

## Abstract

### *Vicenza: a most beautiful city?*

Paolo Lanaro

Paolo Lanaro compares the well-known and commercialized Vicenza with the lesser-known and less-frequented city, fruit of urban planning and political-economic choices that haven't always aimed for social cohesion and the safeguarding of cultural originality. What emerges is a portrait of a city tenaciously attached to its own traditions but also dangerously inclined towards that "nothingness" that is not merely a philosophic argument but rather a distressing possibility fostered by post-industrial capitalism.

### *Vicentine metamorphosis*

Emilio Franzina

In an overview of a large period of the past century (1915-1975), the article gives special attention to the administrative vicissitudes, the conduct of the governing class, and the exercise of power in the capital city and its territory in light of the industrial vocation (both small and large) of the area, the political options and the continuity and discontinuity of the elites as well as the general population in a "white" area occasionally flecked here and there with "pink" or "red". Narratives and images of "Vicentine-ness" recount the story of two generations of writers who figure among the most eminent of 20<sup>th</sup> century Italy, from Fogazzaro to Piovene, Parise to Meneghello, etc., from the early years of the century and the beginnings of fascism to those of the Christian Democrats and Rumor.

### *Marian apparitions and modern devotions in post-industrial Veneto: the case of Schio*

Massimiliano Marangon

This article addresses the singular case of Renato Baron and his "Mariano

Regina dell'Amore" movement in the context of Vicenza and the Veneto in the years of post-industrialization (Schio, 1985 and afterward). The author attempts to disprove the simplistic dichotomy that ordinarily obtains in the analysis of visionary phenomena and assorted "deviant cults", that is the description of a miracle-based faith veined with archaic magic, but with strong social appeal, versus the explanation whereby everything is reduced to a trick and a cover for material interests. Analysis of the events of Schio reveals something more and different: a true and proper cult in the Veneto of the crisis years at the end of the Millennium, a modern devotion that represents a genuine segment of contemporary popular religion (interclass, although dominated by members of the local social-economic elite). Given the apocalyptic and prophetic tone of Baronian visionary performances, where the mystical enters in contact with the psycho-pathological and surpasses it with the sublime force of faith, and the social effects this has had among movements and institutions, the functions of this phenomenon are explored here by applying a complex methodology of historical anthropology (interdisciplinary research involving ethnology, psychoanalysis, sociology, history and other human sciences).

*The "Ramonda": interviews and early reconstructions*

Luciano Chilese, edited by Emilio Franzina

The article retraces the little-known history behind a commercial label that is quite well-known at the popular level, that of the "Sorelle Ramonda", which expanded from apparel to various other genres and sub-genres (leather goods, perfume, sportswear, toys, etc.) in numerous outlets and sales points. From the original store at Montecchio Maggiore the business multiplied prodigiously - in Italy and even abroad - from 1954 to the present. As a family-run enterprise, one of many to have affirmed itself in the province of Vicenza in the second half of the 20th century, it follows models characteristic of Veneto entrepreneurial culture for at least two centuries. But it also employs techniques that denote unequivocal originality and whose happy success represents a sort of miracle that the author undertakes to interpret.

*Vicenza on Paper*

Stefano Strazzabosco

This article examines the literature of Vicentine authors from in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emphasizing particularly the relationship between words and things, and pinpointing in the Second World War (with its forebodings and aftermath) the origins of powerful changes that occurred here as elsewhere. The upsetting of traditional features, the destructive extent of which was veiled for years by the economic boom, was expressed in literature through the re-evocation of the fascist period, stories of the war of liberation, the post-war reconstruction, the contradictions of the years of widespread well-being, the demise of farming society and culture or its confinement to marginal areas in collapse – and so on. Two key aspects assume particular importance: the relationship language/dialect and the notion of Vicentine-ness, defined in the early '60's by Piovene and Parise but traceable back to Fogazzaro. In discussing the quality of Vicentine-ness the article amply cites passages that these authors dedicated to the subject, and asks if and how such a mythic-poetic category can have interacted with the Palladian imprint so typical of Vicenza.

*Diary of a Researcher*

Emilio Franzina

This is the autobiographical and rather bitter summary of a local administrator in Vicenza from 2003 to 2012, of a decade's experience as alderman for both the City and the province. In the wake of a misunderstood (on his part) and complicated political and civic commitment, the author, historian by vocation and university professor by profession, recounts his solitary and unsuccessful battle against the installation of the largest American military base in Europe, the so-called Dal Molin, today grotesquely re-baptized by authorities of the national government (national? government?) "Dal Din".

*Trade unions in Vicenza in the period of grand transformations*

Vladimiro Soli

Focussing on the experience of the Federazione Lavoratori Metalmeccanici

– FLM – in Vicenza, the article analyzes several critical moments in the vicissitudes of Italian trade unionism. The author advances the thesis that a new cycle in the history of trade unions began with the FLM. It produced conditions favourable to labour that lasted various decades, only to exhaust itself in recent times. The interpretation of events emphasizes two main points: that the innovative processes within trade unionism are inevitably accompanied by organizational dialectics that are often very bitter; and that the normalization of the experience of the FLM left unanswered questions that today are being reformulated with force. These events bear reflecting on, because the challenges that unions face today require convincing answers regarding issues of social transformation and the role of labour.

*Dialogue between a trade unionist and an historian on the past and present of the economy of Vicenza*

Marina Bergamin (Cgil Vicenza), Giovanni Favero (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

In this dialogue, the authors start with historical considerations that highlight the continuities and discontinuities in the present economic situation in Vicenza and province, and use the problems of the present to put its well-known economic history into a different perspective. In particular they deal with the historical importance of the manufacturing sector, with industrial districts, paternalism and the ambiguity of the concept of social capital. Their discussion includes recent changes in household consumption and participation in the workforce brought about by industrial growth and immigration, and the consequences for public health and the environment of the inability to form projects for the future.