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Book Reviews

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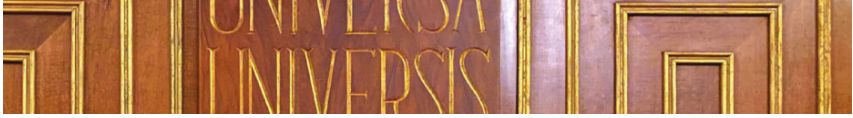
Book Reviews

C. García-Minguillán, E. Pasini, F.T. Scaiola

Reviews of Iannuzzi, Geografie del tempo. Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi nel Nord America del Settecento, Viella 2022; Baldassarri & Zampieri (eds.), Scientiae in the History of Medicine, L'erma di Bretschneider 2021; Martin, The Virtuous Physician: A Brief Medical History of Moral Inquiry from Hippocrates to COVID-19, Ethics Press 2023; Whatmore, The History of Political Thought: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford UP 2021; Bussotti & Lotti, Cosmology in the Early Modern Age: A Web of Ideas, Springer Nature 2022.

1 GIULIA IANNUZZI, *Geografie del tempo. Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi nel Nord America del Settecento*, Roma: Viella, 2022, 328 p.
ISBN: 9788833139968 / 9791254690536, € 29.00.

The monograph *Geografie del tempo. Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi nel Nord America del Settecento* presents a detailed study of the ways in which Europeans encountered, recognised and, therefore, represented the indigenous people of North America in the 18th century. Studying the conceptualisation of indigenous people in the Age of Reason entails tracing deep cultural shifts that took place during the early modern era, beginning with the use of labels such as *savage man*, increasingly problematised by the creation of a recognisable native subject in accordance with Europeanising assumptions, such as a Christian religion, a specific social structure, and an identifiable culture with a comprehensible language. In short, the European image of Native Americans was filtered through a colonialist lens and, therefore, denaturalised and decontextualised, to be better assimilated and understood, and later used in the struggle for controlling the historical narrative. In this way, and significantly in the 18th century, the historical meaning of indigenous identities was questioned, and their specific place was recognised in the universal historiographical discourse, mainly defined by powers with interests in the northern part of the American continent.



Iannuzzi's study thus raises complex questions related to the process of creating a Native American identity (historical, cultural, social, anthropological, ethnographic) in the European mind, and the exposition of a timeline that, on the basis of empirical testimonies arising from direct observation and experience, constructed the past and also foreshadowed the future. This plurality of testimonies in the source base not only encompasses historiographical sources such as chronicles, but also includes interesting documents such as travel diaries of explorers, traders, scientists or missionaries, together with material added to provide empirical evidence of the contact with Native American people, such as vocabularies of indigenous languages, documentation of the life of native nations and their natural space, engravings and graphic representations of physical features and aspects, etc.

The book is divided into 8 chapters specialising in each type of encounter, supported by empirical experience, along with a solid theoretical analysis where the most interesting questions are raised: the creation of a historical narrative pertaining Native American peoples, the enquiry into the origins and contact between different races, the construction of a Native identity recognisable by European observers, the self-awareness of European expansion and the beginning of processes of globalisation, all connected by the common thread of the conceptualisation of time and its manipulation according to the tensions between different European and American colonial powers.

The first chapter, "Distanze temporali, distanze spaziali. Cenni storiografici", offers a useful historiographical review on the study of the past in the age of the Enlightenment, a time during which the historical discipline underwent an important process of change in its discursive frameworks and research tools. This was partially due to the historiographical project related to the *New World* and the interest in narrating the presence and contact with the American "other", within a broader project aimed at reconstructing the past and comparing the identity of different peoples of the globe. The first chapter traces these interests and includes some necessary notes on the methodologies exploited in the peri-

odisation of history, and on the conceptualisation of historical time, dealing, for example, with the *vergangene Zukunft*, the metatheory of historical time or the consciousness of globalisation which goes beyond the specific features of each culture and analyses both the moment of contact and the similarities noted.

The second chapter, “Resoconti di viaggio e conflitti conoscitivi”, focuses on the travel accounts, treaties, and testimonies of missionaries in Nouvelle France and in the British colonies, written by administrators, policymakers or diplomats, scientists and fur traders, describing their contacts with native peoples such as Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee or Catawba. The analysis of this corpus highlights the influence of America as a new power, as well as Anglophone predominance strengthened thanks to key political figures such as Thomas Jefferson. In James Cook’s third voyage, for example, it is possible to appreciate the contact with the Nuu-chah-nulth people on Vancouver Island, motivated mainly by commercial interests, but also by other, more scholarly objectives, such as to provide knowledge of these peoples, descriptions of their territories, as well as to express admiration for the landscape. With the discovery and definition of native peoples, the understanding of their nature was also promoted. The description of anthropological and natural features is dealt with in the third chapter, “Declinazioni diacroniche della diversità americana”, in which the concepts of Aristotelian man, or the *noble savage*, the influence of Spanish observers, or the theories about the Hebraic origin of the Indians are analysed. This interest promoted a scientism that stimulated medical interests in expeditions such as that of Lewis and Clark in 1804, which aimed, among other things, to study diseases and epidemics, as well as contact with indigenous women, their appearance, their customs and their sexualisation.

The ways of life of the native peoples raised questions on the way of constructing the historiographical narrative. The ideological and theological tensions of the time were woven together with the Franco-British rivalry to take control of the historical knowledge on colonised territories. Thus, chapter 4, “Scrivere la storia degli altri”, considers the Jesuit presence and missionary ethnology or anthropology, whereby the primordial and uncorrupted features of the native peoples were recounted from the standpoint of a European ideal of virtue. Thanks to this appreciation, the indigenous people may become the reflection of the Europeans’ ancestors. A particular valuation of indigenous history was thus granted, and there was a debate about how the conventional

historiographical narratology of the *Old World* was not valid for constructing the history of the *New*. From this point, chapter five, “Inscrivere gli altri nella storia”, proceeds to reflect on the linguistic markers used to reconstruct the history of the native peoples, in which the hypothesis of their Hebraic descent encouraged parallel debates on the origins of the communities, the infancy of the colonies, their relationship with Antiquity or with the life of the first Christians, motivating a counter-discourse that questioned the first voices that recognised native peoples, producing tensions for the control of the narrative between the French, British and Spanish colonial powers. As a result, the temporal markers by which the Indians’ past was referred and thus conditioned their future was called into question.

Control of the other by discourse also shows a narrative of legitimisation of the colonial domination. Therefore chapter 6, “Storia e discorso: interpreti, genealogie, gerarchie”, deals with the language used to recognise the other through the testimony of cultural mediators and *go-betweens* who, integrated into the life of the tribes, noticed cultural and social distinctions between different peoples and sometimes promoted an enlightened movement to transfer the ethical-social principles of civilisation in North America. The particularities of indigenous languages, their orality, musicality, and opportunity for recognition are explored in depth in chapter 7, “Vocabolari selvaggi”, through the study of testimonies which included lexicons to encourage contact with the tribes, the creation of pidgin languages, and reflection on the degree of representativeness, hypothesis, and anticipation that indigenous languages offered.

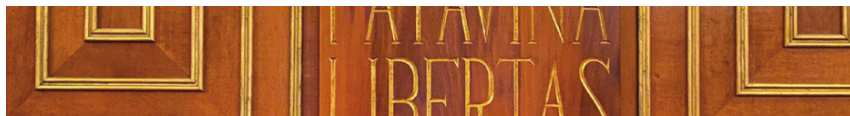
After the synchronic analysis provided by the empirical materials and the consequent diachronic analysis that seeks to reconstruct the past of these native nations, the last chapter deals with how European observers in the 18th century also addressed the future of indigenous peoples. Chapter 8, “Un Futuro Malleabile”, deals with reflections on the future of North America that included unifying political projects, and employed cyclical models to argue that North America was the heir to Enlightened Europe, and destined to become a leading society, with global economic and political dominance in the future. In short, the time to come also offered the backdrop to self-serving representations of the “Indian” as a malleable figure according to the interests of colonial discourses. Again, Native American identity in the European mind as moulded from a colonising perspective.

Far from being a mere description of the sources consulted, this monograph is sustained by an elegant balance between primary and secondary texts, and offers a deeper interpretation of its source base. Perhaps not too much emphasis is placed on philosophical aspects of the creation of time, on the emergence of Historicism during the Enlightenment, or on the distinction between a European witness and a witness influenced by American identity. Also missing is any testimony (diary, epistolary relationship) of women that may have some contacts with native tribes. However, even if these issues are not directly addressed, the study is punctuated by discussions of gender issues and further themes that should be the subject of further analysis in future works.

Apart from the great contribution offered by the thorough research in this book, the cohesive, but at the same time complete structure should be emphasised. Iannuzzi demonstrates a clear mastery of the subject without saturating the reader with unnecessary data: her study puts forward a profound re-examination of the contact between the Western inhabitants, Europeans and Americans, and North American indigenous communities. The balance between a significant number of sources and their explanation, the researcher's valid criteria for delimiting the relevant information and her synthetic and analytical skills when it comes to explaining complex terms, means that this book is not lacking the qualities of great studies: to present complex aspects in a pleasant way.

Geografie del tempo presents a fascinating subject and offers a rich and well-arranged analysis of its sources and themes. Many researchers interested not only in the contact between the *Old* and the *New World*, but also in post-colonialist perspectives, Cultural studies and, especially, the History of time, would benefit from having this relevant monograph translated into other languages.

Claudia García-Minguillán



2 FABRIZIO BALDASSARRI, FABIO ZAMPIERI (eds.), *Scientiae in the History of Medicine*, Roma-Bristol, CT: L'erma di Bretschneider, 2021, 328 p. ISBN: 9788891320186, € 85 (pers.)/€ 140 (inst.).

The Foreword presents this book, which richly celebrates the history of medical studies at the University of Padua (one of the most ancient and renowned universities in the world) as “a step forward in the generation of a new kind of historiography of early modern medicine” (9). This sound lightly bombastic, but indeed the present volume is not a sample of old-kind historiography, while it is, beyond doubt, well inserted in the mainstream of present historiography of medicine (and of universities), with its attention to institutions and places, to collective dynamics, groups, networks, and traditions, to the intertwining of sub-disciplines and approaches.

It begins with a not-so-brief and quite pleasurable history of the eight-century old medical school in Padua (Zampieri), sporting Pietro d'Abano, Vesalio and Acquapendente as the most visible figures in the Late Medieval and Early Modern period. Starting with “the socio-cultural patrimony of the thirteenth century” (24) and the foundation of the school under the aegis of *Patavina libertas*, it proceeds through its history up to the 17th century showing the continuous intersection of medicine and anatomy with the other sciences and academic disciplines. From a much less laudatory point of view, one of the essential features of the school, the anatomical theater and its teachers and demonstrators, is analyzed (Klestinec, who returns here on the subject matter of her 2020 book) as “a site of control, regulation, and for the audience, especially medical students, compliance” (71).¹ The *hortus* (Egmond) in its “multifunctionality” (93) and its connection to *materia medica*, and the institutions of medical museology (Zanatta) of the Padua University provide the subject of two other contributions, that complete this first section in an optimal way, together with a very interesting chapter on the science and ethics of human remains in historical collections (Ballestriero)—a theme that is gaining world-wide traction

¹ At some points this reading seems to be a bit forcefully injected into the sources. For instance, in a key episode related by the Acts of the German Nation of the Faculty of the Arts, the marks are detected of their condition of religious outcasts—they would have been considered Protestants. Yet everybody knew that German territories were split between ‘religions’ and both compilers of the Acts happened to come from Catholic lands (Kranjska, Roermond in Limburg), just as many other *ultramontani* students, German or not.

in museology and is of concern to a wide variety of museums beyond scientific and anthropological/anatomical ones. The second section is dedicated to case studies in and out the Paduan medical school, ranging from Berengario da Carpi (Shotwell) to Girolamo Donzellini (Celati¹) and Giorgio Baglivi (Tonetti); from mid-16th-century Rome (Kavvadia) to 17th and early 18th-century Leiden (De Carli); from René Descartes' medical research and theories (Baldassarri) to present-day classification and identification of diseases (Giarretta); and, for *Pandemiezeit* readers, from pestilence in Renaissance Platonic Medicine (Moreau) to the 1575 Venetian Plague (the same chapter by Celati). They make for a very interesting as well as instructing collection, for which we can be grateful to the editors and the authors. Historians of medicine, anatomy, public health, and medical schools and universities, will find much useful material and engaging points of view.

3 ELLIOTT B. MARTIN, JR., *The Virtuous Physician: A Brief Medical History of Moral Inquiry from Hippocrates to COVID-19*, Oxford: Ethics International Press, 2023, 160 p. ISBN: 9781804411766 (Print), £ 79.99; 9781804411773 (eBook).

In the second issue of this journal, Dr. Elliot Burton Martin, Jr., published an article titled “The Virtuous Physician. A New Translation of a Pseudo-Hippocratic Text and Its Implications for the History of Moral Inquiry; or, The Significance of an Insignificant Text” (<https://doi.org/10.13135/2280-8574/81>). The author has now expanded that article, together with abundant new material, into a book. Since the first chapter, with the reprise of Martin's translation of the pseudo-Hippocratic *Precepts*, here seen as a “a series of moral signposts” (75), the book is solidly located at the intersection of moral philosophy, medical deontology and the history of medicine.

The history begins with the physician-priest becoming a physician-philosopher and, at a point, meets the main classic philosophical schools and the heritage of the Bible. At times, interpretive schemes will be somewhat sketchy, with some corner-cutting in the history of philosophy; but the intent of the book is more narrative than scholarly in this respect. The scholarly contribution, rather, is

¹ See also her 2018 paper in the JIHI (<https://doi.org/10.13135/2280-8574/3060>).

characterized by a conjointly historical and theoretical approach (on questions of identity and moral of the medical profession), an approach that qualifies not only the translation and commentary of the *Precepts*, but the following in-deep analysis of the available knowledge on the origins (with even a reference to Bernal's *Black Athena*), meaning, and history of the Greek word for physician (ιατρός) as well, and finally, in the last chapter (under the title "An Archeology of Disease) a reflection on disease theory prompted first by Ebola, and updated now for Covid19. It is this approach that, on the one hand, gives a strong unity to the work, and on the other hand endears it once again to this journal.

4 RICHARD WHATMORE, *The History of Political Thought: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 160 p.
ISBN: 9780198853725, £ 8.99.

Richard Whatmore promises a very brief introduction to the history of political thought. He has succeeded in this intent. The book does not pretend to be exhaustive. It aims to provide a basic understanding of the main currents of political thought, beginning with Marx and with a focus on the contemporary. It also aims to offer interpretive tools to directly understand key concepts and authors, in order to approach the topic of political thought in a historical rather than a philosophical or political perspective.

It is not possible to list here all the authors cited. It will be more suitable to focus instead on the basic issues inherent in the history of political thought and its potential, that is so well described by the author.

Even considering its brevity, the book is able to provide the reader with the essential bibliographic information, as well as to convey the idea that a historical perspective on political thought is far from useless. Its key element, in fact, is "History". Whatmore takes up the reflection on the usefulness of the history of political thought, with a persuasive contribution.

The history of political thought, itself a branch of conceptual history, became an important independent academic discipline in the 1960s. As the author notes, two critical aspects should be considered. The first one is that "the canonical texts that are usually studied tend to have been written by men" (22), and "this perception has persisted despite the brilliance of a long list of female historians of political thought" (22). Only recently has there been a greater appreciation

of the role of women in the history of political thought and of the importance of gender. A second point is that the traditional history of political thought is mainly Eurocentric, or North-American centered (24-25, 113), and the main authors within it are mostly European.

Yet it is also true, as Pocock said, that we still do not know enough about the transformation of European political thought (113). And since the late 1960s, research on the history of political thought has been increasingly inspired by the writings of Strauss, Foucault, Koselleck and the authors of the Cambridge School (107).

As we have already suggested, the central question of this book is: why (and how) is the history of political thought important? As the author states, “today we live in a period when crisis is once again all around us. The democratic and liberal politics that were for a long time seen to be second nature, even an ‘end of history’, are now recognized to be fragile. Many commentators argue that liberal democracy may not survive the current generation” (8). In the face of this situation, looking at the past becomes crucial, for the simple reason that past generations have faced similar challenges.

It should be remarked that the history of political thought is fluid and dialogic, being a perennial confrontation between authors who propose different positions. It is possible to wonder what these authors would have said about the questions of the present. For it is always the present that, directly or indirectly, dictates the agenda of the questions we pose to the past.

Nevertheless, a recognition of the importance of the history of political thought meets several obstacles. On one side, the past is rejected as inferior to the present, on the other, as Whatmore says, in recent years “there has been a sharp rejection of historical studies that are directly or indirectly critical of nationalist political narratives, constructed political consensus or social media-driven moral crusades” (30). Conversely, one of the most important problems with current politics is that we see it in an ahistorical way.

What can the history of political thought, then, do for us? History explains politics and with this intent the history of political thought reveals the multiplicity of political projects, actions and thoughts, their authors, and critics. In other words, knowledge of the history of political thought makes us aware. If one knows the history of political ideas, one can begin to understand politics. This is possible because the problems of human affairs are cyclical, despite

differences in time and space. And it is precisely the purpose of the history of political thought, to review what has been thought rather than focusing only on the current debate. As the author often points out, history can relate skepticism and uncertainty about our future to parallel fears expressed in the past.

Consequently, historians of political thought tend to be skeptical and critical of ‘presentism’, which is why they prefer diachronic analyses. They immerse themselves in the writings of the time, with the aim of understanding what mattered to political actors, what they perceived, and the range of options available to them. Ultimately, it makes sense to be able to view, for instance, Rousseau as his contemporaries understood him. This approach is well described by the author when he explains that “historians of political thought interrogate the social life of historical communities in their own terms, studying their cultural practices, languages and discourses, linguistic and discursive to recover, as far as possible, people’s conversations about their lives” (19).

To do this, it is necessary to try and reconstruct the meaning of the texts through the analysis of their original ideological contexts, and thus to develop a perspective on the present that is informed by its past. As the author argues: “it is always a bad idea to judge the past by the present as that would mean that we cease to be able to use history or to get any benefit from it. The aim should rather be to allow the past to inform the present” (117).

In conclusion, this book is an interesting and easy guide for those who want to approach the most influential political theorists, whose books have been discussed by generations of scholars, but it is also useful for understanding the major approaches of our time, where they come from, how they have been criticized, and, most importantly, why they matter. It brings the reader to realize that a realistic view of politics must necessarily be historical; to forgo investigating the ‘historicity’ of concepts is the greatest obstacle to understanding reality.

Francesco Tomaso Scaiola



5 PAOLO BUSSOTTI, BRUNELLO LOTTI, *Cosmology in the Early Modern Age: A Web of Ideas*, Cham, CH: Springer Nature, 2022, 328 p. ISBN: 9783031121944, € 117.69 (HC) - € 93.08 (eBook).

At the very beginning of this book, we are reminded that “Astronomy is more ancient than physics” (Raffaele Pisano’s Preface, p. v). Cosmology is a bit of both: as ancient as astronomy, at least, but also permeated by theories on the constitution of nature which, when ‘physics’ grew into an independent field of investigation, would become more and more essential to the former’s doctrines. Cosmology became in the end a branch of physics, but it had also long been identified with it as a branch of metaphysics, most famously by 18th-century German rational philosophers of albeit disparate views. It was then, on religious and philosophical (battle)grounds, a tool and a weapon; a common staple in doctrinal recipes. Cosmology is in fact a peculiar territory, in that in it not only physics and astronomy join forces, but cultural expectations, religion, and philosophy have an important say as well.

“Rational reflection on the universe is at the root of Western philosophy” (Editors’ Introduction, ix), and inside this philosophical tradition the typically Early-Modern, rational kind of cosmology originated, that at that age was mainly practiced by scientists who were also philosophers, or “whose doctrines had profound philosophical implications” (ix). To the most prominent among such figures this book is devoted: the familiar names of Copernicus, Kepler, Galilei, Descartes, Huygens (so often neglected, and thus most welcome here), Newton, and—less obviously—Leibniz¹ mark its chapters. Each of them is treated at the same time as *corpus doctrinarum*, that is, as a scientist; as an individual with specific motivations and tenets (for instance, Newton’s theological commitment to absolute space), and as a focal point in a historical conjuncture, that some of them obviously share at least in the general aspects. The fortes and the feeble points of each one (maybe with the exception of Huygens, that admittedly had very few of the latter) are equanimously presented. The treatment is based both on direct knowledge and on a firmament of the best available liter-

¹ Whose “mixing of, not to say confusion between, theological and scientific discourse” when working in this field is duly noted anyway (287), bug or feature of his thought, and maybe not only of his, this might have been. The chapter on Leibniz is respectful but also pleasurably uncomplimentary.

ature (with the late E.J. Aiton, not unexpectedly, as a recurring comet) and is always very clear but also enough technical as the subject matter requires: 17th-century cosmology is co-substantial, so to say, with decisive progress in algebra and analysis and with the birth of modern mechanics and dynamics, both enterprises to which the book protagonists contributed substantially. The authors show more interest in the cosmological theories per se, and their interplay and mutual conditioning with philosophical theories and *Weltanschauungen*, than in the latter as such; and this is one of many reasons why this book is so solid, and will be found so useful by any reader interested in its subject matter and themes.



Historical plaque of the University of Padua, cover illustration for Scientiae in the History of Medicine.