JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY HISTORY OF IDEAS

2025

Volume 14 Issue 27
Item 7

– Section 3: Reviews –

Book Reviews

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JIHI 2025

Volume 14 Issue 27

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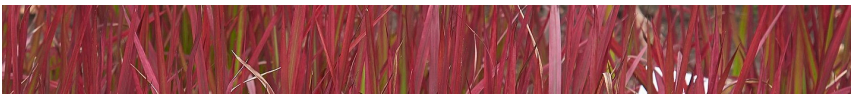
*Reviews of Lacaita and Martinelli (eds.),*The Civilization of Modernity: An Anthology of Carlo Cattaneo's Writings, *Brill 2024; Gianfrancesco and Tarrant (eds.),* The Science of Naples: Making Knowledge in Italy's Pre-Eminent City, 1500–1800, *UCL Press 2024; Maddaluno,* Science and political economy in Enlightenment Milan, 1760–1805, *Liverpool UP 2024.*



1 Carlo G. Lacaita and Alberto Martinelli (eds.), *The Civilization of Modernity: An Anthology of Carlo Cattaneo's Writings.* Studies in the History of Political Thought, 18. Leiden: Brill, 2024. 426 pp. ISBN: 9789004447424, € 145+VAT.

The book I am describing here has the merit of restoring Italian thinker Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869) to his international dimension. By presenting a well-curated and annotated anthology of the writings of the Italian scholar and politician, it offers an opportunity for those who do not read Italian to engage with the multi- and interdisciplinary work of the Milanese thinker. The relatively limited circulation of Cattaneo's work is due, in part, to a lack of translations. Over the years, the fragmentary nature of his writings has discouraged many translators from undertaking the task. Among the few extant English translations, are *Psychology of the Associated Minds: Lectures at the Lombard Institute of Sciences, Letters and Arts* (*Psicologia delle menti associate)*, edited by Barbara Boneschi[1], *Intelligence as a Principle of Public Economy* (*Del pensiero*

[1] Carlo Cattaneo, *Psychology of the Associated Minds: Lectures at the Lombard Institute of Sciences, Letters and Arts*, ed. Barbara Boneschi (Milan: Bocconi UP, 2019).

come principio d'economia publica)[1], and an anthology, *Civilization and Democracy: The Salvemini Anthology of Cattaneo's Writings*, edited by Gaetano Salvemini (who was, himself, a famous Italian socialist and anti-fascist politician and historian), and translated by David Gibbons for the Da Ponte Italian Library.[2] Cattaneo was a prolific author who lent his expertise to a wide range of topics. He was a frequent contributor to various periodicals and an active participant in the politics of his time. The publication of Cattaneo's work remained fragmented even during his lifetime, despite some efforts by the author himself to collect portions of his writings, as explained by Carlo G. Lacaita in his essay in this book. Nevertheless, some of his works remained unpublished during his lifetime. Even part of his lectures on *Psychology of the Associated Minds* were published posthumously.

This volume undertakes the task of publishing an anthology, "conceived primarily in order to illustrate Cattaneo's thought on the subjects of modernity and civilization" (p. LIX). As Lacaita himself explains in his chapter, the anthology is composed of five sections: "The first is devoted to Cattaneo's view of history and civilization, a vision that underpins the positions he took up on so many of the themes he discussed individually. The second focuses on modern civilization, and the role that scientific and technological progress played in the changes to contemporary society. The third section brings together some of Cattaneo's most important writings on the subject of economic growth and how public policy can help achieve it, viewed from a global rather than merely a national perspective. The heart of the fourth section is the issue of social equity, which for Cattaneo was inseparably linked to humanity's freedom and social nature. The fifth and final section, meanwhile, is devoted to federalism, which for Cattaneo was the correct response to the main problems of political life and power, in the sense of enabling coexistence in complex and pluralistic societies based on equal freedoms" (p. XI).

[1] Carlo Cattaneo, *Intelligence as a Principle of Public Economy: Del pensiero come principio d'economia publica*, trans. Ruggero di Palma Castiglion, foreword by Michael Novak, afterword by Marco Vitali (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

[2] Carlo Cattaneo, *Le più belle pagine di Carlo Cattaneo scelte da Gaetano Salvemini* (Milano: Treves, 1922); Carlo Cattaneo, *Civilization and Democracy: The Salvemini Anthology of Cattaneo's Writings*, ed. Carlo G. Lacaita and Filippo Sabetti, trans. David Gibbons (Toronto: Lorenzo Da Ponte Library, 2006).

His relative obscurity outside of Italy is quite surprising, considering Cattaneo's interest in international affairs—particularly British culture and politics. In 1835, Cattaneo married Anna Woodcock, an Anglo-Irish woman who played a major role in establishing connections between her husband and British and Irish cultural figures. His interest in Britain is evident in an early unpublished piece discussing Edward Bulwer Lytton's book *England and the English* (published in 1833). Bulwer Lytton analysed in great detail the effects of the aristocracy's hegemony over England—especially in the political sphere—on culture and morals. Cattaneo's interest also extended to British agriculture and industry: his works *On British Agriculture as Compared to our Own* and *The Industry of Birmingham* are both in this anthology. Like his mentor Gian Domenico Romagnosi (1761-1835), Cattaneo was a keen reader of modern British philosophy. In a letter, he wrote: "I worship Locke". Cattaneo also showed a strong interest—also inherited from Romagnosi—in the work of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). Both Lacaita's chapter and several of the works selected for the anthology offer valuable insights into Cattaneo's philosophical culture and his connections not only to major British thinkers but also to two of the main sources of inspiration for the great Milanese author: Giambattista Vico (1668-1774) and Romagnosi.

His interest in global affairs made him an early pioneer of global history. This is demonstrated by the insightful essay *Dell'India antica e moderna* (*Of Ancient and Modern India*), first published in the *Rivista Europea* in 1845; by his fine essay on ancient Mexico, published in the journal *Il Politecnico* in 1860; by his short essay on ancient and modern Japan, also published in *Il Politecnico* in 1860; and by an insightful essay on China, published anonymously in *Il Politecnico* in 1861. The book also includes another key text by Cattaneo in his explorations of global history: *Aspects of World History: A Preface*.

What distinguishes and makes this work useful are also the two introductory chapters by two renowned scholars—among the greatest living specialists on Cattaneo—Carlo G. Lacaita and Alberto Martinelli, as well as a short biography of the Milanese thinker and an *Editors' Note* that clarifies the selection criteria. In their well-written and well-informed essays, Lacaita and Martinelli successfully highlight some of the most important aspects of Cattaneo's thought, demonstrating both his originality and his relevance to the contemporary world. For example, Lacaita illustrates the specificity and originality of Cattaneo's idea of progress: "for him it was a human construction, driven by

"aspirations" and developed through the "arts" of coexistence, the increase of which requires, like all complex human constructions, "hard work, slow and gradual" " (p. XIII). This vision explains the importance in Cattaneo of the concept of compromise: "his vision of historical and social change emphasized the concept of "compromise" as a way to overcome conflict by recognizing diversities, that is, by giving everyone an opportunity to take part in the exchange with others within a framework of guaranteed equity. This is to say that from the beginning, Cattaneo structured his liberal vision of history and society in terms of democratic and federalist thought" (p. XIV). His form of federalist thought emphasised "the composite nature of languages and nations. In later years he would repeatedly state that nations 'do not move as entire, formed, continuous systems', as the Romantics following Schlegel had argued".

In his essay, Alberto Martinelli identifies the main aspects of Cattaneo's thought that anticipated future developments in the social sciences: 1) The inclusion of intelligence and free will among the sources of a nation's wealth, conceptualizing thought as a factor of production; 2) The defence of economic freedom combined with support for public programs addressing social issues—considering welfare policies not as matters of piety, but as socio-political questions to be addressed scientifically; 3) The development of an innovative approach to social psychology, asserting that thought "is no primitive or spontaneous phenomenon; rather, it is a derivative and artificial production. It did not arise from the faculties of his mind only; it is the minds of the many who are thinking in him"; 3) Finally, Cattaneo's acute awareness of the relationship between the global and the local, anticipating current sociological debates on the nature of contemporary global modernity. Cattaneo explores the complex relationships between processes operating at the global level and the multiple identities and demands of local autonomy. According to Martinelli, Cattaneo may be considered one of the precursors of the 'multiple modernities' approach. These are all inspiring lines of analysis, which invite more comparative research on Cattaneo's works and ideas.

This book therefore represents both the perfect introduction to Cattaneo for the English-speaking public and a stimulating read for those already familiar with his work.

Michele Campopiano

2 Lorenza Gianfrancesco and Neil Tarrant, eds., *The Science of Naples: Making Knowledge in Italy's Pre-Eminent City, 1500–1800*. London: UCL Press, 2024. 276 pp., ISBN: 9781800086739, Open Access (CC-BY-NC) at https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781800086739.

The intellectual history of Italy, whether concerning philosophy, economic thought, medicine or science, often resorts to geography, particularly the geography of cities. This evokes the role of cities in the Italian territories during the late medieval and early modern periods, the numerous capitals of the small states that preceded the unification of the peninsula in the nineteenth century, and the more recent phenomenon of certain cities acquiring a special role in the Italian state. Of such cities, Naples was indeed the pre-eminent one for a long time, as the subtitle of the first book we are considering here suggests. Milan would enter the same league somewhat later, as the different time periods indicated in the subtitles of this book and of the one that is the subject of the following review hint at.

The timeline, in truth, is not actually univocal. One could say of a certain city that it was eminent, or 'flourished', for a certain period of time. Even eternal Rome, for example, thanks to long bursts of obscurantism seems to sparkle only for short periods of time. But during one of these, the scientific history of Rome was intertwined with that of Naples thanks to the newly founded Lincei Academy, which found there members and collaborators of undoubted ability and prestige. A long season of Neapolitan scientific vivacity, if not strictly eminence, is traced by *The Science of Naples*.

A localised gaze often harbours an opportunity for grievance: this book is meant "to address the relative marginalisation of Neapolitan science in the existing Anglophone literature" (p. 14), since the "general tendency to overlook Italy in English language accounts of early modern science is more pronounced in the case of Naples." (p. 1). Similarly, there is a danger of overemphasising the local reality with the risk of forgetting Talleyrand's famous advice, *surtout pas trop de zèle*. The contributions in this book largely avoid this pitfall, with only a few rhapsodic moments, mostly concerning the great Della Porta.

The volume is divided into four parts: the first introduces the readers to "Neapolitan science and its institutions". Alongside the university, Naples hosted other scholarly centres in both secular and ecclesiastical contexts—attention to these aspects is one of the book's major merits. As in other cities with a bur-

geoning cultural life at the time, Naples had private and public sites of scientific experimentation, natural history collections in cabinets of curiosities and private museums, as well as libraries and collections of scientific instruments. Hospitals were places of dissection and anatomical research. As in many Italian cities, religious institutions hosted laboratories: while in Rome they might accommodate astronomers and mathematicians, in Naples friars carried out pharmaceutical activities and "catered for the medical needs of the city's population, especially the poor" (p. 4). Naples was indeed home to a religious "microcosm" (p. 5) of apothecaries and workshops. These pages also introduce us to the academies (a staple of Neapolitan culture since Beccadelli's Porticus Antonianus): the much-studied Investiganti, founded by Tommaso Cornelio and a key player in the history of Neapolitan Cartesianism and the dissemination of Galilean experimentalism in Italy; and the 18th-century Academy of Sciences, founded, among others, by Nicola Cirillo, a famous physisician who belonged to a family of natural science enthusiasts, and university reformer Celestino Galiani (the uncle of the famous economist).[1]

The second part is devoted to "Environment, Disaster and Disease in the Bay of Naples", and contains, alongside a chapter on the pest of 1656, two interesting chapters on Earth history, the study of which was nearly obvious in a city laying under an active volcano, on the one hand, and in a region rich of 'fossil' troves. on the other—and which sported a vast number of intellectuals that could join antiquary ambitions and natural science in works that catalogued the various things precious or ancient, hot and cold, in form of crystals or of petrified living entities, that could be found under the earth and for this reason were called fossils. These are, of course, mostly works of compilation, including Della Porta's largely eclipsed *De aëris transmutationibus*, which nonetheless is

[1] The focus is not only on natural sciences: a richly informative chapter is devoted to 18th political science in Neapolitan universities, sketching before us a landscape that includes both big names and less-known academics (here, we also see the weight of censure and its role in stifling the cultural developments that blossomed over time). Yet, à propos economists, a notable absence in this volume is the 'Neapolitan school' of economic thought—not entirely disconnected from the sciences—from Antonio Serra and Paolo Mattia Doria to Genovesi, Palmieri, Filangieri, Ferdinando Galiani. It is obviously difficult to consistently manage the balance and the intertwinement between individual activities and interests and the general situation, between activity strictly pertaining to the natural science and other signs of cultural vivacity.

not devoid of original observations and some innovative position.

The coexistence of cultural audacity and oldfangled mentality is made apparent in the chapter on Neapolitan medicine and the plague, as well as the limits to the influence of *novatores*, for social reasons, of course, but also because of a lack of adequate empirical investigations. In general, the authors point to "an interaction between intellectual experience and ancient authority" (p. 30), already visible at the turn of the 16th and 17th century, and to a widespread assumption of the uncertain and evolving character of knowledge (p. 11) as two lasting characteristic attitudes of Neapolitan physicians and natural inquirers.

The third part, concerning "Naples and the Early Modern World", and a final chapter, both summon up, at least in my view, a relevant and ultimately undecided question: that of the relation between local dynamics and the wider international dimensions of European culture and science, a relation that cannot but have multiple aspects.

There is an understandable historiographic tension on this point. For instance, the final, amply illustrated chapter on the Ospedale degli incurabili (Hospital for the Incurable, that is, originarily, the syphilitics) and its recent repurposing in a fascinating Museo delle Arti Sanitarie e di Storia della Medicina (Museum of Health Arts and History of Medicine) in Naples, makes no mention of Ettore Vernazza in relation to its foundation. The philanthropist who founded the confraternity of Divino amore and the Incurabili Hospital of Genoa around 1499-1500, and stayed in Naples between the end of 1517 and late 1519, is not even evoked to disprove his purported role in convincing Maria Lorenzo Longo to institute the Neapolitan Hospital.[1] But even if we were to concede that Genoan Vernazza was instrumental in establishing certain health and cure organizations in Naples, it is a fact that he had come to Naples—the city had some traction and exercised attraction.

Representatives of scientific culture in Naples were not isolated: in the 16th and 17th centuries they have connections to renowned naturalist thinkers from

[1] See e.g. Andrea Vanni, DBI 98, s.v. Vernazza Ettore. This is old news, of course: "Traditional Neapolitan historians have tended to claim Maria Lorenzo as the sole originator, while historians of the Catholic reform movement have emphasized the role of Vernazza", as we read in Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson, and Roger Kenneth French, *The Great Pox: The French Disease in Renaissance Europe*, ch. 7, "The French Disease and the Hospitals for Incurables in Italy until 1530" (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), 158-159.

Calabria as Telesio and Campanella, but also to the Paduan school of medicine, including the eminent physician and anatomist William Harvey (p. 6). Naples, even before Goethian enthusiasms, is included in grand tours and is an object of interest for scholars everywhere, both of classical and natural erudition. On top of that, it is reasonably assumed in this book that prominent individuals meant the existence of "transnational scholarly networks " (p. 12). However, in such cases, we rather seem to observe a combination of local isolation and trans-regional or transnational relations that do not effectively translate into the social and cultural context. This combination was neither inconsistent nor exceptional in many European locations at the time—and it is indeed normal that in this kind of reconstruction some major figures appear at the same time exceptional and representative, as well as connected and isolated. Think of Ferrante Imperato, of his natural history collections and of the book (*Dell'Historia Naturale*) that presented them: this was exceptional and raised Europe-wide interest, and also, in a way, 'normal', just as Kircher's or the Wormian museums. Moreover, in this book such cabinets of curiosity are seen, in the end, through the eyes and reports of German travellers and compilers, just like the history of Herculaneum papyri is presented mostly through the stories of English travellers, scholars, and chemists, that is, disappointingly becomes a history of foreign people doing their scientific business in Naples. Again there is some tension, and it would seem that by and by, as La Capria liked to say, this history stops and time turns on itself. But it is important to rembember, even beyond the scope of this book, that this history of antiquarian relations, which had quickly developed into the search for mechanical and chemical techniques for unrolling and deciphering the papyri of that astounding library, did not end, and still in recent time has seen in Naples the development of new electronic and digital tools. As a lieu of scientific research, Naples would repeatedly become a centre of activity–as it happened at the beginning of the 20th century, e.g., in the field of marine biology–and the inner and outer contributions eventually joined forces.

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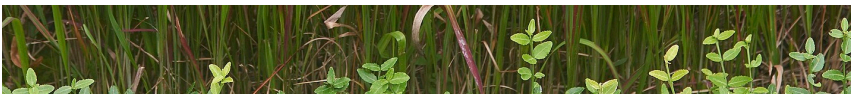

3 Lavinia Maddaluno, *Science and Political Economy in Enlightenment Milan, 1760–1805*. Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2024. 360 pp., ISBN:9781835534045, £ 85.

This book begins with an assignment given to the "Società patriotica"—an institution in Milan, established by Empress Maria Theresa in 1776 with the aim of promoting agriculture, fine arts and manufacturing—to study how to improve flour grinding and bread-making. It was a rather hot topic at a time when the liberalization of commerce and prices raised fears of a decrease in grain availability, and consequently "famines, dearth of wheat, and subsistence crises".[1] The Patriotic Society, initially headed by the philosopher and economist Pietro Verri, had its roots in the milieu of the economists who participated in the magazine *Il Caffè* ("The Coffeehouse"), the flagship journal of Italian Enlightenment. The immediate economical relevance of the question was apparent; but Verri and Beccaria, who were at the time civil servants with reform-oriented ambitions, could not fail to see that a change in crops would not only modify the composition of basic foods, but also made possible "the creation of small-scale rather than large-scale landholdings, coupled with investments in agricultural improvements, as key to developing the luxury sector and redistributing wealth". What is more, the solutions identified by the Society were based on technical and scientific knowledge: an efficient machine to smash potatoes, in order to make bread with potato flour like in other European and Italian cities, a machine to improve bread kneading, and French-inspired 'economic mills' to produce more flour by grinding the same quantity of grain; on Verri's suggestion, the renowned Milanese chemist Marsilio Landriani was put in charge thereof. Thus, right from the book's start, the interconnection in late 18th century Milan between science, the mechanical arts, political economy, the public role of intellectuals, and social reform comes to life.

[1] For this review I had access to the unpaginated digital version made for a well-known e-reading platform; for this reason I will not provide page numbers for quotations.

In a way, the purpose of this book seems to be the articulation of an understudied obviety: everybody seemingly knows already of this association as one of the peculiarities, probably the most important, of Lombard Enlightenment, as well as of its interactions with the state machine under Empress Maria Theresa. But this is not simply a cultural phenomenon, and the crowd of less known participants, the accumulation of practical efforts, the social results, short: what effectively could happen, offer here, first of all, the measure of its richness, credibility, and reality. Moreover, the nuances and the variance in the attitude of the protagonists shed some light on its complexity. Here 'reason' stands for the "rational and experimental procedures aimed at knowing the natural world"; 'economy' stands for "increased productivity, as well as for order and organization of production". This more rational order, that is also moral, is "central to processes of improvement and amelioration of agriculture and manufacturing". The second chapter addresses itself to the connection between such practical measures (even including the standadization of 'units of measure') to an ideal of social usefulness and public happiness: "In the broad philosophical culture of eighteenth-century Milan, *utile* bore a strong connection with the concept of happiness". This required the modernization and mobilitation of both science and manifacture, particularly of the mechanical arts, praised by Beccaria as more philosophical, wise, and inventive, and more relevant to education. An "absolute trust in experimentalism [evidently] translated into a conception of science at the service of society and humanity in general"; Paolo Frisi's *Instituzioni*, a mathematical handbook for the College of Engineers, were "to simplify and extend that part of mathematical and physical sciences which can improve society and commerce". But Maddaluno is also willing to "reassess the idea that [these] institutions and intellectuals", although committed to the experimental method as the key to understanding the natural world, "viewed technology and the mechanical arts in an exclusively positive light". Instead, "their belief in science and its public role was never absolute; rather, they voiced pessimistic views on the Enlightenment and on the instrumental role of technical and scientific knowledge".

In the third chapter, the reader encounters grander projects and the advocated use of perfected hydraulic machines to reclaim land. This sort of initiatives serve, in the mind of proponents, as a paradigm for promoting long-term progress through collective cooperation. The fourth chapter analyzes natural

history and mineralogy as "spaces of political economy" and tools for accessing natural resources and creating wealth, through the autonomization of natural history from medical teaching and its re-conceptualization as an independent discipline with a "key role in relation to political economy, state building, and the management of natural resources". The fifth chapter gets back to the fundamental agricultural undertone of this story, focusing on theories of the soil and its fertility. It is a history of salpeter and nitrogen, of mines and fertilization, of commerce, of productive and improductive luxury, precipitated by the works of chemists and ante litteram mineralogists and geologists.

All of these dynamics involve at the same time the efforts of local inventiveness and experimentation, as well as the adoption or criticism of foreign solutions and ideas, and the adovocacy of scientific and technical rigour; travels to gather botanical and agricultural knowledge and specimina, as well as contributions to the international debates on society, law, and education; practical scepticism and philosophical understanding. Not many years later, an ideal of unified knowledge of natural resources and societal conditions, based on careful acquisition and thoughtful treatment of information, will be brought to light in Melchiorre Gioia works on statistics: this is maybe the only aspect—midway between Galilean philosophy and the study of cheese production that are the extremities, so to say, of this inquiry on Enlightenment Milan—that this book is less interested in.

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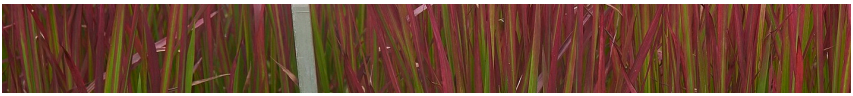

Wouter Hagens, Imperata cylindrica *(cogongrass). Wikimedia Commons (CC-BY-SA,* `https://w.wiki/ErvX`*).*
The genus Imperata is named after Ferrante Imperato.