

B O O K R E V I E W S

L'occhio di d'Annunzio, Maurizio Rippa Bonati, Edoardo Midena, BIBLOS, Cittadella (PD) 2018, ISBN 978-88-6448-131-9, pp. 136.

January 1916, Venetian lagoon. A small Italian two-seat airplane, during an exploratory war operation, made an emergency water-landing. In the collision the passenger violently hit the right eyebrow arch with a severe trauma to the right eye and a supraciliary skin wound. Thus, the illness and the long convalescence of Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863-1938), observer of the Italian Royal Army in the First World War began. After the accident, the symptomatology was utterly neglected for many days, however, one month after it could no longer be ignored prompting the reluctantly Vate to rely on doctors. Numerous luminaries of Italian and international ophthalmology of the time were contacted, including Dr. Orlandini, Cirincione, Landolt and Albertotti. In particular, the cultured professor of the University of Padua, Giuseppe Albertotti (1851-1936), assisted d'Annunzio during the whole period of convalescence as a clinician and also as a man of culture. However, his erudition was sophisticated but not always required. The book, among other peculiarities, proposes the unprecedented transcription and analysis of the let-

ters between the patient d'Annunzio and his physician Albertotti allowing the authors to shape a precise and captivating reconstruction of the restless illness period of the Italian Poet in the months from January to September 1916. From the careful and scrupulous examination of historical-medical sources, the lapidary diagnosis of d'Annunzio's pathology is blunt bulbar right trauma with haemorrhagic phenomena and choroidal and retinal exudative phenomena followed by a macular fibrosis. However, a precious result of this sickness period is the profoundly introspective work *Notturmo* (1916) written by the Poet. This peculiar and unexpected character arises from the injury to the right eye and from the forced blindness imposed on d'Annunzio, to avert a sympathetic ophthalmia in the left eye. Maurizio Rippa Bonati and Edoardo Midena, professors of the School of Medicine of the University of Padua, used a wise and detailed method to analyze both known and unpublished sources, igniting a new and «suggestive» light on one of the most notorious renowned Italian protagonists of the Great War, offering a «clinical» and human exclusive portrait to the audience.

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