

Matteo Sanfilippo, *Il lungo Ottocento delle migrazioni italiane*, Viterbo, Settecittà 2023, pp. 248.

We owe Matteo Sanfilippo a tireless research activity on the history of Italian migratory movements in the modern age, constantly accompanied by a reflection on the vast and uneven bibliography produced by historiography, which he has on several occasions ordered in valuable re-

views and compendiums: suffice it to mention, among the most recent ones, *Problemi di storiografia dell'emigrazione italiana* (Viterbo, Settecittà, 2005) and *Guida allo studio dell'emigrazione italiana* (ivi, 2010, with Michele Colucci). Professor of Modern History at Tuscia University (Viterbo), director of the Centro Studi Emigrazione (Rome), coordinator of the editorial staff of its journal ("Studi emigrazione") and co-director (with Emilio Franzina, trailblazer of Italian emigration studies to whom the book is dedicated) of the "Archivio storico dell'emigrazione italiana", with his latest book Sanfilippo gives us a valuable work of synthesis on Italian migrations in the "long 19th century," a Hobsbawmian category that is well suited to the Italian case and the migrations that cross it. Being a merger of previously written essays, that have been rewritten and not simply assembled, the volume is divided into three sections.

The first part is dedicated to the decades before the building of a national State. Without going too far back (chapter I), this section features a summary of the situation of the modern age: the flourishing of "colonie" beyond the Alps and the seas did not involve only the merchants and craftsmen and the "remarkable" exchanges between ancient Italian States did not include only movements from the mountains and the countryside towards the cities but also internal movements within these spaces, linked to their main activities (agriculture and animal husbandry). Internal migrations are characterized by deep continuities, but the new century is also marked by important "geopolitical" change, from the Revolution to the first Restoration and then to the upheavals of the Risorgimento. The observation also applies to emigrations (chapter II), for instance with the enlargement of the range of movements of traditional figures such as musicians, restaurateurs and street vendors. Their presence outside the Italian space increased, as shown by the settlements in the Americas, which rose from a "tiny" presence to real "Diasporas", with the relevant case of Liguria and the important landing in Argentina. People in exile also contributed to this intensification (chapter III), in a contemporary incarnation of a long-lasting Italian tradition of exile, which peaked in the 19th century. Similarly, the centuries-old foreign presences, organized in well integrated communities (Chapter IV), were experiencing an increase and certainly not a decline as it was long believed: even though numbers remained quantitatively small, they were nonetheless a significant presence in Rome and Naples at first, and then also in Milan and Venice.

While not yielding to the pressing call for the return of the primacy of political history, in 19th-century Italy the centrality of unification cannot be questioned and Sanfilippo takes it as a watershed. Appropriately attentive to long and very long continuities, he does not, however,

neglect to emphasize the ruptures: in addition to the political-institutional one, there is also the great post-unification economic transformation (the focus of a classic study on Italian migrations: Ercole Sori, *L'emigrazione italiana dall'Unità alla seconda guerra mondiale*, il Mulino, Bologna, 1979). The transoceanic "great emigration" between the 19th and 20th centuries remains the most studied form of mobility (chapter V), to the point of neglecting internal movements, arrivals and even the definition of policies on the different types of movement. The discussion on expatriation that was ignited in the wake of the Unification and the making of the two important laws of 1888 and 1901 monopolized the attention of the scholarly world, in continuity with the contemporary debate focused on emigration. The explosion of an epochal mass expatriation (VI), which involved 14 million people, with a shift of the main destinations from Europe to the Americas, concealed the persistent priority of internal movements (which swelled the cities and fed the new industries and mines) and the recurring attention, witnessed by censuses, towards immigrants. The case of Rome (VII) is exemplary: having become the capital of the Kingdom and marked by a demographic surge largely due to immigration (as Giorgio Mortara noted in 1908, writing his first book on *Le popolazioni delle grandi città italiane*), these two elements ended up being neglected, confirming the underestimation of the importance of internal mobility. In the meantime, exile turned into political emigration (VIII), expanding its numbers and horizons. This happened precisely in the phase in which the consideration, widespread around the time of the Unification of Italy, of expatriation as a somehow "natural" dynamic had been followed by a deep rejection, due to the fear of the disruptive and even subversive scope of the movements. However, in a few decades, the combination with colonial logics and nationalistic and even racist exaltation led to the acceptance of emigration as a demonstration of the health and power of the Nation.

In the last two chapters, collected in the third part, Sanfilippo dwells on the post-1861 debate, tightly reviewing Leone Carpi's overflowing production (IX), compared with Cesare Correnti's previous elaborations, as an evidence of the dry reduction of the spectrum of attention, progressively focusing on emigration, also in statistical terms as confirmed by censuses and other official productions. Later (X) it would be the men of the Catholic Church, such as the bishops of Piacenza, Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, and of Cremona, Geremia Bonomelli, who would provide the most acute contributions, not only from an analytical perspective, that were not so distant from the positions of contemporary secular elites.

This "harmony", if not "silent agreement" between apparently opposing

figures marks the concluding reflections. The common understanding between moderates (Catholics and liberals) led to the overestimation of the Diaspora (with the removal of the very high percentage of returns accounting for one third of those who left at the beginning of the 20th century) and left the discussion “unfinished”, later submerged by the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Unification and the subsequent wars. The real rupture of the “great emigration” and its amplified and absolutized perception were further hardened under fascism, which tightened control over all movements and marginalized dissonant voices, submerging them in propaganda. Suffice it to think about the paradox, highlighted several years ago by Anna Treves in a seminal study (*Le migrazioni interne nell'Italia fascista*, Einaudi, Turin, 1976): the anti-urban and anti-internal migration policies of the fascist regime did not affect the urban expansion due to the arrival of immigrants.

The text is fluent and therefore pleasant to read, with a happy alternation of data summaries and comparisons with historiography, of descriptive moments and interpretative insights, of the restitution of exemplary trajectories (from Giuseppe Garibaldi to Pietro Gori) and lessons from contemporary witnesses (from Davide Bertolotti's early-nineteenth-century “odeporic sketches” to Francesco Coletti's demographic syntheses a century later). These pages lend themselves well to introducing the problems of a history of migrations that does not privilege expatriates and the long haul: the recurring problems of numbers, both when they are lacking and when they are contradictory or unreliable (on which another text, which looked at the different forms of mobility from the demographer's point of view, remains inescapable: Corrado Bonifazi, *L'Italia delle migrazioni*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2013); it acknowledges the increase of all migratory volumes over the course of the century and the widening of all the distances travelled (within or outside the borders); it invites us to overcome unhelpful dichotomies, such as that between the political and economic dimensions of mobility; and last but not least, the intertwining of flows is constantly reaffirmed, even in individual trajectories (following Franco Ramella's lesson) or in the vicissitudes of small and large groups and contexts – an assumption reiterated here and one that already informed the rich picture of a very long period drawn by the author with Paola Corti in *L'Italia e le migrazioni* (Rome-Bari, Laterza 2012), after their joint editing of the twenty-fourth Annale of Einaudi's *Storia d'Italia* dedicated to *Migrazioni* (Einaudi, Turin, 2009).

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