into their religious practices. Thus, in Chapter 10, the authors investigate the concept of the evil eye, and in Chapter 11, they analyse the importance of saint festivals, or *feste*, and how these festivals provide a sense of continuity and connection to Italian heritage while adapting to fit into the American cultural landscape. They also explore the ways in which saints' festivals have been used to maintain social order within Italian-American communities, reinforcing traditional values and beliefs and discouraging behaviour that is seen as threatening to the community.

In the last chapter, the authors describe how storytelling, bringing forth various themes and motifs, has been used to pass down cultural traditions and values from generation to generation and how it has helped maintain a sense of community among Italian Americans. The writers conclude their work by reflecting on the importance of memory and nostalgia in sculpting Italian-American identity. They argue that memories of Italy, Italian culture, and the immigrant experience significantly shape a sense of belonging, even generations after their ancestors first arrived in the United States. They claim that Italian Americans have often been marginalised and excluded from mainstream society. Finally, they contend that there is still much to be learned about the experiences of Italian Americans and that continued research and exploration can help shed light on the complexities of Italian-American identity.

Laurie and Michael Buonanno's *Remembering Italian America: Memory, Migration, Identity* is a thoughtful introduction for undergraduate students concentrating on the Italian-American experience, providing a foundation for the study of the migration of Italians to the United States and their assimilation, juxtaposing Italian culture and tradition with the contrasting customs of their new homeland. The authors attempt to chronicle the overall partisan trends, from anarchists to modern Italian-American Republicans. The political science aspect requires a more thorough explanation of voting trends of Italian-Americans through the decades after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and the Bread and Roses Strike of the early twentieth century, far beyond the scope of this book. Ultimately, the Buonannos establish a solid groundwork for the history of the movement of immigrants from Italy to the United States.

The Italian Empire and the Great War

by Vanda Wilcox, New York, Oxford University Press, 2021, viii + 269 pp., £35.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-19-882294-3

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Italy has all too often been left out of wider histories of the 'battle of empires' due to its perceived peripheral role as one of the newest and the least powerful of the 'great powers'. Vanda Wilcox's latest book, *The Italian Empire and the Great War,* is the first book to put the Great War in an Italian imperial perspective and it brings Italy to the foreground of recent research on the world's first global conflict. Published as part of Oxford

University Press's *The Greater War* series, the book looks further than the historical and historiographical stereotypes that continue to place the peninsula in the shadows (and footnotes) of the imperial power struggle that dictated the global conflict. Wilcox does this convincingly, arguing that Italy's colonial ambitions equally drove the nation's entry to, role and impact in the First World War alongside its European counterparts. The author details the young nation's rampant desire for collective identity and pride through belligerence and expansion by analysing its foreign policy and immense war experience across continents. Through a seamless contextualisation of Italy's place in the hostilities, and an integration of recent trends in Italian colonial and diaspora history, Wilcox narrates the nation's quest for a 'greater Italy' compellingly, adopting an original chronological and geographical lens.

With 12 chapters, the book examines 12 years of imperial conflicts, beginning before the inception of the First World War. It starts with the Italo-Turkish War in 1911 and ends with the withdrawal of Italian forces in the Eastern Mediterranean in 1923, following the foundation of the new Republic of Turkey. Thus, instead of a conventional start upon Italy's entry into the war in 1915, Wilcox's introduction outlines and builds on recent scholarship to argue that because the 1911–12 war over Libya involved two combatant European powers, it crucially preceded the global conflict and became an important war front. Chapters 2 and 3 summarise Italy's early imperialist and irredentist aims in Africa, the Balkans and the Mediterranean, viewing them as nation-building projects that set the scene for Italy's transition from neutrality to interventionism during the First World War. This contextual recapitulation of Italy's declaration of war may be a familiar story to experts in the field, but these introductory chapters are key to the comprehension of the main themes, arenas and events that anticipated Italy's policies and actions at the height of the First World War.

Wilcox's impressive research really shines through from Chapter 4 onwards. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on state attempts at 'total war' in its staunchest form, including military service for Italian emigrants across the world, the utilisation of colonial troops, overseas fundraising and cultural mobilisation on the home front. Chapters 6 and 7 emphasise the truly global and imperial nature of Italy's role and experience in the conflict, from the Mediterranean theatre which comprised Libya, the Balkans, Albania and Macedonia to the presence of Italian contingents in Palestine and as far afield as Manchuria. Chapter 8 takes a thematic approach, underlying the importance of analysing contemporary notions of race, nationality and citizenship, which is increasingly reflected in the historiography. This chapter explores the concept of *italianità* and constructions of whiteness in Risorgimento racial theory, as well as their transformation and popularisation in the war, all of which heightened ethnic violence against Italy's enemies in Libya, the Balkans, Germany and Austria.

The last chapters describe the end, outcomes and legacies of the war and, in particular, the effect this had on Italian politics and foreign policy. Chapters 9 and 10 summarise the postwar peace treaties, the delusions they brought Italy, the consequential myth of the mutilated victory and the occupation of Fiume. In Chapter 11, Wilcox's research on the withdrawal of Italian troops from the Eastern Mediterranean, Palestine and Asia Minor further highlights the extent of their reach in the conflict. The book ends by providing crucial context as to how the failures of the nation's last and greatest unification project led to the rise of Fascism and an intensification of Italian imperial policy and practice during the *ventennio.*

Accessibly written with subchapters and well-considered background information, the book will be informative and enjoyable to a range of readers. Wilcox's extensive primary and secondary research allows us to reconceptualise the political and military history of Italian imperialism and the First World War, opening new avenues of inquiry into the

cultural dimensions of the battlegrounds that the author has shed light upon, the continued relevance of which should not be underestimated and is evident in the collective memory of these conflicts and present-day geopolitics.

Geographies of Myth and Places of Identity: The Strait of Scylla and Charybdis in the Modern Imagination

by Marco Benoît Carbone, New York, Bloomsbury, 2022, 280 pp., $103.50 (hardback), ISBN: 978-13-501-1818-8

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What is the Strait of Messina? It is the physical area that connects – and at the same time separates – Sicily and the rest of Italy, but it also is the place where the monsters Scylla and Charybdis dwell (*scillaecariddi* in the regional dialect), and therefore a mythological locus that has its roots in the Homeric poem, the *Odyssey*. If the first is a geographical point that finds its correspondence in the real world, the second gives shape to an imaginary geography. Marco Benoît Carbone's valuable study takes place in the very intersection between those two spaces – real and imaginary. Through a methodological approach that interweaves different disciplinary fields, Carbone's work does not aim to reconstruct the 'truth' of the Homeric myth, but to investigate the ways the 'literary' Strait has given shape to reality since antiquity, and how the narrative of a 'glorious past' has had – and still has – an impact on Calabrians, on their self-perception as descendants of the Greater Greece and as direct heirs of Homer, whom they consider a fellow citizen.

 Throughout the eight chapters of the book, the author redraws the cultural trajectory of the 'Homeric' Strait from the eighteenth century up to the present. Over the centuries, the 'Homeric geography' has attracted travellers, tourists, artists, researchers and filmmakers who have followed Ulysses' route in order to find the mythical places along the shores of the Strait. However, there is a crucial point to consider. If the Homeric myth has definitely – in its different remediated forms – contributed to shape a specific vision of the Strait, the ambiguous connection between myth and reality underlies an identitary construction that connects its present to the glorious past of Ancient Greece:

> Expectations about the landscape of former Greater Greece as a tourist consumable have surrounded the Strait since the Grand Tours, ... but there are also local attempts to consistently take part in the narrative of place through a heritage industry governed by market considerations of entertainment and profitability and approach by the public as a consumable good involving the staging, themeing, memorability and sensual engagement of consumer activities (p. 36).

With this perspective, Carbone's work does not follow the path traced by historical research: if a historical-theoretical type reconstruction was certainly indispensable to