stimulated, by the late nineteenth century, women as consuming spectators and readers had to be taken seriously. From the changes brought about in theatres and academies, as we read in the essays by Paola Giuli (“From Academy to Stage: Improvisation, Gender, and National Character”) and Katharine Mitchell (“Evenings Out: Female Spectators of Opera and Theater in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy”), to considerations of how reading materials moved away from edification and from confirmation of acceptable moral behaviour (in the essays “The Revolution in Reading: From Manzoni’s ‘twenty-five readers’ to the ‘twenty-five-thousand female readers’ of *romanzi d’appendice*” by Adriana Chemello; “Reading as ‘evasione militante’: *Fosca* (1869) by Iginio Ugo Tarchetti” by Olivia Santovetti; and “Bovarism in a New Key: The Reader of Novels and the Social Sciences in fin-de-siècle Italy” by Maria Grazia Lolla), we arrive at the carefully elucidated and valid connections made to a similar audience revolution in social media today in Ombretta Frau and Cristina Gragnani’s piece, “La Piccola Posta: Twitter for the Nineteenth-Century Woman?”

Supported by highly informative and often thought-provoking notes, as well as a rich bibliography, this volume offers noteworthy material for reflection in any arena where modern audiences, and not just Italian ones, are the focus of study and discussion.

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Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse. *The Codex Fori Mussolini: A Latin Text of Italian Fascism*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Pp. 152. ISBN 9781474226950.

Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse present for the first time in English translation the *Codex Fori Mussolini*, a Latin text commissioned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Italian Fascism. Written by the classics scholar Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci (1867–1960), the 1,200-word text presents an idealized history of Fascism from its origins through the first decade of Mussolini’s rule. The *Codex* was printed on parchment and enclosed, along with some gold commemorative coins, in the base of the giant marble obelisk inscribed MVSSOLINI DVX that was erected in 1932 at the Foro Mussolini sports complex in Rome.

After the fall of Fascism, the complex was renamed Foro Italico, but the monument to Mussolini remains, along with the foundation deposit containing the *Codex*. Its continued existence, long after the regime's demise, is in some sense indicative of Italy's relative disinterest in confronting its totalitarian past, especially compared with Germany, where coming to terms with Nazism is taken so seriously that there is a word to describe the process: *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Although some symbols of Italian Fascism were felled or defaced in cathartic acts of iconoclasm upon the regime's collapse in 1943, many Fascist monuments still stand and have been left to speak for themselves.

Public controversies occasionally erupt over Fascist-era installations, and there are calls to remove remnants of the regime or to shutter the various *luoghi di culto* that provide pilgrimage sites for neo-Fascists and others nostalgic for a mythical era in which the trains ran on time. Ultimately, however, little gets done, in part because such disputes are seen often as little more than proxy battles in the daily jockeying for political power.

The authors of the present volume position themselves between resignation and calls for the removal of Fascist works. "If we decide not to excise the relics of an unwelcome past," Lamers and Reitz-Joosse write, "we must find ways of talking about them and confronting them by means other than a chisel" (5). Their tools are history and philology, and they employ them deftly to analyze the propagandistic aims of the *Codex* and the Foro. Here the authors stake their most intriguing claim, namely, that the *Codex* was drafted and deposited with an understanding that archaeologists would discover it in the remote future amid the architectonic ruins of the regime—a remarkable recognition that Fascism, despite its pretensions to universal empire, would expire sometime, too, just as Ancient Rome had so many centuries ago.

This provocative paradox guides the authors' interpretation as they seek to understand how Italian Fascism attempted to manage its own future reception. Amatucci's text furnishes insights into how the author endeavoured to shape the "prospective memory" of the regime by "constructing the Fascist present as he wants it to be remembered once it has become a distant past" (1). An important facet of their analysis concerns the uses of Latin and Roman antiquity in fashioning the Fascist ideal of *romanità* (Romanness).

A substantial essay sets the *Codex* and the Foro in historical, literary, and architectural contexts. The English translation features facing Latin text and is followed by a detailed commentary that identifies and explains Amatucci's many

classical allusions and phrasings, such as locutions from Cicero and Livy. Because the original *Codex* remains immured within the obelisk, the authors selected the latest known version authorized by Amatucci among the four editions published and circulated from 1932 to 1937.

Lamers and Reitz-Joose trace Amatucci's scholarly interests and engagement in the cultural politics of the regime, including Amatucci's membership in the Institute for Roman Studies and his role as a national inspector of secondary schools tasked with enforcing educational standards and loyalty to Fascism. So fundamental was Latin to the pursuit of *romanità* that Amatucci viewed laxity in Latin studies as an act of "true civil desertion" (20). Importantly, Latin was regarded not as a mere historical relic, but as a living language capable of expressing the revolutionary ideas of Fascism and national renewal.

Inventive engagement with the past is visible in the execution of the obelisk, which drew eclectically upon elements of Roman antiquity while downplaying symbolic references that did not neatly fit the Fascist ideal of *romanità*. Framed as a distinctly Roman achievement in contradistinction to the obelisk tradition's Egyptian heritage, its design reflected the influences of constructivism and rationalism, and it was inscribed with simple Latinized block letters instead of hieroglyphs.

Stylistic and thematic innovations, coupled with deliberate forgetfulness, also characterize the *Codex*. The line from Virgil's *Eclogues*, which Amatucci placed in epigraph, sets the tone for what follows: "The great order of the ages is born afresh" (85). Passing awkwardly over the House of Savoy and the Unification of Italy, Amatucci rejoiced at Mussolini's efforts: "we now at last have a state, which was none until 28 October 1922." For Amatucci, Fascism was "a new order of the ages" born afresh for the Italians (89). Perhaps unsurprising, given Amatucci's interest in Christian Latin literature, the *Codex* is imbued with eschatological themes, at once sacralizing Fascism and Mussolini, who is depicted as a Christ-like figure who appeared "by some divine command and will" (87).

The *Codex* surveys several achievements of Italian Fascism's first decade, including Mussolini's seizure of power; the Lateran Accords; the strengthening of the armed forces and establishment of the system of corporations; the stabilization of the lira; Mussolini's urban and agricultural projects; and the opera nazionale balilla and its role in educating Fascist youth. As the authors note, descriptions in the *Codex* of the Foro and the placement of its buildings appear mundane, but they may provide instructions to future archaeologists on how to interpret the obelisk and sports complex by then presumably lying in ruins.

Lamers and Reitz-Joosse's thesis concerning the future audience of the *Codex* is certainly stimulating. However, their account educes yet another (by no means incompatible) interpretation. Their contention that the lack of a concurrent Italian translation suggests "it was apparently not intended for the general Italian public" (21) does not allow that the *Codex* may have been part of a broader performative act regardless of any readership. As Gaetano Salvemini argued in *Giustizia e Libertà* in 1934, "dictators need myths, symbols, and ceremonies to discipline, excite, and frighten the multitudes, and to stifle their every attempt at independent thought. The Catholic Church's fantastic and grandiose ceremonies and the mysterious rituals in a strange language are masterpieces of their genre." For Salvemini, Italian Fascism followed this model. Guided by his insight, we might see the *Codex* (with its strange language of Latin) and the grandiose ceremony and rituals involved in the three-year journey of the 300-ton block of marble from Carrara to Rome (dragged by 66 oxen and floated between pontoons up the Tiber) as elements in a spectacle aimed at a populace to be stupefied and subjugated in the here and now.

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Benedetto Croce. *A Croce Reader: Aesthetics, Philosophy, History, and Literary Criticism*. Edited and translated by Massimo Verdicchio. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. Pp. 144. ISBN 9781442611429.

Il nome e il ricordo di Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), lungamente protagonista della vita civile e culturale italiana della prima metà del Novecento, ha in passato innescato — specie in occasione delle ricorrenze — polemiche, contrapposizioni, riprovazioni ed aspre discussioni sulla sua opera. Esaltato, in vita, come grande maestro e profondo rinnovatore della cultura e della vita morale italiana, e insieme dannato nella memoria come filosofo dal pensiero debole e fiero conservatore della cultura italiana, Croce, come spesso accade per ogni altro grande nome, era stato ricordato nel 1966 (anno del centenario della nascita) con un fortissimo animus polemico. Oggi non è più così, e il lavoro ineludibile e inesorabile del tempo, che si esercita anche sul passato, ha portato a riconoscere la perenne grandezza e attualità della sua voce, forte, come in tutti i classici, nel raccontare l'essenza e