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Foreign Book Review: I viaggi di Freud in Italia [Freud's Travels to Italy]. By *Marina D'Angelo*. Turin, Italy: Bollati Boringhieri, 2024, 303 pp., $23.60 paperback.

Unpublished material by Freud—handwritten in German and recently uncovered in the U.S. Library of Congress—has not yet been published in the very country that houses the library. In *I Viaggi di Freud in Italia* (*Freud's Travels to Italy*), Marina D'Angelo explores Sigmund Freud's connection with Italy through a historical and psychoanalytic lens. The book stems from a remarkable discovery in 2009 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., where researchers Gerhard Fichtner and Albrecht Hirschmüller found a previously unexamined container holding 10 of Freud's pocket notebooks. The notebooks, carried by Freud during his travels and thought to be lost, escaped his efforts to destroy personal documents. The notebooks offer a glimpse into his thoughts and experiences during his 25 trips to Italy, an aspect of Freud's life largely unknown to the American readership. Published by Bollati Boringhieri, this is D'Angelo's first book in Italian, building on her extensive research into Freud's life and the history of psychoanalysis.

D'Angelo, a scholar in Italian studies and a historian of psychoanalysis working in Germany, not only presents the details of these travel notebooks but meticulously integrates Freud's extensive correspondence and published works with the notebooks to reconstruct a snapshot of where Freud stood, day by day, as he journaled his travels across the Italian peninsula. It is akin to watching a cinematic vignette of young Freud in an Italian hotel room, immersed in his thoughts as he contemplates his theory of dreams—still unformulated—during the intellectual labor that will give birth to *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud,

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1900/1953a, 1900/1953b). One can also envision him awakening from one of his many dreams in yet another Italian hotel room, jotting down his oneiric imagery while still in his pajamas.

The book examines Italy not only as a physical destination but also as a source of inspiration for Freud's intellectual and emotional life. In Italy, Freud sought a "lifeblood" or *Erquickung* (Freud, 1986, p. 226), as he had articulated at an early stage (D'Angelo, p. 40) that fueled his pioneering work, while the country simultaneously offered a space to confront his vulnerabilities as he processed his father's death. By examining fragments in Freud's notebooks and letters, and with her broader oeuvre, D'Angelo uncovers early inklings of ideas that would later shape psychoanalysis, reconstructing its origins in the context of Freud's travels.

The book starts with a chapter on Freud's early Italian journeys between 1895 and 1900. In a letter to Fliess on September 6, 1897, Freud (1985) wrote, "From Venice (received your letter) via Pisa, Livorno, to Siena. As you know, in Italy I am seeking a punch made of Lethe[1]" (p. 263), a metaphor drawn from a poem by Heinrich Heine (1844/2006), to express his desire to escape work fatigue and find refreshment in Italian beauty and foreignness. At this point, Freud had just started his self-analysis, initiated after the death of his father, and there is detailed correspondence between what he sightsees around him in his travels and what he sightsees inside himself.

In 1895, Freud visited Venice for the first time with his brother Alexander, marking a turning point from professional to recreational travel, as he realized in his early 40s that his practice could now financially support travel. Freud was deeply affected by the beauty and strangeness of Venice, while mulling over the dream of Irma's injection, which he had just before that trip. Unable to visit Giotto's frescoes in Padova due to the chapel's closure, Freud began having a recurring dream of a space (D'Angelo, p. 55), where he saw grotesque sandstone figures. When he visited the site in 1907, he saw linkages between the two and interpreted this dream in the 1909 edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900/1953a, 1900/1953b) as deferred wish fulfillment. The art and the sensory richness of Italian culture directly influenced Freud's thought process, contributing to his later formulations.

[1]Punch is a playful, intoxicating drink, and Lethe is the mythological river of forgetfulness from the underworld.

The second chapter centers on Freud's (1985) remark, "yet a high point of my life" (p. 449), written on September 19, 1901, in a letter to Fliess from a hotel in Rome. Having finally arrived at the age of 45, for his long anticipated first visit to the city, after years of hesitation and resistance, Freud reflected on the experience as both overwhelming and disappointing. D'Angelo shares Freud's comments on the trip from multiple sources, such as the postcard: "Arrived in Rome after 2 p.m.; by 3, after a bath and change of clothes, we had become Romans. Incomprehensible that we've never come here before" (Freud, 2002b, p. 138, my translation). D'Angelo traces the four known dreams that preceded and anticipated this journey.

For the reader who has been to Rome, revisiting these dreams means witnessing scenes from their own traveling state of mind. In the autumn of 1897, Freud's dreams of seeing the Tiber River and Ponte Sant'Angelo from a train window, only to find himself unable to disembark before the train departs, oscillating between desire and avoidance. Later in 1897, he dreams of being led up a hill and shown Rome in the distance, veiled in mist. Surprised at how clearly he can see Rome from afar, Freud evokes the biblical image of Moses glimpsing the Promised Land. He mistakenly identifies the city as Lübeck, the UNESCO World Heritage Site in northern Germany, which he passed through during his honeymoon travels—an example of displacement and condensation. In the third dream, from early 1898, Freud envisions himself in Rome at last, but instead of its iconic architecture, he encounters a dark stream, black rocks, and flower-filled meadows, imagery of a place yet to be encountered. Fourth, in the spring of 1898, Freud dreams of walking through Rome, only to notice that all the street signs and shop names are in German. The surroundings more closely resemble Prague. At the time, Freud longed to meet Fliess in Rome; however, they typically met in Prague, where Fliess had family ties. At this point, Freud (1985) called his "longing for Rome . . . deeply neurotic" (p. 285), a desire shaped by layered associations: the figure of the Jewish leader; his honeymoon journey, perhaps with its erotica; unmatched imagery cast upon a place long anticipated, yet still unmet; and his emotionally charged wish to meet with Fliess, someone who appeared increasingly unavailable and who soon would no longer be his correspondent.

Marina D'Angelo explores Freud's (2002b) witty remark on his first day in Rome: "Arrived in Rome . . . after a bath and change of clothes, we

had become Romans" (p. 138, my translation) as if it captures both a playful transformation and a ritual of belonging, shedding the past through bathing and attire and symbolically entering Roman life. D'Angelo reads this as self-staging: Freud presenting himself as instantly assimilated into a city he had long idealized. The note contrasts with his later letter to Fliess, where he describes the visit as both overwhelming and disappointing, reflecting the ambivalence of his Roman experience.

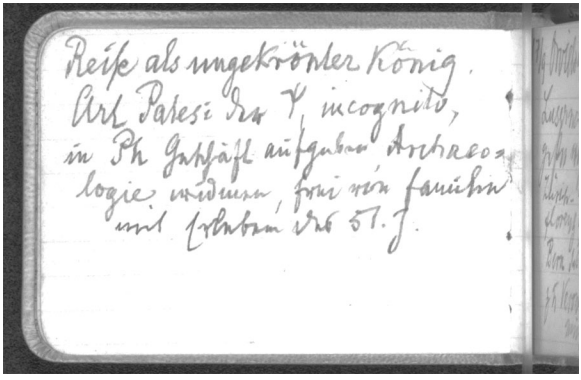
In the following years, Freud is like a contemporary physician who, from his workplace, gazes at travel books and looks forward to his summers elsewhere—Italy, Italy, then Italy. Between 1902 and 1906, he traveled through southern Italy, including Naples and Pompeii. The ruins of Pompeii, frozen in time by catastrophe, became for Freud a vivid metaphor for repression and the return of the repressed. Freud's fascination with Wilhelm Jensen's (1903) novella *Gradiva*, set in Pompeii, gripped him so deeply that it eventually took written form in an essay he published years later. Both Freud and the story's protagonist are drawn to ruins and fixated on recovering memories. The stratified, fragmentary nature of ancient sites offered a tangible model for Freud's future view of the structure of the psyche. His travel notes convey the sensory and emotional intensity of the heat, dust, and crowds, as he mulled over yet-to-be-born theoretical insights. He borrows from ancient poetry, "*Saxa loquuntur*" (stones talk) (Freud, 1896/1962, p. 192). D'Angelo mentions previously unknown travels during those years, such as a trip to Viareggio in Tuscany, where Freud most likely completed the draft of the *Gradiva* manuscript (Freud, 1907/1959).

Image 1 is a photo of Pocket Notebook 6, which carries the title *Ricordare è Rivivere*, Italian for "Remembering is Re-Living." We know that Freud would, years later, develop his thoughts on this in his 1914 paper "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through" (Freud, 1914/1958). Imagine that this pocket notebook simply carried a title chosen by a stationery seller and was purchased by Freud, perhaps at a street stand in Florence. In it, Freud recorded specific times, places, and impressions, from train schedules to brief notations on light, fatigue, and ruins, on the one occasion in 1907 that he traveled to Rome alone, accompanied only by his annotated thoughts. The annotation, "I am travelling like an uncrowned king" (Freud, 1907–1908, my translation) found in this pocket notebook (see Image 2), suggests both grandeur and solitude. It reveals his craving for recognition as an interpreter of

Image 1. Cover of Pocket Notebook 6

Source: Freud (1907–1908).

Image 2. Page 8 from Pocket Notebook 6



Source: Freud (1907–1908).

hidden material, as if he were saying, "Here they see me only as a tourist, but if they only knew how I am unlocking the reality around us, even art, with new interpretative keys, I'd be celebrated."

What could be called a neurotic city wall had been overcome, and Freud's travels to Rome became increasingly frequent and persistent; his companions included his sister-in-law, Minna Bernays, Sándor Ferenczi,

and others. At San Pietro in Vincoli, he examined Michelangelo's statue of Moses in detail, visiting it daily during successive stays. In Pocket Notebook 9, Freud (1910–1912) sketches, "Head turned," "right hand on the beard," "left hand protected" (my translation). The posture speaks of restraint. "How many times I've climbed the steep staircase," he writes, "and slipped away quietly, as if I too belonged to the rabble" (Freud, 1910–1912, my translation). Again and again, he meets the gaze of Moses, gathering the force that would later find voice in "The Moses of Michelangelo" (Freud, 1914/1955a), a trace of how embryonic intuitions ripen into later publications.

When visiting Salò and Lake Garda in 1908, Pocket Notebook 7 reports a motorboat excursion to San Vigilio, "one of the most beautiful spots on the lake" (Freud, 1907–1908, my translation). Freud noted, "In old age I show a great talent for enjoying life" (1907–1908, my translation).

Freud traveled through Florence, Rome, Naples, and Sicily in 1910, and Pocket Notebook 8 includes entries about shopping in Florence, then comments like, "Rome is once again magic" (Freud, 1910–1912), with Forum expenses noted. He sent postcards from Segesta, Selinunte, Agrigento, and Syracuse in Sicily. On September 17, 1910, Freud writes on object-love, later taken up in "On Narcissism" (Freud, 1914/1957). He keeps a piece of sulfur from Palermo. Other entries list antiques and other expenses, such as telegrams, cigars, and photographs. The density of these details lets the reader who knows Italy slip into the journey, walking beside Freud.

At Collalbo on the Renon plateau, Freud (1911/1974) writes to Jung, "Here on the Ritten it is divinely beautiful and comfortable. I have discovered in myself an inexhaustible desire to do nothing" (p. 442) and reads on religion. One line to Ferenczi: "Perhaps the woods of Klobenstein [Collalbo] will also see things come into being which I—or perhaps you—will later be able to present to the world" (Freud, 1911/1993, p. 300). During that holiday retreat, Freud completed "Totem and Taboo" (Freud, 1913/1955b), published 2 years later.

In 1915, Freud (1915/2002a) writes to Abraham, "my libido, having been set free by the loss of Italy" (p. 313), when he could no longer travel to Italy due to World War I. D'Angelo sees this as marking a shift in Freud's relation to Italy—not only geographic but psychic—unable to return, he internalizes the country. The libido, no longer invested in actual travel, is freed and sublimated into writing, theory, and memory.

A decade later, 5 years after the end of World War I, Freud, at age 67, made his final trip to Italy in 1923. He was accompanied by his daughter Anna, now an adult. The journey took place under difficult circumstances; he had undergone surgery for oral cancer that April and had recently lost his 4-year-old grandson, Heinele. Despite that, Freud insisted on completing the journey and expressed longing in letters, stating he wanted to see Rome for the last time and offer Anna something she had long wished for (or he had wished for her).

They arrived in Rome on September 1, 1923, and stayed at the Hotel Eden for 3 weeks. Freud kept a travel diary from September 1 to 17, organizing his notes by morning, afternoon, and evening. However, it was Anna who continued the annotations from the 18th until their departure on the 21st; the daughter is picking up where the father had left off. The record reflects a detailed tour of sites Freud already knew well but now wanted to show Anna. From there, he wrote to his son Ernst, "Rom ist teurer und lauter geworden, aber die schönen Dinge sind schön geblieben [Rome is more expensive and noisier, but all the beautiful things remain beautiful]" (Freud, 1923/2003, p. 396, my translation). In a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé, he added, "I realize here for the first time what good company my little daughter is" (Freud, 1923/1972, p. 126). Freud noted Anna's enjoyment and perceptiveness regarding Rome's complexity. Incidentally, Rome had just become the headquarters of fascism, with Mussolini in power. Hitler would not rise to power until 10 years later. Mussolini was on the world stage, while Hitler was an unknown painter, and in 1923, Italian Fascism had not yet assumed the racialist stance that German Nazism would have a decade later.

Years later, at the age of 75, Freud writes of his deep nostalgia for Italy, confessing that he used to visit Rome at least once a year. In his 1936 letter to Rolland, "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis" (Freud, 1936/1960), he interprets his desire for travel as rooted in childhood dissatisfaction with family and home, linking the urge to see the world to a wish to surpass the father, an astonishing self-analysis of Oedipal dynamics, considering that it comes from someone who had not received this interpretation from an analyst of his own, but who arrived at it alone while traveling. Remembering Rome becomes a way of re-living, *Ricordare è Rivivere* (as the stationery had it), as Freud, now old, could no longer return in person. Italy was both an outer and inner landscape.

D'Angelo's documentary appendix presents the first integrative overview of Freud's travel pocket notebooks from 1901 to 1916, now housed in the Library of Congress Sigmund Freud Papers, Box OV 1. It catalogs 10 main pocket notebooks, including an earlier one from 1901 and later ones added in the critical edition by Hirschmüller and Tögel (Freud, 2024). The appendix provides an Italian translation of the notebooks, still unpublished in English. The appendix also describes the challenges of transcription due to Freud's handwriting in *Kurrent* script (a form of German-language handwriting derived from late medieval Gothic cursive, used widely until the mid-20th century), his use of shorthand, and his use of pencil. D'Angelo translated, curated, and contextualized the entries. The appendix closes with a chronological list of Freud's Italian trips from 1895 through 1923; a section on dreams related to Italy, both published and unpublished; an index of images and abbreviations; and a bibliography.

In conclusion, D'Angelo's book stands as both a comparative analysis of Freud's complete writings and a historical-documentary reconstruction, enriched by previously unpublished materials. It offers an intimate, privileged perspective on Freud as both a scholar and a man, revealing how Italy's landscapes—external and internal—played a pivotal role in the development of his revolutionary ideas.

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