

THE Italic Way^{XXV 1996}

The magazine of the Italic Studies Institute

St. Peter's Cathedral,
Vatican City

The Roman Church:
An Earthly History

In this Issue:

In Name Only: Fallen Movie Stars

History: Masada, A View from the Ramp

Reviews: Pavarotti..... City Hall

Americanizing Italy

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The Italic Way

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The Italic Way

The official magazine of the Italic Studies Institute, a nonprofit corporation headquartered in Floral Park, NY

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SPREADING THE WORD

I have been a subscriber to *The Italic Way*, for several years and would like to take this opportunity to compliment you on the excellent contents of your magazine.

At the same time, my wife and I have been members of the Sons of Italy in America, Antonio Meucci Lodge of White Plains, N.Y. Thank you for allowing us to reprint your excellent article about the persecution of Italian Americans in World War II (Issue XXII) in our monthly newsletter *Avanti*.

Andrew N. Morra
 Mount Vernon, NY

(Ed.: See the Forum Section in this issue for some disturbing news on our quest for Congressional aid in documenting this past injustice.)

TRUE BELIEVERS

Thank you so much for being there, and for keeping alive the precious memory of our glorious ancient past, our vibrant present and hopes for a dynamic future (both here in America and our ancestral fatherland!). God bless you and God bless the Italic Studies Institute!

Anthony J. DeGenito
 Tinton Falls, NJ

I am a subscriber to *The Italic Way* and I enjoy it every time I

receive a new issue. I look forward to many more. Keep up the excellent job you are all doing.

Larry Trotta
 State Trustee
 N.Y. State Order of Sons of Italy

Continued on page 3



All'Italiana

MEGA-ROYALTY

Italic authors have often had difficulty getting published. Before he hit the big-time with the *Aeneid*, for example, Roman writer Vergil had a heckuva time finding an outlet for his early poems.

Things were just as bad this millennium until Virginia lawyer David Balducci closed a \$2 million deal on his very first novel *Absolute Power*, a political thriller. To add to the embarrassment of riches, Balducci sold the movie rights to Clint Eastwood for another million and received a \$4 million advance on his next novel *Total Control*. The plot of *Absolute Power* involves a sexy U.S. President, his kittenish mistress, and governmental intrigue (no, Newt Gingrich isn't a character.)

A Vergil he is not, but maybe Balducci finds his inspiration in another Italic lawyer-turned-writer- the spicy scribe Ovid. *

WHAT DEFICIT?

The image of Italy groaning under corruption scandals, unemployment, political instability, and mountainous debt is not the whole story of this shrewd nation of talent and salesmanship. Italy's trade surplus with the world is the envy of many a deficit nation, including the USA. In only ten months of 1995 the Italians posted a \$22 billion trade surplus. Over half of that profit came from sales of machinery and textiles/apparel. Forget the donkey commercials! These Italians are racking up a fortune with industrial machinery and high-quality fabrics. Even more amazing is that the textile mills are mostly small (averaging 16 employees) family-owned businesses totally out of step with traditional English capitalist theory, which praises consolidation and competition. Italian mills like to stay small and believe in peaceful coexistence, at least within Italian borders. Perhaps it's English economic theory that has been the ruination of the English and maybe our undoing as well. *

Obituaries

• **Robert Gallati**, 82, police innovator who developed the first computerized database for fingerprints in the nation. As the first director of the New York State Identification and Intelligence System in 1964, Dr. Gallati's agency computerized some 3.5 million prints by 1973. His system was adopted by the FBI.

• **Frank Dorsa**, 88, invented the frozen waffle and, with his brothers Sam and Anthony, founded Eggo Food Products. Dorsa built a machine during the 1950's that could make thousands of waffles an hour. In 1966, he and his brothers sold Eggo which eventually became part of the Kellogg Company.



• **Dan Duva**, 44, boxing promoter who competed with Don King and Bob Arum in bringing high-priced fights to the public. Among his champs were Evander Holyfield and Michael Moorer.

• **Dean Martin**, 78, singer, actor who won the hearts of millions of Americans with his laidback style of entertainment. In his numerous movie portrayals Martin, born Dino Crocetti, never defamed his Italian heritage and had no kind words for those who cashed in on mafia movies.

• **Louis Tortella**, 84, mathematician who helped to break the German military code Enigma during the Second World War. Dr. Tortella was a key promoter in the creation of the National Security Agency in 1952, becoming a deputy director in 1958. Considered a master administrator as well as a pioneer in conversion to computers, Dr. Tortella continued to advise the Agency until his fatal illness a few months ago.

• **Amabile Figuri Santacaterina**, 90, one of radio's first female broadcasters. Especially popular in Chicago during and after the Second World War, Mrs. Santacaterina broadcast on behalf of aid to war-torn Italy.

• **Vince Edwards**, 67, famous for his television role as Dr. Ben Casey during the early 1960's. He was born Vincent Zoino in Brooklyn. His "tender hulk of rock" character as Ben Casey foreshadowed the gritty medical series such as ER. *





Top Trio

The Academy awards hit an Italic jackpot this year with three Italian-Americans winning top honors in the acting category: Mira Sorvino (*Mighty Aphrodite*), Susan Sarandon (*Dead Man Walking*), and Nicholas Cage (*Leaving Las Vegas*). *

Cultural Losses

So far this year Italy suffered two losses that saddened the world. One was the destruction by fire of Venice's landmark opera house *La Fenice* (The Phoenix). The other was the tragic death of actor Massimo Troisi, star of the Oscar nominated film *Il Postino* (The Postman).

The two-hundred-year-old wooden *Fenice* (fay-NEE-che) is now the cause of yet another Italian neurotic bloodletting. The fire took place during renovations which were to include a new fire suppression system. Coincidentally, nearby canals had been drained for dredging. So, when the fire broke out, Venice, the city surrounded by water, had no water to fight the blaze. Everyone from the mayor to the street mime is under investigation. Italy's political system and even the Italian national character is undergoing hysterical scrutiny. Anywhere else in the world the event would be just a tragic fire. But in Italy evil lurks everywhere.

In the premature death of 41-year-old Massimo Troisi, Italians blame the actor himself for pushing himself to the point of exhaustion in the passion for his art. Much-beloved by Italians and filmgoers around the world, Troisi's ultimate sacrifice for the arts will be memorialized in his last creation, *Il Postino*. *



Alleanza candidate Gianfranco Fini caricatured in his fighting Roman uniform. Alas, success eluded him.

Back to the Polls

Once again the voters of the Italian Republic headed back to the polls to choose a new government. Racked by fragile coalitions, caretaker prime ministers, and political parties of every persuasion, President Scalfaro could no longer resist calling elections. After the dust settled the clear winners were a coalition of reformed Communists and ex-Christian Democrats known collectively as the Olive Tree Party. Historically, this is the first time Communists (by another name) will help govern Italy.

However, Gianfranco Fini's *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance Party, a democratic descendant of the Fascist Party) garnered 16% of the vote and belongs to a coalition of the Right with some 39% of the vote.

Depending on how the Olive Tree partners get along Italy may yet be subject to political instability. One thing the electorate did not vote on was constitutional reform. The devil is still in the system. *

Mamma's Boys

Known in Italian as *mammoni* (mother's boys), Italy's male generation X is adamant about staying single. "I don't understand why in Anglo-Saxon culture you have to leave home at 18," said one *mammone*. "I think it is an imposition. I mean even if you are happy at home, they throw you out because otherwise you aren't accepting your responsibilities. But I am a responsible person. When women say, 'Let's live together,' I never understand. Why should I exchange one thing for another, one family for another?"

The data suggest that many young people in Italy simply do not want to grow up, says Giuseppe Roma of Italy's census bureau. However, others argue that this state of affairs is a tribute to the adaptability of the Italian family. Where strict control once hindered the offspring's freedom, tolerance and permissiveness — even to allowing sexual trysts within the home — now have their place.

According to the census bureau, the greater percentage of *mammoni* are in northern Italy. Sicily has the lowest.

One of the significant effects on the Italian nation is that it now has one of the lowest birthrates in Europe.

Oh, if only mamma didn't cook so good she'd have grandchildren! *





WORLD NOTES

Viking Agony

Back in 1965 Yale University Press published a book revealing the existence of a map of Newfoundland drawn in 1440, fifty-two years before Columbus' historic voyage. Reportedly drawn from Viking records, the map created quite a stir among Italian-Americans who considered the map a forgery. Although experts were divided on the question of the map's authenticity, over the succeeding years the Viking claim of first European visitation to America was popularly accepted. However, the map is still being tested and studied and is the subject much academic debate. But the bottom line remains the same: Cristoforo Colombo was the first to open the Americas to the world. *

Mean Motor Scooters

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the Vespa motor scooter is hitting the road. In his third world-class endurance trek, Vespa devotee Giorgio Bettinelli is riding his Vespa 150 on a 22-country tour starting from Australia through southeast Asia and on to South Africa. In 1992 Bettinelli got the bug to scooter from Rome to Saigon. Last year he took a nine-month excursion from Anchorage to Tierra del Fuego.

Vespa, which translates as "wasp," has had a glorious history and earned the loyalty of riders the world over. Conceived in 1946 as Italy's answer to the need for cheap transportation amid the poverty and devastation after World War II, some 15 million Vespas have been sold to date and it holds about 43% of the European scooter market.

There is hardly an Italian movie made that does not feature a Vespa in any street scene. Like the Fiat 500, it is an Italian classic. *

Mother Lode

Dr. David Grimaldi of New York's Museum of Natural History recently announced the discovery of the mother of all amber fields right next door in New Jersey. Amber is generally found in exotic places like the Dominican Republic or the Baltic Sea countries, so finding such a rich cache of insect-laden amber from prehistoric Jersey is certainly a news item.

Among Grimaldi's finds is a piece of amber with 90-million-year-old tree flowers embedded within it, the oldest flowers in amber found to date. Over 100 previously unknown ancient species of plants and animals have been discovered at this site, which remains anonymous. *



Italosex

Sex has been in the news, as usual. Among the more notable reports is one from model-actress Lauren Hutton who was asked the secret of her fabulous looks at age 52. "I have no secrets. All I can say is that I drink large quantities of water, I use a lot of hydrating creams, and I make love once a day with an Italian." (Wow!)

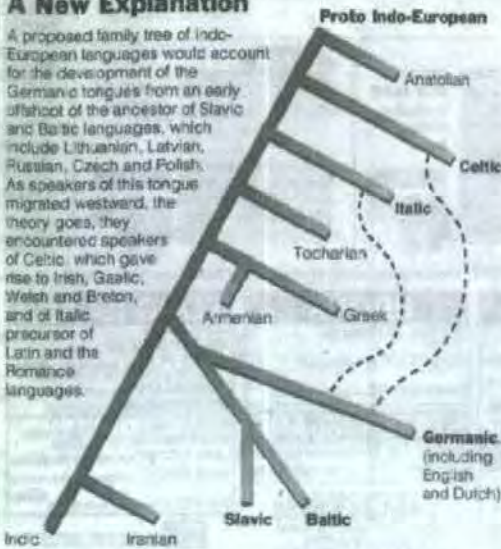
A recent *Cosmopolitan Magazine* survey of readers in 29 countries found that women who consider sex as "fabulous" (as opposed to just satisfactory) were led by Czechs and followed by Americans, French, and Italians. More Russian women claim to have sex on a daily basis but do not describe it as "fabulous" (Wowski!)

April's centerfold in *Playgirl Magazine* was Marcello Morgili, an Italian who originally hails from Sicily. Was Lauren Hutton one of the judges? *



The Descent of Germanic Tongues: A New Explanation

A proposed family tree of Indo-European languages would account for the development of the Germanic tongues from an early offshoot of the ancestor of Slavic and Baltic languages, which include Lithuanian, Latvian, Russian, Czech and Polish. As speakers of this tongue migrated westward, the theory goes, they encountered speakers of Celtic, which gave rise to Irish, Gaelic, Welsh and Breton, and of Italic, precursor of Latin and the Romance languages.



Sources: Dr. Dor. Hinge and Dr. Ann Taylor

Lingua Italica

Few people know that the science of linguistics considers all the romance languages, i.e., Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, Romanian, and Portuguese, as "Italic". In fact, the Italic branch of the Indo-European language group has recently been given credit for influencing the Germanic tongues as well. This means that the Germans, Dutch, and Scandinavians now have another reason to appreciate Italy! *



Swiss Mess

For those of us who think of Switzerland as cute but dull, it came as shocking news that an American family is suing the Italian-Swiss canton of Ticino for \$125 billion.

That enormous sum grew out of an initial investment by a Seattle real estate salesman/jailbird named Higgins. It seems he deposited \$600 million in a Ticino bank which agreed to pay 1% interest each week. The bank soon collapsed so Higgins' family pursued the Ticino government. Because the Swiss did not send a lawyer to the American state court hearing, a judgement was made against them for the principle plus interest since 1966 — \$125 billion — nearly half the amount of the U.S. military budget.

Fortunately for Ticino a federal judge reversed the judgement and is considering dismissal. Local businessman Franco Ambrosetti claims Ticino is just the object of a huge American scam. *

Woman of Peace

She returned to her native Italy dressed in a bright silk sari, the apparel of her adopted home India. Sonia Gandhi, widow of slain premier Sanjay Gandhi, came to Rome to receive the Woman of Peace Award.

Mrs. Gandhi is much-revered in India for her courage and patriotism. Years after the brutal assassination of her husband, Mrs. Gandhi is still considered an influential factor in Indian politics. There are even some who wish her to be India's next prime minister. However, to most Indians an Italian lady ruling over half a billion Indians is unthinkable. *



Lost in Space

Italy's second attempt to create an electrical generator in space has failed again. The joint U.S.-Italy "Tether" experiment in which an Italian satellite and copper wire (tether) were to be unreeled 13 miles into space from the Shuttle Columbia (an Italian name, indeed) ended when the tether snapped at mile 12. Although a frustrating failure, the experiment did in fact generate 3,000 volts just before the break. Italian scientists designed the tether system to solve power and communications problems in future space projects. The Italians backed their theory with a \$115 million contribution to the experiment.

Italian astronauts Umberto Guidoni and Maurizio Cheli were on board the shuttle to oversee the experiment. *

Media News

• Jabba the Hut-lookalike Mario Puzo must need more gambling money because he just dashed off another mafia epic. This paean to the Mob is titled *The Last Don*. His publisher, Random House, is touting it as "better than *The Godfather*...superb!" No doubt every B-grade Italian-American actor will be pitching for the mobstar lead. Mafia-mania is entering its second generation and going strong. Soon Nazis and the Bogeyman will be just distant memories. Even Freddie Kruger can't compete with the Mob's staying power.

• Operation mismatch got off to a curious start with the announcement by fashion designer Giorgio Armani that he is hiring mobster movie mogul Martin Scorsese to produce a documentary on the Italian cinema. Scorsese of *GoodFellas* and *Casino* infamy is excited about the new project. But when asked if he has seen the latest Oscar-nominated Italian film *Il Postino* he admitted he hadn't. So much for knowing your subject.

[By the way, ethnically insensitive Scorsese recently took the pledge to boycott Gillette healthcare products which are tested on animals. No doubt he would prefer Gillette emulate him by using Italian-Americans as lab subjects.] *



EDITORIALS

Tooling Up for Aurora

In an effort to present the Aurora Youth Program as the vehicle to encourage the study of Italian, the Institute commissioned filmmaker Tony DeNonno to document a group of youngsters going through the course. Just completed, this ten-minute video cuts through the polemics to give the viewer a taste of the fun and excitement built into the Saturday classes. The truth is, there are no other comparable programs around. We have shown that the kids are ready for Aurora, but are Italian-American groups and educators ready to move off the dime? Therein lies the real problem. - JLM

Our New Look

Hopefully, our readers will like the new look of *The Italic Way*. There is always a risk that a new design and format will make existing readers a little uncomfortable. But the overall change has not been too radical. Our various departments and sequence of articles remain the same and our staff writers are still very much with us.

We have noticed that *The Italic Way* is setting trends among Italian-American organizations. The Order Sons of Italy in America has just published their premiere issue of *Italian America* in magazine format. Welcome aboard. Our community is going upscale.

Italy Turns Left

On April 21st Italians went to the polls and elected a coalition of center-left parties to govern their nation. In the jargon of Italian politics Left means "liberal" and Right means "conservative." The new coalition is called the Olive Tree Party and includes the Democratic Party of the Left (formerly the Communist Party). In the final analysis nothing much has changed except majorities. There were no constitutional changes voted on by the electorate so everything still depends on shaky coalitions. The new coalition needs to stay married or Italians may have to go to the polls again to get one party strong enough to survive without partners.

As on-lookers to the Italian scene, this turn to the Left probably means more regionalism, more deficit spending, and an even weaker foreign policy. It appears that Italians have, for the moment, opted for *la dolce vita*, which is, no doubt, on borrowed time.

Italian President Visits the U.S.

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro of Italy is not all that popular with his own people. The most common criticism directed at the head of state is that he leans too far to the Left and he is not as impartial as the president should be. Remember, Italy is a parliamentary government and the president is suppose to be like a monarch, ie, above the political fray.

So, like any other harrassed public figure, the Italian President yearns for the warm adulation of foreign shores. Unfortunately, Scalfaro's visit to the United Nations and to the White House in April went pretty much unrecorded by the media. We can all draw our own conclusions about that lack of attention. Suffice it to say that nothing much was going on in the world at the time but the media still preferred to ignore a state visit by the world's fifth-richest industrial nation.

Nevertheless, the Italian president was given the royal carpet treatment at the U.N. The reason is clear: Italy is the 6th largest financial supporter of the U.N. and pays in advance - a rare bird, indeed! Still, Italy's dream of being permanently enrolled on the Security Council, now ruled by the victors of the Second World War, is very much a long shot. Japan and Germany are also looking for spots.

Scalfaro was also a guest of the Clintons at a state dinner. Many of the Italian-American creme de la creme found their way to this White House bash. One glaring exception was Senator Alfonse D'Amato. Was he stricken from the guest list by Hillary Rodham? However, among the in-crowd that night was filmmaker Martin Scorsese. (The I.S.I. was not.) The diminutive director was awed by the honor. Indeed, he must have wondered how he, a filmmaker who has made a career portraying Italians as crooks and low-lives, could be worthy of a dinner with the Presidents of Italy and of the United States. For that matter, so do we. It's sort of like inviting Charles Murray, author of *The Bell Curve*, to a dinner for Nelson Mandela. JLM

Forum of the People

Senator D'Amato Responds

The following letter was received from United States Senator Alfonse D'Amato. It was no doubt drafted by a protective Washington staffer in response our request to for an extraordinary Act of Congress. In a prior verbal discussion, that staffer accused us of trying to get the Senator to do something "illegal" with our "special interest" request. Specifically, we requested on behalf of the major Italian-American groups and the 15 million American citizens who comprise the fifth largest ethnic community in this country that the United States of America acknowledge for the first time the unwarranted and shameful persecution of tens of thousands of Italian-Americans in 1942. In that year, Italian, German and Japanese residents were subjected to arrest, internment, and confiscation of property without due process. Thousands of Italians were routed from their homes along the Pacific coast and forbidden to earn a living at sea. Italian language schools were closed, community newspapers shut down and ethnic organizations banned or harassed. The shame caused the suicide of four elderly Italians and it continues in the silence of that generation and those that followed. Yet, during the Second World War, one half million Italian-Americans, the largest ethnic component, served in the U.S. armed forces to help defeat the Axis Powers.

We asked Senator D'Amato, as a powerful leader in our government and a man who has experienced the pain of ethnic hatred, to lend his support for a film documentary, paid entirely by the U.S. Government (est. \$500,000), as an educational public television production, so other Americans will not have to suffer as the Italians did from future hysteria and baseless fear.

The Senator's generic reply can only suggest that justice and education are not two of the Beltway's priorities. We find it difficult to believe that the Senator's staff really understands this issue. What do you think? *

ALFONSE M. D'AMATO
NEW YORK

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3202

December 21, 1995

Mr. John L. Mancini
Italic Studies Institute
One Holland Avenue
Floral Park, New York 11001

Dear Mr. Mancini,

I am in receipt of your request for funding for a film that will document the treatment of the Italian-American community during World War II. The project you described in your letter certainly seems to serve an unfulfilled need.

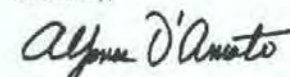
As you may already be aware, however, Congress is reducing spending in a variety of programs in order to balance the Nation's budget. Although the process of balancing the budget and reducing the deficit has created much controversy recently, I believe that most Americans see that these goals must be achieved in order to secure future economic stability.

I hope that you can understand the dilemma Federal Legislators are currently facing. We can no longer be fiscally irresponsible placing extreme financial burdens on future generations. Yet, we must also ensure that the next generation has the tools to deal with problems that may arise.

Since the intent of your project seems worthy, I have enclosed information on federal grant programs and Foundation sources. The Catalog of Domestic Assistance, available at some libraries, is a wonderful reference for available federal grants. However, please keep in mind that some federal programs may be experiencing decreases in funding during these spending rollbacks.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance. I wish you the best of luck in your endeavor.

Sincerely,



Alfonse M. D'Amato
United States Senator



Book Review



Pavarotti, My World

by Luciano Pavarotti with William Wright
Crown Publishers, Inc. New York
335 pages; \$25

If being excellent at one's craft is the criteria, Luciano Pavarotti long ago passed the test. But as this volume, his second autobiography, again attests, there is much, much more to the man than just a superb voice.

The first autobiography, *Pavarotti, My Own Story*, also written with the assistance of William Wright, was published 15 years ago and covered the singer's early life and career. The present volume brings us up to date. (Wright, who followed Pavarotti around with a tape recorder for months, is first-rate at capturing his subject's unique English-language cadence.)

Unlike many celebrity autobiographies, it is not an "and then my success was" type of book. Indeed, one need never have gone to an opera house to appre-

ciate Luciano Pavarotti. Anyone who enjoys the company of a person who is full of life, has a strong sense of humor, can converse about scores of subjects and recognizes his own shortcomings (and criticizes them), will find a lot of good reading here.

Pavarotti's greatest passion is not opera. It is life. If there is one fact that jumps off almost every page, it is that this is a man who loves a good time (perhaps too much so, as some recent reports suggest). He's an avid horseman, a boater, a bicycle enthusiast, a great cook, an inveterate practical joker, as well as . . . the greatest tenor alive.

Stories about his family are frequently amusing and always insightful. To cite but one: His father Fernando, who has a fine voice but never pursued a singing career, sang for his famous son one day. "After I complimented him. . . he said, 'Ah, Luciano, if only you had my voice, think of the career you could have had.'" The funny part is that the old man was serious.

But Pavarotti dearly loves his father. Indeed, the love he has for every member of his family, both immediate and extended, is strong, personal and quintessentially Italian.

Affection for his three daughters, now all attractive young women, comes across convincingly. Daughter Giuliana's bout with a mysterious illness, for example, was described movingly with loving detail. (After many misdiagnoses it was determined to be myasthenia gravis, a serious but curable disease.)

There are delightful behind-the-scenes stories about various projects, one of the more delightful being about the making of the PBS special, *Pavarotti Returns to Naples*. He seems to be remarkably free of the prejudice so many northern Italians have for their southern countrymen. The tenor even takes the criticism of a local chauffeur — that he was mispronouncing Neapolitan words in his renditions of famous songs of the city — in stride. Unfortunately, he does let slip one negative stereotype about a shady southerner "who apparently represented another government" accompanying the camera crews, but in the midst of an abundance of positive remarks about Italy's third largest city it was relatively easy to overlook.

Pavarotti also tells of his errors of judgement — such as the time he lip-synched a pop song at a concert in his home city of Modena in 1992 — in a self-deprecating style that reminds one of the remarks of a child caught with his hand in the cookie jar. "I was corrupted by fear and technology," he writes. *O, cattivo Luciano!*

There is much more in this charming book. It is an apparently honest account — as far as it goes — that should make all who have enjoyed Pavarotti's singing, enjoy Pavarotti the human being. *

- Robert A. Masullo
(Ed. It should be noted that Pavarotti and his wife are now separated due to the tenor's extramarital interests.)

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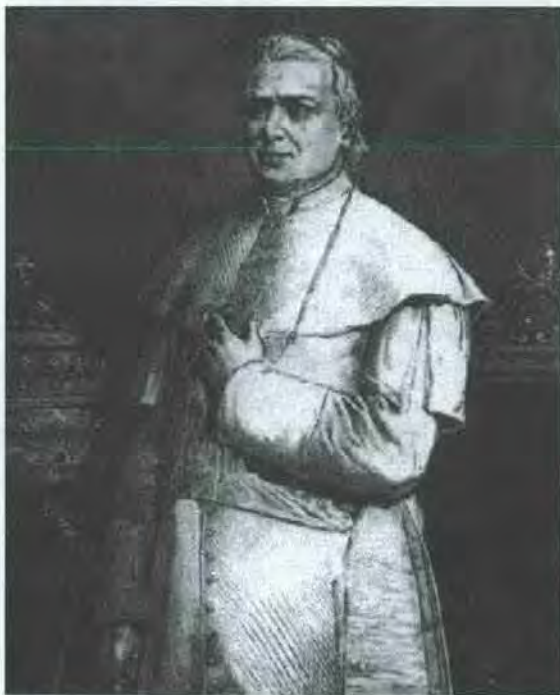
The Roman Church

An Earthly History

by Don Fiore & John Mancini



Quite recently an Italian journalist uncovered a secret plan by Pope Pius XII to annex a portion of Italian territory from that war-torn nation in 1944. Only the objections of Rev. Giovanni Battista Montini (the future Paul VI) prevented the Pope from giving Vatican City a coastline. It seems shocking to hear of such an outrageous land-grab by the Holy See but then again the Church would have only been taking back what was once theirs anyway.



Pope Pius IX (Pio Nono) was, at first, a progressive pontiff who turned against Italian unification. He was run out of Rome.

DIVIDED PENINSULA

For the greater part of its history, the Church actually governed, in every earthly sense, a swath of territory in central Italy known as the Papal States, which included parts of Tuscany, Romagna, Lazio, Umbria, and the Marches. So how did the Roman Catholic Church end up owning so much of Italy in the first place?

It was actually a gift from a Germanic barbarian named Pepin in 754 A.D. Pepin was a Frank, the Germanic tribe that eventually took control of France (hence the name!). He was the father of that well-known figure Charlemagne. A foreigner giving away a piece of Italy never did sit well with patriotic Italians. However, the existence of one more "sovereignty" among the dozen or so other "sovereignities" crowding the peninsula after the fall of the Roman Empire hardly made a difference.

These Papal States remained in existence for the next one thousand years, through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. Their existence was not altogether negative for the future Italian state. The Church's role in preserving the classical tradition as well as its art and scholarship can never be overstated. Moreover, its patronage of the arts during the Renaissance has given the world a vast quantity of magnificent art.

But the beginning of the end came with Napoleon's invasion of Italy in 1799. Buonaparte awoke the Papal States with the modernizing effects of revolutionary France. Soon, even this came to naught when *le empereur* met his Waterloo and the Pope reestablished his presence.

Nevertheless, the seed of nationalism had taken root up and down the



peninsula. The winds of change had arrived in the forms of Cavour, Mazzini, King Victor Emmanuele, and Garibaldi. During the 1850's these Italian nationalists were reassembling the various pieces of ancient Roman Italy. Patriotic wars and rebellions were breaking out in the Austrian and Spanish (Bourbon) held portions of Italy. How would the Pope react to this surging reunification movement?

Pius IX was initially hailed as a (comparatively) enlightened ruler. He was the unfortunate pope who had to face this dilemma head on. After a succession of reactionary popes who had had Italian nationalists jailed and even executed, his liberal political reforms suggested sympathy for the unification cause. That impression vaporized two years later when Pius IX formally repudiated the Italian independence movement. The following spring, his angry subjects rose in armed revolt and declared the Papacy's temporal rule in Italy to be at an end. Fleeing disguised as an ordinary priest in the darkness of night, Pius IX took refuge in Bourbon territory (Gaeta), where he called upon the Catholic monarchs of Europe to crush the secular republic that patriots Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi had established at Rome. Louis Napoleon of France promptly dispatched his army and Rome was retaken after a bloody, two month siege.

Two decades and plenty of battles later, the balance of power on the Italian peninsula had shifted entirely. Nearly the entire land, including the Papal States, had fallen by force of arms to King Victor Emmanuel's Piedmontese troops and their *Garibaldino* allies, reducing the Church's earthly domain to the city of Rome alone. Inevitably, the Royal Italian Army came knocking at the city's tightly locked gates on September 20, 1870. A cannon blast shattered the Porta Pia, the soldiers poured in, the Tricolor was hoisted over St. Peter's, and the Pope's temporal rule over even a square inch of territory was finished.

Though politically and militarily defeated, the aging Pius IX would not accept the loss. Condemning the seizure as an affront against God (it was Pius IX who had authored the doctrine of Papal Infallibility), he took on the role of a self-described "political prisoner". Not only did he flatly reject generous offers of concession by the Royal Italian Government which, in any case, he refused to recognize, he threatened all Italians who supported the new political order with excommunication.

A bitter cold war between Church and State dragged on for years, making it virtually impossible for any Italian to be a good



Buonaparte, the ex-patriate Italian who carried the French Revolution to Italy. The Papal States never fully recovered from his short sojourn into Italy.

A BITTER cold war
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good citizen at the
same time.

Catholic and a good citizen at the same time.

Not until the threat of a communist revolution became acute in 1919, however, did the Church drop its abidingly hostile position against the royal Italian Government by actually representing itself in Parliament through its own political party (*Partito Popolare*, led by the Sicilian priest Don Luigi Sturzo).

In 1926, formal negotiations were opened by the Fascist government toward the settlement of the Church's territorial rights in Italy, which had remained in dispute since 1870.

This thorny question was at last resolved with the signing of the Lateran Treaty by Mussolini and Cardinal Gasparri in 1929. The

product of 150 meetings and 20-some drafts, its terms arranged for the Kingdom of Italy to cede 110 acres in Rome, henceforth to be regarded as the wholly independent Vatican State. Diplomatic independence and universal freedom of transit across Italian territory to and from the tiny nation was guaranteed, while the church retained the right to Italian military defense upon demand. The Italian Kingdom further agreed, among other things, to pay a generous cash settlement as compensation for the territories it had earlier seized, to proclaim Catholicism the official State religion, and to make Catholic education compulsory in public schools. In return, the Church officially recognized the legitimacy of the Italian nation and agreed to maintain a position of non-involvement in the State's domestic and foreign policies, save for matters of spiritual guidance. Indeed, Pope Pius XI blessed Italy's Abyssinian conquest and its participation in the Spanish Civil War.

In 1984, major revisions of the Lateran Treaty were worked out with the Italian Government, resulting in the termination of Roman Catholicism's status as the official religion of the State, and the abolishment of compulsory teaching of Catholic doctrine in public schools.

•••

THE CHURCH'S ITALIC ROOTS

In the days of the Caesars, Italy was a pagan nation. Italian life was quite structured then. Roman citizenship, a privilege mostly granted to Italians and Italian colonists throughout the Empire, came with responsibilities. Italians or *Italici* as they were called, were the backbone of the Roman military. They were liable to be posted to the provinces where they observed a variety of customs and religions. Most religions mimicked Italian paganism in that they worshiped a pantheon of gods with human attributes. For example, the chief god, Jupiter, was called Zeus by the Greeks. The goddess of love, Venus, was named Astarte by the Semitic tribes of North Africa and the Near East. Cults drifted in and out of Italy like fashions, now Isis from Egypt, now Mithras from Asia Minor. Each fulfilled a particular need in the soul.

The Italic code of morality was strong on family and duty to the state. Marriage was monogamous, divorce permissible. Women were socially equal to men, unlike the Greek or Eastern cultures. Parents and ancestors required daily piety whether they were living

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Il Presidente Italiano Visita gli USA

Il presidente italiano Oscar Luigi Scalfaro non è poi così popolare con il suo popolo. La più frequente critica diretta al capo dello stato è che è troppo orientato a sinistra, e non è un presidente imparziale come lo dovrebbe essere. Occorre ricordare che l'Italia è un governo parlamentare, e il presidente dovrebbe essere come un monarca, cioè *super partes*.

Quindi come qualunque altro tartassato personaggio pubblico, il presidente ha l'anelito per la calda adulazione di lodi stranieri. Sfortunatamente, però, la visita di Scalfaro in aprile alle Nazioni Unite e alla Casa Bianca passò praticamente inosservata dai media. Tutti possiamo trarre conclusioni da questa mancanza di attenzione. Basti dire che niente di particolare stava accadendo nel mondo a quel tempo, ma i media preferirono ignorare una visita di stato della quinta nazione più industrializzata del mondo lo stesso.

Ciononostante, al presidente venne accordato un trattamento con i guanti bianchi all'Onu. La ragione è ovvia: l'Italia è il sesto più grande sostenitore finanziario dell'Onu, e paga in anticipo - uno strano pesce davvero! Eppure il sogno italiano di essere permanentemente iscritto nel Consiglio di Sicurezza, adesso capeggiato dai vincitori della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, è praticamente irraggiungibile. Il Giappone e la Germania vanno pure cercando posti.

Scalfaro è stato anche ospite dei Clinton all' cena di stato. Molti italoamericani di spicco hanno trovato la via della Casa Bianca per questo festone. Una vistosa eccezione è stata il senatore Alfonse D'Amato. È stato forse silurato dalla lista dalla Signora Clinton? Comunque, tra i personaggi più in vista quella sera c'era il cineasta mafia Martin Scorsese. (L'Istituto non c'era). Il minuscolo regista stava in soggezione per l'onore. Difatti si sarà meravigliato come lui, un cineasta che ha fatto carriera dipingendo gli italiani come furfanti e sottospecie, potesse essere degno di un cenone con i presidenti d'Italia e Stati Uniti. Se è per questo anche noi ci siamo meravigliati. E' come se uno invitasse Charles Murray, autore di *The Bell Curve* [un libro che parla dell' 'inferiorità' intellettuale dei neri, N.d.T.], ad un cenone per Nelson Mandela. — JLM

Traduzione di Cesidio Tallini

L'Americanizzazione d'Italia

di Mario Ubiali

Ore diciotto: "OK, Il prezzo è giusto." Ore diciannove: "La ruota della fortuna." Prima serata: "90210 Beverly Hills" e "Melrose Place." E la domenica sera? "X Files", ovviamente.

Se pensate che stia sfogliando una "Guida TV" americana, siete in errore: questo è quello che la grande maggioranza del pubblico italiano fruisce ormai da parecchi anni. Attualmente, circa il 60% dei programmi trasmessi sono di origine statunitense, sia nella forma di telefilm e film doppiati che come versioni nostrane di prodotti concepiti oltre oceano.

Come si è giunti a questa situazione? La risposta più immediata è nella natura del mercato. La televisione nacque in Italia solo nel 1954 e i canali (statali) raggiunsero il numero di tre (solo 3) nel 1970. Fino all'inizio degli anni ottanta non ci fu alcuna stazione privata in grado di trasmettere su tutto il territorio nazionale. Non sarebbe inaccurato definire questa situazione come quella di un mercato molto giovane, nel quale è naturale che le parti in competizione si rivolgano a nazioni nelle quali prodotti e formati siano stati "testati" sul pubblico da lungo tempo, garantendone in tal modo la qualità. Se pensiamo alla Televisione come ad un supermercato, ci sembrerà abbastanza ovvia la ragione per la quale una "sede" appena aperta si limiti a vendere ciò che gli altri già commercializzano: chiunque assumerebbe che questo è l'unico modo di formarsi una clientela minimizzando i rischi. Un esempio di questa tendenza è l'utilizzo, nei notiziari italiani, delle agenzie di stampa americane (Associated Press e United Press International) quali fonti principali.

Un descrizione meramente economica della cosiddetta "americanizzazione" (o "Coca-Colizzazione", come alcuni preferiscono dire) della cultura italiana di massa appare a tutta prima soddisfacente. A questo punto basterebbe aggiungere uno studio sulla relazione tra "ratings", pubblicità e scelta dei programmi. Magari potremmo costruire la solita teoria marxista della cultura come sovrastruttura dell'economia. Sfortunatamente, la chiave economica apre soltanto la prima delle tante porte di questo enigmatico castello.

In quindici anni di sviluppo frenetico, il Gruppo Fininvest (creato dal magnate Silvio Berlusconi) ha costretto la RAI a seguire il suo per-

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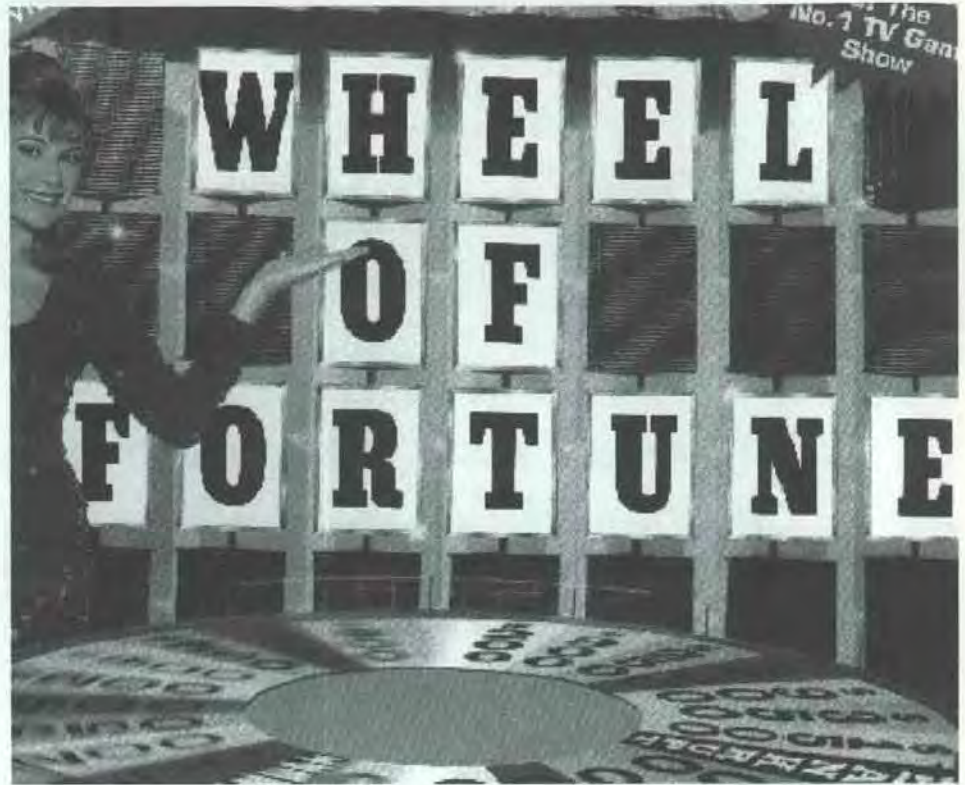
L'Americanizzazione d'Italia

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corso "americanizzante". Ma perché la scelta del modello è ricaduta sugli USA? Del resto, la Tv nacque, prima che in Italia, anche in Francia e in Inghilterra, ma non c'è traccia dell'influenza di quelle due nazioni nei nostri formati televisivi. La spiegazione deve essere culturale.

Recita una vecchia battuta: "Quando l'America starnutisce, l'Europa si soffia il naso." Il fascino della cultura statunitense non è limitato ai soli mass media e richiederebbe una lunga dissertazione sull'intricato rapporto tra i due continenti. Limitiamoci alla cultura di massa. Abbiamo recentemente osservato le polemiche, le critiche e i contrasti destati in Francia da alcune iniziative per contenere la colonizzazione linguistica dell'inglese. È davvero possibile preservare un'identità culturale nell'era di Internet e dei network televisivi? Non si tratta di meri rigurgiti nazionalistici (nel senso deleterio del termine)? Forse quello di mantenere vivi secoli di storia e arte è un desiderio legittimo. Qualunque sia la risposta, la Francia, che ha una forte "personalità" in questo senso, ha quantomeno preso posizione. L'Italia invece non ha manifestato alcuna reazione notevole all'importazione massiccia di culture straniere.

Parte della questione è politica: quando un'operazione culturale viene etichettata come "nazionalistica", l'isterica elite culturale di sinistra grida immediatamente "ai fascisti!", paralizzando qualsiasi iniziativa (proprio quando si



pensava che la sinistra odiasse l'America 'capitalista'...). Così nessuno vuole sollevare il problema a livello politico, sapendo benissimo che si tratta di argomento altamente impopolare. Nel frattempo, il pubblico continua a chiedere più prodotti di importazione. La cornice concettuale si rivela di nuovo più ampia di quella del semplice schermo televisivo.

"Si tratta di un massiccio travaso di modelli culturali da una cultura (dominante) ad un'altra (dominata)", spiega il Professor

Domenico Secondulfo, titolare della cattedra di Sociologia del Consumo presso l'Università di Parma. "Del resto questo non accade solo nei mass media, ma in moltissimi altri campi del consumo, dall'abbigliamento al cibo, per non parlare del software."

I programmi radiofonici, ad esempio, sono in gran parte affollati di musica americana: rock'n'roll e pop sono da sempre considerati proprietà esclusiva di culture anglofone. Ma ciò che è peggio, molti famosi cantanti

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(Zucchero e Spagna, ad esempio) e autori di disco dance (di solito DJ) hanno spesso scelto di cantare versi inglesi, sapendo che avrebbero venduto di piu'. A partire dagli anni 80, nomi quali Madonna, Springsteen, Sting, Iron Maiden, Rolling Stones e simili sono stati decisamente piu' popolari di quelli dei loro colleghi italiani. Tra i dieci singoli piu' venduti nella settimana tra il 5 e il 12 di Febbraio non figura nemmeno una canzone italiana. Dei dieci video piu' richiesti a Videomusic (la principale rete televisiva musicale del paese) nel medesimo arco di tempo sette sono statunitensi e tre britannici. Per rendere piu' interessanti queste cifre, devo aggiungere che la lingua inglese e' stata insegnata nelle scuole pubbliche solo dall'inizio degli anni 80 e che capire il testo di una canzone non e' certo lavoro da principianti. Insomma dobbiamo presumere che la maggioranza di quel pubblico affamato di prodotti americani non abbia per parecchio tempo compreso cio' che i cantanti stavano dicendo. In qualita' di tutore



Mariah Carey

per studenti delle scuole superiori, posso personalmente testimoniare che mi e' stato frequentemente chiesto di tradurre il titolo delle canzoni che i ragazzi compravano ed ascoltavano per settimane. I titoli, non i testi.

"Condivido la preoccupazione per una caduta della cultura italiana", ci confida il Professor Secondulfo. "La causa e' l'affollamento di messaggi "made in USA" sulle reti locali, in special modo nei telefilm e nelle soap operas, ma anche nelle pubblicita' di vari prodotti, soprattutto diretti agli adolescenti. Prendete ad esempio le scarpe "Nike", che non sono "naike" all'americana, ma "nike" alla greca. Quando parole che appartengono alla nostra cultura vengono americanizzate per poi rivendercele, allora la dominanza culturale e' forte."

Se la radio, la musica e i prodotti di consumo sono stati le spiagge ideali per lo sbarco dell'industria americana dell'intrattenimento, il cinema e' probabilmente la luogo culturale nel quale essa ha preparato la sua conquista. Finiti gli anni del Neorealismo e dell'avanguardia di sinistra, morto Fellini, nell'ultimo decennio gli italiani si sono dimostrati affamati di azione, romanticismo e storie "bigger-than-life" (letteralmente: piu' grandi della vita). Pensandoci, non mi stupisce che non esista un modo adeguato di tradurre quell'idioma. Di certo c'e' un modo di comprarlo. Un'industria cinematografica in declino e poco pubblico per biglietti sempre piu' costosi hanno lasciato spazio all'importazione. Per ogni film italiano lanciato sul mercato, almeno cinque sono i concorrenti americani. Provate a indovinare su chi cade la scelta... Nella prima settimana di Gennaio, tra i film piu' visti sette erano Americani e solo tre Italiani, per un totale di 50 miliardi di incassi volati oltre l'oceano. Gli unici prodotti nostrani nella classifica erano commedie che non fanno onore alla nostra tradizione: "Viaggi di Nozze", "Selvaggi" e "Vacanze di natale 1995". Quando i film lasciano le sale e si trasferiscono nel palinsesto televisivo, lo schema si ripete. Non solo i prodotti di fiction americani dominano, ma i vari canali sono orgogliosi di presentarli come tali. Non e' raro udire nei promo frasi del tipo: "finalmente in Italia il film che ha scioccato l'America..." o "...la commedia che ha fatto ridere l'America" e cosi' via. Perche' qualcosa che ha avuto successo in un ambiente culturale cosi' lontano dovrebbe affascinare un pubblico radicalmente diverso? La risposta, ovvia ed inquietante, e' che le due audience sono ormai molto simili.

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L'Americanizzazione d'Italia

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Così simili che persino i formati dei notiziari, presumibilmente espressioni genuine della quotidianità di una nazione, sono notevolmente vicini a quelli statunitensi. Il Professor Secondulfo ha una doppia spiegazione per questo fenomeno: "Potrebbe essere una conseguenza della commercializzazione e quindi dell'impreziosirsi del tempo, della concorrenza anti-zapping tra le reti; oppure si potrebbe trattare di un travaso vero e proprio di modelli culturali. Le due cose sono distinguibili solo in teoria: in pratica sono parti di un unico movimento."

Avere qualcuno "in diretta sul posto" è una routine di qualunque notiziario, anche se "sul posto" non c'è nulla da vedere. Le storie sono diventate più corte e veloci, con interesse crescente per la cronaca e il sensazionalismo. Per la prima volta in molti anni, la politica è descritta come un'arena nella quale "i protagonisti" si scontrano e lottano, invece che una noiosa congerie di "dibattiti istituzionali". Gli stessi conduttori si sono trasformati da scrissi-

mi uomini di mezz'età in affascinanti "anchors", pronti a dimostrare classe, dinamicità e (Dio ce ne scampi) humor.

Non c'è alcun dubbio che negli ultimi anni la cultura di massa italiana sia stata oggetto di una poderosa colonizzazione da parte dei prodotti americani. Vorrei però sottolineare ancora due punti importanti. Prima di tutto, la maggioranza degli italiani non è conscia del problema. Come spiega il Professor Secondulfo: "Questo è un tipico problema di "americani", cioè di persone che SONO della cultura dominante, ma al suo interno sono minoritari, e quindi ricercano un'identità più forte, cercando una immagine culturale da contrapporre agli altri gruppi. Diverso il problema degli italiani di Italia, che NON sono della cultura dominante e quindi provano una forte tentazione di assomigliare ai dominanti, divenendo permeabili a ciò che gli viene proposto come cultura di quel popolo."

Infine, una domanda in onore del motto latino: "In medio stat virtus". La fusione di diverse culture è davvero un fenomeno del tutto negativo? La colonizzazione non è una

routine storica naturalmente accettata come parte dell'evoluzione dell'umanità? Lo era quando i Greci navigarono verso le coste del meridione d'Italia, i Romani in Inghilterra, gli Spagnoli in America e così via. La colonizzazione culturale è qualcosa che un gruppo etnico può contrastare, al contrario del puro potere militare o economico. Nessuna cultura può pensarsi come un'isola, una parte "sicura" del pianeta. Per dirla con il Professor Secondulfo: "Il rischio è quello di ingessare la cultura (che è dinamica) in modelli di riferimento fermi che servono a sostenere l'identificazione del gruppo ma che possono sgretolarsi facilmente."

In bilico tra il rischio di rimanere intrappolati in un modello di riferimento statico e quello di essere spazzati via, gli italiani e gli italoamericani lottano per cercare una via d'uscita tra i mille tentacoli dell'era digitale.

* * *

Mario Ubiali, ventitré anni, è laureando in Filosofia all'Università di Parma. Ha precedentemente pubblicato articoli sulla "Gazzetta di Parma" e "Il Giornale di Brescia". *

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The Roman Church

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or decreased. The importance of maintaining this code of morality, religion if you will, was not lost on the rulers of the Empire. Church and State were not divided. The emperor himself also carried the title of Pontifex Maximus or Highest Priest. By virtue of his secular office, this Emperor/Pontiff presided over the Roman Senate and ruled the Empire through provincial governors and proconsuls.

Devotion to the Emperor/Pontiff included a belief in his *genius*, that spiritual quality that transcended his sometimes corrupt human form. That *genius* was the Pontiff's link to the gods. Some emperors reportedly pooh-poohed the concept. The wily old Emperor Vespasian, on his deathbed, was overheard to say, "I think I'm becoming a god," as he and his *genius* drifted into eternity.

Pagan beliefs permitted the simultaneous worship of gods and goddesses, foreign or domestic. One could pray to Neptune before taking to sea. Or maybe Venus would be honored before asking a pretty girl for a date. It was all quite acceptable, Jupiter didn't mind so long as you remembered him on the important holidays.

The Roman state religion supported a clergy, as well, to serve the spiritual and mundane needs of the people. While we entrust our last will and testament to a lawyer, Italians utilized a holier breed. They customarily entrusted the document to the Vestal Virgins, women of purity who swore an oath of chastity, living a communal life in the service of the gods.

Into this world came Christ's apostles and followers. One Saul of Tarsus, a Jew with Roman citizenship, known to us as Paul, conceived of the idea of converting Romans and Greeks to the new "christian" form of Judaism. Traditional Judaism neither believed in Jesus' divinity nor in his resurrection. And although it accepted converts among the *goyim*, males had to undergo circumcision to embrace the faith — a painful religious experience. Paul convinced Peter and the other Apostles to forgo the foreskin ritual so as to increase pagan converts. It was a sound decision. Among the new converts to Christianity were many Italic soldiers stationed in Judea who eventually carried the new faith back to the Roman homeland.

Still, there remained some major stumbling blocks to the wholesale conversion of Romans and Greeks to this new form of Judaism. Among them: graven images, the eating of shellfish and pork, the comfort of praying to special gods and goddesses, the security of an

authoritarian state religion. Rather than fighting these antitheses to Judaism, the early Church Fathers accepted them all. As historian Will Durant instructs us:



Above: A Roman Vestal Virgin, precursor of the Christian nun.

Below: Caesar Augustus as Pontiff, the leader of the Italic state religion.



"It was not merely that the Church took over some religious customs and forms common in pre-Christian Rome — the stole and other vestments of pagan priests, the use of incense and holy water in purifications, the burning candles and the everlasting light before the altar, the worship of saints, the architecture of the basilica, the law of Rome as a basis for canon law, the title Pontifex Maximus for

the Supreme Pontiff, and, in the fourth century, the Latin language as the noble and enduring vehicle of Catholic ritual. The Roman gift was above all a vast framework of government, which, as secular authority failed, became the structure of ecclesiastical rule. Soon the bishops, rather than the Roman prefects, would be the source of order and the seat of power in the cities; the metropolitans, or archbishops, would support, if not supplant, the provincial assembly. The Roman Church followed in the footsteps of the Roman state; it conquered the provinces, beautified the capital, and established discipline and unity from frontier to frontier. Rome died in giving birth to the Church; the Church matured by inheriting and accepting the responsibilities of Rome. (Caesar and Christ, The Story of Civilization, pp 618-619.)

Catholicism became inseparable from Roman life. Emperor Galerius sought rapprochement with his city's ever-swelling Christian population in 311 A.D. by granting all citizens the right to practice their chosen religion unmolested, provided "that they shall in no way offend public order". Had his decree ended there, it might have stood as the definitive principle of the separation of Church and State. But Galerius had understandable doubts about the loyalty of his Christian subjects and further declared that it would henceforth be the civic duty of Christians to pray to their God for the welfare of the Empire. Thus, the burgeoning Catholic Church was for the first time assigned at least a mildly supportive role in the structure of the Roman State.

The Edict of Milan, issued by Emperor Constantine two years later, presented the Church with an even more solid guarantee of recognition, and within a very short time Christians were not only praying for Rome, but influencing and then dictating its laws and policies. The Church's role in temporal affairs of the Western world would wax and wane over the succeeding centuries. But in Italy it would consistently remain, until relatively recently, a major power of political as much as spiritual consequence. The honor of bearing the earthly seat of the Holy See for nearly two millennia has not come without a price.

So, it is understandable how the Italic people of today who have maintained their Roman Catholic faith view Catholicism as an ancient continuity spanning some one hundred generations. Even for those who have little faith but follow the tradition nonetheless, the Church is the embodiment of the ancient Roman consciousness. ✱



Masada: *The View From the Ramp*

By Alfred Cardone

In Israeli history, the mountain fortress of Masada is a symbol of the ultimate sacrifice for an independent Jewish state nearly two thousand years ago against the Roman Empire. So sacred is the site that Israeli Army recruits are brought to the ruined fortress at the completion of their basic training to take their oath of loyalty. Masada has become in legend the embodiment of everything that was good in Jewish history and all that was bad in Roman history. What follows is the whole story as it has come down to us from the only eyewitness source: Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.

HOW ROME CAME TO RULE JUDEA

In 143 B.C. Simon Maccabee (of Hanukkah fame) succeeded in winning independence for Judea from Alexander the Great's crumbling empire. The dynasty he established spent two generations expanding the borders of Judea by diplomacy and force, absorbing extensive neighboring lands (parts of present day Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria) and making Judea as large as King Solomon's Israel. Religious tolerance was abolished, and their

new subjects were forced to accept Judaism and circumcision. In 69 B.C. two Judean leaders, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, brothers, became engaged in a bitter war of succession. Both sides pleaded their case to the Romans who were the major power at the time. Roman general Pompey decided in favor of Hyrcanus and provided military support. Hyrcanus' victory over his brother came at a high price: Judea became first a client state and eventually a province of the Roman Empire.

Thus began the long troubled relationship between Rome and the Jews. Most Judeans remained strongly opposed to Roman rule. Rome attempted to reduce tensions by exempting Jews from military service and not requiring them to worship the state gods. These privileges were, however, no substitute for independence.

Nonetheless, political divisiveness continued to plague the Jews. The better educated Sadducees, who included mostly traders and wealthy landowners, saw reasons for an accommodation with the Romans. It was the small farmers, led by the Pharisees, who were the driving force behind rebellion. The mili-

tant wing of the Pharisees was the Zealots, who were determined to win independence by force if necessary.

THE JEWISH REVOLT

Unfortunately, the quality of the men Rome sent to govern Judea was mediocre, if not outright dishonest, and helped provoke the great rebellion which was to follow. Generally, these officials were insensitive to the religious feelings of the Jews. By 66 A.D., the high-handed policies of the latest procurator, Gessius Florus, had thrown Jerusalem into an uproar. Florus had seized funds from the Temple treasury to make up for a shortfall in tax payments. Bloody riots followed in Jerusalem. The High Priest and his council, the Sanhedrin, persuaded Florus to withdraw most of his troops. In the absence of Roman troops what had begun as riots against Roman rule now became pitched battles among the Jewish factions. Ultimately, the Zealots prevailed after killing 12,000 of their fellow countrymen.

With the Zealot victory, there was no hope of any accommodation with Rome. A rebel force surrounded the Roman garrison at Masada. Lured by promises for their safety, the Roman garrison was persuaded to disarm. Once defenseless, they were slaughtered to the last man by the Zealots. Back in Jerusalem, the small Roman garrison stationed in the royal palace agreed to surrender after the Jewish leader, Eleazor, guaranteed that their lives would be spared. Here again, once the Roman troops had laid down their arms, the rebels mercilessly killed them all. The slaughter of the garrison was subsequently commemorated in Zealot tradition as the day "the

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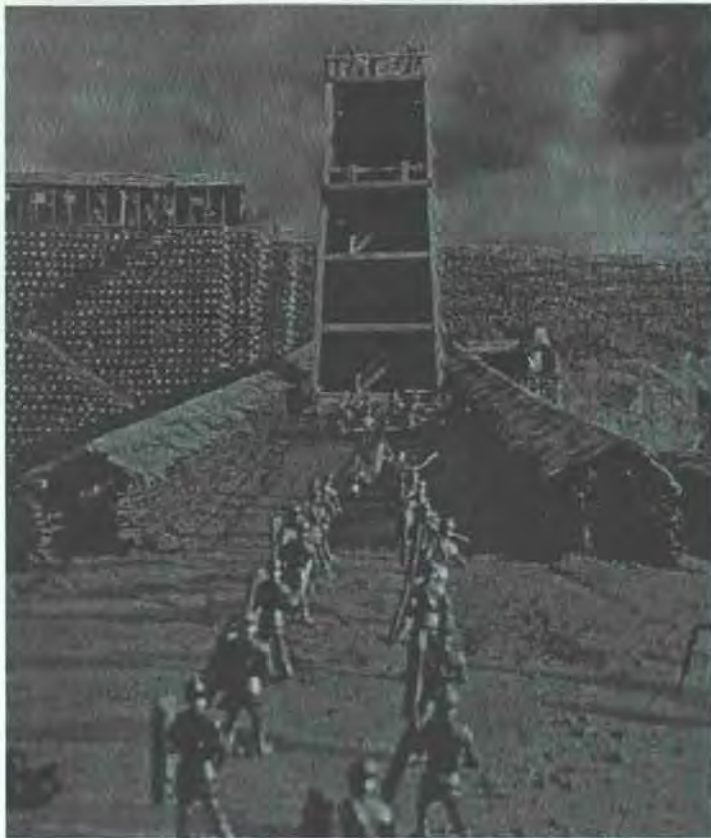
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Romans evacuated Judah and Jerusalem." These wholesale massacres would return to haunt the Zealots.

WHO WAS JOSEPHUS?

Reports of the massacres and military reverses reached Emperor Nero, who promptly appointed Flavius Vespasian as military commander to crush the insurrection. Vespasian entered Judea in 67 with a force of sixty thousand men. He proceeded to capture every rebel-held fortified city in Galilee including Jotopata, where the Judean commander Joseph ben Mattathias was taken prisoner. The Romans rampaged through the city, sparing only women and children who were later sold into slavery. Joseph, who became known to history by his Latin name, Flavius Josephus, formed a friendship with Titus, Vespasian's son, and showed a willingness to collaborate with the Romans. He went on to become a major historian, and although regarded by the Jews as a traitor, his works remain the only primary sources for the Jewish Wars.

In 70, Jerusalem fell after a bloody siege that had lasted a hundred and thirty nine days. In their rage the Romans plundered the Great Temple. (A scene of the plunder is still memorialized on Rome's Arch of Titus.) The thousands of Jews who survived were either sold into slavery or condemned to the arena. By 73, only the fortress of Masada was left to the Zealots.

THE FORTRESS

This fortress, built by Judean King Herod, sits atop a high plateau on the eastern edge of the Dead Sea. Nearly a thousand
Continued on page 21

...once the Roman troops had laid down their arms, the rebels mercilessly killed them all.

The Romans brought the seige to an artform. Few enemies could withstand the persistent legions.

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CITY HALL

A Movie Review by Rosario A. Iaconis

When David Dinkins was Mayor of New York City, he often referred to Gotham's ethnic mix as a "gorgeous mosaic." Governor Mario Cuomo echoed this egalitarian sentiment at a 1991 Columbia University gathering honoring Italian Senator Paolo Emilio Taviani, who had penned a new book about the Admiral of the Ocean Sea. The Governor suggested that the following year's quinentennial celebration of the discovery of the New World should be an inclusive parade of ethnicities, colors and creeds spearheaded by Italians. Cuomo borrowed a page from Jesse Jackson's Rainbow rhetoric and added an Italo-American twist. The media paid no attention. And why should they?

Italians are the sludge at the bottom of the media's melting pot. With their tumbledown ways and village-idiot demeanor, the movie versions of the scions of Italy mar Dinkins' fabled mosaic. Nowhere is this more evident than in the film *City Hall*.

Although Al Pacino's mayor was patterned after Fiorello LaGuardia and neo-anarchist politician Vito Marcantonio, the character wound up as Greek-American John Pappas. Had he remained Italian-American, it would have upset co-screenwriter Nicholas Pileggi's *opera buffa*. Pileggi assisted politician-turned-screen scribe Ken Lipper in fleshing out a key subplot in *City Hall*: Italians as a cancer on American society. Their predilection for criminality and twisted code of honor undermine the foundation of the sacred democracy bequeathed to us by the Greeks, enriched by the Anglo-Saxons and safeguarded by the Jews.



Italians are synonymous with violence and mayhem in this carefully crafted exercise in celluloid slander. Anthony Franciosa, playing the suave yet guttural Gotti-goombah, supplies the movie's center of depravity. Danny Aiello, as Frank Anselmo, provides the link to corrupt city government. Aiello, a self-hating Italian of longstanding, has become the Italian-American Step 'n' Fetchit. While plugging this odious movie on *The Charlie Rose Show*, Aiello-Anselmo played the willing wop to Rose's loquacious Southern gentleman. Tony Franciosa, however, is a recent convert to the Gospel according to gangland. His last hurrah was as an Italo-American FBI agent who declared his shame of mafia hoods in *Bride of the Mafia*. Alas, poor Tony has now joined the eternal Mob.

Which brings us to Al Pacino. Pacino is undoubtedly an enormously talented thespian. His performance in *City Hall* is boisterous and riveting. Pacino conveys the hurly burly of urban politics with every gesture and intonation. He plays the kind of mayor we all wish we could be. Pacino's Mayor Pappas is a courageous and erudite practitioner of *realpolitik*. And his character could only have come from the sidewalks of New York. How ironic that while this big screen politico is a noble Hellenic-American with Oval Office aspirations, the film's Italians are ignoble cretins with mob connections. That such a screenplay did not cause Pacino, Aiello or Franciosa any discomfort is telling.

Would Greek-American actors have lined up end to end to portray the sordid rise and fall of Spiro Agnew? Would they have wallowed in the *moussaka-and-ouzo* environment that led to

Agnew's criminality? Would they have underscored how the first Greek-American to ascend to the Vice Presidency resigned in disgrace? Would they have relished the opportunity to show America and the world the gritty underbelly of the Greek-American experience?

Former Deputy Mayor Ken Lipper is the progenitor of *City Hall*. While serving in the Koch Administration, he witnessed big city government, warts and all. In fact, his Frank Anselmo was patterned after Donald Manes, the Jewish borough president of Queens who took his own life as a result of the creeping corruption in the Koch Administration. Why Lipper transmuted this weak and wicked politician into a scion of Italy is the stuff of bigotry. As a neophyte screenwriter, Lipper was instructed by Oliver Stone to watch the *The Godfather I and II*. After this screening, Ken Lipper caught the Italo-bashing bug that afflicts all of Hollywood. Mr. Lipper's next opus is about the mafia and white collar crime. What a stretch!

The saddest aspect of *City Hall* is what might have been. The film's most powerful scene takes place in an African-American church in Harlem as Pacino delivers an impassioned eulogy at the funeral of a murdered child (the victim of a mafia war crossfire). Bellowing with moral indignation, Pacino states how the greatest mayor of all was a Greek, "Pericles of Athens." Suspend disbelief, now, and imagine Pacino's character delivering the same oration but as a truly noble Italo-American: "the world's greatest statesman was an Italian—Caesar Augustus, emperor, civilizer and architect of two hundred years of uninterrupted peace. I come to you today in peace and brotherhood..." ✱

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Masada

Continued from page 17

Zealots led by Eleazor ben Yair, a relative of the Zealot who had captured Masada back in 66 and massacred the Roman garrison, occupied the site. With its impregnable position and well-supplied defenders, Masada presented a daunting problem in siege warfare. The newly appointed Roman commander, Flavius Silva, arrived at Masada with his 10th Legion.

[The Tenth Legion, actually *Legio X Fretensis*, was typical of Rome's eastern Mediterranean legions, composed of mainly Italian (*Italico*) recruits mixed with many non-citizens who earned their citizenship if they survived the grueling sixteen-year enlistment. However, the centurions and officers were undoubtedly entirely Italian. This legion in particular had origins in Julius Caesar's famous 10th Legion which helped conquer Gaul. The name *Fretensis*, which refers to the Straits of Messina (the body of water separating Calabria and Sicily) may indicate particular areas of Italian recruitment or perhaps that much of the legion was assembled from Roman marines.]

Silva first surrounded the base of the

fortress with a wall to prevent the defenders from escaping. He then ordered his troops to pile dirt upon a broad outcropping of boulders below the fortress to a height of three hundred feet. Silva next had huge stones placed upon this dirt mount, increasing its height by another seventy five feet. The Romans then attacked with an ironclad tower ninety feet high along with siege artillery. The unassailable fortress of Masada was about to fall.

Eleazor and his officers met that night and after a long, agonizing debate, decided that it would be preferable to die honorably by suicide rather than face death, imprisonment and slavery at the hands of the Romans. No doubt the rebel leaders also feared that the Romans would show little mercy considering the treacherous massacre of their garrisons at Masada and in Jerusalem at the beginning of the revolt.

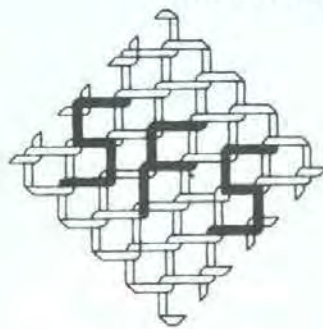
In the end, each man slew his own family. The survivors then killed one another until only one remained. He, in turn, committed suicide. When the Romans entered the fortress the next morning, they were greeted by an unearthly silence. As they searched they discovered the many corpses. The only survivors were two women and five

children who had escaped the slaughter by hiding in an underground cavern. They were spared.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In retrospect, the outcome was both tragic and inevitable. The rebellion was crushed by the might of Rome, and the Jewish state was dissolved. The sad Diaspora, or dispersion of the Jews, had begun and would culminate as a result of a second rebellion in 135. From their first contact, the Romans and Jews had lived in conflict. The Zealot longing for an independent, theocratic homeland (much like today's Iran) clashed with the reality of a Roman world. The incessant Judean wrangling and violent factional struggles among themselves disturbed the need for order and stability around the Mediterranean. Considerable segments of the Jewish population had favored an accommodation with Rome. Flavius Josephus was perhaps their most eloquent spokesman as he argued in favor of submitting to Roman rule and enjoying the benefits and protection of the Roman peace. Instead, the victory of the Zealot faction over more moderate Jews set in motion the chain of events that has shaped our world even today. *

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The Americanization of Italy

by Mario Ubiali



Mariah Carey

Let's see, 6 p.m. *The Price is Right*, 7:00 *The Wheel of Fortune*, during prime time it's *Beverly Hills 90210* and *Melrose Place*. Sunday night? *X Files*, of course.

If you think I am just browsing the American *TV Guide*, you'd better think again. This is what the majority of Italian viewers has been watching on television for several years. Currently, about 60% of programs are of American origin, either as dubbed TV series or movies, or as Italian-produced quiz shows inspired by American concepts.

How could it happen? The simplest answer is: the Market. Television arrived in Italy only in 1954 and grew to three stations by 1970, all State owned. Until the mid-80's, there was no private TV station that could broadcast throughout Italy. So, quite accurately, the Italian media market has only recently developed. As such, it is natural for competitors to copy older and more developed media markets such as the USA. It is a way to minimize risks. What is good in America is deemed good enough for Italians. A good example of this attitude is to be found in the use of press agencies. Italian newscasts use

as their main sources Associated Press and United Press International, both American. When you are the new kid on the block, you follow the others.

From an economic standpoint, this "Americanization" (or "Coca-Colization" as it was described in the early years) of Italian mass culture could be considered well-justified. Certainly from the standpoint of ratings, advertising income and general audience acceptance the wholesale importation of American television has been quite successful. Unfortunately, boiling down this complex phenomenon to just its economic success is to avoid more significant developments. There is unquestionably a social and cultural price that Italy is paying for this American media dominance.

"When America sneezes, Europe blows its nose" is what we say in Europe. But some among us are starting to question just how close a relationship with America we really want. Witness the recent French reaction to English linguistic colonization: *le surfing* and the myriad other vocabulary imports have provoked outright French criticism, created alternate French vocabulary,

and elicited deep cultural debate. Is it possible to preserve one's cultural identity in a world of an English language Internet and Television? Is it reasonable to be concerned? Does opposition to Americanization smack of petty nationalism? Are centuries of history, art, and cultural values really at stake? Whatever the truth might be, at least France, a nation with a strong cultural identity, is asking the questions. Italy has not manifested any reaction to mass import of foreign culture.

ITALIAN DILEMMA

Why isn't there more of a cultural uproar in Italy? For thing thing, unlike France, where arguments are based on national pride, old skeletons come out of the closet and a still-strong Leftist cultural elite starts screaming about the "fascist comeback" (you would think the Left would hate "capitalistic America"). So nobody on the political level wants to raise the issue. For another, there is still a popular demand for any kind of product coming from overseas.

"It's a massive transfer of cultural models from one culture (dominating) to another culture (dominated)," explains Professor Domenico Secondulfo, teacher of Sociology of Consumerism and Mass Communication Theories at the University of Parma. "And it's not only a matter of mass communications formats, but it includes many other consumer items, from clothes to food, including computer software."

In music, for example, rock 'n' roll has been considered exclusive property of English-speaking cultures. What is worse, many popular Italian artists like *Zucchero* and *Spagna* often prefer to sing in English to better appeal to the young public. From the 1980's on, Madonna, Bruce Springsteen, Green Day, Iron Maiden, Sting and any foreign names have been more popular than Italian ones. Among the top ten singles in Italy during the week of February 5, 1996 there was not even one Italian song! Of the



ten most requested videos on Italy's music channel, six were American, the remaining four British. What makes this all the more interesting is that most of the listening public doesn't quite understand the lyrics they hear. If you think that's depressing, well there is more to it. I can testify as an English language tutor in Italian high school, that I have been frequently asked to translate song titles for my students and rarely asked to explain the English lyrics.

Among the top ten singles in Italy during the week of February 5, 1996 there was not even one Italian song!

"I am worried about this free-fall of the Italian culture," says Professor Secondulfo. Italian youth is not only bombarded by the soap operas and TV series, but also advertisements. "Take 'Nike' shoes," Professor Secondulfo continues, "Nike" is a Greek word and our children here are pronouncing it the American way. When words that come from our [Graeco-Roman] culture are being Americanized and sold back to us, well, then the cultural dominance is pretty strong."

TOTAL ENVELOPMENT

If music and advertising were the ideal beaches for the American entertainment industry to launch their invasion, feature films were where they could take the high ground. Italy's love affair with black and white "neorealism" and Leftist experimental movies is in the past. Even Federico Fellini and Vittorio De Sica are dead. Italians have become hungry for pure action, romance and bigger-than-life plots. (Come to think of it, there is not even an Italian idiom to translate "bigger-than-life.") Filling that need

is Hollywood. During the first week of January, 1996, among the top selling movies were seven American films versus three Italian ones, for a total of \$35 million in earnings. The only Italian products in the top ten were low-profile comedies that certainly did no honor to the Italic film tradition: *Viaggi di Nozze*, *Vacanze di Natale 95* and *Selvaggi*. When movies leave the theatres to hit TV and video, the pattern is repeated over and over again. Feature films on video and TV series usually include fetching

promotional material, "finally in Italy the film that shocked America...the comedy that made America laugh..." etc.

How do American promoters know what Italians like and how do they cross the language and cultural barriers? I am afraid to say, but the truth is: those two audiences, Italian and American, have finally become somewhat similar.

So similar that even the format of news broadcasts, supposedly the most genuine expression of culture, is closing the gap with the American models. Having a reporter "live on the scene" has become the routine of every Italian news broadcast, even when nothing is to be shown there. The stories have become shorter and fast-paced, with a trend towards crime, human interest and sensationalism. For the first time in several years, politics has been presented to the public as an arena for "characters" to fight and act out instead of debating issues. The anchors themselves, once serious middle-aged men dressed in black suits, are now young male and female journalists who show charm,

elegance and (God forbid!) humor.

IS THERE A PROBLEM?

There is no doubt that a massive Americanization of Italian culture has taken place over the last ten years or so. But is that a bad thing? On one side, most Italians do not perceive it as an issue. As Professor Secondulfo explains: "The problem of the erosion of Italian culture is mainly an Italian-American concern. It is the worry of a group that lives in a dominant nation and struggles among minorities. They are looking for a strong cultural image to identify with in the clash with other ethnics. As for Italians, the perspective is different: they do not feel that they are a dominant culture and are strongly fascinated by America which they perceive as dominant."

Finally, a common-sense question has to be posed to honor the Latin proverb: *In medio stat virtus* ("The truth is somewhere in the middle"). Is the melting of cultures a completely negative phenomenon? Isn't colonization a common occurrence in a shrinking world, a part of the natural evolution of mankind? At least, it used to be normal when the Greeks sailed to the southern shores of Italy, the Romans to England, the Spanish to America and so on. Cultural colonization is something a nation can resist, as the French are, unlike military or economic threats. No culture can be considered an island, a little "safe" piece of the world. As Professor Secondulfo puts it: "There's a risk in trapping the culture in rigid parameters that serve the purpose of sustaining one group's identity. It's dangerous. Rigid parameters are not flexible and can easily break."

For Italians as well as Italian-Americans the sweep of American culture can bring confusion and frustration in its path. ✱

Mario Ubiali (23) will shortly graduate from the University of Parma as a Philosophy major. He has already written articles for two major regional newspapers in Italy.





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Italic Studies Institute News

Zeffirelli to be Honored

Our 9th Annual Dinner was something special this year. Through the good offices of Plenary Council member Anthony Cardillo we had the honor of presenting Italian theater and film director Franco Zeffirelli with the Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award on May 4th at the Waldorf-Astoria.

Maestro Zeffirelli is best remembered for his cinematic triumphs such as *Romeo and Juliette* (Olivia Hussey), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor), *Endless Love* (Brooke Shields), *The Champ* (Jon Voight) and the television production *Jesus of Nazareth*. Maestro Zeffirelli's latest film, *Jane Eyre*, premiered in Manhattan in April to excellent reviews.

Zeffirelli was also reelected Senator of the Italian Parliament representing Catania, Sicily.

Over 500 guests attended the gala including representatives of the Italian Mission to the United Nations, the Consul General of Italy, the President of the Italian Trade Commission, the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute, New York's Chairman of the Empire Development Corporation, and Bill Dal Cerro of our Midwest Council. (Photos will appear in our next edition.) *

At Right: At the premiere of Jane Eyre: John Mancini, Mrs. & Mr. Michael Romano, Franco Zeffirelli, Anthony Cardillo, and Mary Ann Minucci.



ISI Dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria



On the Dais: Steve Gristina- co-founder ISI, Amb. Clas Gargano, Sen. Franco Zeffirelli, Mary Ann Minucci- Pres. of ISI, Michael Carbone- Social Chairman, Michael Romano- Vice Pres. of ISI.



Maestro Zeffirelli.



Maestro Zeffirelli, Mary Ann Minucci.



ITALIC STUDIES INSTITUTE News

ISI Dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria (cont'd)



Steve Acunto- master of ceremonies, Senator Franco Zeffirelli, Hon. Franco Mistretta- Consul General of Italy, Amb. Clas Gargano- NYS Empire Development Corporation, John Mancini- Co-founder of ISI.



Amb. Clas Gargano, Senator Franco Zeffirelli.



Amb. Clas Gargano, Mary Ann Minucci, Senator Franco Zeffirelli, Steve Gristina.



Prof. Paolo Palombo- NYS Empire Development Corporation, Miss Julie Hoffman, Senator Franco Zeffirelli, Amb. Clas Gargano, Giuseppe Bergamaschi- Attorney for Sen. Zeffirelli, Miss Anna Anni, Giuseppe Pisciotto- Sec'y to Sen. Zeffirelli.

Members Honored by Italy



Elio Grandi

We were pleased to learn that Plenary Council member Frank Guida of Norfolk, Virginia was decorated by the Italian Government as a Knight (*Cavaliere*) of the Italian Republic for his fine work on behalf of Italianita'. Frank, originally born in Palermo, was a pioneer producer and manager in the Rock 'n Roll industry. His work developing ties between the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) and the Italian government culminated in the annual Washington gala that traditionally fea-



Frank Guida

tures the presidents of Italy and the United States.

ISI co-founder Carl Pescosolido was also award Knighthood for his distinguished book, *The Proud Italians*, which has been translated into Spanish as well as Italian and distributed around the world.

And lest we forget, our Washington liasion Elio Grandi also possesses the ranks of *Commendatore* and *Cavaliere della Repubblica Italiana*. *



Carl Pescosolido

Aurora Video Produced

Filmmaker Tony DeNonno (*Antonio Meucci, Italian-American Visions*) completed an exciting 10-minute documentary on our Italian language and culture classes. As part of our marketing strategy, the new video, entitled *Aurora: First Light of Heritage*, was premiered at the Italian Cultural Institute in Manhattan before an audience of Italian teachers and Education Director Gianclaudio Macchiarella.

The video was very well received. Our emphasis is on creating demand for Italian at an early age (5th and 6th grade) to feed public school programs at the middle and high school levels.

Copies of the new video were distributed to our Aurora students at graduation on March 30th. After all, they were the stars. ✱

Midwest Council Speaks Out

Once again Financial Secretary Bill Dal Cerro has managed to express ISI views in a variety of ways: from trading barbs with the Left-wing *NewCity News* over the movie *City Hall* (the editors titled Bill's letter "Whatsamattayou?") to more dignified treatment in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Gentlemen's Quarterly*.

Meanwhile, Plenary Council member Dr. Fred Mecchia is organizing a luncheon around a tribute to Ohio's World War II ace Captain Don Gentile. Fred is in touch with the Gentile family and the Army Air Corps Museum for background and promotion ✱

Dates to Remember

Keep these dates open on your social calendars:

- Golf Outing: Monday, August 12th,
- Family Picnic: Saturday, September 14th,
- Columbus Band Concert: Friday, October 11th.
- Tenth Annual Dinner Dance: Saturday, May 3, 1997.

The Italic Studies Institute gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who have made contributions in memory of ANTONINA SIMETI:

*Peter Anselmo
Jack Arden
Ben Butler
Nick Campanella
Joe Charity
David Chin
Renee Cho
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Morris Cortez
John DePetris
Kathleen Didomenico
Barbara Downs
Phil Felice
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Salvatore & Anna Maria Luppino*

*Clemencia Maghuyop
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Sam Rosenfeld
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Bill Schofield
Chris Shaughnessy
Matt Stavsky
Debra Wagner
Roy Wilder
Garry Wright*

In Name Only

by Joanne Tedesco
and John Mancini

Who doesn't know that Dean Martin was of Italian descent despite his name? How about Tony Bennett? Or Ann Bancroft? For one reason or another Italian-Americans had to change their names to accommodate Hollywood publicity agents or just to escape prejudice.

It was a sad fact of life. And hopefully a thing of the past.

On the other hand, there are many Hollywood celebrities who bear Italian surnames but are of mixed extraction. In some cases these stars have cashed in on Italian stereotypes playing roles as gangsters or low-lives. Most just prefer to be "Italian." For your greater edification we present the stars as you do not know them:



Robert ALMIRAL DeNiro



Armand HEALY Assante



Quentin McHUGH Tarantino



Sylvester LABOFISH Stallone



Mira DAVIS Sorvino



John BURKE Travolta



Angelica SOMA Huston



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