

an extremely broad notion of working class, which may be nominally faithful to the plan's establishing law, which spoke of 'case per lavoratori', but loses sight of the fact that a far from negligible portion of those who were assigned a home – clerical workers, in particular – should actually rather be considered lower-middle-class. One could also doubt that, as an example of urban planning and design from the Fascist era, Littoria – a new town built on the reclaimed land of the Agro Pontino, which was meant to serve all the functions of a city – is the best comparison to the Tiburtino neighbourhood; rather, why not continue with the comparison with Garbatella, looking at the other Roman neighbourhoods that Vittorio Vidotto has branded 'quartieri del fascismo', or at the social-housing *borgate* of the late 1930s that have been studied by Luciano Villani?

However, despite possible reservations, this is undoubtedly an admirable and thought-provoking book. Extensively researched, clearly written and richly illustrated, it will be compulsory reading for all English-speaking scholars who are interested in the Ina-Casa plan, and more widely in urban planning and architecture in post-war Italy.

Bruno Bonomo

Sapienza Università di Roma

bruno.bonomo@uniroma1.it

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doi:10.1017/mit.2017.29

Magic: a Theory from the South, by Ernesto De Martino, translated and annotated by Dorothy Louise Zinn, Chicago, HAU Books, 2015, 224 pp., \$30.00 (paperback), ISBN: 978-0-9905-0509-9

The importance of Ernesto De Martino's work for Italian ethnography can hardly be over-estimated. Trained as a philosopher, De Martino revolutionised the study of folklore by challenging the compilative and 'naturalist' approach of the 1940s and 1950s. Before him, apparently irrational beliefs and rituals of peasants of the South were presented as obsolete remains of an ancient world, soon to be wiped out by progress. In his first book, *Naturalismo e storicismo nell'etnografia* (1941), De Martino argued that to describe these practices without trying to understand their survival in the present was like imitating the moves of a swimmer out of the water, casting ridicule on informants and missing the purpose of ethnography.

De Martino aimed to 'bring back into history' the traditional culture of Italy's most impoverished regions. As Carlo Levi showed in his 1945 account of life in a remote village in Basilicata, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, some of these areas were virtually *terra incognita* for Italian intellectuals. Yet the dominant historical paradigm of the time, based on Benedetto Croce's idealist philosophy, considered any irrational belief an area of darkness that the light of reason was called upon to disperse. The persistence of magic among the poorest sectors of a developing nation like post-war Italy represented a 'scandal' (in De Martino's words), which called into question the hegemonic culture itself and its positive faith in progress. De Martino was a political organiser first for the Socialist then for the Communist Party; his project of writing a 'religious history of the South' drew on a Gramscian perspective of understanding the dialectical relationship between hegemonic and subaltern culture. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of religion led him to contextualise the social facts he observed within a wider historical frame, while the theory he developed to explain their survival is rooted in philosophical existentialism.

Magic rituals, for De Martino, are symbolic and performative responses to the *crisi della presenza* – his most important concept. ‘Presence’ is an elaboration of Heidegger’s *Dasein*, but more oriented towards action; an ‘acting-in-the-world’, not far from what is today termed ‘agency’. In the context of the harsh precariousness and economic dependency in which Southern Italian peasants were forced to live, the very possibility of acting was not given once and for all. Individuals were constantly exposed to the risk of a pathological collapse, a loss of meaning and sense that inhibited the possibility for action, making them feel dominated by invisible forces. He documented rituals, which aimed to restore ‘presence’, such as ritual mourning in Lucania (Basilicata) in *Morte e pianto rituale nel mondo antico* (1958), or the *taranta* possession cult of Apulia, in his masterwork *The Land of Remorse* (1961). His expeditions involved a cross-disciplinary team of some of the most brilliant professionals of the time, from psychiatrist Giovanni Jervis to ethnomusicologist Diego Carpitella and photographer Franco Pinna.

Sud e magia, the second book in De Martino’s ‘Southern trilogy’, is now available in English thanks to Dorothy Louise Zinn’s scrupulous work and to the farsightedness of HAU’s editors. Originally published in 1959, it presents the findings of two fieldwork visits conducted in Lucania in 1952 and 1957. In the first part (Chapters 1 to 7), De Martino expounds in detail on the magical practices of Lucanian *fascino* (‘binding’), transcribing and translating dozens of spells and formulae intended to unbind invisible ‘ties’ of domination. How they ‘work’ in practice is explained in the first chapters of the second part (8 and 9): according to De Martino, these rituals manage to ‘de-historicise the negative’, i.e. insert the specific individual problem into a wider range of shared cultural possibilities, to restore for individuals, at least symbolically, the possibility to act.

In Chapters 10 to 15, the magical world of the peasantry is put into relation with the wider context in which it had developed: in particular, with the persistence of magic in Southern Italian Catholicism, the ambiguous forms assumed by the Enlightenment in the pre-unification Kingdom of Naples, and with the Protestant polemic against Catholicism in Romantic literature. The chapter on Neapolitan *jettatura* (the belief in the power of certain individuals to bring bad luck) is a brilliant ‘thick’ description of the dialectic between hegemonic and subaltern culture: individuals negotiate their beliefs according to their different social and economic positions, but within a common framework of meaning. Thus rural practitioners of *fascino* in Lucania and rationalist intellectuals who inspired the ethnologist himself, are not two worlds in conflict, but different articulations of a single ever-evolving history.

Zinn’s precise translation and annotations infuse new life into a text published more than half a century ago, but which still surprises with its modern flavour. Her translation of the book’s original title as *Magic: a theory from the South* seems to allude to postcolonial theory: the word ‘Sud’ for De Martino referred only to Southern Italy, in the context of the *questione meridionale*; here it hints at the multiple ‘Souths’ to which anthropology directs its scrutiny, and to the gap between mainstream and alternative interpretations of social facts. In fact, De Martino recognised the irruption of the masses in history both in the takeover of rural lands in Southern Italy, and in the decolonisation of Africa and Asia. In Italy, the book was republished in 2015 for the fiftieth anniversary of De Martino’s passing, enriched by the ethnologist’s notes from the field. The same year, anthropologist Amalia Signorelli – who accompanied De Martino on his 1959 field trip to Apulia – systematised the legacy of De Martino into a work that draws on De Martino’s writings to define a ‘style’ of doing ethnography, both in theory and methodology. Zinn’s translation of *Magic: a Theory from the South* is likely to stimulate a fruitful collaboration between two rather different anthropological traditions – Anglo-Saxon cultural anthropology and Italian

ethnography – which today suffer an imbalance similar to the one Northern Italy intellectuals once faced in relation to the Italian South.

Stefano Portelli

Sapienza Università di Roma
Institut Català d'Antropologia
stefanoportelli1976@gmail.com

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 doi:10.1017/mit.2017.31

I ‘dimenticati’: Da colonizzatori a profughi, gli italiani in Libia 1943–1974 by Luigi Scoppola Iacopini, Foligno, Editoriale Umbra, 2015, 207pp. €12 (paperback), ISBN 9788888802794

The ‘forgotten’ in the title of this book refers to the Italian colonial settlers who tried to remain in Libya after the formal end of the Italian colonial administration in 1943 until they were forcibly expelled in 1970 by the Gaddafi regime. Scoppola Iacopini combines a reading of the diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and memoirs from members of the Italian community in Libya, along with a range of Italian newspapers from across the political spectrum. The use of a wide variety of sources allows the author to contrast the high-level diplomatic negotiations between Italy and the postcolonial Libyan state with the lived experiences of an Italian community caught in the space between imperialism and nationalism.

Scoppola Iacopini argues that the Italian settlers were forgotten by government officials, the general public, and historians in the post-war Italian Republic. Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proved more interested in negotiating favourable terms of trade for industries in the burgeoning energy sector than in protecting the interests of the small business owners and agricultural workers in the Italian settler community, which gained little support from a broader Italian public, eager to forget ‘a past that quickly became uncomfortable and cumbersome’ (p.8). This book presents an effort to finally bring national attention to the experiences of the postcolonial settler community. It offers a secondary argument in that it challenges widespread characterisations of the end of Italian imperialism as lacking the ‘tormented process of decolonisation that in various periods assailed the other colonial powers’ (p.10). Though formal colonial control ended quickly and as the result of military occupation and international negotiations, for the Italians living in the colonies, the process of decolonisation was longer and far more challenging.

The book follows a chronological structure from 1943 until 1974. In the Introduction, Scoppola Iacopini establishes the chronology as a means of defining a long trajectory of Italian decolonisation through the experiences of the community of Italian citizens in Libya. Chapter One discusses the transformation of the status of the Italian community in Libya from 1943 to 1950, when they lived under the control of a British Military Administration that saw them as remnants of a Fascist enemy. Chapter Two examines the period between the establishment of the independent Kingdom of Libya in 1951 and the finalisation of an Italo-Libyan treaty in 1956 that was supposed to settle Italian debts to Libya while establishing an economic relationship. Chapter Three gives an overview of the period between 1956 and the 1969 coup, what Scoppola Iacopini refers to as ‘the last years of peace’. This was a period in which most Italians reported experiencing positive relationships with their Libyan Arab neighbours. Scoppola Iacopini identifies a turning point in the Six-Day War in 1967, when Italians found themselves caught up in the general