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978-0-521-27219-3 - Mafia, Peasants and Great Estates: Society in Traditional Calabria

Pino Arlacchi

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*Mafia, peasants and
great estates*
Society in traditional Calabria

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Translated by

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Note to the English edition

The publication of this book in English just over two years after its appearance in Italian is the work of two people. Suzanne Berger of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology first read the manuscript and went to a great deal of trouble in her efforts to arrange an English edition. I owe her a debt of gratitude which is specially associated with the beginnings of my professional work and which I cannot forget.

My friend and colleague, Jonathan Steinberg, of the University of Cambridge, took on the burden of translation and the associated editorial tasks. He has dedicated to the enterprise so much intelligence and hard work that the final product can be considered the work of two authors, not one. It is difficult for me to find the right words to express my gratitude and affection for this extraordinary intellectual personality. I consider my meeting with Jonathan Steinberg one of the great good fortunes of my life.

THE AUTHOR

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Translator's preface

This book has been written by a sociologist but translated by a historian. The difference between our two disciplines turned out to be more important than either of us imagined when we began. If the historian seeks to find many verifiable causes for particular events, the sociologist tries to see in the particular event those general aspects which may yield, if not laws, at least rigorous models.

The two disciplines use different languages. As a historian I have always observed Orwell's second law of writing: 'never use a long word where a short one will do' but, as I discovered, certain terms, long and abstract though they may be, were essential to the model Professor Arlacchi wanted to build.

The attempt to build three precise and internally coherent models of three different sorts of traditional society is the core of the book. Its success is for the reader to decide. He may be assured that there is nothing in this translation which has not been seen and approved by the author.

Trinity Hall, Cambridge
March 1982

JONATHAN STEINBERG