



THE Italic Way

XXXIII 2005

The magazine of the Italic Institute of America

**THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC:
A ROMAN INSPIRATION**

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TEN EVENTS THAT SHAPED THE WORLD

FOUR NEW GOVERNORS

BOGART'S SAHARA: ANOTHER VIEW

TWO ITALYS?

LADY POWER: PART 3

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The Italic Way

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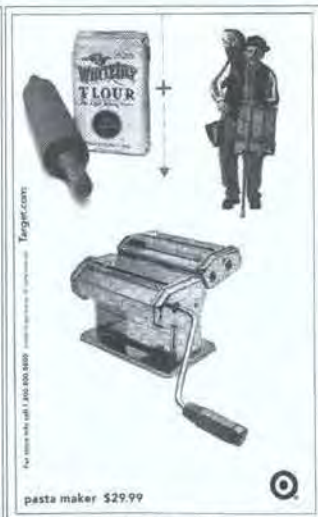
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Corrections

In last issue's **Forum** the author described Jacob as the son of Abraham. Jacob was the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham.

Catherine de Medici's birth and death dates in Part 2 of **Lady Power** were incorrect. They are 1519-1589. (By the way, we neglected to give author Bill Dal Cerro the byline for that feature.)

Tid Bits



Old Stereotypes die hard. The 2004 Target ad makes the same organ-grinder association with Italians as the 1940 political cartoon.

ITALO-GREEK WAR 1940:

We found this unflattering cartoon in the files of the *New York Herald Tribune* to back up the article in our last issue. It shows an Italian soldier with organ and monkey saying "No can do" to an impatient Mussolini. The organ-grinder stereotype of Italians has been a staple for decades in America, among other unkind cuts. Note that it is still being used in Target ads in the *New York Times* in November, 2004 to sell pasta makers.

TRAVELS WITH BILL

Our Associate Editor, Bill Dal Cerro, educates us even when he travels. In this photo, Bill stands beside Professor Mark Haller of Temple University in Philadelphia. Professor Haller has become our resource for facts about organized crime. Contrary to Hollywood and establishment propaganda, organized crime is an equal opportunity profession. Even the history of crime in America leaves Italian Americans a distinct minority among more enlightened ethnic crooks and murderers.



(left) Bill Dal Cerro with Prof. Mark Haller

While at historic Gettysburg, Bill photographed a memorial to Horace Mangrove Gianniny, a survivor of Confederate General Pickett's





Horace Mangrove Gianniny

famous charge. Gianniny was the grandson of Thomas Jefferson's gardener Antonio Giannini, and one of many Italian Americans who fought for the Confederacy.

MEDIA MADNESS

What's a "goombah?" For those of you who follow the degradation of the Italian heritage in this country or read one of our editorials in the last issue, goombah is a perversion of the Italian word *compare*. Our first generation immigrants used the terms *compare* and *comare* for godparents and close family friends. Unfortunately, the terms evolved into goombah and goomah and have

completely different meanings. One enterprising actor from *The Sopranos*, Steve Schirripa, went so far as to write two books on the subject. Were we to describe Schirripa's version of a goombah it would better translate as *cafone* or *cretino*. What is quite interesting is that Schirripa's mother was Jewish and the daughter of a Murder, Inc. father. Schirripa himself admits to stealing as a kid (only food, he says) which may account for his present girth. That a publisher would fund such tripe, and for Schirripa to claim expertise in Italian culture, is absurd. One critic suggested that Schirripa's next book could draw on his maternal side and be entitled *A Hymie's Guide to Life*. But could he find a publisher?

MOVERS & SHAKERS



The Quaker Oats Company has chosen 8-year old **Michael Mariella** of Chicagoland to adorn about 3 million Life cereal boxes. Michael says modeling is "hard work" but despite the volumes of cereal he had to consume, he says "Life is good." And so's the money, we suspect.

David M. Gratta is a member of our Core Council who hails from Mississippi. As the founder of the Italian Language & Culture Foundation in Hattiesburg, David has taken up the daunting task of bringing Italian language instruction to the Magnolia State. Thus far, he has managed to interest state officials as well as the Italian government in his dream of a K through 12 program in some of the state's public schools. Money, as ever, is the major stumbling block. With promises of matching funds from Mississippi's legislature and Governor Haley Barbour and Italy's Consul General Gianfranco Colognato, David hit his first speed bump in an appeal to Washington, DC. The Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program sees

Spanish rather than Italian as a priority for Mississippi. The fact that Italian Americans, with some 40,000 residents, slightly outnumber the Hispanic population seems not to impress the federal government. Such are the struggles that some of our members willingly tackle on behalf of our community. But David is not one to give up easily.

In 1998, the Italic Institute honored attorney **Daniel Petrocelli** for his brilliant victory against O.J. Simpson in a civil action. Well, Petrocelli just racked up another kill, this time against Winnie the Pooh. As lead attorney for Walt Disney Productions, Petrocelli spent thirteen years defending Disney from Winnie's creators for alleged royalty violations. Our celebrity lawyer finally got the case thrown out accusing the Pooh of stealing (not eating) evidence.



The Italic Institute's *Aurora Youth Program* got off to its 17th season. Because of severe financial constraints, only 8 of the planned 16 classes are being held around the Metro New York area. Two hundred 5th and 6th graders will be enjoying the 12-session language instruction, games, songs and history, and a foundation in Italic studies. The highly structured and multiple-site course is available to youngsters at no charge. Annual fundraising is carried out by *Aurora* Director Tony DeNonno through U.S. corporate and New York legislative sponsors. Unlike other scholarship programs *Aurora* gives the gift of heritage rather than cash.



World War II hero **John Basilone** finally got the recognition he deserves: a commemorative postage stamp to be issued in 2005. Dedicated members of the Italian American community pushed for the honor over the course of fifteen years. Peter Ippolito of Union, NJ (Basilone's home state) got the ball rolling by collecting some 200,000 signatures. Manny Alfano of UNICO National spearheaded that group's efforts. The Order, Sons of Italy soon lent its support with 60,000 signatures and the efforts of their Commission for Social Justice led by John Dabbene. These groups appealed to Senator Jon Corzine

and Representative Bill Pascrell, both of New Jersey, to give the campaign some political clout. Sergeant Basilone was the only enlisted



Marine in the Second World War to earn both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross. He refused stateside duty and was killed on Iwo Jima at the age of 29.



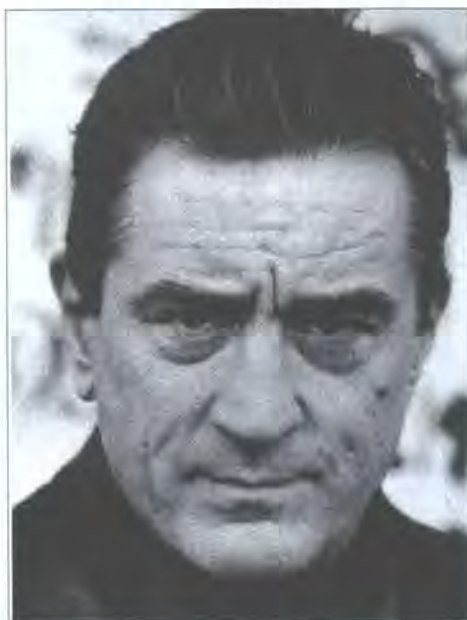
Is her Judaism only skin deep?

probably the world's best known practitioner of Judaism right now." Madonna's publicist Liz Rosenberg repeatedly advised *The Forward* that "it wouldn't be appropriate to include her on such a list" because Madonna "is not Jewish," reports the *New York Daily News*. Madonna has become a devotee of Kabbalah, telling promoters on her "Reinvention" tour that she would not play gigs on Friday nights to observe the Jewish sabbath. She has asked friends to call her Esther, her religious name, and has published a series of children's books based on Kabbalah stories.

[Ed. If it walks like a duck....]

Letters

DE NIRO & SHARK TALE



Mr. Mancini's letter to *Newsday* exposes the fraud that Mr. DeNiro is, and he should be ashamed of himself. Italian citizenship is not appropriate for him, and participation by the morons from *The Sopranos* only makes the idea worse. *Saluti*,
Ben Calderone,
Levittown, NY

(Ed. a feature of *Shark Tale* appears on page 29)

Just read Mr. Iaconis' "Shark Tale Bites - with Stereo-types" in

Newsday and would like to compliment him for his very fine writing! He is most articulate and, above all, he calls it the way he sees it and does not flinch from being politically incorrect. "One man of courage makes a majority," wisely stated Andrew Jackson. One can only imagine what many women and men of courage might do to change things.

Bob Miriani, St. Joseph, MO

I recently became a member of the Italic Institute. I've always been impressed by your organization and the positions that it has taken. In particular, I've always felt that your personal opinions on various issues have been in line with my own. You have been the most articulate spokesman on the topic of Italian American stereotyping in the media. I'm proud to be a part of the Italic Institute and look forward to contributing in a more substantial way.

Anthony Vecchione, Dumont, NJ

DOG'S WORLD



Bracco Italiano

Great issue! Bravo. I don't think I have ever seen the collection of native dogs in one place. The Maremmas have a cousin (not on the list) called Pastore Abruzzese. I had one in L'Aquila! Keep up the great work.

Stephen Acunto, Mount Vernon, NY

Thank you for the magazine. We were very happy to see our wonderful dog [breed] featured in it. He is a Bracco Italiano and there are a few in the U.S.

Princess Ann Marie Borghese,
Castello di Borghese (vinyard & winery),
Cutchogue, NY

PALESTINE

I recently came upon the 32nd issue (2003) of *The Italic Way* in my doctor's office. [Regarding the article] "Why Rome Created Palestine" by Louis Cornaro: is anyone really surprised (least of all Jews), as Mr. Cornaro states, that Palestinians, a truly Semitic people who have maintained homes - and made the desert bloom - for countless generations and then seen their families murdered and their villages razed (many *kibbutzim* were built on the ruins) "still feel they were cheated out of their land." This didn't happen a thousand years ago. It's still happening as homes are bulldozed for illegal settlements, despite the latest phony peace plan - otherwise known as Deadend.

A. Cammarata, Sunnyside, NY

TESTIMONIAL

Your magazine is fantastic: current, informative, educational and honest. Imagine finding pictures of Camille Paglia, Nancy Pelosi, Giovanni Agnelli, President Ronald Reagan, Antonin Scalia, Mother Cabrini, Monica Belucci, Catherine DeMedici, within 32 pages of a magazine that focuses on our legacy as Italians. *Avanti*, you are on track.

Anne Ripepi, Denver, CO

The Institute does great things. Especially appreciated is the article "Captain Corelli's War in Greece" by Alfred Cardone in *The Italic Way*, issue XXXII. Good to read about the Italian Armed Forces' endeavors without the typical British spin.

Alan Biondi, Cincinnati, OH



All'Italiana

REMARKABLE LIVES

Henry Saglio, 92, literally put a chicken in every American pot. In 1948, he managed to breed a chicken that grew faster and meatier than anything known. Chicken prices dropped and America changed its eating habits from 28 pounds per person per year to 82 pounds today. In later years, Mr. Saglio bred antibiotic-free chickens. Said chickenman Frank Perdue, "[Saglio] is the father of the poultry industry." Italic people should also crow about the famous egg-laying Leghorn chicken that was developed in Livorno, Italy.

Edmund DiGiulio, 76, motion picture inventor whose innovations won him engineering awards and enhanced the visual effects of cinema. His three-camera operating system debuted in *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off* (1966). He developed Steadicam for handheld camera work, the first practical reflex viewing system and ultra-high-speed lenses first used in Stanley Kubrick films.



James Cantalupo

McDonald's Corporation CEO **James Cantalupo**, 60, was credited with doubling McDonald's overseas market from 47 restaurants to 118, making it the biggest fast-food operation in the world. After retiring for a much needed rest from constant international travel, Mr. Cantalupo was called back to reinvigorate the domestic operation. He died suddenly at a convention of franchise owners.

Pioneer for the disabled **Henry Viscardi**, 91, knew the physical and psychological pain of disability firsthand. Born with short, twisted legs and standing only 4 feet tall, he endured

the merciless taunts of his schoolmates. It was only at age 27 that a doctor was able to find a craftsman who fitted him with full-sized prosthetics. From that time on, Viscardi became an advocate for the handicapped. He established a school for rehabilitation and even a factory staffed by the handicapped. He advised every president since Franklin Roosevelt.

Fred Olivi, 82, co-pilot of the warplane that dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, died from a stroke. He retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1971. His book, *Decision at Nagasaki*, defended the use of atomic weapons to defeat Japan, although at the time he was unaware of the frightful power of the bombs.

Music lost a couple of shining lights. Songwriter **Teddy Randazzo**, 68, co-authored over 600 songs for Frank Sinatra, Little Anthony, The Temptations, Linda Ronstadt, and others. Some hits were *Goin' Out of My Head*, *Hurt So Bad*, *It's Gonna Take a Miracle*, and *Pretty Blue Eyes*. **Felice (Matilda Scaduto) Bryant**, 77, together with her husband wrote some 800 songs of the 1950's, among them *Wake Up Little Suzy*, *Bye Bye Love*, *Take a Message to Mary*, and *Bird Dog*.

Medicine lost a number of pioneers. **Dr. Charles Accettola**, 90, was



Henry Viscardi



Dr. Thomas Mancuso

the first to set up a medical camp at Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion. **Dr. Thomas Mancuso**, 92, fought most of his professional life for government recognition of low-grade radiation dangers. His research into the long-term effects of radiation have made workplaces safer and established a procedure for long-term follow-up of workers and accident victims. **Dr. Nicholas DeVito**, 82, was an Army surgeon after WW II who treated imprisoned Nazis Albert Speer and Rudolph Hess. While on a cruise, he was asked to treat Walt Disney. **Dr. Paul Calabresi**, 73, was a leader in developing and testing cancer drugs. Rather than looking for drugs to treat a specific cancer, Calabresi explored which cancers responded to a specific drug. He was an early advocate of combination chemotherapy. His methods have been applied to treatments for Hodgkin's lymphoma, breast and prostate cancers. **Dr. Paul LoGerfo**, 64, a thyroid cancer expert, developed the thyroglobulin assay for detecting recurring cancer. He also pioneered the use of local anesthesia in thyroid operations. **Dr. Lou Lasagna**, 80, rewrote the Hippocratic Oath and lobbied the FDA to require clinical testing of drugs prior to public sale and revolutionized these tests with his findings on the "placebo effect." His version of the Oath included the phrase, "Above all, I will not play at God." He became the dean of the Sackler School at Tufts University in 1984. **Dr. Vincent Freda**, 75, was a pioneer in fetal medicine and surgery. He was one of the first doctors in America to perform amniocentesis and co-developed the Rhogam vaccine for Rh-negative mothers. As a young obstetrician he was scorned by colleagues for his theories on prenatal care. Those theories have since been proved.

Big Band singer **Don Cornell**, 84, had a career that spanned 40 years and over 50 million records sold. Born Luigi Francesco Varlaro, he made famous many songs of the 1950's including *It Isn't Fair, I'm Yours*, *I'll Walk Alone*, and *Hold My Hand*.

Fashion photographer **Francesco Scavullo**, 82, was the genius behind the famous *Cosmopolitan* magazine covers. He credited his creativity to manic highs he suffered as a manic-depressive. He also did portraits of the rich and famous: Elizabeth Taylor and Grace Kelly to name a few. His cover girl photos often skyrocketed models to fame as happened with Brooke Shields, Farrah Fawcett and Rene Russo. His father, a restaurateur, wanted his son to go into hotel and restaurant management. Fortunately for the world, young Francesco was chased out of a kitchen at knife point by an angry chef. Photography became a safer alternative.

Government service lost a few good men. **Henry Giordano**, 89, did not become the chief of what is now the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) under President Kennedy for nothing. He



Dr. Louis Lasagna



risked his own life in many undercover stings and established U.S. offices in at least eight foreign cities. Despite his tough exterior he advocated leniency for addicts and more drug treatment.

Anthony Scariano, 86, a leading Illinois political reformer of the 20th century. Early poverty and a passion for honest government guided his twenty years of public service, first as a state legislator then later as a judge. A fierce opponent of organized crime, he cleaned up the scandal-ridden racing industry. As a proud liberal, he championed public education.

Annibale Luigi Paragallo, 90, used his pseudonym Luis Marden during his adventurous career at *National Geographic Magazine*. In his varying roles as photographer, writer and editor from 1934 into the 1990's, Marden embodied the spirit of exploration. A skilled diver, sailor and pilot, Mardsen found the remains of the HMS Bounty, retraced the route of Columbus to a new landing site 65 miles southwest of San Salvador, and discovered new plant and sea life. He pioneered the use of underwater and 35mm color photography.

R. Charles Martini, 84, designed the underground military airport in the Arabian Desert used in both Iraq wars. He did extensive architectural work throughout the Middle East and in China. His home base was Chicago, where his design talent was used from hotels to public housing.

Former president of Chrysler Corporation **Eugene Cafiero**, 77, worked his way to the top from his start as a plant manager. A national recession in the mid-1970's hit Chrysler hard, leading to the resignation of Cafiero's predecessor. Tapped for the position, Cafiero and new chairman Joseph Riccardo revamped the business plan to emphasize auto development. Chrysler turned a profit in 1976 and 1977. Unfortunately, in 1978 Congress imposed tougher fuel standards and Chrysler losses returned. It was then that the Chrysler board brought in the now legendary Lee Iacocca.

Joseph Sisco (right), 85, was the statesman who forged U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East during the 1960's and later became president of American University. As the State Department's chief mediator after the Six Day War, Sisco relentlessly pursued an evenhanded policy in the Middle East. He considered an unbiased U.S. policy to be crucial in keeping the Arab world stable and Israel secure.



THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

In the land that gave birth to the Slow Food movement comes the first spark of resistance to non-sexual reproduction. Earlier this year the Italian Parliament exercised its center-right ideology by banning a host of new age reproduction techniques. On the *lista proibita* are embryo freezing, egg donation, artificial insemination using donated sperm, surrogate motherhood, fertility treatment for women past childbearing age, and assisted reproduction for single women or homosexual couples. As often is the case, the Italian government saw the need to call a time-out on social experimentation. Some Italian medical mavericks

have taken their society to its moral limits. One doctor went so far as to help a 63-year old woman get pregnant and deliver a child. Those who oppose the new prohibitions claim that it will eventually lead to the restoration of anti-abortion laws. They further cite Italy's declining birthrate and need for foreign immigrants as justification for liberal reproduction laws. Italians are fearful of radical change. As Emperor Augustus used to say, "*Festina lente*" (Make haste slowly.)

NATION-BUILDING

Slowly, Italians are trying to undo the democratic paralysis of their First Republic. Designed to avoid another dictatorship after the Second World War, Italy's constitution severely diluted the powers of its prime minister and allowed a proliferation of minor parties. With the coming of Silvio Berlusconi and his Forza Italia coalition in 2001, bold strides are being made. One remarkable feat is that Berlusconi has remained prime minister for more than three years – a first, despite internal coalition struggles, the unpopular Iraq War, and economic downturns. (His goal is a full five-year term that would occur in mid-2006.) A second sign of change is new legislation that would add significant powers to the prime minister, such as the right to dissolve Parliament and call new elections. Berlusconi has the votes to make the change but Italian law requires several more uneasy steps before amending the constitution. To get this far, Berlusconi had to accede to demands from northern regions to decentralize government power. If accomplished, regional governments would have control over health, education and local policing, much like our American system.



Gianfranco Fini, Italy's Foreign Minister and government wiz.

Since January 2005, Italian boys need not fear the military draft any longer. Parliament has officially abolished universal conscription. However, for those young men and women who expect to become police officers, Carabinieri, customs officers or firemen, the barracks awaits.

MU-SHU alla ROMANA

Believe it or not, a Chinatown is growing on one of Rome's seven hills. A Chinese-Italian population has set off alarm bells in some Roman neighborhoods. There are about 250 Chinese restaurants in the Eternal City and on Esquiline Hill, where the Caesars romped, many of the signs are now in Chinese. What began some years ago as an influx of cheap labor for the Italian fashion houses has become a resident ethnic minority of between 60,000 to 100,000 souls. As the Chinese grow in numbers and wealth, accusations of discrimination and "invasion" are flung around. Chinese entrepreneurs cannot fathom Italian neighborhood traditions and Italians are awe-struck by the huge cash resources the Chinese have to buy up real estate and businesses. Even ancient Rome, which was multi-ethnic at its height, had not seen the likes of such a large East Asian presence.



Editorial

A PLEA FOR STANDARDS

The battle against the DreamWorks animation *Shark Tale* is still being fought (see p.29). But one lesson has come out of it. We have now learned that the Italic communities on both sides of the Atlantic have no standard of pride. What we in America consider defamation, the Italians consider art. When the leaders of the Italian American community call for an advance, most of our politicians and *prominenti* hear retreat. It is not merely a question of unity as it is a lack of common standards.

The only standards we all agree on are those relating to our stomachs and taste buds. There are few who would accept Dominos Pizza and Chef Boyardee hijacking our cuisine. Italians have even organized the Pizza Police and the Slow Food Movement to defend our gastro-intestinal systems. Give us *al dente* or give us death! We even put aside our pathetic debate over sauce vs gravy to proclaim our solidarity for buffalo *mozzarella* and *prosciutto di Parma*.

Yet, when it comes to our non-edible patrimony we allow any *paesano* to spin, mutilate and bend it to his own selfish needs. Politicians who ignore the community's plight are excused as uninformed. Community leaders who work at cross-purposes to us are judged only by their status and power not their actions. Actors and directors who feed off negative stereotypes are forgiven because "they gotta eat." Prominent Italian Americans who refuse to aid their own community are forgiven because "we don't burn bridges."

Maybe it is time to apply the same rigid standards to our image as we set for our food. Perhaps it is time to judge movers and shakers by our awesome heritage rather than their selfish egos. *Buon Appetito!*

-JLM

AND THE CHILDREN SHALL LEAD US

When did you learn to be a Catholic or a Jew, a Muslim or a Protestant? Was it when you were 18 and went off to work or college? Was it by living with observant parents? Or, was it by attending religious instruction from 7 years old to adolescence? Learning Catholicism is different than observing Catholicism. Merely aping traditions is not the correct way to pass on a system of beliefs.

Very few established religions entrust the intellectual transfer of beliefs solely to the home or to maturity. Likewise, well-rooted ethnic groups do not wait until their kids are 18 years old to finally recognize them with a scholarship. The fact is, well-rooted ethnic groups give the gift of heritage, not cash. They deem it more appropriate to directly impart the details of their heritage rather than to leave it to parents, public schools, or the media.

Yet, this is precisely what Italian Americans have not done for generations. We entrust our heritage to the family dinner table or to a student going off to study Accounting.

For the past 17 years, the Italic Institute has acculturated thousands of pre-teen children through its Aurora Education Program, a standardized after-school system held on Saturday mornings. Aurora works because it begins the process of developing our group identity at an early age. It gives us—our children—self esteem commensurate with our ethnic identity. Beside that, Aurora creates demand for Italian language in public schools and for Italian teachers.

For all the raves it gets from students, teachers and parents, Aurora has

yet to capture the imagination of the Italian American organizations. With the proper funding, Aurora can be an Italian American version of Hebrew or Greek school. It can be the answer to many of our problems: a well-aculturated Italian American.

-RLS

IT'S RAINING HIT MEN

Recently, Dr. Gary Potter of Eastern Kentucky University, a recognized expert in organized crime, chided the news organizations for failing to incorporate many new findings on ethnic crime in America. In short, notes Potter, the American media continue to promote Italian criminals as *numero uno*. Here are a few examples:

In both New York and Chicago, the recent discovery of "mob burial grounds" was treated by reporters as if gold were being re-discovered in California...or, at the very least, as if they'd stumbled upon Al Capone's vault. (Wait, they already did that one). Two-bit Italian crooks involved in corrupt trucking scandals were "alleged" to be "associates of organized crime"—in one case, dating all the way back to one man's long-dead grandfather. A respected Chicago journalist devoted an entire column to the fact that he lives in a house once owned by Al Capone's cousin. And, in perhaps the most bizarre example of all, an Associated Press story on a pharmaceutical drug ring singled out its ringleader, Louis Gallichio of Newark, NJ, as being an "organized crime associate"—even though the actual drug ring was a model of today's multi-ethnic America comprised of street-gang members, corrupt doctors and college students. Incidentally, the cop who busted the drug ring was named Robert Buccino, a fact buried at the end of the story.

What all of this does, of course, is whet the public's appetite for yet another season of Tony and the Gang on HBO. And for those silly, sensitive souls who dare to complain about the unfairness of "objective" journalism feeding into the "subjective" bias of Hollywood, why, they can just change the channel. Isn't that what Edward R. Morrow would have done?

-WDC

APPRECIATING OUR CLASSICAL AGE

In its zeal to "demystify the grandeur of Rome," as HBO's screenwriter Bruno Heller stated in a recent New York Times Interview, Hollywood continues to perpetuate the hoariest of historical sins: judging an ancient society and its people by modern-day standards. In truth, Rome's hegemony was far more benign than Tinseltown would have us believe.

Like today's Middle East, antiquity was a tough neighborhood. The Romans had to contend with a host of fierce rivals vying for resources, dominion and influence. Had Carthage prevailed over Rome in the Punic Wars, the Western World as we know it might never have come into existence. No rule of law; no governmental system of checks and balances; no *habeas corpus*; and no *Pax Romana*.

Conversely, had the Romans won the Battle of Teutoburg Forest and succeeded in Italianizing all of Germany, Hitler's Nazism, and the Second World war could well have been averted. When Rome's legions finally abandoned the British Isles, it took the natives approximately 1,400 years to attain the same level of literacy they had enjoyed under their ancient Italian overlords.

Do 16 million Italian Americans realize the greatness they were born into?

-RAI



Forum of the People



(Ed. The Italian American criminal has become the preferred target of the media and law enforcement. Thanks to the hundreds of films and TV shows over the decades about the "mob" and the "mafia," many a district attorney, FBI agent and investigative reporter has built his career on pursuing the Tony Sopranos of America. Granted, justice must be served but a question has been raised concerning priorities. For instance, was the FBI more obsessed with the mob than Al Qaeda in 2001? When President Bush likens the Axis of Evil to the Mafia is he also caught up in Hollywood's lopsided view of crime in America?)

Americans can't seem to get enough of Italian gangsters, despite the other mainstream and ethnic criminals plaguing the land. Observed Professor James B. Jacobs, longtime observer of organized crime, during the recent trial for John Gotti's "dopey" brother Peter, "My God, how many more are left?" Perhaps the answer is "what does it matter?" The Five Families on the East Coast and The Outfit in the Midwest will easily outlast Al Qaeda, if only in our hearts. We offer this 2002 piece because nothing much has changed.)



What Federal Agents Call Intelligence

By Jimmy Breslin

After the first day, his neck hurt. He had spent most of the morning searching the staircase and platform of the El (elevated train) stop at Boyd Avenue and 88th Street in Ozone Park, which is in Queens. He wanted a space that would give him a clear view, for eye and camera, of the sidewalk outside the clubhouse where Peter Gotti and the rest of the Gambino gang often congregated.

He was a federal agent assigned to the Gambino Family. His role, starting on this steaming day last August, was to watch Peter Gotti and get footage of all those he talked to. It was urgent because the nation had to be protected from these gangsters.

So here was the agent last August [just before 9/11], crouched on the staircase of the Boyd Avenue El stop, looking out through the bars. He was on the steps leading to the platform for the Rockaway trains and the last stop, at Lefferts Boulevard.

Right away it was hard on the neck. He had his head tilted to the right so he could look down at where Peter Gotti stood in all his magnificence. Peter was in a blue warm-up suit and white sneakers. The agent had been told to expect surprises on the staircase. Once, the guys met on the corner downstairs to fly to Miami for a vacation and Skinny Dom gave them a wave and started up the stairs with his suitcase. "Where are you going?" they yelled at him.

"I don't like flying. I'm taking the subway train to Miami. I'll see you down there."

And now here came foot-sounds up the El stairs. Seeing agent Duffy crouched at the bars, the guy stopped.

"It's all right," Duffy said, straightening.

"I think you're trying to see if some woman comes up the stairs alone," the guy said. "I'm getting a cop."

He turned and started back down the stairs. The agent took out his federal badge and ran after the guy, who now was jumping down the stairs, running for his life.

He turned off the stairs to run into the tollbooth lobby when he threw a glance up and saw the badge flashing.

The agent explained his job and the guy said he was a real citizen and would never, on his mother's grave, give up the agent.

Of course he did. This is how everybody on Liberty Avenue knew that there was a federal agent sitting up on the El like a bird with no call. They could see his face and his camera lens. They named him McGonigle. "I'm bringing my girlfriend down tomorrow so McGonigle can take her picture," one of the guys said. The guy who had the encounter with the agent saw the name of Duffy. They still called him McGonigle. "Watch out for McGonigle," they called to people going up the stairs. Nobody bothered the agent after that.

The El platform has high metal fences that block out the street views. The agent used a small rectangular opening that hurt his neck and caused the eyes to strain, but here, right in his view, was the top of Peter Gotti's head.

It was very important to watch Peter Gotti. He had retired as a Department of Sanitation worker. His brother, John Gotti, was the head of the whole Mafia. They called him the Teflon Don. They lifted John Gotti one night and he has not been out of jail since, nor will he be ever. His illness will get him before the sentence does.

Another brother, Gene Gotti, was sent to federal prison forever on drug charges.

John Gotti's son, John, Jr., was named the head of the Mafia in his father's absence. Shortly thereafter, he was put into federal prison. John Gotti's son-in-law, Carmine Agnello, who ran a junkyard, was given six years.

Still, the nation had to be saved from the Mafia at any cost of men and resources. An agent in any federal bureau, FBI, Internal Revenue, Customs, Secret Service – every federal agency with a badge – had a huge career in front of him if he captured a Mafia name. All through last August and into the start of the fall McGonigle's camera showed through the bars of the El step, taking the same footage of Peter Gotti.

"The nation had to be saved from the Mafia."

continued on page 14



INVEST IN OUR YOUTH!



Aurora

Youth Programs

While financial scholarships to college-bound students have their place, how are we passing on our complex heritage to future accountants and doctors?

Is it any wonder why Greek American children attend Greek School, why Jewish kids are required to learn Hebrew, or why Chinese American parents send their youngsters to Mandarin/calligraphy schools? These enlightened people know that heritage is too important to be left to the melting pot.

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Aurora should be the focal point of our national education agenda.

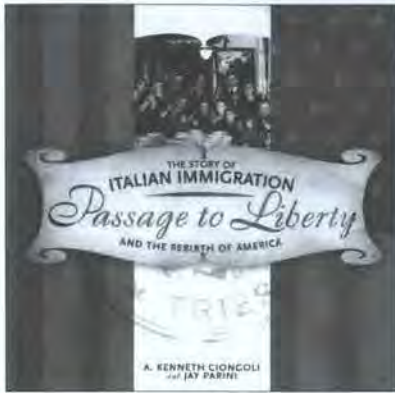
I know it's mine.



Steven Aiello
Aurora Contributor



PASSAGE TO LIBERTY



by
A. Kenneth Ciongoli and
Jay Parini

(Regan Books, 32 pages,
\$29.95)

Reviewed by Rosario
Iaconis

Virgil once wrote that “A home without books is like a body without a soul.” But there is one bestseller that should be in every Italian-

American home: *Passage to Liberty: The Story of Italian Immigration and The Rebirth of America*. Penned with passion, profundity and precision by A. Kenneth Ciongoli and Jay Parini, this is the definitive introduction to a people’s epic journeys of joy and travail in the New World.

Unlike so many texts about the migration of Italo-Americans, *Passage to Liberty* presents these treks as a national saga rather than an “off-the-boat” unloading of bedraggled masses, criminal guttersnipes and fetid *scugnizzi* (street urchins). Gone is the blackboard sophistry that reduced Italian immigrants to mere chattel herded into cities by an exploitative *padrone* system.. Gone, too, are the faintly bigoted discussions of genetic inferiority among Southern Europeans (read Italians).

Instead of vilification, the authors opt for edification. That is, they have replaced the omniscient Archie-Bunker-like narrator with two erudite and scholarly historians. In fact, this book backs up every historical assertion with exquisitely reproduced removable documents that provide both context and substance, ideal for young readers. No brag, just fact. Two of the most telling enclosures are Thomas Jefferson’s lengthy letter to Filippo Mazzei (1796) and the World War II Alien Registration Card that profiled Italian Americans as “enemy aliens.”

Ciongoli and Parini pull no punches, though, in detailing America’s reaction to the children of Columbus. It is not always a pretty picture.

Though Italian seafarers had discovered, explored and pioneered the New World in the late 15th century, their less prosperous brethren who journeyed to America at the end of the 19th century were viciously reviled. Though George Washington was hailed as the American Cincinnatus, the scions of Rome became *personae non gratae* as recently as 1924. Though Giuseppe Garibaldi nearly accepted Abraham Lincoln’s offer to command a sizeable contingent of the Union Army during the Civil war, Italian Americans were branded disloyal and interned for a time in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. Though Filippo Mazzei pioneered the notion that “all men are created equal” in an article in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1774, know-nothing mobs in New Orleans and elsewhere considered Italians less than equal and slaughtered them with abandon throughout the 1890s.

The authors make deft, if painful, use of the oral tradition of the street-level anti-Italian bigots:

“Let’s get those dirty dogs.” “Those black guinea bastards are gonna get what they deserve.”

Crude vigilante-style justice was often meted out to Italians. Then there were the antagonisms with other ethnicities.

Though they had civilized Ireland via St. Patrick (the son of a proud

Roman family in Britain) and founded Roman Catholicism, the offspring of Italy found themselves at the not-so-delicate mercy of the harsh Irish clergy who controlled the American Church well into the 20th century. The authors cite numerous examples of such abuse, including corporal punishment and outright larceny. Pulitzer prize winner Frank McCourt, an ardent Italophile, has written poignantly of this Celtic cruelty. In addition to straining tensions between the two communities, it fueled the anti-clericalism that already existed among more than a few Italian immigrants.

Though it may ruffle some feathers in politically correct circles, Ciongoli and Parini allude to a more visceral reason for such animosity: cultural envy.

Muslims, Mexicans, Arabs and Asians, however talented and industrious, were not present at the creation of the American republic. In fact, Italian commanders, explorers, scientists, jurists and political thinkers formed the very heart and soul of this “shining city on a hill.” Monticello, the Senate, the system of checks and balances, Capitalism and the writ of *habeas corpus* are all Italian constructs.

Ciongoli and Parini are quite adamant in stating that the United States is nothing less than the Roman Republic reborn. Indeed, the founding Fathers were card-carrying Italophiles. And two of the most ardent are immortalized on Mt. Rushmore: George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

That the ancestors of a swarthy bunch of organ grinders and spaghetti vendors had actually discovered, explored and helped to create the United States and Western civilization frustrated and angered the upper-crust Brahmin, as well as the shanty Irish. Thomas Cahill has alluded to this inferiority complex in *How The Irish Saved Civilization*. Indeed, Cahill echoes Ciongoli and Parini when it comes to the notion of Italian exceptionalism.

Thankfully, the Italians and the Irish long ago made their peace with one another, beautifully blending their respective talents in marital, commercial and political unions that have enriched America.

Yet *Passage to Liberty*’s most important contribution to the canon of *italianita*’ is the continuity it restores to the Great Italian Migration. Italians of every stripe, at heart, are explorers. From Columbus, Caboto and da Verrazano to Tonti, Chino and Garibaldi to Marconi, Giannini and Fermi, Italian Americans recreated the ancient unity that has been their birthright since the days of Caesar Augustus. And this is mirrored in the work ethic, creativity and tenacity of everyday Italo-Americans.

Ciongoli and Parini expand on A. Bartlett Giamatti’s belief that the quotidian masses huddled in ships bound for Ellis Island were of the most noble Italic stock—not as delusional Aryan-like *ubermenschen*, but as the descendants of one of history’s seminal civilizations. This genius, this “seed of Aeneas,” they carried with them on a journey to the undiscovered country their ancestors opened wide.

Indeed, for all their differences, both northern and southern Italian immigrants graced America with the genius of *Roma Caput Mundi* (Capital of the World). The reunification of Italy in 1870 actually made it possible for Caesar’s heirs to ennoble yet another wild frontier. In many ways, America became the outpost of the proud ancestral homeland.

Quoting one of the fathers of Italy’s rebirth, Camillo Cavour, the authors underscore *Passage to Liberty*’s underlying inspirational message: “We are one people.”

* * *

*With exquisitely reproduced
removable documents that
[are] ideal for young readers*



TEN EVENTS THAT SHAPED THE WORLD

by John Mancini

The world as we know it is clearly dominated by Western thought and values. Despite the reactionary movements that periodically rise to resist the Western hegemony, every society on earth has been touched by the secular values, for good and bad, emanating from the West.

Italy's place in Western Civilization is first rank. In fact, Western Civilization could not have evolved nor survived without the fine Italian hand. Whether by force or failure, the Italic people have been prime players in the events that molded civilization and shaped the world.

Our staff has pooled its research skills to present the main events that went into shaping the world. We certainly do not claim that this is the best of all possible worlds. It is what it is. The Italic people of today may be proud or ashamed of the deeds of their ancestors. But they can all acknowledge the crucial role their forebears played in world history.

It should be noted that we have not included inventions or technologies. However, "events" may encompass movements that brought the Italic people in collision or collaboration with other cultures.

1. THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY



There would be no Italy without Rome and no Roman Empire without Italy. Historians may use the terms Rome and Romans when describing the great Empire, but it would be tantamount to describing the British Empire as English. Clearly, Rome was the engine that pushed the free inhabitants of the Italian peninsula to world dominion. Over the course of 700 years, from the founding of Rome in 753 BC to the granting of equal citizenship to all free men of Italy in 88 BC, the city of Rome used and abused its Italic cousins as well as its Etruscan and diverse neighbors to create the first nation-

state in Europe. (Greece was only united under Alexander for a very short time, otherwise it was primarily a collection of city-states.)

Possessing a country rather than a city gave Rome the population and economic resources to fulfill its grandest dreams. Rome's army and navy were manned from the male pool of some six million free inhabitants of Italy. Likewise, Roman knights, senators and even emperors came from this same pool. Ultimately, these six million came to rule 80 million people on three continents. But manning the forces of conquest wasn't the only part "Italians" played. To pacify and unify the diverse lands within the Roman domain Italic colonists created a great

network of Latin-speaking settlements in foreign lands. These colonists were retired legionaries, small-time farmers, merchants and government bureaucrats. They established cities such as Vienna, Budapest, London, and Beirut. In time, they intermarried with the locals to create a new hybrid populace with Italic blood and culture. Some of Rome's greatest emperors were products of this Mediterranean network.

Rome's success: Roman brains, Italian muscle

Rome's unification of Italy was itself an experiment that became the model for the Empire. The diversity of the Italian peninsula had many of the challenges that Rome would later face in northern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Beside the Italic peoples, the peninsula and

Sicily were home to Greeks, Celts, Ligurians, and Etruscans. The Roman Republic learned that not only discipline but tolerance, rule of law, expansion of citizenship and public works were the building blocks of a unified society. It was in the crucible of Italy that Rome forged the strategy that would outpace all other conquerors and make Italy the center of the civilized world for the ages. The great Italic poet Virgil put Rome's success this way: "*Such shall be the power of Roman stock tied to the valor of Italy.*" In other words, Roman brains, Italian muscle.

Historian Donald Dudley sums it up this way: "*To create Italy was the first great achievement of Rome; to make a political and cultural unity of the whole Mediterranean world was to repeat this task on a larger scale.*" Roman Italy, by the time of Augustus, ruled 3.3 million square miles of empire, larger than the mainland United States.

2. DEFEAT OF THE SEMITES IN AFRICA AND SPAIN



Semitic culture was neither secular nor humanist.

Today, the term Semite is generally identified with Jews. However, Arabs are also Semites, as were the ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians. These latter two peoples were seafaring merchants and



colonizers. Their influence was widely felt along the shores of the Mediterranean as far as Spain and Sardinia. Carthage was an imperial power long before Rome and from its home base in what is now Tunisia, Carthaginians controlled the western Mediterranean and colonized western Sicily. The basis of their civilization was commerce. In war, they employed mercenaries. In religion, we are told, they practiced child sacrifice, sometimes as many as 300 children with their parents watching. (Even the Christian belief that God sent his son Jesus to be sacrificed for the sins of mankind or the Hebrew Abraham prepared to cut his son Isaac's throat echoes the Semitic tradition of child sacrifice.) In society, Semitic women had few rights. While it is true that the victors write history, both Greek and Roman historians considered Carthage technically advanced but very flawed. Just as we Americans accept our historians as more reliable than others, we may accept the Greco-Roman judgment of Carthage based on our own experience with later Semitic cultures. Intolerance, suppression of females and religious fanaticism seem to be the end product of isolated Semitic cultures. If that sounds harsh, just recall all the Hollywood sword and sandal movies that have denounced Roman civilization with nary a "but." One needs only to see what came out of Roman Europe and what came out of the Semitic Levant to assess the merits of each.

In a series of three Punic (aka Carthaginian) wars before the birth of Christ, Roman Italy ended the spread of Semitic civilization and took possession of Sardinia, Spain, Tunisia and Sicily. The victory enabled Italic colonists to settle in Spain and North Africa, tying those lands to the Italian homeland for centuries.

3. DEFEAT OF THE CELTS— IN GAUL, SPAIN & BRITAIN



The last Celtic leader in Gaul submits to Roman authority

and civilizations. In fact, the Celts invaded Italy and sacked Rome three hundred years before Caesar conquered Gaul. And German tribes invaded Gaul and Italy more than once before Caesar was even born. We all know that it was the Germanic hordes that finally did in the Roman Empire after six centuries of conflict and warfare. The Celts and Germans were not innocent victims of aggression. Julius Caesar's ten-year campaign in Gaul, however imperialistic and politically motivated, was also intended to protect Italy's borders. At the

time, Marcus Tullius Cicero proclaimed "It is not the ramparts of the Alps, nor the foaming and flooding Rhine, but the arms and generalship of Caesar which I account our true shield and barrier against invasion of the Gauls and the barbarous tribes of Germany."

Europe and then the world came to know Greece through an Italian prism

The Roman conquest of Gaul established Italian civilization in France at the expense of a Druid-based culture that eventually found itself literally at the fringes of Europe in Ireland, Scotland and Basque Spain. Gaul became a bulwark against German aggression for four hundred years, enough time to allow Greco-Roman culture to prosper and to give birth to a French nation. This was no small accomplishment in world history.

The German historian Theodore Mommsen said it best, "...that western Europe is Romanic and Germanic Europe is classic...all this is the work of Caesar...[and] has outlasted those thousands of years which have changed religions and states."

4. RETREAT FROM THE ELBE TO THE RHINE

In the realm of "what might have been," there are two tantalizing questions: If the Romans had succeeded in conquering Germany at the time of Christ would the Western Roman Empire have survived another 500 or 1,000 years? If German culture were Italianized, as was that of the Gauls, would the world have been spared two world wars and the Holocaust?

At the time of Caesar Augustus, nephew of Julius Caesar, Roman ships traversed the North Sea and traded down the Elbe River into eastern Germany. Italic influence was furthered by Augustus' stepson, Tiberius, who subdued all the tribes between the Rhine and the Elbe in two military campaigns. However, in 9 A.D. the overconfident Romans allowed themselves to be lured into a trap costing the empire the annihilation of three complete legions. The shocked Emperor Augustus ordered a strategic withdrawal back to the Rhine. The better part of Germany was allowed to continue in barbarism for 400 years until it eventually swept over Europe and inundated Italy initiating the so-called Dark Ages. Had Italian civilization and intermarriage taken root in central Germany as it had west of the Rhine during those 400 years, the history of the 20th Century may have evolved very differently. It is interesting to note that the first universities in Germany were founded on the "Roman" side of the Rhine: Cologne (1388) and Heidelberg (1386).



The University of Heidelberg. Could Germany's history have been more peaceful?

5. GREEK "CONQUEST" OF ROME

"It was no little brook that flowed from Greece into our city, but a mighty river of culture and learning," said Marcus Tullius Cicero just before the birth of Christ. Not all Romans appreciated the gifts of the Greeks in art, literature, philosophy, and science. But there was enough of a thirst within the Italic soul, first whetted by the ancient presence of Greek colonies in southern Italy and Sicily, to demand the finer things

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You could see the pain this was causing his neck. He walked with his head flopping onto his right shoulder.

Suddenly, on Sept. 11, there was no way to reach his office. He went back upstairs to spy on Peter Gotti. What if he had something to do with attacking the trade center?

The company policy was announced: McGonigle's camera kept showing from the El station. And through the fall, through Christmas and the New Year, and all down the months to spring, he sat up there in the El watching Peter Gotti whenever Gotti was there. At other times he waited for Peter Gotti. But a nation depended on its lawmen to get the Gottis.

On Tuesday, apparently, he read the newspaper right away, read the

headline saying that Peter Gotti and another brother, the anonymous Richard, and Richard's son had been picked up. Peter Gotti was being held without bail. No longer could you take pictures of the top of his head.

Yesterday on Liberty Avenue, they looked up and saw that McGonigle and his camera were gone.

"They should be proud of themselves," one of the guys said. "They chased all of the Gottis. So they didn't watch the World Trade Center that got a lot of people killed."

Reprinted from Newsday, June 6, 2002

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GOT MONEY?

Wealthy Italian Americans should consider this:

The **Irish** in America built an entire Church and school system here to keep their culture alive. They rose from poverty to govern American cities and to achieve the highest offices in the land. They still cling to their unity in defense of their culture and ancestral land. Their given names and culture are now considered all-American.

African Americans scaled the heights from slavery to full participation in American society. Their unified struggle has given them a strong voice in government and a media image to be envied. Their unity and purpose is demonstrated in the founding of their own university system. They have developed whole industries in music and entertainment. Their scholars are sought by mainstream universities. Their activists pioneered peaceful protest in America. They number among the highest officials in government.

Judean Americans have accentuated a bond of unity that has brought them the greatest wealth and power in America. They have established their own schools and political action groups. Their representation in American government far exceeds their numbers, thanks to a culture that motivates ambition and wealth. They speak as one voice for Israel and have made it the focus of American foreign policy and aid.

Hispanics, by sheer numbers, have assumed major control of television and print media. They have made Spanish a de facto official language in America. Their various communities guide American foreign policy. By virtue of their numbers, they have the rapt attention of our corporate and political leaders. They are poised to reach the highest sectors of American government.

Chinese Americans have demanded respect from society and government after years of mistreatment. Their once impoverished community set demanding intellectual and economic goals for their youth. Despite stereotypes and racism, they focused their efforts on education and dignity. Their wealthy like Charles Wang of Computer Associates created a \$30 million Asia Cultural Center at a major New York university.

The list goes on. In some cases, like **German Americans**, the disgrace of Germany in two world wars interrupted their political hegemony in America but it has not prevented their cultural and economic dominance of mainstream society. There is no "ethnicity" in the German surname.

Now behold the **Italian Americans**. They are heirs to the four greatest accomplishments of Western Civilization: the Roman Empire, Christianity, the Renaissance, and the Opening of the New World. Despite 500 years in America they are still underrepresented in national politics and still considered "ethnic" rather than "mainstream."

If you are wealthy and would like to change this picture, contact the Italic Institute now to obtain a copy of *The Vision of Heritage*, our plan for a totally new approach to being an Italian American.

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Fax: 516.488.4889 **Email:** ItalicOne@aol.com

Write: Italic Institute of America, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001





Children at school. Rome preserved and protected the Greek legacy

Europe and then the world came to know Greece through an Italian prism, via Galileo and Michelangelo, and through Petrarch and Da Vinci.

But could Hellenic civilization have survived without the protection and absorption of Roman Italy? Ancient Greece had passed through its golden age when Rome came on the world stage. The enemies of free thought and secularism abounded. Alexander the Great's short-lived empire had unified the Greeks for only a few decades. When Rome was unifying Italy and struggling against Semitic Carthage, Greece was merely a collection of independent city-states. Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Macedonia, Achaia, and others spent most of their time warring against each other. Internally, they suffered from economic problems, class warfare and political corruption. Externally, the Gauls pressed on their northern frontiers and pirates ravaged their coasts. The fearsome Germans also arrived on the scene. Greek culture flourished in Egypt's Alexandria and in Anatolia (now Turkey), but elsewhere in the Middle East secular Hellenic culture conflicted with the Oriental penchant for the mystical and supernatural.

Just as Rome's containment of Germany saved Italy from invasion for hundreds of years, it also saved Greece. The perfect example of this occurred during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. His famous *Meditations*, written in Greek, were penned as he led the Roman legions on the Danube front defending Greece from the Germanic hordes.

But the ultimate act of sacrifice took place the year (330 AD) the Empire's capital was split by Emperor Constantine between Rome and Constantinople (Nova Roma, as the Emperor originally named it) in the heart of the Hellenic east. Clearly, this wholesale relocation of the government apparatus guaranteed that Greek civilization would survive for another 1,000 years. Ironically, to the Roman mind the move to Constantinople was also a sentimental journey back to Troy, home of Aeneas and the Roman "race." For Western Civilization, the Greco-Roman presence in this part of the world later became a vital bulwark against the expansionist Arabs and Turks. This wall held until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

6. CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

Yeshu'a ben Yosef was born in the Roman province of Judea. He spent his short life under Roman rule and was sent to the cross by a Roman governor of Abruzzese stock. Could this event and the belief in Christ's

in life. The Italic conquerors of Greece and Asia Minor literally carted away the art of the Hellenic world as well as its artists and thinkers. The later Italy of the Renaissance was not the epicenter of learning for nothing. It was the re-flowering of Greek, Etruscan and Roman seeds, the fusion of earlier classical Italy.

resurrection alone have launched Christianity as a global religion? Could the Apostles have spread the Word and converted multitudes if the Roman Empire did not exist? Unlike Islam, which established itself in the aftermath of a fallen Roman Empire, mainly through force of arms, the Christian sect may have been fortunate to be born during a time of world government and open borders. The Apostles not only had the freedom to travel and preach throughout the Empire, but they received the protection of Roman authorities on many occasions, according to the Gospels. Contrary to popular myth, Roman persecution of Christians was not constant. Once the early Christian fathers adapted to the pagan customs of the Gentiles, they thrived, despite occasional persecutions. In the reign of Emperor Constantine Christianity became the official religion of the Empire. According to historian Will Durant, a Jesuit-educated scholar, "*Probably more Christians were slaughtered by Christians in the years 342 and 343 AD [after the death of Constantine] than by all the persecutions of Christians by pagans in the history of Rome.*" (*Age of Faith*, Chap 1, p.8)



The death of Christ at Italic hands gave immortality to Rome.

Constantine saw in Christianity a new way to unify the diverse population of the empire. He became a Christian to set an example despite his less than fervent belief in its doctrines. It was he who insisted that doctrinal disputes be resolved. It was this pagan who called together the momentous Council of Nicaea to codify the divinity of Christ and the concept of the Trinity. Out of this consensus came the earliest text of the now famous Nicene Creed recited in churches today: *We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible...* To stimulate conversions he allowed church leaders limited political as well as religious powers. This started a process that brought the church political authority. After the fall of Rome in 476 AD, the Pope and his bishops throughout the disintegrating empire actually replaced Roman officials. The infrastructure that once ruled the world

devolved onto the Church and became the apparatus by which the Roman Church still operates.

How ironic, that the execution of one man in Judea led to the complete conversion of an empire. Moreover, as the successor to the

western Roman emperor, the pope took on the mantle of authority for all of medieval Europe. Even the German conquerors eventually converted and submitted to the moral authority of the pope. And maybe not so ironic, that this religion, founded by Jews, became the near exclusive domain of Italians. Pontius Pilate could not have planned it better.

[Additional information on this subject can be found in *The Italic Way* issue X, "Italians and the Bible."]

7. EXPULSION OF THE JEWS

There were two defining events in the history of the Jews, the Diaspora and the Holocaust. Although Jews in small numbers freely migrated from their homeland from the time of the Israelites, the impetus for

The infrastructure that once ruled the world devolved onto the Church



Two Italys, continued from page 25

West Germany. When the wall came down everybody thought the perfectionist Germans would integrate the two pieces in a Teutonic minute. After all, the country was only split up since 1945. Italy was in pieces since the fall of the Roman Empire, 1,400 years ago. Well, if you ever want to hear cousins go at it, listen to an East German talk about a West German or vice versa. Who's lazy, who's a thief, who's a racist, who's a welfare queen. The unemployment rate in east Germany is 23%, a lot higher than Italy's Mezzogiorno (19%). The Germans predicted in 1989 that it would only take five years to reunify their country. It's been fifteen years and counting. The German government still refuses to blend the east's unemployment figures into the national statistics. It would be downright embarrassing for an *ubermensch* nation. But Wolfgang Nowak, the head of a German think-tank, observed, "We might be the first country which has, by unifying, created two peoples." Yet, Italians still think Italy is the worse. Go figure!

What about Spain? Is there really a "Spain?" When you subtract the Catalans and the Basques, "Spain" isn't that big a deal. Talk about

racial and economic disparities. The ethnic and linguistic differences are enormous. They even have separatist bombs going off on a regular basis. But ask a Spaniard and these are manageable concerns. Ask an Italian about his mail delivery and Italy is falling apart.

Perhaps Italians need a required course in their schools called National Realities 101. They would learn that Canada has two different official languages, or that North and South Korea fought a war against each other. They would find out that Scotland and Wales are different from

England and have their own parliaments, not to mention language and culture. Italians would learn that France would have a hundred

dialects if Napoleon III hadn't stamped them out. But more than anything, our whining Italian homeboys would learn that every country has a north vs. south or east vs. west complex. It's called geography. But such a startling concept would be, well, un-Italian.

* * *

(Rosario Iaconis assisted in the writing of this article)

In Italy, all misfortune is ultimately tied to the government and to the Italian character.

Jesuits, continued from page 23

the most prosperous and populous education institutions in California."

The schools offered curricula and policies that combined both Italian and American educational traditions. As in Italy, the academic year concluded with a series of *saggi* or public examinations, which a Santa Clara Jesuit once observed, "would have honored the Roman College to say nothing of any other of our Italian provinces." Following Old World practice, the Italians maintained tight rein over students. Fr. Michael Accolta once proudly contrasted the "exact compliance with the rules of discipline" at Santa Clara with the "unlimited liberty" tolerated in other California schools. Discipline at his institution was strict, he once boasted, but "of course not so stringent as that enforced at West Point." Accommodation was the watchword for professors and pupils alike. "American students love freedom," a Piedmontese priest explained to Roman superiors. "There is an art which, when properly utilized, makes them work, but not everybody is possessed of it."

Attempts to impose a classical education, the hallmark of Jesuit schooling in Europe, met with mixed results. "Oh what a waste of time are Latin and Greek," a San Francisco Jesuit lamented in 1866, "for so many students that I now see working . . . as grocer, butcher, and who knows what else!"

Scientific training was more popular. The western colleges, reflecting both student interest and the Italians' own training, offered more instruction in the sciences than did many Jesuit institutions in the East. To make their curriculum relevant to the needs of Gold Rush California, Santa Clara and St. Ignatius taught assaying and chemical analysis and imported at great cost the "latest inventions" from Europe

in order to "keep pace with the progress of science."

Wherever the immigrants settled in frontier America, they fostered distinctively Italian forms of piety. A cycle of devotional celebrations enlivened the yearly calendar of every parish, college, and Indian mission. Pilgrimages to the shrine of St. Joseph in March, Marian devotions in May, Corpus Christ processions in June, the construction of elaborate crèches at Christmastime – all were standard fare. These rituals of Mediterranean Catholicism nurtured a sense of solidarity and reminded practitioners that their church was universal.

"Italians helped mold the cultural, intellectual, and religious life of the West in ways still felt today"

As American vocations to the Society increased, Italian influence waned. Turinese Jesuit jurisdiction on the West Coast ended

in 1909 when the California and Rocky Mountain missions were united in the new California Province. Ten years later, the Neapolitan mission in the Southwest was absorbed by the Missouri and New Orleans provinces. In the intervening years, Italians helped mold the cultural, intellectual, and religious life of the West in ways still felt today; they in turn were changed and Americanized by it.

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(Fr. Gerald McKevitt, SJ, professor of history at Santa Clara University, has authored and coauthored two books on Santa Clara University and is writing a book on Italian Jesuit immigrants and their influence on American Catholicism.)

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Lady Power: Italic Women Through the Ages (Part 3 of a three part series)

by Bill Dal Cerro

IL RINASCIMENTO AND BEYOND

"Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare"

(Such sweet decorum and such gentle grace)....

Dante Alighieri, La Vita Nuova (1292-1294)

The innate leadership qualities of such upper-class women as Isabella D'Este seemed to accentuate their natural physical charms, a fact which wasn't lost amongst the great painters of il Rinascimento. During that unique period of great art, dozens of masters devoted their careers to crystallizing the image of Italic feminine grace. Indeed, it is inconceivable to recall that era without thinking of Raphael's Madonnas or Titian's nudes. The most enduring symbol of this aesthetic, Botticelli's blond-haired Venus, even has a claim on history: The model for this painting, Simonetta Cattaneo of Genoa (1454-1476), married Marco Vespucci, cousin to the Florentine explorer, Amerigo, whose first name became synonymous with the New World.

The beauty of Italic women was so supreme that it inspired non-Italic artists. The protagonist of Flemish master Jan van Eyck's most famous work, "The Arnolfini Marriage" (1434), is Giovanna Cenami, the young wife of a Florentine silk merchant, Lucca Arnolfini.

The greatest proponent of Italian female pulchritude was, of course, Leonardo da Vinci, the towering genius of il Rinascimento. Da Vinci's famous portraits of wealthy patrons, such as Ginevra de Benci (1474) and Cecilia Gallerani (1485), captured the mysterious essence of upper-class women. He also turned the smile of a local Tuscan businessman's wife into an enduring symbol of Western art, the Mona Lisa (1503).

In addition to their outer beauty, Italic women displayed remarkable intellectual gifts. In 1678, Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, daughter of a wealthy Venetian businessman, became the first woman in the world to receive a PhD (University of Padua, Magistratura et Doctrix Philosophiae). Amazingly, Dr. Cornaro had two predecessors: Clarice di Durisio, a licensed surgeon from the early 1400s, and Costanza Calenda, who obtained a medical degree from the University of Naples in 1422.

In 1491, a year before Christopher Columbus' historic ocean journey, Cassandra Fedele of Venice dazzled huge crowds with her erudite speeches. Giovanni Andrea, a law professor at the University of Bologna, taught his young daughter, Novella, the art of law. A typical Italic prodigy, Novella soon began lecturing at the university on her own; however, Giovanni, the dutiful papa, made her stand behind a curtain so as not to distract the all-male student audience.

In 1542, Olimpia Morata of Ferrara reacted to the corruption of the

Roman church by converting to Protestantism, a move that eventually got her booted out of Italy. Galileo Galilei, the master of the heavens, found comfort during his persecution by church leaders through the strength of two women: his eldest daughter, Virginia Galilei, and his sister-in-law, Alessandra Bocchineri of Matua. And, in the 1600s, Arcangela Tarabotti, a Venetian nun, wrote muck-raking reports attacking both the dowry system and the bureaucratic ineptitude of convents.

When Venice ruled the seas, helped, in part, by businesswomen such as Morosina Morosini and Catina Gardin, who ran a lacemaking factory in the 1500s, the city had its praises sung by such writers as Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Franco and Julia Lombardo. The latter two women are notable examples of a familiar female figure in Europe at that time; the courtesan. Far from being mere arm candy, courtesans in Venice were actually much more well-educated than the men in the city, where they attended training programs in music, sport, literature, public speaking, and, of course, amore.

PAINTING, SCULPTURE, MUSIC AND DANCE

In the art of painting, it took a certain amount of grit to stand out from a crowded field of contenders the likes of da Vinci and Michelangelo. One woman who did, Artemisia Gentileschi of Rome (1593-1652), is now recognized by critics as an equal to her male contemporaries. Sofonisba Anguissola of Cremona (1532-1625) had her paintbrush publicly praised by no less an authority than Michelangelo, making her a highly sought-after commodity in Milan, Mantua and Parma.

Other famed female artists included Honorata Rodiana from Cremona, a fresco specialist who, incredibly, was also a female condottiera (soldier-for-hire). Rodiana died on the battlefield in 1472, defending her home city from invading Venetians. Ironically, in the later 1500s, women artists in Venice would practically start their own school of painting, among them, Rosalba Carriera, a portraitist who became the darling of the French court; Marietta Robusti, daughter of Jacopo Robusti (aka, Tintoretto); and Elizabetta Marchioni, whose lovely flower groupings continue to enchant art lovers everywhere.

Polissena Nelli of Florence (1523-1588) was a nun whose work can be observed in the frescoes of the church of Santa Maria Novella. Barbara Longhi of Ravenna (1552-1638) assisted her father, Luca Longhi, on large religious altarpieces. Fede Galizia of Trento (1578-1630), Giovanna Garzoni of Ascoli (1600-1670) and Margherita Caffi of Milan (1650-1710) were masters of still life paintings.

Two Bolognese women became the main breadwinners of their families. Elisabetta Sirani (1638-1665) eventually took over her father Giovanni's famous painting workshop, while Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) became the official portraitist of Popes Gregory the XIII and Clement VIII. Fontana's husband, Gian Paolo Zappi, was perhaps the world's first "Mr. Mom," taking care of their brood of kids while Mamma went out and raked in the big bucks.

Another Bolognese woman, Properzia de Rossi (1490-1530), excelled

It was Italian ladies who were actively shaping the image of the "modern woman."

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The end of the 1st Jewish state is still visible on the Arch of Titus.

mass migrations was always due to foreign invasion. For example, the Babylonian Captivity noted in the *Old Testament* saw the forcible removal, and eventual return, of a portion of the Jewish populace by its Semitic neighbors. Nevertheless, there were Jewish communities in Greece, Asia Minor, North Africa and Italy before the time of Christ. However, the coming of the Romans to Judea was destined to change forever how Jews related to the rest of the world.

The *Torah* may have foretold the calamity the Jews were to suffer at the hands of the Italic people. *"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth; as swift as the eagle [Rome's symbol] flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;... and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout thy land;... so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, ... and the Lord shall scatter thee among all people; from the one end of the earth even unto the other;"* (Deuteronomy 28:49-64).

Scientific experimentation replaced blind faith in understanding the workings of the universe.

The Romans were invited to Judea by warring factions before the birth of Christ. It didn't take very long for conflict to develop between the pagan, and often heavy-handed, Romans and the zealously monotheistic Jews. In 70 AD and again in 135 AD Jewish zealots instigated a revolt and the Romans reacted. By the end of each rebellion, the Romans expelled or enslaved major segments of the population and changed the name of Judea to Palestina. These traumatic events impacted both the Jews and the world. Ultimately, being cast out of the theocratic state of Judea was a liberating experience to those Jews who yearned for a secular life. Among the talents they discovered within themselves was for international trade. At the Diaspora, the noted Jewish historian Josephus ironically claimed, *"We are not a commercial people."* Life in ancient Judea could arguably be compared to that of New England Puritans or Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. Less than one hundred years before the Romans arrived the famous Maccabees of Hanukkah fame created an imperialist state that not only conquered its neighbors but forced Judaism and circumcision on its new subjects at the point of the sword. It was apparent that science and technology were stifled by biblical inhibitions and revulsion for the Hellenic and Italic cultures. Women were treated in the Semitic fashion, freedom of expression was nonexistent, religious intolerance was institutionalized, and art and scholarship severely limited. One can only imagine whether Jews would have accomplished what they later did in science, the professions, scholarship and the arts had they all remained in their homeland. And, of course, what would our world be like if the Jewish people didn't exercise their prodigious talents in all the societies to which they fled?

But, there was a down side to the Diaspora. Hate within societies that considered the expelled Jews as interlopers and subversives led to pogroms and, ultimately, the Holocaust. In reaction, Jews developed the political movement called Zionism to reclaim the homeland they

had lost. The subsequent return of large Jewish groups to the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries erupted into conflicts with the native Palestinians and helped spawn the global terrorism that haunts us even as we write these words.

In religious terms, the expulsion of the Jews and the destruction of their temple by future emperor Titus in 70 AD liberated Christianity from its Semitic roots. Clearly, the early Christian leadership was predominantly Jewish and communications with the Judean home base, headed by Jesus' brother* James, continued even as Peter and Paul preached elsewhere. Understandably, the spiritual anchor of Christianity was still in the Holy Land where Christ had spent his days. Jewish customs, except for circumcision, dominated the early rites of the Church. For example, Christians continued to take their rest on Saturday instead of Sunday and based their worship on the Jewish calendar. The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem not merely weakened the Judean connection but it was seen as the sign of the Second Coming of Christ and therefore a catalyst for the separation of Judaism from Christianity. With the decline of Jerusalem and the decentralization of Judaism, the Roman and Greek converts to Christianity eventually assumed the leadership of the diverse Christian communities and gave them the organization and doctrines that we now recognize.

*Roman Catholics do not consider James a true brother

8. THE RENAISSANCE

Anyone who thinks the Renaissance, more correctly, *il rinascimento*, was all about art is only partially right. The rebirth of the classical age affected art, science, religion, education, politics, sex, geography, and everything else related to man's life on earth. In a word, the *rinascimento* was about humanism. It was natural law over religious dogma. It was art for art's sake. It was scientific method over alchemy. It was female-friendly.



This painting by Guido Reni captures the Renaissance message of art and learning.

If it weren't for the *rinascimento*, all the world-shaping events listed above would have been for naught. All that had been accomplished by the Romans and Greeks might well have soured in the belly of an autocratic Europe obsessed by the nature of God rather than the potential of man. Feudalism, religious dogma, war, pestilence, and poverty all hammered away at Europeans just as they do today in underdeveloped nations. Fortunately, Italy's place as homeland of the old Roman Empire and of its successor, the Roman Catholic Church, gave it all the right ingredients to shed new light on man's place in the universe.

The very ruins that dotted Italy provoked curiosity among the learned. The discovery of ancient manuscripts in Church monasteries and libraries brought old ideas back to life again. The renewed contacts

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FROM NEW ENGLAND TO THE SUN BELT ITALIAN AMERICAN GOVERNORS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By Anthony Vecchione

A few Columbus Days ago New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg was at the center of a political firestorm involving two actors from the Soprano's television series and organizers of the city's Columbus Day Parade. The mêlée revolved around parade organizers who banned the actors from marching. Their chief complaint: the HBO series was a grotesque example of an already worn out stereotype depicting Italian-Americans as gangsters and lowlifes. From the parade organizers' point of view, allowing the actors to march would have contributed to a further blurring of the lines between fact and fiction. The mayor was welcome to march in the parade but opted instead to dine with the banished thespians at an Italian bistro in the Bronx.

Meanwhile, the Columbus Day Parade controversy dominated the chatter on local talk radio. As afternoon drive time peaked, the most outrageous and offensive comments came from none other than one of the talk show hosts. An Italian-

American caller complained that years of negative portrayals in the media were an impediment to Italian-Americans' ability to attain national political office. In response the host matter-of-factly stated that an Italian American would never be elected president of the United States. He reminded his listeners in no uncertain terms that Italian Americans just weren't "mainstream" enough to attract voters from "Middle-America." Shocking perhaps, but not surprising.

Italian American anti-defamation organizations, sociologists, historians and others have long maintained that more than a century of negative media portrayals of Italian Americans as either *mafiosi* or uncultured buffoons has resulted in nothing short of an institutional stereotype that has made having an Italian surname a liability.

The Italic Institute of America released a report in 2002 that revealed a disturbing pattern of media defamation. The report concluded that despite wealth, access to higher education, and strength of population [16 million] an American with an Italian surname could not fairly compete for president or vice president of the United States.

ROCKY ROAD TO POLITICAL ASCENDANCY

Although Italian American politicians have indeed distinguished themselves from the halls of Congress to various cabinet level posts and one Supreme Court appointment, the Italic Institute study revealed that they have not achieved proportional representation in key power sectors. Ironically, the report contends that Italian Americans were actually making "laudable" strides in achieving political power and influence during the 1960's and 1970s and into the 1980's. But due in part to a surge in media defamation via popular fiction, movies, television programs and video games, the negative stereotyping has continued unabated into the new millennium.

A Zogby Report on American teenagers and stereotyping issued in 2001 revealed that when asked to identify the role a person of a particular ethnic or racial background was most likely to play in a movie or on television, 44% of the teenagers who responded to the survey said

that Italian Americans are most often cast as crime bosses and gang members.

A sobering finding; however, on the national political stage, there may be a ray of hope. Currently there are 6 Senators and 23 Representatives of Italian ancestry (i.e. with or without an Italian surname) serving in the 108th United States Congress. Arguably the biggest star is Minority leader Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

But it's in the governor's mansions from New England to the Sun Belt where Italian-Americans are having the biggest impact. There are currently four Italian-surnamed governors: Janet Napolitano of Arizona, John Baldacci of Maine and Donald Carcieri of Rhode Island, and Joe Manchin of Virginia. Governorships have been a historical strong

... the host matter-of-factly stated that an Italian American would never be elected president of the United States.

point for Italian Americans going as far back as Mississippi in 1900 when A.H. Longino was gover-

nor. The last two governors of New York have been all or part Italian: Mario Cuomo, and George Pataki [Italian on his mother's side]

Despite strong evidence that Italian Americans may not have reached their full potential in the national political arena, some leading political observers believe that the tide may be changing and that having an Italian surname can be an asset. "I don't think it is a barrier to moving ahead. And I think it might be a minor advantage in some places," Michael Barone, *U.S. New & World Report* senior editor told *The Italic Way*. Barone, the author of *The Almanac of American Politics*, commented: "It certainly doesn't seem to have been a holdback in Maine, Arizona or Rhode Island."

It's hard to predict how long it will be before an Italian American man or woman will become a viable presidential or vice presidential candidate. Meanwhile, the election of four governors is indeed something to celebrate. The four current Italian-surnamed governors bring more than just their collective knowledge and expertise to the job - they bring Italian American values and sensibilities - something that they don't teach you in Political Science 101.

JANET NAPOLITANO (D-AZ)

The rise of Janet Napolitano to the pinnacle of power and influence in the state of Arizona is a classic American success story. She was sworn in as Arizona's 21st governor on Jan. 6, 2003. An eastern transplant, born in NYC and



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Lady Power, Continued from p. 17

in a similarly male-dominated arena: sculpture. Perhaps the strong need to assert herself, aesthetically as well as physically, is what led her to clash with the local authorities on many occasions. In one outburst of *passione*, de Rossi threw paint into a competitor's face. Whether it improved the gentleman's appearance has never been determined.

Maria de Dominici, born on the island of Malta (1645-1703), became a nun and displayed her talents in Rome. She, too, had to fight rampant sexism, often taking male clergymen to court when they tried to remove her work from houses of worship. Ditto for Diana Mantuana of Mantua (1547-1612), whose exquisite printmaking skills still weren't enough to allow her entry into Rome's tight inner-circle of male artisans. Things improved in the Eternal City a few centuries later, though, as Teresa Benincampi (1778-1830), a Roman, delighted the local populace with both her sculpting and literary talents.

Just as Italian men eventually dominated the worlds of classical and operatic music, Italian women struck some important first chords of their own.

The tone was set in the late 1500s by Maddalena Messari Casulana. This driven woman had a very specific purpose in mind: "to show the world the foolish error of men, who so greatly believe themselves to be the masters of high intellectual gifts that cannot, it seems to them, be equally common among women." She certainly proved them wrong, becoming the first woman to master the musical art form of the madrigal.

At about the same time, Tarquinia Molza wrote music for a variety of instruments, the harp and lute among them, but it was her angelic singing voice which catapulted her to fame. She and another musician/singer, Barbara Strozzi, performed triumphant tours all across Europe, as did a pair of Florentine sisters, Francesca and Settimia Caccini. It's a very short leap from the above-mentioned ladies to modern opera singers such as Renata Tebaldi (Italy) and Rosa Ponselle (America).

The term "ballet" may be French but, like "renaissance," it is thoroughly Italic in spirit. This terpsichorean art, whose freedom of movement symbolizes female romantic passion, was largely popularized in the late 1500s under Catherine de Medici (1519-1589), the Italian-born Queen of France. As stated before, Catherine became entangled in the fiery religious battles between Catholics and Protestants. She no doubt turned to this graceful new art form as a way to soothe her shattered nerves.

Centuries later, again in Paris (March 12, 1832, to be exact), ballerina Maria Taglioni performed the ballet *La Sylphide* up on her toes, establishing the style for all future dancers. She also caused a sensation by wearing a shocking pink skirt called a tutu, setting yet another artistic standard. Other Italian ballerinas who dominated the Parisian scene were Francesca Cerrito of Naples (1817-1909) and Carlotta Grisi of Milan (1819-1899).

A ROOM OF THEIR OWN

In theory, feminism can be traced back to Mary Woolstonecraft, the 18th century English writer whose 1790 tract, "Vindication for the Rights of Women," made equal rights a debatable social subject. In practice, however, it was Italian ladies who were actively shaping the image of the "modern woman."

Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547), born in Marino, near Rome, became an Italic precursor to the 20th century's Gertrude Stein, a literary

woman whose intellectual spirit drew the artists of *il Rinascimento* around her like planets to the sun. After the death of her husband, Ferrante Francesco D'Avalos, the Marquis of Pescara, in 1525, Colonna devoted herself to the spiritual life, staying at various monasteries around Rome to inspire her writing. Her close circle of friends included, among others, Michelangelo and the writer Pietro Bembo, many of whom were enchanted by her gift for lively conversation.

In 1748, Maria Gaetana Agnesi of Milan published her groundbreaking mathematics text *Analytical Institutions for the Use of Italian Youth*. Her guidebook, which delineated the rules of algebra, geometry and calculus, earned her a professorship at the University of Bologna in 1750. Math students everywhere are familiar with cubic curve which still bears her name: the "Agnesi."

In 1776, Laura Bassi followed in Agnesi's footsteps as a professor of experimental physics at Bologna. Forty years earlier, Bassi had conducted research into the brand new science of electricity. Surely, Bassi's work laid the foundation for another Italian, Alessandro Volta, the 19th century genius who invented the first battery.

After Mary Woolstonecraft's death, a fellow Englishwoman, the Italian-born Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), picked up the mantle of women's rights, albeit in a very ironic manner. A member of Great Britain's most notable artistic family—which included father Gabriele, mother Maria (Polidori) and brother Dante—Christina's Italianate passion pumped some blood into the staid world of English poetry. Though a deeply religious woman, Christina used her gifts to write one of the most controversial of all 19th century narrative poems, "Goblin Market" (1862), a work whose bold eroticism shocked Victorian England.



Italo-English Christina Rossetti lit a fire under British literature.



Maria Montessori challenged academia with bold new ideas. Struggling to make a living in France, Van Gogh often paid for meals

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), a native of the seaside town of Ancona, caused waves in the stuffy world of academia with her humanistic approach to teaching. Her legacy, the Montessori Method, is still taught in schools around the world that bear her name.

Agostina Segatori, the Italian born owner of the popular Café du Tambourin in France, can rightly be credited with introducing the world to the talent of the great Dutch painter, Vincent Van Gogh.

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The Seige of Giarabub

By John Mancini, Alfred Cardone, and Rosario A. Iaconis

The Second World War

had some legendary last stands. The fall of Bataan in April, 1942, is one that older Americans easily recall. The three-month siege came as another shock to the American public in the wake of the Pearl Harbor calamity. It was the first mass surrender of American troops. It also ended with the Bataan Death March, a brutal

forced march of heroic American and Filipino prisoners to Japanese concentration camps. Those trying days of the Pacific war, when American soldiers went under the yoke, were not the stuff of patriotic Hollywood movies. The 1943 movie *Bataan*, starring Robert Taylor, Lloyd Nolan and a rookie named Desi Arnaz, was an inspiring recount of the defeat. But what an anxious America needed was a siege that had a happier ending. A ready-made movie plot may have come to Hollywood via the Royal Italian Army in North Africa. It was the true story of the Siege of Giarabub. Did it become the basis for *Sahara*?

Giarabub, or Jarabub, is an oasis town located in Libya near the Egyptian border. Among other things, it was the reputed birthplace of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. Revered as a Moslem holy site, it was the scene of a 15-week stand against a superior British/Australian force by a battalion of the Royal Italian Army.

In the movie credits of *Sahara*, the producers claim that the story was inspired by an article in *Soviet Photoplay* entitled "The Thirteen." It is certainly understandable to credit the plot to a wartime ally but the desert warfare and locale of the story are definitely not Russian Front material. Zoltan Korda, who wrote and directed the film, was a Hungarian exile who lived in England during the early months of the war. It is possible that he followed news of the siege at Giarabub in English newspapers. One British periodical, the *Illustrated London News*, also carried a photograph of the town that looks uncannily like the set from the 1943 movie *Sahara*. Although we have found no hard evidence to prove that Giarabub was the inspiration for *Sahara*, the similarities are compelling.



The oasis pictured on this theatrical poster mirrors the actual skyline of the oasis-city of Giarabub at the left.



In June, 1940, Italy declared war on Great Britain and France. The Italian war aim was the capture of British-controlled Egypt and the Suez Canal. In late 1940, despite a glaring lack of preparation and overextended supply lines, an Italian Army crossed into Egypt. Disaster soon struck as the more mechanized British caught the Italians in the unforgiving desert. By December, tens of thousands of

Italians were stranded and captured and the remaining force retreated to western Libya. The British, fearing the same unforgiving desert, hesitated to pursue the Italian forces (they had also lost combat units to fight the Italians on the Greek front). Moreover, some pockets of resistance refused to surrender. One of those was a force of Italian soldiers and Libyan colonials under the command of Lt. Colonel Salvatore Castagna. From December 16, 1940 to March 20, 1941, the garrison held off an British/Australian division. Until January 9th, the

Italians received some supplies by air but after that they lived on severe rationing. The orders

from Col. Castagna were simple, "No one should consider surrender. We will fight, and if necessary, make the extreme sacrifice. At Giarabub it is either victory or death." The Italians held out long enough to hear from German general Edwin Rommel who cautiously arrived in North Africa after the Italians stabilized the Libyan front. On March 17th he sent the beleaguered garrison some hope, "I salute the heroic defenders of Giarabub with esteem and admiration. Continue your arduous struggle. In a very few weeks we shall reach you."

Despite the talk of victory or death, and Rommel's promises notwithstanding, the garrison was exhausted and decimated. Some 500 men were killed or wounded and the survivors had only bayonets left in their arsenal to fend off escalating attacks. On March 21, 1941, Giarabub fell to the British along with 800 Italian and Libyan soldiers.

Giarabub became a rousing propaganda tool for Fascist Italy. A movie was made in 1942 called *Giarabub* and a popular song commemorated the siege, *La Sagra di Giarabub* (The Ode to Giarabub). Whether the Allied press articles and the Cinecitta' production filtered out to

continued on the following page





Like the fall of Bataan, the siege of Giarabub was commemorated in Italian cinema.

the Hollywood folks who conceived and wrote *Sahara*, is anyone's guess.

By 1942, when the pre-production of *Sahara* was commenced, American troops had landed in North Africa. Curiously, the American forces were stationed in Morocco not Libya where the main British forces were. Yet, the plot of *Sahara* is set in eastern Libya with an American tank team attached to a British unit. Humphrey Bogart plays a resourceful tank commander, Sgt. Joe Gunn. The storyline follows Bogart's American tank after it retreats from a battle some miles north.

Lost in the desert, the Americans eventually collect an international assortment of stragglers including some wandering but plucky Brits (Lloyd Bridges with an accent), the usual "war-weary" Italian (J. Carrol Naish), an embittered Frenchman (not so weary despite his country surrendering to the Germans in six weeks), a fanatical blond Nazi pilot, and a perfectly loyal black Anglo-Sudanese soldier. Off they go to find water in the desert. What they find is an oasis that looks like a mini-Giarabub, complete with a domed building. Having sated their thirst at the oasis, the group is besieged by a battalion or regiment of thirsty Germans. The siege lasts many days, ending eventually when the Germanic horde surrenders to the international band of defenders in exchange for water.

Despite the heavy propaganda elements, *Sahara* was, and still is, first-rate entertainment. And who doesn't enjoy seeing Bogart take the lead? But was he acting out a role inspired by Col. Salvatore Castagna? Was his oasis a Hollywood set modeled on Giarabub?



Was Bogart really playing the part of Lt. Col. Castagna?

THE ODE TO GIARABUB (LA SAGRA DI GIARABUB)

Translated by Rosario A. Iaconis

High against the palm grove—
with the moon atop the sand dune—
stands an ancient minaret.
Blaring noises, war machines whirring,
flags unfurling
blood flows bursting . . .
What transpires, my camel driver?

It's the ode to Giarabub!

Colonel, I need no morsels, give me
bullets for my musket,
and the dirt that's in my satchel
will sustain me for today.

Colonel, I need no water, give me
deadly firepower,
and with the blood that keeps
my heart beating shall my thirst be slaked.

Colonel, I need no money
for no one here can return alive,
and not a meter is surrendered
till death has passed us by.

Once again the blades of grass sprout cleanly—
where bloody rivers flowed.
Yet those phantasms in formation—
are they living or are they dead?
And who speaks to us in such proximity?
Is it you, my camel driver?

On your knees, O pilgrim: those specters
that you hear are the voices of Giarabub!

Colonel, I need no tributes,
I have perished for my country.
But the death knell of Great Britain
begins at Giarabub.

* * *

ITALIAN JESUITS IN THE AMERICAN WEST

by Fr. Gerald McKeivitt, SJ

"Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history."

In the decades since Oscar Handlin wrote those lines in *The Uprooted*, immigration and ethnicity have remained subjects of intense interest in the United States. Among the millions of refugees who emigrated to these shores in the nineteenth century were approximately 350 Italian Jesuits. Banished from one kingdom after another during the upheaval that accompanied Italian national unification, these expatriates began arriving in 1848. Most of them migrated to the American West. There they profoundly shaped Catholic culture in eleven states during the next half century.

The displaced Jesuits of the Turin Province of northern Italy in 1854 adopted the Pacific Coast as their mission field. In the Northwest, they joined other European Jesuits in ministering to Native Americans in a vast area known as the Rocky Mountain Mission. The Italians' linguistic skills and their ambiguous national allegiance appealed to tribes alienated by repressive U.S. policy.

Their network of schools and churches extended from the Yakimas, Umatillas, and Nez Percés eastward to the Cheyennes, Assinoboines, and Crows. By 1896 the Indian schools of the Rocky Mountain Mission enrolled over a thousand students. One of the most famous establishments, St. Ignatius Mission, Montana, ran industrial boarding schools for both boys and girls, workshops, and extensive farms. In 1887, the Jesuits extended their educational mission to white settlers by founding Gonzaga College in Spokane.

Other Italians emigrated to the arid Southwest. In 1867, members of the Naples Province founded the New Mission – Colorado, which served largely Hispanic Catholics. In the eyes of the Neapolitans, the two jewels in their crown of accomplishment were a college in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and a Spanish-language newspaper, the *Revista Católica*, which appeared in 1875. Inspired in part by the Jesuits' famous journal *La Civiltà* molded regional Catholic public opinion for 87 years.



Jesuits of Las Vegas College

The Jesuit staff of Las Vegas College, New Mexico, which opened its doors in 1877. Founded by Neapolitan Jesuits, the school offered instruction in English and Spanish. Later transferred to Denver, it exists today as Regis University.

The Italian Jesuits' western schools served in the years after the Mexican War as cultural bridges facilitating the transition of young *nuevomexicanos* and *californios* to post-conquest culture.

tions of higher learning. A boarding college planted amid the orchards of the Santa Clara Valley opened its doors in 1851. Today's Santa Clara University is California's oldest institution of higher learning. Four years later, a day school, St. Ignatius College, arose on San Francisco's Market Street, the central thoroughfare of the Gold Rush metropolis. It has become the University of San Francisco. All of the western Jesuit colleges began as elementary and preparatory schools, although several of them offered college-level courses within a few years of their founding. Their student bodies were typically cosmopolitan, reflecting the ethnically diverse populations of the western mining frontiers. The cultural ambivalence of the Italians was an asset because it enabled them to work effectively among Hispanic, European, and Anglo cultures and to build bridges between the two groups.

Wherever they went, the émigrés were torn between two conflicting desires: to adhere to European conventions and to adapt to the exigencies of American culture. When erecting schools and churches, the exiles quickly learned that handsome buildings were essential to their adopted homeland. "Appearances count for a lot here," a Neapolitan Jesuit wrote. "The American, more than any other nationality, is impressed by appearances, and believes in what he sees." They believe "a beautiful building must signify an excellent school," and hence "we must adapt to this weakness of theirs."

And adapt they did. So impressive were their colleges that a San Francisco newspaper declared in 1864, "Today the Jesuits have built

A large contingent of Piedmontese refugees ran the California Mission, founding popular urban parishes and colleges. "Like the Greeks after the fall of Constantinople," recorded an Irish co-worker, "they brought with them libraries, scientific instruments and the education and habits which fit men for the life of teaching. The Fathers, however, labored under one defect – both in the pulpit and in the classroom. They spoke and taught in a language not altogether English, and their manners and ideas were too Italian to meet the tastes of the young Republicans of the West." Eager to recruit native speakers for the institutions, the Piedmontese pleaded with East Coast Jesuits to "send us helpers who speak English."

These atypical westerners molded California's intellectual and religious life by founding two institu-

The Italians' linguistic skills and their ambiguous national allegiance appealed to tribes alienated by repressive U.S. policy.

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Lady Power, Continued from p. 17

with copies of his famous flower still lifes, which the sympathetic Segatori promptly displayed on her walls. Thus, a major artistic movement of the 19th century—impressionism—received its imperus from the shrewd, discerning eyes of an Italian businesswoman.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when the Catholic Church in America was dominated by an all-male, all-Irish clergy, the achievements of Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917) are all the more astonishing. In addition to her missionary work, which was global in nature, the diminutive nun from Lombardy was also a hard-nosed businesswoman who built hospitals, orphanages and religious communities across America. Cabrini became a U.S. citizen shortly before her death in 1917, an act which later made her the first American religious to be canonized a saint (1946).

As Mother Cabrini's career came to a close, Tina Modotti (1896-1942), a native of Udine, arrived in San Francisco just after her thirteenth birthday. Her beauty quickly made her a sensation as a stage performer in Little Italy, leading to a brief career as a silent film actress. Modotti, however, balked at being a bimbo and followed her passion for photography, which led her to Mexico in the 1920s. She joined the Communist Party and used her lens to expose the debilitating poverty of the region. At the close of her life, Modotti, along with her radical artist friends, the painters Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, were being chased out of the country by none-too-happy government officials.



The word for female aircraft pilot is "aviatrix," using the familiar Latin suffix. Should it be a surprise, then, that Italic women took to the skies as effortlessly as Italic men did (Francesco De Pinedo, Italo Balbo, et. al)? In the 1930s, America had Amelia Earhart, but Italy had three record-setting female aviators: Rosina Ferrario, Carina Negrone and Maria Teresa Cacinni. Decades later, an American woman of Italian descent, Bonnie Tiburzi (left), continued this illustrious tradition by becoming the world's first female commercial airline pilot.

MUSES OF STAGE AND SCREEN

In Roman times, actresses such as Bassilla toured the provinces to great acclaim. As a profession, however, acting was considered low-class, almost a form of witch-craft, and men soon took it over, even playing the women's parts! One of their chief reasons for doing so was good ol' fashioned male chauvinism—that is, men didn't think women could fully, creatively express themselves on a stage.

An Italian actress, Eleanora Duse (1858-1924), altered that perception forever. Born in Vigevano (Pavia), Duse's delicate, yet vibrant, luminosity lit up the theater world like a



Eleanora Duse was the first international icon of early 20th Century theater.

Roman candle. Audiences marveled at the intensity of emotion which Duse brought to her various stage roles.

Upon Duse's death, the theater was giving way to a newly emerging art form called cinema. A French actress of Italian-Corsican birth, Renee Falconetti (1892-1946), carried the Duse tradition into film with her stunning portrayal of St. Joan in Carl Dreyer's 1928 masterpiece, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. As this was a silent film, Falconetti relied solely on gestures and facial expressions to convey the depth of Joan's torment. The result was, quite literally, the performance of a lifetime: Falconetti was so emotionally drained from the experience that she never made another film.

Out of the chaos of post-World War II Italy, an exciting new style of filmmaking emerged: neo-realism. Characterized by on-location shooting and the use of non-professional actors, neo-realism's first big stars were a group of actresses, led by Silvana Mangano, whose sensual, Mediterranean faces were a fresh contrast to the synthetic beauty of American starlets.

One of the greatest actresses in film history, Anna Magnani (1908-1973), gave neo-realism its soul. Dubbed "Magnani the Magnificent" by her fans, this native of Rome

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TWO ITALYS?

by Louis Cornaro

There is one stereotype about Italians that appears to be true. Many Italians have a passion for overstatement. And it usually reveals itself during a bout of complaining. For example, if an Italian is stuck in an emergency room for hours he blames not the crush of patients, not the particular hospital, not even the emergency room staff. Rather, he will launch into a bombastic denunciation of Italy's universal health care system, the national government and even the Italian character itself.

Take another example, as a comparison, the devastation suffered in Florida last summer from four hurricanes. For months after the hurricanes had smashed to bits hundreds of flimsy mobile homes, people were still living in un-air conditioned communal shelters or living in homes without electricity and basic services. Yet, aside from grumbling about a bad weather forecast or the high temperatures, no one called for the removal of President Bush. Most suffered in silence and blamed their bad luck on choosing to live in a mobile home in hurricane country.

In Italy, all misfortune is ultimately tied to the government and to the Italian character. When Mt. Etna in Sicily poured lava down its sides, as it has done for thousands of years, Italians held their elected officials responsible, even though no one was killed. If it's not the government, it's the mafia, if not the mafia then it's the northerners or the southerners. Nature is usually the last culprit in Italy.

Who hasn't been regaled by an Italian proudly explaining how nothing works in Italy? When someone tells me a story about Aunt Concetta dying in the hospital as proof of Italian incompetence, I tell him, "Well, if they kill you in an American hospital you get a bill. In Italy at least it's free." At that point, the storyteller is speechless. Or, if an Italian complains that his college graduate son can't find a job in Italy because of the government, I tell him, "We pay \$100,000 for a college education in America, not only can't we find a job but still have college loans to pay off. At least in Italy your education is free." One can easily sense the frustration in an Italian who loses a 'can you top this' debate.

I use these examples to better convey the greatest overstatement that Italians make: that Italy is really two countries, North and South. Italians spend an inordinate amount of time and money trying to prove that Southerners are culturally, even racially, different from Northerners. Who is more corrupt, who is shorter, who is more conniving, who is more racist, who persecuted whom for centuries, etc. They even have unflattering names for each other: *Polentoni* (Northerners eat polenta) and *Terroni*

(Southerners are the dirt farmers). I have seen DNA studies that purport to show that Southerners are Greeks (without proving first that the Greeks are actually "Greeks" and not Turks or Albanians). There are travel videos that would make you wonder how these two Italys ever got together in the first place. But, of course, there is much truth in the dichotomy of Italy. It is as natural as every other country in the world. And, it can be said that the bigger the country the more the differences.

We in America can smugly sit back and nod our heads in agreement that Sicilians "aren't Italian" and "Africa starts at Naples," that the Northerners are really French and Southerners are Greeks or descendants of Roman slaves (Mario Puzo, *The Godfather* and David Chase, *The Sopranos*, believed this, hence their low-life view of heritage). What gums up the divisiveness is why Italians, north and south, all have the same religion, why they all eat pasta, why they all talk with their hands, and why all their dialects come from the same Latin and why so many of them have big noses and bald heads. (I must admit to these traits, myself.)

Meanwhile, we live in a country that makes Italy look like a monolithic state. Didn't we have a civil war here with over 600,000 killed? Talk about differences! I live in the northeast and have little in common, culturally or genetically, with the majority of people in Iowa, California or Alabama. Wherever you are reading this article, imagine your daughter or son marrying someone from New York or Mississippi or Utah. They are trailer park trash or they marry their cousins or they are all fast-talking con artists, aren't they? Many a time I have had to calm down fellow Italian Americans who spout off about the regional differences in Italy. But, they clam up when I use the 'outta-state-guy-marrying-your-daughter' routine.

Economically, sure the Italian South is less wealthy than the North. But there are a lot of people living in mobile homes in our South because they can't afford a house. Matter of fact, I know a lot of Northeasterners who complain that the Northeast has always been short-changed on federal aid to keep the south and west in repair. A recent Rutgers University study of the issue proved it for the second time in 20 years. New Jersey is #2 in paying taxes but #40 in receiving federal aid. So, in Italy some northerners think that only Italy suffers from inequality. They think Italy is unique – a typical Italian conceit.

How about Germany? It wasn't too long ago that we called it East and

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How the north and south view each other



▲ A misconceived, but popular, view of the southern Italian by northerners is that they are dirty, dishonest and lazy peasants only too happy to depend on support from the north.



▲ Equally at fault is the southern impression of the northerners. It is often held that the northerner is hard and grasping, a greedy businessman lacking in philosophy.

From *Italy: the Land and its People* by Michael Leech, Silver Burdett 1974.



Four Governors, continued from page 19

raised in Pittsburgh, Napolitano and her parents, brother and sister, eventually settled in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

After her high school graduation in 1975 she attended Santa Clara University where she won the prestigious Truman Scholarship. Janet graduated *summa cum laude* with a degree in political science and then headed back east to attend the University of Virginia law school.

After graduating from law school Janet chose Arizona to build her career. She clerked for U.S. appeals court judge Mary Schroeder then took a position with a Phoenix law firm where it didn't take her long to become a partner. Janet argued pivotal cases including a case before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that churches should be protected from governmental searches in the now famous sanctuary case.

In 1993 President Clinton nominated her to serve as United States Attorney for the District of Arizona. As U.S. Attorney Janet helped land \$65 million in federal funds to put more police on Arizona's streets, helped the state respond to the Amtrak derailment near Phoenix and helped manage the portion of the Oklahoma City bombing investigation that focused on Tim McVeigh's activities in Kingman, Arizona.

In 1998 voters elected her Attorney General of Arizona, the first woman to hold this position. As AG Janet distinguished herself as a fierce protector of children, an advocate for women, senior citizens and the environment. She also established a cutting-edge cyber-crimes investigative unit designed to prosecute those who would use the Internet to prey on children. Napolitano also created the first office for women's affairs inside the AG's office.

In 2002, Janet took her passion for consumer advocacy back to the voters as a candidate for Governor. Her candidacy attracted a broad coalition of supporters from all ethnic and age groups. In November of 2002, she won a four-way race to become Arizona's chief executive and was sworn in on Jan. 6, 2003, as the state's 21st governor.

In addition to being the state's chief executive, you might say that Napolitano is Arizona's number one sports fan. She's a diehard Diamondbacks and Cardinals fan. You'll also find her rooting for the Phoenix Coyotes, Wildcats, Sun Devils and Lumberjacks.

In her spare time, Napolitano is a hiker and a river rafter. She's traversed trails worldwide and includes among her accomplishments scaling Tanzania's Mt. Kilimanjaro and backpacking in the Himalayan Mountains.

Family is an important part of the governor's life. She maintains a close relationship with her father, Dr. Leonard Napolitano, the retired dean of the University of New Mexico College of Medicine, as well as her nieces and nephews.



JOHN BALDACCI (D-ME)

John Elias Baldacci was elected governor of Maine in 2002 and was sworn into office on Jan. 8, 2003. Born and raised in Bangor, Baldacci was first elected to public office in 1978 when he won a seat on the Bangor City Council at the age of 23. While working in the family restaurant in

Bangor he earned a B.A. in history from the University of Maine.

Always interested in the challenges facing Maine's small business community, Baldacci pursued politics and was elected in 1982 to the Maine State Senate where he served until 1994.

In 1994 he was elected to represent the Second District of Maine in the U.S. House of Representatives. Baldacci is famous for taking the family business on the road where he served spaghetti suppers in little towns in the state's second district, the largest congressional district east of the Mississippi.

Re-elected to Congress in 1996, 1998 and again in 2000, Baldacci served on the House Agriculture Committee and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. During his four terms in the U.S. House he returned every weekend to meet with the people in his district. Among his accomplishments, Baldacci expanded trading opportunities for Maine businesses and worked tirelessly to increase federal funding for research and development at Maine schools and hospitals. He focused on education and economic development as well as pushing for greater access to technology in the classroom and increased federal government support for special education. Most recently, Baldacci championed a plan to provide universal health care for Maine residents.

The governor lives with his wife Karen, a grammar school teacher, and their son Jack, in Blaine House, the governor's official residence in Augusta (a city named for Caesar Augustus).

While Baldacci has politics in his blood, the restaurant business is clearly in his soul. On weekends you can find the governor cooking up one of his favorite dishes, such as pasta *carbonara* or Italian *caponata*. If you want the recipes, you can log on to the governor's web site: www.maine.gov

DONALD L. CARCIERI (R-RI)



Donald Carcieri's journey to the governor's mansion in Rhode Island is a unique one that spans several careers including that of a CEO and humanitarian worker.

Born in 1942, he was the first of Nicola and Marguerite Carcieri's five children. The family lived in East Greenwich where Nicola was a teacher and coach at the town high school. Donald was always a standout as class president, student council president as well as an excep-

tional athlete in basketball, football and baseball.

After high school he attended Brown University on an academic scholarship. He worked summer jobs in construction, crewing a charter boat, and guahogging [a name given to shell fishing] on the Narragansett Bay to help supplement his tuition. He graduated from Brown in 1965 with a degree in international relations.

Two weeks after graduation married his high school sweetheart, Suzanne. Over the years their family grew to include a son and three daughters.



In early years, Carcieri taught math at Newport's Rogers HS and at Concord Carlisle Regional HS in Concord, Mass. Then he switched gears and set his sights on the business world and built a career at Old Stone Bank where he reached the position of Executive Vice President.

In 1981, Carcieri made an unusual career move by taking his family to Kingston, Jamaica, where he headed Catholic Relief Service's West Indies operation. Following that humanitarian adventure, in 1983, Carcieri returned to Rhode Island and joined Cookson America, a materials technology company, as the president of a small startup group. He rose through the ranks to the position of CEO of Cookson America and Joint Managing Director of Cookson Group Worldwide. He was instrumental in the growth of the business into a major manufacturer employing more than 12,000 people worldwide. Under Carcieri's reign Cookson grew from a \$30 million company to over \$3 billion by the time he retired.

Always active in community and state affairs, in 2001 Carcieri's concern over the condition of the state's financial situation led him to apply his business skills to the political arena.

Through a strong grass roots effort, in April 2003 he announced his candidacy for governor on the Republican ticket. Carcieri had never held elected office except as a member of his town's home rule charter commission. He focused his campaign for governor on reining in state spending, balancing the budget, bringing integrity back in government and creating a plan for statewide economic redevelopment.

Carcieri came from behind to defeat the endorsed candidate in a highly contested primary race. He defeated his Democratic rival in the November 2002 election. Carcieri was inaugurated as Rhode Island's 57th governor on Jan. 7, 2003.

As governor, Carcieri has been instrumental in preserving the historic face of Providence and at his urging the former Providence train station became headquarters of Cookson America. Carcieri, a devoted family man, spends as much quality time as he can with his wife, four children and thirteen grandchildren, ten of whom live in Rhode Island.

JOE MANCHIN(D-WV)



West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin knows a thing or two about overcoming adversity. His dream of playing in the NFL was thwarted by a career-ending knee injury that occurred when he was a player at West Virginia University. Disappointed but undaunted, Manchin forged ahead to receive a BS in business administration and went on to pursue a successful career as a businessman. But he didn't stop there. Manchin got

involved in politics at the local level as a member of the West Virginia Legislature where he served first in the House of Delegates then as a state senator where he fought for education initiatives, job creation and

as an advocate for veterans and senior citizens. While state senator Manchin was, among other things, Chair of the Banking and Insurance Committee; Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee; and Chair of the prestigious Rule Making Review. As West Virginia's Secretary of State he was instrumental in promoting voter registration among high school students. (Politics runs in the Manchin blood. His Uncle, A. James Manchin, who passed away in 2003, served as West Virginia Secretary of State from 1977 through 1985.)

As he prepares to take the helm as West Virginia's chief executive, Manchin, a conservative Democrat attributes his success and philosophy of strong economic development coupled with a sense of social concerns to his strong sense of family values. He is pro-life and anti-gun control.

Born and raised in the coal-mining town of Farmington, West Virginia, Manchin is the grandson of an Italian immigrant [on his father's side] who became the town grocer. Manchin attributes his business sensibilities to his small-town entrepreneur grandfather while his socially conscious grandmother gets the credit for his concern for people. According to a spokeswoman for the Manchin transition team, the family name was changed from either Mancini or Mancino.

As governor, Manchin has vowed to bring labor and business together and help stimulate job growth in the Mountain State. He believes that government should offer services to insure the best quality of life for its people, but not eliminate their incentives.

Manchin is currently the owner of Enersystems Inc., a private company that deals with the natural resources of West Virginia. He lives in Fairmont with his wife Gayle. The couple have three children and six grandchildren.

BREAKING THE BARRIER

Is the rise of Italian Americans to proportionate levels of political power still a work in progress? Probably. And while some observers believe that damaging stereotypes continue to be an albatross around the necks of Italian American politicians, others argue that the impact of relentless negative stereotyping is waning. Michael Barone states: "The stereotype exists but I don't think it trumps everything else in popular perception so that someone like Rudy Giuliani can be admired for his own qualities without people saying well, he's a guy from *The Sopranos*." Barone further commented that because Giuliani was a national hero after 9/11 and has been actively campaigning for Republican candidates nationwide, he stands a good chance of being a serious candidate for the presidency in 2008.

But just to keep both feet on the ground, Anthony Cardillo, the Italic Institute's Chairman of Strategic Studies and co-author of the 2002 Gianelli-Cardillo report, is not fully convinced that Italian Americans have reached the mainstream in national politics. He cites the Bush Administration's downplaying of federal judge Samuel Alito for possible Supreme Court Appointment due to his being an Italian American. "If we were truly mainstream, Alito wouldn't be defined by his surname," says Cardillo. As for the new crop of governors, Cardillo doesn't share Barone's interpretation. "These new governors are from small states where Italian governors have been elected previously or where voters were mature enough to dispel ethnic prejudice. Back in the 1970's and 1980's we had governors in major states like Ohio, Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts, where there are still sizeable Italian American communities. Moreover, we are down to only 13 Italian-surnamed congressmen from a high of 24 in 1983."

While it is true that Italian Americans wielded more political power decades ago, having four governors is good news. It may be the start of better things to come.



electrified filmgoers with her dark hair, throaty laugh and “salt-of-the-earth” demeanor.

In a review of Magnani’s 1953 film *The Golden Coach*, the late New Yorker film critic Pauline Kael wrote, “Anna Magnani is like a force of nature...You feel as if she can tear a tree out by its roots and shake it.” Kael’s words read like a description of Terra, the classical Roman goddess of the Earth, a role that the volcanic Magnani could have played in her sleep.

Italic actresses did have their softer sides. The 1950s also gave us Gina Lollobrigida, Pier Angeli and Claudia Cardinale (born in Tunisia), actresses whose looks complemented their acting. A socially awkward, ugly-duckling urchin from the streets of Naples, Sofia Scicolone, soon blossomed into “Sophia Loren” and became the biggest movie goddess of them all. As a child, Loren was mocked by her classmates as *Sofia stuzzicante* (toothpick). As an adult, Sophia Loren reigns supreme as the epitome of European elegance well into the new millennium.

CONCLUSION

Looking back over the 20th century, it’s easy to see that Italic women have lost none of their creativity or genius.

In 1926, novelist Grazia Deledda, writing about her beloved island of Sardinia, received the Nobel Prize for Literature. During World War II, a female member of the Italian Resistance of Jewish lineage, Ginetta Sagan, would later go on to form Amnesty International, the world’s largest human rights organization. In 1956, a downhill skier at the Winter Olympics, Giuliana Chanel-Minuzzo, became the first female athlete to take the Olympic oath at an opening ceremony. In 1986, Rita Levi-Montalcini, another of Jewish heritage, was awarded the Nobel Prize for her work in medicine.



The late Ella Grasso of Connecticut. First elected female governor in the U.S.

national Vice Presidential candidate, 1984; and Nancy Pelosi, first female Majority Whip of the House, 2002).

That intrinsic Italic determination is also making the world a better place in which to live.

American women of Italian descent keep knocking down one door after another in the insular, all-boys’ world of politics

In America, Eleanor Curti Smeal of the National Organization of Women (NOW) turned women’s rights into a genuine social movement during the 1960s. The work of Curti Smeal and other feminists appears to be paying off, as American women of Italian descent keep knocking down one door after another in the insular, all-boys’ world of politics (Ella Grasso, first elected woman governor, 1974; Geraldine Ferraro, first female

In the 1990s, it was an Italian woman, prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, who brought Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic to justice. Carla Cicco, the CEO of telecommunication giant Brasil Telecom, introduced the humanism of Maria Montessori into the cold, sterile world of corporate culture. Gifted women architects like Gae Aulenti brought a distinctive Italic touch to their designs—in Aulenti’s case, the Palazzo Grassi in Venice and the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. Italic business dynasties, from fashion (Miuccia Prada) to



Carla Del Ponte, war crime prosecutor for the United Nations.

car-making (Susanna Agnelli), continued to benefit from the gentle, yet firm, guidance of female executives.

The 21st century got off to a horrifying start with the murder of 3,000 innocent Americans on September 11, 2001. Yet, only a few months after Muslim extremists crashed two airplanes into the World Trade Center, an Italian woman, Oriana Fallaci, rose from the ashes like a fiery Phoenix. The 72-year old renowned Florentine journalist, semi-retired and battling cancer at the time, immediately wrote a new book,

The Rage and the Pride, urging freedom-loving people to stand up and defend Western Civilization against such forces of evil.

Interestingly, the last time Western culture was attacked by Muslim extremists (the siege of Vienna in 1529), another female Italian writer, Veronica Gambara of Brescia (1485-1550), exhorted a newly elected pontiff, Paul III, to “decisively defeat the enemies of Christ.”

Once again, *tutte le strade portano a Roma* (“all Roads lead to Rome”). And, once again, women are leading the procession.



The UN’s Catherine Bertini presided over the World Food Organization dispensing food relief to over 77 million people each year.

* * *



SHARK TALE: FOR THE RECORD

For the past several decades, national leaders of the Italian American community have fought against relentless defamation in the adult media. The predominant concern since the first airing of *The Untouchables* in the 1950's was with Hollywood's love affair with Italian American gangsters and the "Mafia." Due to the subject matter, Italic criminal stereotypes contained in such fictional works as *The Godfather* series and *GoodFellas* had rarely filtered down to children's television and films. But, all of that changed with the coming of the DreamWorks' animation *Shark Tale*.

On August 24, 2003, Bill Dal Cerro, Vice President of the Italic Institute, accidentally came across news of an animated movie in production called *Sharkslayer* (later renamed *Shark Tale*). After a little research, Bill realized that this DreamWorks movie was to be a kid's version of *The Sopranos* with voiceovers by the big names in the mob-movie industry including Martin Scorsese and Robert DeNiro as well as actual cast members of *The Sopranos*. Like Disney's *Finding Nemo*, which did phenomenally in the box office, *Sharkslayer* was to be an underwater story. But unlike *Nemo*, DreamWorks created an ethnic seascape with Italian-named sharks as the bad guys: Don Lino, Don Brizzi, Luca, Giuseppe, etc. DreamWorks' intent was made even clearer in an interview with partner Jeffrey Katzenberg in *USA Today*. "Imagine an underwater cityscape that is Chicago meets Las Vegas meets Miami...Classic references include everything from 'The Untouchables' to 'Some Like It Hot' to all three 'Godfather' films. Robert De Niro as Don Lino, a kingpin shark looking to expand his turf, after 'The Sopranos' James Gandolfini had to drop out. De Niro joins Will Smith, who plays Oscar, a hustler who dreams of moving up on the food chain from his lowly job at a whale wash. When one of the don's sons (Michael Imperoli of 'The Sopranos') is accidentally rubbed out by a dropped anchor, Oscar takes credit for the hit and becomes an unlikely hero."

If there were ever a perfect target in the world of defamation, *Sharkslayer* was it. The Italic Institute's Executive Council, John Mancini, Don Fiore, Rosario Iaconis, Bill Dal Cerro and Renata Sdao concluded that *Sharkslayer* did not fall under the First Amendment defense because its primary audience was children. Protection of Minors clearly takes precedence over artistic expression. Certified letters were drafted and sent to DreamWorks partners Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg with a copy to Jack Valenti (Motion Picture Association) on September 10, 2003 requesting that the characters be "de-Italianized." With a full year until completion, Institute leaders felt that this request was reasonable. What they did not appreciate at the time was how important an "Italian mob" angle was to the studio and to the Italian American actors who signed on to the project. A special appeal was also sent to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. (The ADL had just honored Italy's Prime Minister



DreamWork's animation, *Shark Tale*, crossed the line in 2004 by introducing negative Italian American stereotypes to minors.

Silvio Berlusconi, using the event for fundraising. It was assumed that the event had strengthened Judeo-Italic ties.) But, after two weeks it became apparent that the Institute was not going to receive any replies, not from DreamWorks, not from the ADL. A call to the ADL verified that its leader, Abraham Foxman, had no sympathy for our *Shark Tale* cause.

By November, 2003, after two months of this one-sided diplomacy, the Italic Institute accepted the fact that DreamWorks did not take its concerns seriously. On November 8th, a protest rally was held on Long Island with students from the Institute's *Aurora Youth Program*. At the same time, Don Fiore developed a *Shark Tale* file on the Institute's website to register and coordinate all relevant activities. On November 17th, an unprecedented appeal was sent to major and minor Italian American organizations throughout the nation to join the Institute in fighting DreamWorks. The appeal emphasized the need to mobilize all the community's resources including the media, politicians and education experts. Reaction to this appeal was the formation, in December, 2003, of an *ad hoc* coalition composed of the Order Sons of Italy in America, UNICO National and the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) along with other Italian American, Polish and Arab groups called CARRES (Coalition Against Racial Religious & Ethnic

Stereotypes). The New York-based Columbus Citizens Foundation later joined as a "founding member." CARRES' first appeal to DreamWorks was a letter to Steven Spielberg dated January 21, 2004. Although the Italic Institute joined CARRES, it was not invited to participate in planning sessions until mid-2004.

After being rebuffed by DreamWorks, the Founding members of CARRES each pooled \$10,000 for a public relations campaign to reach the national media. The Institute had already expended \$10,000, with another \$10,000 to follow, to crack the DreamWorks defenses and to access the media. Only one minor victory was achieved when the Institute reached out to actor Peter Falk, a 1998 recipient of the Institute's Silver Medallion for his 20-year role as Detective Columbo. Falk was doing the voiceover for Don Brizzi, a the shark leader of the "Five Families." Subsequently, his character was renamed Don Feinberg, a token Judaic villain in a sea of Italic sharks. At the same

time, Italic Institute spokesmen were achieving success with articles and interviews in mainstream publications like

the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Newsday*, *New York Daily News* and the *Associated Press*. Nevertheless, major national television news, entertainment and talk shows eluded all CARRES members, including the Italic Institute.

Prior to going public, CARRES tried to reach Spielberg using NIAF's contacts in Hollywood. But, direct discussions with DreamWorks and Motion Picture Association president Jack Valenti proved fruitless.

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But the reality was that 99% of the so-called Italian American Caucus remained on the sidelines.



with contemporary Greek scholars from Constantinople and with Arabs who had studied the ancient Greeks sparked the memories of a bygone era when the intellect soared. The recovery of classical statuary breathed new life into art and inspired new techniques.

As the Church's coffers filled with the offerings of Europe, the popes became patrons of the arts. As Italian city-states reasserted their mercantile traditions, capitalism grew and with it wealth. This wealth subsidized the men and women who would give the *rinascimento* its glow: Michelangelo, Raffaele and others. Political science was born as Macchiavelli examined the ancient historians and produced his own reflections on government and human nature.

The *rinascimento* made man rather than the heavens the measure of all things. Scientific experimentation replaced blind faith in understanding the workings of the universe. Galileo and Da Vinci asked the questions and searched the heavens and the earth for the answers. Despite the threat of the Inquisition, Italian scholars such as Lorenzo Valla, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo Galilei had the courage to replace myth with truth.

Interestingly, Italian church leaders allowed the full gamut of artistic expression. Unlike their Greek Orthodox counterparts, Roman Catholic prelates continued the classical tradition of statuary within their churches. (Greeks would only condone two-dimensional icons to avoid idolatry). Even nudes adorned the paintings and statuary of Italian cities with the tacit understanding of the church fathers.

The freedom of thought that we now appreciate in a secular society we owe to the *rinascimento*.

9. THE REPUBLIC



It is on the Roman republic that the U.S. government is modeled rather than the ancient Greek or British.

Democracy is an elusive form of government. In purest terms it means the direct involvement of every eligible citizen in ruling a society. Athens is generally considered the birthplace of democracy. Yet, democratic Athens only allowed eligible males to vote or hold office. Women had few political or even social rights. Moreover, there was no naturalization process to allow non-Greeks to have equal rights. In contrast, the Romans developed the *Res Publica*, the Public Thing, in which eligible males voted for representatives to an Assembly and Senate. The republican system was more suited to heavily populated societies. In addition, a multi-tiered system of privileges allowed non-Romans (i.e. non-residents of the city) to gradually become Roman citizens. For example, all free males of Italy became Roman citizens by 88

BC. In 212 AD, all free males of the empire became Roman citizens. This was a concept unequalled in the ancient world.

Naturalization, representative democracy, tri-part government (executive, judicial, legislative), checks and balances, federalism, bi-cameral legislature, and the court system all evolved from the ancient Roman model. St. Paul, a Jew who possessed Roman citizenship, was inspired by that privilege to redirect the Christian mission. Instead of requiring male converts to be circumcised in the Jewish manner, Paul welcomed non-Jews, foreskins and all, to be Christians. It was a major marketing bonanza. There were a lot more pagans than Jews in the world.

The Founding Fathers of the United States looked beyond the British parliamentary model of representative democracy and favored the older Roman model. John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and others all studied Roman and Italian sources to gain insight into an ideal republic. Although they studied John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau for individual human rights, it was Macchiavelli, Cesare Beccaria (penal reform) and Gaetano Filangieri (*The Science of Legislation*), as well as Marcus Tullius Cicero and other primary Roman sources, that they chose to shape the Great Republic we have today.

Other concepts and trappings adopted from the Romans were the presumption of innocence, the veto (literally: I forbid!), the Senate, the House of Representatives (from the Roman Tribal Assembly), the President, the Capitol (from Capitoline Hill, one of the famous seven hills of Rome), the eagle, the fasces (mounted on the walls of the House), vocabulary such as *E Pluribus Unum*, and, of course, the grand architecture of Washington, DC.

Most important of all, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire provided the examples for a progressive republic. In its secularism Rome ruled with relative tolerance. Despite the occasional waves of persecutions, the empire managed to survive with hundreds of ethnic groups and religious sects among its 80 million inhabitants. In its extension of citizenship Rome cultivated a meritocracy. Eventually, non-Italic individuals rose to positions in the Senate, army and the emperor's throne. In its humanism Rome institutionalized social welfare. Though we hear cynically about "bread and circuses" the mature Empire established such innovations as refuge for unwanted babies, funding for poor and orphaned children, public schools, hospitals, public baths, and libraries. As an urban-based empire, Rome provided for varying degrees of self-government in major cities and provinces. Natural disasters brought financial and humanitarian aid from Rome directly or from neighboring provinces. An earthquake in northern Turkey during the reign of Hadrian (124 AD) brought imperial funds to care for the survivors and to rebuild the devastated cities. (One of those cities was Nicaea, mentioned above, where modern Christianity was officially launched one hundred years later.) There existed a "federalism" within the Roman Empire that later inspired the relationship between our national government and the states of the union. In the rule of law Rome allowed the orderly resolution of conflict and a system that enhanced the rights of women and improved the lot of slaves. Roman law was the first to be codified and implemented with an extensive court system and professional attorneys. Like our society, the Romans aspired to higher standards even though they fell short of them.

It is unfortunate that our debt to Rome for secular government and law is so little appreciated by the general public, thanks to the entertainment media.

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CARRES then, in 2004, turned to the Italic Institute's original strategy of mobilizing Italian American politicians and issuing press releases. A meeting was arranged by NIAF with Representative John Mica (R-FL), co-chairman of the Italian American Caucus in Congress. Steven Aiello of the NIAF Board of Trustees and facilitator of CARRES and John Marino, NIAF's Political Liaison, received strong assurances of Mica's support in rounding up Caucus members. It was later determined, however, Mica never solicited other members of the Caucus.

Prior to the CARRES initiative, the Italic Institute had written, faxed and called some 19 members of the Caucus starting in October, 2003. Only one congressman, Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), joined the fight by writing directly to Spielberg on January 9, 2004. (Pascrell had also been contacted by New Jersey constituent Dr. Emanuel Alfano of One Voice.) A year later, in October 2004, Rep Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) lent her support. But the reality was that 99% of the so-called Italian American Caucus remained on the sidelines.

Similarly, a host of celebrities and *prominenti* within the national community also failed, after numerous appeals, to respond to the fight against *Shark Tale*, people like Mario Cuomo, Lee Iacocca, Jay Leno, and Al D'Amato, among others.

In May, 2004 the Italic Institute staged a protest at the Tribeca Film Festival where Robert DeNiro and Jeffrey Katzenberg held a preview of *Shark Tale* for parents and children. Over the Italic Institute's written objections, Charles Gargano, New York State's Chairman of the Economic Development Corporation awarded the Festival a \$200,000 grant. (Gargano also happened to be chairman of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, a member of CARRES and had a part in Robert DeNiro's mob comedy *Analyze That*.) Three Institute members from Chicago were flown to New York, two of them dressed as Leonardo DaVinci and his Swiss bodyguard, to distribute flyers and a satirical cartoon. Along with representatives of CARRES, Institute leaders (John Mancini, Rosario Iaconis, Bill Dal Cerro and sociologist Joseph Giordano) attended the preview and confirmed that *Shark Tale* promoted stereotypes to children.

In an attempt to break through to the television media, Columbus Foundation President Lawrence Auriana issued a number of press releases and held a press conference in Manhattan to denounce Steven Spielberg for hypocrisy. Assisted by the Italic Institute's research, Auriana was able to demonstrate that Spielberg received \$1 million in a federal giveaway in 1996 to "teach tolerance." Moreover, contrary to denials from Spielberg's office that he was not involved in the production of *Shark Tale*, Bill Dal Cerro located documentation proving that Spielberg had reviewed the storyboards for *Shark Tale* the previous year. Notwithstanding, Auriana's press conference was poorly attended and he only managed to get airtime on the local UPN station. Despite the glaring facts against Spielberg, the national television media could not be drawn into the *Shark Tale* controversy. CARRES facilitator Steven Aiello blamed the failure to have a national celebrity spokesman as the major drawback to the campaign.

Having exhausted appeals to DreamWorks, the media and the product sponsors for *Shark Tale*, CARRES finally voted for a boycott of the film as well as Coca Cola, Burger King, Krispy Kreme and General Mills. Renata Sdao researched legal liability issues and provided CARRES members with case citations to protect them from lawsuits. Again, the media was not interested in the boycott and none of the marketing

partners felt intimidated by the threat, including Coca Cola, which had previously met with Italian American leaders in Chicago.

The *Shark Tale* marketing spread to reading material. Scholastic Books published the script of *Shark Tale*, in novel form, for children and marketed it in schools complete with Italian-named characters. Katie Couric of NBC News' *Today Show* did a voiceover in the animation and promoted the film on her national television program. The Italic Institute engaged both of these marketing firms in a fruitless dialogue. Neither would admit that their *Shark Tale* products were inappropriate for children. NBC avoided the charge of Ms. Couric's questionable ethics, altogether. The Institute later filed an FCC complaint.

AN ASSESSMENT

The results of the *Shark Tale* campaign may rightly be considered a tactical failure. The Italic characters in the film were not deleted, no sponsors dropped out, no apologies were extended to the community, no admission of stereotyping was made by anyone. Spielberg's reputation was not tarnished. Not one celebrity attempted to help, not one prominent Italian American helped the cause, only two Italian American congressmen out of a Caucus of 160 members stepped forward. Finally, the film grossed over \$200 million dollars including the overseas market. It enabled DreamWorks to successfully sell shares with an initial public offering on Wall Street. It made Spielberg and his partners even richer. At this writing, DVD's are being marketed.

However, in a strategic sense, some success may eventually come from a newfound unity among the Italian American organizations. It may also come from finally getting a strong message to a handful of corporations and one studio in Hollywood that Italic stereotypes are not acceptable.

Perhaps, in the long run, the message will spread and *Shark Tale* may be the media's last venture into Italic-defamation-for-kids.

Among the causes that undermined the efforts of CARRES may be that the issue itself, i.e., "mafia-for-kids", didn't register with reporters and many Italian Americans. Or, perhaps the Italic Institute and CARRES got a late start in mobilizing resistance. (Opposition began one year before the film was released.) Clearly, there are powerful forces within the community that work contrary to anti-defamation. The failure to mobilize even the co-chairmen of the "Congressional Caucus" and even one celebrity was a paralyzing setback. It demonstrated either a complete lack of political influence or a half-hearted undertaking.

Few issues will present themselves as clear-cut as *Shark Tale*. It was a first in many ways. It was the first Italian mob animation. It was unequivocally negative. It was a slam-dunk case of Spielberg hypocrisy. And, it was outside the protection of the First Amendment. Hollywood literally exposed its flank to us. Yet, it exposed the open gaps in the community, between organizations, among individuals and even between the government of Italy and the Italian American community. The Italian government was set to reward "artist" Robert DeNiro with Italian citizenship during the *Shark Tale* premiere in Venice. Only a timely appeal to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi by OSIA National President Joseph Sciamè and other CARRES leaders prevented the insulting travesty. Still, at this writing, the Italians have not said whether the citizenship is being delayed or reversed in deference to CARRES. Such are the vagaries of this trans-Atlantic relationship.

* * *

Clearly, there are powerful forces within the community that work contrary to anti-defamation.



10. OPENING THE NEW WORLD



Probably the greatest event in history began with one Italian's dream.

No doubt this greatest of all events would have occurred anyway after 1492, but the facts reveal that Italian vision, talent and daring played a dominant role in opening the New World. We can easily speak of Columbus, Vespucci, Cabot and Verrazano to personify the grit that tamed the Atlantic Ocean. Yet, these men were the end products of a unique civilization. To sail across the great and unknown ocean took as much mental preparation as seafaring skill. Except for the Portuguese whose famous sons were the first moderns to follow and round the African coast, the European powers depended on a few Italians to carry their flags across the unknown sea. [We must acknowledge that Vikings, perhaps the Irish and even Portuguese fisherman hazarded the North Atlantic before Columbus. However, their exploits did not appreciably change history.]

The concept of sailing west to find the east was not revolutionary. The ancient Greeks proved the earth was round. The question was how big around? Fortunately for Columbus there was land between Spain and China otherwise he and his men would have perished at sea. Still, the logic of sailing west was intellectually sound.

The reasons for Europeans seeking a westward passage were manifold: The spread of Islam in the Middle East disrupted the ancient overland trade with Asia. Even though it was restored during the Crusades the northern European nations could not keep the Arabs in check for very long. Italian city-states eventually reached accords with the Arabs and created a monopoly of trade with the Middle East and overland to the Orient in the days of Marco Polo. This monopoly continued to supply Europe with its silks and spices until the fall of Constantinople to

the Muslim Turks in 1453. The Turks took control of the eastern Mediterranean and the Levant, causing a major disruption in Italian trade. Europeans needed a new supply route. The Portuguese found their monopoly to Asia when their ships first rounded the tip of Africa in 1498.

From this thumbnail history one can see that Italians figured prominently in commerce with the Indies and Orient. Trade and capitalism dated back to Roman Italy. Joint stock companies, marine insurance, and letters of credit were developed during the Empire. And while other Europeans were evolving from rural feudal societies to nation-states, the feudal-free Italian cities just kept doing what came naturally. Resources were not spent on unifying a country and maintaining a national army as in France, Spain and England. Profit was not a dirty word, nor was money-lending as among the upper classes of other Christian countries. The impulse to create and the thrill of competition were intrinsic parts of the Italic culture. So was the tradition of seafaring. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Gaeta and Amalfi were production centers for navigators and intrepid seamen. These and other cities such as Florence and Rome were also the custodians of scholarly works of the Romans, Greeks and Arabs documenting past explorations and theories of earth science as well as the tools needed for a long ocean crossing, the compass and astrolabe. In the crucible of Italy capitalism, competition, creativity, and knowledge produced the generation of navigators who would lead Europe across the Atlantic.

It is a common belief that the Italian explorers were wholly financed by the great nations that they sailed for, that they needed only to worry about maritime problems. This was certainly not the case with the first bold navigators Columbus and John Cabot (Caboto). Both these men were foreigners in their sponsoring country. Each proposed a risky venture at a time (1492 and 1497) when the Atlantic was a blank slate.

According to Hispanic historian German Arciniegas, Columbus was required by the Spanish sovereigns to provide two-thirds of the money for his first voyage. Fortunately for Columbus, Italian merchants and bankers had offices in Spain and he was able to raise the money from them. John Cabot, on the other hand, was forced to finance the whole amount of his trip. In return he could claim all the lands he found, merely paying the English crown a percentage of profits from commerce generated. Such were the conditions under which these Italian explorers served that Arciniegas rightly claims, "*The discovery of America was, in part, an Italian enterprise.*"

IN TRIBUTE

Boiling down the history of the world to ten "events" and crediting them to one people is admittedly a risky proposition. There are six populated continents and hundreds of ethnic societies that have contributed to human civilization in one way or another. Notwithstanding differences of selection, interpretation or perspective, the ground upon which this summary is built is solid. If the Irish "saved" civilization surely the Italic people had a hand in creating it. The roots of both the word "civilization" and the deeds that produced it grew deep from the soil of Italy.

* * *

(Alfred Cardone assisted in the research and format of this article.)



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