

demonstration of how Italy's emergent bourgeoisie staged itself in death, with, for example, funerary sculpture vividly depicting bedside death scenes as well as aspirational interiors. Located as such works were in 'neighbourhoods' within new cemeteries, they simultaneously capture the relative egalitarianism inspiring rising moneyed classes within the 'old' Italy, and the rivalries for status among members of those classes.

Overall, Malone's book enlarges on an area that already constitutes a minor field unto itself, namely the study of Italy's mass war cemeteries. Typically, of course, in Italy those cemeteries hold the fallen of the First World War, and the commemorations of that war fall squarely under the rubric of art and politics under Fascism (as some of Malone's earlier work, in fact, has done already). Here, though, we examine the essential precedent for those later civic burial grounds, and with it the elaboration of the very idea of a civic, collective, and even secular cemetery in Italy – one that practices the cult of the nation in tandem with that of the Church. From this point of view, *Architecture, Death and Nationhood* assumes an important place among scholarly works that are key to understanding Italy's transition from its pre-Unification internal divisions to an ability (no matter how incomplete) to depict the new nation through its dead. In other words, this book is the necessary counterpart to studies of the Monument to Victor Emmanuel II (the much-derided Vittoriano at the heart of Rome), which was designed to commemorate the king under whom Italy was unified – and later became home to Italy's Unknown Soldier of the First World War. By exploring the tastes of the many in the new Italy, the book provides us with the backdrop against which that one terribly visible monument was crafted.

The book also includes a detailed catalogue of cemetery complexes, in the form of an appendix, as well as numerous photographs throughout the book. Whether, like this reviewer, you already enjoy visiting Italian cemeteries, or you have not explored them yet, Malone's study will give you vital context, and enrich your next (or first) such visit.

Mia Fuller

University of California – Berkeley

miafull@berkeley.edu

© 2018 Association for the Study of Modern Italy

doi:10.1017/mit.2018.24

Scrivere d'amore. Lettere di uomini e donne tra Cinque e Novecento, edited by Manola Ida Venzo, Rome, Viella, 2015, 495 pp., €35.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-6728-447-4 © 2018 Association for the Study of Modern Italy

This anthologised collection of love letters is brought to a wider reading public thanks to a collaboration between the Archivio di Stato and La Sapienza University in Rome, and represents a welcome addition to the histories of emotions, gender and social history, the history of private lives, memory studies, and life writing in Italy from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Consisting of sets of letters housed in public or private archives and with each section introduced by a scholar or family member, it offers an important platform for analysing *affect* and phatic expression in a selection of correspondence by exceptional figures (e.g. Franca Rame to Dario Fo; Sidney Sonnino and Palma Bucarelli to their respective lovers) and between ordinary heterosexual couples, betrothed or adulterous. Due to the remit of *Modern Italy*, this review will focus solely on the letters from the late eighteenth century onwards – a period in which letter

writing began to be practised as never before among the increasingly educated lower-middle classes.

Venzo's introductory essay – which highlights the 1980s as the years that saw a number of studies on private correspondence and a focus on the centrality of the individual – provides a stimulating overview of work carried out thus far, and contextualises the anthology's contribution. She highlights the universal and apparently decontextualised nature of cultural constructions of love up to the end of the nineteenth century and beyond (p. 15), in spite of differences in a letter writer's use of language and expression according to gender and social class boundaries. There follows a shorter and more theoretical contribution by Roberto Bizzocchi on decodifying emotions, as a preamble to the main body of letters. Tracing a genealogy of philosophers from Nietzsche to Foucault to Paul Veyne, Bizzocchi draws on the latter's analysis (from 1978) of the sentimental 'practices' that individuals project onto a person whom they 'objectify' and may mistake for 'love'. He calls upon historians to reconstruct and analyse such 'practices', a process which is already underway in gender history, the history of sexuality, and the history of the family.

The letters are presented thematically in typologies (e.g., courtly love; love among intellectuals; adulterous love; blogs on love) and historically defined periods or places, as well as in linguistic and affective contexts (e.g., the early years of Fascism; post-Second World War Rome; love letters to celebrities; death-bed love letters; manuals on love-letter writing; letters online). The first section of the volume is on *I codici espressivi*, in which Maria Iolanda Palazzolo discusses the explosion of love letter-writing manuals onto the Italian book market at the end of the eighteenth century. She provides useful context on their didactic function and commercial success, demonstrating growing consumer demand for advice, norms and social conventions. Moving into the twentieth century, Lorenzo Cantatore foregrounds letters between married art historian and politician Giulio Carlo Argan (1909–1992) and avant-garde art critic and director of the Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna from 1942–1975, Palma Bucarelli (1910–1998), who remained single until 1963. Argan's concern for Bucarelli's health (she suffered migraines) and his adoration of her is apparent on reading his letters. Going back in time but forwards in the volume, Venzo returns to introduce letters written by the many middle- and upper-class women with whom the young patriot and politician Luigi Pianciani (1810–1890) had affairs, highlighting differences according to gender in their use of language. The men's discourse is full of gallantry and romantic rhetoric, according to Venzo, in comparison with a hurried and 'harsh' language predominantly adopted by the women. Returning to the twentieth century, Paola Carlucci presents letters charting the extramarital affair between Prime Minister Sidney Sonnino (1847–1922) and the 'donna di mondo' and aristocrat Natalia Morozzo della Rocca (1807–1997) prior to the former taking office, while Antonietta Sammartano's contribution presenting letters between her betrothed parents, Nino Sammartano and Anna Galli, illustrates middle-class male discourses on romantic love during the early years of Fascism (Galli had kept all but one of these letters from her fiancé). Francesca Borruso foregrounds letters from 1919 to 1922 between the married then tragically estranged anti-fascist couple Ada Prospero and Piero Gobetti while Gobetti was in exile in Paris (he died there in 1923). The section titled *Roma città aperta* contains a selection of letters between another married couple – a teacher named Olga, and an anti-fascist journalist known as Fritz. They were written during the Second World War when Fritz was captured and imprisoned by the Americans, and are introduced here by their son, Corrado Lampe, who describes their first encounter in 1940 as '*un vero e proprio colpo di fulmine*' (p. 331). In the section *In punto di morte*, focusing on letters written in the context of struggles against Fascism, Venzo returns again to discuss male abuse of power and promiscuity in wartime in a reflection on love, sex, betrayal and

abandonment in the partisan struggle. Venzo includes a selection of letters between an unknown Red Cross nurse and an injured soldier before the latter attempted suicide because of unrequited love in 1945, and from a young Fascist woman who fell in love with the married leader of a group of partisans. Continuing with the Nazi occupation, Luca Saletti introduces Giulio Levi's eight letters to his Tuscan lover Tosca, a single mother. Sent during 1943–1944, they speak of the everyday (including visits to the cinema and theatre) as well as the dramatic events leading up to Levi's internment in a concentration camp, where he died aged 23. In the section *Scrivere alle celebrità* (including the longest essay in the volume) Irene Palombo recounts the permutations of the dramatic, long-distance and ill-fated love affair between an ordinary middle-class teacher based in the Abruzzan countryside, Concetta Cipolla, and the celebrated poet, Angelo M. Tirabassi, from 1906 to 1909 (his letters to her are – not surprisingly – lost). Librettist Francesco Maria Piave's lines '*La mia delizia e la mia croce*' in Verdi's celebrated opera *La Traviata*, in which the heroine sings of her dilemma (whether to remain a high-class courtesan or to live with her bourgeois suitor) are borrowed by Cipolla in her letters to Tirabassi. Palombo's inclusion of certain stanzas about Violetta's sacrifice feel ill placed given that Concetta is apparently still a virgin (p. 417). The volume closes with Mariateresa Pizza's presentation of Franca Rame's heartfelt love letter to Dario Fo, which she published on her online blog during the year she passed away (2013).

The impressive bibliography of works cited is testimony to the vast corpus that informs the introductory essays and of work done in the field thus far in the Italian context, though references to the anglophone context are strikingly absent. What appears at times more of a *pot pourri* of love letters through the ages (on what basis has the choice of pairs of lovers or couples been made?) is not helped by the overwhelming heteronormativity of the selection, particularly in a book series dedicated to women's history. There is also the risk that (bar the final contribution) the penned love letter is not only memorialised but mythologised, and the book's insistence on heterosexual love and its portrayal of men as more romantic than women compounds negatively the stereotype of Italy as a country of 'Latin lovers'. These quibbles notwithstanding, the volume intelligently stages the interconnectedness between dramatic historical events and the unpredictability of the emotions, particularly when it comes to love – in its many complex and multifaceted variations.

Katharine Mitchell

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

katharine.mitchell@strath.ac.uk

© 2018 Association for the Study of Modern Italy

doi:10.1017/mit.2018.37