

Vol. 4, No. 4 Fall/Winter, 1992

# THE Italic Way

The Newsletter of the Italic Studies Institute, Inc.



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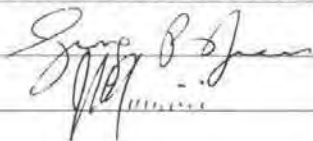


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## Letters

Address all letters to: LETTERS, The Italic Way, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001

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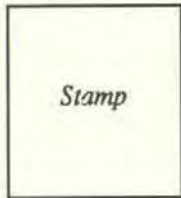


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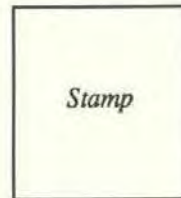


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## LETTERS

### Seeking Eyewitnesses

I am writing a history of Italian Americans during World War II, and I would like to hear from people who lived through that conflict. There are a number of areas I wish to explore in order to reconstruct those times. These are just some of the questions I need to ask:

What was the homefront like when Italy was the enemy? What special feelings did Italian-American soldiers have fighting against Italians in Africa and Italy? How did neighborhoods and Old World values change during the war? How were Italian citizens in America affected by anti-alien acts?

If the readers of *The Italic Way* can assist me in this historical endeavor, it would be to the benefit of our whole community.

George E. Pozzetta  
Dept of History  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611

### Confronting Clinton

On a recent visit to Savannah, Georgia, with my family, I happened upon Governor Bill Clinton addressing a crowd at Johnson Square. Fortunately, I was able to question him about that disturbing telephone conversation in which he and Gennifer Flowers characterized Governor Cuomo's behavior as that of a Mafioso. I felt his comments were offensive to all Italian-Americans, and I told



him that as an Italian-American democrat from New York, I was concerned.

He became very defensive and gave as his excuse that Gov. Cuomo was being tough on him at the time. He then assured me that if I voted for him I would have nothing to worry about because his past performance as a governor has proven

that he has been very responsive to the needs of all ethnic groups.

I hope that our conversation will remind Gov. Clinton to be more sensitive to ethnic stereotypes and to treat Italian-Americans with the respect they rightly deserve.

Janice Ricci  
W. Hempstead, NY

(Ed., Mrs. Ricci is a member of the Institute staff)

### Correction

In the article *Profiles: Guglielmo Marconi* (Spring, 1991), by Elio Zappulla, the reference to Mussolini was added by the editors without the knowledge or consent of the author.



## FUTURE ISSUES OF THE ITALIC WAY

- SICILY - Italic from the start
- DISCOVERING AMERICA - Partly an Italian enterprise
- CELTIC ITALY - The Irish side
- ITALIAN DEBT - What Italy Owes Italian-Americans
- MAFIA - Strangers among us



## All'Italiana

### ITALY SWITCHES ALLEGIANCE

Italy is a gasser. Quite literally. Unlike nuclear-obsessed France or coal-fired Britain, Italy is changing its energy profile post haste. With little fanfare, Italy is lessening its dependence on exorbitant petroleum products and turning to cost-effective natural gas. The high cost of imported oil necessitated such a move. In fact, petroleum had a negative impact on Italy's postwar economic miracle. In 1991, Italy's trade deficit in energy totalled 18.26 trillion *lire* (approximately \$15.9 billion). However, it boasted a 2.74 trillion *lire* non-energy trade surplus. The forthcoming integration of the EEC in 1992 may also have nudged Italy into action. What better way to clean up the environment, reduce the national deficit, encourage economic growth in the South, and one-up condescending rivals on the Continent?

### NASA TURNS TO ITALY

The Italian Space Agency is taking the lead in helping the National Aero-

navics and Space Administration build America's proposed space station, Freedom. Having been impressed with the Italians' technological wizardry in the European space effort, the U.S. turned to its steadfast and dependable ally to design and build two pressurized modules. These will be used to ferry payloads to and from the station. The only other nations asked to help were Japan and Canada. Alenia Spazio will build the 13-foot long cylinders that weigh 8,800 pounds and are 14 feet in diameter. In addition, plans are afoot for the Italians to develop a pressurized miniature laboratory to carry a centrifuge (a device which simulates gravity). And in September, 1992, Italian astronaut Franco



Insignia of Italy's 10th Light Flotilla. Led by the late Luigi Durand de la Penne, it decimated the British fleet in Egypt during World War II

Malerba is due to fly with his American counterparts on a shuttle mission.

### COME HOME, ITALICI

Like Israel and Ireland, Italy is calling her sons and daughters to return to their homeland. A new Italian law now makes it possible for all native-born Italians and their de-

scendants to reacquire Italian citizenship. Thanks to this progressive piece of legislation—the first major change in the Italian immigration law since 1912—Italian-Americans, Italo-Argentines and other Italicis throughout the world will be able to attain dual citizenship. According to Italy's Minister of Immigration, Margherita Boniver, the process is fairly automatic and requires a brief period of residence in Italy. Even non-Italic spouses can become full citizens of the Italian Republic. Boniver readily acknowledges that prosperous Italy has become a "magnet" for "tens of thousands" of Italicis scattered across the globe. Many participants in this counter-exodus come from Latin America. Boniver's Ministry has also proposed a massive aid package for Italians in many of the more hardscrabble foreign lands.

### A GIFT FROM THE PAST

Italian scientists struck gold, or rather lead, in the wreck of an ancestral



Italian-designed yachts have challenged both the luxury market and international competitions like the America's Cup.



# All'Italiana

cargo ship that sank 2,000 years ago. The miraculous discovery of a Roman wreck off the coast of Sardinia has given Italy nearly 55 tons of lead ingots that are radioactive-free for use in highly sophisticated atomic research. Unlike regular lead, which contains naturally-occurring radioactivity, the Roman lead has lost all its radioactivity after 20 centuries under water. Using their Roman gift, Italian researchers may now be able to resolve a major puzzle in solar physics.



Investor Gianni Agnelli viewing the controls of *Il Destriero (The Charger)*, Italian entry in the Transatlantic Challenge. Last Italian win was by the oceanliner *Rex* in 1933.

## DARING ADMIRAL DIES

Italy has lost one of her most valorous sons: Admiral Luigi Durand de la Penne, the commander of the Italian frogman team that sank two British battleships in the port of Alexandria in 1941, died in his native Genova on January 17, 1992. Although he later served his nation with distinction as a diplomat and statesman, Durand de la Penne will forever be enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen for his heart-stopping courage in World War II. Stung by the British at Taranto (see p.16) in 1940, the Italians vowed to avenge that deed via their stalwart submariners. Durand de la Penne and his underwater warriors proved that even the vaunted English navy had a soft underbelly. After this maritime humiliation, Winston Churchill lived in constant fear that Durand de la Penne and his aquamen would decimate the remaining British fleet. That the sons

of Aeneas jolted the British out of their midday complacency is a testament to the Italians' skill and courage.



The late John LaCorte  
The FBI, the bridge, the telephone.

## FIGHTER FOR TRUTH

John Napoleon LaCorte, 81, passed away last November of heart failure. A frontline fighter for the historical rights of Italian-Americans, LaCorte is best known for gaining the recognition for explorer Giovanni da Verrazano as the first European to enter New York Harbor. La Corte's Roman-like tenacity (he was born in Sicily) ensured that the Bridge connecting Brooklyn and Staten Island was named after the explorer. La Corte also worked to accord the FBI's founding father, Charles Bonaparte, a place in history.

As president of the Italian Historical Society and the JNL Better World, LaCorte was last working on recognition of nineteenth century scientist Antonio Meucci as the first inventor of the telephone.

The first issue of *The Italic Way* in 1988 featured LaCorte on the cover.

## TO RULE THE WAVES

Italian seamanship is being tested in both sail and power. *Il Moro di Venezia (The Moor of Venice)* is Italy's entry in the highly emotional America's Cup race. And by the looks of it, the Italians may be unsettling the Anglo-Saxon skippers. In competition with the Aussies and Japanese, *Il Moro* cleared the finish line first. The Italians must now trump the New Zealanders. The winner of that playoff gets to race against the USA for the America's Cup this summer.

In the Blue Ribbon race across the Atlantic, an Italian consortium has fielded *Destriero (Charger)*, a 100,000 horsepower aqua machine that cruises the ocean at 57 knots. The Italians haven't captured the Blue Ribbon since the steamship *Rex*, the pride of Italy's merchant fleet, won it in 1933.

The summer of 1992 may be a double celebration of Italian seamanship.

\*\*\*\*





## World Notes

[We present this section to inform our readers of events and trends that may be of interest with regard to ethnic opinions or cultural values.]

### ALPHABETICALLY

Another victim of the demise of the USSR is the Russian Cyrillic alphabet. The Muslim republic of Azerbaijan has formally adopted the Latin alphabet, rejecting both Cyrillic and Arabic alternatives. Six other republics may follow suit in an effort to get into sync with the Western world. Russia's loss (and also the Arab world's) is our gain. The republic of Moldova is considering a switch not only to the Latin alphabet, but also to their former romance language of Romanian. The last significant conversion to the Latin alphabet was by Turkey in the 1920's. Vivat Latina!

### GERMAN SOLIDARITY

Some Italian businessmen may be having second thoughts about the borderless European Community (EC). In theory, all of Europe is open to free commerce regardless of nationality. So, explain to Pirelli of Italy why German banks and automakers banded together to nix the Italian buy out of Continental, Germany's premier tire-maker. "Corporate Germany united against Pirelli," stated one London automotive analyst. Pirelli's shareholders were the casualties in this attack on the new Siegfried Line.

### THE POLISH FIAT

Italian carmaker Fiat (*Fabbrica Italiana Automobile Torino*) was the first Western automotive concern to break through the old Iron Curtain back in the 1970's. So it may not come as a surprise that Fiat is reversing gears. In short, a new Fiat made in Poland is expected to penetrate the new European car market.

Attempting to cash in on the nostal-

gia of its old 500 (*Cinquecento*) model of the 50's and 60's, the new Fiat 500 is meant to be the mini-car of the future. Slightly less cramped than its ancestor, the new Cinquecento (*ching-qweh chen'-toe*) may be Poland's chance to corner a major share of the automobile market.

### WORLD CLASS CONSUMERS

Their gross national product (GNP) is the fourth highest in the world (after the U.S., Japan, and Germany) and Italians are starting to flaunt their wealth. It isn't as if Italy needs to accumulate any more, but Italian investors are plunking down big money for the world's

art. According to *ArtNews*, Italians have replaced the Japanese as the number-one art buyers in the world. The amazing part is that there are only six Italian collectors involved versus 106 Americans and 10 Japanese. But their purchases outranked everyone else's. With over two-thirds of the known art of the world residing in Italy, Italians might be accused of monopolistic practices.

### FLYING COUSINS

Italy's American corporate cousins are starting to rediscover the fatherland. It isn't just Lee Iacocca cutting design deals with Pininfarina (Jeep Eagle) or Lamborghini (Dodge Viper). In the



An Italo-Polish product.  
A new Fiat 500 (l.) beside an original.

field of national defense, Chairman Renzo Caporali of Grumman is backing Italy's S211 jet trainer as the next generation aircraft for future U.S. Navy and Air Force pilots. Grumman's favorite son was designed by Gruppo Agusta, of helicopter fame. Among the competitors are a Swiss, German, Argentine, and (wouldn't you know it) another Italian jet—the Macchi (*Ma'-key*). The



Grumman's entry for U.S. military trainer: Agusta's S211

# World Notes



Macchi happens to be the official trainer of the Italian Air Force.

## FIRM FOUNDATION

*Newsweek* polled a bevy of international experts in education to select the top ten schools in the world. Surprisingly, not one school was chosen in France or the United Kingdom, the legendary bastions of proper education. Instead, Italy's Diana school in Reggio Emilia was selected for excellence in preschool training. Citing the abundance of arts and crafts used to get the children to express themselves, experts consider this Italian model to be excellent preparation for academics and socialization. Observations of the children at work, along with tape recordings of their activities, provide information on how children reason to accomplish a task.

Alas, not all schools in Italy are up to Diana's standards, but many are catching up, 90 percent of the 3-year-olds in this Italian region attend public preschools.



Ivo Livi

## QUINTESSENTIALLY FRENCH

If not Charles Boyer, the Frenchman most typifying his countrymen was Yves Montand who passed away in November of 1991. Singer, movie star, and politician, Montand was an institution in France. Among his loves were Edith



The Diana School in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Top notch education for preschool.

Piaf, Simone Signoret, and Marilyn Monroe. With all that talent and sex appeal, it is not surprising that he, like Bonaparte and many other famous Frenchmen, was Italian-born (real name: Ivo Livi). Montand's family moved to France when he was a child. His last great act was fathering a child at age 67.

## BLOODY HOAX?

Now that the Shroud of Turin has been exposed as a forgery, the world's hoax-busters have turned their attention to Naples' famous blood of San Gennaro. According to belief, blood in the vial is shaken three times a year to predict the future. If the gel turns to liquid, Naples will be spared ill tidings. If it remains a gel, watch out. In fact Vesuvius has erupted in years when the gel refused to liquify.

Italian chemist Dr. Luigi Garlaschelli of the University of Pavia claims that the blood is really a mixture of chalk, hydrated iron chloride, and salt water. Normally a gel, this potion liquifies when shaken. The chemist claims that medieval alchemists had access to these ingredients. Besides, St. Januarius died 1,000 years before the first "miracle" was demonstrated in 1389 so no one knows exactly when and how his blood was preserved.

## OLYMPIC WINS

Champion skier Alberto Tomba may not be a shy winner but his homeland deserves accolades for placing 5th in medals won at the Winter Olympics. Beating out home-

team France and mega-America, Italy's sportsmen and women demonstrated that the land of the palm trees has plenty of human resources. What many people don't realize is that winter sports are practiced on snow-covered mountains throughout Italy, even in Calabria and Sicily.

By the way, Tomba is planning to go for the World Cup title next.



Olympic ace Alberto Tomba



## Editorial

### CUOMO: THE REALIST

Now they won't have Mario Cuomo to kick around anymore. Or will they?

The governor's seemingly inexplicable decision not to seek the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination stunned the political world and let loose a torrent of unbridled punditry. From William F. Buckley, Ray Kerrison, and Deborah Orin on the right, to Ted Koppel and Jeff Greenfield in the center, to Slim Fast salesman Eddie "How am I doing?" Koch in left field, thinkers and shakers speculated on why the governor of the Empire State foreswore an opportunity to occupy the Oval Office.

Ostensibly, the governor was holding fast to his pledge not to put White House ambitions over State House necessities. If he couldn't come to an agreement with Republicans to end the state's fiscal morass, then Cuomo vowed to veto a run for the Rose Garden. As politics would have it, the New York legislature failed to close the state's horrendous budget gap. True to his word, Cuomo declined to run.

Mario Cuomo is a man of honor—high praise indeed in our scandal-ridden republic. He understands that the needs of the many truly outweigh the needs of the few—or the one. According to Richard Nixon, a longtime admirer of Mario Cuomo's intellect and political savvy, the governor is the only "heavyweight" in the Democratic party. The former president takes Cuomo at his word that New York's budget battle had to take precedence over a presidential bid. But Nixon offers an accompanying explanation: Cuomo abhors losing. Perhaps, in his heart of hearts, he felt 1992 might be a less-than-propitious year. The GOP's elder statesman also feels Cuomo could have been better advised. Nevertheless, Nixon maintains that Cuomo is still a young man who will undoubtedly be a leading contender for the 1996 Democratic presidential nomination—provided another Democrat doesn't capture the White House in 1992.

For now, Cuomo has saved himself from learning a sad reality. His support among Italian-Americans would have been tepid at best. Many Italian Americans are of a different political persuasion. It is no coincidence that the governor's fiercest opponents in New York State are named Marino and D'Amato. However poetic it might have been to put a Mario in the Oval Office on the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage, Cuomo lacked the blessing of his own people. --RAI



Cuomo: Enough said

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# Forum of the People



## FRANCESCO COSSIGA: DREAMER WITH A MISSION

Only a visionary is willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause. Yet even a dreamer must have a blueprint for his dreams, a schematic to help him reach that unreachable star. Otherwise, like Don Quixote, he will find himself tilting at windmills and attaining nothing. Fortunately for Italy, Francesco Cossiga hails from Sardinia, not Seville.

Although he is nearing the end of his tenure as Italy's president, Cossiga has set in motion forces that will ultimately transform his nation. In one of the most memorable performances in post-war Italian politics, this bespectacled Sardinian statesman has turned the Italian polity on its ear. Cossiga has publicly broken with his party on most of the major issues confronting the nation. He has challenged his fellow Christian Democrats, aligned with the Socialists, befuddled the Liberals and Republicans and exasperated the Democratic Party of the Left (formerly the Communist Party).

The Italian president is the country's head of state, a largely ceremonial post. The prime minister—currently Giulio Andreotti—is the leader of the government. This dichotomy was the brainchild of jittery post-war Italian politicians who feared concentrating power in the hands of one man—a new *Duce*. Unfortunately, the new system worked all too well. Although it enabled Italy to take a breather after two decades of authoritarian rule and helped to usher in an unprecedented economic prosperity, this



Italian president Cossiga:  
Pushing for the 2nd Republic

## Cossiga has publicly broken with his party on most of the major issues confronting the nation.

dual-leader structure weakened the central government. Internationally and geopolitically, Italy no longer commanded a position of respect. American presidents did not know who really wielded power in the new Italian Republic. (Post-war France nearly collapsed in a coup under a similar system. Only Charles DeGaulle's assumption of constitutional dictatorial powers stemmed the tide and saved *La Belle France*.)

In addition to structural instability, this flawed separation of powers encouraged some alarming trends in Italian national life: a counterproductive regional autonomy, acceptance of archaic and divisive dialects and, most insidiously, a chronic corruption in local governments. Thankfully, Italy's economic miracle and the sense of solidarity created by the Cold War overshadowed these negative developments. Aside from the exception of Bettino Craxi's courageous leadership, the bifurcation of national power continued to sow weakness and dissension.

Enter Francesco Cossiga. Having ascended to the presidency with no great expectations, Cossiga quickly reverted to type. He spanned the globe accepting honorary doctorates and lecturing foreigners about Italy's cultural patrimony. However, with each passing trip abroad, the silver-haired Sardinian became more passionate and vocal about Italy's vices as well as its virtues. He also emerged as an unrepentant cold warrior. Two years ago, he revealed his role in the formation of a clandestine, quasi-military group called *Gladio*. It was created by the Italian state to combat a Communist takeover of the peninsula. Most recently, however, Cossiga has turned his guns on former allies in the Christian Democratic Party. Appalled by the advances of the Lombard League, he proposed sweeping institutional changes in Italy's political system. According to Cossiga, this would enable Italy to put its budgetary problems in order, stop the taunting of supercilious EC members, and forever put to rest the carping of pseudo-separatists. It would also strengthen the south without resorting to phony paternalism. That is, free entrepreneurship and accountability would be the watchwords of the new Italian order. These measures would require austerity, taxation, and sacrifice. And these are the reasons the President's party resists his overtures. Ironically, the Socialists seem to be more in tune with Cossiga. They favor the dissolution of the present polity and the creation of a Second Republic. Presumably, it would be of the presidential variety.

For his courage, Cossiga, the impossible dreamer, has earned the scorn of his party. Some politicians—including the ex-Communist Party Head, Achille Occhetto—have called for the Sardinian's impeachment. Perhaps it is they who should be impeached for Italy's sake.

- RAI



## REVIEW

### Video Review:

### *Once Around*

By Rosario Iaconis

Whenever American moviegoers think of Italian families, they usually imagine the cartoon-like cretins in *Moonstruck* or the gangsters pictured in *Goodfellas*. Even film critics, an unusually enlightened and tolerant bunch, are convinced that these films represent the quintessential Italian-American archetypes. (John Simon, at least, has the good taste to acknowledge the existence of this phony Hollywood shorthand.)

But how can we chastise our fellow Americans when Italians are among the first to lavish praise on such films! At baptisms, weddings and Christmas dinners, they wax pathetic about the fire and intensity of Joe Pesci's maniacal hood or Al Pacino's controlled performance as the good Godfather. When warned that they are condoning and even promoting stereotypes, they fall back on a mixture of world-weary cynicism and the Italian equivalent of a Gallic shrug: "Look, you'll never change things" or "Yeah, but what about John Gotti—he's real!"

Yet, give these selfsame film critics an intelligent, wholesome depiction of Italian-American family life and they find it inaccurate, trite, or false. That's why the film *Once Around* was a box office bust. Viewed in the comfort of one's home, however, it may well enjoy a renaissance.

The Bella clan is an upscale, close-knit, Italian-American family living in Massachusetts. Like most American households, they have their quirky kids

and sibling squabbles. They share secrets and peccadillos, lust in their hearts and argue ad nauseum. But the Bellas, like the Andersons, Goldbergs, and O'Briens, are passionate and sensitive folk with higher aspirations than cooking the next pot of "pasta fazool".

For the first time on-screen, Danny Aiello gives a textured, moving per-

fessors, psychologists and, yes, loving wives. Ms. Hunter eschews the heavy-handed accent so favored by that noted thespian Cher. Hunter's portrayal, like Olympia Dukakis' in *Moonstruck*, smacks of sincerity.

The film's pivotal performance, however, comes from Richard Dreyfuss, who plays Sam Sharpe, the



A cinematic milestone: normal Italian-Americans

formance that is devoid of "Nooh Joisy" inflections. As patriarch Joe Bella, he projects warmth, strength, and dignity. Here is a three-dimensional man who puts Vincent Gardenia's stick figure in *Moonstruck* to shame. (Ironically, Aiello portrayed a wimpy Mamma's boy in that lunatic flick.)

Holly Hunter—who hails from Dixie—is reminiscent of all those bright Italian-American women who set a young man's heart aflutter. College-educated, homespun, yet intellectually sophisticated, they are now college pro-

self-indulgent, highly emotional Lithuanian-American millionaire who is in love with Holly Hunter, aka Renata Bella. Dreyfuss' bravado provides the film with its key conflict, as well as its timeless theme. And Renata's family is inextricably caught up in the vortex of emotions unleashed by Dreyfuss. In the end, the Bella family proves to be the pillar in Renata's life, the oasis in her private storm. Director Lasse Hallstrom captures Italian-American ideals as no Italian-American auteur has ever done. This is one film for all families — be they Italian-American or otherwise.

\*\*\*\*



## PROFILES

### GIANDOMENICO PICCO

by Joyceann Yaccarino

Ian Fleming would have loved Giandomenico Picco, diplomat, negotiator, and secret envoy for a global peacekeeping organization. The debonair 43-year-old Picco is Italy's answer to James Bond. But, unlike Fleming's fictional alter ego, Picco is a living, breathing hero. As the special hostage negotiator for former UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, he succeeded where the Anglican envoy, Terry Waite, had failed. The dashing Italian's special brand of shuttle diplomacy is largely responsible for negotiations that led to the release of most of the western hostages in the Middle East. In the words of Mr. Perez de Cuellar: "Picco is more of a soldier than an international civil servant, and I have a fatherly love for him."

World events did stack the deck in his favor, since the end of the Cold War diminished the advantages of hostage taking. If the "new world or-

circumstances to meet some of the same clandestine groups, was one of the hostages freed thanks to the bold and painstaking moves of Perez de Cuellar and Picco.

After the last of the American hostages was released, Picco refused to rest on his laurels and forged ahead with the unfinished business of the German hostages and the Israeli detainees.

A comprehensive package deal was arranged with a variety of governments, militias, religious leaders, and captors. After the August release of John McCarthy, the British journalist, the diplomatic momentum built again late this fall when Israel released 25 captives. The UN requested this "special gesture" on the part of the Israelis to propel their new strategy to settle the hostage issue before the end of 1991. The kidnappers also made con-



**United Nations diplomat extraordinary, Picco succeeded in getting all the hostages freed.**

nearly decade-long process. Although Picco never saw Iranian officials, he risked his life by meeting with the three main captor groups. Once they surrendered hostages, the captors did not ask

### **He attended meetings in secret locations, traveling in the dead of night without bodyguards.**

der" set the tone, it was a combination of UN initiatives, patience, diligence, and the extraordinary courage of an even-handed negotiator that secured the release of those held captive in the Middle East. Picco went to almost any lengths. He attended meetings in secret locations, traveling in the dead of night without bodyguards. Picco made many of these trips with a cloth bag over his head in order to make contact with the captors. Terry Waite, the Anglican envoy who lost his freedom while traveling under similar

cessions in adopting this "new strategy" and in an unprecedented move released Cicippio and the other hostages on a promise that Arabs detained in Isreal, southern Lebanon and Europe would also be released. In the past, hostages would never be released on a simple "promise." Picco played a major role in establishing a consensus for this new strategy.

From nuts-and-bolts diplomacy to shadowy subterranean meetings, the dogged determination of Picco won the day. Shuttleing among a dozen capitals the "tight lipped envoy" brought an end to a

for protection. "The groups never raised the issue of their future safety," Picco said. "In fact, when the stories about this came out, I was specifically asked by the groups to make a denial that this was ever the case and I did."

Through his deeds and words, Picco demonstrated an uncommon valor. And in the best Italic tradition, he has come to represent the quintessential soldier for peace.

\*\*\*\*



## Focus

# FORBIDDEN ITALY

By Louis Comaro

Can you imagine Western Civilization bereft of sensuality? Why, it just wouldn't be human. Let's face it, mankind is much driven by hormones. How we control hormonal impulses, or channel them safely and purposefully, is a cultural matter. And culture is the distillation of thousands of years of ancestral experimentation.

How did our norms of behavior in public and in bed develop? How did Italy — home to art, fashion, and religion — help mold our sexual mores? What influence does Italy have on those values today?

### The Italic Libido

No one ever accused "real" Italians of being prudes. From their "manly" reputation for pinching tourist derrieres to their classic sex farces of the silver screen, Italians have gained renown as world-class lovers. However, recent polls claim that Italians have changed their legendary adulterous habits. Yet, "moonlight and Venice" still seem to conjure up the right mood for any couple in love. And the romantic Latin is still in the cornucopia of Western stereotypes. But then there is *love* and there is *sex*.

Among the varied lexicon of the Italian peninsula is the word *cazzo*, as in *il cazzo*, or *che cazzo!* Frankly, it refers to the male genital, and no doubt is a relic of an ancient Italic obsession with the phallus. (Actually, an obsession in nearly every ancient culture.) But for some inexplicable reason the Italian culture has retained it in a number of unique forms (*minchia* in Sicilian) despite two millenia of Christianity.



Staller the "fleshpot"  
(former legislator)

Phallic obsession was difficult to give up because in pre-Christian Italy the phallus was a sign of good luck, much like our horseshoe and rabbit's foot. Many buildings and sidewalks in Pompeii bear witness to a common accep-



The Italian horn and its probable ancestor — the phallus (from Pompeii)

tance of the male organ as a good luck sign. The phallus, with testicles, was chiseled in stone to ward off evil, molded into medallions worn by ancient Italians, and even crafted into wind chimes and oil lamps. It may shock many to hear that the uniquely Italian "horn" (*corno*) dangling from the necks or car mirrors of some Italian-Americans is considered by many scholars to be a cleaned up version of the ancient phallic good luck charm. So, it would appear that sex has a certain continuity in the Italian psyche.

### Porno Politicians

Probably the first love manual was authored by the naughty Ovid, a Roman author of the first century (see *Perspectives* section). Into the Middle Ages, the great poet Petrarca pined for his beloved Laura. (History may never know if the cerebral author bedded the object of his affection.) By the 17th Century, Benvenuto Cellini was regaling readers with the fruits of his sexual pursuits, another first in modern literature. The 18th Century brought us Casanova, the first true playboy of Europe. Today, the theme of sex before dishonor is played to the hilt in Italian movies like *Love Italian Style* and *Seven Beauties*.

But if you think that the Italic style of sensual love is classy, don't forget superstar Madonna's down-and-dirty side. And we mustn't forget the lamentable end of Benito Mussolini and his mistress Clarita Petacci.

Just as it is around the world, sexual titillation is pervasive in today's Italy. Television game shows and variety shows round out their format with firm buttocks and overflowing bosoms. There is even a cable show in which housewives strip for prizes.

# Focus



But the Italian public has gone a step further. Contrary to our own abhorrence (or obsession) of sexual scandal in politics, a portion of the Italian electorate sent a former porn queen to parliament.

Iiona Staller, parliamentarian extraordinaire, was born in Hungary 40 years ago, moved to Rome when she was 17, studying ballet, piano, and violin. She deduced that audiences at her concerts preferred to see her nude rather than playing the violin, so she entered the world of pornographic entertainment. She claims to have made one of the few films showing condoms, and insists that she is the dominant partner in any sex scene. Among her props are dildos which she even totes to press conferences. Italy's Radical Party (equivalent to our Libertarian Party) invited Cicciolina, her stage name ("little fleshpot") to join the slate of candidates for the Italian Parlia-



Roman men in close encounters.  
(From an ancient Italian silver cup)

Not since Cleopatra made mush of Julius and Anthony have two women exposed Italy's sexual proclivities. An ancient soul has been bared.

## Competing Values

To get the right perspective on what is going on today in Italy we need to flashback to times gone by:

In the ancient world three major forces struggled for the Italian psyche — the Etruscan, the Greek, and the Judeo-Christian. Each brought with it a view of sexuality at variance with the others. We know, for example, that the early Judeo-Christian morality demanded chaste women and circumspect behavior. Nudity of any sort was forbidden and females were treated as chattel. The Greeks, on the other hand were all for nudity and men freely indulged all the vices without limit. Still, Greek women were either playthings or sequestered mothers. The Etruscans — that mysterious breed that flow-

(Continued p. 25)



Signorina Moana Pozzi, the newest porno-politician

ment. Notwithstanding the Party's motives — publicity or protest — Staller won election in 1987 after campaigning naked with a snake.

A force to be reckoned with, Staller wants even Italians to blush. She had promised, or threatened, to appear bare-breasted before her legislative colleagues, and offered to go to bed with Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf War if he released his hostages. Such pranks along with her frequent absences from parliamentary votes eroded Cicciolina's political affection among party hacks, causing her to drop out of the 1992 race. Nevertheless, the trend is catching on. A new political faction, the Love Party, fielded a native daughter turned porn star. Moana Pozzi, 30, ran unsuccessfully for the Italian parliament this year. An incurable romantic, Pozzi managed to sway a few votes.



Victims of the old Italian law against divorce, Sophia Loren and Carlo Ponti had to leave Italy to get married.



# SEXY I

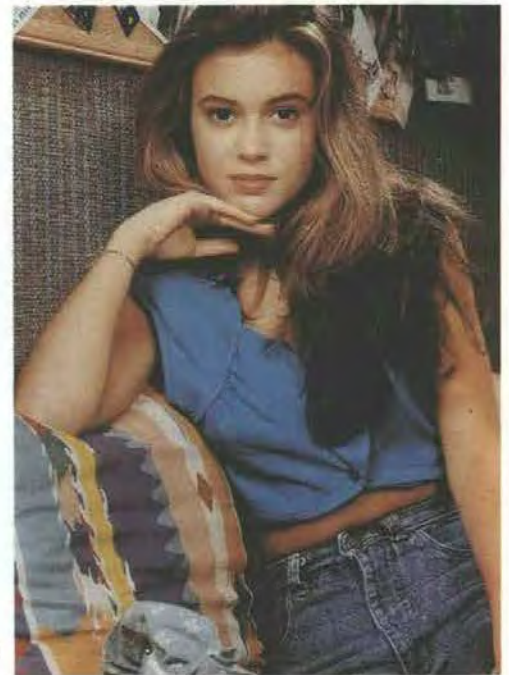
Here are some Italian-Am  
by *The Italic Way* sta



**Jack Scalia**



**Connie Selecca**



**Alyssa Milano**



**Sly Stallone**



# TALICI

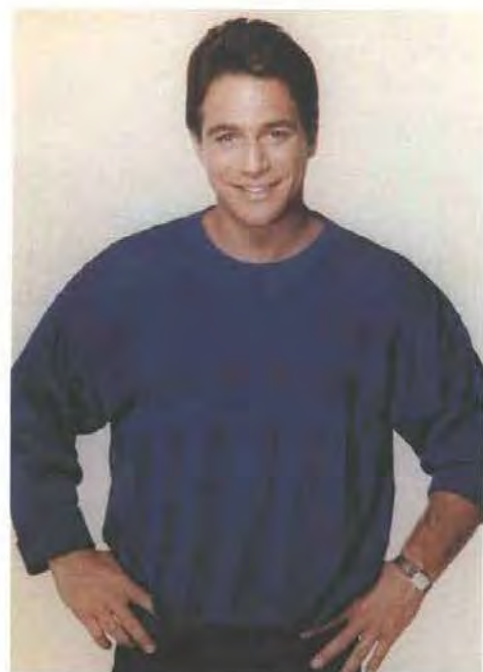
American movie stars selected  
for their sex appeal.



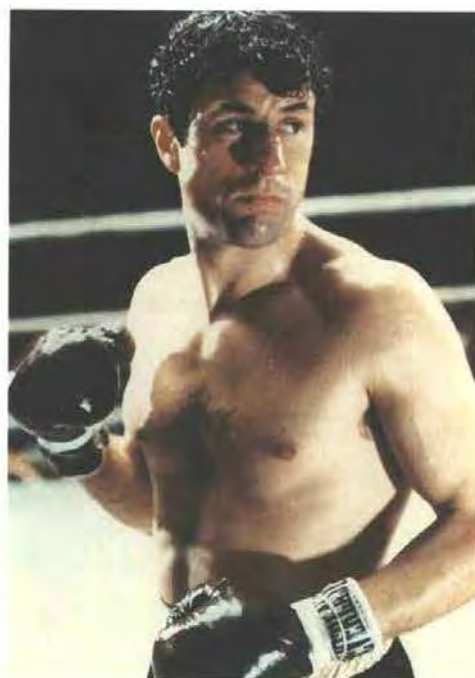
**Giancarlo Giannini**  
(Italian)



**Brooke Shields**



**Tony Danza**



**Robert DeNiro**

**Mary Elizabeth  
Mastroantonio**



**Madonna**



## Perspectives

### TARANTO : Prelude to Pearl Harbor

In June of 1940, Italy entered the Second World War as an Axis partner against the British Empire and what was left of France. The Italian Navy was given a number of missions. Among them, a submarine force was active in the North and South Atlantic working with the German wolf packs to starve Great Britain. But the bulk of its duty was in the Mediterranean escorting sup-

ply convoys to Africa and keeping the British Navy tied up. Pampered by Mussolini at the expense of his Army and Air Force, the Italian Navy was no mean war machine. Its order of battle included six modern battleships, enough to dominate *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea).

What the navy did lack, however, was radar, ample fuel, and aggressive leadership. Unfortunately for Mussolini, the British had what the Italians

lacked.

Using 21 Swordfish biplanes, the Royal Navy managed to catch a portion of the battlefleet at anchor at the naval base of Taranto in southern Italy. Although only one battleship (*Conte di Cavour*) was severely damaged, the psychological impact greatly disturbed Italy and *il Duce*.

The Japanese took great interest in Taranto and it served as a model for their great strike on Pearl Harbor one



The battleship Conte di Cavour

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## TARANTO (continued)

year later. Like Taranto, Pearl Harbor called for low-level torpedo attacks and the element of surprise. What the Japanese should have learned from Taranto was that sinking ships in shallow harbors does not a victory make. Just as two of the Italian battleships were hit but refloated to fight again, most of the American fleet was *not* lost at Pearl Harbor because of its shallow basin.

What the British reaped from Taranto was a blow to Fascist militarism. What the Japanese reaped at Pearl Harbor was the whirlwind. It should be noted, however, that the Italian Navy avenged Taranto the following year when six of its intrepid frogmen sunk two British battleships and their supply ships at Alexandria, Egypt. --JLM



The Italian battleship Littorio.



## Perspectives

### The Art of Love (Ancient secrets revealed)

by Pamela Gleason

If you wanted to pick up girls in Ancient Rome, one of the best places to go was the race track. Not only did the tight seating arrangements practically force you to sit very close to the lady of your choice, the nature of the event made striking up a conversation exceedingly easy.

"Be sure to ask with great interest which horses are running and then immediately cheer for the same one, whichever it is, that she cheers for."

This practical advice comes from Ovid's *Art of Love*, an instructional poem first published in 1 BC during the reign of the Emperor Augustus. *The Art of Love*, written in a witty and lively style, is divided into three books. The first two explain how a man can find, seduce and keep a mis-

tress; the third tells how a woman can attract a lover. Ovid's poem was extremely popular in ancient times, and continued to be read and enjoyed throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and into the modern era. Although Ovid's methods might sound a bit cynical, today's man about town could certainly benefit from some ancient wisdom if he were serious about enlivening his love life.

Another good place to meet women, according to Ovid, is at a banquet. There, you have the advantage of wine, which "gives courage and makes men apt for passion." Of course, you have to be sure not to drink too much, or you might end up courting a woman who is only beautiful when you are drunk. Also, if you drink too much, you risk making a fool of yourself or quarreling with the lady's husband. Getting drunk is dangerous, but



Cupid and Psyche (from Ostia Antica)

pretending to be drunk can be quite useful: "Make your crafty tongue stumble in stammering talk, so that whatever you do or say more freely than you should, may be put down to too much wine." Another important piece of advice is to be polite and deferential to the lady's husband, since "he will be more useful to you if made a friend...Tis a safe and oft-trodden path to deceive under the name of friend."

If the lady of your choice repulses your advances, Ovid's counsel is persistence: "First let assurance come to your minds, that all women can be caught." You must praise her constantly and convince her you are madly in love with her, which is not hard since "each woman thinks herself loveable, hideous she may be." It is also sometimes useful to let her see you cry: "With tears you can move iron...If tears fail (for they do not always come at need) touch your eyes with a wet hand." If your

lady refuses to see you, you should make friends with her handmaid, who will plead your cause with her mistress. It sometimes happens, of course, that the handmaid is also attractive. Ovid's considered advice is to abstain from seducing the handmaid, but if you must, "see that you gain the mistress first, and let the servant follow; do not begin your wooing with the maid."

Once you have a mistress, you must endeavor to keep her. Here, Ovid's advice is to stay away from love potions and philtres, and to strive to make your affair enjoyable: "That you may be

loved, be lovable." Do not fight with your mistress; save fighting for your wife: "The dowry of a wife is quarreling; but let your mistress ever hear welcome sounds...that your coming may make her glad." Always pretend to agree with her, but take great care not to let on you are only pretending. Be very careful that your mistress does not find out about other girlfriends. Do not give any gifts which the others might learn about, and "lest the lady catch you in some well known retreat, meet not every mistress in one spot." If your mistress should discover your secret, however, "manifest though it be, yet deny it ever. Be not submissive then, nor more flattering than of wont; such signs point to overmuch guilt."

Ovid's advice to women is somewhat more conventional. In order to obtain a

(Continued of p. 27)

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## Media Madness

[In which we present media material with commentary]



**ITEM:** A movie reviewer for Channel 12, a Long Island cable station, gave a "thumbs up" to *My Cousin Vinnie*. Saying that Italian-Americans who were insulted by *GoodFellas* and *The Godfather* will be proud of Joe Pesci's *My Cousin Vinnie*.

**COMMENT:** *My Cousin Vinnie* is a lawyer's version of *Rocky*. An uncouth Brooklyn boy makes his bones fighting the Alabama judicial system. Although the movie is a lot of laughs, who really believes it boosts the Italian-American image? Let's find out what our Italo-Alabaman readers think.

**ITEM:** A Kansas City, MO grand jury jails, without charges, 20 relatives of suspected Italian-American gamblers to squeeze damaging testimony out of them.

**COMMENT:** The Italian-American community of Kansas City is rightfully upset by this ethnic round-up. Forming a protest group named Basta! (Enough!), these citizens have taken to the streets. Unfortunately, the ACLU and the Kunzlers of the world have ignored their pleas. Civil rights have been suspended for these relatives of alleged gamblers. It would be analogous to jailing President Bush to rat on his son Neil (Silverado) Bush.



### From Italy with Elegance.



**ITEM:** Italians polish their wine image. You may have noticed that Italians put their best foot forward with fashion, art, music, and wine, to the point of being smug.

**COMMENT:** The fourth largest economic power needs to spend some money on advertising that fact instead of the latest chair designs from Milan. Most American newspapers don't even bother quoting Italian political leaders unless they are bashing their nation.

# Media Madness



**ITEM:** Hunt's Spaghetti Sauce ad depicts the great (but primitive) cooks of Italy. (left)

**COMMENT:** Shucks! We suppose an Italian ad agency ought to use great Appalachian brewers to market American bourbon. Possum stew, anyone?



**ITEM:** Democratic candidate Bill Clinton of Arkansas was overheard in a recorded telephone conversation agreeing with a female friend that Governor Mario M. Cuomo acts like a "mafioso."

**COMMENT:** Ever since "All-American" newscaster Sam Donaldson proclaimed the press' right to question the possible Mafia ties of any Italian-American, we should not feel in the least bit slighted. Even New York City politician Peter Vallone was more upset by the invasion of Clinton's privacy than the smearing of the well-respected Cuomo. Would it offend the New South to accuse Clinton of being Klanish?

**ITEM:** The press is at it again predicting the imminent demise of Italy. Skyrocketing national debt, a bureaucracy of thieves, incompetent medical care, and regional separatism are reaching crisis portions.

**COMMENT:** Surely, the Italians have their share of problems — some serious ones, at that. But when are American journalists going to act mature? Here are some tips: Do not assume that one act of malpractice in one hospital in Naples represents the entire Italian medical system. Do not underestimate the Italian ability to accomplish change. Accept the fact that Italy is a major economic power and earned her position. Try to put things in perspective: Scotland wants out of Great Britain; American kids are dying of violence in schools and on the streets; and the unemployment rate in eastern Germany is 17%. There is plenty of gloom and doom to go around. Eventually, Italians will create their 2nd Republic.





# News of the Institute

## NEW GOVERNOR

By a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, John C. Santora was confirmed as a Governor of the Institute for a three year term. John's outstanding achievements as the 1991 Dinner Chairman have enabled the Institute to expand its administrative and program efforts. John's professional career is managing a portfolio of prime Manhattan properties. John, his wife Debra and children Nancy and John reside on Staten Island.



John Santora

## ELECTIONS & REVISED CONSTITUTION

In response to Institute President John Mancini's announcement that he wished to step down as chief executive officer in 1992, the Board of Governors initiated a review of the Institute's constitution as part of a reorganization. Because of the time factor (elections are normally held in February), the Governors voted to postpone elections until March. In the meantime, by a majority of the Board, the constitution was revised creating the position of Secretary of Programs & Administration. Other revisions include experience requirements for all officers, two year terms for governors instead of three, direct election of the President by the Plenary Council, and a mandated budget allocation of not less than 70% to Institute programs. **ELECTION RESULTS:** President: Albert Crecca; Vice President: Michael Carbone; Financial Secretary: Robert DeSiena; Secretary of Programs & Administration: John Mancini; Treasurer: George Ricci.



Al Crecca

## 5th ANNUAL DINNER

Spearheaded by Chairman Louis Mantia, preparations for the annual dinner dance are underway. Once again, our affair is growing in popularity and ticket sales were off to a promising start. However, with the country in the grips of recession Lou and Social



5th year of the youth program. A need to expand

Chairman Mike Carbone are cautiously optimistic. Nevertheless, our Fifth promises to be our best with a 15-piece all-ladies band (Kit McClure), big door prizes, and a Viennese Hour to remember. Tickets are \$300 and journal ads are available. For information contact our office at (516) 488-7400. The date is Saturday, May 9th (Mother's Day weekend) in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf. Last year's attendance was over 700.

## AURORA PROGRAM

Saturday Italian classes (Level I) for 5th and 6th graders were just completed in New Hyde Park, Long Island, with 20 youngsters participating. Among them were a number of non-Italic kids who just wanted to see what all the excitement was about. The course was offered free as part of an experiment to solicit students through the

public grade schools (most districts frown on enrollment fees as being profit motivated). Although some districts were uncooperative in allowing us to distribute brochures in class, we feel that we are on the right track for our much-desired expansion of the program.

In April, we will inaugurate a special fast-track adult course at our office in Floral Park, Long Island. Specially designed by our staff to prepare teens and adults for a trip to Italy or as an introduction to the Italic world, this pilot program may be just perfect for adults who cannot commit to a full-blown language course or just do not have a facility for languages. It's so new, we don't even have a name for the course. A lunch-hour class for members is also contemplated in Manhattan.

And since Italic means more than Italian, the Institute is positioning itself as a champion of Latin in America's schools. We hope to report soon that a number of high schools around the country have accepted our offer to award achievement prizes to Latin students. Each prize will consist of our Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace) commemorative medallion and \$25 cash.

## FORBIDDEN ITALY (continued from p. 13)



ered some 800 years before Christ — appreciated a tasteful nude and held women in relatively high esteem.

Had Western man followed the ancient Greek way of sex and marriage we would be a far different people. Scholars who have studied the ancients through their artwork have concluded many things about the attitudes and customs of the various peoples. While both the Greeks and Italians (i.e., Italo-Etruscan) were obsessed with the good luck aspects of the phallus, the Greeks saw it as a weapon rather than just a sexual member. In their male-dominated society, the penis came to represent a symbol of authority. In fact, many of their cities contained numerous public monuments called Herms in which a male figure with erect penis loomed over pedestrians below. So symbolic of male chauvinist authority were these Herms that one night in ancient Athens anti-establishment "terrorists" lobbed off all the penises throughout the city. (Talk about threatening someone's manhood!) Undomesticated womenfolk were suspected,

From extant artwork, the Greek ideal of sex is clearly contrasted to that of the Romans. If art reflected life, each ethnic group had distinguishable proclivities. Greek men, for example, are often shown penetrating their women standing up and from the rear, never allowing women to mount them as ancient Italic art displays. Was this a conscious message by the Greeks that women were to be the recipients and not the initiators of the sex act?



Art with the Church's blessing

Orgy scenes are extremely rare in Italic art despite the notoriety of imperial pleasures. Yet, orgies are common in Greek art where the *symposium*



A popular Italian TV gameshow

(literally, "drinking party") was the boys' night out. Does this reluctance by Romans to picture group sex reveal a bit of shame in the public conscience?

Anal sex is also rare in Italic art, except in occasional homosexual scenes. It is quite frequent in Greek art. This type of sodomy may have been a common form of contraception among the Greeks as it still is among some Third World poor.

Another common action in Greek sex scenes is sadism through degradation or the beating of the female partner with a money purse or slipper. Such behavior was not at all normal in Roman art.

Finally, Hellenic art rarely, if ever, depicted cunnilingus, which the Greeks regarded with revulsion. Fellatio predominates their depictions of oral sex. The Romans, on the other hand, were not averse to showing cunnilingus and simultaneous oral sex in their love scenes. Again, does this reflect the equality of the sexes that set Italic/Etruscan culture off from most other peoples?

### Religious Art

It is to the credit of the Italian spirit that art did not totally succumb to religious censorship. It is all the more amazing considering what occurred in Greek art. The Athenian Golden Age of perfect and god-like nudes never made the transition to  
(Continued p. 28)

### Institute (continued)

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#### PROJECT ITALIA

At last, our first video has been re-edited and re-titled. Running a tight 23 minutes and narrated by former Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, the video is entitled *America: The Italian Legacy*. A comprehensive program will be undertaken to distribute the video to schools, cable networks, and interested organizations. This video represents our commitment to inform the general public of Italy's contribution to government and law, and to preserve a record of that story. There will be additional screenings of the video for Plenary Council and General members in the near future.

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## PROFILES

### Camille Paglia The Sex of Art

by Joyceann Yaccarino

Camille Paglia's intellectual ferocity has garnered the author a great deal of attention—not all of it positive. Throughout her career she has articulated her controversial ideas with a pugilistic energy that has earned her as many foes as friends. Paglia is a sensationalist by her own admission. From that vantage point, no topic is off limits, no generalization too farfetched. Her startling notions and reflections on pop culture, fine art, sexuality, modern feminism and even her Italian heritage are unsettling and provocative.

In an interview with *New York* magazine she recounted one of her combative responses to a student who had insulted her: "I called up Gail Parker, [the president of Bennington at the time], and I said 'I'm going to kick him in the ass.' and she said, 'Yeah, you're right, he should be kicked in the ass.' Now, see, as a WASP, she thought I was using a metaphor, okay. As an Italian when I say I'm going to kick someone in the ass, I mean kick them in the ass."

In her book *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (Yale University Press), the professor of humanities at the Philadelphia School for the Humanities partakes in some scholarly fisticuffs. Paglia has hit a nerve with her colorful assaults upon feminism and liberalism and her theories about paganism, androgyny, nature and sexual conflict. Her book reached number 7 on the paperback best-seller list last December—not the norm for a work of scholarship.

*Personae* is meant as a critical study of the representation of human sexuality in Western art. In her argument, Paglia contends that nature is really barbarous and violent, not benevolent and romantic. "The amorality, aggression, sadism, voyeurism, and pornography in great art have been ignored or glossed over by most academic critics." Paglia makes it her business in the next 600-odd pages of her book to catalog the sexual symbolism she finds in every medium in Western art.

*Personae* travels down both tines of a forked road. On one path, pornography is art, and decadence and the amorality of the instinctual life are good and necessary. On the other, classic gender-based stereotypes predominate. "My stress on the truth in sexual stereotypes and on the biologic basis of sex differences is sure to cause controversy." And that it does. According to Paglia, Western civilization is the work of men, and women owe a debt of gratitude to the creativity of the superior male half of the species. In her view of the world, women do have power, but theirs is the dark, unbridled powers of nature. "If civilization had been left in female hands, we would still be living in grass huts." No doubt most women—especially those engaged in creative endeavors—will find these comments disturbing, but Paglia is a writer who repels with one phrase and compels one to read further with the next.

Paglia's chosen attention grabber is to make high-brow and low-brow cultural comparisons: Chaucer and Charlie Chaplin, Lord Byron and the Beach Boys, Cleopatra and Auntie Mame, Gracie Allen and the Delphic Oracle. From Hera to Bette Davis, Christianity to shamanism or Shakespeare to rock music—it seems no form of human expression or "projection" escapes Paglia's inspection.

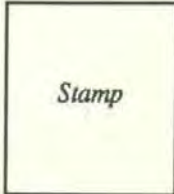
Paglia saves some of her most stinging jabs for the Italians. She attributes her own ability to reconcile violence and culture with her Italian heritage, and describes sadistic images as normal in Italian terms. "My immigrant relatives used to say, 'May you be killed!' or 'May you drag your tongue along the ground!' (. . .) Torture and homicide are immediately accessible to the Mediterranean imagination." These first person statements which pepper the text cast a dark shadow on the work. Her connection between her Italic origins and her proclivity to act out her violent impulses is as unsettling as her elaborately structured house of sexual symbolism.



Paglia: Traditional & Strange

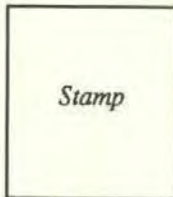
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### The Art of Love (continued from p. 18)

lover, a woman must first be attractive. Unadulterated beauty is not enough, however, a woman must work to make herself look good: "Care will give good looks: good looks neglected go to waste." Makeup, skillfully applied, can hide blemishes, and the right clothes camouflage figure flaws. It is a good idea to go late to banquets and other parties, because "delay will enhance your charm: Though plain, to the tipsy you will seem fair." In order to keep men interested, it is best to play "hard to get" since "what is easily given ill fosters an enduring love; let an occasional repulse vary your merry sport." Men like to feel that their meetings with you are secret and dangerous, so pretend to be afraid of being caught, even if there is no such danger: "Though it were easier by the door, admit him by the window, and show signs of fear on your face."



A loving Roman couple

*The Art of Love* was, of course, highly satirical and was not intended to be taken completely seriously. Its publication, however, was a contributing factor to Ovid's downfall. The Emperor Augustus, troubled by the moral turpitude of Roman society, initiated a program of social reforms in order to discourage adultery and divorce. As part of his efforts to clean up Rome, he banished his own daughter Julia for the crime of immorality. *The Art of Love* was published just one year after Julia's banishment. Augustus, not amused by Ovid's flippancy, banned his works from public libraries. Some nine years later, Ovid himself was banished to the town of Tomis on the Black Sea for an undisclosed "error" which may have had something to do with adultery of Augustus' granddaughter, who was exiled at the same time.

According to the historian Suetonius, however, Augustus' concern for moral standards did not extend into his own personal life. Marc Anthony once protested that Augustus had "at a dinner party, taken the wife of an ex-consul from her husband's dining room, right before his eyes and led her into a bedroom; he brought her back to the dinner party with her ears glowing and her hair disheveled." Perhaps if the Emperor had read *The Art of Love*, he would have been a bit more subtle in his methods.

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***The Italic Way***





## Forbidden Italy (continued from p.25)

the later Byzantine Age. The curvaceous Aphrodite gave way to flat icons. Florence, not Constantinople, carried on the Greek and Roman traditions. The Roman Catholic Church did not merely tolerate the nude form, it patronized it. Although sometimes criticized as a cause of sexual guilt, the Church clearly cultivated the appreciation of the body beautiful. At the Vatican and most Italian cities, a nude Adam, as well as his descendants down to David, were allowed to strut their stuff under the tolerant eye of Rome's prelates. Judge not, lest ye be judged.

The ancient Italians passed on this sexual openness to the Celts, Germans, Britons, and other tribes of the hinterland of Europe. Romanization brought with it sexual art. And one can trace the spread of Italic civilization among tribes in varying degrees of explicit tribal art.

### The Cutting Edge

Every culture has its own way of dealing with sex, or not



**A classical Greek flogging his harlot with a slipper. Theater and art weren't the only imports to Magna Graecia (southern Italy).**

dealing with it. Certainly, the Italian culture has run the gamut of conflicting mores. The home of Catholicism once forbade divorce and abortion. Today, it condones both, leading all other European countries in terminating pregnancies. Yet, Italians appear comfortable supporting both propriety and carnal pleasures, scoffing at the likes of what they see as our bizarre show trials that gloat on date rape and sexual harassment. Americans and Italians sometimes run to extremes.

Gary Hart, a 1988 presidential contender lost his quest after some "monkey business". Ilona Staller, on the other hand, made monkey business her 1987 platform to victory. Yet we sense change coming to America in the way Democratic candidate Bill Clinton stared down the press over an alleged 12-year affair. Admittedly, though, the United States is not ready for porno-politicians

The Italians appear to be bringing the sexual society to its "logical" conclusion. Whether it becomes the wave of the future or civilization's undoing remains to be seen.

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