

# THE Italic Way

XXXII 2003

The magazine of the Italic Institute of America

*Cirneco dell'Etna*  
Sicily's Quiet Canine

A Breed of Our Own:  
The Dogs of Italy

In this Issue:  
Corelli's War in Greece  
De Pinedo: Global Aviator  
Lady Power, Part 2  
Book Review: *Ghost Soldiers*  
Top Italian Surnames  
How Rome Created Palestine



# The Italic Way

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Director - Italic Way - Rosario A. Iaconis  
 Managing Editor - John L. Mancini  
 Production Manager - Rita L. Mancini  
 Feature Writers - Alfred Cardone,  
 Bill Dal Cerro, Don Fiore

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Direct all inquiries to (516) 488-7400.  
 Fax: (516) 488-4889 Website: italic.org  
 email: ItalicOne@aol.com

### Correction

Our last issue reported on the death of Rino Monti, construction manager of the World Trade Center. We incorrectly listed the amount of steel used in construction as 400 pounds. It was actually 400,000 tons.

### Tid Bits

#### ITALIAN AMERICANS NEED NOT APPLY

(Excerpt from the *New York Times*, 27 December 2002, page 1: "Expecting a Vacancy, Bush Aides Weigh Supreme Court Contenders")

"The political consideration, and delicate ethnic balancing, are so central to the deliberations that administration officials said the chances of one possible candidate, Judge Samuel A. Alito Jr., a federal appeals court judge in Newark, may have lessened after one senior official [in the Bush Administration] noted that there was already an Italian-American on the Supreme Court, Justice Antonin Scalia."

(Ed. Analyze This: The ruling party in the United States believes that Judge Alito, by virtue of his last name, must be judged by his ethnicity. There are now two Irish-surnamed justices on the

*Supreme Court and two Jews. Justice Thomas is black, Justices Rehnquist, Suter and Stevens have northern European surnames. No other ethnic scrutiny was reported, except for Scalia and Thomas. Yet, the Bush Administration is considering, among others, another black {this time female}, three northern Europeans and a Hispanic. The conclusion is that Alito is not "mainstream" American.)*



**Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia with his patron, President Ronald Reagan. Scalia's appointment in 1986 was an appeal to an ethnic voting bloc that had recently thrust Mario Cuomo and Alfonse D'Amato into power.**





**JOHN GOTTI'S  
FAREWELL**

*Ed. Note: The following letter was published in Newsday (Long Island, NY) on June 15, 2002.*

I was astonished at your coverage of John Gotti's death and his moribund *Cosa Nostra*. At 9-1/2 pages, it was a new low in ethnic profiling. Your decision to publish and

lead with such minutiae is a perfect example of pre-Sept. 11 prioritizing. The Hollywood-Media Axis that has inflated Italian-American criminals over 30 years has, no doubt, contributed to our vulnerability to real terrorists.

**John Mancini, Floral Park**  
*Chairman, Italic Institute of America*

Dear Mr. Mancini:

I found your letter to *Newsday* particularly interesting because it was not only well stated but because what you did is what just a thousand of us could do as a group. Thank you again. You made my day.

**Gaetana Cannavo (via e-mail)**

Mr. Mancini:

Your letter to *Newsday* was incisive, persuasive and unanswerable. Wish we had many more intelligent, articulate spokespersons for the IA community. Bravo to you for your work!

**Gerard Rosa (via e-mail)**

**COLUMBUS DAY PARADE FLAP**

Rosario A. Iaconis is right on the mark ["Sopranos' Stereotypes Must Be Wiped Out," Viewpoints, *Newsday* Oct. 14]. Italian-Americans must respond with outrage to the total disregard for their rights and feelings by people in high positions. With respect to *The Sopranos* actors marching in the Columbus Day Parade, Mayor Bloomberg sounded a little like Marie Antoinette when he said, "If you don't like it, don't wave." He demonstrates total contempt for the feelings of the vast majority of Italian-Americans. I commend the organizers of the parade for not being intimidated by his apologists, tragically among them former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, and for pursuing their rights, and those of all Italian-Americans, in court.

**John A. Viteritti, Southold, NY**



**The 2002 Columbus Day Parade marked the first time Italian Americans had to defend their rights in court.**

Dear Mr. Iaconis:

I am so proud of you for speaking out for Italian Americans. My first husband was a WASP, and when he passed away I married another non-Italian. It is absolutely amazing how brazen and out-spoken acquaintances can be when there is a mixed couple present. I want to tell you that there is plenty of discrimination out there. The TV industry and Hollywood have contributed to down-grading the reputation of decent Italians.

**Mrs. Margaret (Marsicano) Henderson, Blairsville, GA**

**Letters**

**Forza Cugini!**

I am writing to you from Italy and I am just an average citizen who happens to read the foreign press occasionally and who is very proud of being Italian. I just want to encourage you to fight for your rights as American citizens. You should settle for nothing less. Italians around the world are hardworking (from Australia to Canada, through the whole of Europe and South America). We are very proud of all of you.

**Alberto Scarsi (via e-mail)**

**Giuliani Defended**

"The Trouble With Rudy" by Louis Cornaro in the last issue is an embarrassment. It does not enhance the mission of our publication or organization. It smacks of personal vendetta or political assassination. So, in the future, dear editor, please [print] more balanced articles especially when they concern persons of our common heritage. *Ad hominem* scurrilous attacks degrade not only the writer but also the publisher.

**Joseph Barbaro, East Meadow, NY**

*(Ed. - If the Forum (Op-ed) article annoyed you before 9/11 you must think the author a traitor since Giuliani was knighted and*



*canonized after the disaster in NY. The fact is that this magazine is not just a "feel good" journal. That is why we are different. Controversy is part of life. That's how we all grow.)*

### Forza l'Istituto!

*Finalmente*, we now have a voice that represents the decency, respectability, intelligence and courage of MY HERITAGE. Other organizations busy themselves with too damn many Galas and Las Vegas Nights to "promote" the Italian heritage. What CRAP. The Italic Institute is the last, and ONLY, Italian-American organization that I belong to. I've had more than enough of the others.

Gennaro Pupa (via e-mail)

### Kids Bash Italos

*(The following letter is reprinted from The Hartford Courant(Connecticut), November 10, 2002)*

Last month, my wife, 11-year-old daughter and I were subjected to a Renbrook School-sponsored skit ridiculing Italian Americans as fat, foul-mouthed, flatulent, stupid people. With purported Italian accents, hand waving and a script replete with "mamma mias" and "fettuccini alfredos," the sixth to ninth grade actors depicted a family of Italian Americans at The Olive Garden Restaurant, famous on TV and the skit's title. It was clear that the seven or so children on stage had planned, practiced and were now presenting to the Renbrook students, parents and teachers a skit of hurtful, hateful, derogatory Italian American stereotypes. There was no plot; it was simply ridicule. My wife quickly left; I forced myself to be a witness. In retrospect, I learned something. Until you've been ridiculed for your ethnicity or race - essentially the cards you were dealt at birth - you haven't known humiliation.

Joseph P. Fasi, West Hartford, CT

*Joseph P. Fasi is past president of the Connecticut Italian American Bar Association and the father of two Renbrook students. The school's headmistress later offered an apology to the community in response to Mr. Fasi's letter.*

### Operation Wop - WW II

*(Ed. Note: The following is an e-mail exchange between John Mancini, Chairman of the Institute, and Mike Province of The Patton Society.)*

Date: Mon., 30 April 2001

Subject: "Operation Wop"

Can you tell me why General Patton used this derogatory term in N. Africa? I understand that Germans were "krauts" and Italians "wops" but didn't Patton have some Italian Americans in his unit at this time? Did the troops know this operation by that name?

John Mancini, Italic Institute

Date: Monday, April 30, 2002

Subject: Re: Operation Wop

I was unaware of the "Operation Wop" name, I don't know if the troops knew of the name. I take it you are of Italian descent? You don't seem to be upset with the term "krauts" even though there were Americans of German descent in the army, also. The real problem is that people today don't understand the situation and the attitude of the times. Today's politically correct generation tends to apply their standards to people who lived a half-century ago. The Germans were trying to take over Europe, were murdering Jews as quickly as they could, and the Italians were helping them.

Mike Province, The Patton Society

Date: Monday, April 30, 2002

Mr. Province,

I don't know your ethnicity, although the word "province" comes from Latin, an Italic language (i.e., derived from the land of the wops.) Was there an Operation Kraut? I only came across Operation Wop in a book called "The Bloody Road to Tunis." Curious how you never stumbled on that label in any of Patton's bios. Either someone was loathe to repeat it or it was just more British propaganda. I believe if you pursue some additional reading you may find that contrary to your statement that Italians were helping Germans murder Jews the Italians, Fascists included, did little to cooperate with the Germans on that score. In fact, 85% of Italian Jews survived the war and Italian troops protected Jews in the occupied Balkans and southern France. I refer you to "Italians and the Holocaust" by Susan Zucotti (wop by marriage). You should know these things so you do not spread misinformation.

John Mancini, Italic Institute



**Did George S. keep  
Operation Wop a secret  
from his Italian  
American troops?**



# All'Italiana

## PASSING GENERATIONS

Social and industrial activist **Anthony Mazzocchi**, 76, died last October. Mazzocchi, born to a poor Brooklyn family, educated himself during World War II by reading paperbacks between battles in Europe. After the war, he worked in a variety of manufacturing companies where he struggled for workers' rights. At 26, he became the president of a union local. He was one of the first labor leaders to obtain dental coverage for workers and equal pay for women. His struggle against nuclear testing in the atmosphere helped to end that practice. He was a principal force in the legislating of OSHA, the Occupational Safety & Health Act that monitors the nation's work places. He presided over the founding convention of the Labor Party in 1996 with a platform that still calls for universal health care.

**Charles Poletti**, 99, was New York's first Italian American governor for 29 days in 1942. As the Lt. Governor, Poletti filled out the remaining term of Governor Herbert Lehman, who had resigned. During the Second World War, Colonel Poletti was tapped to oversee the military government of occupied Italy. A daunting task under severe social and economic conditions, Poletti struggled to weed out Fascist leaders and serve the needs of the impoverished regions. He has been accused of reintroducing the Mafia to Sicily in his zeal to undo Fascist rule.

World War II Medal of Honor winner **Gino Merli**, 78. Merli saw extensive combat as a machine-gunner from the Normandy landing to the Battle of the Bulge. It was in Belgium that he single-handedly fought off a German unit, at one point playing dead and receiving four bayonet wounds without crying out. He later continued firing, leaving some 52 German dead in front of his position. Merli later went to church to pray for both the American and German casualties.



Theatrical producer **Lore Noto**, 79. In 1959, Noto saw a one-act play called "Fantasticks" at Barnard College. He was hooked by the song *Try to Remember* and committed himself to making the show an off-Broadway hit. The name became "The Fantasticks" and went on to run for 42 years and 17,162 performances, the longest running musical in world history. It finally closed on January 13, 2002 with Noto bringing down the curtain. He died in July after a 16-year battle with cancer.

Producer **William D'Angelo**, 70, embarked on his media career in the Army when he was assigned to a film unit. After the service he helped produce such television series as *Maverick*, *Cheyenne*, *Lawman*, *Hawaiian Eye*, and *Batman*. Later he produced some of the episodes of *Room 222*, *Love, American Style*, *Barefoot in the Park*, and *Alice*. In the 1970's

he produced a children's show for NBC called *Run, Joe, Run*, a canine "Fugitive."



Actor **Richard Crenna**, 75, began his career in the 1950's as Walter Denton in the television series, *Our Miss Brooks*. He later starred in the sitcom, *The Real McCoys*, in 1957. His feature films included the *Rambo* series with Sly Stallone, *Marooned*, and *The Sand Pebbles*, as a U.S. Naval officer in China. He escaped ethnic typecasting but insisted, "Pronounce my name right and you know I'm Italian."

**Rose Scherini**, 76, historical researcher who brought Italian Americans face to face with the grim reality of World War II in America. Working for the National Archives and the FDR Library at Hyde Park, NY, Miss Scherini documented the persecution of Italian American community leaders and the wholesale eviction of thousands of Italian residents and their American-born children on the West Coast. Her documentation first reached the halls of Congress in 1995, with an appeal by the Italic Institute to then-Senator Al D'Amato (R-NY). To date, there has never been an apology or expression of regret from the President or the nation.

Fascist journalist **Indro Montanelli**, 92, practiced his craft over six decades, never without controversy. Although a professed Fascist, his news columns sometimes irritated party elite. He was imprisoned by the Nazi occupiers in 1943 but escaped. Even after the war, his words provoked the left as well as the right. He was kneecapped in 1977 by the Red Brigade. Still later, he fought with future Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi over control of the press.

**Walter Jinotti**, 74, developed the pollen count index in 1987 and held more than 100 medical patents. He was elected to the New Jersey Inventors Hall of fame in 1997.

**Joseph Picone**, 83, co-founded the Evan-Picone company for women's clothing. He was a pioneer in assembly-line garment manufacturing, dividing up the work for various components of each garment. His partner, Mr. Evans, agreed to drop his "s" if Picone stopped pronouncing his final vowel "pi-KOH-nay."

**Carmela Baratta**, 96, of Long Island, mother of five medical doctors. And she only had five children!



**Giovanni Agnelli**, 81, was the grandson of the founder of Italian conglomerate FIAT (*Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino*). At the reins of FIAT, he created a corporate paternalism to the benefit of all workers and made FIAT, at one time, the number one carmaker in Europe and parts of South America. His milestone



accomplishment was to open the USSR to Western automotive production. FIAT built the first ultra-modern factory in Togliattigrad to produce 700,000 Lada automobiles, a modified Fiat, each year.

### ITALIANS STILL EAT IN

Things change a mite slower in Italy. The classic two-hour lunch and nap are still observed by working Italians. A recent national survey revealed that 75% of working folk go home for lunch and 20% of those also hit the sheets. The wonder is that Italians are the 6th wealthiest people on the globe!

### COURAGE REWARDED

President Bush awarded a belated Medal of Honor to Captain Rocky Versace in recognition of his heroism during captivity in North Vietnam. Captain Versace refused to cooperate with his Communist captors, sometimes goading them to punish him rather than his American comrades. The Communists eventually shot him in frustration. Capt. Versace's father accepted the nation's highest honor on behalf of his son.

### A BRIDGE NOT FAR

It may be the 9th wonder of the world and it has taken two thousand years to arrive, but Italy is now committed to linking Sicily with the mainland via a suspension bridge. At a projected cost of \$4.5 billion, and spanning nearly three miles, construction is targeted to begin in 2005. Beside the challenge of length, Italian engineers must factor in earthquakes and the ever-threatening cost overrun (think of Boston's "Big Dig").

### THEY SHALL RETURN

It took 56 years, but Italy's last monarchs, the House of Savoy, are now permitted to come home. Unfortunately, the immediate heir to the now defunct throne, Prince Vittorio Emanuele IV, broke a bone while in exile and missed the opening day in October. Not to worry. He and son Emanuele Filiberto arrived, without fanfare, in December. The Savoys were booted out after the war because of Victor Emanuel III's support for Mussolini and for abandoning Rome when the Germans came.



Italy's national police now have an all-female division.

### BREAKING BARRIERS

- The elite national policemen of Italy are called the Carabinieri. Since their founding in 1814 they have kept the civilian peace as well as policing the military. Although picturesque in their 18th Century dress uniforms, complete with tri-cornered hat, the Carabinieri have been called on to fight brigands and mafiosi and even stemmed the First World War rout at Caporetto (1917) by summarily executing Italian Army deserters. Today, the force is open to female recruits. Among the line of march during Italy's Republic Day celebration can now be seen the First Division of Women Carabinieri.

- She spent ten years overseeing the United Nations World Food Program, feeding millions who hungered. Today, Catherine Bertini is a chief administrator working directly with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Her humanitarian and managerial credentials are impeccable. Bertini is the first American female to reach the top ranks of the United Nations.



Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has spent eight terms representing the people of her San Francisco district in the United States Congress. Her views understandably match the liberal outlook of her constituency. Despite this, her Democratic colleagues in the House voted to make Pelosi their first female Minority Leader, replacing Missouri's Dick Gephardt. Pelosi was chosen for her ability to bring consensus along with the belief that she will project a clear alternative to Republican agendas. Another Italic first.

### ITALIC SPACE PIONEERS

The recent Columbia tragedy gives us pause, but we can reflect that much like the exploration of the New World, outer space has its share of Italic explorers. First there was Rocco Petrone, NASA's project director for the first moon landing, then the Italian Space Agency launching satellites from a platform off Kenya, then Dr. Riccardo Giacconi's Hubbell Space Telescope, then the Italian-built Raffaello cargo carrier for the International Space Station (ISS), then Italian astronaut Umberto Guidoni, then the first paying space tourist Dennis Tito, now U.S. astronaut Michael Massimino, who hiked aboard the Shuttle last March. In 2006, Italy will provide a larger habitation module for the ISS to allow for seven astronauts to live and work in space. For its expertise and expense in constructing the module, more Italian astronauts will be allowed to visit the Station. Coincidentally, Massimino's mission was to replace the camera in Dr. Giacconi's space telescope. Italians take care of their own!





# WORLD NOTES

## A FASCIST STATE OF MIND

With the passage of time, historians and political theorists are shedding decades of notions about Fascism, that political concept made flesh by thinker/dictator Benito Mussolini. Among the revelations is that Fascist Italy was authoritarian not totalitarian, as defined by Nazi Germany and the USSR; and that Fascism (i.e., "the corporate state") has been a path to democracy. Citing Spain, Taiwan, South Korea and Chile as evolving fascist nations, *The New York Times* writer, Nicholas Kristof, observes that these countries "flourished economically, bred a middle class and eventually proved flexible enough to evolve into greater democracy." Kristof and scholar Michael Ledeen have concluded that even Red China is going Fascist (do we now call it Black China?). As Ledeen says, "China is evolving, but not toward democracy. It bears many hallmarks of a maturing fascist state. Just imagine if Italy were run by Mussolini's heirs." Economists report that China is now leaving democratic India in the dust. Ole Ben may yet replace Marx, Engels, Keynes and Greenspan.



The Italian aircraft carrier Garibaldi on station in the Indian Ocean.

## ALLY AGAINST TERROR

Counted among America's allies after the World Trade Center attack was the Italian Republic. Elements of the Italian armed

forces joined in the invasion of Afghanistan, including the aircraft carrier Garibaldi. Small by American standards, the Garibaldi carries eight Harrier jets and four attack helicopters. In all, Italy provided 2,850 men (no women were shipped to the battle zone) including 1,400 seamen, 1,000 soldiers, 300 airmen with eight Tornado fighter planes, and 150 Carabinieri paratroop police.

## WINTER SPORTS

Italy came in 7th during the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City: 4 gold medals, 4 silver medals, 4 bronze medals. It beat out such winter wonderlands as Switzerland (#9), Finland (#12), Sweden (#13).

\* A little-known event called the Cambrian March Patrol Competition is held in England each year. The competition pits the elite military mountain units of several nations in a grueling test of endurance. For the past two years, Italian patrols have won. This year the Julia Patrol (for the Julia Mountains of northeast Italy) bested U.S. Rangers, English Leathernecks, and other elite units. To top it off, Italy's Sassari Patrol came in second.

## TALES OF 9/11

The tragedy of September 11th will be studied for decades. For Americans of Italian descent, the World Trade Center was the grave of many of their brethren, yet we are finding that Italo-Americans stand out in other ways. In our last issue, one of the obituaries was for Rino Monti, the Port Authority, construction manager of the WTC. Guy Tozzoli, also of the Port Authority, was the project director who first conceived of the mega structure and convinced everyone to build it and also to create Battery Park City. Ralph Blasi was the security director for the World Financial Center, a neighbor of the WTC. Back in 1997, he initiated discussions with all the neighboring buildings about their evacuation plans, unheard of among competitive landlords. Blasi was shocked to find out that both the WTC and the WFC planned to evacuate to the Winter Garden Atrium, a place that could only accommodate 2,500 and was covered in glass. It was his alternate plan that steered his tenants away from the Atrium on that fateful day and allowed the population of the WTC to pass onto the surrounding streets to safety. Then, there is worker Frank Silecchia, who, during the daunting clean-up effort, discovered the steel I-beam cross that become a source of inspiration for the rescue workers. And, much is owed to demolition contractor Anthony Novello whose company was one of the first to volunteer after the disaster, providing a giant Caterpillar 345 Excavator. Novello's company purchased the first one off the assembly line and gave it its baptism at the World Trade Center. It is one of the reasons that the clean up proceeded ahead of schedule.

## WORLD STARLET

She is fast becoming a global heart throb. She is Italian actress





Monica Bellucci, 34. Her sultry Latin looks coupled with a background in law have made her appealing in just about any role. Currently featured in *Tears of the Sun* as a doctor in the jungles of Nigeria, Bellucci is the object of rescue, if not lust, for co-star Bruce Willis and his contingent of U. S. Navy Seals. Bellucci, whose debut was in the coming-of-age Italian film *Malena*, is well on her way to becoming Europe's 21st Century Sophia Loren and Catherine Deneuve. Her next American

appearance will be in Mel Gibson's unique Jesus film, *The Passion*, wherein the starlet will play the Jewess Mary Magdalene. All actors in the film will speak in either Latin or Aramaic. Can this Umbrian temptress work her charms in a Semitic gutteral? For sure, no one will have their eyes on the subtitles.

### ROMANOMICS

London is becoming a treasure trove of Roman artifacts. A marble marker was just found with the name Londinium chiseled on it, the first solid evidence with the name of the ancient city. It was, of course, on Italian marble. Other finds include a military base with a food commissary. One piece of pottery was labeled "fish sauce" and had the rating of "top quality" written on it. Italic officers only ate the best.

Elsewhere, archeologists are confirming the immense trading system that flourished during the Roman Empire. Inhabitants of the sprawling empire wanted for nothing, if they could afford it. But it was not merely the well-known overland Silk Route that handled the trade. Recent excavations along the coasts of Africa, India and Southeast Asia are revealing thriving maritime trading posts, as well. Italy's trading partners included India, China and Java. Roman citizens manned trade centers along the Red Sea, in Kenya, India and Canton, China. Although the Romans took over trade connections that had predated their empire, Roman capitalism and the spread of Roman citizenship to non-Italians created boom times even outside the empire. The emperor Tiberius bemoaned the balance of payments deficit: "The ladies [of Italy] and their baubles are transferring our money to foreigners."

### LATIN ROLLS ON

Keeping tabs on a "dead" language isn't as easy as you think, especially if it's Latin. Although it was a requirement for generations of American students in the past, it hit some bumpy roads in academia. In 1978, only 6,000 students took the National Latin Exam. Today, we can report that 120,000 took it in 2001. The secrets of its success are enthusiastic teachers, national competitions and more mythology. Of course, one of the first phrases students learn is *Italia est pulchra* ("Italy is beautiful"). After all it was the homeland.

### AMERICA'S CUP IN ITALIAN HANDS

Italians have always coveted the top prize in the Anglo-Saxon world of sports, the America's Cup. This sailing competition of the rich and famous has been, for its 150 year history, a preserve of Brits, Americans and parts Down Under. Two previous attempts by Italian entrepreneurs in the Azzurro and Prada made the finals but never copped the Cup. This year's race in New Zealand finally put the Cup in Italic hands. Swiss bil-



Landlocked Italian competitor beats Anglo sea power.

lionaire, but Italian native, Ernesto Bertarelli, financing his Alinghi ("cow bells") turned the competition upside down. Not only is this the first time the Cup became a Latin trophy, it is the first time that a landlocked nation won. The question is how can Switzerland host the next race without an ocean?

### HOT IS GOOD

Remember the old admonition to stay clear of spicy foods? Not according to the latest research from Dr. Mauro Bortolotti of the University of Bologna. In clinical tests of patients with gastro-intestinal pains, the good doctor gave them pills with the equivalent of 3 spicy meals a day. By the end of the trial period, complaints were down 60%, compared to a 30% decrease in placebo users. Dr. Bortolotti credits the chemical capsaicin in red pepper for blocking the pain transmission. Consult your own doctor before sprinkling red pepper on that broccoli rabe or *baccala*.

### OLD AGE REVISITED

In our last issue we reported the oldest living man was a Sardinian aged 115. The oldest woman is Japanese, 115 last year. However, the oldest American woman passed away last August at the age of 114. Her married name was Adelina Domingues but her father was an Italian sea captain. She was born in the Cape Verde Islands and moved to the U.S. in 1907. She was physically active and mentally sharp until about a month before her death. She died in her sleep during a nap. Another American, Giulia Mondini of Highland Park, IL, passed away last year at age 110.



### A MINER ANGEL

There were many heroes in the rescue of the nine Pennsylvania miners last summer. Trapped 240 feet below ground, it was anybody's guess where to sink the rescue shaft. But the doomed men had a very meticulous angel on their side, Joseph Scaffoni, chief of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Deep Mine Safety. Scaffoni found the map of the old mine that the miners had escaped into. He reasoned that the nine men, fleeing water, would be forced to high ground. In no time, Scaffoni led the rescue drillers to the exact spot over the miners' position. His calculations paid off and nine men escaped the Grim Reaper.





# Editorial

## THE SHAM OF IT ALL

In the movie, *A Few Good Men*, Jack Nicholson's character utters the memorable line, "You can't handle the truth!" That's just the way I feel after decades of trying to arouse dignity in Italian Americans.

There is no question in my mind, or that of my colleagues at the Institute, that much of the Italian American "leadership" cannot handle the truth, in this case, the mounting evidence that having an Italian surname in America is a questionable proposition, thanks mainly to media profiling. Our 2000 Film Study demonstrated the institutionalized denigration of the Italic media image. Our 2002 Gianelli Report traced the political and cultural decline of our community from the 1970's and 1980's. But the most shocking revelation was a recent pronouncement from the Bush Administration that affirmed a second-class citizenship for us. In short, the highest executive power in the land, the Office of the President, classifies us as an ethnic group different from "mainstream" Americans. (See the Tid Bits Section on page 2 for the story.)

The irony of all this is that everything has been a sham. Those millions of Americans who bear an Italian surname, who have avoided ethnic organizations and labels like the plague, who willingly embrace media stereotypes as though they applied to Italians from Mars, must now face the truth: they and their offspring are just ethnics like the rest of us.

The other sham is the total silence of the major Italian American organizations. If there is one thing that we are all in business for it is to prevent exactly the words uttered by the Bush Administration. What a sham, to take the money of thousands of Italian Americans and not even protest such a calamitous statement. What a sham, to claim that you are the voice of "25 million (sic) Italian Americans" in Washington and fail to even mobilize your so-called "Congressional Delegation" to defend our civil rights as Americans.

These leaders not only failed as "Italians" but, far worse, as Americans.

-JLM

## COM-PA`-RE vs. "GOOMBAH" (sic)

The word "goombah," stumbling out of the same Italo-American lexicon that gives us "gabbagol" and "pastafazool," is rapidly morphing from a mere linguistic corruption to a common definition of a particular cultural and behavioral mode. Firmed up by *The Sopranos* star Steve Schirripa's best

seller, *A Goombah's Guide to Life*, (Crown Publishing Group, 2002) and a resultant burst of copycat material appearing in magazine articles and hastily created Internet websites, it serves to conveniently condense an ungainly string of adjectives such as "crude," "loud-mouthed," "bigoted," "uncouth," "graceless," "ignorant," and "Italian-American" into a single, handy term. You need only to describe someone as a "goombah" and your listeners instantly get the idea.

Sure, some of us see it as another phase in the continuing depletion of dignity from our heritage. But other Italian Americans, or at least those short on education and big on gold neck chains, are wearing the goombah name tag with pride and exuberance, grateful for having finally achieved a firm, sociological identity.

-D. Fiore

## THE ZEALOTRY OF SENATOR MILLER

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At a time when anti-Italian intolerance reigns supreme in the media, this is the drivel that tries men's souls.

-RAI

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# Forum of the People

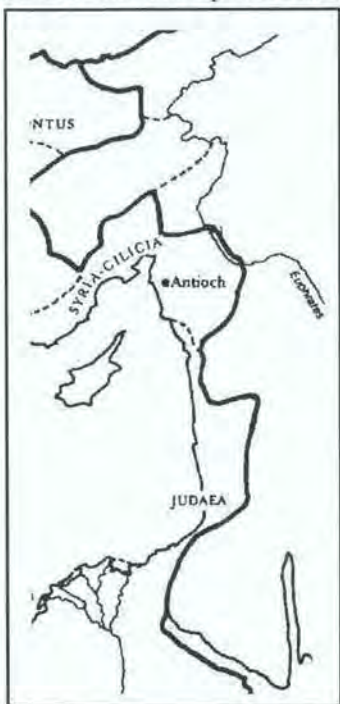


## Why Rome Created Palestine

by Louis Cornaro

**D**oes the tragedy of September 11th and de facto war that now exists between us and the Islamic World have its roots in the Israeli-Palestinian struggle? Does the general public really know the history that has brought us to this point?

Today's American Economic Empire finds itself in the same predicament as Rome's Empire in 66 A.D.



At the time of Christ, Judea was the name of a troubled Roman province.

point! Americans of Italian origin should bear a special interest in resolving the Middle East crisis. After all, it was Imperial Italy that destroyed the last Jewish state. Our own retired Marine General Anthony Zinni is quite versed in the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. As an expert in the region and a short-lived peace envoy he is ranked by the Bush Administration's insensitivity to the Arab/Muslim World. Zinni declares that many of Bush's advisors are "not from the same planet as me."

At the same time, many American Jews and Israelis are sincere in a belief that a Palestinian state must be created and that fanatics on both sides must be short circuited.

Then, Rome sent its legions to crush fanatical Jewish Zealots who might well have ignited the fires of anarchy throughout the empire. Our ancestors' ultimate solution was to disperse much of the Jewish population. Sixty years later, after another revolt, the rest of the Jews were exiled and the name of Judea became Palestine. We now find ourselves, as Americans, confronted by the conflict between Zealots (now known as Zionists) and Muslim fanatics over the same piece of real estate. The consequences are the same as those faced by Rome — anarchy. Shockingly, Americans are not demanding a resolution of the problem. The "consensus factory" in this country has managed to minimize the explosiveness of this conflict. Talk about missing the

*"To Jewish extremists known as Zealots, Italic civilization based upon man-made institutions and humanist values was an abomination"*

## The Promised Land

According to the sacred Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) of the Jewish people, the patriarch Abraham left his home in Ur (modern Iraq) to find his fortune in Egypt. He brought his wife Sari (later called Sarah) whom he passed off to the Pharaoh as his sister. After taking Sarah as a concubine and later finding out the truth, the Pharaoh banished Abraham and Sarah from Egypt. Abraham and Sarah fled to Canaan (now Israel) and came to like the place. Sarah could have no children so Abraham took a servant woman named Hagar and begat a child named Ismael. A short time later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Isaac became the heir of the Jewish people and Ismael that of the Arabs. Therefore, both Arabs and Jews trace their roots to Abraham. Abraham liked Canaan so much ("...the land wherein thou art a stranger...") that God promised it to Abraham's heirs - the Promised Land. Actually, the promise was for all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates River (*Genesis 15:18*, remember Abraham's home town was Ur which is on the Euphrates.) Arabs today believe that the Israeli flag has two blue lines because they represent the two river borders. Abraham's son, Jacob, later had seven sons, among them Joseph. Out of jealousy, the six brothers sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Instead of suffering in

Egypt, Joseph thrived and sent for his

Hebrew brethren to settle in Egypt. Eventually, the Torah tells us, the Hebrews became slaves of the Pharaoh.

After 400 years of slavery, another patriarch, Moses, led the Hebrews out of Egypt and delivered them to the edge of Canaan, Abraham's "Promised Land"

## Conquest of Canaan

Despite assurances by God, the Hebrews found themselves at odds with the people of Canaan over the ownership of the land. The Old Testament tells us of bloody battles in which the Hebrew host slaughtered the inhabitants of Canaan, men, women and children, to gain the "Promised Land." (An example, typical of the conquest, was the city of Hebron which we are



After two calamitous rebellions, the Romans decided to disperse the Jews and renamed the province Palaestina. In 1947, the United Nations reversed Rome's decision.

(Cont'd on p. 20)





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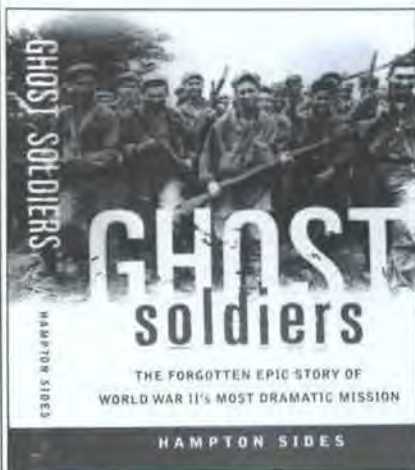
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# GHOST SOLDIERS

A review by  
Rosario A. Iaconis



*"this audacious mission...is the stuff of legend"*

Though Hampton Sides's *Ghost Soldiers* is a compelling, well-told tale of American valor and Japanese vindictiveness in the cauldron of the Phillipines campaign during World War II, Steven Spielberg will almost certainly pass on bringing this book to the big screen.

Why? Probably because Tinseltown's provincial, politically correct know-nothings won't buy it—figuratively and literally. Messers Ovitz, Eisener and the like have bigger gefilte fish to fry.

Yes, the feat that inspired *Ghost Soldiers* represented a significant psychological turning point for America's beleaguered military following the stunning Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the humiliating fall of Bataan to the selfsame forces of Dai Nippon in 1942. Even Doolittle's daring air raid over Tokyo mattered little in the grand scheme of the Pacific war.

Yes, Mr. Sides offers colorful portraits of several off-beat operatives who helped turn the tide for Uncle Sam and the fighting Filipinos. One such individual was a sexually alluring female American spy known as High Pockets. Posing as a chanteuse of Italian descent, she coaxed, teased and cajoled logistical secrets out of gullible Japanese officers frequenting her Manila cabaret.

Yes, the narrative pits an elite but newly formed U.S. Army 6th Ranger Battalion against possibly 8,000 battle-hardened Japanese soldiers whose evacuation of the Phillipines did not lessen their allegiance to the Emperor or mitigate their adherence to the martial code of Bushido.

Yes, these real-life American rescuers make the fictional "Dirty Dozen" pale into cartoonish insignificance. And the Army Rangers' mission was one that would truly "defend and avenge in the same act." Yet Mr. Sides is careful not to depict these men as unflinching warriors devoid of tics, warts and eccentricities. In the end, their very human qualities

made them all the more heroic.

Yes, this audacious mission to liberate more than 500 Holocaust-like survivors of the Bataan Death March before the retreating Japanese forces could exterminate them is the stuff of legend—historical and cinematic. Indeed, it makes the Israeli raid on Entebbe look like a staged appearance on TV's "Fear Factor."

Nevertheless, the inherent reality of Hampton Sides magnum opus militates against wider exposure on the silver screen. First, there is the issue of Japanese savagery. Though the author reminds his readers of Japan's exemplary treatment of Russian POWs during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Mr. Sides demonstrates that Hideki Tojo's military was possessed of a different ethic.

Having convincingly vanquished the Americans in the Phillipines, the Japanese initially attempted to establish a kinship with the Filipino peasants. "Asia for the Asiatics" was the slogan they employed. However, this fell by the wayside when the natives signaled their preference for the Americans. Such behavior, of course, provoked the less-than-gentle side of the sons of Nippon:

"One afternoon Captain Bank came face to face with this latter sentiment. He was marching through a barrio when a pregnant Filipino woman appeared on the road and handed out cassava cakes for the prisoners to eat. The barefoot woman was young and sad-faced. Tears of sympathy pooled in her eyes. Having spotted this act of generosity, a Japanese guard grabbed the woman by the arm and forced her behind a tree. 'I heard her plead for mercy,' Bank said. 'I couldn't believe what I was seeing. She was on the ground. He took his bayonet and gouged her fetus right in front of her. We could hear her, screaming and screaming.'"

Still, the most problematic aspect of *Ghost Soldiers* from a cinematic standpoint is the ethnicity of the Army Rangers' commander. Mr. Sides carefully delineates both the methods and the mantras employed by Colonel Henry Mucci in forging the fighting force that would liberate the godforsaken Ghost Soldiers of Cabanatuan. Chosen by Gen. Walter Krueger, commander of the United States Sixth Army, Col. Mucci was both the intellectual heart and operational genius who succeeded in pulling off the most brilliant rescue mission in the history of World War II. Dubbed "Little MacArthur" for his derring-do and pipe-smoking tenacity, this second-generation Italian-American West Pointer blazed a trail with the surgical strike precision of

*(Cont'd on next page)*



the Cabanatuan rescue.

After the prisoners had been liberated, it was Mucci's task to organize the tortuous march back toward Platero and the American lines. In this endeavor there was no one better than Col. Mucci, according to Ranger Thomas Grace: 'We would have followed him to hell that night. And when we got there, he would've opened up the god-damned gates.'

Even the emaciated, newly liberated prisoners fell under Mucci's sway. Bob Brady was one of those poor unfortunates. "In that crazy situation out there in the field, we desperately needed a leader, and that was Mucci. We could see that what he said counted. We respected him. He was tough and colorful and somehow reassuring. He led the way, and we followed."

If only the media and the rest of America would follow.

\* \* \*



**Colonel Henry Mucci, a West Point graduate and war hero, ran for political office in his Connecticut hometown after the war. Some say that he lost to another Italian American because he could not speak Italian to his first generation constituents. It was probably America's loss.**

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# A Breed of Our Own: The Dogs of Italy

by  
John Mancini

Italians have been known as lovers, but are they dog lovers? They are the premier humanists but where does man's best friend fit in their world? It is probably safe to say that, unlike many Americans or Englishmen, Italians are not known to induct lesser species into the inner family circle. They are not unique in this, of course. But, there are cultures that have consigned dogs to a food group, one that the Italian culture has happily disdained, along with the horse and frog. Thousands of years of Italian history has relegated the dog to a rather pragmatic relationship - "earn your keep." Herding sheep, retrieving game, racing, or guarding the home are the assigned tasks of most Italian breeds. Yet, among the twelve or so breeds, there are one or two that get by on their looks alone.

Maybe the world-renowned humanism of Italians has something to do with their stand-offish attitude toward the pooch. Humanism is just that: man is the measure of all things; animals just don't measure up. To Italians, the dog represents the hardscrabble life. In English, we say, "it's a dog's life" to express sloth and privilege. In Italian, *mondo cane* ("a dog's world") refers to a cruel and savage life. As a mainly urban folk, most Italians see dogs as unsanitary, helpless, and troublesome (barking disturbs the afternoon *riposo*). Because Italians are rarely lonely, often having extended families within walking distance, canine companions are not often in demand. Walking a dog, scooping poop, paying veterinary bills, and being threatened with flea infestations weigh heavily in the Italian thought process, even when eyeing the cutest pup. Call it lazy, call it smart, the end result is that fewer Italian homes have pets than in America.

Generalities often have exceptions. One such example is filmmaker Franco Zeffirelli (*Romeo & Juliet*), the proud father of seven Jack Russell Terriers. (However, this may be a result of being raised by English nannies; after all, the Jack Russell is an English breed.) And we mustn't forget the most famous animal person of all was an Italian - St Francis of Assisi. Dogs, which must have been part of his permanent retinue, still loiter the streets of his medieval town today. Some even walk in and out of cafes like sacred cows.

Few Americans are familiar with Italian breeds. At first thought, only two come to mind — the Neapolitan Mastiff and the Italian Greyhound - the Skipper & Gilligan of the dog world, if one were to compare their body builds. The former was bred in Roman times to fight for home and hearth, the latter to run like hell. The other breeds are the lovable Spinone hunting dog, the intimidating Cane Corso, the striking Bergamasco sheepdog, the family toy Bolognese, the

little fox-like Volpino, the truffle-hunting Lagotto Romagnolo, the quiet Sicilian greyhound known as the Cirneco dell'Etna, the retrieving Bracco, the long-eared Segugio, and the handsome sheepherding Maremma.



The mother of all Italian dogs, at least spiritually.

## The Original She-Dog

The Latin word for dog is *canis* (CA-neece), in Italian it's *cane* (CA-nay). Biologists have labeled the dog *canis familiaris* (the common or family dog). We get the word canine from these Italic roots. We also get our first historic appreciation of the dog from the Romans. It is not altogether a stretch to say that the She-Wolf (*Lupa*) of Rome, that enduring symbol of man's dependence on nature, was the first homage to the dog. (We mustn't confuse this with the bizarre ancient Egyptian and Semitic statuary that had interchangeable animal parts i.e., dog heads on men's bodies.) The ancient

Italic people accepted the wolf-dog as she was. The *Lupa*, to this day, is the quintessential souvenir of the city of Rome, much like the Statue of Liberty symbolizes New York. It is sold on nearly every corner. The she-wolf, as the legend goes, suckled the abandoned twins Romulus and Remus until they were adopted by their own kind. To be descended from twins who nourished themselves on animal teats was a source of pride for the Romans. While other ancient nations fancied themselves descendents of the most sanitary and impeccable ancestors, the Romans didn't mind rubbing other peoples' noses in their gritty lupine origins. It must have irked many a nation to be conquered by a people who paraded around with one of the most despised animals in creation, the wild dog. You have to believe that the Romans relished every minute of that reaction.

But the reverence for their wolf forebears did not make the Romans compassionate dog lovers. Life was tough back then and the main purpose of the canine was to serve its master. Every student of Latin will remember the term *cave*

*"the Italian elite preferred the sleek racing dog, more emblematic of their entrepreneurial roots."*

(Con'd on p. 16)



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# Lady Power: LIGHTING THE DARK AGES (Part 2 of a 3 part series)

After the fall of Rome, the European continent, without its strong Italic foundations, plunged into chaos. The Franks, Ostrogoths and Visigoths who invaded Italy in 489 A.D. plundered, rather than built upon, the nation's resources. Artworks were destroyed. Torture replaced the Rule of Law. Native Italic people were forced to work under feudal lords. And the famous Roman aqueducts fell into disrepair, fomenting the Black Plague diseases which would wipe out almost half of Europe's population by the mid-1300s.

Yet, a stabilizing force did emerge amidst the general chaos: Christianity.

Filling the power vacuum left by the Emperors, the Popes of Rome became temporal as well as spiritual leaders, often holding greedy potentates at bay. And, although the Church's hierarchy was exclusively male-dominated, its spiritual soul was nourished by a strong female figure:



**Catherine De Medici was 14 years old when she married the King of France. By the time she died, she had created French cuisine and taught her subjects to use a fork.**

Mary, the (Jewish) Mother of Jesus. However downtrodden, the Italic people drew strength from Mary's image as the protectress of mankind, a reinforcement, in cosmic terms, of the loving power of Italic mammas.

According to Judith Anne Testa, a retired art professor at Northern Illinois University, Italic women were a major factor in spreading this new religion—not only spiritually but also, as it turns out, perhaps from positions of leadership. Testa and other scholars are finding more and more evidence suggesting that women functioned in ceremonial roles, even as priestesses, during the very early years of Christianity. The pivotal role of Marian worship in the Catholic religion leads one to wonder—as does its offi-

cial appellation, "Mother Church."

As the dust settled over Europe, Italy began its transformation from unified Empire into scattered city-states. Sea exploration established contacts with the outside world. Although these new sea routes initially enriched a few southern Italian cities such as Amalfi, Salerno and Bari, power soon shifted northward to more politically well-developed urban cities such as Genoa, Venice, Milan, Pisa and Lucca.

As expected, this new wealth created a new aristocracy, which included women in positions of influence. One of them, Countess Matilda of Florence, helped establish a stable commune (city government) system in Tuscany in the early 1100s, laying the groundwork for what would eventually become the Renaissance (or, to give it its proper Italian name, *il Rinascimento* (Ree-nah-shee-MEN-toh).

## IL RINASCIMENTO'S FEMININE ROOTS

Many historians date the beginning of *il Rinascimento*, or rebirth, to Francesco Bernardone, aka St. Francis of Assisi, in the 12th century. St. Francis's humanism inspired a fellow female mystic in his hometown: Santa Chiara (St. Clare), who founded the Poor Clares religious order in 1212. Clare and her fellow religious—which eventually included her own mother and sister—weren't just spiritual guides; they were also counselors and teachers, women whose leadership skills put them on par with their Franciscan brothers. Clare's reputation was so well-respected that, two days before she died, Pope Innocent IV officially approved her Rule for the Christian monastic life, which stressed poverty, penance and penitential prayer.

By the time the 1300s rolled around, the Italian language itself began paying homage to its feminine side. The city of Venice, now a superpower, had two appellations, *La Serenissima* (The Serene One) and *La Regina dell'Adriatica* (Queen of the Adriatic). Venetian women, in fact, were instrumental in developing their city into an economic power such as Franchesina Sorenzo, wife of the doge Giovanni Sorenzo. It can even be argued that the beauty of the Italic language was inspired by a particular Italic woman: Beatrice dei Portinari, the real-life lovely for whom the great Dante Alighieri wrote his monumental love poems, *La Vita Nuova* (The New Life, 1292-94).

Prior to Dante, another great writer, Francesco Petrarca, aka Petrarch, immortalized a mysterious woman named Laura in a series of intense, yet chaste, sonnets. A contemporary of Petrarch's, Giovanni Boccaccio penned his scandalous masterpiece *The Decameron* giving female characters an equal voice. Boccaccio's novel was actually a series of short stories, many of them told from a woman's point of view and presenting Italic women as earthy, sensual equals to their men.

In reality, not all Italic women were shrinking violets or mute objects of adoration. The writer Christine de Pinzan (1364-1430), Italian by birth, scandalized her adopted country of France with her groundbreaking attack on male chauvinism, *Le Livre de la Cite des Dames* (The

(Cont'd on pg. 28)





*canem* (CA-way CA-em: "Beware the dog"). It was a famous mosaic found at Pompeii, illustrative of the mission assigned to most dogs in the Roman world: to guard the home. Among the dogs known to have been favorites in ancient Italy are the Neapolitan Mastiff and the Cane Corso, dogs that fought with Rome's legions, and the Italian greyhound, a skeleton of which was found in Pompeii. No doubt, most of the other breeds would have been found in Italy and Sicily in those olden times; however, these three are very well documented. It is thought that dogs such as the exotic-looking Cirneco dell'Etna as well as the greyhound were imported from Africa before Rome was even founded (753 B.C.)

Even after Rome's fall, the Italian greyhound figures prominently in Renaissance paintings. The cultured class of northern Italy saw in the graceful curves and dynamic body of the greyhound a good representation of their own youth and vigor. Unlike the later English aristocracy that sat for portraits with cocker spaniels and hunting dogs, the Italian elite preferred the sleek racing dog, more emblematic of their entrepreneurial roots. Perhaps the Italian passion for swift cars over luxury models is a carry over of this cultural, if not genetic, trait.

### Each One Unique

For those readers who may want to acquire an Italian pet, here are descriptions taken from expert sources:

**Segugio (Say-GOO-jo) Italiano** or the Italian Hound has been exported from his native Italy only in recent years and is not yet established in any numbers in other countries. He stands 23 inches at his tallest, but there is considerable variation. He has a short coat that can be harsh or smooth, and in neither would he be difficult to groom. He is not a greedy feeder. His color range includes black and tan and deep red through to cream. He is generally lightly built, with good musculature, as befits an active hunter of considerable stamina. The length of the ears is exaggerated with the same purpose as in the Bloodhound - to sweep scent up in front of the nostrils on the trail. His temperament can be even, but early representatives of the breed were not enthusiastic about being handled by strangers; things are reported to have improved, but it would still be advisable not to take one on without careful research among breeder enthusiasts.



The **Bracco Italiano** originated in Italy in the early part of the eighteenth century. A mixture of hound and gundog (sporting), the original aim was to produce a pointing animal. In fact, today he is a multi-purpose dog and is used as a hunt, point and retrieve (HPR) breed. He measures around 26 inches at the tallest and has a fairly solid head and body. His fine glossy coat varies in color from orange and white to red and white. He is an attractive looking dog and easy to clean up after a day's work in the field. His suitability as a household or family dog remains unproven.



The **Italian Spinone (Speen-NO-nay)**, like the Bracco, is a multi-purpose hunting dog. He stands 27 inches and can weigh 80 lbs. He has a thick wiry coat all over, and sports very distinctive eyebrows that are longer and stiffer than the rest of his hair. He can come in a variety of pastel shades of orange and brown on a white background. To complete the picture, he has a characteristic relaxed trot that appears tireless. He has become amazingly popular in a relatively short time; his devotees speak well of him as a hunting dog. They also rate him highly as a family companion.



The **Bergamasco** is one of the most recent exports from Italy; like so many others, he has long been used as a herding dog and a guard dog in the mountains, and he has strong protective instincts. It is too early to give much indication of how well he will settle in as a member of a family household. He stands up to 24 inches high and can weigh as much as 84 lbs. He is solid and powerful, expects exercise, not necessarily at a great pace, and will eat appropriately for his size. His most distinctive feature is his coat, which can be solid grey or black with any shade of grey and a certain amount of white; light fawn is also seen. The coat itself is abundant and harsh. Grooming can be a problem because his coat tends to form loose mats.

The **Maremma Sheepdog** is Italy's version of the nomadic flock-guarder. As such this is a dog that has derived from generations of working guard dogs. He stands 29 inches high but is not heavily built. He is not seen in the United States. He is fairly trainable with a good basic intelligence, even if a trifle aloof with strangers. He will take his time to admit strangers to the bosom of his family. He carries a medium-length coat that fits him closely; it's white with a slight touch of fawn. He has an alert expression that denotes the watchfulness of his ancestry. He is a worker and requires exercise to keep him the fit, muscular creature due to his breeding.



The **Neapolitan Mastiff** may be descended from the war and fighting dogs of ancient Rome. He has the usual mastiff square-shaped head and muzzle, powerful body, and strong limbs. In addition he sports a quantity of loose skin





around jowls and dewlap, coupled with pendulous lips, which give his head a huge appearance. His short, dense coat is tight fitting on body and limbs; it is usually black or blue-grey, but occasionally brown shades are seen. He enjoys exercise but is not over-demanding in this

respect; he does not boast a fairly large appetite. He is undoubtedly courageous and protective of owner and property. His devotees state that he will only use his full force on command, which comes as a relief to those who do not own him. Grooming him is not a problem, although, like so many breeds that have loose jowls, he dribbles, and when he shakes his head he may prove a trifle anti-social.



The **Bolognese**, who has recently started to spread from his native Italy, is a small white dog with square compact build. He has a distinctive white coat, which is described as flocked and covers the whole dog, head and all. He only stands 12 inches and, as he is expected to be exhibited in the natural state, he tends to give the impression of a

rough-and-ready character, which is unusual in a toy breed. He is intelligent. Those looking for a pleasant, small dog that is not too tiny might well consider having a look at the cheerful Bolognese as a household companion.



The **Italian Greyhound**, at his best, is a true miniature of the classic Greyhound. He is graceful and nimble in movement. He weighs 6 to 10 lbs, so there is not much of him. His coat is short and glossy, and his skin is fine; he does not take too

kindly to cold weather and will wrap himself up in a blanket quite deliberately. Grooming only requires a piece of silk rubbed over him daily to keep him shining rather like a porcelain model. The colors seen are black, blue, cream, fawn, red and white or any of those broken with white areas. He holds his ears in a quizzical fashion when really interested. His bones are fine and therefore fairly easy to break. His muscles can be quite impressive, but, in truth, too many dogs appear spindly. This is an elegant, ancient breed, but those who fancy owning one should study them carefully before rushing out to buy the first one offered. He is not suited to life in an energetic family household, until children are old enough to understand the problems of his lightweight statue.



The **Cane Corso** is related to the Neapolitan Mastiff and its physical features are similar, except for the absence of the Neapolitan's drooping jowls and sad eyes. The name is believed to be derived from the Latin word

*cohors* meaning "guard of the courtyard." Definitely a war dog from ancient times descended from the *Canis Pugnax* or Roman War Dog, the Cane Corso was used to protect Roman officers in battle and, no doubt, employed as a contestant in the Roman circus against other animals for the entertainment of the masses. Aggressive and combative by nature, he reacts without hesitation and with surprising force. However, he is an excellent interpreter of human gestures and can learn to react only when necessary. Italian farmers have preserved the breed as a family member and guardian.

The **Cirneco dell'Etna** is a medium-sized hunter from Sicily, where it is used to hunt rabbits and game birds. Fearless, tireless and full of dignity, despite his size (he stands from 18 to 22 inches), the Cirneco is known worldwide as a dog who does not bark very much. Descended from ancient greyhounds, he has a greyhound's muzzle, big triangular erect ears, a liver-colored nose, deep-set eyes, and a tail that hangs down like a saber when he stands still. His coat is extremely short and tan in color with white markings only on his chest. His loyalty and reluctance to bark make him a perfect family pet.



The **Volpino** is a delicate but brave family pet. Intelligent, agile, obedient, loyal and affectionate, the Volpino is easy to train. He stands up to 12 inches with a thick coat, erect ears, and bushy curled tail. The Volpino comes in solid shades of white, red or honey color.

The truffle hunting **Lagotto Romagnolo** certainly earns its weight in gold. During the writing of this article a Romagnolo sniffed out a truffle that sold for \$35,000 to a Los Angeles restaurateur. The irony is that this dedicated pooch doesn't even get to enjoy a dish of pasta al tartufo.



\* \* \*





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# FORGOTTEN FLYER

By  
Don Fiore



**De Pinedo gave aviation its global scope, laying out air routes to Asia, Africa and both Americas by 1927. But, his name is mostly missing from the history of aviation.**

don't worry if the answer is not on the tip of your tongue. You didn't sleep through history class that day. Hardly anyone can guess it correctly. That's because the Santa Maria in this instance was a double-hulled Savoia-Marchetti S-55 seaplane, its commander was Col. Francesco De Pinedo of the Royal Italian Air Force, and the year of its momentous arrival on New World shores was 1927.

Accompanied by Captain Carlo del Prete and Sgt. Vitale Zacchetti, De Pinedo made his ocean crossing as part of an extensive goodwill aerial tour of the Western Hemisphere sponsored by the Royal Italian Government. Touching four continents, and highlighted by an unprecedented round-trip crossing of the Atlantic, the four-month voyage initially promised to be aviation's story of the year. The entire world followed the front page coverage won by De Pinedo as he blazed paths over oceans, mountains, deserts, and rain forests in his tour-de-force demonstration of the increasing practicality of global air travel, and of Italy's intention to lead the way. Columbus, of course, had single-handedly changed the course

**S**pot quiz: Name the year in which a courageous and determined Italian commanded a vessel christened the Santa Maria, and defied the odds by crossing the Atlantic and opening a new path between the hemispheres? 1492? Well, that was the first time. But it happened again. And the question is in reference to that second event.

Now  
*"No other aviator on the planet had ever logged more miles in a single machine"*

of history, while De Pinedo, being just one of the many aviators of his era who were attempting to bridge the continents, only contributed to historic changes that were already in progress. But his contributions were significant enough to merit a far more prominent place in the annals of aeronautical achievement than they presently do. Which is to say virtually no place at all. Who's ever heard of Francesco De Pinedo? But though obscure today, De Pinedo did not find fame so elusive during his lifetime. Anyone keeping abreast of the latest aeronautical developments back in the 1920s would instantly recognize his name.

The adventurous Italian first caught the world's attention in 1925, when he completed a spectacular 34,000-mile aerial tour of the Orient. Launched with a Savoia-S-16 seaplane on April 25, the journey opened flight paths across the Middle East, India, Indochina, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, China, and Japan, and was unquestionably the most challenging and impressive aeronautical milestone achieved to date. No other aviator on the planet had ever logged more miles in a single machine, and by the time he returned to Rome six months later, landing his weather-beaten aircraft like a victorious Caesar returning from his conquests, he had become a world class hero.

Awards and decorations poured in from everywhere. When the International Aeronautical Federation [Federation Aeronautique Internationale] instituted its annual Gold Medal award later that year, created to recognize the year's most outstanding contributor to aviation's development, De Pinedo was chosen as its first recipient. Emperor Hirohito conferred the Order of the Sacred Treasure upon him, and virtually every nation on his route honored the Italic aviator in similarly high fashion.

Subsequent to his tour of the Americas two years later, during which he won the distinction of piloting the first foreign aircraft to fly to the United States, De Pinedo was presented with the Air Force Cross by the British Crown (1927) and the Distinguished Flying Cross by act of the U.S. Congress (1928). This was particularly noteworthy, since these awards, like so many others pinned on his tunic by heads of state from around the world, were usually not distributed so freely to foreign airmen.

De Pinedo's celebrity was manifested in other ways. His portrait, for instance, appeared on Italian Air Force recruitment posters, enticing Italian teenagers to the enrollment desk with promises that they, too, could become

(Cont'd on p. 21)



# Forum of the People (continued)

told was "...utterly destroyed and all the souls that were therein." -Joshua 11:37) By the time of David and Solomon (930 B.C.), Israel extended well into what is now the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Today, many Arabs fear that ultra-Zionists wish to recreate this empire.

## Rome Sends its Legions

Well after the Empire of Solomon fell apart, feuding Jewish factions invited the Romans to help settle their internal differences. The legions came and never left. By now, Italy controlled the entire Mediterranean and Judea was vital to the control of trade routes and the eastern Mediterranean. Roman literature is quite clear how much different Jewish civilization was in relation to that of the West. The Romans found Jewish dietary practices strange (imagine Italians giving up pork and shellfish) and the Jews' intolerant belief in one god as absurd. Although the Italic and Hellenic peoples were able to introduce their cultures around the western world, the east was another story. The Jews took their religion seriously and the Romans were seen as defilers. To Jewish extremists known as Zealots, Italic civilization based upon man-made institutions and humanist values was an abomination, much as today's Muslim zealots view American culture. The Italic penchant for graven, even nude, images and the relative liberation of women only added fuel to the struggle for Jewish independence.

We know from the New Testament that the Romans had their hands full in Judea. Even if Roman corruption were subtracted out, the clash of secular Italy with theocratic Judea would still end badly. The break came in 66 A.D.



A 1936 report of the first Palestinian intifada. Jews were buying up Palestinian land at an alarming rate.

Centuries of pogroms and discrimination, Jews came to believe that they could build a "homeland" in Palestine. As originally envisioned, Israel was to be a colony within the Muslim world rather than a nation-state. At that time, Palestine was merely a region under Turkish dominion. It was not farfetched for Jews to simply buy land in Palestine and expand into a major settlement under the Turkish sultan.

*"As originally envisioned, Israel was to be a colony within the Muslim world rather than a nation-state."*

when the Zealots fomented rebellion (it was not universally supported). This first Jewish War is well documented and ended with the retaking of Masada by the Tenth Legion (The original Roman garrison was tricked into surrendering and slaughtered to a man. Hence the Roman vengeance.) The great temple in Jerusalem was sacked and, even today, the event is commemorated on the Arch of Titus in Rome.

Sixty years after the first war, another rebellion broke out. Again, the Romans showed no mercy. This time, Rome decided that Jews could not live in peace in Roman Judea. Exile was decreed and the name of the country was changed to Palaestina.

## Modern Times

Fast forward through the Crusades (a Christian invasion of Arab territory) and into the late 1800's. European Jews launched a new movement called Zionism, a return to the Holy Land. Responding to cen-

However, the First World War changed the Middle East map once again. Great Britain was about to take Palestine away from the Turks. In 1917, the British foreign secretary Balfour issued a declaration (no doubt he was lobbied heavily to do this) holding forth the promise of a "Jewish homeland" in Palestine. The promise was later rescinded when the Arab inhabitants heard about it, but hopes had been raised. It is clear, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, that Balfour supported the homeland idea for Britain's own selfish motive: a strategic advantage base of European settlers, even Jews, close to the Suez Canal, Britain's vital link to India.

Britain rued the day it opened Palestine to Jewish immigration. By the 1930's, even before the Holocaust, thousands of Jews were literally buying up Palestine. Newspapers of the time chronicled mayhem and murders. Arabs murdered Jewish settlers and even other Arabs that had sold land to the Jews. The first Intifada (Arab rebellion) took place in 1936. World War II only delayed the religious

strive. By the end of the war, with the massive influx of European Jews following the Holocaust, Britain had total anarchy on its hands. Ultra-Zionists of the Stern Gang, the Hagannah, and the Irgun (today it is known as the Likud Party, led by Ariel Sharon) murdered British soldiers and Arabs alike. American and British newspapers at the time labeled these Jews terrorists. Britain and the world were at a loss to resolve the strife. A partition of Palestine by the United Nations was suggested as a way for the Brits to get gracefully out of the Middle East.

It is a fact that the Ultra-Zionist groups refused to agree to a partition. They held, and still do, that the "land of Israel" includes all that King Solomon possessed. Moderate Jews accepted the notion of a partition and through force of arms, and a United Nations resolution, a smaller State of Israel was born.

It surprises many people that the Palestinians still feel they were cheated out of their land. (The American Indian is an interesting parallel. We are still compensating them with casinos.) Some Zionists claim that much of Palestine was vacant, that some Arab landowners deserted their lands when war broke out, or simply that the land was conquered fair and square and can never be returned. But the simple fact is: many Palestinians have not accepted Israel's conquest of their land.

## A Solution?

The Roman solution was reversed after two thousand years and the world is confronted with a seemingly endless conflict that has now engulfed the rest of the globe. Can we believe either side? Can they ever agree among themselves? Or must a solution be imposed, not in the Roman way, but with an international congress between the Western powers (not just the U.S.) and the Arab world. Many vested interests must be overcome to find a permanent solution. The future of all our children is at stake.



In 1946, Zionist terrorists struck the King David Hotel killing 46 people. The Likud Party of Ariel Sharon is the direct heir of these terrorists, whose goal was to colonize all Palestinian land.

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# Forgotten Flyer *Cont'd from p. 19*

“another De Pinedo”. And in 1927, When the Newfoundland Post Office issued the world’s first commemorative air mail stamp honoring an individual aviator, the name on the stamp wasn’t Lindbergh. It was De Pinedo. In the universal consensus, whether measured in terms of skill, initiative, or courage, the Italian was the consummate aviator of the day.

On their own merits, De Pinedo’s exploits, packed as they are with as much drama and action as any Hollywood adventure film, make fascinating stories. But equally intriguing is the way in which this daring pilot has been so thoroughly forgotten. Readers can pore over any dozen accounts of aviation history that line library or bookstore shelves without encountering as much as a footnote reference to his name. Even in De Pinedo’s native land, modern Italians who would have no trouble identifying Lindbergh, Earhart, or Orville and Wilbur Wright, have never heard of him.

Weighed against his achievements and the worldwide recognition once afforded him, such obscurity immediately appears inexplicable. But in a way, this too is part of the remarkable blend of triumph, heroism, and tragic twists of fate with which his story is structured.

*“Even modern Italians  
have never heard of him”*

## Background

Francesco De Pinedo was the classic depiction of Italy’s version of who should man the aeronautical vanguard in the dawning era of global flight. Where the popular American perceptions identified aviation with roguish mavericks and daredevils, he never failed to project the image of a genial and cultured Latin gentleman; pleasant, yet impeccably correct in manners and as equally conversant in art or music as in the latest aeronautical technology.

Born to a distinguished Neapolitan family, De Pinedo received a first-class education, initiated at an early age and provided, no doubt, in anticipation that he would eventually practice law like his father. His studies were completed not at a law school, however, but at the Royal Italian Naval Academy, where he enrolled as soon as it was clear that his passion for the sea would override every other ambition.

De Pinedo graduated just in time to see action in the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-12, serving destroyer duty on the Aegean Sea. It was during this conflict that the newly-invented aeroplane was deployed on the battlefield for the



**When De Pinedo’s first seaplane was destroyed in a suspicious fire in the U.S., the Italian government refused an American offer to supply another. Instead, an exact duplicate was shipped from Italy. De Pinedo lost one month and the chance to cross the N. Atlantic before Lindbergh.**

first time in history when pioneer Italian aviators soared over the Libyan deserts to fly reconnaissance, and later to drop bombs on enemy positions. Launched purely as an experiment, the Italian application of flying machines as weapons of war was so sweepingly successful that no modern nation would henceforth neglect to include them in its national arsenal.

Like everyone else, De Pinedo was impressed by his country’s demonstration of aviation’s military potential, and when Italy entered the First World War three years later, he volunteered for a pilot’s spot in the Royal Italian Navy’s newly



**A 30,000 mile trek, twice across the Atlantic and over four continents.**



created air division, speeding through training in forty five days. His love of the everything maritime was not displaced when he turned in this new direction, since he specialized in flying seaplanes, vehicles that allowed him at once to be both aviator and sailor.

After the Armistice, like most of Italy's army and navy personnel with flight experience, he was transferred to the Regia Aeronautica, the Royal Italian Air Force, when that new branch of the Italian military framework was created in 1924. Promoted to captain, De Pinedo was guaranteed a prestigious and secure future as a high ranking staff officer. But the very thought of a life defined by a series of desk jobs made him wince, since he dreaded the tedium of bureaucratic life. Already in his mid-thirties, he was yearning for a chance to get back in the sky. This he achieved by lobbying for and securing permission to conduct a demonstration flight to the Far East.

The plan was ambitious, but not exactly something new. The Royal Italian Government, with the cooperation of its various air arms and private Italian industries had been sending aviators on goodwill tours to foreign lands since the end of the war. The principal purpose of these friendly "raids," as they were termed, was to secure overseas markets for Italy's formidable war surplus aircraft inventory as well as the newer products of the Kingdom's burgeoning airplane manufacturers. But national prestige was also a motive, since many Italians were rankled by the continuing failure of much of the world to recognize the Kingdom of Italy as one of the Great Powers, despite the critical role it had played in the recent World War. The "raids" were staged, then, to be of an impressive nature in which not only the quality of Italian-built equipment would be showcased, but also the extraordinary skill of Italy's airmen. Since, in the 1920's, the degree and intensity of a country's aeronautical activity was considered a reliable yardstick with which to measure its standing in the world order, the "raids" would help dispel any doubts regarding Italy's ability to stand toe to toe with Britain, France, or America.

## The American Tour

Almost immediately after the successful completion of his 1925 oriental tour, De Pinedo began preparations to dupli-

### **De Pinedo, Italian, Starts 30,000-Mile Flight, Planning to Touch Four Continents**

cate his earlier feat, but on the opposite side of the globe. This journey would start with a flight across the Atlantic, still considered a highly dangerous proposition in 1927, after which he would barnstorm his way across South America, peppering up the trip with a daring and unprecedented flight over the Brazilian rain forests. From there he would fly to North

America, visit major U.S. and Canadian cities, and wrap up the voyage with a second Atlantic crossing back to Italy.

The aircraft selected for the mission was another Savoia machine, an S-55 seaplane originally designed as a torpedo bomber for the Regia Aeronautica. Having already captured fourteen world records in its class for speed, distance, altitude, and load capabilities, the aircraft had emerged as one of Italy's top of the line aeronautical products. Even the plane's appearance was an attention catcher, with its two sleek hulls joined like Siamese twins by a single, broad and sweeping wing, its cockpit situated in the center of the wing itself, and its powerful Isotta Fraschini engines mounted overhead.

The size of the S-55 afforded a three-man crew, and De Pinedo enlisted his old navy comrade and navigation expert Captain Carlo Del Prete and mechanical trouble-shooter Sgt. Vitale Zacchetti to accompany him on the flight. After a brief, torchlight departure ceremony, the aviators boarded their plane, which they had appropriately named the Santa Maria, and soared off beneath the stars on the frigid, early morning hours of February 13th.

The ocean leap, launched from the West African coast, was harrowing. At one point, Zacchetti was forced to turn to mineral water from the crew's provisions, and finally, to rain water sopped up with a sponge to cool the planes engines after broiling ambient temperatures depleted the radiator coolant. But the Italians ultimately succeeded and the South American phase of their tour began officially upon the Santa Maria's triumphant arrival at Natal, Brazil. Working their way down the coast, the aviators touched down at major cities where, welcomed as Latin kinsmen, their arrivals were invariably marked by parades, banquets, and every other imaginable festivity.

The highlight of the South American tour, of course, was the flight over Brazil's enormous and almost impenetrable rainforests, something never before attempted. Departing from Asuncion, Paraguay, on March 16, the Santa Maria vanished into the wilderness and for the next few days its crew lost contact with the outside world. On March 20, however, the Italians emerged alive and well, landing at the central Brazilian outpost of Manaus, where their first order of business was to attend Mass to give thanks for their survival.

Leaving the continent on March 24, the aviators island-hopped across the Caribbean, greeted in tumultuous fashion at Pointe-a-Pitre, Port-au-Prince, and Havana, where all the boats in the harbor sounded their bells, horns, and whistles for half an hour in tribute. Their next stop was New Orleans.

The outline of the North American tour had the Italians flying across the Southwest, up the West Coast from San Diego to Vancouver, then to the Midwest and East Coast successively. The journey got underway on April 2, but came

(Cont'd on p. 26)



# Captain Corelli's War in Greece

By  
Alfred Cardone

**F**or those who have not read the book or seen the movie, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, the plot revolves around the 1940-41 war between Italy and Greece. While historical accuracy is not generally an abiding concern of novelists and filmmakers, they often resurrect propaganda that is best left as old bar room banter. In this vein, Fascist Italy's attack on Greece, and the miserable winter war that followed, has become a legendary stain on the Italian national character. For Great Britain, searching to find hope in the dark days of 1940, after the ignominious surrender of France and its own flight from Dunkirk, the Italian setback in Greece was an opportunity to assure the world that the Axis was beatable. It also gave the



English and American press the chance to demonstrate that Mussolini, despite twenty years in power, had not made Italians into Romans. Yet, when all the facts are assembled, one can only conclude that the understrength Italian expeditionary force waged a tenacious war against nearly the whole Greek army and a sizeable part of the British air force, not to mention the horrific terrain and natural elements that would have doomed lesser armies.

It is important to remember two strategic concepts before one questions Italian military aims in the Balkan peninsula. First, the Balkans and Greece were part of the eastern Mediterranean theater that included the Middle East and Egypt. Challenging Britain's naval and air power in North Africa (i.e., to capture Suez) required the neutralization of any potential bases around the eastern Mediterranean rim. Second, Mussolini feared Hitler as much as he feared the Allies. He needed to keep Germany away from the Mediterranean, an Italian preserve. The Italian occupation of Albania in 1939, prior to the outbreak of World War II, was launched to secure a springboard in the Balkans. It was also intended to send a message to Italy's Axis partner.

Italy entered World War II on June 10, 1940 on Germany's side by declaring war on Great Britain and France. In a major move against the British, Italy invaded Egypt in September 1940 penetrating as far as Sidi Barrani, just over the Libyan border. Simultaneously, Italian forces quickly conquered British Somalia and also made incursions against the British in Kenya and the Sudan.

In early October 1940, Germany informed Italy that the Greek government had agreed to grant Britain naval and air bases to assist them against Italy. In fact, British ships and airplanes began using Greek ports and bases for supply and refuge from Italian naval forces. To make matters worse, Hitler unexpectedly occupied part of Romania in order to secure the oil fields at Ploesti, and German troops began arriving in Bucharest. Mussolini considered this an intrusion into Italy's natural sphere of influence in the Balkans. He decided that a bold stroke was needed to counter both the British and the Germans. Beginning on October 12, 1940, Mussolini held a series of confer-



Ordered to "smash the Greek kidneys" by Mussolini, Italian units go on the offensive during a 5-month war of attrition.

ences in Rome to plan the attack on Greece, setting the date for October 28, 1940, the anniversary of the Fascist March on Rome in 1922. This left Italy with only two weeks to prepare for the campaign.

Most Italian diplomats and military leaders did not expect serious resistance from the Greeks. It was thought that the fighting spirit of the Greek army was questionable and that some segments of the Greek civilian population would welcome the Italians as liberators. Italy's King Victor Emanuel III predicted that "at the first hard blow," the Greek army would "begin to crumble, and no one would succeed in stopping it." Furthermore, a supporting invasion force from Bulgaria was anticipated since Mussolini had invited King Boris to "descend to the sea" in Thrace when Italy attacked. Italy, therefore, sent only three additional divisions to reinforce the five that it already had in Albania, giving the Italians far less than the twenty divisions that the Italian general staff had originally estimated were required for the invasion. This modest Italian invasion force, the majority of whom were recruits, would be under the command of General Visconti Prasca. [It should also be pointed out that the Italian divisions were "binary," consisting of two regiments, while the Greek divisions consisted of the more conventional three regiments. For this reason, troop strength in this article will be expressed in regiments.]

Meanwhile, the Greeks had secretly begun mobilizing in the middle of August 1940. By October, the Greeks had concentrated twelve regiments in Macedonia opposite the Italian left flank. Once their mobilization was complete, the Greeks would have 220,000 men in twenty-four regiments facing the Italians. Bulgaria's refusal to join Italy in the attack on Greece, perhaps in response to pressure from Turkey, enabled the Greeks to transfer another twenty-four regiments from Thrace to Macedonia to assist in fighting the Italians. The Greeks would have a further twelve

*"It was thought that the fighting spirit of the Greek army was questionable and that some segments of the Greek civilian population would welcome the Italians as liberators."*

regiments in reserve and 300,000 men left over. The Italians would initially enjoy a slight numerical advantage in Epirus, which was the Greek district targeted by the Italian invasion, of 162,000 men against 150,000 men, but only until the Greeks completed their







**Facing nearly the whole Greek Army, mountain units such as these Alpini had to wage war against superior artillery and daunting winter weather. The Italians never achieved the required 3:1 superiority for a successful attack, but persisted doggedly to victory.**

mobilization. This advantage was far less than the usual numerical superiority required for a successful offensive. Any Italian reinforcements would have to be shipped across the Adriatic Sea and would face serious bottlenecks due to the limited capacity of the Albanian ports of Valona and Durazzo and the poor internal transportation facilities inside Albania. Greek reinforcements, on the other hand, could be more swiftly brought to critical locations along the front.

Steady, drenching rains in Albania began on October 26th, which turned the terrain over which the Italians were to advance into a sea of mud. On October 28, 1940, fourteen regiments of the Italian 9th and 11th Armies invaded Greece and pressed forward under torrential rains, which deprived them of air cover. Best progress was made along the coast, where by November 9th, Italian reconnaissance forces had penetrated about sixty kilometers. Greek resistance, however, was more determined in the center and left. Italian progress here was much slower. The Greeks were using French artillery, which was superior to anything the Italians were able to deploy. This Greek superiority in firepower lasted until late in the campaign and proved to be a significant factor in the ensuing combat. The British also quickly dispatched five RAF squadrons of fighters and light bombers to Greece, which attacked Italian installations in Greece and Albania.

Within two weeks, the Italian offensive ground to a halt and Mussolini replaced General Visconti Prasca with General Soddu. On November 14th, General Alexandros Papagos, chief of staff of the Greek army, ordered a complete counter-offensive with twenty-one regiments. His troops now enjoyed a marked numerical advantage over the Italians. The Italians had only sixteen regiments to cover the defense of 140 kilometers, which permitted easy infiltration into the Italian rear. The situation was made worse by the desertion of thousands of Albanian troops fighting with the Italians. The panic and sudden flight of an Albanian battalion at Mussa put the Italians in an especially precarious position in that sector of the front. On the northeast

front, the Greeks captured the town of Koritsa after a hard fought battle. On the Epirus and central fronts, the Greeks pushed the Italians back toward the frontier and by November 16th had retaken Konitsa. On November 18th, General Soddu ordered a retreat. The Italian troops had now been fighting for three weeks in terrible weather with the disadvantage of long and chaotic supply lines. There was a shortage of trucks, horses and mules, the only practical means of moving ammunition, food and wounded in the mountains. The key valley town of Koritsa was abandoned, and on November 26th Marshal Pietro Badoglio was forced to resign as Commander-in Chief, to be replaced by General Ugo Cavallero.

In early December 1940, the Greeks achieved a breakthrough and invaded Albania, capturing the port of Santi Quaranta and the town of Gjinokaster. Parallel advances were made along the rest of the front after heavy fighting in the mountains. The Italians gradually gave up more ground during the month of December, and General Soddu was removed. General Cavallero now assumed command of the Greek campaign, while retaining his position as Commander-in-Chief. Italian counter attacks were held in check by the Greeks, and in January-February 1941, the Greeks launched a further offensive supported by RAF squadrons, which struck at Italian port facilities and lines of communication. British planes also sank an Italian hospital ship on which Mussolini's daughter Edda was serving as a member of the Italian Red Cross as it was sailing to Albania in the middle of the night. The Greeks achieved a maximum penetration of about 55 miles into Albania, before being halted short of their objective of the town of Tepelini by reinforcements from Italy. Both sides were exhausted at this stage and had suffered heavy losses.

Fearing a World War I-like stalemate in the Albanian mountains, Mussolini sent a representative to Berlin in December 1940 to discuss the prospects of German assistance in the conquest of Greece. The Germans planned to attack Greece from Bulgaria to bring hostilities in the Balkans to a swift conclusion; however, weather conditions would make any German offensive (i.e., panzer and mobilized forces) impossible until the spring of 1941. On February 8, 1941, Greece asked Britain for more help in case of a German attack. It was agreed that Britain would send a force to hold a position west of Salonika to strengthen the nine Greek regiments there and the nine Greek regiments in eastern Macedonia. Churchill decided to divert thousands of troops from North Africa to Greece, against the advice of his generals. This diversion of British

forces left all of Tripolitania (western Libya) in Italian hands and contributed to future Axis victories in both Libya and Egypt. The so-called disaster in the Balkans had saved the Italian forces in Libya.

On March 1, 1941 Bulgaria joined the axis, and the next day, German troops crossed the Danube. The vast majority of Greek forces, forty-two regiments comprising 300,000 troops, and essentially all their supplies were engaged on the Albanian front against the Italians between Lake Ohrid and the Adriatic Sea. Mussolini was, nonetheless, determined to achieve a break through against the Greeks before the Germans intervened. His order to his troops was to "smash their kidneys." He visited Italian troops in Albania in March 1941 to deliver the message in person. On March 9th, the Italians launched another offensive between the Vijose River and Mount Tommorit with twenty-four regiments. After achieving minimal gains, the offensive was called off by March 19th after heavy casualties on both sides. The Greeks drew manpower from the fortified line in eastern Macedonia in order to replace casualties in the Albanian fighting. The British, meanwhile, had begun arriving

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# Out of Africa

by  
John Mancini

**T**here is a scene in the movie *Lion of the Desert* in which General Rodolfo Graziani, played by the late Oliver Reed, lectures an Arab leader, played by the late Anthony Quinn on African history. The Arab had just accused the Italian general of stealing Libya from its rightful owners. Pulling out an ancient Roman coin from his pocket, Graziani contemptuously replied that the coin was recently unearthed a short distance from where the two men stood. "We were here two thousand years ago!" yelled the general.

So it was that during the time of the Roman Empire, all of north Africa was planted with Italian colonies. Historians estimate some 400,000 Italians had settled in the then-fertile lands that are now Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and Algeria. The famous St. Augustine lived and wrote in Africa. During modern times, these same countries saw a return of Italian colonists. In Tunisia, alone, there were over 100,000 Italians in residence.

We are accustomed to think of Italians immigrating to the Americas, and primarily to the United States. The reality is that of the 57 million people of Italian descent outside of Italy, only 16 million live in the U.S. The rest can be found in Ibero-America, Canada, Australia, Northern Europe, and Africa. The famous starlet Claudia Cardinale was born in Tunis. A quick look at a map reveals the reason for the heavy Italian influence: Sicily is only 85 miles away, closer to Tunis than it is to Rome.

To illustrate the point of this article, we only had to look to a member of the Italic Institute. John Misso was born and raised in the French colony of Tunisia. He immigrated to the United States in 1961, a time when many Italians left the country, the reason being that Tunisia had become an independent nation and times were changing. His family settled in Queens, New York, and John learned English as a teenager. He later married Maria Marro, also of Queens (an immigrant from Avellino, Italy). Today, John lives on Long

Island, where he and Maria conduct two Aurora Language classes for the Institute on weekends.

John's ancestors come from the Italian island of Favagniana off Trapani, Sicily. His paternal grandfather had



**These ruins bear testimony to an Italian population in Tunisia, two thousand years ago.**

a girlfriend in the old country but risked losing her when her family moved to Tunis for a better life. In a desperate act of love, John's grandfather followed his future wife to Tunis and worked in construction. John's father was born there, as was his mother. John was born in 1948, at home.

At the time John's grandfather immigrated, the 1890's, the Tunisian cities of Tunis, Bizerte and Sfax were the destinations of most Sicilians seeking a new life. Although possessed by the French, who took Tunisia during the African land grab of the 19th Century, Italy never gave up its claim by virtue of its 100,000 Italian colonists. Even the French could not export that many colonists to Tunisia (Algeria was their main preserve). It wasn't until Mussolini received France's tacit approval of his conquest of Abyssinia in 1935 that Italy withdrew its claim to Tunisia, abandoning the huge colony there.

Life in the colony was culturally French, even into the 1960's. French was the primary language, although John spoke Sicilian dialect at home. Arabs were their neighbors, and John's mother became fluent in Arabic while supervising workers at the nearby dress factory. By and large, Italians at that time considered themselves Italian first, Frenchmen second and Tunisians third. This was brought home to them during the Second World War when French authorities

*(Cont'd on p.27)*

**John and Maria Misso go native on a visit to John's Tunisian homeland.**

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## FORGOTTEN FLYER

to an abrupt and shocking halt when the Santa Maria went up in smoke during a refueling stop near Phoenix, the victim of a local youth's carelessly discarded cigarette.

Mortified that the gallant S-55 should come to such an inglorious end on American soil, the United States government offered to supply a replacement plane with which De Pinedo might finish his tour. Mussolini politely declined, and instead ordered an exact duplicate of the original aircraft be rushed to De Pinedo's disposal. Extraordinary pains were taken to match the new machine, christened the Santa Maria II, with its ill-starred predecessor...even down to the inclusion of the hand-cranked phonograph that De Pinedo had slipped on board to provide himself and his comrades with music during their odyssey. The only noticeable difference were the Latin words "Post Fata Risurgo" ("I rise from death") inscribed on the new plane's hull.

A full month had been lost because of the Arizona incident, and ostensibly to return to Italy on schedule, De Pinedo revised his itinerary by eliminating all points west of the Mississippi. But he had another good reason for wanting to speed things along. Perhaps sparked in part by his own exploits, the race to claim the Orteig Prize, a bounty of \$25,000 offered to the first aviator to complete a non-stop flight between America and France, was emerging as the big challenge of the moment. Activity in the competition had stepped up greatly during the weeks in which the Italians awaited their replacement aircraft, though all attempts thus far had had tragic conclusions. But it seemed very possible that someone would succeed in claiming the prize within the next few weeks.

De Pinedo, of course, hadn't registered as a contender. Participation in any competition, especially one involving a cash prize, was out of bounds for his goodwill tour. But unless he wanted to see his achievements of the past four months eclipsed forever by the more glamorous feat of some other flyer, De Pinedo knew that he'd better make his ocean crossing first.

After mopping up the remaining portions of their abbreviated tour, which included a two-day stopover in Chicago, De Pinedo and his crew flew to Newfoundland, the staging point of their Atlantic flight. Almost incredibly, their initial attempt, which was aborted due to violently severe weather, was made on May 21, of all days, and a date about to be enshrined in aviation history, but for reasons having nothing to do with De Pinedo. In New York at 7:52 AM on that very morning, a young, largely unknown, pilot named Charles Lindbergh hopped into a Ryan monoplane named

The Spirit of St. Louis, and pointed it toward Paris. Even after Lindbergh landed there in triumph, completing the first, solo non-stop Atlantic flight, De Pinedo was still unsuccessfully battling gale strength winds trying to get his plane in the air. By the time the Italians managed to complete their journey, their arrival back home could only be described as anti-climactic. De Pinedo was still a hero, but Lindbergh had evolved into a demi-god. From that point, the Italian aviator gradually faded from the public eye until mention of his name in the international press diminished to the "whatever-happened -to..." variety. He did manage to make headlines one last time in 1933 when he attempted a comeback by way of a record-breaking non-stop flight between New York and Baghdad. For reasons never completely determined, his plane crashed shortly after takeoff at Bennett Field and the gallant Italian died in a burst of flames.

New Yorkers held a memorial service that measured up to the airman's earlier days of glory. Thousands came to

*"Thousands came to  
St. Patrick's for the funeral mass"*

St. Patrick's for the funeral mass, the mayor, top American military brass, and assorted diplomats and dignitaries filling the pews. A squadron of U.S. Navy planes provided aerial escort for the procession that followed, as a horse-drawn caisson solemnly carried De Pinedo's remains to the 57th Street pier for repatriation aboard the Italian steamship Vulcania. Despite being sepulchered with full military honors marked by oratory protestations of the immortality of his achievements, De Pinedo was rarely mentioned again.

\* \* \*

For those who dismiss endless mob movies as "harmless," the Institute's 2000 Film Study exposes the institutionalized degradation of our community by the entertainment industry. For a copy, send a check for \$10 (for postage & handling) to:

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interned the Italians colonists while the Axis armies ranged across North Africa.

The official language of schools, banks, church and government offices was French, despite the fact that Italians outnumbered the Gallic populace. At school, John was also taught Italian, Latin and Arabic. As a resident of Tunis, John lived close to the ancient site of Carthage. School trips and Latin studies made him aware of his link to Roman history. Once, while on a field trip, John found a Roman coin, just as General Graziani had in the movie. John also realized that his ancestral Sicily had seen an Arab occupation for 250 years.

Relations between Arabs and Italians were peaceful and John's family lived harmoniously in an old Arab neighborhood (the famed Casbah). Although the Misso family remained committed to Italian cuisine, it frequently ate Arab style: coucous (steamed semolina with meat and vegetables) and harissa paste, a hot condiment.

Despite the outward harmony, there was always the fear, on both sides, of intermarriage. Poverty among the Arabs was another distinct difference, and John occasionally observed that Arab families were forced to give up some of their own children to insure their survival. By 1957, Tunisia was given its independence, causing much concern among the European colonists. Anti-colonial violence had already engulfed neighboring Algeria for years and most Italians chose to move to France or Italy. John's family decided to head to America and waited five years for a visa. In 1961, the family left Africa for a stopover at Naples, the first time John stood on Italian soil, then, on to New York. He was not to make an extended trip to Italy until 1972. His Italian improved in New York when he began reading *Il Progresso*, an Italian American daily. Today, he prides himself on speaking English, Italian and his parent's Sicilian dialect.

John and Maria Misso are part of the saga shared by all of our forebears. They each left a homeland to come to America to thrive and to raise a family. Yet, John's story is one that is not always familiar to us. His Italic roots are in Africa.

\* \* \*

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Book of the City of Ladies). And, when a pompous political writer named Giuseppe Passi published a 1609 tract called *I Donneschi Difetti* (The Defects of Women), Lucrezia Marinella, a Venetian poet and writer, responded



with her own essay, *La Nobilita' et l'Eccellenze delle Donne* (On the Nobility and Excellence of Women). Marinella's caustic wit and intelligent counter-arguments clearly mark her as the spiritual godmother to such 20th century feminist writers as Oriana Fallaci (Italy) and Camille Paglia (America).

**The outspoken Camille Paglia**

And, let's not forget the influence which Italic women had on u p - a n d - c o m i n g English writers: not only Geoffrey Chaucer (whose female characters in *The Canterbury Tales* were derived from

Boccaccio), but a young actor-turned-playwright named William Shakespeare. A student of Italian literature, master Shakespeare was no doubt entranced while reading about these alternately beautiful and strong-willed ladies. Italic women appear in a number of his most famous plays—among them, "Romeo and Juliet" (Giulietta); "The Taming of the Shrew" (Katharina); "Much Ado About Nothing" (Beatrice); "Othello" (Desdemona); "The Tempest" (Miranda); and "The Merchant of Venice" (Portia).

Indeed, Portia's plea for forgiveness in "Venice" ("The quality of mercy is not strain'd") is in keeping with the enlightened Italic humanism of the period, also symbolized by two Veronese siblings, Isotta and Ginerva Nogarola. The male intellectuals of the time often ridiculed le sorelle Nogarola, treating these well-educated women like talking dogs (i.e., freaks) for daring to air their opinions in public. The same was true for Laura Cereta of Brescia, the highly educated daughter of an engineer/physician father. In her volume of letters, published in 1488, Cereta viewed her fellow women, whom she considered shallow and catty, as even more of a threat than men. To wit:

"I might have forgiven those pathetic men, doomed to rascality, whose patent insanity I lash with unleashed tongue. But I cannot bear babbling and chattering women, glowing with drunkenness and wine, whose impudent words harm not only our sex but even more themselves...Any women who excel they seek out and destroy with the venom of their envy."

**CATHERINE(S) THE GREAT**

Other European countries had female leaders from time to time: the eccentric Queen Christina of Sweden, for

example, who adopted Rome as her home city in 1655, where she now lies buried; and Russia's Catherine the Great, who ruled her vast country from 1762-1796.

However, when it comes to Catherines, Italic women, once again, set the standard. No less than six great women named Catherine left their mark on la bell'italia: Caterina Fieschi of Genoa (1447-1507), a gentle noblewoman whose dedication to the poor inspired her rakish husband, Giuliano Adorno, to change his ways; Catherine of Bologna (1413-1463), a religious visionary who wrote an influential treatise on spirituality; Catherine of Ricci (1522-1590), a Florentine nun who advised popes and cardinals; and the three greatest Catherines of them all: Catherine of Siena (1347-1380); Catherine de Medici (1389-1464); and Caterina Sforza, Countess of Forli (1463-1509).

Catherine of Siena combined private devotion with civic duty. During the time of the Great Schism (1378-1415), when the Papacy moved to Avignon, France, Catherine acted as the main facilitator between France and Italy, the new Pope and the old Pope. Her negotiating skills, along with her passionate public letters, eventually brought the Papacy back to Rome. In turn, a grateful nation made her the female patron saint of Italy.

Catherine de Medici, a member of the powerful Florentine family, was wedded to the King of France when she was just 14 years old. Yet, this precocious teenager included Italian chefs as part of her entourage, thus introducing her French subjects to the art of fine cooking. She also introduced the "civilized" custom of eating with forks, as well as the wearing of make-up, both of which the French considered pretentious.

Over the centuries, as we know, the French adopted these practices as their own, including the creation of the modern bra in 1912—although Italic women had already worn *mamillare* (breast supporters) in Roman times.

Despite her disastrous meddlings in the raging battles between Catholics and Protestants in France, Madame de Medici was a giggly high-school girl compared to Caterina Sforza. Descended from a fierce Milanese family, Sforza survived three assassinated husbands, took numerous lovers, dabbled in magic and led her own armies against none other than the fabled and feared military leader, Cesare Borgia. The poe-



**Mother Cabrini**



# I NOSTRI COGNOMI: (OUR SURNAMES)

By Hon. Anthony Scariano

Here is the latest ranking of Italian surnames from a recent study conducted by one of Italy's newest magazines, *Focus*.

Still in first place is **Rossi**, the plural of *Rosso* (meaning the color "red" and applied to the bearers perhaps because of the color of hair, beard or ruddy complexion).

Second is **Russo** common especially in southern Italy and Sicily. Although it is Italian for "Russian," it doesn't mean there was a Russian invasion of the boot. Rather, it is how *Rosso* was pronounced in the dialect of southern Italy and Sicily. It probably described the features of Longobards (germanic Lombards from Northern Italy) and Normans (Norsemen from France) who descended on the south after Rome fell.

Next is **Ferrari**, the plural of *ferraro* (blacksmith) or for anyone who worked with metal, especially iron (*ferro*). That's why Smith is one of the most common names in English-speaking countries.

**Esposito** (ess-POE-zee-toe) is in fourth place. It comes from the dialectical version of the word *esposto* meaning exposed, exhibited, displayed. The earliest bearers of the surname were so baptized because they were foundlings. *Ospizio degli esposti* is a "foundling hospital." Almost three-quarters of a century ago, Italy enacted a law that forbade the imposition upon foundlings of names and surnames that reflect their origins.

**Bianchi** is fifth. It is the plural of *bianco* (*white*). The original Bianchi were surely light- or fair-complexioned persons.

**Romano** is sixth. From earliest times and for a long period thereafter it was the surname fixed on anyone who originated from Rome to the place where he was given the name. And clearly there were many of such migrants.

Seventh is **Colombo**. In Italian, it means "pigeon" or "dove," a good example of applying a surname inspired by certain characteristics, physical or otherwise: a very common way of acquiring a surname in almost all countries. The frequency of *Colombo* may be explained by the fact that it is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, given in honor of the celebrated St. Colomba, and an expression of endearment - "love," "darling."

**Ricci** (REE-chee) is eighth and means "curly," which is self-explanatory: another surname that derives from a physical characteristic of the person so named.

Placing ninth is **Marino**, an adjective relating to practically anything having to do with the sea, which probably explains why so many people sport the name in a country that is almost entirely surrounded by water. Our "marine" and "mariner" are cognate words.

In tenth place, we find **Greco** meaning "Greek." The Greeks colonized the coasts of Southern Italy and Sicily as

early as the middle of the eighth century B.C., and had a presence there until they intermarried with the more numerous Italic and Etruscan peoples. Italians with a Greek background or cultural leaning became known as *il Greco*, if male, or *la Greca*, if female. Thus are surnames born.

**Bruno** is eleventh in the ranking. Here again, a color serves as a surname, this time brown. Just as *Bianchi* and *Rossi* denote the physical features of the bearers of those names, *Bruno* as a surname and as a birth name is attached to persons who are of a darker complexion. But, it was also related to plum-growing. In some areas of Italy, Calabria for example, the dialect word for plum is *bruno*. (In Italian, plum is *susina*.)

**Gallo** comes in twelfth. It is the word for "rooster" or "cock," a surname for persons, according to one professor, who would strut or assume to "rule the roost." Surely, we've heard reference made to a person even today as "cock of the walk."

**Conti** is number thirteen. It is the plural of *conte*, a count; a noble title. In earlier times, certain officials who were not nobility took on the title: e.g., in the Venetian government, a *rettore* (rector) was a civil governor who on occasion assumed the title of count. Very often persons who worked for a count were referred to by their peers as "so and so, the Count's coachman," or secretary, etc. Ultimately they came to be referred to as *Conte* to shorten the description (or, in dialect, *Conti*) and the title stuck.

Fourteen is **DeLuca** meaning child or spouse of *Luke*, a very popular New Testament name in many countries. "*De*" is an old form of what is now *di* in Italian (of).

Fifteen is **Costa**, Italian for "coast," "slope" and "rib." Coast and slope could have been originally applied based on the geographical location of a person's abode, but it is difficult to imagine anyone being surnamed based on that part of the anatomy known as a rib!

Sixteenth place goes to **Giordano**, a place name. It derives from the River Jordan of biblical fame, and from the town of Montegiordano (Mount Jordan) in Sicily. A person who comes from that town became known as *Giordano*, but others might have taken, or were given, the surname for their religious activities, perhaps after a pilgrimage to the Middle East.

**Mancini** (mahn-CHEEN-ee) is seventeenth, the plural of *mancino* (left-handed) - or the equivalent of our nickname "Lefty." There were many variations on the theme of left-handedness in the world of Italian surnames.

Number eighteen is **Rizzo** (REET-so), a variant of the surname *Ricci* for curly-haired persons.

In nineteenth place is **Lombardi**, plural of our Lombard - i.e., a current or former inhabitant of the region of Lombardia, the capital of which is Milan, named for the Germanic tribe that settled in northern Italy but later spread to all regions and mixed with the locals. Many persons from



that region took up residence in Sicily and became businessmen there. Hence, the great number of Lombardi in Sicily.

Number twenty is **Moretti**. It is the plural diminutive of Moro, Italian for Moor, applied to persons with very dark hair or complexion. The name also referred to Turks or Saracens, who also, like many other nationalities, have had a presence in Italy.

Twenty-first is **Barbieri** (barb-YAIR-ee). It is the plural form of barber - another case of an occupation becoming a surname, an extremely common occurrence. The singular is *barbiere*. Some bearers of this trade name spell it Barberi because that's the way it's spelled and pronounced in many Italian dialects, especially in Sicily and southern Italy.

Number twenty-two is **Fontana**, Italian for "fountain" or a "spring of water." Its origins as a surname came about as a means of identifying a person living near a public fountain.

**Caruso** comes in as number twenty-three. It means "boy" or "boy in service," for example, a farm boy, shop boy, errand boy, etc. It also means young man or bachelor. My grandfather often referred to his male grandchildren as *stu carusu*, meaning "this boy," in his Sicilian dialect.

Number twenty-four is **Mariani** the plural of Mariano, or Marian, relating to Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

**Ferrara** is number twenty-five, an industrial city in northern Italy. Persons who are new to a village or town or city were often referred to as "the man from Milano" (Milan), or from Venezia (Venice) or Sicilia (Sicily), and that has been the way their surnames have been acquired. Accordingly, one can go to a city telephone book and easily come across these and many more "place" names that are surnames.

Number twenty-six is **Santoro**, a short way of saying San Salvatore. The "san" means saint before a name, and "toro" is a short form of Salvatore (savior). There are also other nicknames for Salvatore; for example Tore is Turi in Sicily and southern Italy, the diminutive of which is Turiddu, the leading character in Mascagni's opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

In twenty-seventh place is **Rinaldi**, a principal hero of the medieval stories that Italians are fond of, just as much as the English dote on King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Italian children who re-enact these stories love to play the part of these heroes, and such is the history of acquiring a nickname that becomes a surname.

Number twenty-eight is **Leone**, Italian for lion. It is also the Italian version of the Latin Leo. The lion symbolizes nobility and daring, and as a surname, it can be encountered all over Italy, by itself, or as part of another name, for example, Monte Leone (Lion Mountain), a surname acquired by reason of the proximity of a person to such a topographical site.

**Galli** is number twenty-nine. Although the plural of rooster (gallo), the use of galli as a surname is derived from Gallia, Italian for Gaul, the ancient name of what is now France and environs. Gallico stands for gallic in Italian and is a frequently encountered surname, for the French had an enormous presence and influence in large parts of Italy throughout history.

Last but not least is **Longo**, number thirty. An anatomical name given to countless persons who were tall or long, which is its principal meaning.

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## Captain Corelli's War in Greece (continued)

Cont'd from p. 24

on March 7th, and by March 21st, had completed their concentration of nearly 58,000 troops to block the anticipated German invasion.

Elsewhere in the Balkans, Yugoslavia's regent Paul signed the Tripartite Pact on March 26th pledging that nation to the Axis. The next day, however, he was overthrown in an anti-Axis coup-d'etat, and young Peter was declared king. Hitler immediately decided to attack Yugoslavia as well as Greece for this betrayal. A coordinated German attack on both countries would be launched on Sunday, April 6, 1941 in conjunction with major new Italian offensives.

On April 6, 1941, the Germans invaded Yugoslavia from Austria, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, while the Italian 2nd Army of sixteen regiments invaded northern Yugoslavia from Italy, and the Italian 9th Army in Albania released eight regiments to invade southern Yugoslavia. The Italians easily stopped a Yugoslav attack on Albania, and Italian marines invaded the coast. The Italian 2nd Army advanced rapidly southwards along the coast of Dalmatia, while the Italian 9th Army marched northward. Linking up at Ragusa, the Italians had succeeded in occupying the entire coast of Yugoslavia including Montenegro in less than two weeks. The Italians had taken 30,000 Yugoslav prisoners, suffering only a few hundred casualties. The Germans occupied the remainder of the country, and Yugoslavia surrendered on April 17th. Meanwhile, the German troops that invaded southern Yugoslavia from Bulgaria, numbering thirty regiments, veered southwards into the Salonika plain and entered Greece. On April 8th, the Germans reached the port of Salonika and succeeded in cutting off nine Greek regiments in northeast Greece and forcing them to surrender. The Germans made first contact with the British on April 9th, and very soon the nine Greek regiments and the British were forced to retreat to a previously prepared defensive line on the Aliakmon River.

On April 12th, thirty-two regiments of the Italian 9th and 11th Armies attacked the forty-two Greek regiments defending the Albanian front. After a few days of fierce fighting, the Italians broke through their lines and steadily pushed the Greek forces toward the Greek border capturing numerous prisoners and large quantities of arms and materials. Four hundred and fifty Italian fighter planes, bombers and dive bombers carried out continuous punishing attacks on the retreating Greeks, destroying hundreds of truckloads of troops and material. Greek troop concentrations, barracks and artillery positions were decimated. The last Greek stronghold in Albania was captured after a bloody fight around Perat, in which the best part of Greece's forty-two regiments was lost. West of the Pindus Mountains, the Anglo-Greek forces also retreated before the advance of the Italian troops into Greek territory. By April 14th, the British forces and the Greek 2nd Army had retreated as far south as Mount Olympus before the German advance from the east, thereby exposing the right flank of the Greek forces facing the Italians in Albania. The Greeks retreated about five to ten miles south and east of Albania forming a defensive line along the Kalamas River as the Italians advanced across the Greek border at all points.

The Italians recaptured the Greek town of Konitza and also converged on Kalabaka, twelve or thirteen miles inside the frontier. Italian artillery shelled the Greeks along the Kalabaka line, and Italian troops fought the Greeks between the Viosa and Dryno Rivers for control of the main road into Epirus. The Greeks lost tens of thousands of men killed or taken prisoner and thousands of artillery pieces and automatic arms along the route of retreat. Meanwhile, the Germans reached Yanina and blocked the Greek path of retreat. Realizing the situation was now hopeless, General Zolakoglou, the commander of Greek forces in

Albania, asked the Germans (rather than the hated Italians) for terms on April 18th. That same day, the Greek premier, Koryzsis, shot himself.



**The Fiat G.50. The Royal Italian Air Force earned its pay against the British and Greek forces.**

The British continued their rapid retreat before the German advance and began a desperate evacuation of Greece on April 21st, while King Giorgos fled to Crete. Hoping for more lenient terms than they expected to be granted by the Italians (remember "smash their kidneys!"), the Greeks surrendered to German forces on April 20th. Incensed at the utter disdain for Italy's victory, Mussolini insisted that the Greeks surrender unconditionally to an Italian general two days later on April 22, 1941 at the command post of the 9th Army. [This disdain was apparent in the movie version of *Corelli's Mandolin* when the Greek characters offered to surrender to "a German dog" rather than the Italians.]

*"on the Italian front Greek losses were 13,000 killed, 50,000 wounded, tens of thousands captured"*

The nine British regiments were able to retreat to the coast of Attica from which most of the men were evacuated (another Dunkirk) by April 29th after most of their equipment had been destroyed or left behind for the Germans. In addition, two British, three Dutch and eighty-five Greek ships were sunk. The British were routed and had lost 3,700 men killed and 11,500 captured while the Germans lost 2,232 killed and 3,000 wounded in this campaign. The Germans also received the surrender of 218,000 Greek and 344,000 Yugoslav soldiers. About 2,700 Greeks were killed fighting the Germans. Whereas, on the Italian front Greek losses were 13,000 killed, 50,000 wounded, tens of thousands captured and thousands maimed by frostbite. The Italians had lost 13,755 killed, 50,000 wounded, 20,000 captured and 12,368 maimed by frostbite over the previous six months. The Italians had fulfilled the essential function of tying down and exhausting practically the entire Greek Army, thus paving the way for the rapid German success against the mere eighteen Greek regiments and the British expeditionary force facing them.

In the end, Italy annexed the majority of the Dalmatian coast as well as Montenegro from Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslav region of Kosovo was also added to Italian Albania. Most of Greece was occupied by Italian forces except for Macedonia in the east and the area around Athens, which was occupied by the Germans. The Italian people were jubilant at their victory in the Balkans after six hard months of war. Thousands of students, civilians and soldiers engaged in wild street demonstrations in Rome waving Italian and German flags and hailing Mussolini. It had been a difficult campaign, but in the end even direct British military intervention could not prevent the conquest of Greece and Yugoslavia by Axis forces. This was to be the high point of Axis fortunes in the Mediterranean.

The reality of the Italian soldier's tenacity and endurance was a far cry from the operatic portrayal in *Corelli's Mandolin*.

\* \* \* \*





ple of Italy were awed by Sforza's boldness, referring, in a popular phrase, to "the man's heart that beat inside (her) woman's breast." Others, however, were less impressed, coining the Italian word *virago* (a domineering woman) to cut her down to size.

### ISABELLA, LA PRIMA DONNA DEL MONDO

If Leonardo da Vinci, with his innate Italic genius, symbolized the I-can-do-it-all spirit of *il Rinascimento*, he had a close female equivalent in Isabella d'Este, the magnificent Marchioness of Mantua. Growing up in the court of Naples before being married off to Francesco Gonzaga, Isabella delighted the populace with her myriad of talents: scholar, linguist, musician, dancer and politician, all wrapped up in a cheery personality which charmed artists, ambassadors and popes.

Yet, Isabella was no ball of fluff: While



Isabella D'Este, the Toast  
of the Italian Renaissance.

in Rome during its infamous sacking by the Spanish and Germans (May 6, 1527), she shielded terrified natives within the walls of the fortified Palazzo Colonna, protecting them from the horror and chaos outside. And she didn't engage in idle chatter, either: Along with her sister-in-law, Elisabetta Gonzaga, the Duchess of Urbino, Isabella regularly met with poets and scholars of the day, creating the tradition of a literary salon (*salone*, in the original Italian).

Perhaps Isabella's wit is what endeared her to her subjects: After endless years of power plays, aimed at benefiting her three sons, Isabella was relieved when her two daughters opted for the religious life. Said an exhausted Isabella: "I do not expect my new son-in-law to give me any problems."

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