienation or poverty, which outweighed motives of *gallismo*. It is the role of famine in Italian-Greek relations which interests Paolo Fonzi in his analysis of society under occupation. While in no way supporting the *brava gente* myth, the author aims to go beyond that longstanding debate, to tease out reality on the ground.

Neglect of this subject was also due to the lack of accessible archives both in Italy and Greece. However, the author's persistence to gain full access has paid off, giving us many new insights into Italian military strategy as well as a deeper understanding of the psychology and lived experience of the participants.

Fascist policy before the war included sweeping plans to divide up the Balkans and dismember Greece without any genuine understanding of the complex ethnic composition of the region (pp. 34–36). German dominance over the Greek armistice blocked any such schemes and Greece remained intact. Subsequent Italian occupation policy was to be a milder version of these grand designs: in the Ionian islands, nearest to Italy, the Italians came closest to achieving total control (p. 39). Occupation policies and their varied application in many Aegean islands are discussed in section two (pp. 86–113).

This book provides a synthesis of a growing body of research which has concentrated on the German occupation, the repression of the resistance, and the tragic and brutal consequences of occupation. Greece has long been a focus for anthropologists whose work has underpinned a shift in focus to society and the psychology of the participants. This is illustrated by the Greek reaction to attack by Italy, formerly a friendly nation (at least prior to Fascist expansionism) with which the Greeks had something in common. Greeks perceived the invasion as a betrayal, and the initial victory against Italy on the Albanian frontier had a major impact on national morale. The occupation and domination by their defeated enemy was seen as an insult to national honour. The subsequent brutality of the Wehrmacht may have altered opinions, but suspicion of the Italians remained, even where Italy attempted to provide food and public assistance or alleviate excessive occupation costs.

These suspicions were not unwarranted, given the high level of corruption among the Axis authorities in Athens (pp. 113–21). Three officials alone had complete control over the distribution of food, leaving the field open to systemic corruption. An Italian import company, closely linked to the Fascist Party of Athens, favoured Italian residents, and supplies often reappeared on the black market, preventing relief from reaching the starving. Speculation was worst in food producing

areas like Thessaly where profiteering was carried out by the Wehrmacht as well as by the Italian army. Corruption was endemic right down to the ordinary soldiers. Although most received rations, they had little to supplement their needs; as a result, stealing and exploitation of the black market were rife. In response, blatant subversion of Italian authority was a well-developed Greek strategy; officially the Italians were in control but lacked the power to impose their authority, leaving the ordinary soldier at a loss (p. 59).

This book also examines how sexual relations with Italian soldiers were not just a way for starving women to acquire food for themselves or their families, as the official Greek version claims. The author notes the complex motives, including Italian disaffection with army life, for some of these relationships, and the surprisingly high number of marriages (pp. 138–40).

The failure of the occupation authorities to prevent the collapse of social order left a power vacuum to be filled by the resistance, notably in the Communist EAM-controlled areas. The third section of the book analyses Italy's counterinsurgency policies and how brutal repression was exacerbated by rivalry with the German authorities (p. 167). Although there is perhaps too much emphasis on certain well-known facts, this book offers new material on occupation policy and is a welcome contribution to our understanding of Greek-Italian relations.

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**‘E se paesani / zoppicanti sono questi versi’. Povertà e follia nell’opera di Amelia Rosselli,**  
by SARA SERMINI, Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 2019, 252pp., €24 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-22-26638-5

Publication in the Mondadori series *I Meridiani* has become the ultimate dream of everyone involved in Italian literature. Although often a power game, a matter of ‘dangerous’ relationships and, *ça va sans dire*, economic returns, having one’s own ‘*Meridiano*’ is comparable to being awarded the poetic laurel with which senator Orso dell’Anguillara crowned Francesco Petrarca in the Campidoglio on 8 April 1341. Unsurprisingly, this honour was bestowed upon Amelia Rosselli, certainly the most important woman in twentieth-century Italian poetry and, beyond any gender distinction (Rosselli herself preferred to be labelled *poeta* rather than *poetessa*), perhaps the most important poetic voice of twentieth-century Italy. From the beginning of her poetic career, experimental groups active in the late 1950s and early 1960s – respectively, Pasolini’s ‘Officina’ and the neo-avant-garde ‘Novissimi’ and ‘Gruppo 63’ – tried, in vain, to enlist her among their ranks. In 1963, Pasolini wrote about her verses in the journal *Menabò*: ‘I would say that I have never seen, in recent years, such a product, so powerfully amorphous, so objectively superb.’ Yet Rosselli remains a poet who escapes any label: her work is a ripe and magical orchard, constantly bearing new fruit and thus creating the need for new studies.

Rosselli’s collected works were issued in the *Meridiani* series in 2012, with a timely introduction by Emmanuela Tandello, one of the major scholars of Rosselli’s poetry. At that point, her poetry had already been the object of several studies, both in Italy and abroad: but the publication of her collected works gave rise to countless important critical readings, which demonstrate the