quelli dei nuovi immigrati in Italia (dal Nord Africa, dai paesi dell’Est europeo), che usano un italiano mischiato alle loro lingue madri, che spesso coincidono con altre lingue ‘maggiori’ o dovremo dire dominanti come l’arabo, ad esempio.

Sempre in questo spirito, che non ignora mai un preciso inquadramento storico, un passato recentissimo giunge a un presente dramaticamente delineato che viene dipinto con una vivida precisione che ricorre alla cronaca, alla storia, ai fenomeni culturali e linguistici. In questo solco metodologico, e direi prospettico, si muovono i capitoli Cinema and Migration: ‘What and ‘Who’ Is a Migrant, e The Laws of Migration. Per Cinema and migration potremmo ripetere gli elogi già espressi, sia per il metodo, sia per la forma, per il capitolo sulla Minor Literature, ‘Minor Italy’.

Intendiamo segnalare invece, in conclusione, l’ultimo capitolo di quest’eccellente lavoro, che si staglia su quello che si può descrivere come un dramma storico della l’identità italiana recente, e cioè le leggi sull’immigrazione (The Laws of Migration). Il dato si offre come angoscianti per sua natura, intrinsecamente si potrebbe dire, poiché gli italiani, anche se considerati non-bianchi (e la Parati ripercorre la letteratura e la tematica legate a questo aspetto della percezione della comunità in certi paesi di destinazione dell’emigrazione italiana), sono uno dei grandi popoli emigranti della storia recente. Già nel primo capitolo la Parati rileva che “In Italy, both the Left and the Right have been articulating discourses that reproduce the rhetorical strategies that have victimized migrants who are needed and marginalized at the same time” (25). Un’osservazione asciutta e per questo quanto mai efficace.

Nel quarto capitolo la studiosa osserva amaramente che “laws, such as the one masterminded by the Northern Leaguer Umberto Bossi and the post-fascist Fini undermines the construction of a hybrid cultural future in which incoming and native traditions can move beyond hostility” (183). Su questa lucida e inquietante constatazione (ahinoi realistica) della Parati, intendiamo concludere dicendo che questo studio si pone come un aggiornato, interessante, stimolante, ma soprattutto ricco e rigoroso lavoro, utile sia nel campo dei più avanzati Italian Studies, sia in quello degli studi sulla lingua in una moderna prospettiva indagata con una ‘strumentazione’ critica articolata e aggiornata, anche se circoscrivibile ideologicamente (ma non ci è parso un gran difetto, tutt’altro).

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This Italian translation of the original Hungarian Emlékek városa. Fiume, (2001) offers a detailed history of Fiume, one of the many Adriatic territories that Italy lost after WWII. As scholars become aware of the importance of these Julian Dalmatian lands in the numerous mid-20th century contests waged over them between Italian, Croatian, Slovenian, Austrian, German, English, French, and American interests, few studies undertake to explore more fully the rich
Hungarian contribution to Fiume. Ilona Fried’s volume fills that lacuna through a wide-ranging study, spanning Fiume’s incorporation to the Hungarian crown as separatum coronae adnexum corpus in 1868 to the Yugoslavian occupation of 1945. As the title indicates, Fiume is portrayed as a city of memory, of the many memories of the different people who have claimed her in a variety of languages.

Within Ilona Fried’s chronology Fiume experienced four distinct phases: the Hungarian rule of 1868 to 1918; the irredentist “questione fiumana” of 1918 to 1924; Italian rule from 1924 to 1945; and the Yugoslavian period of 1945-1947 that witnessed the “esodo”. The “Prefazione” (9-12) and “Premessa” (13-15) contextualize Fiume as a “modello di città mitteleuropea” (13). The “Cronologia” (17-26) offers explanations of notable events and personalities in Fiume’s history from 1719 to 1900. The author treats competing identities and nationalisms in “Identità e cultura” (27-52) where multicultural Fiume is seen as “la seconda città del paese dopo Budapest” (28). With “Nasce la cultura 1868-1918” (53-68), Fried points to the numerous urban and social developments that also distinguished Fiume from other major cities of the late Austro-Hungarian empire as Budapest, Bratislava, and Zagreb. From the architecture to the caffè culture of its downtown, ‘800 Fiume is put forth as a shining example of a prosperous mitteleuropean city where many Latin, Magyar, Germanic, and Slavic influences blended rather successfully (60-64).

“Società, la struttura sociale, etnie, religioni” (69-140) covers a number of social issues, including the city’s varied ethnic makeup that was, however, primarily characterized as competition between Slavic and Italian populations. The city’s economy is depicted as tied very closely to the railway system and the port during this period since Fiume was directly related to the Hungarian “mito del mare” (114). Fried points out that a significant percentage of Hungarian imports and exports passed through Fiume, including munitions from the Whitehead torpedo factory. With WWI approaching, and internal and external tensions rising, Fiume’s highly charged political situation contended with the Partito Socialista Operario di Fiume, the irredentist Giovine Fiume, and increasing Croatian nationalisms (133-140).

In “I canali della cultura” (141-182), Fried offers a view of the cultural scene in Fiume that boasted numerous multilingual and multicultural initiatives. Among these was the Italian “Circolo Letterario”, founded in 1893 and headed by Michele Maylender, mayor of Fiume and author of Storia delle Accademie d’Italia (148). Maylender and Giovanni Kobler, author of Memorie per la storia della libraria città di Fiume, are prominent among the literary and academic figures of the period in “Le forme della comunicazione — le convenzioni letterarie” (183-211). As Fried provides profiles of other writers, works, and movements, primarily in Italian and Hungarian, she states that the major influences of post-romanticism and decadentismo are also informed by a sense of isolationism and a particularly complementary relationship between Italian and Hungarian traditions (183).

The section “1918-1924” (213-241) treats the very colourful period in Fiume’s history when Italian nationalism, irredentism, and the “vittoria mutilata” of WWI converged. Its privileged position as the prime Hungarian port had
passed, replaced by Gabriele D’Annunzio’s “impresa di Fiume” that brought international notoriosity to the city and to Italian nationalism. As Fried reminds us, while this fervour that led to Fiume’s becoming formally Italian was the realization of the dreams of the increasing Italian population, it also meant a decrease in prestige since it would now have to compete economically with nearby Trieste (215). While Fried mentions the dynamic literary and cultural environment that accompanied D’Annunzio in Fiume, she also points out how, to many, the “impresa” was a harbinger of Mussolini’s famous “Marcia su Roma” of 1922.

The final section, “1924-1945” (243-353), covers the troubled era of Fiume italiana. Fried begins by mentioning how the irredentists’ hopes of economic recovery were discouraged by increased competition from Trieste and Sušak (243-244). Fried relates how, in hindsight, many believe that Fiume would have fared much better as an independent city. Much of her analysis focuses on the literary and artistic developments of the recently Italianized city. The inevitable comparison with Trieste leaves Fiume somewhat behind numerically yet with the distinguishing flavour of its Hungarian sympathies (252). There follow profiles, brief analyses, and reflections of Italian and Hungarian writers from Fiume (290-335). “Il mito” closes the volume on a nostalgic note as this “crocevia di varie culture” is destined to remain a bitter-sweet memory for many Italians and Hungarians.

Ilona Fried’s Fiume, Città della memoria (1868-1945) is a handsome volume replete with archival photographs and reprints of original documents, primarily from the city’s Italian and Hungarian days. One of its greatest strengths is the ability to bring aspects of the Hungarian contribution to the attention of an audience that has likely had little exposure to it. Its concentration on social and literary factors is a pleasant change from the often heavy-handed and ideologically-charged analyses of WWII and the accompanying atrocities. However, the occasionally sparse treatment of more political themes merits expansion, especially regarding the dramatic developments in the early 20th century. Further, the Italian appears stilted at times, as in the following: “Nel suo libro La dissoluzione dell’Austria-Ungheria, Valiani parlando di un avvenimento lo descrive così com’è conosciuto croata” (360). Nonetheless, despite these stylistic infelicities, Ilona Fried has produced a valuable study on an important aspect of Fiume’s history that has not received nearly enough attention. Her detailed research, particularly into the Hungarian side of the issue, has broadened Studi fiumani and further characterized it as a fascinatingly multicultural and plurilingual field that must not be merely relegated to memory or manipulated by ideologies, but vigorously explored in its multicultural context.

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