

Book Reviews

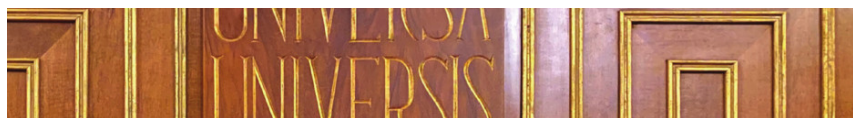
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Reviews of Iannuzzi, Geografie del tempo. Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi nel Nord America del Settecento, Viella 2022; Baldassarri & Zampieri (eds.), Scientiae in the History of Medicine, L'erma di Bretschneider 2021; Martin, The Virtuous Physician: A Brief Medical History of Moral Inquiry from Hippocrates to COVID-19, Ethics Press 2023; Whatmore, The History of Political Thought: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford UP 2021; Bussotti & Lotti, Cosmology in the Early Modern Age: A Web of Ideas, Springer Nature 2022.

1 GIULIA IANNUZZI, *Geografie del tempo. Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi nel Nord America del Settecento*, Roma: Viella, 2022, 328 p.
ISBN: 9788833139968 / 9791254690536, € 29.00.

The monograph *Geografie del tempo. Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi nel Nord America del Settecento* presents a detailed study of the ways in which Europeans encountered, recognised and, therefore, represented the indigenous people of North America in the 18th century. Studying the conceptualisation of indigenous people in the Age of Reason entails tracing deep cultural shifts that took place during the early modern era, beginning with the use of labels such as *savage man*, increasingly problematised by the creation of a recognisable native subject in accordance with Europeanising assumptions, such as a Christian religion, a specific social structure, and an identifiable culture with a comprehensible language. In short, the European image of Native Americans was filtered through a colonialist lens and, therefore, denaturalised and decontextualised, to be better assimilated and understood, and later used in the struggle for controlling the historical narrative. In this way, and significantly in the 18th century, the historical meaning of indigenous identities was questioned, and their specific place was recognised in the universal historiographical discourse, mainly defined by powers with interests in the northern part of the American continent.





Iannuzzi's study thus raises complex questions related to the process of creating a Native American identity (historical, cultural, social, anthropological, ethnographic) in the European mind, and the exposition of a timeline that, on the basis of empirical testimonies arising from direct observation and experience, constructed the past and also foreshadowed the future. This plurality of testimonies in the source base not only encompasses historiographical sources such as chronicles, but also includes interesting documents such as travel diaries of explorers, traders, scientists or missionaries, together with material added to provide empirical evidence of the contact with Native American people, such as vocabularies of indigenous languages, documentation of the life of native nations and their natural space, engravings and graphic representations of physical features and aspects, etc.

The book is divided into 8 chapters specialising in each type of encounter, supported by empirical experience, along with a solid theoretical analysis where the most interesting questions are raised: the creation of a historical narrative pertaining Native American peoples, the enquiry into the origins and contact between different races, the construction of a Native identity recognisable by European observers, the self-awareness of European expansion and the beginning of processes of globalisation, all connected by the common thread of the conceptualisation of time and its manipulation according to the tensions between different European and American colonial powers.

The first chapter, "Distanze temporali, distanze spaziali. Cenni storiografici", offers a useful historiographical review on the study of the past in the age of the Enlightenment, a time during which the historical discipline underwent an important process of change in its discursive frameworks and research tools. This was partially due to the historiographical project related to the *New World* and the interest in narrating the presence and contact with the American "other", within a broader project aimed at reconstructing the past and comparing the identity of different peoples of the globe. The first chapter traces these interests and includes some necessary notes on the methodologies exploited in the peri-

odisation of history, and on the conceptualisation of historical time, dealing, for example, with the *vergangene Zukunft*, the metatheory of historical time or the consciousness of globalisation which goes beyond the specific features of each culture and analyses both the moment of contact and the similarities noted.

The second chapter, “Resoconti di viaggio e conflitti conoscitivi”, focuses on the travel accounts, treaties, and testimonies of missionaries in Nouvelle France and in the British colonies, written by administrators, policymakers or diplomats, scientists and fur traders, describing their contacts with native peoples such as Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee or Catawba. The analysis of this corpus highlights the influence of America as a new power, as well as Anglophone predominance strengthened thanks to key political figures such as Thomas Jefferson. In James Cook’s third voyage, for example, it is possible to appreciate the contact with the Nuu-chah-nulth people on Vancouver Island, motivated mainly by commercial interests, but also by other, more scholarly objectives, such as to provide knowledge of these peoples, descriptions of their territories, as well as to express admiration for the landscape. With the discovery and definition of native peoples, the understanding of their nature was also promoted. The description of anthropological and natural features is dealt with in the third chapter, “Declinazioni diacroniche della diversità americana”, in which the concepts of Aristotelian man, or the *noble savage*, the influence of Spanish observers, or the theories about the Hebraic origin of the Indians are analysed. This interest promoted a scientism that stimulated medical interests in expeditions such as that of Lewis and Clark in 1804, which aimed, among other things, to study diseases and epidemics, as well as contact with indigenous women, their appearance, their customs and their sexualisation.

The ways of life of the native peoples raised questions on the way of constructing the historiographical narrative. The ideological and theological tensions of the time were woven together with the Franco-British rivalry to take control of the historical knowledge on colonised territories. Thus, chapter 4, “Scrivere la storia degli altri”, considers the Jesuit presence and missionary ethnology or anthropology, whereby the primordial and uncorrupted features of the native peoples were recounted from the standpoint of a European ideal of virtue. Thanks to this appreciation, the indigenous people may become the reflection of the Europeans’ ancestors. A particular valuation of indigenous history was thus granted, and there was a debate about how the conventional

historiographical narratology of the *Old World* was not valid for constructing the history of the *New*. From this point, chapter five, “Inscrivere gli altri nella storia”, proceeds to reflect on the linguistic markers used to reconstruct the history of the native peoples, in which the hypothesis of their Hebraic descent encouraged parallel debates on the origins of the communities, the infancy of the colonies, their relationship with Antiquity or with the life of the first Christians, motivating a counter-discourse that questioned the first voices that recognised native peoples, producing tensions for the control of the narrative between the French, British and Spanish colonial powers. As a result, the temporal markers by which the Indians’ past was referred and thus conditioned their future was called into question.

Control of the other by discourse also shows a narrative of legitimisation of the colonial domination. Therefore chapter 6, “Storia e discorso: interpreti, genealogie, gerarchie”, deals with the language used to recognise the other through the testimony of cultural mediators and *go-betweens* who, integrated into the life of the tribes, noticed cultural and social distinctions between different peoples and sometimes promoted an enlightened movement to transfer the ethical-social principles of civilisation in North America. The particularities of indigenous languages, their orality, musicality, and opportunity for recognition are explored in depth in chapter 7, “Vocabolari selvaggi”, through the study of testimonies which included lexicons to encourage contact with the tribes, the creation of pidgin languages, and reflection on the degree of representativeness, hypothesis, and anticipation that indigenous languages offered.

After the synchronic analysis provided by the empirical materials and the consequent diachronic analysis that seeks to reconstruct the past of these native nations, the last chapter deals with how European observers in the 18th century also addressed the future of indigenous peoples. Chapter 8, “Un Futuro Malleabile”, deals with reflections on the future of North America that included unifying political projects, and employed cyclical models to argue that North America was the heir to Enlightened Europe, and destined to become a leading society, with global economic and political dominance in the future. In short, the time to come also offered the backdrop to self-serving representations of the “Indian” as a malleable figure according to the interests of colonial discourses. Again, Native American identity in the European mind as moulded from a colonising perspective.

Far from being a mere description of the sources consulted, this monograph is sustained by an elegant balance between primary and secondary texts, and offers a deeper interpretation of its source base. Perhaps not too much emphasis is placed on philosophical aspects of the creation of time, on the emergence of Historicism during the Enlightenment, or on the distinction between a European witness and a witness influenced by American identity. Also missing is any testimony (diary, epistolary relationship) of women that may have some contacts with native tribes. However, even if these issues are not directly addressed, the study is punctuated by discussions of gender issues and further themes that should be the subject of further analysis in future works.

Apart from the great contribution offered by the thorough research in this book, the cohesive, but at the same time complete structure should be emphasised. Iannuzzi demonstrates a clear mastery of the subject without saturating the reader with unnecessary data: her study puts forward a profound re-examination of the contact between the Western inhabitants, Europeans and Americans, and North American indigenous communities. The balance between a significant number of sources and their explanation, the researcher's valid criteria for delimiting the relevant information and her synthetic and analytical skills when it comes to explaining complex terms, means that this book is not lacking the qualities of great studies: to present complex aspects in a pleasant way.

Geografie del tempo presents a fascinating subject and offers a rich and well-arranged analysis of its sources and themes. Many researchers interested not only in the contact between the *Old* and the *New World*, but also in post-colonialist perspectives, Cultural studies and, especially, the History of time, would benefit from having this relevant monograph translated into other languages.

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