

IN THE COLOURFUL REFLECTIONS OF MIGRANTS IN THE LAND OF CALABRIA,
ALMOST A REVERBERATION OF THE FATA MORGANA?

*Salvatore Berlingò**

SUMMARY: 1.- Where, how and when of the Fata Morgana phenomenon and its effects; 2.- Dante's 'made in Italy' and the double register adopted for the reception of foreigners in the 'bel paese là dove 'l sì suona'; 3.- The 'need for the world' and the upward refraction of Calabria's plural identity; 4.- The Mare Amoruso imperative and the 'categorical octativities' aimed at substantial and concrete justice; 5. - Dante before and beyond Kant: from the 'Justice of Charity' to the 'Charity of Justice.

1.- Where, how and when of the Fata Morgana phenomenon and its effects

The contemporary problems of migratory flows induced by international mobility, which have become extraordinarily more pressing in conjunction with the related phenomena of globalisation even conflicts¹, require a timely and in-depth rethinking of the already vast scenario of study and research pathways that, in Italy, lie *on the sidelines of the usual didactic and scientific programming*.

A few years ago, a study meeting was held in Reggio Calabria on *The Mediterranean: so near, so far*². Such wording might make one think of a mirage, capable of involving and moving onlookers, only to evaporate, however, at the first light of dawn or at the first contact with reality.

If one really wants to resort to a metaphor, I believe, therefore, that it is more in line with what is about to be said to use a different figure, which indicates the phenomenon of *refraction at the top of the image*, also because it does not take place according to a merely subjective dimension - like the mirage - but materialises in an objective, real (albeit temporary) projection, which, apart from other well-localised areas of the planet, is frequently observed in the area of the Strait of Messina, taking the name of *Fata Morgana*.

Why does it seem appropriate to evoke, with regard to the Mediterranean, the dynamics of *refraction upwards*, to which the phenomenon of the Fata Morgana gives shape? Because the Mediterranean, with the succession of its histories and the precipitate of its traditions, operates as a sort of catalyst or refracting prism that continually refocuses and shifts forward and upward the future scenarios and prospects of the various identities pertaining to the lands mirrored in it, whose essential condition for maintaining and developing is not to withdraw into themselves, but to project relentlessly outwards and forwards or, if you prefer, to *transcend* their entities.

* Professore Emerito di Diritto ecclesiastico e canonico presso l'Università degli Studi di Messina, Dipartimento di Giurisprudenza.

¹ Cf. Pope Francis' repeated calls for a 'third world war in pieces'. The issues alluded to in the text have a planetary scope (see, for all, M. B. Steger, *La globalizzazione*, trad. it., Bologna 2016), but they imply a very specific impact on the European reality, as can be seen in the essay by A. Armellini and G. Mombelli, *Né Centauro, né Chimera. Modest proposal for a plural Europe*, Venezia 2017 and in the report produced by COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community), *Promoting peace in the world, Europe's vocation*, in *Il Regno-doc*, No. 17 of 2016, 564, but also by the acute analysis of S. Ferrari, *Eclisse dell'Europa, laicità e libertà religiosa*, in *Il Regno-att.* 10 (2016) 305, who, in the face of irrefutable demographic, socio-economic and political data, fears a «double decline» of our Continent «in the West and with the West». The accents of the *LETTA REPORT* on the completion of the Union and the *DRAGHI REPORT* on Europe's competitiveness are similar.

² See the book *Il Mediterraneo: così vicino, così lontano. Nuovi scenari per una nuova Calabria e un nuovo Mezzogiorno*, edited by the Associazione ex Consiglieri Regionali della Calabria, Reggio Calabria 2015.

Moreover, the annual conference of the European Consortium for Church and State Research had already taken place in Reggio Calabria, during which they discussed the gap that globalisation-related phenomena, taking over from the dominance of secularised civilisations, were increasingly widening between the subjective dimension of the citizen and that of the believer (or of the person belonging to cultures and ethnic groups deeply marked by faith)³.

Moreover, the fact that the relationship between global and local takes place in extremely different ways, according to the different areas and stages in which it is configured, was foreseen by a valiant thinker from Reggio Calabria, Domenico Farias. He had not failed to observe perspicuously that in the territorial areas in which modernising globalisation makes its influence felt, producing only an increase in consumption and not a development of creative energies, the phenomena associated with globalisation have such a repercussion that they inevitably translate into forms of reactive localism⁴. As a result, faced with the influx of ever greater numbers of immigrants, the relations between natives and non-EU citizens are often intertwined and alternate, on one side and on the other, with behaviours that are now of certainty-security (today we would say: 'identitarian'), now of uncertainty-fear (today we would say: 'securitarian'): the insecurity of the immigrant and the security of the native or, vice versa, and, more and more frequently, the security of the former and the insecurity of the latter, led to doubt and fear⁵.

For this very reason, from that very moment, I had become convinced that the objective of any serious didactic commitment should have been «to educate 'speakers' of different *languages* to know how to *speak* in a single *discourse*» and to know how to listen to a *foreigner*, who, while remaining a foreigner, i.e. integral in his or her linguistic and cultural identity, is no longer perceived as a *stranger* or even hostile, but is welcomed and treated as an *equal* and as a *neighbour*, despite - and all the more so because of - his or her diversity⁶.

³ See European Consortium for Church and State Research (ed.), *Citizens and faithful in the countries of the European Union. A dual belonging at the test of secularisation and globalisation*. Proceedings of the Colloquium (University for Foreigners: Reggio Calabria, 12-15 November 1998), Leuven-Milan-Baden Baden, 1999. We can underline the premonitory significance of that conference, noting how the opportunity to revisit the topics it dealt with was still felt afterwards, through duly updated and contextualised analyses with reference to the Mediterranean basin and the migratory flows therein. Reference can be made to the *Milan Report. Cittadinanza ed appartenenza religiosa nel contesto euromediterraneo (Citizenship and Religious Belonging in the Euro-Mediterranean Context)*, edited by the editors of the *Quaderni di diritto e politica ecclesiastica*, published in that journal (*Quad. dir. pol. eccl.*, No. 1 of 2016) under the title *Cittadinanza e libertà religiosa nell'Area Euromediterranea (Citizenship and Religious Freedom in the Euro-Mediterranean Area)*; cf. also the Proceedings of the 2015 ADEC Conference, in the volume *Democrazie e religioni. Religious Freedom, Diversity and Coexistence in 21st Century Europe*, Università degli Studi, Trento, 2016; as well as: C. Cardia, *La libertà religiosa tra ascesa e crisi dei diritti umani*, in *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*, Rivista telematica (www.statoechiase.it) 22 (2016) 1-17, especially pp. 6 ff., the dossier on *Religious Pluralism & European Integration*, in www.olir.it and the 4th Bruno Kessler Lecture: H. Bielefeldt, *Il potenziale della libertà di religione. The experience of a United Nations Special Rapporteur*, held in Trento on 20 October 2016. Finally, it is no coincidence that the European Commission, in its *Call for Proposals EACEA/05/2016*, under the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 3 (*Support for Policy Reforms, Social Inclusion through Education, Training and Youth*) specified, that for their eligibility, such proposals must «predominantly pursue one of the following two general objectives...: (1) to prevent violent radicalisation and promote democratic values, fundamental rights, intercultural understanding and active citizenship; (2) to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged students, including people from a migrant background, by preventing and countering discriminatory practices».

⁴ D. Farias, *Mondialità dell'età contemporanea e contemporaneità della storia locale*, in the collected work *Chiesa e Società nel Mezzogiorno. Studi in onore di Maria Mariotti*, II, Soveria Mannelli 1998, 1655-1671.

⁵ D. Farias, *Il cambiamento dei rapporti tra territorio e cultura e le dichiarazioni universali dei diritti*, in the volume *Testimonianze calabresi dei diritti dell'uomo e dei popoli*, Reggio Calabria 2002, 26 f.

⁶ S. Berlingò, *Introduction* to the volume *Testimonianze calabresi*, cit. 8. Moreover, in that same period of time, also A. Cavalli, *Il messaggio universale dell'Unione europea*, in *il Mulino* 4 (2000) 629-632, proposed the 'European model' - which is, after all, a Euro-Mediterranean model, as it can be seen as a deep Mediterranean suggestion among the

In formulating that wish, it was possible to leverage what Giorgio La Pira, the Sicilian (from Pozzallo) Holy Mayor of Florence, had said in the context of the *Week of Studies on Mediterranean Man*, held in Tunis in October 1968, namely that, in our days, «prophetic utopia» is «the only possible historical reality»⁷.

It is worth remembering how Reggio Calabria is the barycentre of the *Mare Nostrum* basin, not in a merely topographical, or even just geographical sense, but rather in the sense of a focal point, albeit *eccentric*, and therefore *strange* - but precisely because it is strange and eccentric, *healthy* and *creative* (to refer to a well-known Gödel assertion) - in which, as in a *vertex*, or rather in a hyperbolic *vortex*, all the virtualities and all the conflicts typical of the Mediterranean are thickened⁸.

Reggio is situated on the edge of what - I refer to Giustino Fortunato - can be defined as a hydrogeological cliff, with which, moreover, Europe extends its offshoots towards two continents, the African and the Asian⁹; and just as the chaotic geological stratification of the soils of that province induced the *humus* for the typical and unique fruit that is *bergamot*, so from the serial sedimentation of civilisations and cultures that have succeeded one another over the centuries, leaving imperishable traces, a vocation for *interculture* has germinated. It is precisely for this reason that Reggio and its *hinterland* possess the capacity to recognise, welcome and enhance the various identity contributions, enriching and implementing them: in the same way that the essence of bergamot fixes the aromatic *bouquet* of each perfume, without annulling or altering it, but simply reinvigorating the lighter fragrances, highlighting the latent ones, attenuating and tempering the stronger ones¹⁰.

Calabria is, still and always, a frontier brand: with the weight of closures, fractures, separations, clashes, conflicts and, above all - as unsurpassed by Georg Simmel¹¹ - the ambiguities that this can entail¹²; but also with the wealth of exchanges, integrations, reciprocal enrichments and synergies

peoples of all the European regions - as an answer «to the greatest problem that the globalisation process poses to the contemporary world: how to live and collaborate peacefully without erasing differences, but rather enhancing them as differences». For my own part, I had already developed similar convictions in an *Introduction* to the book *Il fattore religioso fra vecchie e nuove tensioni (The Religious Factor between Old and New Tensions)*, Turin 1997, 9-21, and resumed them later in *Il 'cammino' e le 'radici': riflessioni su di una 'nuova' missione della 'vecchia' Europa (The 'new' mission of the 'old' Europe)*, in *Quad. dir. pol. eccl.* 2 (2005) 361-368. In this perspective, it also seems appropriate to recall the KEK's *Open Letter to the Churches and associated organisations in Europe and invitation to dialogue and consultation*, 21 June 2016, in www.ceceurope.org as well as the already mentioned COMECE report, *Promoting Peace*, cit., especially 565 ff.

⁷ G. La Pira, *La cultura e la civiltà mediterranea per la storia nuova del mondo*, in Id., *Il sentiero di Isaia. Scritti e discorsi (1965-1977)*, edited by G(ianni). and G(iorgio) Giovannoni, with an *Introduction* by W. Veltroni, Milan 2004, 151-153. Also Pope Francis, *Speech on the occasion of the awarding of the 'Charlemagne Prize'*, reiterated that in order to realise the «dream» of a "new European humanism" we need «memory, courage, sound and humane utopia» [cf. *Il Regno-doc.* 9 (2016) 282].

⁸ C. Alvaro, *Mediterraneo*, now in Id., *Viaggio in Turchia*, Reggio Calabria 2003, 142: «In the men of the Mediterranean countries, the vices that lost them and the virtues that brought them to the top have remained prevalent in every individual; from individual to individual and from nation to nation, faults and virtues form almost a kinship that throughout the millennial stirring of their history has remained equally alive in all; as in a family where one can observe the different characters as they have alluded from one to the other». I owe to Prof. Antonino Zumbo, former Rector of the University for Foreigners 'Dante Alighieri' in Reggio Calabria - whom I would like to thank - the precious indications of Alvaro's writings referred to in the text.

⁹ A. Bancalari Molina, *La idea de Europa en el mundo romano. Proyecciones actuales*, Santiago de Chile 2015.

¹⁰ Cf. S. Berlingò, *La ricchezza dell'intercultura nell'esperienza locale*, in *La Chiesa nel tempo* 1 (2004) 110 f.

¹¹ G. Simmel, *Étude sur les formes de la socialisation*, transl. franc., Paris 1999.

¹² There has been no shortage of those (K. Lehnert, *La Calabria a Berlino*, in *Il Quotidiano*, 3 July 2001, 9) who have made Calabria a symbol of Italy and Europe in this respect; D. Farias, *Situazioni ecclesialesi e crisi culturali nella Calabria contemporanea*, Cosenza 1987, 334, had already noted this, according to whom «the Calabrian cultural

that any location located at the crossroads of several cultures and ethnic groups can benefit from¹³ : at the centre - in the sense clarified above - of the Mediterranean, in the bosom of a sea predisposed to embrace in the same context and along its shores those many othernesses or diversities, which make its identification code plural and complex.

2.- Dante's 'made in Italy' and the double register adopted for the reception of foreigners in the 'bel paese là dove 'l sì suona'

Of the *Mediterranean* as a *sea of the one God*, but also a *theatre of differences and conflicts*, Andrea Riccardi reasoned in the course of a magisterial lecture held in Reggio Calabria¹⁴ . The authoritative scholar, in some of his works relating to the Mediterranean area¹⁵ , has rightly and energetically warned of the possible tragic events caused by the pouring onto the Calabrian-Sicilian coasts of epochal migratory flows, warning that they could lead to a dramatic involution, from cohabitation to conflict. This would lead to the disappearance of that very 'world' which, once again, La Pira, with his noble and prophetic yearning, predicted could be transformed into a new Lake Tiberias, where the peaceful, tolerant and plural Spirit of Pentecost could be revived in counterpoint to the Babelic confusion¹⁶ .

To help avoid the nefarious outcome of the thwarting of the 'Pentecostal' spirit just mentioned, the urgency and opportunity of a recovery of the educational *mission* aimed at welcoming foreign (students) has been grasped in Italy, by articulating the educational programmes not through the

heritage» - as if to say: the genetic code of this Region - «is not only Calabrian and often is not natively Calabrian and refers *elsewhere* to be understood and appreciated». In my turn, again in the above-mentioned article, I would argue, however, that the 'multiple eccentricity or peripherality' of Calabria could dialectically turn into its opposite, that is, into a 'multiple centrality'. Perhaps this is also the reason for the Sea that bathes the Calabrian coasts. Alvaro, *Mediterraneo*, cit. 141, says: «...he who has seen it once often returns to it with his memory, and proposes to see it again».

¹³ The Veneto poet Biagio Marin wrote to his dear friend Arturo Carlo Jemolo that demarcation lines often tend to become lines of communion: cf. *Arturo Carlo Jemolo: da lettere inedite (1913-1981)*, edited by A. Galante Garrone, M. C. Avalle, Turin 1994, 851.

¹⁴ The text can be consulted on the website of the University for Foreigners 'Dante Alighieri' of Reggio Calabria, www.unidarc.it. It is worth recalling here a few passages from Riccardi's conclusions: «Simplifications are unsuitable for understanding the world of the Mediterranean: the many communities, many more than three, the many different attitudes to the one God, the many ways, the modernised societies, the peaceful ways and the violent ones. It takes a sense of complexity to orient oneself. Often religion - and Islam in particular - is today 'deculturised', detached from cultural and historical mediations, while globalisation processes tend to convey simplified ideological caricatures. Fundamentalism is also linked in some way to this process of deculturation of religions. The processes of radicalisation are linked to the disorientation, caused by globalisation, that lives in the suburbs of large European cities as well as in those of the South of the world...The Mediterranean continues to be the sea of the one God and of the many communities of believers, but, in a globalised world, a new understanding and new investments of thought, culture and humanity are required».

¹⁵ See, in particular, A. Riccardi, *Mediterraneo. Cristianesimo e Islam tra coabitazione e conflitto*², Milan 2014, but also Id., *La strage dei cristiani. Mardin, gli Armeni e la fine di un mondo*, Bari 2014. The issue is masterfully explored by F. Cardini, *Europa e Islam, storia di un malinteso*, Bari 1999, returned to the subject in Id., *L'Islam è una minaccia. Falso*, Bari 2016 and by G. Corm, *Contro il conflitto di civiltà. Sul "ritorno del religioso" nei conflitti contemporanei del Medio Oriente*, with *Preface* to the Italian edition by M. Caculli, Milan 2016.

¹⁶ Cf. the volume *Ritornare a Israele. Giorgio La Pira, gli ebrei, la Terra Santa*, Pisa 2016, with an *Introduction* [as significantly titled in *Il Regno-att.* 10 (2016) 284 ff.] by D. Menozzi, *Figli dell'unico Abramo*. Regarding the events feared by Riccardi it is sufficient to recall, emblematically, what happened on 26 February 2023 with the tragic shipwreck of Cutro, in which more than ninety migrants lost their lives, including more than thirty children.

formation of 'ghetto' classes¹⁷, but by resorting to a *dual register*: on the one hand, by providing foreign students with every useful tool for their better interpenetration into the Italian language and culture; on the other hand, by cultivating in Italian students the aptitude for a sense of openness and dialogue with foreigners, with the intention of contributing to the weaving of a network of mutually enriching relationships and supporting a *policy of cooperation and development* of both the context territories and the migrants' territories of origin. The aim should be to equip *human resources, both indigenous and foreign, in the role of intercultural mediators and 'facilitators' of and in Euro-Mediterranean relations*, especially with the training of personnel required by the third sector (or 'pillar'), by the new *welfare* (think, for example, of the initiative of the so-called *humanitarian corridors*¹⁸), the commitment to a *new active, participatory and responsible citizenship* in all the regions and countries concerned (also through the agreed return to the territories of origin of the staff units that have been provided and/or whose skills are best suited to planning and implementing the development of their communities of origin).

In this regard, it could be pointed out that the reference to a sort of 'myth' of Italianness in the world is hardly reconcilable with openness to the 'foreigner' and rather risks indulging in the drifts of identity that are often implicit in any reference to 'roots'¹⁹. On the other hand, it is certainly admissible to sustain the opposite, i.e. that the reference to 'roots' may not be discriminating and instead prove to be inclusive, as emblematic cases demonstrate, such as, for example, that of the recourse to the attractive force of '*made in Italy*', with the evocation, par excellence, of the figure and magisterium of Dante Alighieri. In the latter author's doctrine, in fact, decisive elements can be found, both to assume as a hermeneutic figure of the Mediterranean the interpretative key proposed at the outset of this contribution, and to understand how the problems of intercultural can benefit from the coordination between an adequate vindication of identities²⁰ and the establishment of greater and more substantial relations of justice between the most diverse peoples and nations.

The intercultural theme cannot do without the distinctive traits of *concreteness* - of 'Mediterranean concreteness' speaks masterfully and authoritatively Paolo Grossi²¹ -, which demands - as the Gospel episode admonishes -, on the part of those who are continually urged to refract their gaze ever higher, not to abstract themselves into mere ecstatic contemplation, annihilated in the face of blinding and therefore 'anaesthetising' glares (think of the three tents to be

¹⁷ On 11 April last, during the holding of the *Day of the Sea and Maritime Culture*, also in Reggio Calabria, from the Minister of Education and Merit, Giuseppe Valditara, who was present for the occasion, it was learnt that - net of the debated question on the predetermined and ever decreasing number of foreigners in each school class and the circumstance according to which first generation foreign students have a 22% deficiency in Italian, equivalent to a year of schooling less than Italian students, and a school drop-out rate of 30% compared to 9% of Italians - the Ministry would have already launched a feasibility study some time ago, in order to create a more effective reception and integration system, with more inclusive classes and with recourse to the strengthening of knowledge and study of Italian by specialised cultural mediators. It is worth noting, moreover, that in Reggio Calabria, the local University for Foreigners 'Dante Alighieri' has activated, since the 2007/2008 academic year (the first after obtaining legal recognition) a degree course in *Multidisciplinary and Intercultural Operators of the Mediterranean Area* (corresponding to the one currently called: *Mediators for Interculturality and Social Cohesion in Europe*) and a Master's Degree Course in *Planning and Management of Social Policies and Services in the Mediterranean Area* (corresponding to the one currently entitled: *Policies for Innovation and Social Inclusion - POLIS*).

¹⁸ On the experience, in this regard, promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio in collaboration with the Federation of Evangelical and Waldensian and Methodist Churches, see, *ex multis*, P(aolo). T(ommasoni), *I corridoi umanitari*, in *Il Regno-att.* 6 (2016) 138, as well as www.santegidio.org.

¹⁹Cf. M. Bettini, *Contro le radici. Tradizioni, identità, memoria*, Bologna 2012.

²⁰Cf. K.A: Appiah, *The Lie of Identity. How to recognise the false truths that divide us into tribes*, Milan 2019.

²¹ Cf. P. Grossi, *Scritti canonistici*, Milan 2013, 234.

set up, according to Peter's proposal, on the high mountain: *Mt* 17:1-8; *Mk* 9:2-8; *Lk* 9:28-56) of the Transfiguration (as if to intend it as the 'end of history').

It is enough to reflect on the fact that Dante is a forerunner of the concept, very relevant today, according to which the more one recognises oneself in another, the more one must grow in oneself (and vice versa)²². As for concreteness, this conception finds in Alighieri much more robust and realistic foundations than the abstract studies of contemporary semeiotics or the empirical visions of modern reductionist scientism can offer to the albeit appreciable theories on the *universality* of human rights. The latter key to interpreting reality is, in some respects, the heir to the 'radical Aristotelianism' against which Dante vigorously fought, ever more convincingly, in the course of the evolution of his thought (from the *De vulgari eloquentia*, to the *De Monarchia* to the *Convivio*, to the poetics of the *Dolce stil novo*), with the overcoming of the use of mere linguistic universals and with the recovery of the *simplicissima signa*, of the indirect or, better, 'incarnate' 'light' of Beatrice's eyes (the 'amor che nella mente mi ragiona').

3.- The 'need for the world' and the upward refraction of Calabria's plural identity

Also on the strength of the results of the most recent research carried out on the subject by eminent Italian and foreign scholars - starting with Miguel Asín Palacios²³, passing through Maria Corti²⁴ - it is possible to focus training and research objectives on the valorisation of Dante's language as a 'narrative' module of the history of a concrete and well-defined identity, such as the Italian one, by its very nature open to acceptance and 'contamination', in the sense of a pacification and mutual enrichment between the various civilisations and cultures that are part of the Mediterranean.

Moreover, in the very introduction to a collection of interdisciplinary writings²⁵ does not fail to acutely note that «in the contemporary era ... characterised by what have been called 'fluid identities' [or 'liquid' or 'plural'] ... the situation is in some ways paradoxical. While at the theoretical level one continues to work in the direction of a weakening of the notion of identity ... in the social imaginary and in political practice attempts are increasingly being made to functionally re-appropriate that notion ... 'For those who fear, everything rustles', wrote Sophocles»²⁶.

But speaking of 'identity' - and taking it for granted that, as an economist attentive to the *humanities* writes, trees bear no fruit if their roots are not nourished by good soil²⁷ - the attempt to recover an Italo-Calabrese identity understood as a *plural* identity, by its very nature devoted to

²² Cf. A. Zielinski, *Être chez soi, être soi. Domicile et identité*, in *Études* 6 (2015) 63.

²³ Cf. M. Asín Palacios, *Dante e l'Islam*, transl. it., Milan 2014 (the original in Spanish dates back to 1919).

²⁴ Cf. the posthumous collection of writings by M. Corti, *Scritti su Cavalcante e Dante*, Turin 2003.

²⁵ One can consult, in this regard, at www.quadernibalestrieri.it, in particular the *Introduction* to *Quaderno* 8, of the *Biblioteca Balestrieri*, with the essay by V. Crupi, *Lungo i sentieri dell'interculturalità medievale: Dante e l'Islam*, *ivi*, pp. 13-24, which makes us aware of the Arab-Muslim sources of the *Divine Comedy*, through the *Book of the Ladder of Muhammad*, while other essays highlight the influence, on the language of the Poet, of the 'illustrious vernacular' practised in the *Magna Curia* of Frederick II, settled precisely in the lands "on this side and on the other side of the Lighthouse": cf. G. Folena, *Cultura e Poesia dei Siciliani*, in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, edited by E. Cecchi and N. Sapegno, I. *Le Origini e il Duecento*, Milan 1965, 277. Lastly, for the most recent contributions on Dante's thought, in relation to what is argued in the text, see, again, V. Crupi, A.F. Calabrese, *La Trinità in Dante. Dalla "Vita Nuova" alla "Divina Commedia"*, Soveria Mannelli 2020 (with a review by S. Berlingò, *Poesia e Mistero*, available at www.unidarc.it); M. Naro, *Alta fantasia. L'altra teologia di Dante Alighieri*, Brescia 2021; G. Brunelli, *Dante: la visione dell'arte*, in *Il Regno-att.* 10 (2021) 4.

²⁶ See *Quaderno* 8, *cit.*, pp. 7-12.

²⁷ See L. Bruni, *Investire su humanities e coesione sociale*, in *Il Sole24Ore*, 2 March 2016.

interacting with the universe, indeed with the *pluriverse*, is in harmony with that *need for the world* in which Fernand Braudel saw the *input* perceived and used by Europeans to access navigation on the high seas and thus take possession of all seven pelagos of the planet²⁸.

It is probable, moreover, that Braudel overlooked how, in the depths of the Mediterranean peoples, that need for the world implied an even deeper meaning and value, namely those reposed in the evangelical *Duc in altum!* (Lk 5:4), so energetically evoked by St John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* of 2001²⁹.

In truth, the typical (and topical!) position of Calabria (also known as 'Italy', from the mythical sovereign Italo), emblematic with respect to so many other peripheries in the world, has in itself the potential to break through all barriers, to turn peripheral walls - as has already happened in Berlin - into open and vital borders, endowed with enormous prospects for revitalisation, growth and development. It is no coincidence that Domenico Farias, referring to the example provided by the scholars of the Peloritana School of Law - which has shared notable affinities and personalities with Calabria -, has noted that the choice of a peripheral territorial location, if it sometimes excludes the researcher from accessing «scientifically stimulating and enriching contacts, ... helps him, on the other hand, not to be subservient to ephemeral fashions and also to share the spiritual climate prevailing in places where the more or less visible presence of ancient wisdom is united with the experience of painful social situations that invite everyone to seriousness and essentiality, including the scholar»; the latter's demonstrated courage in being able to live in «a *sui generis* condition of marginality in a sense analogous to what the American sociologists of the first Chicago school gave to this word» guarantees him, conversely, an unparalleled and enviable freedom of thought³⁰.

Everything may therefore seem close at hand, within reach; but the clarity of vision, typical of sailors used to scanning the Mediterranean currents, if, on the one hand, it allows new scenarios to be perceived, must, on the other hand, protect against self-deception. Only in this way will it be possible to aim with some hope of success at a goal that is still far off, because there are still long stretches of the road to be travelled following the not easy itinerary of interculturality, for which there is no predefined module, but, if anything, the need for a perennial rediscovery and re-elaboration can be grasped³¹.

The ridge on which Calabria, like any other borderland, insists, is the edge of a chasm at the bottom of which it could be pushed by its marginality and by the inability of its people to emerge from the straits of a *fera*, rather than *proud*, wildness and closed particularism. And it would be a

²⁸ F. Braudel, *Civiltà materiale, Economia e Capitalismo*, Milan 1999, 375.

²⁹ See, in this regard, also P. Coda, in *Il Regno-doc.* 19 (2016) 642.

³⁰ Cf. D. Farias, *Giornate in onore di Angelo Falzea*, Milan 1993, 217 ff.

³¹ Cf. A. Riccardi, *La civiltà del convivere*, in the volume collettaneo *Islam e occidente. Riflessioni per la convivenza*, Laterza, Bari, 2002, p. 48. Ferrari, *Eclisse dell'Europa*, cit., p. 308, dwelling on the need for an up-to-date review, in the intercultural context, of the problems pertaining to secularism and freedom of religion, indicates as a direction of research worthy of being explored «the idea of 'embedded neutrality'»; however, the author himself believes that, in this regard too, "many other verifications should be carried out". Some perplexity, in this regard, is aroused by the results of the albeit accurate investigation by F. Macioce, *Laicità e l'integrazione sociale: un rapporto ambiguo*, in *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*, cit, No. 27, 2016, p. 17, according to which even the perspective of assimilationism would be authentically secular when, by shifting «integration from the plane of values to the plane of (social and political) force», it would limit itself to «imposing, in the name of the majority principle, or of historical tradition, or of the constitutional system in force, a certain model of coexistence as the only one possible»: as if these socio-political arrangements did not represent determined and circumscribed plexuses or nuclei of value, not exhaustive - 'per la contraddizione che nol consente' (*Inferno*: canto XXVII, v. 117) - of the *humanum*, that is, of a reality - as the author himself expresses it (*ibid.*, p. 14) - «beyond cultures, at an Archimedean point to which all cultures look and from which they all draw lymph». On this topic see also, for a calm analysis of Cass. Pen., Sec. I, of 15 May 2017, criticised on several fronts for alleged "assimilationist" propensities, A. Licastro, *La questione del kirpan tra esigenze di sicurezza e suggestioni "assimilazionistiche"*, published on 23 May 2017, on the blog messinordine.it.

tragedy within a tragedy, this time not only for areas such as Calabria, if the Mediterranean, instead of transforming itself - as La Pira longed for - into a new great lake of Tiberias, into a waterway flowing into the port of Isaiah³², were to irrevocably mark - as has been feared and is tragically occurring - a watershed between two worlds irreparably divided, similar to what happened with the Rio Grande between the two Americas, and as it could happen today between southern Italy and 'Padania', between Wallonia and Flanders, between the Europe of Greece and that of Berlin, between Europe and Africa, between the USA and Mexico, between the rich of the earth and the poor of the planet.

4.- The *Mare Amorosus* imperative and the 'categorical activities' aimed at substantial and concrete justice

It is precisely in the weakest, most peripheral and marginal areas that identities are pushed, more than elsewhere, to retreat into their own 'castle'. Each one, inside its own manor, proceeds, even before elaborating defence strategies, to evoke - as in Dino Buzzati's *The Desert of the Tartars* - figures of non-existent enemies and to turn every foreigner into an enemy or, at least, into an annoying stranger. It is not out of place to recall, in this regard, how the hostess of Kafka's *The Castle* expresses herself, irritated by K.'s insistence on having an audience with the Count: "You are not from the castle, you are not from the village, you are nothing"; indeed, she adds, "you are something too, unfortunately you are a stranger, someone who is always in the way, someone who (...) causes a lot of trouble, (...) who is not known for what intentions".

Reggio Calabria was awarded the title of 'Metropolitan City'³³. This title is truly its due, as a city destined to assume the strategic role of an administrative and urban hub at the centre, or rather, at the heart of the Mediterranean, or rather, of a Sea, as already mentioned, predisposed to receive, in the same context, along its shores, the many othernesses and diversities that make its identity plural and complex, and which a poem by Duke Duke of Piacenza identified as the *Loving Sea*³⁴. In it, according to the Lapirian expression mentioned earlier, the typical features of "Mediterranean humanism" stand out, which is by no means declining (and therefore mono-declining) according to archaic, erudite or solipsistic 'identity' inflections, but also and above all in such a sense as to favour a fertile (*interdisciplinary*) temperament of multiple instrumental knowledge and, at the same time, of variegated cosmo-visions aimed at appreciating relational or non-competitive immaterial goods.

In this regard, a considerable aid can be offered by the rediscovery of the 'transcultural' core³⁵, and therefore genuinely 'Mediterranean', of fraternity, which, not by chance, often translates into gestures, testimonies and even institutions inspired *by* and substantiated *by* concrete aid towards the most marginalised and neglected strata of our way of (con)living. Moreover, two centuries ago, Proudhon had already recalled that in the Hebrew language every act of charity towards one's neighbour was synonymous with *zedakah*, or philanthropy; and, subsequently, Massimo Cacciari

³² Cf. G. La Pira, *Il grande lago di Tiberiade. Lettere di Giorgio La Pira per la pace nel Mediterraneo (1954-1977)*, edited by M. P. Giovannoni, Florence 2006.

³³ On the swirling itinerary that today leads 'metropolises' to turn into 'cosmopolises', see the evocative reflections of F. Rella, *Immagini del tempo. Da metropoli a cosmopoli*, Turin 2016.

³⁴ Pencilled codex, No. 2908 in the *Biblioteca Riccardiana* in Florence.

³⁵ I refer, as on other occasions, for the meaning to be given to this term, to the pertinent warning to be found in D. Farias, *Crisi dello Stato. Nuove disuguaglianze e marginalità*, Milan 1993, 109, according to whom, this expression should not allude to a mere space common to several cultures, but rather to a 'frontier between culture with its acquired evidence and a radically different and unknown reality, which is the object of desire, of a search and an adventure of the spirit that takes man to the depths of himself'.

had pointed out how, over time, "a sort of 'contagion'" had been produced between the "masters of exile" and the "ancient nomolatos", represented by Judaism and Christianity, through the re-evaluation of that trait of continuity between the Old and New Testaments that can be grasped in the rule of dialogue and in the value attributed to the relationship with the other³⁶.

Not only Calabria and Southern Italy, but Europe itself are now at a crossroads: they must choose whether to act as places to *visit* (or, for those who believe in the historical nemesis, to *conquer*)³⁷, or as places open to *hospitality* and *welcome*, capable of recovering even the most reluctant interlocutors to dialogue, which only the sediments of civilisation and culture deposited in lands such as those lapped by the Mediterranean can be able to capture and involve in a renewed sense of *friendship*³⁸.

Obviously, the main vehicle of communication for the establishment of these relationships can only be offered by *language*. However, even in this aspect - especially when the main interlocutors are foreigners from countries and conditions that are disadvantaged or different from our own («the peripheries of the world»³⁹) - it is necessary to strive to imprint language teaching with a particular inflection, with the use of utterances and idioms that are not merely identifying, but open to interactive communication with other languages, even those that are less practised and widespread, but concretely and vitally centred on the stories and narratives typical of each person and culture. With respect to these aims and methodological methods - which are not easy to acquire without a highly qualified education, which draws on the acquisitions already matured within the doctrinal *corpus* of Dante Alighieri, but not always kept in mind by subsequent generations - the teaching of Italian must avoid materialising into a new and more subtle form of assimilation and subjugation,

³⁶ For appropriate references in this regard, I refer to S. Berlingò, *Nel silenzio del diritto. Risonanze canonistiche*, Bologna 2015, 81 f.

³⁷ In this regard, it is useful to recall that Kant, in his essay on perpetual peace, specified the difference - fundamental for a correct and equal approach to social and intercultural relations - between the *visitor* and the *guest*, clarifying that for the latter, the common rules of coexistence are not enough, but is required «a benevolent [i.e. a *friendly*] particular agreement», the only suitable one for welcoming «the stranger in the house as a cohabitant»: I. Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden und andere Schrifften*, in the translation by N. Bobbio, L. Firpo, V. Mathieu, *Scritti politici e di filosofia della storia e del diritto di Immanuel Kant*, Torino 1956, 303 ff.

³⁸ The realisation of the objectives set out in the text can benefit, as an underlying canvas - capable of corroborating the best intentions and fostering the most extensive sharing - from the appeal to the specific form of empathy, constituted, precisely, by the sentiment of *friendship*, according to its most appropriate meaning, that of an antidote that immunises against its exact opposite, namely enmity, or - to use a term common to both Nietzsche and Scheler - "le ressentiment": the fodder of every kind of war or conflict, just as friendship is at the foundation of peace and relations of coexistence between individuals, peoples and nations. It is not for nothing that Pope Francis, in his *Homily* delivered on 19 November 2016 during the Consistory for the creation of 17 new Cardinals, denounced the «virus of polarisation and enmity» that is spreading and insinuating itself everywhere (even in the Church), transforming 'others', particularly immigrants or refugees, into «adversaries» and «enemies» (in *Avvenire*, 20 November 2016, p. 5). In this regard, may I refer to H. L'Heuillet, *Du voisinage. Réflexion sur la coexistence humaine*, Paris 2016, as well as my work *L'Amicizia Mediterranea*, in the volume *Reggio città metropolitana. Per l'amicizia mediterranea*, edited by G. Tuccio, Rome 2010, 113-116. Moreover, friendship in relation to the Mediterranean had already been written about in an incomparable way by C. Alvaro, *Quasi una vita*, Milan 1950: «Il Mediterraneo. Encounters and sediments of civilisations. Friendships, which often go back over the centuries. The peoples facing this sea gossip about each other».

³⁹Cf. A. Riccardi, *Periferie. Crisi e novità per la Chiesa*, Milan 2016, 121, according to which the theme of the peripheries and that of the global city leads to a renewed conception of the Church and pastoral care. See also, in this sense: J.W. O'Malley, *Réforme de l'Église*, in *Études* 4234 (janvier 2017) 71-81; E. Zanetti, *Il diritto canonico e le situazioni cosiddette irregolari dal punto di vista matrimoniale*, in *Quad. dir. eccl.* 30 (2017) 304-338; the contributions collected in the volume edited by A. Spadaro, C.M. Galli, *La riforma e le riforme nella Chiesa*, Brescia 2016; as well as, in Rivista *Quad. dir. pol. eccl.* 1 (2017) the essays by P. Cappellini, G. Canobbio, A. Grillo, G. Dalla Torre, C. Minelli, S. Dianich, P. Valdrini, P. Papatomas, D. Keramidis, L.J. Hoffeman, N. Doe, A. Maffeis, C. Fantappiè, on the monographic theme *A un secolo dalla codificazione piano-benedettina: istituzioni e diritto nell'esperienza ecclesiologica cristiana contemporanea*, edited by the Editors of No. 1 of the same Review.

seeking to be respectful of what Jacques Derrida used to express with the term "différence"⁴⁰, to be referred to, in the sphere of interest here, as every 'different' history, language or discourse. Only in this way can a dialectical and constructive confrontation be fostered, propitiating attitudes and relations suitable for creating a climate of reconciliation and positive harmony, in the freedom and symmetry of each person's positions.

The creation of synergies, also at an academic level, committed to the role of a driving fulcrum of a vision of Europe less unbalanced towards the North-East and with the aim of operating as a crucible for the creative fusion of the type of knowledge triggered on the various and different (or 'other') 'histories' pertaining to the Mediterranean civilisation, would pay homage to the masterly teaching of Dante, who studied to adopt the '*illustrious vernacular*' - going beyond the original reduced and circumscribed sphere of its primitive use - as an idiom capable of offering the only possible coinage for a common 'idiom' among the albeit multiple and (at first glance) irreducible 'idioms' of the numerous Italian dialects⁴¹.

5. - Dante before and beyond Kant: from the 'Justice of Charity' to the 'Charity of Justice'

Dante's teaching may, finally, be useful in helping us understand how '*first love*', which blows where and when it pleases, postulates a commitment that goes beyond the Kantian '*friendly*' particular agreement aimed at welcoming and accommodating the stranger; and it also goes well beyond the rational and formal *justice of charity* analysed by Kelsen, in terms of a system, however evolved and up-to-date it may be, of laws regulating philanthropic actions. It draws on that 'beyond' that in *De Monarchia* the great Poet identifies as the very essence of law: the «*hominis ad hominem proportio*», that is, a prompt, concrete response to requests for justice commensurate with each distinct, perennially new and different request for humanity (*unica semper!*), *a response that can only be given by a justice inspired and guided by charity (and not vice versa)*, and hence by the *charity of justice*.

So, in the flexible, but no less firm, approach of the 'fugitive Ghibellin', the 'tempera' with which the sweetness of mercy forges justice («*iustitia dulcore misericordiae temperata*»: *Summa aurea*, Liber V, § 1) does not it completely undermines (unless it introduces a clear aporia) any binding duty, but rather pushes it to be ever more effective and demanding (*overcoming law!*⁴²), to make itself ever closer to the needs of the most miserable (*miseri-cordes!*) and disinherited, to maximise and optimise, by virtue of a categorical priority, its objectives ('*Optimierungsgebote*'⁴³).

It is, in short, an ideal *of*, but also a concrete commitment *to*, justice, aimed at transforming what is ordinarily perceived as a stumbling block into a cornerstone (*Ps* 113-118; *Mt* 21:23), in order to achieve new advances on the path to an ever more fulfilled and integral *well-being* of all peoples and a more effective protection of the less protected: a notion of justice with respect to which the

⁴⁰ J. Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*, Seuil, Paris, 1967.

⁴¹ Recently inspired by this model, in her specific and current field of research, is a young and talented scholar (currently Full Professor at the University for Foreigners 'Dante Alighieri' of Reggio Calabria), M.S. Rati, *Varietà dialettizzate e code mixing italiano/dialetto nel parlato degli immigrati*, in *Carte di viaggio*, No. 8, 2015, 143 ff. *Indagini sul parlato giovanile di Reggio Calabria*, Roma 2014. I recall that Alighieri, with regard to the *illustrious vernacular*, had written in *De vulgari eloquentia*, I, XVI, 4, that it «in qualibet redolet civitate nec cubat in ulla».

⁴² R.A. Posner, *Overcoming Law*, Cambridge-MA 1995.

⁴³ R. Alexy, *Concetto e validità del diritto*, transl. it., Turin 1997, 73, of which see also, more recently, Id, *Collisione e bilanciamento quale problema di base della dogmatica dei diritti fondamentali*, in *La ragionevolezza nel diritto*, edited by M. La Torre, A. Spadaro, Turin 2002, 37 ff.

inscription carved in Hammurabi's stele, on the protection of the poor, widows, orphans, represented, even then, the 'deposit', reflected in history, of a superior (divine?) and yet profoundly human; of that human, which, as already mentioned, is proposed beyond the claim of self-sufficiency of any single culture⁴⁴.

In this sense it is perhaps appropriate not to forget that Augustine's well-known saying that *Dilige, et quod vis fac!* (*In Jo. Ep. tr. 7,8: PL 35,2033*) was not pronounced in a context to propitiate a more lenient ('weak' or 'mild!') application of the law, but rather in the midst of a discussion on the legitimacy of the application of severe ecclesiastical punishments against the Donatists, even within a community founded on love («*ad disciplinam dictante caritate*»), such as the *communio of the christifideles*, which, from its origins, has identified the *canones* as its distinctive rules⁴⁵.

Similarly, it is understandable why, in a land like Calabria, where there is a strong risk of a criminal entanglement between the capillary networks of organised crime - defined by the southern bishops as a «*disgraceful scourge of our society*»⁴⁶ - and the networks of human traffickers who have insinuated themselves into the flow of the most desperate migrants, Pope Francis' warning to excommunicate the 'dranghetists'⁴⁷ has resounded loud and severe. Moreover, was it not said specifically by the Apostle of the Gentiles: «*Qua propter, si esca scandalizat fratrem meum: non manducabo carnem in aeternum, ne fratrem meum scandalizem*» (*I Cor 8:11*)?

The recovery, in every direction and at every level, starting with Europe and its peoples - who originated from the Mediterranean - of such a commitment and lifestyle, which is coherent, rigorous, and thus aimed at imprinting a connotation of service on every expression of authority, can indeed still offer fertile nourishment and robust support to human coexistence in every region of the Planet⁴⁸.

However, we need to equip ourselves on the side of concrete, credible, shared witness⁴⁹: in a constant interweaving, if you will, between *prophecy* and *martyrdom* (in its most genuine meaning of incarnated witness), between already and not yet, and vice versa.

And on the other hand, precisely in view of the solidity to be imparted to a testimony coming from a Europe projected onto the Mediterranean - at such a delicate, tragic and complex time, in

⁴⁴ Cf. S. Natoli, *Il rischio di fidarsi*, Bologna 2016.

⁴⁵ I refer, in this regard, to Berlingò, *Nel silenzio del diritto*, cit., p. 181; but see also A.G. Hamman, *La vita quotidiana nell'Africa di S. Agostino*, transl. it., Milan 1989, 271.

⁴⁶ This expression is found in the title of the document, dated 1975, *L'Episcopato calabro contro la mafia, disgraceful scourge of society*, which echoes an earlier collective letter by the Episcopato Meridionale, *I problemi del Mezzogiorno (The Problems of Southern Italy)*, dated 1948. Both texts were inspired by the Archbishops of Reggio Calabria, Mgr A. Lanza in 1948 and Mgr G. Ferro in 1975. For a detailed reconstruction of the episcopate's attitude towards the Mafia, see R. Giuè, *Vescovi e potere mafioso*, Assisi 2015 and A. Mantineo, *La condanna della mafia nel recente magistero: profili penali canonistici e ricadute nella prassi ecclesiale delle chiese di Calabria e Sicilia*, Cosenza 2016.

⁴⁷ This was the case in the Pope's speech on 22 June 2014 before 250,000 faithful in the Sibari Plain. Moreover, how much the current Pontiff cares about not separating the charitable afflatus from the rigour and, where necessary, the severity of justice, can be deduced from the issuance on 4 June 2016 of the M. P. *Come una madre amorevole*, which provides for effective sanctions against Bishops (or Eparchs or Major Superiors) negligent in applying the directives on the protection of minors, given by John Paul II, with the M. P. *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, further supplemented by Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. For the reform of Book VI of the Code of Canon Law, aimed at pursuing these goals even more fully, please refer, most recently, to the Apostolic Constitution *Pascite Gregem Dei* (in www.vatican.va), which came into force on 8 December 2021.

⁴⁸ I have already expressed this view in *Nel silenzio del diritto*, cit. 14 f.

⁴⁹ Cf. the exhortation formulated by Pope Francis, *Address on the occasion of the awarding of the 'Charlemagne Prize'*, according to which precisely now «in this torn and wounded world of ours we need to return to that solidarity in fact, to the same concrete generosity that followed the Second World War». The establishment of the *Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development*, with an Apostolic Letter in the form of a Motu Proprio dated 17 August 2016, is part of the pursuit of these objectives.

which the swarming of eastern and southern peoples, the inhuman refugee camps, the churning of the waves by which so many innocent people are continually swallowed up, the «third world war in pieces» (according to the already mentioned expression of Pope Francis), bear witness to an entirely different reality, obscured by the eclipse of a lost humanitarian spirit⁵⁰. I believe that the choice to place Italy at the forefront of research and teaching specifically oriented towards the pursuit of a *social cohesion* based on the enhancement of interreligious and intercultural relations is a choice that cannot be postponed.

Objectives of this kind correspond to the pressing needs that - net of the inadequacies and delays of *institutional policies* - reality highlights, demanding that we proceed in the direction of a more profitable management of *migratory flows* and *international cooperation* activities, also in view of safeguarding the goals of democracy and freedom, which seemed to be consolidated in our countries - so as to be able to boast of them before the whole world - and which instead risk being overwhelmed by recurring, arising and perennially unresolved conflicts⁵¹.

Abstract.– The calamitous events, that are forcefully widespread at a global level, reverberate on migratory flows, also on those headed to Calabria, which increase in an exponential and multi-faceted way, so that lend itself well to representing them the metaphor of the Fata Morgana, i.e. the phenomenon of refraction upwards and in multiple dimensions of images, found in the Strait of Messina, center of gravity of the Mediterranean basin, has always been a meeting/clash place for the most diverse civilizations and cultures.

Gli eventi calamitosi prepotentemente diffusi a livello globale si riverberano sui flussi migratori, anche su quelli diretti in Calabria, che aumentano in modo esponenziale e pluriforme, sicché bene si presta a raffigurarli la metafora della Fata Morgana, ossia il fenomeno della rifrazione in alto ed in più dimensioni delle immagini, riscontrabile nello Stretto di Messina, baricentro del bacino del Mediterraneo, da sempre luogo di incontro/scontro delle più diverse civiltà e culture.

⁵⁰ See R. Escobar, *Dalla parte giusta della storia*, in *il Mulino* (2016) 383-397.

⁵¹ For a review of the various points of view on the subject, see *La grande regressione. Quindici intellettuali da tutto il mondo spiegano la crisi del nostro tempo*, edited by H. Geiselberger, Milan 2017. In today's societal articulations it is increasingly difficult - in my opinion - to achieve, as advocated by J. Rawls, *Political liberalism*, New York 1993, the 'overlapping consensus', i.e. a consensus by simple 'intersection' or 'overlapping'. I refer, finally, for a critique of John Rawls' theory of justice, to M. Alvarez Ortega, *John Rawls y la religión en el espacio público: promesas y realidades de un mito teórico*, in *An. der. ecl. Est.* 2015, 21-37.