

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

LIV



2023

BALCANICA

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ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

UDC 930.85(4-12)

BELGRADE 2023

ISSN 0350-7653
eISSN 2406-0801

LUCIANO MONZALI, *LA DIPLOMAZIA ITALIANA DAL RISORGIMENTO ALLA PRIMA REPUBBLICA*. MILAN: MONDADORI, 2023, 455 P.

Reviewed by Bogdan Živković*

Luciano Monzali, professor of the history of international relations at the University of Bari, recently published a study on the history of Italian diplomacy. As Professor Monzali is one of the leading scholars in this field, the book is the culmination of his previous research and publications. This volume is not merely a collection of his previous articles, re-edited for this occasion. It, in fact, offers an interesting methodological approach to narrating the history of Italian diplomacy. Namely, it contains two different sections. The first one (three out of the initial four chapters) consists of shorter essays about the history of Italian diplomacy. The second section consists of five biographies of illustrious Italian diplomats.

As for the three essays, in the first one (pp. 11–36) Monzali goes back to pre-unification times. This chapter depicts the foreign policy principles and diplomatic culture of the Savoyard state. All the other chapters in this book resonate with this initial essay, demonstrating that Savoyard principles, primarily the rationality of their foreign policy, left a lasting imprint on Italian diplomacy. Continuities, discontinuities and evolution of traditional values are recurring topics of this monograph.

Chapters two and four are also essays on the history of Italian diplomacy. The second chapter (pp. 37–78) is devoted to the period from the Italian unification to the Second World War, and the fourth one (pp. 167–182) focuses on the renaissance of Italian diplomacy after 1943. These two essays revolve around the diplomatic tradition of liberal Italy. Although Monzali criticizes that tradition for being provincial and Eurocentric, his outlook is mostly positive. He writes about the success of liberal diplomacy prior to the March on Rome and how the liberal diplomatic tradition

managed to persist and evolve during the fascist era, preserving the Savoyard legacy of rationality in foreign policy. Most importantly, Monzali underlines how that liberal diplomatic tradition was crucial in 1943. In a dramatic time for the country, it was diplomacy that managed to revive the Italian state. With their rational focus on national interest, diplomats led Italy to a stronger alliance with the US and Western Europe, reinventing the Italian position in the new international order. Thus, they led to benefits and progress for the country whose future had not seemed so bright in 1943.

The essays described above contextualize the five case studies, i.e., the five biographies of illustrious Italian diplomats that are at the centre of this volume. Chapter three (pp. 79–166) is a biography of Raffaele Guariglia; chapter five (pp. 183–252) depicts the life of Pietro Quaroni; chapter six (pp. 253–312) focuses on Roberto Ducci; chapter seven (pp. 313–424) analyses the career of Roberto Gaja; and, finally, chapter eight (pp. 425–440) is a shorter biography of Luigi Vittorio Ferraris.

Continuities and evolution are the thread connecting all the above mentioned diplomats. For Monzali, Guariglia is an example of how the structures and traditions of pre-fascist diplomacy survived the Mussolini era – how they adapted to fascism, modified themselves and finally resurfaced with the demise of *il Duce*. On the other hand, Raffaele Guariglia influenced the new generation of diplomats, such as Roberto Ducci and Roberto Gaja. He passed his

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realism on to the new generation, but also the notion that a diplomat has to be an intellectual and have a broader cultural and political perspective.

Guariglia's portrait is followed by Pietro Quaroni's. Quaroni is also depicted as an incarnation of the best qualities of pre-fascist Italian diplomacy. Mainly, its harsh realism and sincerity in communication with the power centres in Rome. Besides preserving these principles, Quaroni was also a man of the new era. His long stay in Afghanistan helped him to overcome the traditional flaws of Italian diplomacy – provincialism and Eurocentrism.

Two of Quaroni's pupils, two main figures of Italian diplomacy in the period from 1965 to 1975, two Roberto's – Ducci and Gaja, are depicted in the following chapters. Ducci and Gaja's portraits are the central part of this book. Both started their diplomatic careers in the fascist era but were dominantly influenced by the principles of pre-fascist diplomacy, both were intellectuals, both were dedicated to analysing the impact of atomic weapons on international relations, both saw the pinnacle of their careers during the *centro-sinistra* era in Italian politics, both were anti-communists, and both were staunch supporters of the Western alliance. The list of their similarities can be expanded, but Monzali also depicts their differences. For instance, how Gaja was more focused on the alliance with Washington, and Ducci on the collaboration with other Western European countries.¹ But

what Monzali emphasizes is how these two prominent figures incarnated the long-lasting legacies and traditions of Italian diplomacy. They followed those traditions when leading the *Farnesina*, and transmitted their values to the next generations of diplomats.

The book ends with the portrait of Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, an example of a diplomat who was inspired by Gaja and Ducci and preserved the traditional values of Italian diplomacy. In Monzali's portrait we can see that Ferraris was someone who strongly believed that a diplomat should take an active part in the political, cultural and social life of his country, and not be afraid to voice his opinion. In this traditional concept, a diplomat is obliged to counsel his government on international affairs and to have a vision of his country's international role.

Two methodological features make this volume particularly successful. First, as the author underlines, publications on the history of diplomacy focused not on foreign policy but on the diplomatic institutions themselves are much needed in Italian historiography. In this regard, Monzali's study is a competent reconstruction and analysis of that history – how it is rooted in the Savoyard states, and how its traditions persisted and evolved. Second, this book is a *tour de force* of Monzali's characteristic focus on individuals and their agency. In the five biographies, by telling the stories of five diplomats, Monzali manages to depict and analyse the history of Italian diplomacy. Thus, with this book Monzali successfully demonstrates that the Italian diplomatic tradition was crucial in shaping national history, and how individuals and their efforts were paramount in that endeavour.

¹ Another difference that is important in the Serbian context is their outlook on the relations with Yugoslavia. Both were experts on this issue. Ducci even served as ambassador to Belgrade from 1964 to 1967. Also, both advocated a resolution to the bilateral territorial dispute. However, Gaja was persistent in his view that it was not in Italy's interest to hurry to arrive at one. He believed that Rome should request more territorial gains. On the other hand, Ducci was content with ratifying the de

facto state of the border. Hence, he advocated a swift solution to the dispute.

ISSN 0350-7653



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