

*Alltagsgeschichte* suggests promising new areas of inquiry in Italian historical studies while providing opportunities for cross-national comparisons with other totalitarian regimes.

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**Architecture, Death and Nationhood: Monumental Cemeteries of Nineteenth-Century Italy,**

by Hannah Malone, London and New York, Routledge, 2017, xvi + 262 pp., \$125.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4724-4681-7

Scholarship on post-Unification Italy is hardly short of important work on bodies. We have a rich set of studies on the rise of public hygiene, demography and statistics, newly scientific methods of baby-care, and ideas of race and biopower in the constitution of the nation, including Italian physical anthropology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In many ways, the anxieties and hopes of a newly unified Italy sought description and resolution in governmental, institutional, and scientific investments in the Italian body.

For this reason it is startling to realise that the scholarly possibilities of *dead* Italian bodies in the same era have been left untapped – until Hannah Malone’s book on the new cemeteries that emerged rapidly once the dust of Unification had settled. *Architecture, Death and Nationhood* is an imposing study that delivers a number of insights, well-balanced between those that speak to architectural historians, and others that more directly address political and cultural historians. In a new nation with an embarrassment of past cultural riches on which to draw, it asks, which updated forms were best suited to bury the citizenry of the times? And at this distance, what can we learn regarding Italian society, class, taste, and ambitions of the era, from the funerary monuments and the monumental cemeteries that contained them? In addition, what do the sprawling new burial grounds of, for instance, Genoa, Verona, Brescia, or Rome reveal about Italian arts in comparison to parallel works in the countries to which Italians inevitably compared their own – France, Britain, Germany? These are the principal questions articulated (and answered) in this groundbreaking work.

Thanks to her ambitious research in archives, print, and cemeteries, Malone is entirely persuasive as she draws out the ways in which the latter can be microcosmic renderings of the cities to which they are attached, or when she refers to them as conveying ‘purified images of the societies that they served’ (p. 2). Her thorough readings of spatial arrangements, in fact, highlight these cemeteries’ formal innovations in arranging and celebrating the dead in deliberate, self-conscious correspondence with new forms of state life. In this regard, the book repeatedly teases out instances in which the cult of the dead slipped out of the total grasp of the Church, becoming one of the new Italy’s canvases for developing secularism.

At a formal level, historians of art and architecture will be convinced by Malone’s contextualisation of new Italian cemetery forms with respect to the Napoleonic contributions at the beginning of the century – to law and art – as well as her precise argumentation for the uniqueness of this new Italian invention, with respect both to other European models and earlier Italian ones. For social and cultural historians of modern Italy, most interesting will be the book’s compelling

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.

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**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