# *Introduction*
## *Hegel from the Margins*

Italian revolutionaries were still licking their wounds in prison or exile after the armed repression of the 1848/49 revolutions, when, in October 1850, one of their number, Bertrando Spaventa (1817–1883), then in exile in Turin, received a letter from his fellow revolutionary Pasquale Villari (1826–1917). The latter, himself then in exile in Florence, urged his friend to keep teaching and studying the philosophy of Hegel. Although it was difficult to promote foreign philosophies in Turin, especially those expressed in the German language and therefore tainted by association with the Austrian 'invader', Hegel's was the philosophical system best able to sustain a nation intent on developing its self-consciousness. Villari thus believed the promotion of the Hegelian philosophy to be the most urgent task facing Italy at that time:

> If we could only get Italians to understand Hegel, Italy would be regenerated …. Without philosophy we cannot become a nation …. Italy needs to find a system representing the whole of its nationality, one that gathers together whatever elements of life there are in the whole peninsula; but, first of all, it needs to recover its self-consciousness, and no system is more capable of this than the Hegelian.[1]

Both Spaventa and Villari were hounded by the Bourbon police on account of their active participation in the 1848 Neapolitan revolution. They were therefore obliged to flee the Kingdom of Two Sicilies and seek refuge in another Italian state. The Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, in particular when under the guidance of Camillo Benso Count of Cavour (1810–1861), had become one of the most appealing destinations for Italian revolutionaries, the only Italian State to have retained its 1848 Constitution, the Statuto Albertino (Albertine Statute). The Savoyard state had undergone what Christopher Clark has termed a 'European revolution

[1] Silvio Spaventa, *Dal 1848 al 1861. Lettere, scritti, documenti*, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari: Laterza, 1923), p. 78.

in government', exemplified by the promulgation of the Sicardi Law, which had eliminated privileges of clergy and alienated the former aristocratic rights.[2]

The regeneration of the nation to which Villari refers was indeed a widespread preoccupation in nineteenth-century nationalisms. Italian patriots thus frequently employed the words 'Regeneration' and 'Resurgence' (*Risorgimento*) to indicate their common endeavour. What is crucial, though, is that the philosophy to be understood and 'popularised' was Hegel's, a philosophy entirely oriented towards the understanding of the State rather than of the nation. In order to regenerate the nation, Hegel needed to be 'translated' for the Italian public: 'Hegel is the Aristotle of the new civilization ... but Hegel cannot be translated like Aristotle, one needs to understand him, render him intelligible without superficiality, render him *popular*, not *vulgar*.'[3] This is because Hegel's philosophy argues that liberty is the unfolding in history of a process of self-consciousness and that the political liberty of a community is possible only through the development of the self-consciousness of the people about their past and their national character. This was the path delineated by the philosophy of Hegel, and Italians now had to creatively adapt this path to suit their own intellectual past and local philosophical tradition.

*Hegel and Italian Political Thought* uncovers a forgotten meaning of philosophical ideas by investigating readings of Hegel's thought in Italy during the nineteenth century: ideas have political power when they are elaborated in connection with the historical context. By looking at the nineteenth-century Italian reception of Hegel, a practical dimension of ideas emerges, and this with a twofold meaning. First of all, Hegel's ideas are turned into political practices by those Italians who had participated in the 1848 revolution, who then would lead the new Italian government after unification, between 1861 and 1876, and who finally would continue to play a central role in Italian political life until the end of the century. Secondly, the practical dimension of ideas refers to the peculiarities of Italian Hegelianism, which serve to distinguish it from the broader European reception of Hegel: it insisted on the historical and political dimension of Hegel's idealism, merging Giambattista Vico's understanding of history with Hegel's philosophy of history; it reformed Hegel's

[2] Christopher Clark, 'After 1848: The European Revolution in Government', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 22 (2012), pp. 171–197. For a wider understanding of the 1848 revolutions in Europe, see Christopher Clark, *Revolutionary Spring: Fighting for a New World 1848–49* (London: Penguin, 2023).

[3] B. Spaventa, *Scritti inediti e rari (1840–1880)*, ed. G. D'Orsi (Padua: CEDAM 1966), p. 506.

dialectic by providing a phenomenological reading of the categories of the *Science of Logic*; it engaged with the outcomes of positivism and the natural sciences by presenting a *critical Hegelianism* closer to realism than to idealism, to reality than to metaphysics, to history than to logic, to life than to science, to practice than to ideas. Italian Hegelianism presents itself as a continuous attempt to elaborate a reading of Hegel that highlights the union between philosophy and history, and the synthesis of idea and fact, centring Hegelianism on the historical reality of life, without however losing sight of the metaphysical and logical dimension of the German philosopher's thought.

This book rethinks Italian political thought by taking into consideration the specific location of Italy in the imaginary map delineated by nineteenth-century Italian Hegelians in their conversation with their northern European critics and counterparts. It therefore criticises the conventional hierarchies in the study of Italian political thought, interrogating intellectual relationships within Italy as well as between Italy and the wider world. Challenging notions of centre and periphery, this book investigates the long process of transition whereby Italy ceased to be a cluster of dominated and isolated states and became a single nation-state. It does so by exploring the influence of Hegelian thought in shaping a new political vocabulary, in large part through the contribution of the Italian Hegelians. It is the story of a generation of intellectuals born at the start of the century, the majority of them from Southern Italy, who experienced the collapse of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies and the dissolution of the common cultural and political space of Southern Italy, and who helped to forge modern Italian political thought.

By uncovering this neglected intellectual inheritance, the book recovers a world characterised by multiple cultural, intellectual, and political affiliations that have since been obscured by the conventional narrative of the formation of nation-states. It thus rethinks the origins of Italian nationalism and of the Italian state, highlighting the intellectual connections between Germany, the Habsburg Empire, Switzerland, and France, and re-establishing the lost link between the changing geopolitical contexts of western and northern Europe and the Mediterranean. It shows how nations emerged from an intermingling, rather than a clash, of ideas concerning the State and liberalism, modernity and religion, history and civilization, revolution, and conservatism, South and North. Through the story of this generation of Hegelians, who began to engage with Hegel's philosophy shortly after his death, in 1832, and continued to grapple with it until the end of the century, this work contributes to the most recent

scholarly debates on Hegel and Italian Hegelianism, to the broader field of the history of political thought, as well as to the research on nineteenth-century Italian political thought.

## I.1 Hegel and Italian Hegelianism

Following the classical works of the 1970s, recent years have witnessed a return to Hegel studies, and from a survey of the latest publications it seems clear that the phenomenon is currently at its peak.[4] This so-called third wave of Anglophone scholarship on Hegel has largely developed as a result of readings divided over the question of whether Hegel's idealism should be considered as metaphysical or non-metaphysical,[5] reopening a dialogue between different fields and tendencies in philosophy while paying a particular attention to the German nineteenth-century context,[6] Hegel's mature thought and his enduring influence[7] as well as its relationship with German Idealism.[8] The insights contained in the various fairly recent reconstructions of Hegel's philosophy, mostly brought about by German and American philosophers, have barely been taken up by historians or political theorists.[9] Consequently, research since the 1970s on Hegel's moral and political ideas has tended to isolate this subject matter from his speculative concerns. In this vein, scholars have opted to examine

[4] Among the key classical works in the 1970s see Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); G. D. O'Brian, *Hegel on Reason and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Bernard Cullen, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1979); Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[5] See D. Moyar (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); F. C. Beiser, 'Hegel and Hegelianism', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. G. Stedman Jones and G. Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 110–146.

[6] For a general overview, see M. N. Forster and K. Gjesdal (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of German Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); A. De Laurentiis and L. J. Edwards (eds.), *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hegel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). See also Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[7] M. Bauer and S. Houlgate (eds.), *A Companion to Hegel* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2008); Robert B. Pippin and Otfried Höffe (eds.), *Hegel on Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[8] F. C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Ludwig Siep, *Aktualität und Grenzen der praktischen Philosophie Hegels* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[9] See, for example, Klaus Hartmann, 'Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View', in *Hegel*, ed. A. MacIntyre (New York: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 101–124; Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Robert Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Dieter Henrich, *Konstellationen: Probleme und Debatten am Ursprung der idealistischen Philosophie (1789–1795)* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991).

Hegel's ethics and politics without reference to his metaphysics.[10] This approach was initiated by Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) when attempting to distinguish what was 'living' from what was 'dead' in Hegel's philosophy, yet the problem with this viewpoint is that it makes it difficult to integrate the disparate elements of his project.[11] Not only does it render the *Logic* irrelevant to his social thought, but it also makes it hard to explain the role of both the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1822, 1828, 1830). In addition, this strategy presupposes that ethics and metaphysics have a distinct and determinate status in speculative philosophy, and it implicitly disregards the encyclopedic ambition of the Hegelian system. At the same time, despite their major advances in scholarship, philosophers have for the most part opted not to analyse Hegel's social, economic, and constitutional ideas. In fact, few political theorists today, and scarcely any historians, devote themselves to the study of Hegel's thought. Admittedly, there have been a number of exceptions, such as Duncan Forbes, Douglas Moggach, and Warren Breckman, or indeed Frederick Beiser, who has combined a commitment to the history of philosophy with an interest in Hegel. Only very recently have historians of political thought, such as Richard Bourke and Elias Buchetmann, engaged with Hegel's philosophy, insisting on a historical and contextual understanding of Hegel's political thought and stimulating a renewal of Hegel scholarship within the field of political thought, which has in turn prompted a reconsideration of the Hegelian tradition of political philosophy.[12]

Notwithstanding the intellectual significance of this revival, these works have shown little interest in important aspects of Hegel's reception, which in their own right are crucial for recent developments in intellectual history

[10] See Z. A. Pelczynski in 'An Introductory Essay' to his edition of *Hegel's Political Writings,* trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); Steven Smith, *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. xi; Allen Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 4–6; Mark Tunick, *Hegel's Political Phiosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 14, 17, 86, 99; Michael Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 8; and Alan Patten, *Hegel's Idea of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 16–27; Paul Franco, *Hegel's Philosophy of Freedom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 83–84, 126, 135–136, 140, 151–152, 360–361; John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 330.

[11] Benedetto Croce, *Ciò che è vivo e ciò che è morto della filosofia di Hegel* (Bari: Laterza, 1906), now in Benedetto Croce, *Saggio sullo Hegel* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2006).

[12] Richard Bourke, *Hegel's World Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023); Elias Buchetmann, *Hegel and the Representative Constitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

and the history of political thought. While participants in the recent debate pay due attention to the study of the Young Hegelians and British Idealism, as well as to the American, German, and French receptions of Hegel, the Italian reception has been almost wholly neglected.[13] This is despite the relevance of Hegel both for Italian political developments and for the broader transnational landscape of Italian idealism, associated mainly with Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) and Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944), figures who greatly enriched the European understanding of Hegel's philosophy and played a central role in the dissemination of Hegelian thought. There are a few exceptions to this general trend, such as Bruce Haddock and James Wakefield's volume, which endeavours to rethink Gentile's thought beyond the classical readings of his work as 'Fascist philosophy'.[14] With the focus on differences between Croce and Gentile's philosophies, David Roberts's work for its part addresses wider problems surrounding politics and liberalism.[15] He also denounces the marginalisation of modern Italian political thought, relegated from the wider European canon to the field of Italian Studies, where Italy is accorded the status of a periphery that passively received the discoveries and novelties of German, French, and British political thought. Relatively few works have resisted this general trend towards marginalisation, emphasising instead the originality and the relevance of Hegel's Italian reception within a broader range of European political thinkers and highlighting the transnational dimension of Italian political thought and its peculiarities.[16]

[13] For the different national receptions, see respectively Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); W. J. Mander, *British Idealism. A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); T. Rockmore, *Hegel, Idealism, and Analytic Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); T. Rockmore, *Hegel, Idealism, and Analytic Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Douglas Moggach, *The New Hegelians: Politics and Philosophy in the Hegelian School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Douglas Moggach, *Politics, Religion and Art: Hegelian Debates* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011); Lisa Herzog (ed.), *Hegel's Thought in Europe: Currents, Crosscurrents and Undercurrents* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 239–261.

[14] Bruce Haddock and James Wakefield (eds.), *Thought Thinking: The Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile* (Cardiff: Imprint Academic, 2015).

[15] David Roberts, *Historicism and Fascism in Modern Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

[16] See, in particular, the works by Richard Bellamy, *Modern Italian Social Theory: Ideology and Politics from Pareto to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Richard Bellamy, *Croce, Gramsci, Bobbio, and the Italian Political Tradition* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014). See also Brian P. Copenhaver and Rebecca Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce. Modern Philosophy in Italy 1800–1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Rocco Rubini, *The Other Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014); Rocco Rubini, *Posterity: Inventing Tradition from Petrarch to Gramsci* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2022). For a general overview, see the special issue

Considering the intellectual prominence of Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce in Italy and their central role in bringing to light the majority of books, letters, and manuscripts by the nineteenth-century Italian Hegelians, it does not come as a surprise that, within Italian scholarship, the understanding of the phenomenon of Hegel's reception in nineteenth-century Italy has been dominated by their two different interpretations, left unchallenged for almost fifty years. While Gentile had traced a direct line between nineteenth-century Italian Hegelianism and his own *Actualism*, Croce tried to trace the thread of the Italian liberal tradition from the Neapolitan Revolution of 1799 to the Italian Risorgimento. The historiographical debate was reopened in the 1950s and the 1960s by a group of Marxist scholars who criticised both approaches. Thanks to the publication of the correspondence between Bertrando Spaventa and his pupil, the Marxist Antonio Labriola, intellectuals such as Palmiro Togliatti and Giuseppe Berti, as well as Giuseppe Vacca and Domenico Losurdo later on, tried to identify a line of development of Italian historicism from Spaventa and Labriola to the work of Antonio Gramsci.[17]

The very diverse attempts to reconstruct a unitary vision of the development of Hegelianism in Italian political thought were contested by a number of different scholars in the 1980s. In this period, the focus on the historical context of nineteenth-century Italy and the political experience of the Risorgimento was enhanced by the availability of new archival sources that were published in the course of the following decades (correspondence, lectures, manuscripts, etc.), offering a fruitful ground for those seeking to avoid ideological approaches and univocal interpretations.[18]

edited by Fernanda Gallo and Axel Körner, 'Hegel in Italy: Risorgimento Political Thought in Transnational Perspective', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 24, no. 2, 2019.

[17] For an overview of the different approaches, see Giovanni Gentile, *Bertrando Spaventa e la riforma dello hegelismo*, in *Opere*, vol. XXIX, ed. G. Gentile (Florence: Le Lettere 2001). Gentile's approach in the aftermath of World War II was contested only by Felice Alderisio, *Esame della riforma attualistica dell'idealismo in rapporto a Spaventa e a Hegel* (Naples, 1959). Gentile's interpretation was later reiterated by Italo Cubeddu, 'Bertrando Spaventa pubblicista (giugno – dicembre 1851)', in *Giornale critico di filosofia italiana*, 42, 1963: 46–93; and Italo Cubeddu, *Bertrando Spaventa* (Florence: Sansoni, 1964). Among the studies with a marxist approach, see Giuseppe Berti, 'Bertrando Spaventa, Antonio Labriola e l'hegelismo napoletano', *Società*, X, 1954: 406–430; XI, 583–607; XII, 764–791; Palmiro Togliatti, 'Per una giusta comprensione del pensiero di A. Labriola', *Rinascita*, XI, 1954: 254–256, 336–339, 387–393, 483–491; Sergio Landucci, 'Il giovane Spaventa fra hegelismo e socialismo', *Annali dell'Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli*, VI, 1963: 647–707; Gaetano Arfé, 'L'hegelismo napoletano e Bertrando Spaventa', *Società*, VIII, 1952: 45–62.

[18] For an overview of the catalogues of manuscripts and unpublished works of the Neapolitan Hegelians, see *Gli hegeliani di Napoli e la costruzione dello Stato unitario. Mostra bibliografica e documentaria* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1989); Alessandro Savorelli, *Le Carte*

Some critics have concentrated on the ethical and political aspects of Italian Hegelianism[19], while others have highlighted the contribution made to the theoretical and philosophical debate or to the understanding of the general historical context.[20]

In very recent years, German and Italian scholarship has witnessed a revival of interest in Hegel's reception in Italy in the nineteenth century, partly on account of the bicentenary of the birth of both its most prominent figures, Bertrando Spaventa (1817–1883) and Francesco De Sanctis (1817–1883).[21] Although this revival has fostered a renewed engagement with the recent debate in the history of philosophy and the history of literature, it remains within the categories of interpretation developed during the 1980s and very closely related therefore to internal German and Italian academic debates and by the same token at odds with the most recent – and, indeed, highly fruitful – tendency in intellectual history, which considers Italy in the broader transnational and global context.[22]

*Spaventa della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1980); Bertrando Spaventa, *Epistolario*, vol. I (1847–1860), ed. M. Rascaglia (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1995); Rosa Franzese and Emma Giammattei (eds.), *Studi su Vittorio Imbriani* (Naples: Guida, 1990); Nicola Capone (ed.), *Silvio Spaventa e i moti del Quarantotto. Articoli dal 'Nazionale' e scritti dall'ergastolo di Santo Stefano* (Naples: La scuola di Pitagora, 2006); Francesco Fiorentino, *Manuale di storia della filosofia ad uso dei licei*, 4 vols. (Naples: La scuola di Pitagora, 2007); Antonio Labriola, *Carteggio (1861–1904)*, vols. I–V, ed. Stefano Miccolis (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2000–2006); Theodor Sträter, *Lettere sulla filosofia italiana* (Bomba: Troilo, 1999); Alessandro Savorelli, *Biblioteche di hegeliani e positivisti (maestri, convertiti, apostati)* in *Biblioteche filosofiche private in età moderna e contemporanea*, ed. F. M. Crasta (Florence: Le Lettere, 2010), pp. 237–249.

[19] See, for example, Eugenio Garin, *Filosofia e politica in Bertrando Spaventa* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2007); Luigi Gentile, *Coscienza nazionale e pensiero europeo in Bertrando Spaventa* (Chieti: Noubs, 2000).

[20] See, for example, P. Piovani, *Indagini di storia della filosofia* (Naples: Liguori, 2006); Fulvio Tessitore, *La cultura filosofica tra due rivoluzioni (1799–1860)*, in *Storia di Napoli*, vol. IX (Naples: ESI, 1972), pp. 225–293; Guido Oldrini, *La cultura filosofica napoletana dell'Ottocento* (Bari: Laterza, 1973).

[21] Enza Biagini, Paolo Orvieto, Sandro Piazzesi (eds.), 'Francesco De Sanctis, 1817–2017', special issue of *Rivista di Letteratura italiana*, 35, no. I, 2017. For a very recent overview of the secondary literature on Bertrando Spaventa, see Marcello Musté, Stefano Trinchese and Giuseppe Vacca, *Bertrando Spaventa. Tra coscienza nazionale e filosofia europea* (Rome: Viella, 2018); see also Bertrando Spaventa, *Epistolario*, ed. M. Diamanti, M. Mustè, and M. Rascaglia (Rome: Viella, 2020). On Hegel's reception in Italy, see F. Iannelli, F. Vercellone, K. Vieweg, *Hegel und Italien, Italien und Hegel: Geistige Synergien von Gestern und Heute* (Milan: Mimesis, 2019); Marco Diamanti (ed.), *La fortuna di Hegel in Italia nell'Ottocento* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2020).

[22] The exception within this debate is the very recent special issue edited by Fernanda Gallo and Axel Körner, 'Hegel in Italy: Risorgimento Political Thought in Transnational Perspective', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 24, no. 2, 2019.

This book on the contrary engages with the most recent debates in intellectual history and with the international scholarship on Italian political thought, combining it with new archival sources that offer fresh perspectives on the topic. Fredrick Beiser has summarised the dilemma facing scholars of Hegel and of Hegel's reception in terms of a choice between a metaphysical or non-metaphysical understanding of the German philosopher, insisting that accurate historical research has to confront Hegel with his metaphysical concerns, which are 'alien to the spirit of contemporary philosophical culture, which mistrusts metaphysics'.[23] However, a non-metaphysical understanding of Hegel would be less historically accurate, as it would appear more as 'a construction of our contemporary interests than the real historical school'.[24] It is at this juncture that historians, concerned with past issues for their own sake, move away from political theorists and political philosophers, preoccupied as they are with contemporary controversies. There is indeed at this point an opportunity for historians of political thought to close the gap, the study of nineteenth-century Italian Hegelianism offering a fresh perspective on this problem.

Italian Hegelians investigated and discussed both the metaphysical and the non-metaphysical Hegel, moving confidently from the most difficult pages of the *Science of Logic* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which Silvio Spaventa called 'the book with the seven seals' (Il libro dai sette sigilli): as intellectual historians, they explored Hegel's texts and analysed his ideas in depth, while reconstructing his context and German intellectual debates; as philosophers, they selected and reshaped those ideas within Hegel's philosophy that answered to their contemporary political concerns; as politicians, they tried to enhance their political practice, deriving inspiration from their reformulation of Hegelian ideas. While accurately reconstructing the Italian context and this network of intellectuals, the present book reflects on the prominent place that philosophy assumed in nineteenth-century political debates and the key role that ideas played in the political arena.

## I.2 The History of Political Thought

Rather than reading political statements as facts, as was customary in most of the idealist accounts of Italy's national resurgence, which established a

[23] Frederick Beiser, 'Introduction: The Puzzling Hegel Renaissance', in *Hegel and Nineteenth-century Philosophy*, ed. F. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 1–14, 5.
[24] Beiser, 'Introduction', p. 6.

teleological straitjacket of idealised standard accounts of national history, more recent, critical approaches tend to read them as speech acts within a complex framework of contextual references, where the representation of social and political realities had aimed to achieve specific political outcomes.[25] Many of these contextual references are embedded in international and sometimes global debates, which themselves require careful analysis, such as a comparison of the relationship between the history of political thought and the political cultures of the different countries within which it has been practised.[26] Despite a long and erudite tradition in Italy of studying these ideas as 'storia delle dottrine politiche' (history of political thought), a more analytical and theoretically informed approach based on methodological engagement with, for instance, Anglo-American studies of political theory, the so-called Cambridge school, or a Koselleckian history of concepts has emerged only relatively recently.[27] Since then, the history of Italian political thought has rapidly developed into a vibrant field of research.[28]

[25] Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, *Vol. 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 107.

[26] Stefan Collini, 'Postscript. Disciplines, Canons, and Publics: The History of "the History of Political Thought" in Comparative Perspective", in *The History of Political Thought in National Context*, ed. D. Castiglione and I. Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 280–302.

[27] On the field of history of political thought in Italy, see Angelo D'Orsi, 'One Hundred Years of the History of Political Thought in Italy', in *The History of Political Thought in National Context*, ed. D. Castiglione and I. Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 80–106; on Anglo-American studies of political theory, see John G. A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History. Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 3–19; on the German school, see Jahn-Werner Müller, 'On Conceptual History', in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. D. M. McMahon and S. Moyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 74–93, 77.

[28] See Richard Bellamy, *Modern Italian Social Theory: Ideology and Politics from Pareto to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Richard Bellamy, *Croce, Gramsci, Bobbio, and the Italian Political Tradition* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014); Maurizio Isabella, 'Nationality Before Liberty? Risorgimento Political Thought in Transnational Context', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17, no. 5, 2012: 507–515; David Ragazzoni, 'Giuseppe Mazzini's Democratic Theory of Nations', in *Nazione e nazionalismi. Teorie, interpretazioni, sfide attuali*, ed. A. Campi, S. De Luca and F. Tuccari (Rome: Historica, 2018), pp. 279–305; Sandro Recchia and Nadia Urbinati (eds.), *Giuseppe Mazzini, A Cosmopolitanism of Nations. Giuseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building, and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009); Roberto Romani, 'Reluctant Revolutionaries: Moderate Liberalism in the Kingdom of Sardinia, 1849–1859', *The Historical Journal*, 55, no. 1, 2012: 45–73; Fabio Sabetti, *Civilization and Self-Government. The Political Thought of Carlo Cattaneo* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010); Martin Thom, 'City, Region and Nation: Carlo Cattaneo and the Making of Italy', *Citizenship Studies*, 3, no. 2, 1999: 187–201; Nadia Urbinati, *Le civili libertà: Positivismo e liberalismo nell'Italia unita* (Venice: Marsilio, 1990).

This book's approach to Italian political thought actively engages with recent broader debates in the history of political thought, while also entering into a dialogue with the scholarship on the intellectual history of the Mediterranean. It does so by enlarging the range of sources usually deployed by intellectual historians, following the invitation that histories of ideas should encompass a broader understanding of context by reconstructing 'the complete range of the inherited symbols and representations that constitute the subjectivity of an age', both through immersion in the archives and by grappling with philosophical, legal, and political texts.[29] This research relates to the trends in the field that integrate the analysis of philosophical and political texts with biographical information;[30] explore the circulation of books and translation of classical texts;[31] and reconstruct national and international networks of intellectuals by focussing on correspondence, exile, as well as on relevant periodicals and journals.[32] Combining these different approaches to the field, this book reveals unexpected paths to the identification of one of the bodies of political thought, in which ideas are closely connected to the practical experiences of authors, the circulation of intellectual flows, and the access variously granted to texts.

If, as Pocock affirmed, a body of political thought can only be said to exist when a context 'lasts long enough to give discourse some command over itself', and if conversations within and between cultures must be stable and durable in order to produce significant bodies of political thought, then the Italian Hegelians had indeed represented a body of political thought in modern Italy.[33] But how is it that this body of

[29] Quentin Skinner, 'Motives, Intention, and Interpretation', in *Visions of Politics*, p. 102.

[30] See Maurizio Viroli, *Niccolo's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Andrew Fitzmaurice, *King Leopold's Ghostwriter: The Creation of Persons and States in the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

[31] See Edward Jones Corredera, *The Diplomatic Enlightenment: Spain, Europe, and the Age of Speculation* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Axel Körner, *America in Italy: The United States in the Political Thought and Imagination of the Risorgimento, 1763–1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); see also the very recent project on translations in the Age of Revolutions: Rachel Hammersley 'Experiencing Political Texts', https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FV013378%2F1.

[32] See Ann Thomson, *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in Early Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational* Patriotism *in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850: Stammering the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[33] J. G. A. Pocock, 'On the Unglobality of Contexts: Cambridge Methods and the History of Political Thought', *Global Intellectual History*, 4, no. 1, 2019: 77; see also J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

nineteenth-century political thought did not enter the main surveys in the field when by contrast Niccolo Machiavelli or Antonio Gramsci loom so large? There are hidden intellectual hierarchies that structure and constrain the field: very recent research in the history of political thought, in particular on the twentieth century, is indeed now presenting alternative bodies of political thought, very influential in their own contexts. These works explore the connections between theory and political practice by highlighting the 'power of political ideas', such as Shruti Kapila's recent monograph on modern Indian political thought, as well as collective efforts to reconstruct a 'democratic canon', such as the edited volume on African-American political thought by Melvin Rogers and Jack Turner.[34] The present book assumes the social and political influence of ideas 'since people's behaviour is deeply influenced by what they think, and especially by what they believe firmly'.[35]

These recent studies are the result of the efforts that have shaped the field in the last few decades in order to present a multiplicity of bodies of political thought, paying attention to a broader field of intellectual production.[36] The different sub-fields have contributed greatly to this approach. Those engaged in writing the history of international and legal political thought have thus attempted to highlight the contested, fruitful, and shifting nature of classical works. The reshaping of classical authors by a wide range of actors, who might have different intentions, is often the site of negotiation of ideas. This book is interested in the way Hegel had been reinvented by nineteenth-century Italian thinkers, 'emphasising the personal, institutional, social, and political dynamics that underpinned the posthumous trajectory' of Hegel's philosophy 'and what these dynamics tell us about their goals, priorities, and world views'.[37] This different context might also offer a reading of the author that is quite far from their original intentions. The sub-field of comparative political thought would appear to have been moving in a similar direction. Indeed, some of its

[34] See Shruti Kapila, *Violent Fraternity: Indian Political Thought in the Global Age* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2021); See also the book review by Emma Stone Mackinnon, 'Toward a Democratic Canon', *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2022: 1–13. The review analyses the edited volume by Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner (eds.), *African American Political Thought: A Collected History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

[35] E. F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 2.

[36] Siep Stuurman, 'The Canon of the History of Political Thought: Its Critique and a Proposed Alternative', *History and Theory*, 39, no. 2, 2000: 147–166.

[37] Paolo Amorosa and Claire Vergerio, 'Canon-making in the History of International Legal and Political Thought', *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 35, 2022: 469–478, 470. See also Mira Siegelberg, *Statelessness: A Modern History* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2020).

practitioners have gone so far as to highlight the potential theoretical (not historical) value of creative misreadings of thinkers from the past.[38]

A very interesting criticism of the established bodies of political thought has emerged in particular from the studies on women's intellectual production, an interest that has crossed the diverse sub-fields, proposing exciting studies in international political thought, in intellectual history, as well as in political theory.[39] These works uncover stories of female political thinkers and philosophers who have contributed to the development of political thought in traditional or less traditional ways, aiming at presenting alternative views of political thought. This book recovers the work of the female philosopher Marianna Bacinetti, better known by her married name of Marianna Florenzi Waddington, who greatly contributed to the history of Italian Hegelianism.

Exciting new works on Italian political thought highlight how asymmetries in relations of power, which often produced revolutions, diasporas, or exiles, have affected the identification of bodies of political thought and recast relationships between centre and peripheries.[40] Most of these works appeared within the wider field of the intellectual history of the modern Mediterranean.[41] Studies in modern intellectual history of the

[38] Adrian Blau, 'How (Not) to Use the History of Political Thought for Contemporary Purposes', *American Journal of Political Science*, 2020: 359–372; see also Navid Hassanzadeh, 'The Canon and Comparative Political Thought', *Journal of International Political Theory*, 11, no. 2, 2015: 184–202. For an overview on this debate, see Duncan Bell, 'International Relations and Intellectual History', in *The Oxford Handbook of History and International Relations*, ed. Mlada Bukovansky, Edward Keene, Christian Reus-Smit, and Maja Spanu (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023), pp. 94–110.

[39] For a wide-ranging effort to recover the international thought of women, see K. Hutchings and P. Owens, 'Women Thinkers and the Canon of International Thought: Recovery, Rejection, and Reconstitution', *American Political Science Review*, 115, no. 2, 2021: 347–359; see also P. Owens and K. Rietzler (eds.), *Women's International Thought: A New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); I. Tallgren (ed.), *Portraits of Women in International Law: New Names and Forgotten Faces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023). Regarding the developments in the field of intellectual history and political theory, see, for example, Hilda L. Smith, 'Women's History as Intellectual History: A Perspective on the Journal of Women's History', *Journal of Women's History*, 20, no. 1, 2008: 26–32; Ben Griffin, 'From Histories of Intellectual Women to Women's Intellectual History', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 24, no. 1, 2019: 130–133; Lisa L. Moore, Joanna Brooks, and Caroline Wigginton (eds.), *Transatlantic Feminisms in the Age of Revolutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Penny A. Weiss, *Canon Fodder: Historical Women Political Thinkers* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2009), pp. 3–29.

[40] See T. Hauswedell, A. Körner, and U. Tiedau (eds.), *Remapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Context* (London: UCL Press, 2019).

[41] Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); see also David Armitage and Alison Bashford, 'Introduction: The Pacific and its Histories', in *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, ed. David Armitage and Alison Bashford (London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1–28. For a wider overview of the recent development in Mediterranean intellectual history, see F. Gallo and M. D'Auria (eds.),

Mediterranean have reconstructed the entanglement of interactions and shared experiences in the Mediterranean in the long nineteenth century, highlighting the capacity of local authors, scholars, and intellectuals to use foreign ideas for their own purposes and shedding new light on the creative amalgamation with local cultural and political traditions.[42] Moreover, they have investigated how the peoples of Southern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, which all experienced diverse forms of subordination to northern 'great powers', had to struggle with broader changes in ideas about states while striving to maintain their political and cultural autonomy.[43] Nineteenth-century Italian political thought is no exception.

The renewed interest in modern Italian political thought within the field of intellectual history of the Mediterranean has produced very interesting works as well as new challenges to the identification of alternative bodies of political thought. New research that investigates Italian political thought within the scholarship on Mediterranean history has also insisted on the 'connectivity', a dimension embodied in the biographies of intellectuals who travelled across the Mediterranean space, often following revolutionary moments, in the networks they created and in the ideas they exchanged.[44]

The reconstruction of network-based liberalism at a specific moment, such as the 1820s or 1848 revolutions, and the mapping of ramifying connections among liberals across Europe and the World (especially Latin America or the Indian Ocean) help little in identifying an alternative body of political thought. However, liberals from Southern Europe were in a particular predicament (compared, for example, to liberals in Britain): they endured various moments of political oppression that forced them into

*Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from Its Southern Shores* (London: Routledge, 2022), pp. 1–19.

[42] Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou, *Mediterranean Diasporas. Politics and Ideas in the Long Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[43] Joanna Innes and Mark Philp (eds.), *Re-Imagining Democracy in the Mediterranean, 1780–1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); see also Peter Hill, *Utopia and Civilization in the Arab Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[44] See, for example, Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, 'The Mediterranean and "The New Thalassology"', *American Historical Review*, 111, 2006: 722–740; Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita (eds.), *A Companion to Mediterranean History* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014); David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Alina Payne (ed.), *Dalmatia and the Mediterranean: Portable Archaeology and the Poetics of Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Michele Bacci et al., 'On the Mediterranean Space in the Middle Ages', *Perspective*, 2, 2014: 271–292; Elisabeth A. Fraser (ed.), *The Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Art of Travel* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

exile, and there was a constant flux of streams of exiles.[45] These moments of exile were certainly moments of reflection, writing, and exchange of ideas with the local contexts hosting them, but then these people returned to their own countries and most of them subsequently occupied key roles in governments and parliaments. The peculiarity of these moments of 'pause' (and sometimes fight) as well as moments of real politics becomes even more interesting if tracked across a longer timespan, which allows us to recognise the interactions between ideas and political practices, identifying then a particular body of political thought, one that was especially relevant in modern Italy.

Intellectual historian working on the Mediterranean invite us also to consider more seriously the role of space in the history of political thought. Intellectual history for a long time resisted a reflection on space. However, more recently, scholars have suggested that space be considered a key element in the understanding of intellectual history, even going so far as to define space as 'the final frontier for intellectual history'.[46] If we then consider space not as a mere context but as 'a mode of intellectual production deserving of interpretation in its own right', taking it seriously and, therefore, reading 'deliberately against the grain',[47] we have to agree with Antonio Gramsci when in his *Prison Notebooks* he notes that North, South, East, and West, although 'arbitrary and conventional [historical] constructions', more or less explicitly 'expressed (and still express) a value-judgement' with very real intellectual and political consequences.[48] Engaging with the history of political thought by including the specificities of spaces and entanglements that characterised the Mediterranean region in modern times means that we consider also these 'value-judgements' that provide a new understanding of Italian political thought. This book investigates the history of Italian political thought also by reflecting on the wider spatial and intellectual context of the Mediterranean in the nineteenth century and its place in the intellectual and political hierarchies at the time. It explores how engagement with a classical and influential thinker such as Hegel from the margins of its geo-philosophical borders

[45] Maurizio Isabella, *Southern Europe in the Age of Revolutions* (Princeton, Princeton University Press: 2023); Michalis Sotiropoulos, *Liberalism after the Revolution: The Intellectual Foundations of the Greek State, c. 1830–1880* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[46] Armitage, 'The International Turn in Intellectual History', p. 239.

[47] Randolph, 'The Space of Intellect and the Intellect of Space', 225; Brett, 'The Space of Politics and the Space of War', 34. On this debate, see also Daniel S. Allemann, Anton Jäger, and Valentina Mann, *Conceptions of Space in Intellectual History* (London: Routledge, 2019).

[48] Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere* (Turin: Einaudi, 2014), II, 874.

(nineteenth-century Italy) has produced an alternative body of political thought, which was equally influential in its own context. Rather than a passive reception of ideas thought elsewhere, nineteenth-century Italian Hegelianism represents a creative amalgamation of different intellectual flows, local and international, offering an original and interesting reading of Hegel. Rethinking Italian political thought through the lens of Hegel's 'presence' in Italy means also to recenter the Peninsula in modern historical time. As Franco Cassano argued:

> For a long time the south has been seen like an error, a negation, or a delay. To reverse this picture, the first thing that is required is to give back to the south the ancient dignity of being a subject of thought, rather than being thought of from the standpoint of others. In a similar manner, the Mediterranean has long been regarded as a sea of the past. It is in fact a central place of contemporary history – a place in which the north and the west meet the east and the south of the world.[49]

Re-establishing the dignity of subjects of thought for the Italians and recovering the 'thread of their philosophical tradition' in order to develop the self-consciousness of the Italian nation were indeed the main aims of the Italian Hegelians, who in the first instance engaged with Hegel's philosophy of history as a history of liberation from intellectual and political oppression.

## I.3 Italian Political Thought and the Risorgimento

Since the first translation of one of Hegel's works into Italian, the *Philosophy of History* (*Filosofia della storia*) published in 1840 and translated by Giambattista Passerini (1793–1864) during his exile in Switzerland, Hegel was presented to Italian readers almost as a historian, whose philosophy of history, due to the certainty of future political freedom, seemed directly relevant to the revolutionary tremors leading to 1848, at the height of which Antonio Turchiarulo translated Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (*Filosofia del diritto*). In his introduction, Turchiarulo highlighted the relevance of Hegel's political thought for Italy's national emancipation, describing it as a path to political freedom and civilisation.

What the first Italian Hegelians found so attractive in Hegel's philosophy of history was both the notion of freedom as the liberation of humanity through the struggle of Spirit in its historical existence and the

[49] Franco Cassano, 'Southern Thought', *Thesis Eleven*, 67, no. 1, 2001: 1–10, 1.

ideas of progress and liberation addressed to all nations. At this early stage, Italian Hegelianism was open to receiving the revolutionary potential of Hegel's philosophy. Against Hegel's own express warning, the dialectical philosophy of history now helped those studying it to look into the future, confirming the promise of a new age to come. Responding to Hegel's call for liberation, Italy would once again be part of European culture – as it had been during the Renaissance.[50]

While the political implications of Hegel's thought seemed obvious, there were important differences in its reception between the North and the South of the peninsula. The diffusion of Hegel's thought in northern Italy before 1848 was not based on direct knowledge of Hegel's original texts in German but on their mediation through Victor Cousin's French school of Eclecticism, which itself had followers in the South of the peninsula, including Stanislao Gatti (1820–1870) and Stefano Cusani (1815–1846). This book begins in 1832, when the first work on Hegel appeared in Italian, written by Giandomenico Romagnosi (1761–1835) in the Florentine journal *Antologia*, with the title *Alcuni pensieri sopra un'ultra-metafisica filosofia della storia* (*Some Thoughts on an Ultra-Metaphysical Philosophy of History*), commenting very critically on Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, his account being based on Eugène Lerminier's (1803–1857) exposition of Hegel's philosophy in his *Introduction générale à l'histoire du droit* (*General Introduction to the History of Right*, 1829).[51] It was in the South, however, that Hegelianism assumed the role of a proper philosophical movement, commonly referred to as Neapolitan Hegelianism, which over the years also came to assume an important role on the national stage.

It was at the Neapolitan school of the Kantian Ottavio Colecchi (1773–1847), who had studied in Königsberg, that the group of liberals subsequently at the heart of Italian Hegelianism, gained access to German texts in the original language and became familiar with the language of German idealism and the scholarly debates in Germany. As a more systematic intellectual current, Neapolitan Hegelianism lasted for approximately forty years, from 1841, when Stanislao Gatti and Stefano Cusani founded the periodical *Il Museo*, up to the beginning of the 1880s, when its main exponents died. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, that tradition was reshaped and reinterpreted by a number of different Italian intellectuals, and in particular it was adapted by Antonio Labriola (1843–1904) to the new intellectual challenges posed by the then current reflections on socialism. This book ends with Labriola's re-elaboration of

[50] See Nuzzo, 'An Outline of Italian Hegelianism (1832–1998)'. [51] *Antologia*, vol. 96, p. 289.

this tradition in his 'philosophy of praxis', presented in a series of three Marxist essays appearing between 1895 and 1898 with the title *Saggi intorno alla concezione materialistica della storia* (*Essays on the Materialistic Conception of History*) and in his fourth and last essay *Da un secolo all'altro* (*From One century to the Next*), written between 1897 and 1903 and published posthumously by his young friend Benedetto Croce.

The protagonists of Neapolitan Hegelianism at the beginning of the movement were for the most part young scholars who, while fighting for the national cause, endeavoured to read, translate, and interpret Hegel's philosophy in direct relation to their political concerns. Before 1848, they had largely worked as a clandestine group, hiding from the Bourbon police. After the revolution of 1848 and its subsequent repression, its advocates continued their studies in prison or in exile, mostly in Piedmont, Switzerland, or France. It was only after Italy's political unification in 1861 – when De Sanctis became Minister of Public Education, Silvio Spaventa was appointed vice secretary of Internal Affairs, and Bertrando Spaventa was elected a deputy to the national Parliament – that Neapolitan Hegelianism became officially part of Italy's national canon of political thought. It was largely due to Labriola, who as a pupil of Bertrando Spaventa was closely connected to the Neapolitan Hegelians, and his vigorous resistance to materialism that towards the turn of the century a younger generation of thinkers developed a new interest in Hegel's philosophy. In the case of Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, Labriola's own anti-materialist Marxism came to form the basis for their engagement with Hegel's thought, in Croce's case assuming the guise of a new historicism and in Gentile's case that of a neo-idealism.

From the perspective of a Hegel scholar, much of the Italian reading of Hegel might seem a distortion of the German philosopher's thought. Most of the debates in which Italians placed their understanding of Hegel were fundamentally different from the German context of political thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Neapolitan Hegelians' quests and needs were closely related to the political context of the Risorgimento, with the result that Hegel's philosophy of history was drawn closer to the anti-metaphysical overtones of Vichian historicism. Within this context, Hegel's understanding of the Protestant Reformation as the key event in the making of the modern world is deprived of its theological element and turned into the earthly and philosophical experience of the Renaissance. Hegel's ideas regarding civil society were reshaped beyond economic and corporative relations to become the embodiment of society's cultural dimension. Hegel's marginalisation of the role of the nation in favour of

that of the State was overturned by adopting a new concept of 'nationality', which included a cultural (though not an ethnic) dimension as the basis of the rule of law. Hegel's 'Dialectic' and his Logic were reinterpreted from the perspective of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Italian Hegelians redefined Hegel's concept of parties in terms of electoral organisations affecting the relationship between the State and civil society. Therefore, understanding Italian Hegelianism implies a readiness to hear Hegel's philosophy in a different voice. This entails a willingness to consider the amalgamation of Hegelian thought with Italy's own fruitful intellectual ground, including the legacy of Vico's *Scienza Nuova* and the rediscovery of Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella's philosophy.

Beyond the study of particular intellectual currents, the importance of Italy's political context is one of the present book's main concerns. As Eugenio Garin asserted, Hegel's Italian reception was never a matter of purely academic debate or of 'scientific neutrality'. Instead, Hegelianism has always constituted a central aspect of Italy's political culture, where Hegel's philosophy was constantly rethought and reshaped according to different moments of the nation's political development.[52] As Norberto Bobbio noted, in Italian political history 'all roads lead to Hegel, or, rather, all roads begin from Hegel'.[53] On a similar note, Sergio Landucci has argued that, in Italy, Hegelianism always represented an 'element of the nation's civil life', a 'civil force' in support of national unification.[54] Therefore, unlike certain strands of interpretation elsewhere in Europe, in Italy Hegel retained a revolutionary potential. Thus, by looking at Italian political thought through the lens of Hegel's 'presence' in Italy, this book not only fills a gap in philosophical scholarship but also sheds new light on Italian political thought.

The focus on Italian Hegelianism exemplifies an approach to the history of political thought that accentuates different modes of reception and the amalgamation of ideas into new intellectual contexts. It also helps to place the study of Italian Hegelianism within a wider context of recent historiographical approaches to Risorgimento political thought. Italian engagement with Hegel was a direct response to Italians' own experiences of a dramatic change in the semantics of historical time since the end of the Seven Years' War, followed shortly after by the American and French

[52] Eugenio Garin, 'La "fortuna" nella filosofia italiana', in *L'opera e l'eredità di Hegel*, ed. G. Calabrò (Bari: Laterza, 1972), pp. 123–138.
[53] Norberto Bobbio, *Da Hobbes a Marx. Saggi di storia della filosofia* (Naples: Morano, 1965), p. 237.
[54] Sergio Landucci, 'L'hegelismo in Italia nell'età del Risorgimento', *Studi Storici*, 4, 1965: 597–628.

Revolutions. Due to its transnational perspective, the interest in Italian Hegelianism shares important ground with other fields of modern Italian history that over the last few decades have examined, for instance, the impact of European romanticism on Italy's cultural and intellectual development[55] or the role of international experiences in shaping ideas in the Italian peninsula.[56]

A central purpose of this book is to understand this shift from the intellectual reconstruction of the Italian national narratives during the Risorgimento to the political movement leading to Italian unification. The 'nation', is a continuous process of historical and cultural reconstruction and political negotiation that was far from being a straightforward or self-evident entity. The prevailing understanding of the idea of nation during the Risorgimento is linked to the debate on 'national character', a term that, as highlighted by Georgios Varouxakis, was often used by nineteenth-century European historians as an 'explanatory category'.[57] Emphasising the Risorgimento's many different political voices means highlighting Italy's intellectual diversity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but also its close connection with wider European thought and with multiple political experiences.

The term 'regeneration' had been most current during the 'revolutionary triennium' (1796–1799) in Italy, when the influence of French republicanism was at its height. As Lucien Jaume has recently pointed out, the discourse on the French Revolution continually refers to the principle of regeneration (*régénération*).[58] Scrutiny of French dictionaries suggests that during the Enlightenment and, indeed, up until the French Revolution,

[55] Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg (eds.), *Storia d'Italia. Annali 22. Il Risorgimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2007); Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (eds.), *The Risorgimento Revisited. Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth Century Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Lucy Riall, 'The Politics of Italian Romanticism: Mazzini and the Making of a Nationalist Culture', in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1830–1920*, ed. C. A. Bayly and E. F. Biagini (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 167–186; Martin Thom, *Republics, Nations and Tribes* (London: Verso, 1995).

[56] Enrico Dal Lago, *The Age of Lincoln and Cavour. Comparative Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century American and Italian Nation-Building* (New York: Palgrave: 2015); Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*; Oliver Janz and Lucy Riall (eds.) 'The Italian Risorgimento: Transnational Perspectives', *Modern Italy*, 19, 1, 2014; D. Kirchner Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation. Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); Axel Körner, 'Transnational History: Identities, Structures, States', in *International History in Theory and Praxis*, ed. B. Haider-Wilson, W. D. Godsey and W. Mueller (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017), pp. 265–290.

[57] Georgios Varouxakis, 'The Discreet Charm of 'Southernness', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17, no. 5, 2012: 547–550.

[58] Lucien Jaume, 'Réformer, Régénérer, Renaître: Un imaginaire de l'Occident? La clef Révolution française', *Transversalités*, 137, 2016: 23–35.

the term '*régénération*' was used only with a religious meaning and was not deployed in the political arena. After 1789, this term passed from the religious domain, to which it had previously been restricted, to the political, moral, and social domains.[59] The myth of the regeneration of the nation is indeed also connected with the widespread attempt among nineteenth-century historians to reconstruct the various 'national characters', related to the diverse narratives concerning the origins of the nation. The political culture of the national movement in the first half of the nineteenth century in Italy was far from uniform, and the different definitions offered of the Italian national character were connected to the diverse interpretations of the origins of the nation – such as the debate on the antiquity of the Italian nation, or the myth of the Catholic roots of Italian culture, as well as the narrative tracing the origins of the Italian nation back to the 'communal age of freedom' and the early medieval *comuni*.[60] The idea of the regeneration of the nation implies therefore the return to a human essence, forgotten or suppressed, and this is possible only through a revolution. Revolution, in short, offers the promise of emancipation, which has shifted from the religious to the political sphere, involving as it does what Jaume calls a *transfert de religiosité(s)*.[61] This definition highlights the inner, subjective tensions within the general aspiration towards regeneration, entailing something other than the merely external dimension of ceremonies and symbols related to the new cults.

[59] See Mona Ozouf, *L'homme régénéré: Essais sur la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), pp. 116–157

[60] For a general overview regarding the debate on the different myths building Italian national narratives, see the recent work by Rosario Forlenza and Bjørn Thomassen, *Italian Modernities: Competing Narratives of Nationhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Regarding the myth of Roman and Etruscan origins, see in particular Antonino De Francesco, *The Antiquity of the Italian Nation: The Cultural Origins of a Political Myth in Modern Italy, 1796–1943* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Paolo Casini, *L'antica sapienza italica. Cronistoria di un mito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998); Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy: From Unification to Fascism* (London: Routledge, 2009). For a deeper understanding of the narrative of the Catholic roots of the Italian nation, see Guido Formigoni, *L'Italia dei cattolici. Dal Risorgimento ad oggi* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), pp. 35–59; Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e Stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna. Il Mulino, 2007), pp. 7–57; Martin Papenheim, 'Roma o Morte: Culture Wars in Italy', in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 202–226. The republican myth has been explored by Forlenza and Thomassen, *Italian Modernities*, pp. 23–55; see also Norma Bouchard (ed.), *Risorgimento in Modern Italian Culture: Rethinking the Nineteenth-Century Past in History, Narrative, and Cinema* (Cranbury, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005).

[61] Lucien Jaume, *Le Religieux et le politique dans la Révolution française. L'idée de régénération* (Paris: PUF, 2015), p. 7; on this debate, see also Josep R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996); Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

In Italian, the two terms 'regeneration' (*rigenerazione*) and 'resurgence' (*risorgimento*) coexisted during the first half of the nineteenth century, while in its latter half the word '*Risorgimento*' took precedence.[62]

During the nineteenth century, Italian political language underwent a radical transformation: while the term *Risorgimento* had generally indicated a specific period of modern history (approximately from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries), by the end of the century that term began to be identified with the Italian struggles for national emancipation.[63] At the same time, the word *Renaissance* began to be used to indicate the period of early modern history between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, also identified with the birth of 'Modernity'. This change in the language represents a shift from an interpretation that highlights the religious and moral dimensions of the principle of Italian modernity to one that stresses its historical characteristics. Such a shift from an ethical-political meaning to a historiographical one consists of an interpretative transformation of the origins of modern national culture: initially the Renaissance was considered a political and moral model, to emulate or to condemn, but it then assumed the role of a historiographical category.

That transformation in the language represents a change of ideas or rather, in this case, of the way the intellectual and political leaders of the Risorgimento interpreted the failed religious and moral reformation in Italy of the early modern period. While recent scholarship has highlighted how the term *Risorgimento* came to mark a 'symbolic repositioning from the religious to the political' dimension of the term, it was still confused with the *Renaissance* as then understood.[64] Linguistic studies have traced a semantic history of the two terms, *Risorgimento* and *Rinascimento*, illustrating how political and ideological factors conditioned their use and the meanings they carried.[65] This book investigates this change in the political language, proving that it was also a consequence of a deeper study and understanding of the Renaissance as a historical period and its main

[62] See Erasmo Leso, *Lingua e rivoluzione: Ricerche sul vocabolario politico italiano nel triennio rivoluzionario 1796–1799* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere e Arti, 1991), pp. 153–154. By 'language' here I refer mainly to the notion elaborated by J. G. A. Pocock, 'Introduction: the State of the Art', in *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1–34.

[63] On the complex debate regarding the dating of the Renaissance, see Delio Cantimori, 'La periodizzazione dell'età del Rinascimento', (1955), in *Storici e storia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), pp. 553–557.

[64] Banti et al., *Atlante culturale del Risorgimento*, p33.

[65] Alessio Cotugno, 'Rinascimento e Risorgimento (sec. XVIII–XIX)', *Lingua e Stile*, 2, 2012: 265–310.

protagonists, such as Giordano Bruno, Tommaso Campanella, or Niccolo' Machiavelli, promoted by the Italian Hegelians.

The idea of the need for a regeneration (or resurgence) of the moral and intellectual life of Italians was connected to the widespread assumption among European and Italian intellectuals that the Italian character suffered from a backwardness, laziness, and indolence.[66] In order to assume a new role as a modern nation, the Italians needed first, or so it was supposed, a moral and intellectual revolution: the incessant references to the regeneration of the nation in Italian political discourse, from the republicans to the most conservative political groups, demonstrate a process of self-othering among the national elites. As Lucy Riall has emphasised: 'nationalism in Italy was born from a sense of weakness: of resistance to Napoleon's conquests; of inferiority towards Italy's neighbours, and of loss relative to a glorious past .... Even nationalism's appeal in Italy comes from a feeling of failure, offering as it does the dream of regeneration (*risorgimento*), against which the squalid state of the present-day nation is judged and found lacking'.[67] Historians, philosophers, and publicists played a fundamental role in readapting and reshaping collective memories, as well as in creating a national narrative.[68] This book contributes to the understanding of these narratives by engaging with the scholarly debates regarding the role of the Italian South in the Risorgimento.

The process of Italian unification has often been portrayed in the historiography as a process of royal conquest, whereby its principal architect, Cavour, together with the King Vittorio Emanuele, imposed Piedmontese rule on the rest of the Peninsula. Moreover, the representation of Southern Italy in many Northern Italian accounts as a backward and uncivilised land has led historians in recent years to portray the South

[66] For a more specific analysis of these stereotypes regarding the Italian national character, see Silvana Patriarca, 'Indolence and Regeneration: Tropes and Tensions of Risorgimento Patriotism', *The American Historical Review*, 110, no. 2, April 2005: 380–408.

[67] Lucy Riall, 'Which Italy? Italian Culture and the Problem of Politics', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39, no. 3, 2004: 437–446, 438.

[68] For an overview of historical narratives, see Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007). Also see Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). For national narrative, see Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990). Also see the essays in Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas, and Andrew Mycock (eds.), *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media, and the Arts* (New York: Berghahn, 2008); and Joep Leerssen, 'Setting the Scene for National History', in *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 71–85. For a discussion on this scholarship, see the recent work by Matthew D'Auria, *The Shaping of French National Identity: Narrating the Nation's Past, 1715–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

through the 'logic of coloniality'.[69] Studies by Jane Schneider, John Dickie, Nelson Moe, and Silvana Patriarca have thus explored the widespread proliferation of stereotypes representing Southern Italy in the aftermath of unification, in the process often going beyond the analysis of the so-called Southern Question – which investigates instead the economic and political differences between the North and the South of the Peninsula.[70]

Very recently, scholars such as Roberto Dainotto, Luigi Carmine Cazzato, and Claudio Fogu have considered the process of Italian nation-building through the lens of postcolonial critical studies, applying the logic of Edward Said's Orientalism to Southern Europe, and Southern Italy, and so proposing a discursive construction of the 'Souths' of Europe dubbed 'Meridionism'.[71] Although the key role of Piedmont in the unification process is beyond dispute, these approaches tend to overshadow local and popular participation, in particular within the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, as well as the work of Southern Italian political representatives in the new Parliament.

This book explores the contribution of the political thought and political practices of Italian Hegelians, most of whom were from the South, to the building of the new Italian State. Many of them had first served the Kingdom of Italy in the Southern provinces during the delicate transition period, then in the central government and parliament in the early years of state-building, between 1861 and the 1880s, serving as representatives in both of the main parties, the Historical Right (*Destra Storica*), and the Historical Left (*Sinistra Storica*). They reshaped the Hegelian theory of the State to serve the new Italian political context and contributed to the understanding and designing of the new Italian State. In the history of

[69] Claudio Fogu, *The Fishing Net and the Spider Web: Mediterranean Imaginaries and the Making of Italians* (London: Palgrave, 2020), p. 17.

[70] On this, see Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jane Schneider (ed.), *Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in One Country* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), parts 1 and 3; Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), especially pp. 187–223; John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotype of the Mezzogiorno, 1860–1900* (London: Macmillan, 1999).

[71] Roberto Dainotto, *Europe (in Theory)* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Fogu, *The Fishing Net and the Spider* Web; Luigi Carmine Cazzato, 'Fractured Mediterranean and Imperial Difference: Mediterraneanism, Meridionism, and John Ruskin', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 26, no. 1, 2017: 69–78. On this, see also Matthew D'Auria and Fernanda Gallo, 'Ideas of Europe and the (Modern) Mediterranean', in *Mediterranean Europe(s): Rethinking Europe from Its Southern Shores*, ed. Fernanda Gallo and Matthew D'Auria (London: Routledge, 2022), pp. 1–19.

Italian Hegelianism, Naples and the South played a particularly prominent role. This work will therefore present a critique of conventional hierarchies in the study of Risorgimento political thought.

Within the history of Italian Hegelianism, the pre-eminent role assumed by Naples and the South was never quite matched by North Italian interest in the German philosopher. This discrepancy constitutes the basis for a key argument in this book and addresses a central issue of historiographical debates on modern Italy, namely, the relationship between North and South and the South's role in Italy's relationship to the wider world. In this context, it is important to note that the stereotyping of the Italian South as backward and different from the North emerged early in the history of Risorgimento political thought. Since the late eighteenth century, various thinkers associated with the Neapolitan Enlightenment, Antonio Genovesi and Gaetano Filangieri among them, had identified a number of social and cultural problems that allegedly were specific to the Italian South and made it difficult to reform the Kingdom of Naples. Many of their arguments were then reiterated by the protagonists of the Neapolitan revolution of 1799, the men and women around Vincenzo Cuoco[72], and subsequently by the Napoleonic administration in Naples.[73] After 1815, political thinkers from the North used this debate on the South to define what it was that made their own realms allegedly more progressive. Writing in the 1840s, Carlo Cattaneo argued that the South lacked most of the features his native Lombardy shared with Central and Northern Europe, due to its arbitrary and oppressive system of government. He describes an entirely foreign country, one whose culture contrasts dramatically with the cosmopolitan spirit that characterises the middle classes of Northern Europe.[74] Whereas Cattaneo, relying upon this analysis, and as a matter of principle, would for a long time question the rationale of politically unifying the Italian peninsula into a single

[72] See Marta Petrusewicz, *Come il Meridione divenne una Questione. Rappresentazione del Sud prima e dopo il Quarantotto* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1998), pp. 17–20; Franco Venturi, *Riformatori napoletani* (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1962).

[73] John Davis, *Naples and Napoleon. Southern Italy and the European Revolutions, 1780–1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[74] Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius. Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2002), pp. 104–107; Fabio Sabetti, *Civilization and Self-Government. The Political Thought of Carlo Cattaneo* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books: 2010); On Cattaneo's views on Southern Italy, see F. Gallo, 'The United States of Europe and the "East (s)": Giuspe Mazzini, Carlo Cattaneo, and Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso', in *Europe and the East: Historical Ideas of Eastern and Southeast Europe, 1789–1989*, ed. Mark Hewitson and Jan Vermeiren (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 133–162.

nation-state, other political thinkers concluded that the North was under an obligation to lead the South into political modernity.

The study of Italian Hegelianism presents us with a very different image of the South. Taking account of its flourishing tradition of philosophical debate, it becomes obvious that the Italian South in no way represented an intellectual periphery of Europe – an argument that can easily be extended to the South's role in the history of European art and music or in the history of science. There is a long tradition of Anglophone historiography from Patrick Chorley, *Oil, Silk and Enlightenment. Economic Problems in XVIIIth-Century Naples* to the works of John Robertson, such as *The Case for the Enlightenment. Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* and John Davis' *Naples and Napoleon. Southern Italy and the European Revolutions, 1780–1860*, that has attempted to raise the profile of the Southern contribution to Italian intellectual history of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.[75] The transnational orientation of its cultural and intellectual life bears witness to the centrality of its position within the Italian peninsula and within Europe. As a consequence, the South also assumes a particularly prominent role when the history of Italy's political emancipation is placed in the context of larger transnational debates and of Italy's multiple imperial connections.[76] Moreover, Italians were conscious of their own contribution to the ideas and the political institutions of the world's most progressive nations.

As recent studies on the representations of the 'margins' of Europe, from Ireland to the Balkans, have indicated, these lands have undergone a process of Othering since the eighteenth century in connection with Europe's attempts to define its identity and with the rise of nationalism.[77] This book aspires to rethink Italian political thought by focussing on how the creative amalgamation of Hegel's ideas with Italian culture led to a

[75] See Patrick Chorley, *Oil, Silk and Enlightenment. Economic Problems in XVIIIth-Century Naples* (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici in Napoli, 1965); John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment. Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); John Davis, *Naples and Napoleon. Southern Italy and the European Revolutions, 1780–1860*.

[76] See the works of Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*; and 'Nationality Before Liberty?'; Axel Körner, 'National Movements against Nation States. Bohemia and Lombardy between the Habsburg Empire, the German Confederation and Piedmont', in *The 1848 Revolutions and European Political Thought*, ed. D. Moggach and G. Stedman Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 345–382; Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850. Stammering the Nation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[77] See Marta Petrusewicz, 'Rethinking Centre and Periphery in Historical Analysis: Land-based Modernization as an Alternative Model from the Peripheries', in *Remapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Context*, ed. T. Hauswedell, A. Körner and U. Tiedau (London: UCL Press, 2019), pp. 17–26; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

rethinking of historical and political concepts that greatly influenced the intellectual history of modern Italy and, indeed, of Europe as a whole.

The narrative offered by Italian Hegelians was intended to shape the idea of a modern Italian State regenerated by the encounter of their own fruitful intellectual traditions with the most advanced European philosophy, namely the Hegelian. As clearly described by Axel Körner in his recent work *America in Italy*, the process of amalgamation is never simply a matter of passive reception but is rather a translation into a new context, a complex process that leads to results that often bear little similarity to the original.[78] Analysing Italian Hegelianism allows us to reject the idea that engagement with foreign ideas describes a process of passive learning, in the sense of adopting supposedly more advanced ideas from abroad; and the same applies to intellectual flows within the Italian peninsula. As Marta Petrusewicz has explained, North and South exist in a relationship of otherness, where self-perceptions of the North depend on the image of an Other in the South, which in turn is then internalised by Italians from all over the peninsula.[79] Such processes of internalisation are foundational of hegemonic relationships and teleological distortions, whereby the South supposedly needs the North in order to leave its position of self-imposed inferiority. Rather than accepting such intellectual hierarchies, this book tries to identify original acts of creative amalgamation. Each of the five chapters of this book analyses one of these acts of amalgamation.

In Chapter 1, 'The Vico-Effect', this research explores how, in different parts of the Peninsula, Hegel's thought circulated in the guise of translations and commentaries from 1832 up to 1848. It then reconstructs the intellectual context of Naples and the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, paying particular attention to how the interpretation of the philosophy of Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), often viewed in relation to Victor Cousin's (1792–1867) reading of the Neapolitan philosopher, was combined with the study first of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and then of G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831). Key figures in this process are Ottavio Colecchi, Stanislao Gatti, Stefano Cusani, and Francesco De Sanctis. Finally, it defines the context in which the school of

[78] Axel Körner, *America in Italy: The United States in the Political Thought and Imagination of the Risorgimento, 1763–1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[79] Marta Petrusewicz, *Come il Meridione divenne una Questione. Rappresentazione del Sud prima e dopo il Quarantotto* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1998); on this topic see also Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices. Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Neapolitan Hegelianism arose, highlighting the novelty of the 'principle of nationality' as a product of this amalgamation. The elaboration in 1848 of the idea of 'nationality' characterising an organicist view of the law and the State, connected to the unitary aspirations and endeavours of the Risorgimento, would transform Neapolitan Hegelianism from a local tradition of thought into a national experience. By engaging with Hegel's ideas, the Neapolitan intellectuals developed their political revolutionary practice in 1848. After the revolution, while in prison or exile, Italian Hegelians further refine the reflection on Italian philosophy in order to enhance that process of self-consciousness of the nation.

Chapter 2, 'The Renaissance', illustrates how Italian Hegelians, and in particular Marianna Florenzi Waddington and Bertrando Spaventa, between 1848 and the 1860s, contributed to the understanding of the philosophical tradition of the Italian Renaissance by rediscovering the works of Giordano Bruno. They traced a line of continuity between the Italian Renaissance and German Idealism by arguing that 'the last disciple of Bruno was Hegel'. They challenged the myth of the Hegelian 'Protestant Supremacy', amalgamating the widespread criticism regarding Italian Catholicism, and presented an alternative path to 'Modernity' traced by the Italian philosophers of the Renaissance. Bruno insisted on the autonomy of conscience and the infinite value of human dignity by reformulating existing notions of moral and political liberty. They affirmed the peculiar bond between historiography, philosophy, and politics that characterised Italian culture during the nineteenth century.

This connection is also at the heart of Chapter 3, 'The Risorgimento', in which it is the key figure of Niccolo' Machiavelli that allows Italian Hegelians, and in particular Francesco De Sanctis, Francesco Fiorentino, and Pasquale Villari, to challenge the idea of an Italian 'missed Reformation', recasting the Renaissance as 'the Italian version of the Reformation'. The rediscovery of Machiavelli's work is connected to the radical change that nineteenth-century Italian political language underwent regarding the nexus of *Rinascimento–Risorgimento*. This chapter demonstrates that the change in the language represents a shift from an interpretation that highlights the religious and moral dimensions of the principle of Italian modernity to one that stresses its historical characteristics.

It is in Chapter 4, 'The Ethical State', that the context of the Risorgimento is explored more closely while scrutinising Hegel's political thought and comparing his texts with Italian Hegelians' commentaries and interpretations of Hegel's philosophy. It focuses in particular on Marianna

Florenzi Waddington, Bertrando Spaventa, and Silvio Spaventa. It then examines how nineteenth-century interpretations of Hegel were rehearsed and redeployed by the main Italian scholars of Idealism in the twentieth century, Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile.

Chapter 5, 'Hegelians in Charge', extends further the key argument of the book, exploring the contribution of the political thought and political practices of Italian Hegelians, to the building of the new Italian State. This chapter focuses in particular on Silvio Spaventa and Francesco De Sanctis and how they reshaped the Hegelian theory of the State to serve the new Italian political context and to contribute to the understanding and designing of the nascent Italian State. It investigates the laws they proposed, the Parliamentary speeches they delivered, and the political pamphlets they wrote, discussing contemporary political issues often addressed by having recourse to Hegel's ideas reshaped to respond to the challenges presented by their own time. The chapter concludes by exploring the influence of Italian Hegelianism on Antonio Labriola's 'philosophy of praxis', which is an original reading of Marxism and one that preserves some of the key traits of the Italian Hegelian reading of Hegel. Italian Hegelianism was shaped by a 'practical' understanding of Hegel's philosophy, whereby it insisted on the historical, ethical, and political dimensions of Hegel's metaphysics and attempted to realise Hegelian political ideas in the practice of political life. This critical approach would be passed on to the Italian Hegelians' dearest pupil, Labriola, and would persist as a trait of Italian engagement with Marx's political thought.

The Epilogue focuses on the influence and legacy of nineteenth-century Italian Hegelianism by investigating how Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Gentile, and Antonio Gramsci re-elaborated this tradition at the turn of the new century in order to develop their own philosophical systems, their interpretation of Hegel, Marx, and the relationship between politics and ethics, as well as their understanding of Italian history and of the role of intellectuals in the formation of the Italian state.

By presenting the story of this generation of intellectuals who engaged with Hegel's philosophy while actively participating in Italian political life in the nineteenth century, this book contributes to the scholarly debates on Hegel and Italian Hegelianism, on the history of political thought and intellectual history, and on Italian political thought and the Risorgimento. It traces the development through the century of the political and philosophical ideas of a group of scholars and politicians who from the Southern periphery of Europe engaged with the philosophy of Hegel and raised

them as subjects of thought. It offers a perspective on a time of radical political and intellectual transformation undergone by one of the most spectacular instances of nation- and state-building of nineteenth-century Europe by presenting one of the many bodies of political thought, certainly one of the most influential in modern Italy. It is in history that philosophy acquires its political relevance.