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# THE Italic Way

XLI, 2015

The magazine of the Italic Institute of America

COLUMBUS MONUMENT,  
MANHATTAN

**SLIPPING AWAY**  
OUR CULTURAL INTELLECT

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# The Italic Way

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## Quotable:

***“Destroy the record of a people’s past, leave it in ignorance of who its ancestors were and what they did, and one can fill the empty vessels of their souls with a new history, as in 1984.”***

- Patrick Buchanan, *The Death of the West*

### Have Hope Ye Who Enter Here!



The above Buchanan quote has a definite Italian connection. Mr. Buchanan traces the attack on culture to Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891 – 1937). It was Gramsci, living in Stalin’s USSR, who realized that Communism had little chance of success if the target people maintained its core values. “To capture the culture” was Gramsci’s solution to win the minds of his victims - to control the media, suppress nationalism, replace mythology, and revise history.

We need look no further than our experience as Italian Americans to see firsthand how our cultural heritage has been captured by others. We have no one to blame but ourselves for leaving a vacuum in the 3,000-year story of our ancestors that was easily filled with Mafia lore, street culture, and self-loathing.

As you enter the world of *The Italic Way*, you will find a cultural legacy unlike the simple food and family heritage that dominates our lives outside these pages. It’s a legacy that produced the Roman Catholic Church, opened the New World, invented humanism, and saved the West’s Greco-Roman roots more than once. Even our staff is awed by the revelations they find. They happily share them with you.

In many respects, our enormous legacy is too complex and daunting for most Italian Americans to grasp. The hands that rocked our cradles were not imbued with our millennial history. It is we who must build our own cultural intellect. - **John Mancini**, Editor

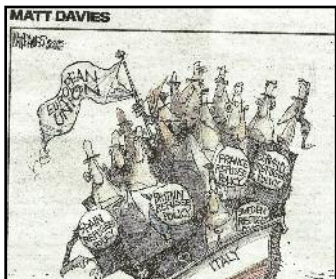




# ITALY STRUGGLES

**I**Italy is coping with economic, prestige, low birthrate, and refugee woes.

Not a day goes by that the Italian Navy does not rescue hapless fugitives from Africa and the Near East who seek Europe's humanist culture – 130,000 in just a year. Fleeing Islamic terrorism, Arab anarchy, or sub-Saharan poverty, the Third World is beating a watery path to the bastion of Greco-Roman civilization and Christianity.



A Newsday cartoon captures the impact of the refugee crisis on Italy.

Italians have understandably had enough of the unrelenting tide of humanity and the costs of rescue and internment. Jutting

out into the Mediterranean Sea once made Italy a world power,

now it only means bearing the tide of international discord. These illegals are also changing the ethnic make-up of an aging Italy plagued by a low birthrate. The European Union, that supernational entity of which Italy is a founding partner, has reluctantly bankrolled some of Italy's efforts. But nations like Germany, France and Britain know that they will be the next stop for the masses of refugees.



and right managed to agree on a new President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella (above), from a prominent Sicilian family whose brother, a regional president, was gunned down by the Mafia in 1980.

Despite the calm, many Italians feel the pain of losing national honor. India has refused to compromise on trying two Italian marines for mistakenly killing two Indian fishermen whom they mistook for pirates in international waters in 2012. Italy has already settled with the families for \$190,000 each



Italian Marines Massamiliano Latorre (l), and Salvatore Gironne. Latorre was allowed to return to Italy for open heart surgery, but Gironne awaits trial in India.



Prime Minister Matteo Renzi met with President Obama in March.

On the bright side, the current center-left government of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi appears to be stable enough to weather the various storms. Italians of the left

Chairman of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi. He has all the economic woes of Europe on his plate.

but the Indian government wants a trial. In frustration, Italy has appealed to the European Union to negotiate.



More recently, Italians were angered that President Obama failed to inform Prime Minister Renzi of the accidental killing by a U.S. drone of ISIS prisoner Giovanni Lo Porto when Renzi visited the U.S. last March. Italians learned of the death from the news media.

Within the EU, Italy has managed to take key slots in the European hierarchy, including Mario Draghi as President of the European Central Bank and Federica Mogherini as

Foreign Policy Chief of the EU. These prestigious positions are on the front line of headline-making crises. Draghi must help broker



EU Foreign Secretary Federica Mogherini with Israel's Netanyahu (l) and Iran's negotiator Mohammad Zarif (below)

and enforcing austerity on debt-ridden members, including his own Italy. So too must diplomat Mogherini cope with Iran's nuclear ambitions and the very crises that have caused the onrush of refugees. She is even in the middle of the

India-Italy dispute. "It's good for everyone to be fully aware of how much of an impact the unresolved dispute of the two Italian Navy officers can have on relations between the EU and India," Mogherini told all parties.



And we mustn't overlook another major Italic player in the world's tumult – Jorge Mario Bergoglio, aka Pope Francis. He too has projected a strong role for the Vatican in the various crises that have set in motion population shifts and threatened the lives and livelihoods of Christians in Africa and Asia.



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## SELMA REVISITED

The story of the African American struggle for equality in the South was documented in the 2014 movie *Selma*. But few moviegoers know that Dr. Martin Luther King's very presence at Selma in 1963 partly depended on Italian American surgeon Emil Naclerio (near right), who helped save King's life in 1958 when he was stabbed by a black woman in Harlem, NY. Nor would they know that Italian American correspondent for NBC-TV, Richard Valeriani (far right), was brutalized by the same police who attacked the black marchers that day. Italian American legend Tony Bennett also participated in the final march to Montgomery.



## DRONE MAN

He is a very secretive man but the guy who headed the CIA's drone program, until recently, was **Michael D'Andrea**. Some of the things reported about him include:

- He is a convert to Islam (left, at prayer).
- He directed the hunt for Osama bin Laden.
- He was the driving force of the Obama administration's embrace of targeted killing as a centerpiece of its counterterrorism efforts.
- He was the basis for a character known as "The Wolf" in *Zero Dark Thirty*.

## DRUG CZAR

**Michael Botticelli**, 57, is the nation's "drug czar," aka White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Unlike previous czars, who hailed from military, police, or political backgrounds, Botticelli is a recovering drug user (26 years clean)!



## SPACE FELLOWS

Italian Americans don't just manage sports teams. Michael Suffredini (bottom) is the Director of the International Space Station. Mark Sirangelo (top)



heads up the space program for Sierra Nevada Corp. and its Dream Chaser shuttle, which can carry seven passengers and use commercial airports instead of launching pads.



## WEATHERMAN



Talk about a hotseat. Louis Uccellini is the "forecaster-in-chief" as Director of the National Weather Service. Last winter he took some flak from New Yorkers for predicting a January blizzard that wasn't. The city subway system was shut down in anticipation, stranding millions. In fact, the blizzard had shifted 75 miles east and paralyzed Long Island's East End and New England. Blame the Jet Stream!

## FALLEN PATRIOT

Canadians mourned the murder of Corporal Nathan Cirillo last October by a deranged convert to Islam. Cpl. Cirillo, an Italo-Canadian, was on guard duty at National War Memorial in Ottawa when the murderer struck.



In our article, "**Jaws of Defeat**" (issue XXXIX) we were unclear if the British cracked Italian naval codes as they had Germany's Enigma. Here is what Sir Harry Hinsley, a historian who worked at the Benchley Park code-breaking facility, made famous in the 2014 movie *Intelligent Life*, stated at a seminar in 1993: "...we couldn't read the Italian book ciphers for the army, the navy and the airforce..." "Book ciphers proved to be invulnerable..." "...the Italians occasionally, who rather looked down on machine ciphers [like the German Enigma], warned the Germans that the allies were reading their ciphers. And the Germans said 'Pooh, pooh, we are alright.'" In short, loose German lips sunk Italian ships.





# All'Italiana

## SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

**Thomas Menino**, 71, was the longest-serving mayor of Boston and the first Italian American. He was the City Council President when he replaced Mayor Raymond Flynn, who left office to be a U.S. ambassador in 1993. Menino's rough-hewn, hands-on approach to office endeared him to residents. Often considered an autocrat, he succeeded in spurring an urban renaissance that revitalized downtown Boston, making it a thriving economic and cultural magnet.



**Robert Poli**, 78, achieved fame as the union leader who stood up to President Ronald Reagan in 1981. To his regret, Reagan won by destroying Poli's Air Traffic Controllers Union during an illegal strike. Poli had endorsed candidate Reagan believing the future president was sympathetic to Controller grievances. Once in office, however, Reagan fired the strikers and successfully replaced them. Poli fought the law and the law won.



**Marge Roukema**, 85, was born Margaret Scafati and went on to serve eleven terms in the House of Representatives (R-NJ). During that time Roukema championed unpaid leave for family medical emergencies. She came by this cause after dealing with her own son's leukemia. Her struggle bore fruit with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Passed over by Republican

leaders for a select House Committee, Roukema warned the Party that it was losing its moderate appeal to voters.

**Marty Napoleon**, 93, born Matteo George Napoli in New York, NY, Napoleon was part of an influential family of jazz musicians including brother Teddy (piano) and uncle Phil (trumpet). A pianist like Teddy, Marty played with Louis Armstrong, toured all over Europe, was featured in Hollywood movies, and gigged at the White House.

Actress **Virna Lisi**, 78, played opposite such leading men as Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis, and Frank Sinatra. Already fluent in French and Spanish, the Italian actress had to learn English from scratch when she landed the co-star role in the 1965 film *How to Murder Your Wife*. Praised for her acting and good looks, Lisi was part of Hollywood's European imports



which included Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida.

**Mario Cuomo**, 82, was once a rising star in national politics. As the consummate negotiator, Cuomo's reputation for intellect, honesty, and moderation, coupled with his public speaking skills, opened the way to the governorship of New York State, three terms from 1983 – 1994. As keynote speaker at the 1984 Democratic National Convention, he electrified the nation with the realities of two Americas, one rich, one poor. Despite the hope of many that Cuomo would run for president in 1992, he pulled back at the last minute and chose to remain governor. However, he failed to achieve a fourth term in 1994.



**Carl Rubino**, 100, came to prominence with a television scandal in 1959. As attorney for Charles Van Doren, a contestant on NBC's *Twenty-One* quiz show, Rubino accompanied Van Doren to a Congressional hearing that exposed television's dirty little secret: rigged quiz shows. Among his other accomplishments, Rubino also worked in the New York City District Attorney's office tackling corruption on the waterfront, counterfeiting, and police malfeasance. Born and raised in East Harlem amid crime, Rubino credited "a good family, the church, the Boy Scouts – and a lot of luck" for his integrity and good life.

**Michele Ferrero**, 89, created Nutella, that chocolate-hazelnut spread that now has international appeal. His company, the Ferrero Group, was founded by Michele's father Pietro in the late 1940s. It now rivals Mars, Nestle', and Hershey with sales of some \$10 billion. Nutella was the result of a cost-cutting plan to dilute expensive cocoa with abundant hazelnuts. It became a staple among Italian children who spread it on bread or crackers and has now become an American favorite. Ferrero also makes Tic-Tacs and Ferrero-Rocher chocolates.



**Tony Verna**, 81, changed how viewers watch sporting events. In 1963, he invented the instant replay during the Army-Navy game. Sports fans now take for granted the idea of capturing and

reviewing action on the field. Even umpires have come to appreciate a system that takes the guesswork out of judging a close call. He went on to produce five Super Bowls, the Olympics, the Kentucky Derby, and the Live Aid concert of 1985. On his tombstone, Verna asked for this: *“Son of Italian immigrants. Invented instant replay.”*

**Tonya Gonnella Frichner**, 67, was a lawyer and professor who became a global voice for Native Americans. Part Italic and part Onondaga Indian from Upstate New York, Gonnella Frichner followed her mother’s commitment to indigenous peoples. She taught Indian history and anthropology at a number of colleges as well as becoming the North American representative at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

## RHODES TO RHODE ISLAND

Last November, the people of Rhode Island elected their first female governor, Gina Marie Raimondo. It helped that Rhode Island is heavily Italic but Governor Raimondo isn’t just a politician or a lawyer, she’s a doctor of Sociology (Oxford) and a *magna cum laude* in Economics (Harvard). How did she get to Oxford? Ironically, Raimondo was a Rhodes Scholar too! Our smallest state once produced the legendary U.S. Senator John Pastore (D-RI, 1950-1976), whom LBJ nearly chose as his Vice President.



## SNARKY JUDGES

University of California, at Irvine, Professor Richard Hasen has developed a “sarcasm index” to rate Supreme Court justices. Lo and behold, the top two sarcastic black robes at the nation’s top court are Antonin Scalia and

Samuel Alito. Basing his scale on harsh language and irony, Prof. Hasen has Scalia way ahead of the competition in putting down opinions he doesn’t agree with. Scalia admits to being a “nitpicker” with language but many advocates stretch language to the breaking point. For example, when someone used the term “modify” to mean a complete change of something, Scalia wondered if the French Revolution “modified” the French nobility, who were not only



dethroned but beheaded. Perhaps it isn’t just a coincidence that Scalia and Alito hail from southern Italian culture which is infamous for its lack of euphemism. After all, it was the Romans, not the Greeks, who created satire, the ultimate sarcasm.

## THE CASE FOR RAW EGGS



The cinematic boxer Rocky popularized downing raw eggs in training, but one Italian centenarian claims three eggs a day helped her reach 115—that, and staying single since 1938. Emma Morano of Verbania, Italy (on Lago Maggiore) still lives alone in a two-room apartment tended daily by her niece. Her meals now consist of two raw eggs, ground meat, soupy pasta and a banana. Medically, she refuses to go to hospitals or even doctors’ offices. Instead, her physician visits her once a month. Emma was born in 1899 when FIAT was founded and Marconi sent his first radio waves over the English Channel. Emma’s egg regimen dates back to the world’s first health book author, Luigi Cornaro, who recommended a daily egg, small meals, and a little wine. He lived to 98 back in 1566. Maybe he needed that second egg to break 100!

## NOT JUST DONKEY CARTS

Palermo, Sicily, conjures up many images to foreigners – a city with ancient traditions, the best and sometimes the worst of the Mezzogiorno – “Italy on steroids,” as they often say. (Sicily was joined to Italy in 241 B.C.) But Palermo is also a modern seaport.



MSC Cruises, the world’s largest privately owned passenger liner company, recently chose Palermo’s shipyard to resize a small fleet of cruise ships – lengthening

and upgrading them. The shipyard is owned by Italy’s famous Fincantieri, shipbuilders for many Carnival liners and most Italian naval vessels. The four ships, *Armonia*, *Lirica*, *Sinfonia* and *Opera*, are supposed to all be finished in 2015, lengthened by eighty feet and revitalized with balcony cabins, new restaurants and entertainment features.







# WORLD NOTES

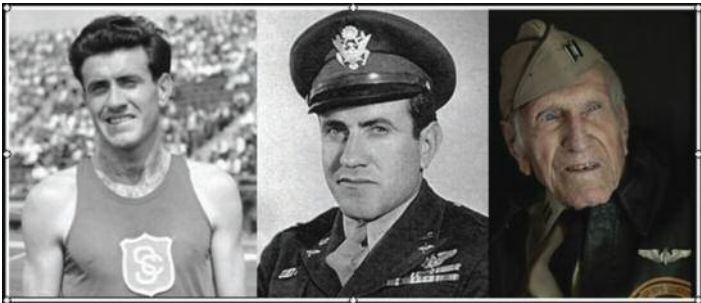
## NAPOLEOMANIA

He may be dead these past 194 years but the Napoleon brand is still a money-maker. Some of the emperor's possessions went to the auction block late last year, offered by Monaco's royal family to fund palace renovations. Among the items was one of Buonaparte's bicorne hats that sold for \$2.4 million. Among the reasons the Italic general still gets the big bucks is his rags-to-riches life. One collector describes Napoleon as "the American dream," a foreigner who became emblematic of France and remade Europe. Wealthy people just want to be part of his mystique, some buying up hundreds of his artifacts. As for Buonaparte's adopted homeland, the French recently succeeded in stopping production of a euro coin that depicted the emperor's defeat at Waterloo, explaining it was in bad taste. Some bygones are not forgotten.



## UNBROKEN BREAKS RECORDS

It was described as a quasi-religious, redemptive film, which would account for its box office success last Christmas. That was *Variety's* take on Angelina Jolie's first film *Unbroken*, the story of the tribulations of Louis Zamperini during the Second World War. Advertised with Zamperini's motivational words "If you can take it, you can make it," the film chronicled Captain Zamperini's more than full life - from a son of Italian immigrants to spending much of the war abused in a Japanese prison camp. In between, he ran in



the 1936 Berlin Olympics (meeting Hitler), served as a combat airman, and survived weeks in a raft after ditching into the Pacific only to be captured by the Japanese.

The movie earned over \$47 million at the box office and is now on DVD. Meanwhile, the book on which the film was based spent 180 weeks on the *NY Times Bestseller List*. And a new book, *Don't Give Up, Don't Give In*, has also been published to good reviews.

Louis Zamperini died at age 97 just before the movie was released.

## THEME PARK ON TIBER

It's had many uses since Benito Mussolini built *Cinecittà* outside of Rome. When it opened in 1937, "cinema city" cranked out Fascist propaganda films. Near the end of World War II it was a refugee camp. Right after the war it gave birth to neo-realism and gave Italy a leg up on global entertainment. During the 50s and 60s it was the site of *Ben Hur*, *Cleopatra*, and all the sword and sandal movies. Then the "spaghetti westerns" were born there, making Clint Eastwood an international star. Even mobster director Marty Scorsese used it for *The Gangs of New York*. Today, after a ten-year makeover, *Cinecittà* is now also a theme park *a la* Universal Studios Orlando. Who knew that Benito Mussolini would be Italy's Walt Disney?



**Cinecittà: ride a rollercoaster or walk through ancient Rome**

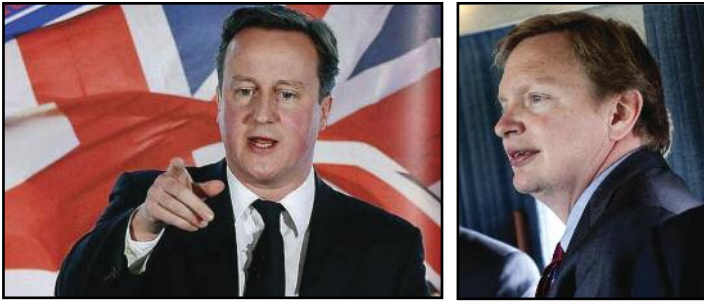


## BEHIND THE SCENES

When British Prime Minister David Cameron needed advice on his reelection campaign, his Conservative Party hired President Obama's master planner, Jim Messina. Not that Messina knew much about parliamentary elections, but he knows how to appeal to voters, regardless of the system. What Cameron and his Conservatives got was a surprising victory over Britain's Labour Party. Messina was born in Denver, raised in







Prime Minister David Cameron and his election consultant Jim Messina

Idaho, and schooled in Montana. Once called “the most powerful person in Washington that you haven’t heard of,” Messina now has world-wide credentials.

And how about that Clinton Foundation that some are calling a pay-to-play façade for Hillary and Bill’s wheeling and dealing? Thus far, the Foundation appears to be carrying out its mission to help the disadvantaged around the world. But it received its first major cash infusion back in 2005

when Italian Canadian mining magnet Frank Giustra (left) donated \$31.3 million. The donation came when Giustra’s company won a huge uranium deal in Kazakhstan, coincidentally after Giustra and former President Bill Clinton visited the country. Frank Giustra came from a working class Canadian family, spent part of his childhood in Italy and Argentina, and is well known for his philanthropy.

## LATIN TEACHER SHORTAGE

Among the great myths in this country is that Latin is a dead language. So, hearing that a Chicago school can’t find enough qualified Latin teachers for an elementary school sounds like a joke. But it’s true. Decatur Classical School, within the Chicago Public Schools, voiced this complaint last March. The American Classical League, which promotes the study of ancient Greek and Roman cultures confirms the national shortage, estimated at 25 – 30 teaching positions. In some schools Latin is offered from kindergarten, but mainly from fifth grade on.

To quote Marty Abbott, executive director of the American



A shirt inspired by a line in Monty Python’s satirical film *The Life of Brian*.

Studying Latin will answer this question.

Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Alexandria, Va, “Latin is the fourth most studied language in the nation, after Spanish, French, and German.” So where does that leave Italian? Number five, slightly ahead of Japanese and American Sign Language.

## BURNT OFFERINGS

When Vesuvius buried Pompeii in 79 A.D. it also buried nearby Herculaneum and a private home that contained a vast library. Named the House of Papyri by archeologists for its stash of paper scrolls, the villa (recreated below) may contain many of the lost works of



ancient scholars, perhaps even tidbits about a certain holy man from Judea. Unfortunately, the 18,000 scrolls so far unearthed are badly scorched and unreadable. That is until now.



This year, using a method called X-ray phase contrast tomography, scientists have been able to read parts of one scroll without unrolling it. The day may come when this ancient Italic library will unlock secrets Vesuvius has kept from us.

## CAJUN PRIDE

Louisiana has been the home state of French Americans since the British cleansed them from Arcadia (hence “cajun”), Canada in the 1700s. Cajun, or Creole as they are also called, politicians have ensured the survival of their French heritage through state-financed programs in French language immersion classes that serve some 4,000 students each year. One parish (county) intends to go bilingual on street signage. And certainly, Cajun cuisine and music are still alive and well. Although the New World was first opened by Italian explorers, the nations they worked for, including France, remember their own.



# Editorials



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

### Washington: Rudderless Without Rome

Rosario A. Iaconis

Given America's reactive—rather than proactive—leadership in the metastasizing cauldron of the Middle East, it is abundantly clear that NATO necessitates its Italian ally's naval, peacekeeping and diplomatic prowess.

From ISIS to Libya and Syria to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Iran, President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have misread both the Arab Street and the Persian mind.

*Yet Washington ignores Rome.*

The French-inspired Libyan misadventure, which brought *al Qaeda* back to Tripoli and beyond, led to the assassination of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens in Benghazi in 2012.

*Yet Washington—and the Western allies—ignored Rome's warnings regarding military action in Libya, a former Italian colony.*

Today, following the end of Italy's highly successful—but costly—*Mare Nostrum* operation, migrants and terrorists are flooding the wine dark sea.

*Yet Europe has backpedaled on maritime migration security, once again ignoring Rome.*

Vladimir Putin continues to run diplomatic rings around the State Department and the White House in the Ukrainian crisis.

And Iranian deputy foreign minister Abbas Araqchi's impudence in the nuclear talks in Switzerland has made a mockery of the pending P5+1\* deal with Tehran: "The export of stocks of enriched uranium is not in our program, and we do not intend sending them abroad." \* (U.S., UK, France, China, Russia + Germany)

*Yet Washington ignores—and excludes—Rome.*

Had Italy been included in the original Iran Contact Group, a P5+2 might well have negotiated a more equitable and verifiable nuclear deal. After all, the Magic Boot is Tehran's biggest European trading partner. Yet Rome remains a staunch ally of Israel.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has noted that with respect to the Middle East, "The main problem of the area is Iran – if we don't solve that one we will not be able to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

In reflecting on the benefits of peace *all'italiana*, Western leaders would be wise to heed Rome, not a newcomer (like Germany) to Mediterranean affairs.

-RAI



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

### Respect Has A Price

Bill Dal Cerro

"Our dignity is not for sale." Noble words. Did they emanate from the mouth of an Italian American? Alas, no: These proud words were spoken by David Hill, a Native American activist. He was defending the actions of a group of Native American actors starring in Adam Sandler's latest puerile comedy, *The Ridiculous Six*.

In a story reported all over the media, Native American actors were deeply offended by the mocking tone of many of the film's gags, prompting them to walk off of the set. But, as the saying goes, don't actors gotta eat? In the case of Native Americans, this would seem to be especially true, given the racism and poverty that still affects their community. The average Native American doesn't benefit from casino winnings; they are still economically deprived. Shouldn't they just swallow their pride and accept such easy Hollywood money?

Instead, our Native American brothers and sisters gave everyone a stirring demonstration of what true pride in one's ethnicity really means. It runs deeper than cash.

What, then, is the excuse for Italian American actors, many of whom have long since "made it" in Hollywood, especially financially? Instead of using that money and celebrity to undercut Hollywood bigotry, they continue to milk Italian stereotypes for all they're worth. They take and give nothing back. We long for the day when Italian American actors will walk off a mob movie set and say, "Enough! These films degrade our ancestors." Still waiting, people.

In the interim, what has been the result of such selfish attitudes? Two (count 'em: two) major symphony orchestras in the United States, Chicago and San Diego, held screenings of *The Godfather* this year. The San Diego one actually topped the Chicago one by having audience members "dress up like the mafia" at a pre-screening party, and dress up they did. Even little children were photographed wearing fedoras and chomping on cigars. We can't imagine a screening of a John Ford western where people are encouraged to dress up as "redskins." That would never happen, nor should it. And that's because Native American actors, unlike Italian American actors, have true *gravitas*.

-BDC





# Forum Italicum



**The following interview with “Progressive Radical” author Michael Parenti was conducted for *The Italic Way* by reporter Bob Masullo in March of 2015 in Berkeley, CA. We present his views to demonstrate the variety of political and social perspectives within our community.**

## Michael Parenti, an Intellectual with a Common Touch

Michael Parenti, born 82 years ago in what was then the biggest “Little Italy” of them all (Manhattan’s East Harlem, aka Italian, now Spanish, Harlem), grew up to become one of America’s leading political thinkers. He has written 25 books and more than 300 articles, all of them giving a unique *Parenti-esque* spin on history, politics and economics. His writing is at once scholarly and accessible, using down-to-earth, often humorous language to explain complex concepts. Now a resident of Berkeley, California, he is still actively writing and lecturing.



Michael Parenti, left, with Bob Masullo in Berkeley, CA

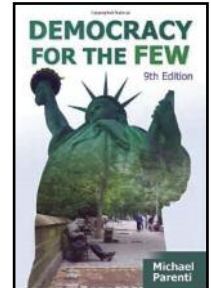
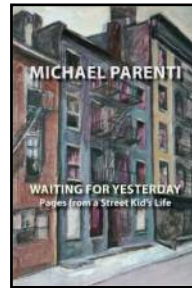
**THE ITALIC WAY (IW):** How would you define “progressive radical?”

**MICHAEL PARENTI (MP):** A progressive radical is someone who supports democratic political procedures rather than moneyed-driven ones, much needed human services, public ownership of education, utilities, industrial production, and most financing, while opposing big corporate power and global imperialism.

**IW:** You grew up in East Harlem when it was the largest Italian neighborhood on this side of the Atlantic. Was that a positive

or negative experience?

**MP:** By its nature, I would say that any large Italian neighborhood would be a mix of positive and negative experiences. The neighborhood had a toughness to it but it was also familiar, fairly safe, and lively. I used to shudder at the sterile environments of suburban areas and the antiseptic middle-class neighborhoods on the rare occasions I visited them. East Harlem was a



*Waiting for Yesterday: Pages from a Street Kid's Life* — The memoir of an Italian-American intellectual.

place of humble origin, poor, hardworking people, nothing to be ashamed of. But as I got into my teens, East Harlem began to feel like a provincial world and I longed for other experiences and wider horizons.

**IW:** Tell me about your parents. What were they like? Were they supportive? Did they speak Italian at home? Where in Italy were they from? Was life in your home more “American” or more “Italian?”

**MP:** My parents were hardworking Italian Americans who spoke English at home except when they wanted to say something confidential to each other or when they conversed with their immigrant parents; then they used their southern Italian dialects (some of which I could decipher as they spoke). My father was Barese and my mother was Calabrese. They were tolerant of my inclinations to play sports and street games, and read books and adventure magazines. They were happy and proud when I graduated high school but they never urged me to go on to college. Higher education simply was not part of their world view.

**IW:** It’s well known that you hold a Ph.D. in political science from Yale, but where did you go to elementary school, high school, and college? And were there many other Italians at these schools? Were you drawn to other

Italians growing up and in school?

**MP:** I attended a somewhat rundown public school located in East Harlem, consisting almost entirely of Italian boys. I went to De Witt Clinton High School where most of the students were Jewish, not many Italians. Same with City

(Cont’d. on p. 22)

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**“The accomplishments of Italian Americans are frozen out of the mainstream media.”**

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# Slipping Away

***Don't worry about losing Little Italies. The real problem is losing our cultural intellect - both the visible treasures and our classical perspective.***

## Our Cultural Intellect At Risk

by John Mancini

Last February, PBS broadcast a four-part series on Italian Americans written, directed, and produced by a director named John Maggio. It was a nostalgic look at a commonly held version of Italian American history – from the poverty of the *Mezzogiorno* to the immigrant struggle. (See page 18 for our review of this series.)

We suppose the message in this series, as underscored by the opening segment about longevity among Italians in the community of Roseto, PA, is that there has been a cost to us in coming to America: family unity, traditional culture, and even health. True enough, but such things are never permanent anyway. The forces of change – intermarriage, new generations, and mobility – are unrelenting. Those forces affect every immigrant group except those who follow the strictest religious traditions. But more important than food, family, and cultural tradition is the loss of our “cultural intellect.” Sadly, that intellect has been draining away for decades without much notice from community leaders and academics.

## Cultural Intellect

What do we mean by “cultural intellect?” Simply, it is our cultural mindset. On the lowest plane, we perceive our Italian culture as blue-collar, old neighborhood, and extended family. Few of us see the higher



The Garibaldi-Meucci House on Staten Island, NY. (r) The first generation members of the Sons of Italy encased it within a temple (left) to treasure it. Today, few Italian Americans even know it exists.



***Cultural Intellect is deeper than our immigrant story and the food we eat***

plane – the 3,000-year-old legacy of a multi-dimensional culture that literally changed the world. Let’s call it our classical foundation. Some perceptive Italian Americans started laying the groundwork years ago to preserve this classical foundation. You can see their efforts around the country in landmarks such as the Garibaldi-Meucci House (below left) on Staten Island, NY, the Columbus Monument in Manhattan, in the Balbo Column in Chicago, and in the Bank of America launched in California. Those generations before us also planted the intellectual seeds for our climb

from a street culture to the lofty plains of Anglo-America. They established *La Casa Italiana* at Columbia University in 1927 as the center of classical Italian culture in America. They published English language magazines in the 1930s devoid of food or fashion, and revealed in books like *Four Centuries of Italian American*

*History* (1952) the untold story of how we helped create America before the mass immigrations.

These physical monuments and the underlining intellectual foundation were to be the tools to reconnect us to Classical Italy – our Greco-Roman-Etruscan roots, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment, as well as our invaluable contributions to the New World – so we could transcend our immigrant mentality. But internal and external forces interrupted our climb. Those forces began with the Second World War—when Fascist Italy linked its fortunes to Nazi Germany—and eventually reversed our climb to a rapid decline in cultural intellect. And don’t confuse this intellect with general education.

There is no logic in counting the number of Italian



The 1892 World’s Fair first honored Columbus. Under the word “carnival” is written “The World United,” the true meaning his voyages.

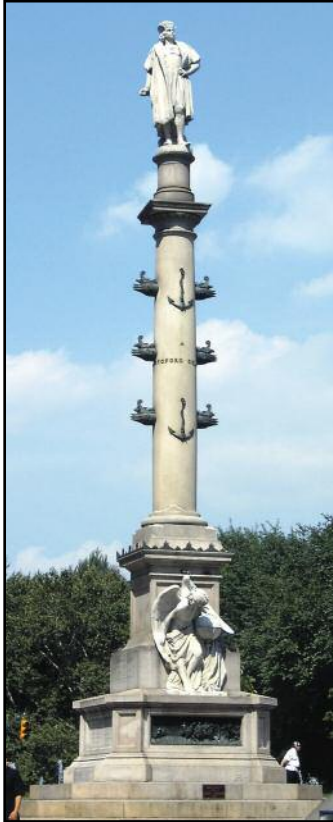




American college graduates as proof of our cultural/ethnic intellect, or the myriad books and films that examine, in a thousand monotonous ways, the same immigrant story that has defined us for over a century. The truth is our community has lost whatever classical intellect we possessed in the 1930s and has chosen to retain only glorified memories of an immigrant past. Nevertheless, evidence of that cultural intellect remains. It up to us to understand its value and to rededicate ourselves to our classical legacy. Here are the treasures given to us:

## The Columbus Monument

It was called The World's Columbian Exhibition of 1892-93 in Chicago, a celebration of Christopher Columbus by Anglo-America. Its theme was four hundred years of northern European struggle and ultimate domination of North America. Riding the wave, Italian American newspapers in New York raised enough



money to erect their own magnificent monument to Columbus in 1892 in the heart of Manhattan, now known as Columbus Circle. This feat would eventually give birth to Columbus statues around the nation, a groundswell embrace of a Renaissance explorer. Italian immigrant culture was now redirected to its classical roots instead of *la miseria*.

The Great Navigator was our ticket to the American dream. Illiterate Italian immigrants who never heard of him before coming to these shores now had a stake in the game. Over the years, Columbus, first an icon of the Irish-dominated Knights of Columbus, became an Italian American property. He was lauded with a holiday and parades. The Anglos considered him a hero, so we had no qualms in honoring him. His was the story of a grand vision, of organizational skills, of amazing

courage, and perfect execution. It was Columbus who personified the greatness of the Italic people. Even his statue in Columbus Circle rests on a 'beaked' column, the prows of six triremes, harking back to Roman sea power.

For the generation of 1892, this monument was the sacred symbol of America's debt to Italians, not the other way around. Inscribed on the base is the phrase "He gave a [new] world to the [old] world." But in 2012, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, with the blessing of some Italian American leaders, allowed a Japanese designer to use the monument for a ludicrous art exhibit: Columbus became an oversized knick-knack on a coffee table within a room hoisted 70-feet above the street. Our heroic Columbus became a circus attraction and a diminished attitude toward his legacy was condoned.

## La Casa Italiana

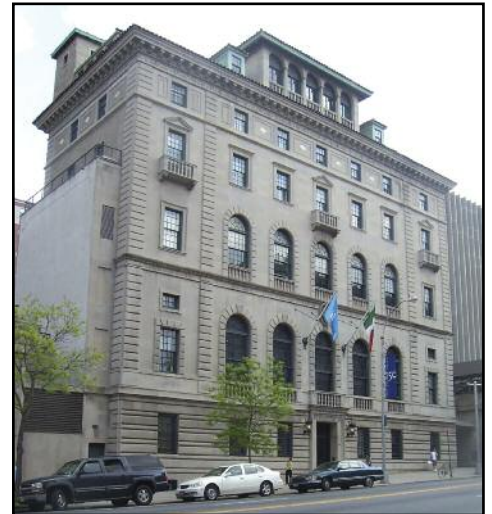
The year 1927 saw the brutal executions by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. After the infamous massacre of eleven Italian immigrants in New Orleans in 1891, the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti came as another reminder

to Italian Americans that they were still the low man on the totem among European Americans. Notwithstanding the huge numbers of Italian Americans that served in the First World War or the coming of our college educated second generation, nothing had changed Anglo-America's perception of us as an inferior, working class people prone to violence and radicalism.

## Columbia University and the Italian government have usurped our cultural legacy

But, new things were afoot. A group of Italian American students attending Manhattan's Columbia University in the early 1920s wanted to give Classical Italian culture a home on campus equal to that of French, German, and Spanish. Their dream became a reality when members of the Paterno Family, builders and real estate tycoons, offered to erect a six-story palazzo off-campus to be "The Italian House."

On Columbus Day, 1927, the building was opened in a much-publicized ceremony attended by Italian Senator/inventor Guglielmo Marconi. *La Casa Italiana* was our forebears' answer to New Orleans and Sacco & Vanzetti. It was the largest



**La Casa Italiana in 1927. In the words of Guglielmo Marconi: "To promote the educational and spiritual uplift of Italians in America." Nary an Italian American can be found there now.**



**Mayor Bloomberg allowed a Japanese artist to erect a room around Columbus, 70-feet up, making him a coffee table prop. This NY Post photo captured the disrespect of some visitors.**



# Italy Restored

## Did the Roman Empire really fall in 476 A.D.?

by Alfred Cardone

Historians like a beginning and an end, so they picked the year the last Roman emperor lost his throne to Germanic invaders. But the vast empire, founded by Caesar Augustus before the birth of Christ, had two capitals by then: Roma and Nova Roma (aka Constantinople) and two emperors (east and west). Moreover, exactly 60 years after Rome's "fall," an eastern emperor retook Rome and Italy from their barbarian conquerors. That emperor is better known for codifying Roman law, but the debt that is owed to him for restoring the western empire can never be understated. Known to history as Justinian, his remarkable story is a tribute to our resilient Italic legacy.

Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Justinianus, known to history as Justinian, was born in 483 A.D., just seven years after the "fall" of Rome, at Tauresium in the Roman Balkans. His family was of mixed Roman blood, but Latin-speaking. His uncle Justin was a member of the imperial guard and brought Justinian to Constantinople where he adopted the boy and ensured that he was well educated in Roman history, law and the-



Santa Sophia (now Hagia Sophia) built by Justinian as a Christian church in Constantinople (Istanbul), now a museum.

### Rome Falls

For centuries, the western Roman Empire was subject to unrelenting pressure from Germanic tribes along its borders. Augustus himself had lost three legions in 4 A.D. in an attempt to push the

German border from the Rhine to the Elbe River. By the 400s A.D. the barbarians had broken through and overwhelmed Italy, bringing down the curtain when they deposed teenaged Emperor Romulus Augustulus.

Despite the terrible loss of half their empire, there was still a Roman Empire. The modern idea that the Roman Empire had ceased to exist and was somehow in the process of transforming into what is today known as the Byzantine Empire was not the perception of the day. The fact that the city of Rome had fallen was not wholly unexpected. The city had been under siege or sacked a number of times during that grim period. What mattered was that the Roman imperial apparatus continued unbroken with its center at the New Rome (Constantinople).

No sooner had Justinian assumed the imperial purple, then he focused all his energies on restoring the full empire. Justinian did not merely consider himself ruler of the East, but as the rightful ruler of the entire

### The reconquest of Italy and southern Spain allowed Latin Civilization to ultimately triumph in Europe

ology. Uncle Justin rapidly gained power and influence in the capital and became emperor in 518. His nephew Justinian proved to be exceptionally talented and was eventually appointed co-emperor. With the death of Justin, Justinian became sole ruler of the Roman Empire in 527.

Roman world and the heir of Constantine and Augustus. Being a native Latin-speaker in the Greek-speaking eastern capital meant his heart was in the west.

It was in that spirit that Justinian launched his *Renovatio Imperii* or restoration of the Empire. But before he could turn westward, he needed to secure his eastern borders. An invading Persian (Iran) army had been defeated at the battle of Dara by Justinian's young general Belisarius in 530.

Two years later, Justinian negotiated a treaty with the Persian Empire. With the eastern frontier secure, Justinian turned his attention west. In June 533, a Roman armada of 600 ships

#### A Barbarian Scorecard

Just to sort out German tribes, here's a breakdown: Saxons invaded and ruled in Britain, Visigoths took over the Spanish peninsula, Vandals swept into North Africa, the Franks took over Gaul (France) and the Ostrogoths overran Italy, later joined by the Lombards.

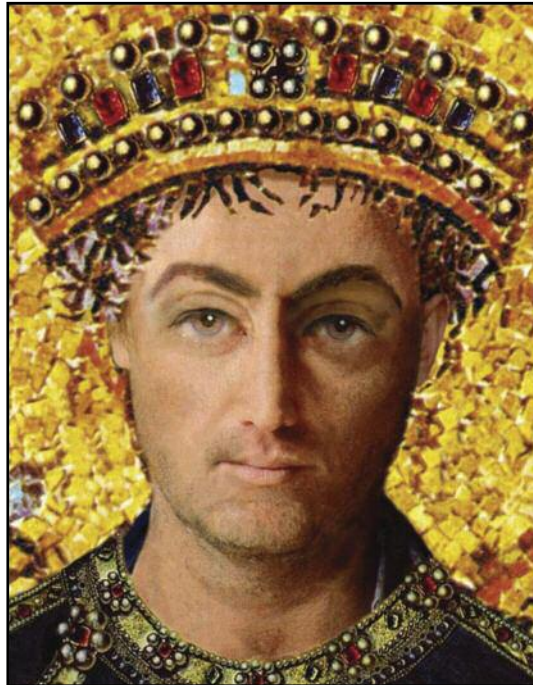




### Emperor Justinian

This picture is digitally-enhanced based on a mosaic in San Vitale Church in Ravenna.

Though born in the Balkans, he was Latin-speaking and Romanized.



carrying 10,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry landed in Tunisia. Under the brilliant command of General Belisarius, the Romans crushed the Vandal army, retaking the province within four weeks, as well as the islands of Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearics. Belisarius then turned his attention toward Italy, seizing Sicily in 535. His army advanced north taking Naples after a fierce battle and capturing Rome itself on December 9, 536. Sixty years after the young Romulus Augustulus had lost his throne in the West, Rome was again part of the Empire and free from barbarian occupation. The Ostrogothic King Vitigis, however, raised a large army of 50,000 men and besieged Rome for more than a year until March, 538. Protected by the twelve miles of Aurelian Walls and defended by fewer than 4,000 imperial troops, Rome withstood the siege. The defeated barbarian army, suffering from hunger and disease, was forced to withdraw. Belisarius proceeded north taking Milan and all the Gothic strongholds in the Po Valley. The barbarian capital of Ravenna was finally reclaimed for the Empire in 540. King Vitigis and his wife were captured and sent to Constantinople for a triumph.

Meanwhile, a renewed war between the Empire and Persia forced the recall of General Belisarius. It also gave the Ostrogoths an opportunity to counter attack and again seize large portions of the Italian peninsula. Belisarius was sent back to Italy in 544 but was unable to turn the tide with the insufficient number of troops dispatched. Justinian then sent a force of 35,000 men under the command of General Narses to finally drive the Ostrogoths out of Italy. Ravenna was recaptured in 552, and the Ostrogoths were finally broken at the battles of Busta Gallorum and Mons Lactarius in that same year. A large Frankish invasion from Gaul was repelled at Casilinum in

### The Great Lawgiver

Justinian's most enduring achievement, the one he is most famous for, was the compilation and codification of all existing Roman law. In 528 he formed a commission of ten jurists headed by his chief magistrate Tribonian to accomplish this monumental task. The resulting *Justinian Code* or *Corpus Juris Civilis* was completed in 534 and consisted of four parts. The *Codex* contained 4,562 public and private laws dating back to the reign of Hadrian (117-138), which were

updated and reorganized. The *Digest* was a summary of Roman jurisprudence over the centuries and included the views and interpretations of experts on law and justice. The commission had to read two thousand legal texts in order to complete this section. The *Institutes* was intended to serve as a guide to understanding the Code and explained its objectives and principles. It was essentially a handbook for law students. Finally, the *Novellae* was a collection of new laws issued during the reign of Justinian and supplemented the *Codex*.

### Roman emperors Constantine, Theodosius, and Justinian built the infrastructure of Christianity



The western half of the Roman Empire (dark green) that Justinian reconquered.

The *Justinian Code* served as the legal system of the Eastern Roman Empire for centuries and (Cont'd on p. 20)



# Oriana Fallaci:

## Journalistic Warrior

by Bill Dal Cerro

***“I have always looked on disobedience toward the oppressive as the only way to use the miracle of having been born.”***

- Oriana Fallaci (1929 - 2006)

There have been ground-breaking female journalists in America: Nellie Bly, for instance, whose undercover expose' of unseemly conditions in mental institutions in the 1870s laid the groundwork for investigative reporting; or Barbara Walters, celebrity interviewer and former co-host of TV's *The View*, who, in 1976, became the first female journalist to co-anchor a major television newscast (the *ABC Evening News*, with Harry Reasoner).



But neither of them can hold a pen or a notebook to Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, a larger-than-life figure who became as publicly well-known as her subjects—no mean feat when some of those interviewees included key political and cultural figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

the Ayatollah Khomeini, Fidel Castro, Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Yassar Arafat, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Henry Kissinger, Nguyen Van Thieu, the Shah of Iran, King Hussein of Jordan, Muammar Kaddafi, Deng Xiaoping, and Pope Benedict the XVI.

Fearlessness is a part of every journalist's job. The pursuit of truth requires tenacity, dedication, and even a willingness to put one's physical safety on the line to get a good story. Fallaci had all of these qualities, but in droves.

In 1968, prior to the Summer Olympics in Mexico, Fallaci, covering student activist riots for the political magazine *L'Europeo*, was shot three times by Mexican police, who also dragged her down a flight of stairs and left her for dead. Touring Vietnam, she often went undercover to avoid military conflicts. The same was true when covering the Indo-Pakistani War (1971), the war in Lebanon (1982), and the Persian Gulf War (1991).

Perhaps nothing symbolizes Fallaci's boldness more than her infamous interview with the Ayatollah Khomeini. It was 1979, and the Ayatollah had just come to power after leading the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Forced to wear a *chador* (head-to-toe body covering) during the interview, Fallaci grilled the leader about his society's second-class view of women, needling him with the question, “*By the way, how can you swim in a chador?*” (Fallaci was always good with a quip.) Replied the Ayatollah : “*Our customs do not concern you. If you don't like the Islamic dress, you are not obliged to wear (the chador), since it is for young women and respectable ladies.*” Fallaci, not missing a beat, responded, “*This is very kind of you, Imam. Since you tell me that, I'm going to immediately rid myself of this stupid, medieval rag! There!*” She removed the chador and flung it at Khomeini.

(Note: Fallaci did the same to condescending male Hollywood celebrities: When she interviewed boxer Muhammad Ali in the mid-1960s, he deliberately belched in her face three times, whereupon she called him an “*animal*,” unplugged her tape recorder, and stormed out of his house.)

Although Fallaci's name may sound like an Italian beauty product, and although she did practice the very Italian concept of *fare una bella figura*, she was anything but a shallow shrinking violet. Her feisty, take-no-prisoners approach to journalism was undoubtedly nurtured at her father's knee: Edoardo Fallaci was a Florentine cabinet-maker who spent WWII fighting in the Italian resistance movement. Oriana, then only a teenager, often accompanied her father and the partisans as they aided the invading Allied troops.

After the war, Fallaci decided against a career in medicine and became a newspaper reporter. To use a medical metaphor, journalism had gotten into her bloodstream. “Truth” became the antidote to propaganda and power.

As she once put it, “*Whether it comes from a despotic sovereign or an elected president, from a murderous general or a beloved leader, I see power as an inhuman and hateful phenomenon.*”

In the 1950s, Fallaci moved to New York, writing a book, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Hollywood*, based on her interviews with celebrities. In 1961, however, she wrote *The Useless Sex*, a book about the oppression of women in the Middle East, presaging her attacks on Islam forty years later, toward the end of her life.

And in 1965, she published *If The Sun Dies*, a collection

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***She removed the chador and flung it at Khomeini***

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of interviews with astronauts and engineers from NASA who were preparing for the first moon landing. Clearly, Fallaci's restless curiosity was literally reaching beyond movie stars to cosmic considerations.

In 1967, with her first trips to Vietnam, Fallaci finally found her voice. An initial Communist sympathizer, she eventually found fault with both sides. A crucial interview with Henry Kissinger in the early 1970s, when he referred to himself as a "cowboy," certainly swayed public opinion both against him and the war. In 1968, even before the Summer Olympic protests in Mexico City, she covered the JFK and MLK assassinations, where she derided the "bourgeois vandalism of protesting students who dare to invoke Che Guevara while living in homes with air conditioning, going to schools in daddy's big cars and going to nightclubs wearing silk shirts."

Readers were often left confused by what they viewed as Fallaci's chameleonic political views – that is, her ability to criticize both the Left and the Right, to not be an ideologue. And what about the way she injected her own views into stories? Weren't journalists supposed to be "objective"? On that last subject, Fallaci suffered no fools gladly: "Our weakness in the West is born of the fact of our so-called 'objectivity.' It does not exist, it cannot exist! The word is a hypocrisy which is sustained by the lie that the truth stays in the middle. No, sir: Sometimes, truth stays on one side only."

Fluent in English, Spanish, and French, and the author of sixteen books, Fallaci was a fanatical researcher who labored over every word as if it were a brushstroke in a painting, a metaphor she often used. Sometimes her research helped to undercut self-absorbed leaders. In a 1973 interview with Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, she listed all of the misfortunes of his life and kept pressing him on what would happen to the country after he died. The king was not amused: "Death? Death? Who is this woman? Enough, enough, go away!!" he shouted. The interview was over, but Selassie's refusal to consider Fallaci's question may have led to what did follow his death – brutal wars and terrible famines.

Similarly, as reporter Margaret Talbot relates in a February 24, 2011 *New Yorker* article on Fallaci, the late dictator Muammar Qaddafi, whom Fallaci interviewed in 1979, tried to dismiss the Italian journalist by telling her to go and read his *Green Book* (the equivalent of Mao's *Little Red Book*). Fallaci retorted: "On the contrary,



Fallaci donned a Muslim chador for this interview with Ayatollah Khomeini. He didn't appreciate her Italian humor.

*I have read it. It doesn't take very long, you know, fifteen minutes. It's so small. My powder compact is bigger than your Green Book."*

Fallaci had her favorite interviewees, such as Pakistan's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and King Hussein of Jordan (who, when she expressed discomfort in calling someone 'Your Majesty,' smilingly told her, "Then call me only Hussein! A king's job is like any others.") She also had her least favorites, such as Fidel Castro ("he smelled"), the Shah of Iran ("insane"), and Yassar Arafat ("he lies even when you ask him what time it is"). And her public comments were sometimes just as controversial as her interviews. Here are just a few:

**On Jews:** "I am angry at the Jews for many things. If you want to take the example of America, how they have the power, the economical power, in so many ways, and in the press and other kinds of stuff. I never realized how it happened with the control of the media to that point. Why?"

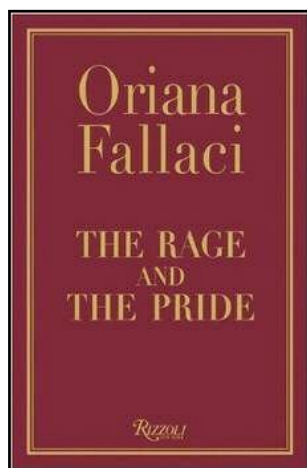
**On Feminism:** "Feminism without men is a vengeance and nothing else; it means substituting one oppression for another, one humiliation for another. It's making harems in reverse, putting a veil on men instead of women."

**On Americans:** "We don't understand these Americans who, like adolescents, always speak of sex and who, like adolescents, all of a sudden, have discovered that sex is good not only for procreating children."

**On Mexicans vs. Muslims:** "If you put a pistol to my head and ask who I think is worse, Muslims or Mexicans, I'd have to think a moment, then say 'the Muslims,' because they have broken my balls."

It's worth noting that, with the exception of Muslims and Islam, Fallaci moderated all of her above opinions. She supported Israel's right to exist and became a vocal opponent of anti-Semitism in Europe. She disagreed with the tone and even some of the tenets of feminism (e.g., abortion rights) but led the crusade for women's equality both in Italy and around the globe. And she loved America—and its democratic ideals—so much that New York City became her second home during the last decade of her life (1990s to 2006). It was while living in New York that Fallaci, semi-retired and battling cancer, made a dramatic "last entrance" onto the world stage.

## On Fidel Castro: "He smelled."



If you want to know why Islam and the West are at odds, this is a must read.

In 2001, living only a few blocks from downtown Manhattan, Fallaci witnessed first-hand the carnage

(Cont'd on p. 28)



# The First Weatherman



## *Evangelista Torricelli unlocked a mystery of nature and taught us how to weigh the atmosphere*

by Don Fiore

It's interesting to note that amidst all the high tech equipment utilized in modern weather forecasting, there's one simple instrument that has been performing

employed, he could never get the water to rise higher than about 34 feet. Galileo responded that this situation concurred with attempts to mechanically raise a column of water with pumps. A lift of 34 feet was the apparent limit, and the two physicists discussed the possible reasons behind this.

Both men agreed that, Aristotle notwithstanding, it was a vacuum that drew the water up, but Galileo believed that the cumulative weight of the water restricted the height to which it could be raised. Baliani, on the other hand, suspected that the problem was related to the weight of the atmosphere opposing the work of the pump or siphon. This was a stunningly radical suggestion, since virtually everyone at the time, including Galileo, considered air to be weightless, and therefore incapable of exerting any sort of pressure.

quite satisfactorily at the job for well over three hundred years. That device, the mercury barometer, was invented in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Italian physicist and mathematician Evangelista Torricelli. And like so many other fundamental components of science, its development evolved in a meandering, almost serendipitous way.

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### *Everyone, including Galileo, considered air to be weightless*

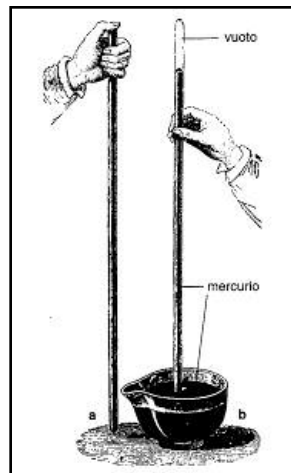
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The root of the story begins almost 2,000 years earlier, when Aristotle declared that "nature abhors a vacuum," and like most of his other pronouncements, the ancient sage's words on this matter passed unchallenged down through the centuries. It was universally accepted that a vacuum, meaning a space literally devoid of air and all matter, could be imagined, spoken of, and theorized on, but could never actually exist.

The great Italian physicist Galileo, who practically built his career on successfully disputing old dogmas, doubted this supposed impossibility. For one thing, siphons and suction pumps had been used for centuries to move water and drain ship bilges, which indicated that some sort of vacuum was at work. The question was visited only sporadically until 1630, when Galileo received a letter from his friend and colleague, Giovanni Battista Baliani.

While working on the problems of hydraulics in draining swamps and marshes, Baliani had conducted an experiment that involved siphoning water uphill to an elevation of sixty feet. But regardless of the diameter of the pipe or hose, or any other variations

so questions of vacuums and siphons were the last thing on his mind. (As we know, the trial concluded with a plea bargain admitting of his "errors" about the earth moving in space to receive a sentence of house arrest for the remainder of his life. Nevertheless, Galileo quietly mumbled, "*Eppure si muove!*" ("but it still moves!")



But Galileo's earlier discussions with Baliani had been brought to the attention of other Italian scientists, and in 1641, Gasparo Berti, a physicist and mathematician at the University of Rome, conducted a series of extraordinary experiments to determine what

Using mercury instead of water allowed the measuring device to be smaller





forces were at work. With the assistance of another respected physicist named Rafaele Magiotti, Berti had erected a 40 foot pipe vertically into a large vat of water. He placed a closed valve near the bottom of the pipe, and fastened a large, tightly sealed container of water at the top. When he opened the valve at the bottom, some but not all of the water drained from the container into the



Torricelli, left, was a mathematician who assisted Galileo, right.

vat. The rest, apparently defying gravity, remained stagnant in the vertical pipe at a height of, again, about 34 feet! These experiments were conducted in the presence of the physicists Niccolo Zucchi and Athanasius Kircher, and all four men agreed that it was the draw of the vacuum produced in the emptied top container that kept the water suspended in the column.

A description of Berti's experiment was duly reported to Galileo. Although forbidden by the Church to continue his work in astronomy, he had resumed his study of motion, trajectories, and other concerns which led to his final great work *Two New Sciences*. As it happened, Galileo had taken on a new assistant for this project, a mathematician named Evangelista Torricelli who had already made a name for himself through his own varied and outstanding scientific research. Torricelli was greatly intrigued by Berti's experiment, but with Baliani's speculations in mind, was quietly developing his own theory for the results.

Shortly after Galileo's death in 1642, Torricelli repeated Berti's experiment, but on a more manageable scale. Instead of water, he used mercury, reasoning that mercury, fourteen times denser than water, would allow him to trim down the pipe, vat and other equipment from feet to mere inches.

Torricelli filled a bowl and a thin, yard-long glass tube with mercury. He then turned the tube upside-down, submerging its open

end into the bowl. Like the water in Berti's pipe, the mercury dropped a bit and then stopped. But unlike Berti and his associates, Torricelli readily provided the correct explanation.

*"We live submerged beneath an ocean of air,"* he declared, and it was not the weight of the water column as Galileo believed, nor the draw of the vacuum as theorized by Berti, but the weight of this "ocean"—atmospheric pressure pushing down upon the mercury in the open bowl that would allow the mercury in the tube to fall no further. Air did have substance, and it could now be weighed.

This was proven conclusively upon Torricelli's observation that the height of the mercury in the tube changed with the weather. If the mercury dropped, rain soon followed. A rising then stabilizing level forecasted calm and clear blue skies. Atmospheric pressure was changeable, and Torricelli's device not only provided a means of measuring the variations, but of predicting the weather as well.

The news of Torricelli's findings blazed through the scientific communities of Europe. In France, Blaise Pascal equipped himself with a "Torricellian Tube," as the Italian's device came to be called, and ascended a mountain to demonstrate the steady decrease in atmospheric pressure at higher elevations. The English physicist Robert Boyle also employed the instrument in his experiments, and is credited with giving it its current, more descriptive name from the Greek words for pressure (*baros*) and measure (*metron*).

The name change might be considered the most substantial improvement made upon the device over all the years since its conception. Science has found no more accurate means of gauging atmospheric pressure than Torricelli's basic design.

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***"We live submerged  
beneath an  
ocean of air."***

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Anglo-Irish scientist Robert Boyle, left, and French intellect Blaise Pascale, above. Both men made use of Torricelli's device and his scientific conclusions.

# The Italian Americans

## A PBS Series by John Maggio

### A Roundtable Discussion by Anthony Vecchione



I was hoping that the recent PBS documentary, *The Italian Americans*, was going to be a refreshing change from the overdone immigrant story. It wasn't.

Like most chroniclers of the Italian experience in North America, documentary filmmakers focus on the mass immigration that started in the late 1800's. They neglect to tell the story of the scions of Italy that made their mark in the New World long before the steerage passengers crossed the Atlantic. These early Italian explorers and emigrants played a significant role in helping to shape our nation. Even limited as it was to four hours, this series could have used some novel additions and serious triage.

Because the series is the most ambitious of its kind, it deserves more than a simple review from one person. I have asked a few of our staffers, John Mancini, Rosario Iaconis, Bill Dal Cerro, and Bob Masullo, to share their feelings about this production. While they complimented Maggio where it was appropriate, their intimate knowledge of Italian and Italian American history gives them more insight than the average viewer.

**John:** My overall impression of the documentary is that 99% of Italian Americans who watched it probably considered it positive and often emotional from a family perspective.

**Anthony:** Maggio managed to enlighten PBS viewers about facts



in Italian-American history not widely known. For instance, the impact and legacy of Bank of America founder Amadeo Giannini and the massacre of eleven Italians in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1891 are not generally known.

**John:** Part 3 was by far the best and most original. Mussolini and aviator Italo Balbo were treated fairly, and even the Mussolini speech was not the usual jaw-jutting balcony scene.

The World War II portion was instructive, but Maggio should have spotlighted air ace Don Gentile and heroic Marine John Basilone as well as a general statement on the number of Medal of Honor winners we had. Those facts would surprise many viewers.

**Bill:** Agreed. Part 3 was the best. It was thrilling, as a Chicagoan, to watch actual footage of Balbo's landing of 24 seaplanes on Lake Michigan after crossing the Atlantic in 1933. I also give Maggio high marks for dignifying *Una Storia Segreta*, the wholesale eviction of 10,000 Italian Americans from the West Coast and restrictions on 600,000 around the country.

**Anthony:** But so much was left out. Was Maggio aware of Giovanni Schiavo's landmark book *Four Centuries of Italian American History*? He ignored 400 years of contributions. In fact, he didn't even mention Schiavo who immigrated here in 1916 and spent a lifetime researching the accomplishments of our people – an amazing feat!

### The strong points were: Giannini founding Bank of America and the little-known stories of the New Orleans and WW II persecutions

**Rosario:** Good point. *The Italian Americans* lacked the dignity and gravitas of *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews*. Indeed, Maggio's oeuvre was prosaic – and had the look and feel of a dated documentary, especially the Roseto segments.

**John:** Sure, Roseto could have been cut out completely. It was more like an infomercial. Maggio totally ignored Columbus, Cabot, Vespucci and so many others who literally opened America. Except for Giannini, it was all about the immigrant working class.

He failed to mention Italians founding Planters Peanuts, TransAmerica, California agriculture, and the wine industry. No mention of intellectual accomplishments

Our roundtable participants l-r,  
Anthony Vecchione, Bill Dal Cerro,  
Robert Masullo, John Mancini,  
Rosario Iaconis

(Cont'd. on p. 19)





like *Atlantica Magazine* in the 1930s, the groundbreaking work of Wall St. nemesis Ferdinand Pecora, or the major donation of *La Casa Italiana* to Columbia University in 1927.

**Bob:** The series was better than nothing. But not that much better. What can you expect from a show that starts with a clip from *The Godfather* and cites it as an exemplar of our people?

**Rosario:** Maggio's obsession with the Mafia—and the fictional *Godfather* trilogy—was as deflating as it was self-defeating. And why, pray tell, did *Sopranos* creator David Chase make an appearance?

**Anthony:** But most disappointing was Maggio devoting a sizable chunk of Parts One and Four to organized crime. What other groups would rehash their criminal history on national television?

**Rosario:** The incessant crime family mumbo-jumbo morphed into a paean to *The Godfather*, a movie that is to Italians what *The Birth of a Nation* is to African Americans.



Producer / Director John Maggio had an inside track to PBS. Maria Laurino wrote the companion book and worked for *The Sopranos*.

**John:** I suspect you're right. The program opens with all the Mob movies that Maggio blames for the "misleading" images of Italians. But no Italian Americans – like Coppola and Chase – are held responsible for "misleading" Americans and the rest of the world. Instead, those filmmakers are treated like our cherished sons.

**Bill:** There was a continual blending of *The Godfather* and *Sopranos* into the mix. Maggio even brought in Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia – who acknowledged that the Senate probably confirmed him because everyone felt sorry for our gangster image and feared Italo voter backlash – to expound his love of *The Godfather*. In fact, the series pretty much indicts *The Godfather* for ruining us but allows David Chase, the creator of *The Sopranos*, to praise *The Godfather* as emblematic of his own family's story. And what was the purpose of having David Chase comparing the dimly lit images in *The Godfather* to Rembrandt? Who knew Chase was an art crit

ic, too? Clearly, Maggio didn't want to offend Coppola, Puzo or Chase for what they wrought. What was Maggio's message? Despite the Mafia stigma we still turned out great. Did we really?



Anarchists were treated favorably in the series despite men like Luigi Galleani, a true terrorist.

**John:** There is a reason for that. Maggio's co-author Maria Laurino has connections to those filmmakers. Laurino helped write a *Sopranos* episode, the one where Tony's crew confronts Native Americans who are protesting a Columbus Day Parade. The show was a sorry mish-mash of mob families (literally the husbands, wives and kids) trying to be historians and activists. It ends with a speech by Tony to drop the Italian thing because "*we all made it in America as individuals.*" Laurino and Chase forgot to add that Tony's crew actually made it because they were thieves and murderers. And Chase made it because he spreads that stereotype.

**Tony:** What did you all think of Maggio's grasp of Italian history?

**John:** Very simplistic – two minutes worth. Neither Laurino nor Maggio has a basic understanding of the ties that bind the north and south in the first place. They carry on the myth that Italians are two different races – the south had no redeeming history, just poor, oppressed peasants.

**Bob:** Absolutely no connection of southern Italians with ancient Rome or *Magna Graecia*, the arts and music, or even seafaring. The message was only that they were downtrodden wretches who "escaped" from southern Italy and "made it" in the New World.

**Tony:** Nor did the series explore the Catholic Church's complicity in suppressing Italian nationalism or its benign neglect of the south. Like the Mafia filmmakers, the Church in Italy got a free pass.

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### "The incessant crime family mumbo-jumbo morphed into a paean to *The Godfather*..."

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**Rosario:** Maggio's grasp of Italian geography is utterly inaccurate. Lazio and Tuscany are in central – not northern – Italy. The Magic Boot does not have a monopoly on regional discord. Are Maggio and Laurino even aware of the centuries-old regionalisms in Spain, the UK, France, Germany, and China? How about our own Civil War? At the end of the day, John Maggio gave audiences a *Beverly Hillbillies* version of Italian history – short-sighted, anecdotal and, at times, apocryphal.

**John:** The message was strange: Our ancestors fled a despotic  
(Cont'd. on p. 32)



## Justinian (continued from p.13)

assured the survival of Roman law. It was largely forgotten in the barbarian West, however, until the study of Roman law was revived in the universities of Italy during the twelfth century. Beginning in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the *Corpus Juris Civilis* became the basis of the developing legal systems of Continental Europe, as well as the foundation for legal study, training and discourse. All subsequent law codes in the West borrowed heavily from it, including the civil law systems of Western Europe, Latin America, and to a lesser extent English common law, from which American law is mainly derived. The founding fathers were also inspired by the *Justinian Code*. When a commission headed by James Madison formulated a list of recommended texts for use by the First Continental Congress, the first items listed were the *Institutes* and *Codex*.

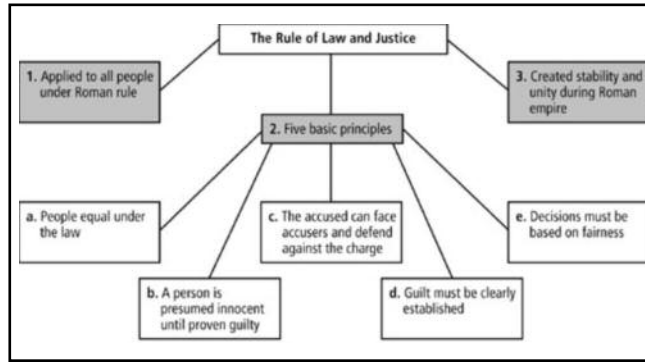
### Christianity

Justinian's reign was a boon to Christianity. The reconquest of the West strengthened the church in Italy and the provinces and aided the conversion of barbarians. Justinian saw himself as a new Constantine, the emperor who had established the unified church, and sought to unite the empire politically, economically and religiously under one Christian ruler. He became a defender and promoter of religious orthodoxy and regarded himself as God's ultimate deputy and the enforcer of the true Christian faith. He proceeded to suppress various heresies and banned the worship of Isis in Egypt and Ammon in Libya. The Academy in Athens founded by Plato was even brought under state control. Orthodox provincials in the West living under the persecution of barbarian rulers who adhered to the Arian heresy looked to Justinian as their one hope. He gave legal force to the four ecumenical church councils and legally proclaimed the creed of the Trinity and Incarnation. At the Second Ecumenical Council in 553, the bishops acknowledged Justinian's supreme sta-



General Belisarius stands to the left of the emperor

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Roman Law established the principles and critical thinking that made the West unique.

foundations, the administration of church property, the election of bishops, priests and abbots, the conduct of monastic life and episcopal jurisdiction. Under the emperor's direction, ninety new churches were constructed including St. Catherine Monastery in Sinai and the magnificent Church of Santa Sophia in Constantinople (now Istanbul). The new church, with its gilded octagonal dome, numerous chapels, shrines and mosaics, became the center of the Eastern Orthodox Church for many centuries and remains an architectural and engineering wonder of the world.

Justinian's conquests gave new life to the eastern Roman Empire.

He reversed a period of decline and helped ensure that the Empire would last for centuries to come. In fact, the eastern Roman Empire lasted until the Turks overran it in 1453. Those precious centuries were invaluable in preserving the knowledge of the ancient world and helping to

### Among the texts recommended by James Madison for the First Continental Congress were the Justinian codes.

shield the West from the onslaught of Islam. His support of the early Church and religious orthodoxy helped strengthen and spread the Christian faith at a fragile time in its history. Most significantly, the Justinian Code preserved Rome's creative genius in the law and later formed the basis for all subsequent law codes in the West. No other code of laws has had so great an impact.

Flavius Justinian was among the many remarkable Romans to whom the Western World owes its essence and its very survival.



Justinian established Ravenna as the new capital of Italy for reasons of defense and communication with his eastern capital.

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# GoodFellas:

## Nothing to Celebrate

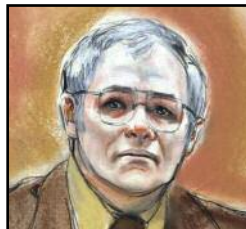


**F**ilm critics are calling attention to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Martin Scorsese movie *GoodFellas*. Supposedly based on an actual crime, the Lufthansa Heist of 1978, the film has been acclaimed as a less romanticized version of organized crime, complete with gritty characters based on the so-called Lucchese Crime family. Like Coppola's *Godfather*, Scorsese managed to envelope the Lufthansa Heist in the aura of Italian American culture, leaving audiences with little feel for the multi-ethnic reality of organized crime.

by Bill Dal Cerro

Movie lovers, mob wannabes, and even U.S. state's attorneys are all agog over the 25th anniversary celebration of *GoodFellas*, Martin Scorsese's 1990 mob pic detailing the 1978 heist of a Lufthansa cargo plane at Kennedy Airport in New York. At the time, it was promoted as the most prolific heist in U.S. history, although the robbers only got away with \$6 million dollars in cash – a paltry sum even by the standards of '70s drug cartel bosses in South America and Miami. Reporters who covered the story wrote that the "brazenness" of the robbery is what turned it into a media sensation but, clearly, the underlying factor was that many of the thugs had vowel-laden surnames or were "connected" to New York "mob families." In short, it was the same old Hollywood hype, using anti-Italian prejudice as a cattle prod.

With the arrest in January, 2014 of petty thug Vincent Asaro, however, the reality began to get muddled. Although Asaro was finally, officially being charged with the 1969 murder of a fellow gambling associate named Paul Katz, he was also being fingered by informants as one of the possible Lufthansa thieves. And what emerged is that Scorsese's "goodfellas" were actually "dumbfellas" – that is, they knew nothing about the Lufthansa cargo plane until NON Italian associates filtered down the information through fellow gamblers and thugs.



Scorsese and Peleggi hid the real ethnic brains behind the Lufthansa Heist, Martin Krugman and Louis Werner, one Jewish, the other German.  
(Werner sketch by Ida Libby Dengrove)

In a January 23, 2014 *New York Times* story about Asaro's arrest (front page and in-color, of course), reporter Joseph Goldstein notes that a Lufthansa cargo agent, Louis Werner (German Amer-

ican), in debt to his bookie, Martin Krugman (Jewish American), is the one who floated the idea of the heist. Werner had already had some previous practice: In 1976, he and a fellow airport worker, Martin Gruenwald (also German American), stole \$22,000 from a Lufthansa plane. Krugman shared Werner's idea with Henry Hill (Irish/Sicilian American, whose life story was the focus of *GoodFellas*). Hill then told Jimmy "The Gent" Burke (Irish American), who then shared the information with his Lucchese Syndicate associates. Burke and his gang were then aided in their plan by Parnell Edwards (African American), Tony Rodriguez (Portugese-Spanish), and even an Air France cargo worker named Robert McMahon (Anglo-Irish American). The stuff of Italian mob movies, right?

Even more pernicious: It turns out that, in the script for *GoodFellas*, Scorsese and his co-writer, Nick Pileggi, completely eliminated Werner and Gruenwald. Instead, they made Joe Manri, a minor thug, the person who tells Hill and his crew about the Lufthansa shipment. (Incidentally, Manri's real name was Manriquez. He was Hispanic.) And Jimmy "The Gent"

Burke? He was morphed into a supporting character played by Robert De Niro. Burke's infamous legacy in New York organized crime was overshadowed by Joe Pesci's irascible little psychopath character. When accepting his Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for *GoodFellas*, Pesci thanked the Hollywood crowd with one humble utterance: "It is my privilege."

To underline the Italian ambiance, the film featured no rowdy Irish pubs nor any German American beer gardens. Instead, the characters caroused in an Italian restaurant, where songs by famous Italian American crooners played in the background. And, after three of the characters murdered someone in the trunk of a car, they stopped to see one of their mothers -- who, despite being woken up at 3:00 am, made pasta for the boys.

Scorsese cast his own mother (right) to link these murderers to Italian food and family.

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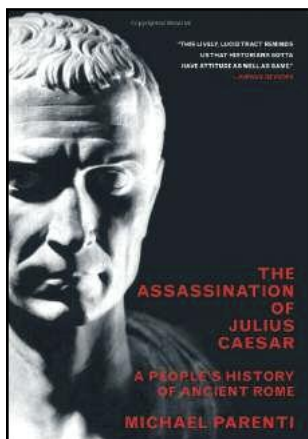
College of New York where I got my B.A. I was first introduced to the upper class Anglo-Protestant world at Brown University, an Ivy League school, where I got my master's degree, and then on to Yale. Not many Italians crossed my path in those institutions. But I never avoided the ones who did.

**IW:** Why do you think you became a progressive radical? Did the likes of Leonard Covello, Fiorello LaGuardia, Vito Marcantonio and Carlo Tresca influence you? Did you have any direct dealings with any of them or other Italians like them?

**MP:** I had no direct contact with such notables or others like them, although a couple of times I did hear Marcantonio speak from a sound truck during his campaigns. I shook his hand once - he was my Congressman, my father liked him a lot. I became a liberal and later on a militant radical largely because of the segregation issue. I'm convinced that my own ethnic and class experiences as a working-class Italian American, who was relatively marginalized in society, left me with a lot of sympathy and understanding for the African-American struggle, and a lot of anger against the terrible oppressions of racism and Jim Crow. I also think my ingrained regard for people who are being unfairly and sometimes brutally mistreated played a big role. And I had no use for Joe McCarthy. Then came the Vietnam War, which I found to be a criminal horror. It caused me to engage in numerous protest actions at the street level, some of which proved physically injurious and career damaging.

**IW:** In *Waiting for Yesterday: Pages from a Street Kid's Life*, your recent memoir, you mentioned that well-educated people who would never use an ethnic slur directed at other groups did not hesitate to make anti-Italian comments in your presence. Why do you think this is so? Why do you think non-Italians have so little empathy for Italians and Italian Americans?

**MP:** Many of the Italians who migrated here came without a penny to their name. They were—in the fevered imaginations of Anglo-Protestant Americans—the low-life, unwashed, swarthy hoards given to crime, violence, and ignorance. The association of Italian Americans with organized crime has been repeatedly propagated over the years by congressional hearings, news media, television series such as *The Untouchables* and *The Sopranos* along with books and films like *The*



**“In this book I present an alternative explanation: the Senate aristocrats killed Caesar because they perceived him to be a popular leader who threatened their privileged interests. By this view, the deed was more an act of treason than tyrannicide...”**

**“I don't think Fascism revealed anything distinctly flawed about the Italian character...”**

*Godfather*. The impression left in the minds of millions is that the association is justified. A few hundred *mafiosi* are treated as representative of 20 million law-abiding Italian Americans. Added to that are the dimwitted illiterate “Fonzi” and “Guido” stereotypes. Meanwhile the accomplishments of Italian Americans in the arts, entertainment, science, commerce, social sciences, law, labor organizing, social activism, and numerous other fields go unnoticed and are frozen out of the mainstream media.

**IW:** Why haven't Italian Americans developed an effective response to anti-Italianism, the way other groups have to negative stereotypes and prejudicial comments directed at them?



**Michael Parenti went from the streets of East Harlem to Brown and Yale.**

**MP:** Some Italian American groups actually have hit back with indignant declarations and protest letters regarding the stereotypic portrayals of stock characters and derogatory terms used to characterize Italians. But their efforts have been given scant attention in the mainstream press. Non-Italians I have talked to, including politically progressive individuals, tend to think that biases and slurs against Italians are few and far between and “are not as important as women's issues and gay rights,” as one radical feminist told me. I responded (with admirable restraint) that *all* denigrations and group prejudices are in need of our attention and are not to be ignored, for silence implies acceptance, and there is no room for

acceptance of any kind of bigotry.

**IW:** You have traveled in Italy. What were your impressions of the country and the people?

**MP:** I first traveled through parts of Italy in 1951 not long after World War II. The people seemed friendlier than in France and England (the other two countries I had visited). The Italians were keenly aware of their war-caused deprivations, yet they still dressed rather tastefully. Not until 50 years later did I make my next trip to Italy. I noticed that the young males no longer stood on street corners to hound and whistle at the young females. Now that sexual mores were much less repressive, sexual behavior was also much more mature.

**IW:** Why do you think Fascism developed in Italy? What does Fascism say about the Italian character?

**MP:** I don't believe Fascism revealed anything distinctly flawed about the Italian character (*Cont'd. on p. 30*)





# Italophobia - An Epidemic

by "Dr." Louis Cornaro

**If you're thinking of asking an Italian American bigshot to help you with anti-defamation or heritage-building, don't waste your time. I'm no doctor but I believe most of our corporate and political leaders suffer from Italophobia, the paralyzing fear of being associated with other Italians.**

This strange malady came to my attention some years when I attended a gathering of Italian American organizations in Albany, invited *en masse* by the so-called Italian American Caucus. The chairman at the time was Assemblyman Anthony Genovese, now deceased. When asked why the Caucus never spoke out against media defamation, a perplexed look—symptomatic of an Italophobic—crossed his face. Taking a deep breath, lowering his head and clutching the podium, Genovese proceeded in a most parental tone to explain, *"This Albany gathering is just a courtesy to meet your political Caucus, not for us to get involved with community issues."* In other words, we drove five hours to Albany for a hardy handshake.

Many case studies of Italophobia exist in our Institute files. Perhaps these examples will better explain the malady:



(l-r) Florio, Gargano with De Niro, Valenti

**CASE #476 — *Shark Tale*, a 2004 DreamWorks animation, featuring "Sopranos" sharks  
PATIENTS — Charles Gargano, James Florio, Jack Valenti**

This Hollywood feature broke old taboos against incorporating ethnic stereotypes in children's movies. (The last ones were Disney's *Dumbo*, 1941, in which cartoon crows spoke in Negro dialect and *Song of the South*, 1946, with ragged Uncle Remus) While still in production, appeals went out to prominent Italian American politicians and business leaders for help.

Many refused. Among them were former New Jersey Governor James Florio and former Governor of New York Mario Cuomo. New York State official Charles Gargano refused to restrict the preview of *Shark Tale* at the Tribeca Festival, which was funded by his agency. Clearly Italophobic, Gargano later went on to have a cameo role in *Analyze This*, a *Godfather* spin-off with *Shark Tale* voiceover-star Robert De Niro. The President of the Motion Picture Association, Jack Valenti, refused to cooperate to help change the PG rating to PG-13. Reruns of the movie can still be found on cable networks.

**CASE #633 — The effort to have the label "crime families" stricken from the FBI's nomenclature as ethnic profiling  
PATIENT — Nancy Pelosi**

"Crime Families" is used by the FBI to denote Italian American organized crime syndicates. No other ethnic crime groups are given this label, not even real family crooks like the Madoff family (Bernie and brother Peter). Back in the 1990s, the Italic Institute appealed to FBI Director to replace the phrase with gang or syndicate but his reply was that in Italy police also used "families." In truth, the Italian police use the word "clans" to label mafia gangs, which would be fine with us, as clan is not associated with ethnic Italians. In 2010, we appealed to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a "proud Italian," to lobby the President, a fellow Democrat and minority himself, to order an FBI change. Absolutely no response was forthcoming. Pelosi represents a district in San Francisco where "alternate lifestyles" predominate. She is active with AIPAC, an Israeli lobbying group. This patient exhibits many symptoms of Italophobia. "Crime Families" remains a red letter of ethnic profiling. It has now been joined with the word "Mafia," which by a President Nixon directive back in the 1970s, was stricken from police jargon, but has now returned to become an all-purpose word in the media.



**CASE #871 — CBS-TV allows the word "wop" in a primetime comedy series.  
PATIENTS — Joseph Califano (r), Frederic Salerno (l)**

CBS has two hit series: *Mike & Molly*, a sitcom featuring one Italian American character, and *Crime Scene Investigation* (CSI) with no Italo characters. In one episode of the latter, a police official



(Cont'd. on p. 32)



## Slipping Away (cont'd. from p. 11)

ethnic building on campus, some 30,000 square feet to house the Department of Italian, Italian American clubs and organizations, and the Italian [high school] Teachers Association. A 20,000-volume library was donated by Dr. Charles Paterno, and undergraduates were encouraged to use *La Casa* for study, exhibits, stage shows, and social events. The Classical Italian heritage had found its official home in America. Its mission as stated in the parchment conveyed to Columbia was “to diffuse Italian culture in America.” And in the words of Marconi, “*To promote the educational and spiritual uplift of Italians in America.*” They surely needed uplifting, and still do!

*La Casa* carried out its mission for 63 years until Columbia sold it to the Italian government in 1990. Since then, it has become a cloister for European graduate students, closed to Columbia undergraduates, and no longer headquarters of the Italian Language Department. Its staff, board, and fellowships are cleansed of Italian Americans. Only the Italic Institute protested the hijacking of this premier cultural bastion. Only the Italic Institute mobilized the Paterno Family and the resources to sue Columbia for the misuse of a major donation. Neither our politicians or academics lifted a finger to support this struggle. The result was a defeat in 2012 in court and another cultural citadel lost to our community.

### Balbo Column & Balbo Drive

In 1933, Italy was on excellent terms with the United States. A former wartime ally, Italy had undergone a relatively peaceful revolutionary change in government eleven years before. This first Fascist state led by dictator Benito Mussolini was heralded by Anglo-America as a deterrent to Communism and anarchy. Except for a minority of Italian Americans, Fascist Italy was viewed as an inspiration. The



Crossing the Atlantic with twenty-four Italian-made seaplanes was no small technological feat in 1933.

mass adulation of Chicagoans and people across the country, was commemorated with a small monument, topped with a Roman column sent by Mussolini from the ruins of Ostia, the seaport of ancient Rome. The Chicago street along the lake was renamed Balbo Drive by the city fathers.

### The Balbo Column represents Italic daring, much like Columbus Day

Like clockwork, this monument has been subjected to calls for its removal and the renaming of Balbo Drive. And like clockwork, Italian American organizations, undergirded by Balbo expert Don Fiore of the Italic Institute, counter the revisionists. The Balbo Column (right) represents Italic daring and technology, much like Columbus Day. Labeling the Balbo Flight a propaganda stunt by [Fascist] Italy means little in light of the international competition to cross the Atlantic in those days. (Using that logic, the



American moonwalk of 1969 was sheer braggadocio when an unmanned spacecraft would have sufficed.) Balbo's extraordinary feat was clearly part of our cultural intellect, the ability of Italians to challenge the limits of ocean and sky, to link, as Columbus did, two worlds. Neither Balbo nor Italy was our

enemy at the time. Italy was one of the four major powers of Europe. Not to continue our resistance to revisionists and anti-Italic bigots would be yet another nail in our intellectual coffin.

### Other Physical Treasures

There are other tangible testimonies to our cultural intellect. The Garibaldi-Meucci House on Staten Island, a borough of New York City, has been owned and maintained by the Order Sons of Italy for over a century. The average Italian American has no idea of its existence or significance. Antonio Meucci was a 19<sup>th</sup> Century inventor who pioneered the telephone and fought Alexander Graham Bell for patent rights. Garibaldi resided in the house in 1850 after escaping a failed attempt to liberate French-occupied Rome. This house represents our intellectual roots, not our immigrant *miseria*. (photos on page 10)

In San Francisco stands the TransAmerica Building (below), and nearby the former headquarters of Bank of America (page 26).

Both of these corporations were founded by Amadeo Giannini. They represent our early presence in the insurance industry and banking. The buildings are monuments to their Italic founder but inside, nary an Italian American executive or board member can be found. These corporations, created by Italic



intellect and entrepreneurship, no

(Cont'd. on p. 26)





# Our Greek Geniuses

**O**ne of the many blessings of the Roman Empire is how the ancient Italic people absorbed and preserved the genius of others. From the Etruscans of central Italy came Roman engineering. From the Greeks of southern Italy and Sicily—those coastal colonies call Magna Graecia (Greater Greece)—the Italic people learned how to learn.

*“It was no little brook that flowed from Greece into our city, but a mighty river of culture and learning.” - Marco Tullius Cicero*

by Jack Spiezio

Modern Italians, both on the Apennine and abroad, often look back to the days of ancient Rome as the beginning of a glorious cultural tradition that carries on to this day. The Romans themselves, however, saw themselves as the descendants of an even more ancient stock: the Trojans. Whether or not this is actually true, common belief dictated that Aeneas, after he managed to escape the violent fall of Troy, journeyed to Italy. Once there, he and his men intermarried with the natives and brought forth the race who would become the Romans. Though this story may be nothing more than mythology, it does speak to the nature of the Italian people. Italy has always been a rich melting pot of a variety of cultures existing with each other. One need only realize that two of history’s greatest so-called “Greeks,” Archimedes and Pythagoras, spent much more time in Italy than in Greece. These two men are perfect symbols of how ancient Italy, much like modern America, was a land where the brilliance and genius of many different peoples coexisted and cohered to form a great progeny.

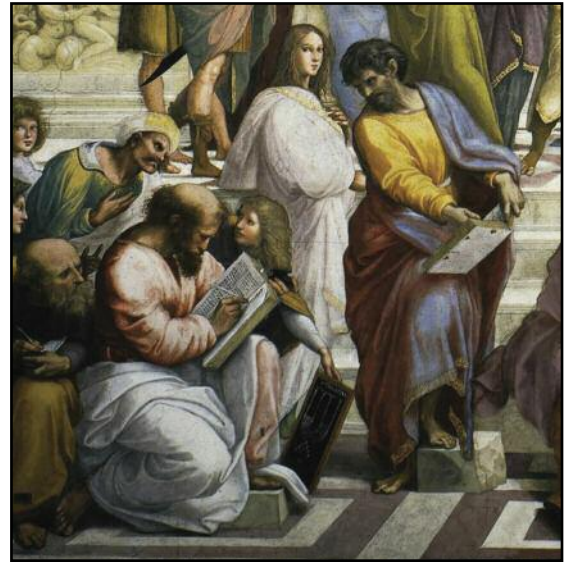
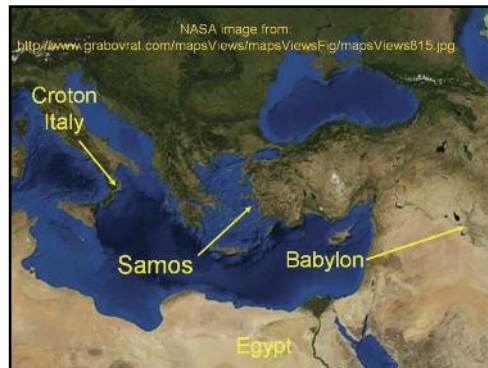
## The Genius of Calabria

Pythagoras made famous the word “philosopher” half a century before Socrates was even born. His native home was the Greek island of Samos, where he was born in 570 B.C., but he spent much of his young life travelling about the Mediterranean. This rambling man made his way through the Levant (mainly

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**Italy has always been a rich melting pot of a variety of cultures.**

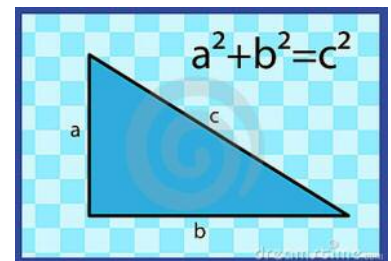
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Raffaello's famous *School of Athens* has Pythagoras jotting down notes in a book. Of course, the ancients used scrolls not books.

Babylonia) and Egypt where he undoubtedly was exposed to the wonders of mathematics. Around 530 B.C., at the age of 40, he decided to abandon his Greek homeland and move to the city of Croton in Calabria. It was here that Pythagoras opened an unique academy, a combination religious order and school of mathematics. Members of the academy were mostly vegetarians (but no beans!)

and believed that mathematics held the secrets of universe. They made geometry, the bane of many a high school student, the highest form of



The square of the sides equal the hypotenuse squared. Everything you need to know about triangles came to us from Pythagoras.

mathematics. While no one is certain of their previous origins, the theorems of geometry, the concept of a spherical earth, circular orbits, and formulas for measurement came to our modern world through Pythagoras.

As is often the case, though, a genius was

Pythagoras was well traveled before he settled in Calabria, Italy.

(Cont'd. on p. 31)



longer contribute or give back to our community. (A telling example of this is the PBS series we cited in the first paragraph. Although the Bank of America story was told in this series, no funding for the film came from the bank or TransAmerica.)

Elsewhere across America, there are non-academic cultural centers that are doing the yeoman's work of providing language classes and museum collections for their communities. Most of these centers survive without cash infusions from the major organizations – a sad commentary.

There are other physical symbols of our classical legacy worth noting: the statues of Caesar Augustus, used as props at Caesars Palace casinos; the Verrazano Bridge in New York named for the famed explorer; the statue of FBI founder Charles Bonaparte, gracing the lobby of that organization; and the pioneer adobe *Casa Grande* erected by Padre Kino (or Chino) in Arizona and the *Romaggi Adobe* in California. These, then, are the physical treasures of our classical, not immigrant, legacy. They deserve greater attention and promotion.



Bank of America's former headquarters in San Francisco

## Intangible Treasures

Lately, Christopher Columbus has hit the rocks among Italian American academics, politicians, and even organizational leaders. Simply, many of them are fair-weather Italics. Many of them parrot multicultural platitudes, pander to other groups, and have little grounding in anything beyond the “food & family” routine so pervasive among us.

Columbus has become a hot potato for pandering politicians. On Staten Island last October, two local politicians opted to replace the poorly attended Columbus Day Parade with an Italian festival, deleting the name Columbus from the event. On Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, the sponsoring organization has been gradually expunging Columbus from the parade's line of march. The *Santa Maria* float is gone, as are any tributes to the explorer by commentators. Everyone, it seems, is playing it safe by glossing over the very reason for the holiday. They celebrate immigrant “courage” (more accurately, “desperation”) rather than the real courage and earth-changing exploits of a Classical Italian navigator who brought Western Civilization and Christianity to half the globe. If our own East Coast leaders and politicians with huge numbers of Italic inhabitants abandon Columbus, what can we expect around the country?

Italian language instruction is another example of cultural intellect gone awry. Any non-English culture that wishes to preserve itself and prepare future generations always focuses on its native lan-

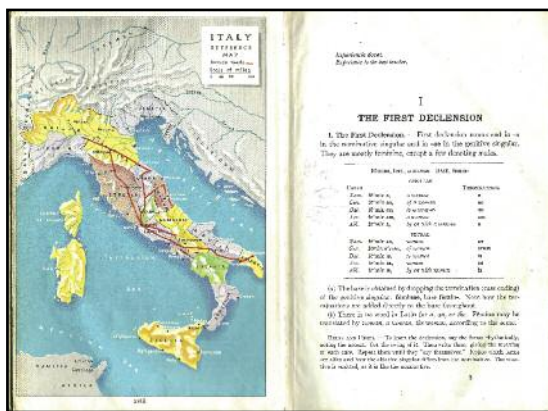
guage. Greeks, Jews, Chinese, Poles, even Gaelic Irish encourage parents to enroll their children in after-school ethnic classes. In most cases, it's more than “encourage.” Often, it's tied to religious training. Our Italian American culture has no mandate for acculturation, after school or otherwise. Nor is the Catholic Church understandably interested in preserving our culture. We have put way too much faith in “the family” to preserve cultural intellect. Illiteracy was rampant among our immigrant generation, and most of our own mothers and fathers were not well versed in the big picture of heritage. Hence the monotonous “food & family.”

Italian American organizations only allocate a small portion of their income to cultural programs, preferring to “give back” to America with huge grants to medical charities and other non-ethnic appeals. No one addresses the fact that there is no demand for Italian language among Italian Americans. Families are rarely given incentives like free youth programs, travel, or scholarships tied to heritage training. Despite the obvious lack of demand, the groups and the Italian government invested \$3 million for Advanced Placement tests. In 2014, only 2,200 high school students chose to take the Italian AP tests, just 20 students more than Japanese. (By comparison, 135,000 took the Spanish AP and 21,000 the French AP) We outnumber Japanese Americans by 16 million souls. The lesson: cultural intellect must be imparted directly to Italian American youngsters, not through the American school system, with one exception – Latin.

## Families are rarely given incentives tied to heritage training

Latin has over 6,000 AP takers across America, three times the Italian AP. I took two Latin courses in junior high school and can attest to one thing: it changed the whole perception of my Italian heritage...for the better. The very first page of my Latin text (below) had a map of Italy. Latin should be the first step to cultural intellect. Why is it mutually exclusive from Italian studies? Linguists classify Latin, as well as Spanish, French, and

Portuguese, as the “Italic Language Family.” Need we say more?



Another sad indicator of our diminished cultural intellect is the loss of quality periodicals.

Back in the 1930s the college educated second generation provided English-speaking Italians upscale sources of information. Then, as now, many educated Italian Americans sought to rise above the old neighborhood and its street culture. (Cont'd. on p. 28)





# Jazz Italian Style

## *Bebop, Swing, and Bella Musica*

by Bill Dal Cerro & David Witter  
383 pages, \$19.95

A Review by Rosario A. Iaconis

In crafting *Bebop, Swing, and Bella Musica*, Bill Dal Cerro and David Anthony Witter have rewritten the rule book of American jazz.

Not since Peter Hamill's *Why Sinatra Matters* has a volume captured the unheralded but unmistakable musical genius of a people.

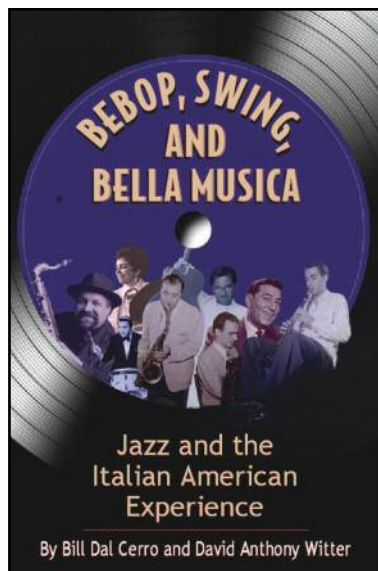
And any Daddy-o within eyesight of this review will surely recognize the authors as real gone cats. Dal Cerro and Witter have turned out a tome that's 18-Karat. *Bebop, Swing, and Bella Musica* is the bomb.

Unlike some other meditations on jazz, this one is as prodigiously researched as it is factually accurate. (There's no screwin' the pooch in these pages.) Indeed, both writers spent years interviewing the likes of Sam Butera, Buddy DeFranco, Gap Mangione, and Bucky Pizzarelli. Talk about literary jamming. The result is a magisterial work that is informative, infectious, and historically spot-on.

Though *Alma Mater Italia* is widely known as the epicenter of music—from orchestras and instrumentals to lyrical opera and soaring arias to Neapolitan love songs and modern pop music—few would ever link the scions of Italy with jazz. Fewer still are



Joe Marsala  
(clarinet) employed  
African Americans  
(photo by Chas. Peterson)



black and white bands.”

Yet even such groundbreaking events pale before the epochal waves of Italian migrations that forever altered the destiny of the United States – and the world. This book provides more than a musical tour of America; it yields a mother lode of historical revelations and fresh perspectives. With great clarity and erudition, Messrs. Dal Cerro and Witter delineate the Four Great Waves of Italian migrations to the New World. The first wave was the *Age of Exploration* ushered in by Columbus, Cabot, da Verrazzano, Vespucci, Tonti, and Malaspina.

The second wave includes the artisans, sculptors, musicians and businessmen who enriched the early colonies. Filippo Mazzei, a friend of Jefferson and Washington, coined the notion that “all men are created equal” (in Italian). He remains emblematic of this period. (Moreover the Founders based our republic and constitution on the ancient Italian model of Rome that Mazzei invoked.)

The third wave arrived in the mid-19th century, populating the Midwest, California and the Southwest and launching extensive commercial and agricultural innovations. And the fourth wave—the mass migration with which we are all familiar—occurred from 1880 to 1920.

Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra are heavily represented in *Bebop, Swing and Bella Musica* – and with good reason. Both singers are purists blessed with pipes of gold. Moreover, in their pursuit of excellence, each of these musical stylists exemplified the Italian notion of effortless mastery, aka *sprezzatura*, and the Italian Renaissance ideal of humanism. *Bel canto*, jazz, and egalitarianism all played a part in their greatness.

However, another Italian musical giant—Dean Martin—deserved more ink here. Martin jammed with the Mills Brothers, Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong. To their credit, though, Dal Cerro and Witter included a telling quote from Dino Crocetti regarding *The Godfather*: “I hated that movie, what it did to the Italian people. There was no call for that.”

A profound pronouncement from the King of Cool. -RAI

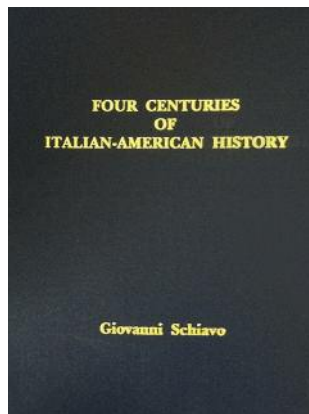


## Slipping Away (cont'd from p. 26)

Magazines like *Atlantica* focused on Italian accomplishments both in Italy and here. Food and fashion had little place in these magazines. You can find a 1930 debate in *Atlantica* about why neighborhood youngsters weren't opting to study Italian. Problems were actually addressed, not covered up as now. [A perfect example is an Italian government official recently claiming that 250 million people around the world speak Italian. Considering there are only 57 million people in Italy, where in creation does he find 200 million Italian speakers outside of Italy? Does he count people ordering a *cappuccino* in Kansas?] Very few Italian American magazines are provocative or deliver hard realities. Instead, they are meant to cheer the reader up and paint a picture of prosperity, power, glamour, and nostalgia. (Hopefully, *The Italic Way* is the exception.)

Italian America was once full of small bands that played traditional music and symphonic marches. Now, down to a handful playing for the occasional feast or church procession, they lack the funding and young talent necessary to restore our glorious musical intellect. This is a treasure far more important than cookbooks and Mafia movies. Meanwhile, Celtic bagpipers and Polka bands can be found throughout America.

Finally, there must be more respect for what came before our grandparents. History is a dirty word for many Italian Americans unless it's about sports statistics or old mobsters. It is often out of their comfort zone to listen and appreciate things beyond their immediate past. They see the history of Italians in America as starting with their grandfathers. As Italic Institute President Bill Dal Cerro likes to say, "There were four waves of Italians to America: the first wave was the explorers, the second those who helped create the United States, the third, the early pioneers in California and the Midwest, and fourth, the rest of us."



Researcher Giovanni Schiavo (above), a Sicilian immigrant, devoted his life to uncovering those four waves. His book *Four Centuries of Italian American History* was finally published in 1952. Thanks to his daughter Eleanor Schiavo Leonard and grandson Andrew Leonard, you can now access this work at [www.italic.org](http://www.italic.org). Be amazed at the treasures he uncovered and which remained out of reach these many years. If we are to restore our cultural intellect it is our duty to spread the word that we came before the Mayflower and are not just from the old neighborhood. That is how a classical people should see themselves.

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## Fallaci (cont'd from p. 15)

and horror of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Although she was "ice-frozen, even my brain was ice-frozen," Fallaci summoned up the strength to write a 4,000 word essay that, after being published in *Corriere della Sera*, became a book: *The Rage and the Pride*. In it, Fallaci denounced Islamic fundamentalists, described Imams as "spiritual guides of terrorism," and decried the attacks as a salvo in a "clash of cultures" between Muslim countries and the Western democracies. She continued to elucidate these ideas in a second book, *The Force of Reason*.

Muslim organizations across Europe were outraged. In June, 2005, prodded by a lawsuit filed by Adel Smith, president of the Union of Italian Muslims, a judge in Bergamo, Italy, called for Fallaci to be extradited and stand trial for "defaming Islam." Although the trial proceeded, Fallaci managed to expose its absurdity from afar, noting to the judge that Mr. Smith, in his public statements, had called for her murder (issuing a *fatwah*) and that he had also defamed Christianity. The trial quickly adjourned and fell apart.

In 2006, sensing the end was near, she returned home to Florence. Although America was, to Fallaci, a "husband or a lover," she called Italy "my patria, my home, my mother. I love my mother more than my husband."

Fallaci's love of Italy is truly the backbone of *The Rage and the Pride*. She once said that "the minute you give up your principles, and your values, you're dead, your culture is dead, and your civilization is dead. Period." Fallaci certainly rose to the challenge in defending Italian culture. Her book takes the reader through the entire swath of Italic history, from classical Rome and the Renaissance to the *Risorgimento* and modern Italy. An avowed atheist, she nonetheless muses that "I have a lot in common with the Catholic Church. Damn, if I do! How couldn't I? I was born in a landscape of domes, monasteries, Christs, Madonnas, saints, crosses and bells. The first music I heard when I came into this world was the music of the bells of Santa Maria del Fiore."

Fallaci continues: "Through that church, I have learned what sculpture and architecture and painting and poetry and literature are, what beauty combined with knowledge is. Thanks to it, I began to ask myself, what is Good, what is Evil, if God exists."

Fallaci wasn't alive to witness the Arab Spring of 2011, when many largely Muslim countries—Tunisia, Libya, Egypt—began deposing their tyrannical leaders. But she was alive in April 2004 when a countryman, Fabrizio Quattrocchi, was captured by Islamic militants in Iraq. Before his Muslim kidnappers had a chance to decapitate him, Quattrocchi screamed, "I'll show you how an Italian dies!" At that point, he ripped off his hooded blindfold and lunged at his surprised tormentors, who quickly shot him to death. Italian rage and the pride indeed!

As for Fallaci, she was asked by PBS television host Charlie Rose in 2003 what she wanted to be remembered for after her death. She said: "For my guts, my honesty, and my independence of thought."

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# Honoring the Admiral

***Ever wonder why Italian Americans never celebrated Columbus Day with a special meal or dessert? So did we. Christmas, Easter or St. Joseph's Day wouldn't be right without a food tradition, so why didn't Columbus deserve something special - like pesto to acknowledge his Genovese birthplace?***

***We asked chef Mary Ann Esposito, host of television's longest running cooking show, PBS "Ciao Italia," to create a new dish to honor Columbus and the Italian explorers who unified the globe. She calls it Pasta Due Mondi, joining ingredients from the New World and the Old. (special thanks to member Dona DeSanctis for introducing us to Mary Ann).***

by Mary Ann Esposito



Mary Ann Esposito, [www.ciaoitalia.com](http://www.ciaoitalia.com)

We have Christopher Columbus to thank for not only discovering the New World but also for discovering new foods that he brought back to Europe. He brought back potatoes, legumes, corn, peppers, avocado, squash, pumpkins, tomatoes and cocoa. His search for spices was less successful, only finding allspice and not the cloves and peppercorns that were in such demand in Europe.

During his voyages, his

crew ate salted fish, hardtack (biscuits) and drank wine. He carried olive oil, cheese, honey, vinegar, sardines and pickled meats in the ship's hold.

If Columbus were to be invited to dinner with you, he would be familiar with some of the ingredients in this pasta dish. He might not recognize red tomatoes, though, since the first ones were yellow, and from where they take their Italian name, *pomo d'oro* (*pomodoro*), meaning apple of gold. He might be a little skittish, too, about eating the tomatoes since they were considered an ornamental plant with poisonous properties. But his fears would be quelled once he took the first forkful.

## ***Pasta Due Mondi*** (Two Worlds Pasta)

Serves 4 - 6

5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 small hot red pepper, crushed (1 tsp or more to taste)  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
4 anchovies in olive oil, mashed  
1 large red bell pepper, seeded and diced  
1 medium zucchini squash, diced  
2 medium red skin potatoes, unpeeled and diced  
1 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen  
1 cup halved yellow cherry tomatoes (Sun Gold variety has nice flavor)  
1 pound linguine  
½ cup minced basil leaves (in honor of his home town of Genoa, land of pesto sauce)

Pour 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large bowl; add 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon coarse ground

black pepper and mix well. Add the bell pepper, zucchini and potatoes to the bowl and mix well to coat the vegetables.

Transfer them to a baking sheet and roast them at 350F until just *al dente*, about 12 to 15 minutes. Set them aside.

In a large saute' pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and stir in the hot red pepper, garlic and anchovies and cook over medium heat until the mixture is soft and sauce-like. Add the corn and cook 1 minute. Turn heat to simmer. Add the cherry tomato halves and roasted vegetables. Cover and keep warm.

Cook the linguine until *al dente*; drain, reserving ¼ cup of the cooking water.

Add the linguine to the saucepan along with the water and stir over low heat to blend all the ingredients well. Add the basil and toss again.

Serve hot with your favorite grated cheese.



**From the Old World: pasta, basil, olive oil, garlic, & cheese**

**From the New World: potatoes, squash, corn, peppers, & tomatoes**

**From the Ocean: anchovies**



as such. Any people in the aftermath of the Great War, suffering terrible losses, can be led astray, not all of them but enough of them. The advent of Fascism did reveal a lot about the oppressive nature of Italian class society, and about the existence of a socialist movement that was strong but not strong enough to win state power. I believe that substantial portions of Italian society, much of the working class, some of the middle class, and almost all of the intelligentsia had no love for *il Duce*.

**IW:** What has the German-led austerity program done to Italy? And is Italy really as bad off economically as Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland?

**MP:** Italy is a social democracy, less prosperous and more corrupt than northern European countries like Norway or Finland but somewhat better off than Greece, Portugal, and Spain (or so it was some years back). Austerity always comes on the backs of the working poor and is targeted against a nation's hard-won social programs. The problem may not be Germany as such but the ruling interests of these various countries (with the German elites leading the way) who use the European Union as an instrument to limit the social gains of the working classes of every country within the EU.

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**Italian Americans worry more about “welfare chiselers” than “corporate profiteers...who are really sticking it to us.”**

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**IW:** A large percentage of today's Italian Americans are right of center. Considering the history of Italians in America and in Italy—job and housing discrimination, lynching in New Orleans and elsewhere, labor activism in the New York garment industry and in the strikes in Lawrence, Mass., and Patterson, N.J., the Sacco and Vanzetti tragedy, the mafia stigma, and a century of unabated depiction in the media and entertainment industries as criminals and buffoons, plus the downfall of Fascism in Italy—don't you think this is odd?

**MP:** The Italians in America were too busy trying to make a living to concern themselves with trying to make history. They did relatively little if anything for Sacco and Vanzetti or for other struggles that featured their besieged ethnic kin. In recent times their heavily conventional ways have led them to be American super-patriots and Reagan Democrats, worried more about crime, drugs, “welfare chiselers,” and same-sex marriages and less about the corporate profiteers who are the ones who are really sticking it to us.

**IW:** Why do Italian Americans have little or no appreciation of their classical heritages, namely Ancient Rome and the Renaissance, and only an immigrant consciousness? Greeks, Jews,

Germans, Irish and others seem to be much more aware of their deeper heritage.

**MP:** As Italians we have as much right to be proud of our heritage as any other national group. I enjoy my heritage, be it from Ancient Rome to Renaissance Italy and beyond. But I also appreciate the human endeavors and achievements put forth by many other civilizations. The celebration of one's heritage should not come at the expense of anyone else's. But you are right, many Italian Americans have no interest or information regarding both their long past history and their more recent history. Like other ethnic groups, the Italians in America have largely acculturated to the existing mass media culture. Like people of various backgrounds, Italian Americans are seriously involved in consumerism and maintaining a suitably middle-class lifestyle. There is nothing wrong with wanting to live comfortably or decently. But it is unfortunate that it is too often coupled with apolitical inertia and a limited conventional consciousness. My friend, Richard Vanucci, himself a conservative (who reads books and refuses to use a computer) says, “As a folk we are our own worst enemy.” It's “Frank Sinatra,” *Jersey Shore*, and boundless consumerism without any effort devoted to our history in this country and the old country, Vanucci believes. I agree, but I think there are a lot of quality Italian American writers and social activists, and worthy organizations and publications, *The Italic Way* being one.

Several of Parenti's lectures are available on YouTube at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com); just type in his name. His personal website is [www.michaelparenti.org](http://www.michaelparenti.org).

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**CAN YOU SEE  
THE DIFFERENCE?**

***The Italic Way is the  
“deep end” of the  
heritage pool.***

**We are not for  
everyone. But if you  
want depth,  
C'mon in!**

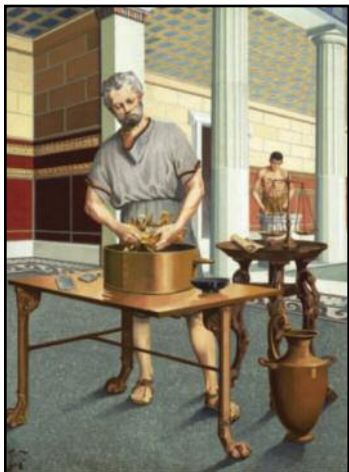
**Join at [www.italic.org](http://www.italic.org)**





## Greeks (cont'd from p. 25)

misunderstood in his own time. While we may now consider Pythagoras to be one of the great thinkers of antiquity, in his own time he was reviled for his academy's secret rites by those not included in his school. He and his followers were perceived as overly exclusive and insular, which eventually led to the people of *Magna Graecia* destroying the various schools of Pythagoreanism which had been established throughout the area. It is unclear whether Pythagoras himself died in the chaos or was simply chased through Italy before committing suicide by starvation; both stories persisted in ancient times.



### The Genius of Sicily

Archimedes, unlike Pythagoras, was born right in the heart of *Magna Graecia*. The city of Syracuse, Sicily, where he was born in 287 B.C., was a thriving metropolis which extended its influence throughout the Mediterranean. Once again unlike Pythagoras, Archimedes lived most of his life in his home city. There, he became one of the greatest mathematicians of all time. He is most well-known for the famous “eureka” moment.

Charged by the king with the task of determining whether or not a golden crown had been mixed with silver, Archimedes devised an extremely clever method for determining the density of the crown without having to destroy it. The story goes that, while getting into a bath tub, Archimedes was struck by that fact that the water in the tub was displaced in an amount proportional to the volume of what-

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***We use Archimedes' discovery  
in fermenting wine  
and brewing beer.***

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ever was put in it. Therefore, the mathematician realized that he could easily deduce the composition of the crown by simply measuring the amount of water the crown would displace and dividing the crown's weight by this figure. He was so ecstatic about his conclusion that he is rumoured to have screamed “*εὕρηκα!*” (eureka!), Greek for “I have found it,” as he ran into the street naked, too excited to take the time to put on clothes. Archimedes had discovered Specific Gravity – a method of identifying elements. (Every element on the Periodic Table has its own S.G. Gold's S.G. is 19.32 while silver is 10.5 Specific gravity readings are also the mainstay of wine and beer-making to determine when all the sugar has fermented into alcohol).

This ancient Da Vinci also dabbled in solar energy, leverage, and



hydraulics. One of his most famous inventions is the “Archimedes' Screw,” – literally a giant hand-cranked screw inside a cylinder still used today for lifting water against gravity. The principle may have been developed earlier but his design is the most commonly used.

Like Pythagoras, Archimedes was obsessed with mathematics. He was the first to prove that the area of a circle is equal to  $\pi$  times the radius squared ( $A = \pi r^2$ ).

Despite his international prestige, he met quite a violent end. In 212 B.C., during the Second Punic War, Archimedes' home city of Syracuse had been under siege by the Romans for two years. Once the Romans took the city, the general Marcus Claudius Marcellus requested to speak with the great scientific mind about whom he had heard so much. Archimedes could not be bothered. He was too busy working on his mathematics to go meet with some general; but the Roman soldier who had been sent to get him did not take this rejection lightly. In a fit of rage, the warrior slew the mathematician who died asking only that the circles he had been working with be left untouched. The anger with which Marcellus received this news is a testament to the greatness of Archimedes' intellect.

Italy has been a brilliant tapestry of different cultures. Pythagoras and Archimedes are very much part of our Italian story. The very richness of Italian heritage is that it is indeed not one single heritage.

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A working Archimedes' Screw in Holland.



## Maggio (cont'd. from p.19)

Italy to be fodder for the American dream, but for some reason half of them went back to despotic Italy, including my grandfather. The truth is they fled to make a living, like everyone else in this country. It could just as well have been about the Irish, Chinese, Hispanics or Poles - everybody who came here had dirty jobs and faced discrimination. Non-Italians watching this show can rightly say, “big deal Italians, what made your menial work special?”

**Bill:** The last part of the series was a shambles – hastily stitched together, and very clichéd. That includes the Puzo stuff. There was a build-up, but absolutely no follow-through. It was a tribute to the wrong people – too much with the singers (not even Connie Francis). And Rocky Marciano deserved a plug for the 1950s. At the end, I did feel a bit nostalgic, as in “What a largely wasted opportunity!”

**John:** The segment on Italians in the labor movement was informative but Maggio treated the Anarchist connection of some of these activists too lightly. In truth, the image of Italian Anarchists was like Islamic terrorists today. They had assassinated the King of Italy in 1900 and half a dozen statesmen in Europe. I can understand America’s fear of these people. They were not a noble side of us.

**Rosario:** Maggio’s choice of talking heads was another squandered opportunity. Where was astronomer Carolyn Porco, or Prof. Richard Gambino who authored *Vendetta*, the authoritative book about the 1891 New Orleans massacre?

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**Maggio relied too much on the usual consultants. This was the small picture, not the big one.**

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**Bob:** Maggio relied too much on the usual suspects of misguided *italoamericanità* (Gay Talese, Emelise Aleandri, et al). Like them he has come late, far too late, to the Italian American party. Had he consulted any member of the Italic Institute the series almost certainly would have blazed new trails.

**Anthony:** Did anyone find it curious that the lead sponsor of the series was Del Grosso Foods?

**John:** It speaks volumes about our so-called success when the history of our people is introduced by three jars of tomato sauce. No question that Del Grosso is a first-rate company proud of its roots. But, why wasn’t this documentary co-sponsored by the Bank America, TransAmerica, Planters Peanuts, etc? The truth is, these companies, founded by Italians, have no Italian Americans on their boards, like Del Grosso. How did that happen? That’s another story worth investigating.

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## Italophobia (cont'd. from p.23)

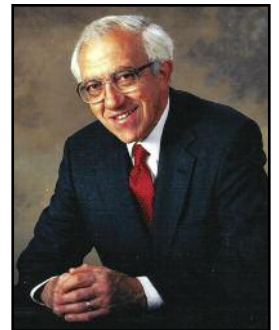
opens and drinks an \$84,000 bottle of wine that is evidence in a crime. When a startled fellow officer questions this violation of law, his partner replies, “*Like the Italians say, ‘if you want to live a little you have to cheat a little.’*” In one episode of *Mike & Molly*, the urban Italian American character trades insults with a farmer. When the farmer is asked why the two are insulting each other the farmer refers to the light-hearted banter by explaining “*I’d take a bullet for this wop.*”

The Italic Institute wrote to CBS executives—from the VP of Diversity to President Nina Tassler—asking that the words “Italians” and “wop” be cut or bleeped on the dub master so the words would not be carried into reruns and syndication. Everyone at CBS and the FCC refused to address the ethnic insults. The Institute then wrote to two Italian American members of the CBS Corporate Board, Frederic Salerno and Joseph Califano. Little did we know that both men suffered from *Italophobia gravis*. Four appeals were made to them, the last one resulted in a warning from the CBS Legal Dept to stop bothering them. Each of these men is paid some \$250,000 to sit on the Board and owns about 40,000 shares of CBS stock. They sit on the Board to ensure that CBS’s mission: “*to incorporate socially responsible messages into its programming*” is carried out by its executives. Both of these uncut episodes are now in syndication on multiple cable networks.

**CASE #386 — A middle school teacher produces a “Mafia” stage play.**

**PATIENT — Sam Rotolo**

This particularly sad case of acute Italophobia occurred in Batavia, IL. The principal of this school was Sam Rotolo, who had the power to rein in the teacher. Despite a lawsuit brought by an Italian American parent at the school, Mr. Rotolo allowed the play to proceed, including the teacher coaching the players in Italian American accents and mannerisms. Rotolo departed this world but his obituary lives on:



“*In 2006, Mr. Sam Rotolo’s Italian heritage made local news when protesting parents at the junior high filed a lawsuit to stop a play, a comedy written by one of its teachers about “little mobsters,” saying it portrayed offensive stereotypes of Italian-Americans. In the end, school officials stood behind the production. When asked to comment, family members said Mr. Rotolo defended the teacher — whom he had worked with before retiring — saying, “He’s a fine young man who gets a lot out of the kids. He would never do anything to ridicule any ethnic group.”*”

### Prognosis:

Italophobia may strike anywhere and anyone. Be aware of the symptoms, but there is no known cure. Patients eventually die, happy in their “heroic” stand against political correctness, at least toward their own kind.

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## HONOR OUR 'TEAM AMERICA'

Columbus Day is under siege in America. The Great Navigator is being blamed for every ill that has befallen the Indigenous peoples of the New World and every human being who was forcibly brought here. Even our politicians are taking cover.

The Italic Institute offers those of you who still see Columbus and the other Italian explorers as men of vision a way to celebrate your ethnic link to them. Italic people the world over should openly revere these intrepid explorers whose courage and leadership united the earth and linked all of humanity. How many other groups in America can produce a list of men like these who opened and mapped a New World? Our researchers have assigned an appropriate day to mark their individual achievements. Make it a proud and open tradition in your home,

and among your extended family, to honor these men who share your Italian lineage by displaying our Italian Explorers Banner at your home, your business, or your club.

### **Cristoforo Colombo... October 12, 1492**

The day he landed on an island in the Caribbean, opening the New World. Approximately half of this voyage was financed by Italian merchants in Spain.

### **Giovanni Caboto... June 24, 1497**

The day he landed on North America to claim part of it for England. He also planted the flag of Venice on that day. Cabot's voyage was fully financed by him and Italian merchants in Bristol, England. Benjamin Franklin mentioned this fact in 1775 to protest British oppression.

### **Amerigo Vespucci... February 15, 1502**

The day he took command of the Portuguese fleet exploring the Brazilian coast and realized that the islands Columbus had found were off the shore of actual continents — a New World.

### **Giovanni da Verrazzano... July 8, 1524**

The day he returned to France and announced French title to a northern & eastern portion of North America to King Francis I.

### **Enrico Tonti... April 9, 1682**

The day Enrico Tonti and Robert La Salle reached the mouth of the Mississippi River and claimed the river and vast Louisiana Territory, named for King Louis XIV, for France. Tonti spent 25 years in service to France in America.

### **Alessandro Malaspina... July 30, 1789**

The day Admiral Malaspina sailed from Cadiz, Spain, on a voyage around the world. He mapped in detail the Pacific coasts of the Americas up to Alaska.

### **Giacomo Beltrami... August 28, 1823**

The day he announced finding the source of the Mississippi River in northern Minnesota. His explorations were done as a private traveler but his name survives in Beltrami County, MN.

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