# Book Reviews

**T. Bayoumi, S. Pickford, P. Subacchi** (eds.), *Managing complexity. Economic Policy Cooperation after the Crisis*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2016, pp. 350.

The economic crisis that erupted in mid-2007 marked a turning point in the way economic policy cooperation was conceived. The crisis dramatically laid bare massive interconnections among different countries' economies, linkages revealed by the way the shock was transmitted after the collapse of Lehman Brothers. It was no longer possible to rely on the economic orthodoxy of *benign neglect*, in which each country only looked at its own policies without considering the spillover effects of its actions on other countries. Given the linkages among economies, an effective response to the crisis had to be global in scale.

This book analyses how economic policy cooperation has developed since the outbreak of the crisis and explores its different dimensions. It is organized into four parts: Part I focuses on the theoretical framework underpinning cooperation benefits; Part II examines the international interlinks and policy responses to the crisis; Part III concerns the integration of economic policies; and Part IV provides an institutional setting for cooperation. The book is edited by Tamim Bayoumi, deputy director of the Strategy, Policy and Review Department of the IMF, Stephen Pickford, senior fellow in the International Economics Department at Chatham House in London, and Paola Subacchi, director of the International Economics Department at Chatham House. David Vines and other international experts are contributors.

The crisis delivered a hammer blow to the prevailing pre-crisis theory of benign neglect, which held that world economic order and a good global outcome would result if each country acted in accordance with its own national interest. This view was partly the child of the so-called Great Moderation, in which the world economy grew rapidly and without inflation, convincing economic actors and policymakers that limited international cooperation was sufficient because growth was self-sustaining.

This orthodoxy was responsible for the global propagation of the crisis, because there were no effective institutions and mechanisms in place to anticipate it and limit its consequences. The spread of the crisis fostered the opposite idea: that it was necessary to enhance world policy cooperation, given the international consequences of national policy actions. This approach is in the interest of every country, because each of them produces and is affected by spillovers.

The softest framework for cooperation is *concerted unilateralism*, a regime in which each country can do what it wants without having to change its policies, although some coordinated actions are considered necessary for a better global outcome. This was the case of the Bretton Woods system between 1944 and 1971, under which each country was free to choose its policies but had to comply with international rules for the exchange rate, with the International Monetary Fund acting as global supervisor of the international monetary system.

The global response to the recent crisis by the G-20 can be seen as a revival of concerted unilateralism forty years after the crisis of Bretton Woods. In 2009, the Pittsburgh summit saw the launch of the G-20 Mutual Assessment Process, including a set of macroeconomic objectives. Countries agreed on expansionary policies, each one knowing that, thanks to concerted unilateralism, the others were doing likewise. But from mid-2010 policymakers changed their way of thinking: fiscal austerity took hold, and only a few countries opted for quantitative easing and other unconventional monetary policy measures. The global outcome has been contradictory and disappointing, in part because

concerted unilateralism went largely in the wrong direction, towards austerity.

Things began to change again in 2014: austerity measures were moderated in several countries and the meeting of G-20 finance ministers in September 2014 fixed a global target for both aggregate demand and output (with an expected additional increase of global output of 2% in 2018). Having set this goal, each country was free to adopt its own policy measures from a wide menu of possible initiatives.

Other aspects also deserve to be emphasized. In the post-crisis world, international cooperation has to play a role not only in global policy coordination, but also in the trade-off between economic growth and financial stability. Low interest rates can stimulate GDP growth but they also amplify financial risks. Naturally financial instability can produce spillovers, which is why international monetary cooperation is needed. Financial stability is a global public good.

In other words, international cooperation is important in the same way as is domestic cooperation; yet, even in at national level policymaking is sometimes highly compartmentalized, as we see in the case, for instance, of the separation between fiscal and monetary policy.

Finally, international cooperation can be strengthened by global institutions, but the main problem lies in the difficulty these institutions have in persuading policymakers to change direction.

**Filippo Di Iorio**
*"Federico II" University, Naples*

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**Alberto Castelli**, *Il discorso sulla pace in Europa 1900-1945*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2015, pp. 272.

In the first half of the 20th century Europe witnessed wars and political revolutions whose scale, intensity and costs in wounded and dead had vast consequences for human history. Early in the century, the tensions

spawned by militarism and imperialism erupted in the First World War. In its wake came the Russian Revolution, the era of totalitarianism and the tragedy of the Second World War, an event that radically altered the basis of the international community and that still reverberates today. This book by Alberto Castelli, professor of history of political thought at the Università degli Studi di Ferrara, analyzes the sweep of these events from a fascinating vantage point: the discussion on peace as shaped by European intellectuals and scholars in the first half of the 20th century.

The question of peace is closely linked to many other political issues: socialism, international law, human rights, democracy, and non-violence. Although a systematic reflection on pacifism was lacking, many intellectuals in the early 20th century put forward serious and relevant reasons to pursue disarmament and to avoid the possibility of war and violence. According to Castelli, a common discourse on peace in Europe did exist. And, as his book clearly explains, it involved different and sometimes contrasting voices which were nevertheless united by the common desire to renew the relations between nations oppressed by the brutality of violence and social disorder.

The book is divided into four parts. In the first part, Castelli considers the turn of the century and the years until 1914, and finds that there were two basic components of the political philosophy of peace at that time: on one side, confidence in the progress of civilization and the ability of reason to gradually awaken consciences and affirm freedom, prosperity and peace among nations; on the other side, the common understanding that the pursuit of aggressive policies by European states would eventually result in a terrible conflict. The quest for a new order and the awareness of an imminent danger were the opposite poles within which the entire debate unfolded. The second part of the book concerns the anti-war discussion in the early years of the First World War, when the dominant theme was revulsion for the escalation of violence and despair over the failure of intellectuals and political leaders to stop it. The third part covers the twenties and the thirties,

summarizing different proposals put forward by intellectuals and scholars to consolidate the fragile peace established by the Treaty of Versailles. In the final part of his work, the author argues that the reflections on peace, especially in the forties, constituted a line of nonviolent political thought and helped to radically reformulate the fundamental concepts of politics.

The author should be credited with a considerable achievement: he does not propose a ready-made thesis, nor does he espouse a particular doctrine or ideology. Indeed, he carefully avoids any ideological distortion of a political discourse that was fragmented, contradictory and complex, as the history of ideas always is. His book does not dwell on individual personalities and their lives, for its aim is to show that the discourse on peace was not just the expression of the thinking of a group of intellectuals and scholars. Still, decisive contributions admittedly did come from individual personalities, including Teodoro Moneta, the only Italian to have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Norman Angell, Lev Tolstoy, Rosa Luxemburg, Bertrand Russell, Romain Rolland, Max Scheler, Altiero Spinelli, Simone Weil, and Aldo Capitini.

**Tiziano Torresi**
*Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici, Naples*

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**Larry Dwyer, Neelu Seetaram** (eds.), *Recent Developments in the Economics of Tourism*, 2 vols., Edward Elgar, 2014, pp. 1200.

The acclaimed series founded by Mark Blaug brings together previously published contributions to the field of economics spanning the last few decades. This is highly useful, as much of the important literature is still spread across a vast range of sources and is often hard to access. The collection under review is edited by two authoritative tourism scholars, Larry Dwyer and Neelu Seetaram, respectively president and council member of the International Association for Tourism Economics.

Although tourism economics is a relatively new field, it has received a great deal of attention. In the past, travelling was reserved for the well-to-do; the advent of mass tourism, with its economic impact, made it a subject of study for economists. According to the World Tourism Organization (2016), in 2015 international tourism arrivals grew by 4.6% to 1,184 million and international tourism generated US$1.5 trillion in export earnings.

This two-volume work is composed of a selection of articles published in the past decade, chosen from among those that have significantly advanced the study of the economics of tourism. It covers a wide range of topics, including tourism growth, trade, destination competitiveness, and tourism forecasting.

Volume I, devoted to demand, supply, pricing, taxation, employment, and the environment, consists of six parts, namely: 1. Tourism Demand Modeling and Forecasting; 2. Supply and Pricing; 3. Tourism and Transport; 4. Taxation; 5. Tourism and the Environment; and 6. Employment Issues.

Volume II covers tourism trade, growth, and welfare. It is divided into four parts. The first, concerning tourism trade, growth and economic development, is divided in turn into three sections addressing, respectively, tourism and economic growth, international trade, and social issues and the welfare effect. The essays in the latter tackle controversial issues. To what extent does tourism contribute to the economic development of poor countries? Does it reduce poverty? To these and other questions, we find that there are no easy answers; in this equation, there are always winners and losers.

The other three parts of Volume II concern "Economic Impacts", "Tourism in Crisis", and "Destination Competitiveness". Here we are presented with analyses of the economic impact of inbound tourism on various destinations. Attention is also paid to events that have hampered tourism activity: the world financial crisis, the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the September 11$^{th}$ attacks, political coups, natural disasters, and others. Such events can slow tourism and

sometimes even bring it to a halt, affecting the target destination. Students of tourism need to be aware of these issues and develop ways to address them. The same goes for policymakers.

Tourism is one of the world's biggest industries, so the proliferation of tourism economics textbooks comes as no surprise. The work under review reflects the complexity of the economics. One of its strengths is the discussion of controversial issues such as the relationship between development and tourism. Another is its examination of the environmental impact of tourism as it relates to sustainability. The authors delve into complex matters such as models of sustainable tourism, estimating the carbon footprint on a destination, and congestion in popular tourist areas – challenging issues for tourism planners and policymakers alike.

The theoretical and informed policy-making contributions contained in this collection make it a required reference work for serious students, university lecturers, researchers, tourism economists, planners, and tourism policy makers.

**Mo Khamouna**
*University of Nebraska*

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**Luca Tedesco**, *Dal libero scambio all'autarchia. Gino Borgatta e gli "interessi dell'economia nazionale"*, Roma, Aracne, 2016, pp. 266.

In recent years, there has been renewed historiographical interest in the role in 20$^{th}$ century Italian history played by an influential group of intellectuals-technicians who collaborated with political leaders in shaping national economic policies.

Luca Tedesco, Professor of Contemporary History at Roma Tre University, analyses the development of the work and thought of Gino Borgatta, an Italian economist who studied under Luigi Einaudi in Milan and Vilfredo Pareto in Céligny and Lausanne at the start of the century, and its impact during the inter-war years. Borgatta's central theme

was the tariff protection afforded to grain and metals, which resulted in the upward trend in import duties throughout all of Europe between the later 19th century and the First World War. The abandonment of the traditional free-trade policies was mainly a response to the economic crisis of 1873, which caused plummeting grain prices and weakened not only European farmers but also manufacturers.

In Borgatta's view the protectionist trend was influenced heavily, indeed primarily, by nationalist ideology and politics, more than by purely economic reasons. Echoes of his Paretian background were evident in his reading of protectionism as a "pseudo-economic action" driven mainly by the self-interested calculations of particular interest groups, matched by nationalist sentiments. Tedesco rightly emphasizes Borgatta's analysis of protectionist trade policies as the political means to an end. High tariffs were orchestrated by powerful industrial and agricultural interest groups – as Borgatta proclaimed, for instance, at the congress of the Anti-Protectionist League in Milan in May 1914 – not in order to create income for the entire nation but just to shift wealth from consumers to producers. This objective could be pursued by imposing artificially high prices through tariffs, which reduced the purchasing power of most of the Italian population.

The First World War had a profound impact on economic thinking, and Borgatta was no exception; he gradually modified his ideas. In 1916, in an article in *La Riforma sociale*, he allowed that, in a state of national emergency – such as war – specific, temporary government intervention in the economy could serve policy objectives relating to national security, such as the achievement of self-sufficiency in raw materials, essential goods and services.

However, these ideas would develop fully only in the 1930s in response to the Depression. In the 1920s, Borgatta had regularly criticized the increase in public spending and debt, due not only to the war but also to social and administrative costs and the wartime profits of a small group of big industries, which expanded enormously in size and reached high levels of production as a direct consequence of State

demand. Faithful to his liberal background, Borgatta called for the limitation of government economic intervention, so as to dismantle the gigantic economic, administrative and military apparatus erected during the war, lower public spending and restore balance-of-payments equilibrium.

One of the greatest obstacles to this policy was the political strength that the major interest groups, both industrial and agricultural, had gained during the war. In the highly unstable scenario of the war's immediate aftermath between 1919 and 1922, with an inflationary boom followed by a deflationary recession, Borgatta welcomed the first Fascist government in October 1922, above all for its policy of reducing State intervention and attenuating social disorders. as well as lowering tariff protection. This policy was pursued consistently during the "liberal" period of Mussolini's first government, i.e. until July 1925, when custom duties on wheat were reinstituted by the Finance Minister, Alberto De' Stefani.

In response to the crisis of 1929, a number of countries enacted tax increases, including Italy, further depressing world trade, which by 1934 had fallen by 70 percent from its 1929 level. Italy's dependency on imports for a number of essential commodities, wheat among them, was made dramatically clear by the worldwide plunge in agricultural prices.

The Depression was crucial in prompting Borgatta to reconsider his theses concerning international trade from the perspective of economic crisis. Without totally abandoning his earlier free-trade position, he began to view the tariff levels that the crisis had made necessary in a positive light, as a stimulus to national producers to improve techniques and increase the quantity and quality of output. The consequent strengthening of the national economy would eventually enable producers to return to the international markets with a renovated industrial and agricultural structure, more rational and efficient, capable of reducing Italy's import dependency.

As Tedesco underscores, then, Borgatta came to see tariff protection not

simply as an artificial source of extra income for agricultural producers and the State but as a temporary defense against the low prices of foreign farm goods, designed essentially to foster domestic economic activity to the common benefit of producers, consumers and government.

In the 1930s this analysis constituted the theoretical basis for Borgatta's support of the policy of autarky announced by Mussolini at the second National Assembly of the Corporations, on 23 March 1936. However, the author also stresses that Borgatta had begun to serve as advisor to the Fascist regime as early as the mid-1920s, which led him to examine a series of issues – the balance of payments, monetary questions and war debts – on behalf of the Ministry of Finance.

Following his endorsement of autarky, in any event, Borgatta participated constantly in Fascist entities, playing a central role in the Technical Committee of the National Institute of Corporatist Finance, established in June 1939. The involvement of technicians in the Fascist government was in fact a common practice, presumably corresponding to Mussolini's need for a pragmatic response to the economic crisis and the deflationary spiral of the 1930s.

Luca Tedesco rightly focuses on Borgatta's eventual acceptance of the theory of Italian autarky, highlighting the uncommon political and theoretical path taken by his thought, from the traditional liberal ideas of free trade to his political and economic justification of autarky in the late 1930s.

The looming war was certainly a factor in this shift of perspective. As the 1930s drew to a close, Borgatta's writings were clearly shaped, as Tedesco observes, by the imminent prospect of a conflict that would unavoidably require a high degree of national self-sufficiency in agricultural products and other raw materials.

In Borgatta's eyes, the corporatist structure built up during the 1930s was functional to autarky in that it fostered the participation of all parts of the economic community in the effort to increase production. Unlike the jurist Alfredo Rocco, Borgatta interpreted corporatism not as an extension of direct State intervention in the economy but as a

publicly directed emergency arrangement among private initiatives.
According to the author, what truly characterized Borgatta's intellectual evolution was his presentation of pro-autarky arguments as if they were consistent with his original anti-protectionist stance. In a word, the new economic scenario of the 1930s – with the collapse of international trade, the demise of the gold standard and tariff increases throughout the world – impelled Borgatta to re-evaluate Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage. Borgatta's critique of classical free-trade theory concentrated on its nature as a static model that took no account of time. For Borgatta, as for others, the process leading to autarky was not good as such but could be useful as a political tool for transforming comparative advantages and trade positions.
In short, the book recounts the way in which a liberal thinker like Gino Borgatta could change his views and endorse Fascist autarky as a respectable economic policy instrument. The objective, to Borgatta's mind, was not to cut off international trade but to transform its nature and dynamics. To his way of thinking, the impending war between the Axis and the Allied countries might very well issue forth in a new European space, dominated by the German-Italian alliance, in which a new balance of comparative advantages would emerge to the benefit of Italian producers and consumers.
Tedesco's work thus broadens and sharpens our knowledge of the attraction that Fascist economic policy and doctrine exercised on no few high-profile non-fascist intellectuals, typified by Gino Borgatta.
In short, this volume offers a valuable contribution to the history of Italian economic thought in the inter-war period. It is enriched by an Appendix consisting in a compendium of papers of Borgatta's, with separate sections devoted to newspaper articles and other essays. The Appendix provides a fascinating overview of the evolution of Borgatta's ideas between 1914 and 1940.

**Valerio Torreggiani**
*Roma Tre University*

**Gennaro Varriale**, *Arrivano li turchi. Guerra navale e spionaggio nel Mediterraneo (1532-1582)*, Novi Ligure, Città del Silenzio Edizioni, 2014, pp. 293.

Gennaro Varriale's work forms part of a rich tradition of studies on the Mediterranean in the 16th century. What makes "The Turks are coming. Naval warfare and espionage in the Mediterranean" especially interesting is the author's focus on the hidden actions of the enigmatic, ambiguous figures of the spies employed by Charles V and Philip II. However, in accompanying Varriale along this path, one realizes that his work is also much more than this, since there clearly emerge interstitial spaces – like Naples – where the different strategies used by Christians and Muslims often materialized as in a play of mirrors. The work's intrinsic value is further increased thanks to the preface by Miguel Ángel Bunes Ibarra, who compares the two great Mediterranean empires of the 1500s and their respective protagonists in the never-ending struggle between Christianity and Islam. Bunes Ibarra highlights the key role of Naples, the Catholic Monarchy's most populous Mediterranean city, a centre of espionage *par excellenc*e where sailors, spies, deserters, captives, Moriscos, renegades and Rebattins – Christian converts of Arab origin – ended up in search of a second chance.

In the first chapter, Varriale examines the genesis of the Mediterranean conflict under Charles V and the first great naval battle between Christians and Muslims: the Siege of Coron in 1532. The work begins with Pedro de Toledo's arrival in Naples on 4 September 1532 as viceroy, at more or less the same time as the military events in the Ionian Sea. This synchrony is not coincidental but instead represents a change of paradigm within the Mediterranean: the South of Italy, now firmly held by the Spanish crown to the disadvantage of the French monarchy, became the borderland, the fortress to be defended from Ottoman attacks. It is no coincidence that on several occasions Toledo acted to strengthen the Kingdom's land defences, along both the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coasts, against the incursions of Turks and

Barbary pirates. Apulia was selected as the ideal point of departure for the new crusade against the infidels. Admiral Andrea Doria, the Prince of Melfi, was the naval leader of this crusade and was kept constantly up-to-date on the situation in the East by Alfonso Granai Castriota, Marquis of Atripalda, a noble of Eastern origin and founder of the espionage network funded by the Crown in the Mediterranean.

The Sultan's response to the attack and the loss of Coron was to call upon Khayr al-Dīn Barbarossa, the corsair most feared by Christian coastal dwellers and galleys, who had been appointed to the position of Kapudan Paşa of the Turkish fleet. So Charles V ordered the formation of a squadron of four galleys to patrol the Kingdom's coasts; Toledo financed this enterprise by imposing a new duty of one *tornese* on each roll of fresh meat, fish and cheese.

If the network of spies played a key role in conquering Coron, as the middle part of the first chapter says, this was the event that induced the Sultan to call up Barbarossa, retake the stronghold in 1534 and so enable his admiral to dominate the Western Mediterranean. In the concluding section of the chapter, the author describes Barbarossa's raids along the Tyrrhenian coast in the summer of 1534. Barbarossa subsequently entered the port of Marseille, definitively confirming the rumours and suspicions that had been circulating for many years: Francis I had in fact concluded a pact with the Sublime Porte. After returning to Algiers following disagreements with the King of France, Barbarossa conquered Tunis in 1534, overthrew the tyrant Mulay Hasan and declared himself Bey of the city and vassal of Suleiman.

The second chapter starts with the conquest of Tunis by Barbarossa, which further stoked the Italian fears of Islam. Charles V could not allow this enterprise by the Ottoman admiral and the Sultan to go unpunished, as Tunis was the oldest and most important emirate in North Africa and a strategic crossroads in the international scene, the doorway to the western Mediterranean. As in Coron, Charles V again called on his network of informers: the Genoese-born Luigi Prasenda, disguised as a merchant, was to travel to La Goletta. The Kingdom of

Naples made the crucial contribution to the reconquest of Tunis, paying 150,000 ducats into the Imperial coffers. The conquest of La Goletta would clear the way for imperial supporters to retake Tunis, which fell thanks to a revolt led by Christian slaves and the supporters of Mulay Hasan, including the few Rebattins who still remained in the city.

The retaking of Tunis was celebrated as an extraordinary feat, and Charles V now began to be referred to as a modern-day Caesar as well as the recognized paladin of Christendom. The Emperor departed for Sicily and embarked on a journey across the country, ratifying and legitimizing his control over the Italian territory. On 25 November 1535 he reached Naples, where a long line of nobles, ecclesiastics and gentlemen awaited him at Porta Capuana, and he was given the keys to the city. After wintering in Naples Charles proceeded to Rome and then on to Genoa, where he boarded a galley headed for Spain.

In the first section of the third chapter, Varriale analyses the shift in the focal point of the Mediterranean to the Adriatic and the Ionian, which resulted in the Battle of Preveza between the Christian and Ottoman fleets in 1538. The Ottoman chronicles recall this as the greatest naval event of the 16th century, one still celebrated today by the Turkish Navy. This, Barbarossa's greatest victory, marked the end of Christian hegemony in the Mediterranean and transformed the Adriatic from a Venetian gulf into a free sea. The international situation worked against the interests of Venice and the South of Italy, so much so that when Barbarossa was moored off Preveza prior to the battle, he received a visit from the Baron of Saint Blancard, Vice Admiral of Provence. Francis I of Valois had dispatched the baron to ask Suleiman to help him free the Italian peninsula from Imperial domination.

The French king later sent the diplomat Antoine Escalin des Aimars (referred to in sources as Polin) to Constantinople. The intrigues between France and the Ottoman Empire brought Barbarossa – as Varriale notes in the second section – to land in Marseille after ravaging the Tyrrhenian coasts of Italy in the summer of 1543. Francis of Bourbon, Count of Enghien, was sent to Marseille to welcome Barbarossa

on behalf of Francis I. After sacking Nice (a possession of Charles II, the Duke of Savoy), Barbarossa followed the king's instructions and landed in Toulon, where he stayed for eight months. During his sojourn in France, Barbarossa also paid a ransom to Andrea Doria to free the corsair Dragut, a deal that attests to the presumed reciprocal esteem between the two admirals.

However, the tension with Francis I convinced Barbarossa to abandon the French coast and head back to Italy, where he destroyed Vado and ravaged Elba, Talamone, Porto Ercole and Orbetello. The Ottoman fleet took Ischia, while the inhabitants of Lipari and Vulcano were put in chains and brought to Constantinople as slaves. In 1543, the Emir of Tunis, Mulay Hasan, traveled to Europe to negotiate new agreements with Charles V, but Mulay Amida overthrew Hasan and took power in Tunis. The former ruler then repaired to Rome, where he met the historian Paolo Giovio and converted to Catholicism.

In the fourth chapter, Varriale asks whether from the 1550s onward the Mediterranean can be called an Ottoman sea. The death of Don Pedro de Toledo in 1553 deprived Charles V of his right-hand man in the fight against the Sultan to defend the South of Italy against the Turks and the Barbary pirates. Pedro Pacheco, Cardinal of Jaén, took over government of the Kingdom. Dragut, successor to Barbarossa at the head of the Ottoman fleet, seemed to be the strongest advocate of an attack against the peninsula or Sicily. The network of informers in the service of Charles V and then of Philip II was strengthened and made more reliable in order to contain the threat to the South of Italy from the Barbary pirates. The Treaty of Chateau Cambrésis, the death of Henry II of Valois and the religious wars in France undercut the latter's ability to threaten the Italian peninsula, which remained firmly in Hapsburg hands for decades. The defeat at Djerba in 1560 was a serious blow to Philip II. Five years later, as Varriale points out, Philip II appointed the naval captain García de Toledo as Viceroy of Sicily, sending an unequivocal message to the Sultan: Sicily was a stronghold that the Turks were not to pass beyond.

The last section of the fourth chapter focuses on the Siege of Malta in 1565. The fears of an Ottoman attack took shape when Piyale Paşa sailed from the Golden Horn with two hundred galleys. The terrifying news reached the heart of Christendom, and it was confirmed that the Turkish fleet's destination was Malta. The heroic resistance of the defenders and the landing by Philip II's fleet on 8 September lifted the siege and banished the Ottoman galleys from the island. This outcome punctured the myth of the naval supremacy of the Ottomans and the Barbary corsairs.

The author is leading the reader towards the great Battle of Lepanto in the fifth chapter. Setting fire to the arsenals in Venice was the moment of truth. The enormous Euro-Mediterranean powder keg needed only a spark to set it off: Selim II's objectives in the Adriatic, the problems in Flanders, the Emperor Maximilian's difficulties in halting the Ottoman advance in Europe and the Rebellion of the Alpujarras, all signaled that the situation was coming to a head. The spark was the Ottoman invasion of Cyprus, Venice's pearl of the east, in 1570. This traumatic defeat brought Venice back into the orbit of alliances with other Catholic powers. Pope Pius V approved the Holy League, thanks to the all-important mediation of the papal nuncio Luis de Torres, who convinced Philip II to join forces with Venice. On 7 October 1571, at Lepanto, the Christian galleys, captained by Don Juan de Austria, inflicted a severe if short-lived defeat on the Ottoman fleet.

From the perspective of a galley, the Mediterranean appeared to be a continuous territory with no clear borders. *Mare Nostrum* was a mixed space with its own lingua franca, the emblem of cultural exchanges across the waters. Paradoxically, the conflict between the Catholic Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire necessitated contacts between these two great powers. After a military campaign, it was normal for the members of religious orders like the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians to land at Constantinople and the main towns of the Barbary coast to free prisoners of war. As for the Spanish Crown, Naples was a special case, with a lay confraternity established specifically to liberate the

Christian *cautivos* from the galleys and from Turkish-Barbary towns. This was why the Neapolitan liberators maintained enduring relations with the Maghreb, forging an extensive network of contacts stretching from Algiers to Tunis. An impenetrable intelligence network at the service of Philip II, whose members were known as "*Gli occulti*", arose in Constantinople in 1562.

To conclude, Varriale's work is a key tessera in the great mosaic of the Mediterranean-centred tradition in historiography. The emergence of intrigues hidden at first sight, the naming of characters previously seen as of secondary importance, or completely unknown, and the acknowledgement, at long last, of the true role and importance within *Mare Nostrum* of Naples, the largest city under Spanish rule and a city with a significant Muslim population – these aspects and the author's focus on sources and care in designing the graphs that accompany a large part of the work augur well for the successful adoption of this historiographical approach by other academics.

**Fabrizio Filioli Uranio**
*University of Roma Tre*