

**Edoardo Tortarolo, *Diesseits und jenseits der Alpen:
Deutsche und italienische Kultur im 18. Jahrhundert***

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The focus of this fascinating collection of essays by Edoardo Tortarolo is an examination of the lines of German-Italian intercultural relations in the eighteenth century. A stated aim of the collection is to investigate individuals who were historically significant in this context, but who have been largely sidelined in recent research. The reader is presented with a series of six essays, each one focussing on a key thinker and the contemporary thinkers and debates to which he was connected and with whom and with which he engaged. One drawback of this book is the general lack of connective tissue in the introduction. Indeed, a greater discussion concerning the detailed conceptual links between the historical episodes and personalities discussed in the essays contained within the collection would have helped to better anchor some of its key themes. A fuller introduction would also have rendered this intriguing and important collection somewhat more accessible to a wider scholarly audience, including early advanced undergraduates. Unfortunately, the introduction does not really develop a *detailed* conceptual framework or chapter overview, and one of its aims - to provide food for thought concerning modern intercultural relations in Europe - is weakly stated at best. On the other hand, the beauty of this collection of essays is that it offers the scholar a treasure chest of generally heterogeneous, yet interrelated parts, as well as the intellectual “breathing room” to engage with the research findings and analysis free of stifling and prescriptive paradigms.

The first chapter in this collection examines the relationship between the Italian painter and printmaker Giovanni Battista Casanova (brother of the better known Casanova) and Johann Winckelmann. This relationship began when Casanova was in Rome from 1752-62 in the circle of Raphael Mengs. Casanova was involved in reproductions of the frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and this was how he came into contact with Winckelmann (11), finishing the sketches for the engraving in Winckelmann’s *Monumenti inediti*. After Casanova was called back to Dresden by Hagedorn to teach in the newly revived Academy of Arts, the friendship between he and Winckelmann disintegrated. The focus of this chapter is on the intellectual dimensions of the dispute between Casanova and Winckelmann. Tortarolo argues that, essentially, this concerned the nexus between aesthetics and historicity, and that it was at the centre of a much larger polemic against Winckelmann. Utilizing the German edition of Casanova’s 1770 work *Abhandlung über verschiedene alte Denkmäler der Kunst*, Tortarolo maintains that its apparent didactic function belies its significance for understanding the nature of the conflict. He argues that Casanova’s work,

contextualized by way of reference to Mengs' earlier study, *Gedanken über die Schönheit und über den Geschmack in der Malerey* (sic), can be read as a challenge to the perceived rigidity and ahistoricity of a theory-driven, "systematic" approach to art-historical analysis and aesthetics; an approach, as Casanova perceived it, of which Winckelmann was a proponent. In place of such a system, Casanova espoused a relativistic aesthetics, as well as the vital necessity of historical knowledge and, most importantly, practical experience (including the capacity to draw) for the discernment of authenticity in antique art. The focus of any art-historical analysis had to situate a work of art within its correct and concrete cultural-historical context, and this required a strong familiarity with not only historical knowledge, but also the artwork itself. One outgrowth of Casanova's approach was an attack on a hegemonic aesthetics centred around Greco-Roman art (exemplified by Winckelmann), as seen in his elevation of the importance of Egyptian art for later (Greek) developments, and in his exclamation that "every style has its own beauty" (28).

The second chapter in this collection examines the German translation of the Florentine political philosopher Cosimo Amidei's *La Chiesa e la repubblica dentro i loro limiti* (1768) by the one-time courtier in Vienna and writer Franz Rudolph von Grosse in 1784. The German title of the text is *Die Kirche und der Staat, ihre beyderseitige Pflicht, Macht und Gränzen* (sic). The focus of Tortarolo's analysis is the manner in which Grosse not only translated but also modified Amidei's text in order to utilize it as part of his anti-clerical and, ultimately, anti-absolutist polemic during the time of the Josephinian reforms in the Habsburg Monarchy. Indeed, this essay is especially germane to the core themes of the collection, as it indicates the potential for recontextualization of texts in the service of far more radical ideas in the eighteenth century. Having initially supported absolutism in his text *Der Souverain, oder die ersten Haupt- und Grundsätze einer Monarchischen Regierung* (1780), in the following years Grosse came to retract this sentiment in favour of one that perceived despotism as intrinsically bound with "religious oppression". Grosse likely encountered Amidei's (anonymous) work during his 1773 trip to Italy, after which he appropriated and added different lines of argumentation to it. One such component that Grosse added to the text was a particular emphasis on religious reform. Indeed, as Tortarolo shows, from the first chapter Grosse inserted a discussion of the psychological basis of Christian religion, as he saw it. All-too-human emotions, such as fear, gave rise to religion "as a clerical power system", in which the clerical institutions were themselves the product of superstition. The "true" Christianity was based on reason, according to Grosse, and it was one in which there was no need for priests "because every person is his own priest". While building upon Amidei's separation of temporal and spiritual power, Grosse ultimately radicalized it when he argued that ecclesiastical authority ultimately rested with God alone. While Grosse's translation and expansion of Amidei's work charges the text with a resolute anti-Catholic, anti-clerical tone, it also (as the title suggests) examines the limits of temporal authority. Indeed, Grosse articulates Amidei's discussion of Rousseau's social contract theory and connects it to anti-clerical polemic. Tortarolo argues that Grosse, building upon Amidei's discussion of Rousseau, saw the human capacity for "docility" while in a state of bondage as the root cause of both despotism and the ability of the church to appropriate various powers that should otherwise be in the hands of temporal authorities. The remedy for this was the

utilization of human reason and social and political awareness on the part of the body politic; an awareness of their own rights, and the ability to see the powers of church and state in a new light. Grossing expanded on Amidei's discussion of the nature of the sovereign, emphasizing the first-among-equals status of this figure and linking sovereignty to the exercise of the general, rather than particular will. The right to religious freedom was a key liberty that the state was obliged, on account of the derived nature of its power, to uphold, and the difference between a sovereign and a tyrant could be seen in whether such a right was protected by the state or abrogated in favour of the right of the Roman Curia to control religious affairs.

Chapter three is especially salient for German Enlightenment studies, as it begins from the premise that we should (and, indeed, have begun to) consider the philosophical bases of the German Enlightenment to extend far beyond the twin pillars of Idealism and Weimar Classicism. Indeed, as Tortarolo argues, widening the scholarly horizon to include other intellectual movements, such as *Popularphilosophie*, reveals the diversity of German intellectual life in the eighteenth century. The focus of Tortarolo's analysis in this chapter is the history of philosophy, and the place within this of universal history, exemplified by Karl Friedrich Flögel, and its alacritous uptake in Italian discourse in the second half of the eighteenth century. Tortarolo begins by noting the general paucity of German philosophical texts in Italy in the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. However, in the last decades of this century, there was a flurry of translations of German texts pertaining to *Popularphilosophie*, such as those by the then-reputed, but now little known Karl Friedrich Flögel. The popularity of Flögel's work, as well as others of the *Popularphilosophie* such as Sulzer, Mendelssohn and Sonnenfels was not chiefly attributable to the influences of Italian publishers and translators, Tortarolo argues, but was in large measure on account of its capacity to provide "a consensus-forming model of interpretation of universal history, which linked anthropological optimism, reform pragmatism and political loyalty" (72). The intellectual climate in history of philosophy at that time in the German lands, and that in which we can situate Flögel's ideas, concerned the desire to construct a "rational interpretation of human history without the need for a regression to the concepts of chance and wonder" (61). Flögel's text, *Geschichte des menschlichen Verstandes*, appeared after that of Isaak Iselin, *Über die Geschichte der Menschheit* (1764), with which it shared a certain affinity. Indeed, Iselin's text maintained that the progress of a society was to be measured by the "degree of control of reason over sensuality and imagination" that it possessed, and it was the common endeavour to connect "the empirical diversity of historical contingencies and the unitary development of reason" (62) that linked Flögel's intellectual programme to that of Iselin. Flögel's text was then later translated into Italian by the professor of German languages and literature at Padua, Angelo Ridolfi.

In chapter four, Tortarolo investigates and contextualizes the thought of Giovanni Salvemini di Castiglione, a Tuscan-born, Calvinist convert and philosopher of natural law who resided for a period of time in Vevey, Lausanne and Bern. The focus of the chapter is Salvemini's critique of Rousseau's second *Discours*. Salvemini directed his confutation of Rousseau at the latter's attack on a fundamental principle of natural law: that man is an inherently social creature, and that private property has a socially stabilizing effect. Salvemini begins by arguing against Rousseau's

conception of the state of nature and the natural condition of humanity. In place of Rousseau's individualist, pre-societal Golden Age, Salvemini argues that "natural man" exists not outside of society, but within it, embedded within patriarchal and paternalist familial structures. As Tortarolo states, Salvemini perceived society not as "the root of all evil, rather as the necessary prerequisite of human perfection" (87). Responding further to Rousseau's text, Salvemini maintained that the socio-economic inequality that exists in society, while a product of private property, nonetheless also contains the seeds of its own amelioration, as it is through economic development that a society as a whole becomes wealthier and thus has the capacity to build institutions that promote the common good. Salvemini was not just a "liberal Protestant writer", an idea developed in the context of the nineteenth century and projected back onto the eighteenth, contends Tortarolo. Rather, Salvemini was very much at the vanguard of a natural-law-based, moderate, antidespotic (yet not antimonarchist) Enlightenment movement. It was neither radical nor conservative; indeed, Salvemini saw his ideas not as an alternative to these aspects of Enlightenment thought, but rather situated them as the "single possible" Enlightenment philosophy.

Chapter five investigates the political influences upon, and political dimensions of, the Berlin Academy of Sciences, initially the personal project of the polymath Leibniz. Tortarolo's discussion centres upon the Berlin Academy's existence within the context of the reign of Friedrich II, examining its role (from the 1740s) as an instrument of knowledge production in the service of Prussian absolutist politics. While the Academy could prove to be an unwieldy instrument (indeed, the intellectual undercurrents and heterogeneous influences permeating it were many and various), nonetheless its members did share a commitment to enlightened absolutism, especially to historical scholarship in support of it. Situated firmly within contemporary European discussions concerning the nature of historical knowledge and political philosophy, one encounters within the Academy figures such as Jakob Wegelin and Carlo Denina. While this chapter does provide an interesting view into some of the political dynamics of the Berlin Academy, it is, unfortunately, not the strongest chapter in the collection. It would be of benefit to the reader, and to the coherence of the chapter, if the thesis could be established much sooner, and this in a less circuitous manner. Indeed, it isn't until the final pages of the chapter that Carlo Denina, ostensibly an integral part of the analysis according to the title of the chapter, is really introduced.

The aim of chapter six is not to provide a revision of Alberto Radicati di Passerano's life and work, but rather to situate him within radical Enlightenment discourses. Tortarolo argues that the radical Radicati should not be thought of as an isolated figure, but rather that it is important to link him to other thinkers who shared common intellectual concerns, especially regarding deist discourse in early eighteenth-century London. This chapter carries out such a maneuver by contextualizing Radicati through a discussion of the equally controversial Johann Conrad von Hatzfeld. Indeed, the primary focus of the chapter is on Hatzfeld's radical thought, beginning with his attack on the relationship between godly influence and Newtonian mechanism in his *The Case of the Learned According to the Merit of the Ill Progress Hitherto Made in Arts and Sciences* (1724). Hatzfeld viewed a

potentially interventionist God, ready to step in and rectify the cosmic equilibrium, as one step on a slippery slope toward Spinozean pantheism. Against what he perceived as the pernicious occasionalism inherent in Newtonian (and Cartesian) thought, and in support of his deist views, Hatzfeld advocated a materialist dynamic system in which matter itself possessed the property of movement and the force of attraction. A particular point of synergy between Hatzfeld and Radicati came in Radicati's defence of suicide, *A Philosophical Dissertation Upon Death* (1732), which drew heavily on John Toland's use of materialist dynamism in his *Letters to Serena* (1704), and would later influence Hatzfeld's own views on the matter. Tortarolo indicates that it would be incorrect to associate Hatzfeld with conservative, Tory and High-Church-aligned opponents of Newton, such as Robert Greene, as Hatzfeld also held strongly socially critical and republican views. This was indeed what set Hatzfeld apart from Newton's usual critics in the British Isles. Further afield in the Netherlands, having departed London in 1741, Hatzfeld's next incendiary publication, *La decouverte de la verité et le monde detrompé* (1745), provoked the opprobrium of the municipal magistrate in the Hague. This was on account of its manifestly anti-clerical, even "anti-religious" agenda (129). While the text continued its polemic against Newton, it also revealed a strong political, social and intellectual reform motif. Indeed, as Tortarolo states, such criticism was "tightly bound with his criticism of the philosophical bases of modernity" (130). In many respects, while Hatzfeld attempted to integrate himself into contemporary debates, the radicalism of his views precluded any substantial support by leading lights of the Enlightenment, such as Christian Wolff.

As the foregoing discussion has indicated, this collection of essays emphasizes the importance of human agency in historical transformation. Indeed, this book comprises a stimulating bricolage of histories which probes different and diverse facets of various intellectual debates in the Enlightenment. It articulates the myriad dimensions of, and discourses feeding into, learned thought in the eighteenth century, and in so doing, ultimately asks us to return to the hoary chestnut, "Was ist Aufklärung?". However, it does this (in refreshingly understated fashion) not through the prosaic and abstract, but through the personal and the particular. Consensus has formed around the notion that there was not one single Enlightenment, but that there were many, and this collection, far from any structuralist pretensions, brings to the fore those actors who contributed to and shaped these historical developments.