

Tiene este libro del profesor Cruz una envidia de sabiduría que los filósofos especialistas podrán valorar en detalle.

Espero, en estas líneas de síntesis, haber sido justo y agradecido al magnífico esfuerzo intelectual que el autor ha vertido en este libro, donde aprendemos no solamente lo que es la intimidad personal y su crecimiento, sino las actitudes básicas que no pueden faltar en el desarrollo psicológico y moral de cada uno.

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### Pomante, L. (2104).

*Between History and Historiography. Research on Contemporary Italian University.* Macerata: Edizioni Università di Macerata, 176 pp.

To allow the foreign historians of higher education and universities to fully understand the particular organisation and structure of the Italian university system” (p. 7): this is the objective which, as stated by the author himself, enlivens the pages of the book *Between History and Historiography. Research on Contemporary Italian University*. Divided into four dense chapters, presented at seminars and international conferences, this recent volume in English actually offers a rich and documented framework on the Italian university history of the last two centuries and on the state of research in this field of study, helping the foreign scholar to decipher and interpret historical and historiographical features of the Italian context. The book’s title effectively summarizes the overall design of the monograph, because the first two chapters allow you to enter into the post-unification and contemporary Italian university *history*, whereas the last two ones shed light on the *historiography* and sources needed to carry on research in this area of study.

Specifically, the first chapter (*The Peculiarities of the Italian University System. The Role of Small Provincial Universities from National Unification to Post-World War II Period*) focuses on a special feature of the Italian post-unification university system, represented by the so-called ‘minor universities’. We refer to a type of university widespread in small towns of the Italian provinces, which has played a significant role not only for the cultural and socio-economic growth of many peripheral areas of the peninsula, but also for a more general definition of the Italian university system as a whole. The second chapter (*The Rise of E-Learning in the Italian University System between the Creation of On-Line Universities and the Innovation of the Educational Processes in Traditional Universities, 2003-2013*), deals

with a completely new item also for the Italian panorama of studies, because it reconstructs, for the first time, the complex and, in some ways, controversial case of the introduction of distance learning and on-line universities in Italy, tracing the antecedents (1980s and 1990s), the origins (Ministerial Decree of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2003) and developments (until 2013) of this recent chapter in the Italian university history.

With the third chapter (*The University as a Historiographical Problem. Studies and Research on Italian Universities and Higher Education Systems in the Last Twenty Years*), we go into the merit of the historiographical discourse. Set according to the usual formulas of the studies' review, the chapter offers a systematic and updated overview of publication, lines of research and conferences which have animated the Italian scientific debate on the history of higher education and universities in modern and contemporary age in the last three decades. This useful overview is followed by an organic presentation of the projects promoted at local and national level aiming at the preservation and enhancement of the primary sources in this field of study. In this perspective, the fourth and final chapter (*Preserving memory. The archives of the Italian universities and the organisation of historical research in higher education field*) highlights the importance of the historical archives of the Italian universities, both as a "site of memory" and as a "research laboratory" (p. 169) essential for a concrete progress of knowledge on the history of higher education and university.

Each chapter of this volume in English allows composing a lucid and coherent overall picture, which seems to answer a double purpose. On the one hand, to offer the coordinates (categories and research tools) needed to penetrate the complex and, in some respects, labyrinthine history of the Italian university world (well represented in the book cover). On the other hand, to propose an approach to the history of university able to encourage an effective internationalization of the field, through the promotion of research models and historiographical analysis functional to the development of a comparative dialogue and debate among different study traditions.

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