

The first section of the book examines the issues of identity, justice and liberty, which were prominent both in the establishment of the Italian state and in the complex institutional evolution of France, from monarchy to republic. At the same time, they lie at the root of the debate on Italian and French political economy. Italian and French authors involved in the Risorgimento and in the mid-century social turmoils are discussed. Romagnosi was the inspiration for generations of Italian politicians and economists, amongst whom Cattaneo, who coupled political action with intellectual reflection on the national identity of Italy and on the influence of the public administration on growth and social justice. An alternative perspective is given in the paper on slavery, which denies human identity, justice and liberty. The five papers of the second section are devoted to the relationship between political and economic freedom and its effect on equity. A few classical Italian and French authors who discuss these issues, and their reception in Italy and France, are at the core of the papers. Economic freedom and equity are examined in Sismondi, a francophone author who spent an important period of his life in Tuscany, and one paper deals with the reception of List in Italy and France for the purposes of free trade, protectionism and social fairness. The section provides fresh insight, which even puts a new perspective on the reflections of well-known scholars, like Jean-Baptiste Say, according to whom economic freedom and social justice are strictly connected, and Pellegrino Rossi, his successor as professor of political economy in Paris. The last paper highlights the relationship between the aforementioned concepts from the point of view of the pursuit of social equity through the reforms propounded during the unification of Italy. The intellectual and political conflict between the social vision of Liberalism and Socialism in some of their various forms is the main topic of the four papers of the third section, in which different streams of Socialism are discussed. Particular reference is made to Saint-Simon and his followers. An alternative approach to the French utopian socialism is examined in a paper that modifies the interpretation provided by Sombart and Durkheim. Finally, the almost unknown economic thought of a group of prominent French intellectuals between the end of the nineteenth century and the First World War is examined, highlighting the link between the attitude towards economy and the political choices of Halévy, Alain and Maurois.