

INTRODUCTION

Liberal Italy and The Challenge of Transnational Education (1861–1922)

New perspectives in the history of education have focused on connecting histories beyond national boundaries and empires. This Special Section takes on the challenge of ‘reconfiguring Europe’ through the transnational, in line with the priorities recently outlined by Pierre-Yves Saunier.¹ The global networks woven by Italian educators in the period of Liberal Italy had a significant transatlantic dimension. The papers highlight two case studies: a Catholic female missionary, belonging to the first generation of Italian women-in-the-making, empowered by access to education and a professional identity (Williams); and an Italian-American headmaster, who embraced Deweyan ideals, marrying them with ‘issues related to the education and Americanization of the immigrant child’ (Moretti). In particular, the topic analysed by Williams is evidence of how, in the midst of widespread Italian migration from the homeland, the nineteenth-century European ‘culture wars’ were re-enacted and negotiated by Italians abroad, thus acquiring a transatlantic, global dimension.²

Recent scholarship has highlighted the relative historiographical neglect of the study of Liberal Italy, spanning the period between the achievement of national unification, in 1861, and the advent of Fascism, in 1922.³ As revisionist historians have underlined, such neglect was rooted in a historiographical reading of the period which struggled to analyse Liberal Italy ‘on its own terms’, and, rather, analysed its significance mainly as a prelude to the rise of Fascism.⁴ Within the English-speaking world of Italian studies, the making of Italy’s modern national identity is, to this day, an under-studied area: yet, as Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg powerfully put it, ‘the history of Italy’ between 1861 and 1922 ‘is the history of a state in search of a nation’.⁵

In the context of the dominant historiographical neglect of Liberal Italy, the history of education has fared marginally better: after all, this was the era that many associated with the famous quote, attributed to the Italian Minister Massimo

¹Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs and Kate Rousmanière, *Connecting Histories of Education. Transnational and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in (Post)Colonial Education* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2014); Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

²Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³Fulvio Cammarano, *Storia dell’Italia liberale* (Bari: Laterza, 2011).

⁴Nick Carter, ‘Rethinking the Italian Liberal State’, *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 3, no. 2 (2011): 225–45.

⁵Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: On Making Italians, 1860–1920* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 1.

D’Azeglio: ‘We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians’.⁶ The educational policies and practices adopted in this period became the focus of historians interested in ‘nation-building’ and in the related politics of ‘making Italians’: central to the national debates surrounding the theory and practice of educating the nation was the loaded politics of *incivilimento*, literally, the ‘civilising process’. As Raymond Grew cogently argued, ‘Education was the panacea. In the first years of the new nation, remarkably able ministers of education devoted themselves to that cause, despite inadequate budgets, schools, and teachers.’⁷ Yet, the commitment to Italian children’s education by education ministers, who were often affiliated to masonic lodges and therefore motivated by anti-Catholicism, should not overshadow the challenges of the new nation. As the most recent historiography has shown, not only were classes overcrowded, but the ruling classes tended to privilege mass-disciplining over education. Indeed, it was in this period that patterns of inequalities were institutionalised: peasant children’s education, seen as counterbalancing the power of the parish priest, was limited to primary schools.⁸ In addition, some of the problems faced by educationalists of the newly unified Italy had ramifications in the colonies. As Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller have argued, it was a ‘particularity of the Italian “civilizing mission”’ that it ‘was directed as much toward Italian colonizers as toward the colonized’. Indeed, as the process of *incivilimento* within Liberal Italy was still in progress, ‘Italian elites and colonial functionaries also worried constantly that Italian colonists were themselves too unschooled and subaltern to command effectively’.⁹ A recent Special Section on ‘Empire and education: from Liberal Italy to Fascism’, published in the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, addressed the question of transnational education in Italy from the perspective of the Mediterranean colonies and featured an introduction by David Atkinson and two papers by Valeria Deplano and Alessandro Pes.¹⁰ The present Special Section complements and extends the work of these scholars – by covering an area of transnational education that was equally important for Liberal Italy from the perspective of its ‘imaginative geographies’: education within the transatlantic connection of the ‘migrant nation’.¹¹

The use of the term *incivilimento* was a measure of the anxieties that underpinned the government’s efforts in the liberal period. Apart from recognising the urgent need for infrastructure and trained teachers, Italy’s establishment was driven by the wish to erase from the new nation the image of ‘backwardness’ and

⁶The famous sentence, said to have been pronounced in the aftermath of Italy’s political unification, is now considered to be apocryphal.

⁷Raymond Grew, ‘Culture and Society, 1796–1896’, in *Italy in the Nineteenth-Century*, ed. John Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 224.

⁸Adolfo Scotto di Luzio, *La scuola degli italiani* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007).

⁹Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds., *Italian Colonialism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2008), 3.

¹⁰David Atkinson, ‘Special Section: Empire and Education: from Liberal Italy to Fascism’, 561–79; Valeria Deplano, ‘Making Italians: Colonial History and the Graduate Education System from the Liberal Era to Fascism’, 580–98; Alessandro Pes, ‘Becoming Imperialist: Italian Colonies in Fascist Text Books for Primary Schools’, 599–614, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 18, no. 5 (2013). See also Matteo Pretelli, ‘Education in Italian Colonies during the Inter-war Period’, *Modern Italy* 16, no. 3 (2011): 275–93.

¹¹For an in-depth definition of the term see Atkinson, ‘Special Section: Empire and Education: from Liberal Italy to Fascism’, 562–4.

superstition, which was seen as a particular problem of southern Italy. Foreign travellers, political exiles and northern Italians alike regularly made this association.¹² Yet, by the 1870s, the publication of the results of the Franchetti–Sonnino governmental enquiry into the economic and social conditions of the South fuelled the concerns of both Italian and foreign observers. Not only did an English-born protagonist of the Italian Risorgimento, Jessie White Mario, publish an account on the desperate living conditions of the poor children of Naples, soon reported abroad, but foreign educationalists set off to propose their own solutions to the problem of educating Italy's southern children.¹³

Investigating such accounts, recent studies have sought to deepen and widen the historical enquiry into the question of 'making Italians' by weaving within this narrative the threads of transnational activism. Drawing attention to the 'civilising' ambitions of British women operating in Liberal Italy, James Albisetti focused on the establishment of schools for Neapolitan children by Julie Salis Schwabe in the 1870s.¹⁴ Similarly, using postcolonial readings, and highlighting the orientalisering of Italians by British women, Maura O'Connor also provided an analysis of these same Neapolitan schools in the journal *Women's Writing*.¹⁵

This Special Section develops further the interconnections between Italy, education and the world in the light of the growing influence of the 'transnational turn', which has recently taken centre stage within the scholarly community, and, in particular, in the context of nineteenth-century Italy.¹⁶ Building on the growing body of literature that has focused on the transnational dimension of the Italian national movement, culminating with Italy's unification in 1861, the articles which follow cast Liberal Italy's global connections along two main trajectories. First, they bring to the surface cross-Channel and transatlantic connections, which do not fit neatly into polarised postcolonial historiographical readings: the latter tend to frame the Italians either as passive recipients of the 'civilisational mission' of northern travellers or as the perpetrators of a 'civilisational', imperialist, and later Fascist propaganda. Second, the following readings contribute towards placing the question of 'anti-Catholicism and the culture war in Risorgimento Italy' in the context of Liberal Italy's transatlantic diaspora, beyond Europe.¹⁷

The contributions presented here show how the policies and strategies of communication implemented by diverse educational agents who operated across the borders of Liberal Italy often adopted (or challenged) the language and principles of

¹²For a summary of relevant debates see the recent book by Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹³Jessie White Mario, *La miseria di Napoli* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1877). For an analysis of the echo of her writings see Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe, 'Italian Women in the Making: Revisiting the *Englishwoman's Review*', in *Britain, Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento*, ed. Nick Carter (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 179–203.

¹⁴James C. Albisetti, 'Education for the Poor Neapolitan Children: Julie Schwabe's Nineteenth-Century Secular Mission', *History of Education* 25, no. 6 (2006): 632–52.

¹⁵Maura O'Connor 'Civilizing Southern Italy: British and Italian Women and the Cultural Politics of European Nation Building', *Women's Writing* 10, no. 2 (2003): 253–68.

¹⁶Oliver Janz and Lucy Riall, 'Introduction: The Italian Risorgimento: Transnational Perspectives', *Modern Italy*, Special Issue 19, no. 1 (2014): 1–4.

¹⁷Manuel Borutta, 'Anti-Catholicism and the Culture War in Risorgimento Italy', in *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 191–213.

liberalism and Catholicism, drawn from the Risorgimento. Such historical context needs to be borne in mind when framing the culture within which agents of education operating in Liberal Italy and beyond were formed. By following these transnational trajectories across the Channel and across the Atlantic, to include the final acts of the liberal era, the following papers help to outline the thin lines of transnational education within the *long* Risorgimento.¹⁸

Trans-nation, religion and exile in the Risorgimento context

The education of Italians first became a battleground in the aftermath of the Napoleonic invasion, when the transnational effects of the French occupation found expression in the introduction of compulsory, free, secular schools, which supplanted traditional religious education, formerly administered by the Jesuits.¹⁹ The latter, whose pedagogy emphasised reading the classics in elitist colleges, could boast equally impressive transnational credentials.²⁰

Following Napoleon's defeat and the restoration of the old order in Italy, between 1815 and 1848, educators continued to look beyond the local, seeking to import from abroad pedagogical models for educating the young. In particular, Joseph Lancaster's monitorial school movement was adopted by schools that sprang up in Turin, Naples and Florence. Lancasterian educational principles were particularly popular in Piedmont, where the Salesian priest, Don Bosco, capitalised on the educational principle of boys teaching boys in order to provide free education to scores of illiterate children.²¹

During the revolutionary years of the national movement the transnational dimension of education was also displayed outside the peninsula: in particular, teaching Italians across national boundaries acquired new meaning in the context of the experience of political exile. The establishment of schools in England, founded by Italian émigrés for the education of Italian migrant workers and their children, was a central component of the transnational experience of the Risorgimento. Apart from the well-known London Free School, established in 1841 by Giuseppe Mazzini, which aimed to equip Italians in London with moral and civic education based on freedom of conscience,²² there were other schools for Italian migrants set

¹⁸For the definition of 'long' Risorgimento as a period lasting until 1922 see Gilles Pécout, *Il lungo Risorgimento: la nascita dell'Italia contemporanea (1770–1922)* (Milan: Laterza, 1999).

¹⁹Desmond Gregory, *Napoleon's Italy* (Cranbury, London and Mississauga: Associated University Presses, 2001), 191; Michael Broers, *Politics and Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The War against God, 1801–1814* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 133–4. See also Alexander Grab, 'Jewish Education in Napoleonic Italy: The Case of the *Ginnasio* in Reggio Emilia', *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts*, Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook, University of Leipzig, Special Issue, 'Early Modern Culture and Haskalah – Reconsidering the Borderlines of Modern Jewish History', no. 7 (2007): 269–89.

²⁰With the end of Napoleon's empire, Jesuits would continue to be influential for decades, particularly in the shaping of the curriculum of the prestigious 'liceo classico'. On the transnational credentials of Jesuits education see the recent book by Maurice Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education: Expulsion, Suppression, Survival and Restoration 1762–1803* (Farnham: Ashgate Press, 2013).

²¹Michael Ribotta, 'Don Bosco's Battle against Illiteracy', *Journal of Salesian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1990): 10–12.

²²Michele Finelli, *Il Prezioso Elemento: Giuseppe Mazzini e gli emigrati italiani nell'esperienza della Scuola Italiana di Londra* (Verrucchio: Pazzini, 1999).

up by London exiles according to their differing beliefs and hopes for the new Italy. Examples include the school run by Don Baldacconi, the conservative Roman-Catholic priest of the Lincoln's Inn chapel, under the patronage of the King of Sardinia, as well as the Protestant school for young Italian children run by the Italian evangelical exile, Salvatore Ferretti, founded in 1847.

As competing educational models were being rolled out by exiled patriots, liberal Catholic writers were busy imagining political solutions to embrace the national movement without challenging the Pope's authority. At this particular crossroads, in Borutta's words, 'the Risorgimento seemed to live in harmony with Catholicism',²³ galvanised, between 1846 and 1848, by what was interpreted as the national-patriotic disposition of the young, liberal Pope, Pius IX. As is well known, the illusions of the liberal Catholics would be dashed by the sudden change of heart of the Pope in 1848. Italian democratic hopes would be equally crushed in 1849, with the fall of the short-lived Roman Republic. Its democratic Constitution, which safeguarded the freedoms of Roman citizens, including religious liberty, well reflected the democratic spirit of the Risorgimento.

As Mazzini's Roman Republic surrendered, the Piedmontese King of Savoy took the lead in spearheading the movement of national unification under a moderate, liberal, monarchical banner. In 1848, the king's chances of leading the new national movement were enhanced by the concession of the *Statuto Albertino*, the monarchical constitution, which became a defining component of Italian national consciousness.²⁴ Indeed, Piedmont's concession of freedom of worship would galvanise young Italian Jews into participating actively in the national liberation movement: their acquired right of citizenship would be the basis for the integration of young Jews within the new Italy.²⁵ As Eugenio Biagini has perceptively argued, 'questions of religious identity and pluralism were integral to the Risorgimento definition of liberty'.²⁶

The Pope's decision to condemn the national unification movement, patently threatening his temporal power, would weigh heavily on the shoulders of Italian Catholics in the aftermath of Italian unification. In 1864, in the *Syllabus*, the Pope condemned liberalism and modern 'errors', and, following the loss of Rome, he declared himself a prisoner of the Italian state, forbidding Italian Catholics from taking part in national elections. Following these inauspicious beginnings, linked to the unresolved 'Roman Question', the relationship between patriotism, Catholicism and education became contested ground. The Casati Law on education (1861), inherited from the Kingdom of Sardinia, reflected the anticlerical climax in which it had been conceived, aiming to curb the power of the Church in schools by allowing children to be excused from religious education. In 1871, the formal relationship between the

²³Borutta, 'Anti-Catholicism', 192.

²⁴The *Statuto Albertino*, while proclaiming that Catholicism was the religion of the state, tolerated other cults.

²⁵Tullia Catalan, 'Italian Jews and the 1848–49 Revolutions: Patriotism and Multiple Identities', in Patriarca and Riall, *The Risorgimento Revisited*, 214–31. For the liberal period see Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, 'Libertà di coscienza e modelli di cittadinanza nell'Italia liberale. Ebrei e comunità ebraiche nel rapporto con le istituzioni statali', *Società e Storia* 118, no. 4 (2007): 699–724.

²⁶Eugenio F. Biagini, 'Citizenship and Religion in the Italian Constitutions', *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 2 (2011): 211–17; Borutta, 'Culture War'; Martin Papenheim, 'Roma Morte: Culture Wars in Italy', in Clark and Kaiser, *Culture Wars*, 202–26.

Italian state and the Vatican would be sealed unilaterally by the passing of the Law of Guarantees, which refused to recognise the Pope's territorial sovereignty yet recognised his spiritual power. The law did not go as far as disestablishing the Catholic Church, but continued to guarantee the principle of freedom of worship.

Liberal Italy and education in the colonies

Fifteen years after Italy's political unification, the establishment of a new government of the Left – the *Sinistra Storica* – under Prime Minister Agostino Depretis signalled the beginning of social reforms; these included the passing of further educational legislation, the Coppino Law (1877), which not only increased by two years the period of obligatory schooling, but abolished compulsory religious instruction. Despite liberalism appearing to make inroads in the new Italy, progress was slow, as 'intransigent' Catholics employed 'modern' means, including the media, to exercise their influence:²⁷ for example, in the 1880s and 1890s, the powerful Jesuit lobby increasingly questioned the citizenship rights of Italian Jews.

The most overt challenge of the Italian state to the influence of the Vatican came with Francesco Crispi's accession to power. Symbolic of the heightening tensions in Rome was Crispi's decision to push ahead with the plans to erect a statue in the capital in honour of Giordano Bruno, father of freethought, burnt at the stake in 1600 on account of his pantheistic philosophical teachings. News of the statue reverberated across the world in masonic circles, among freethinkers, academics, ageing Garibaldians and the Italian migrant communities, which had contributed subscription funds from London, New York, Buenos Aires and Melbourne.²⁸

While Crispi's anti-Catholicism was spectacularly displayed at home through this defiant gesture in Rome, it also permeated Italy's foreign policy, particularly with regard to the educational policies of the colonies.²⁹ Italy's colonial expansionism received a substantial impetus with Crispi, who saw it as an opportunity for Italy to penetrate the Mediterranean through commercial activities, compete with France and participate in the European 'civilising' mission. Yet the principles of freedom of worship and the government's anticlericalism also coloured the encounters of Liberal Italy with the Other. Eritrea and then Somalia, which respectively came under Italian rule in 1885 and 1908, were inhabited by a Muslim majority and a large minority of Christians (Ethiopian Christian Copts, Catholics and Protestants). In the light of the 'culture war' that was being rolled out in Liberal Italy at the same time as colonial expansion was taking place, the decision of Italian governments to respect native religious affiliations echoed the ideological legacy of the Risorgimento beyond the

²⁷Christopher Clark, 'The New Catholicism and the European culture wars', in Clark and Kaiser, *Culture Wars*, 45.

²⁸Lars Berggren and Lennart Sjöstedt, *L'ombra dei grandi; monumenti e politica monumentale a Roma (1870–1895)* (Rome: Artemide edizioni, 1996), 174 and fns 108, 109 and 181. See also Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2004), 67–74; Papenheim, 'Roma Morte', 217–26.

²⁹Crispi's resounding anticlericalism was occasionally tempered by opportunistic conciliatory tones. See Christopher Duggan, *Francesco Crispi: From Nation to Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 492 and 664.

nation's border. Thus, in the context of colonial expansionism, Crispi's overwhelming anticlericalism had overtones of Risorgimento liberalism.³⁰

Italy's colonial policy experimented with different institutional models, including governmental multi-faith schools and missionary schools. The initial desire to uphold the principle of freedom of worship beyond the national boundary has been highlighted by Silvana Palma, who showed how, in a number of colonial schools, religious freedom regulated the encounters between colonisers and colonised, teachers and students.³¹ Non-denominational, government vocational schools were established in Eritrea, in Cheren for Muslim workers in 1911, and in Addi Ugri for Copt workers in 1913. Yet, as the 'culture war' between the Vatican and the state unravelled in Liberal Italy, colonisers were increasingly influenced by these metropolitan tensions.

In Egypt, Italy's struggles for education between the masons and the Church, underlined by Tina Tomasi and, more recently, by Gianfranco Bandini, were re-enacted by a group of Italian masonic associations, counting a high proportion of Jewish members, which put up a serious battle in order to preserve multi-faith schools.³² In Eritrea, where the main goal of the colonisers was to inspire loyalty towards Italy, communicated through the model of the 'good Askari', the education of local children, combined with military discipline, was basic, predominantly vocational and strictly Catholic. Missionary schools employed 'civilising' texts aimed at instilling devotion to and admiration of Italy.³³ All revolutionary episodes of the Risorgimento were purged from the narrative for fear of fomenting sedition.³⁴ In Libya, where Italians had set up schools prior to occupation, they were regarded as

³⁰In this context Sabina Donati's view of the equilibrium between citizenship and religion in the Italian colonies is enlightening: 'the Italian colonizers introduced a concept of colonial subjecthood that was inclusive of the "personal statute" of the individual. This guaranteed that property and inheritance rights as well as issues of family law (i.e. marriage, polygamy, divorce, separation, paternity, adoption, age of majority and paternal tutelage) were determined by the religious laws and tribunals of each native. Thus fundamental spheres of indigenous life continued to be regulated by shariatic, Orthodox and Jewish principles to which the African populations were particularly attached for historical, social and cultural reasons.' Sabina Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861–1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 125.

³¹Silvana Palma, 'Colonial Lessons: The School of Arts and Crafts in Segeneiti (Eritrea), 1914–1921', in *Annali*, Istituto Universitario Orientale 70 (2012): 61–73.

³²Gianfranco Bandini, 'La Franc-maçonnerie et le droit à l'Unité italienne jusqu'au début du XX^e siècle', *Paedagogica Historica* 46, no. 1–2 (2010): 161–77; Tina Tomasi, *Massoneria e scuola dall'unità fino ai giorni nostri* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1980). On Jews and Masonry see Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, *Fare gli ebrei italiani: Autorappresentazioni di una minoranza (1861–1918)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012); Francesca Sofia, 'Gli ebrei risorgimentali fra tradizione biblica, libera muratoria e nazione', in *Storia d'Italia. Annali 21. La Massoneria*, ed. G. M. Cazzaniga (Turin: Einaudi 2006), 244–65.

³³*Manuale di letture scelte italo-tigrài ad uso delle scuole indigene per cura della Missione cattolica* (Asmara: Tipografia Francescana, 1916), 120.

³⁴Philip S. Zachernuk, 'African History and Imperial Culture in Colonial Nigerian Schools', *Africa: Journal of the International Africa Institute* 68, no. 4 (1998): 485, 490; Gail P. Kelly, 'Learning to Be Marginal: Schooling in Interwar French West Africa', in *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, ed. Gail P. Paradise Kelly and David H. Kelly (New York: Ame Press, 2000), 191.

a ‘training ground for national and civic education and a valuable instrument of propaganda’.³⁵ Religious tolerance was an important trait of these schools, which continued after the Italian occupation. The Italo-Arabic schools, which were a cornerstone of the project to assimilate young Libyans, aimed to teach the Italian language and work ethic, while instilling a sense of gratitude towards Italy.

Educating Italian migrants of the transatlantic diaspora

Moving beyond the ‘imagined geographies’ of colonial territories in Africa, and encompassing the transatlantic ‘imagined community’ of Catholics described by Peter D’Agostino, the papers that follow focus on the circulation of educators who contributed to preserving or fostering a sense of common belonging to *Italianità* among Italians who crossed the Atlantic.³⁶

The cross-fertilisation between Christianity and nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe has recently been highlighted by Hugh McLeod.³⁷ The involvement of the Catholic Church in the education of Italian migrants would become pivotal in the Americas, as the diaspora of Italians reached proportions of an ‘unprecedented mass migration’, involving 14 million people between 1876 and 1914.³⁸ As Choate has pointed out, mass emigration complicated the problem of inventing a national identity especially as, in America, the authorities encouraged assimilation, which threatened *italianità*. In the absence of a national culture, language and religion were seen as the common ground that would help construct ‘a national identity for transnational emigrants’.³⁹

Non-Catholic Americans initially welcomed the Italian communities, heartened by the conviction that Italians were coming from a lay state.⁴⁰ Italian-American migrants, whose transatlantic crossings were often cheered by the singing of the *Hymn to Garibaldi*, had funded subscriptions for erecting statues in honour of the anticlerical founding fathers of the nation, Garibaldi and Mazzini.⁴¹ As the cult of monuments gained ground as a secular alternative to the cult of saints, the unveiling of monuments presented opportunities for associational life and commemorative rituals at home and abroad. In South America Mazzini’s statue was unveiled in

³⁵Ministero delle Colonie, *Le scuole italiane in Tripoli* (Rome: Tipografia nazionale G. Bertero Rome, 1914), 1.

³⁶David Atkinson, ‘Constructing Italian Africa: Geography and Geopolitics’, in *Italian Colonialism*, ed. R. Ben-Ghiat and M. Fuller, 15–26, and his ‘Special Section: Empire and Education: from Liberal Italy to Fascism’, 561–79; D’Agostino *Rome in America*, 7; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso 1991).

³⁷Hugh McLeod, ‘Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe’, *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15, no. 1 (2015): 7–22.

³⁸Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 23.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Stefano Luconi, ‘Le reazioni statunitensi alla prima immigrazione italiana’, in *Le relazioni tra Stati Uniti e Italia nel periodo di Roma capitale*, ed. D. Fiorentino and M. Sanfilippo (Rome: Gangemi, 2008), 99.

⁴¹Emilio Franzina, ‘La canzoni dell’emigrazione’, in *Storia dell’emigrazione italiana*, ed. P. Bevilacqua, A. De Clementi and E. Franzina (Rome: Donzelli, 2001), 560, fn 31.

Buenos Aires in 1878, in the presence of immigrant associations, masonic lodges, mutual aid societies, Italian republicans and a 'wave of people'.⁴² In 1888 and in 1901, statues of the anticlerical Garibaldi followed in New York and in Chicago. The equation between Catholicism and *italianità* was therefore not immediately transparent in the Americas. In Argentina, schools had a Mazzinian secular orientation with the goal of maintaining the Italian language but also providing an education to migrant children. This would soon change, in a transatlantic display of the 'culture wars' between anticlerical Garibaldians and intransigent Catholics.⁴³

In the context of Italian migration to the Americas, historians have highlighted the need to differentiate the experience of Italians who settled in North America from that of those who migrated to South America. This is an important distinction in terms of the differing practices of assimilation, amalgamation and integration within the two geographical areas. The 'Italo-phobia of the English-speaking world' described by Robert F. Harney, which fixed Otherness by associating race and anti-Catholicism, was a 'malady' that was alien to South America, where the creation of clusters of Italian neighbourhoods – known as 'Little Italies' – was not manifest.⁴⁴ As Donna Gabaccia has argued, in North America racialised exclusion could draw on 'an intense and popular hostility to Catholicism' (previously experienced in Britain by Irish poor migrants), which was absent in Latin America.⁴⁵ The papers that follow deal with a discrete and geographically specific element of the education of Italy's transatlantic migrants, highlighting the responses of Italian educationalists to the particular, well-identified challenges of marrying integration and identity preservation in the Anglo-Saxon world. The epicentres for dissemination and cross-national exchange identified are New York (Moretti) and London (Williams).

The Vatican's interest in the fate of Italians abroad increased under Leo XIII. In the contribution by Williams we learn how the 'the department of the Vatican responsible for Protestant countries had produced a number of reports on the plight of Italian immigrants in the United States', highlighting the need for 'Italian-speaking priests and sisters to serve them'. Williams' contribution adds a new perspective to the field, recently surveyed by Margaret Susan Thompson, which takes seriously the responses that immigrant sisters gave to the 'challenge of what it meant to be American and Catholic, religious and educator' and how best to respond to the tension between 'cultural retention and assimilation' (or 'Americanisation').⁴⁶ By analysing Mother Cabrini's activism, Williams looks beyond the polarised dichotomy between intransigent Catholics and modern liberals, locating her on the fault

⁴²Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 29–31.

⁴³D'Agostino, *Rome in America*, 45–51, 58–60.

⁴⁴Robert F. Harney, 'Italophobia: English Speaking Malady', *Studi Emigrazione* 22, no. 77 (1985): 6–43.

⁴⁵Donna R. Gabaccia, 'Global Geography of "Little Italy": Italian Neighbourhoods in Comparative Perspective', *Modern Italy* 11, no. 1 (2006): 9–24.

⁴⁶Margaret Susan Thompson, 'Adaptation and Professionalisation: Challenges for Teaching Sisters in a Pluralistic Nineteenth-Century America', *Paedagogica Historica* 49, no. 4 (2013): 454–70.

line between the Risorgimento tradition of liberal Catholicism and the forces of emancipatory progress of modernity. Williams does not go as far as placing Cabrini squarely within the ‘conciliationist’ movement embraced by the Scalabrini Fathers in America.⁴⁷ After all, as Deidre Raftery has affirmed, ‘education in the convent school had purposes that were quite distinct from those prescribed by official “state” education’.⁴⁸ Instead, Cabrini turned her personal association with a ‘migrant nation’ into an opportunity for universalism and humanity.

Williams argues that Cabrini’s familial connection and correspondence with the Italian representative of the Left (Sinistra Storica), Agostino Depretis, bears witness to her openness to considering different points of view and entering into discussion with people of very different views. Cabrini’s action, however, was not directly political, as she saw her activism as part of the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, Williams shows that through her local upbringing, her familial ties and her readings, Cabrini developed an understanding of liberal thought which she brought to bear on the educational practice that she promoted within her independent female religious order. The order that she founded grew transnationally and Cabrini went on to establish numerous schools of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in the United States, Panama, Nicaragua, Brazil and Argentina, as well as Europe.

Countering traditional approaches to education, Cabrini mobilised her schools to promote modern pedagogy, crossing linguistic and cultural barriers. Williams shows how Cabrini had ‘encountered “modern” progressive pedagogy in both secular and Catholic settings’ by frequenting Catholic and secular institutions as a learner and teacher. In particular, her professional role, as certified ‘maestra’ (primary school teacher) places this transnational missionary in the national context of emerging opportunities that presented themselves to Italian women for the first time in Liberal Italy.⁴⁹ While working for the Catholic Church, it transpires, Mother Cabrini was an active leader and a modern woman, who, not unlike some of her contemporary Italian women emancipationists, travelled relentlessly across the Atlantic to establish networks of communications. Her encounter with Maria Montessori reveals how two women, whose access to education had only recently been secured by educational reforms in Liberal Italy, campaigned and spearheaded missions to improve education in theory and practice. Williams’ claim that Cabrini’s schools used Montessori’s progressive methods is a measure of how Cabrini’s commitment to God and nation harnessed the most advanced educational theories.

As Italian educators became entangled in transatlantic encounters, their consciousness of the shortcomings of their young nation grew. For American Catholics the poverty-stricken immigrants who reached the American shores were a measure of the magnitude of the ‘Italian Problem’ and a symptom of the fact that Italians, like the Pope, were seen as prisoners of the masonic clutches of the state.⁵⁰ In an

⁴⁷The conciliationists promoted the rapprochement of the Vatican with Liberal Italy. D’Agostino, *Rome in America*, 56–8. See also by the same author, ‘The Scalabrini Fathers, the Italian Emigrant Church and Ethnic Nationalism in America’, *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 7 (1997): 121–51.

⁴⁸Deidre Raftery, ‘The “Mission” of Nuns in Female Education in Ireland, c.1850–1950’, *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 2 (2012): 299–313.

⁴⁹On Italian women in Liberal Italy and access to professions see Sutcliffe, ‘Italian Women in the Making’.

⁵⁰D’Agostino, *Rome in America*, 59.

analysis of the shifting political discourse on Italian migrants in North America, Erica Moretti transfers her focus onto the American intellectual debates surrounding the best way to integrate the southern European newcomers into the fabric of society. Moretti focuses on how the science of pedagogy sought to offer answers to the problem of assimilating Italian children and forging the Italian-American child, given that 'a small but influential number of intellectuals promoted the notion of cultural pluralism, according to which immigrants were to preserve the best of their heritages while being introduced to the principles of American culture'. The image of the Italian immigrant child 'thrown in contact with saloons, gambling dens' and 'disorderly houses' was, according to Carl Ipsen, 'the raw nerve of Italian official self-consciousness about the image of the nation abroad'.⁵¹

Moretti shows how, in the midst of the 'so-called progressive era' in America, an Italian-American educator, Angelo Patri, reached out to the Italian children of immigrants by drawing on his personal experience and by experimenting with the most recent pedagogical theories in his educational practice as teacher and headmaster in a state school in a New York district heavily populated by Italians. Dealing with children speaking many different dialects, Patri did not focus on language classes, but endeavoured to instil in all pupils a sense of pride in their heritage. At the basis of Patri's approach was his desire to engage with multicultural education.

From a pedagogical point of view Patri supported the notion of 'learning by doing', a practice which he trialled following his reading of John Dewey's writings and the Montessori method. Like Mother Cabrini, Patri encountered Maria Montessori, who praised his pedagogical approach, drawing a direct line between progressive education and education for citizenship. As Montessori told Patri on visiting his school, educating children to the 'mere habit of obedience' was an inadequate 'preparation for life in a democracy'. As Moretti explains, Montessori told Patri: 'The safety of democracy depends on the intelligence and independence of voters.' It was Patri's contention that his methods would equip Italian-American children to grow into responsible citizens.

Moretti's contribution focuses mainly on the years leading up to the First World War, when Patri was headmaster in the New York inner-city state school of Crotona Park in the Bronx. He recounted his experiences in a non-fiction book, *A Schoolmaster in the Great City*. Patri was a prolific writer, also publishing and translating books for children. In the light of Patri's pedagogical theory and practice, based on self-discipline rather than obedience, the publication of Patri's fictional book *Pinocchio in America* adds a meaningful commentary to the way Patri saw his own role in forming the Italian-American citizen.⁵² The book was published in 1929, when the Fascist regime, which had already consolidated its grip on power in Italy, received the recognition of the Pope after abrogating the Law of Guarantees and signing the Lateran Pacts: the reconciliation between the state and the Vatican finally resolved the 'Roman Question'. In D'Agostino's words, 'The concordat imposed medieval canon law upon a modern nation, destroyed civil liberties, and oppressed religious minorities'.⁵³

⁵¹ Carl Ipsen, *Italy in the Age of Pinocchio: Children and Danger in the Liberal Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 52.

⁵² Angelo Patri, *Pinocchio in America* (New York: Garden City, 1929), xiv.

⁵³ D'Agostino, *Rome in America*, 197.

In the opening introduction to *Pinocchio in America*, Patri imagined Pinocchio, typically, running away from home. Leaving Italy behind, Pinocchio stated: 'I'll go to America where children are free', just before disappearing into the sea. It is possibly not surprising that Patri's novel, written for the Italian-American child, was a story of departure. Yet it was also a story of return: by the end of the book, according to the script, Patri's Pinocchio becomes a good boy, and decides to return home to his father, Geppetto, whose house is conveniently located under Vesuvius in Naples (rather than Tuscany, where the original tale is set). The imagery of the tale was borrowed from dreams of return that the children of Italian migrants may have associated with. Yet there was a further twist in Patri's story. As Pinocchio boarded the homeward-bound ship, Patri ended with a final dialogue between Pinocchio and the Statue of Liberty, here reproduced:

'Dear, dear', said Pinocchio looking into the sky. 'To think I travelled so far and saw so much and never looked behind things'.

'What is that you said?' asked Liberty, leaning down from her pedestal.

'There is one thing I haven't found out yet. Please tell me what is behind things?'

'Questions,' said Liberty. 'Questions are behind everything'.

'Never any answers?'

'Yes, but they are questions too'.

'Dear me. Questions always make me want to run away.'

'Of course. Everybody wants to run away. That is one reason why this harbour is crowded every day. Everybody is running away from somewhere to somewhere else.'

'Imagine. I never thought there were so many people like me'.

'Exactly. What made you think they were different? We are all alike and all different. But we all have to do the same thing in the end. If you want to be happy, you keep on asking questions of whatever, whomever you meet without ever taking the answers as the last word. Always go ahead to the next one to the next question. In that way you sometimes get new answers, and that makes you happy. You ought to be very happy. Goodbye and good luck to you.'

'And what,' thought Pinocchio, 'what do you suppose is behind that?'

As one of Dewey's followers, Patri put his faith in the power of education to revitalise democracy. As Richard Wunderlich and Thomas J. Morrissey have noted, in *Pinocchio in America* the Watchful Rooster was a progressive educator. In an idealised America, 'the novel's fictive world' had 'just and efficacious institutions, the foremost of which' was 'public education'.⁵⁴ Ending the novel with a question mark was Patri's way to foster the child's inquisitive mind. In the light of the fact that the novel was read as Mussolini's power was being legitimised by the authority of the Pope, the Statue of Liberty's exhortation to question and challenge authority seemed particularly fitting; even more so when put to an Italian-American child, educated to the value of freedom, boarding a ship homeward bound. Yet Italian-Americans would look with a degree of pride to Mussolini's achievements for many years to come. Indeed, according to recent historiography, Italian migrants rarely condemned

⁵⁴Richard Wunderlich and Thomas J. Morrissey, *Pinocchio Goes Postmodern: Perils of a Puppet in the United States* (New York: Routledge 2002), 158.

Fascist anti-Semitism, as the legacy of the liberal tradition of the Risorgimento might have suggested. Instead, the attitudes were coloured by self-interest in the context of competing tensions amongst Italian migrants and American Jews.⁵⁵ The two contributions that follow address in different ways the question of how educationalists of Liberal Italy ventured beyond the nation, grappling with questions of national identity, ‘civilisation’, freedom and democracy, and negotiating the tensions of the ‘culture wars’ in the wider world, while Liberal Italy spiralled slowly towards dictatorship.

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⁵⁵For a recent study on Italian Americans’ attitudes towards Fascism and anti-Semitism, see Stefano Luconi, ‘The Response of Italian Americans to Fascist Anti-Semitism’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 35, no. 3 (2001): 3–23.