ARBA SICULA is the official journal of the Sicilian-American organization by the same name whose principal objective is to preserve, study, and promote the language and culture of Sicily.

ARBA SICULA is normally published once a year, in the Fall. To communicate with the Editor, to submit materials for publication, to subscribe and to obtain information on our organization, write to Gaetano Cipolla, PO Box 149, Mineola, New York 11501. The materials received will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Those who subscribe to the journal automatically become members of Arba Sicula. Annual dues entitle the members to two issues of Arba Sicula (or one if a double issue) and two of Sicilia Parra. Arba Sicula is a Non-Profit Organization.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all unsigned articles are by the Editor.
ARBA SICULA
A Non-Profit International Organization Promoting the Language and Culture of Sicily

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Attention Arba Sicula Members!
Our address has changed

While Arba Sicula’s official address remains the same as before, our mailing address from now will be:

**Arba Sicula/Gaetano Cipolla**
**P. O. Box 149**
**Mineola, New York 11501**

As Professor Cipolla will go to St. John’s University only sporadically, please send all your communications, dues and other materials, to Arba Sicula at this address. This will avoid delays and make communication more efficient. We will still hold our events at St. John’s University.

**Acknowledgments**

The Editor expresses his gratitude to Carolina Scarito Heffley for her careful proofreading of the journal. Her help is invaluable in eliminating annoying errors that inevitably occur.
# ARBA SICULA

**VOLUMI XXXVIII, NUMIRA 1 & 2, PRIMAVERA E STATI 2017**

**VOLUME XXXVIII, NUMBERS 1 & 2, SPRING & SUMMER 2017**

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Annunciui/Announcement

1. On November 3, 2017, Gaetano Cipolla, Nino Provenzano and Michael Badalucco will participate in the Annual Gala at NIAF in Washington DC. They will make a presentation to the people attending the conference, focusing on Arba Sicula and the work it does for the language and culture of Sicily. NIAF this year will highlight Sicily’s contributions. If you live nearby, drop in to see us. We will have a room for the presentation and will be assigned an area for an exhibition of books and things of interest to Sicilians.

2. We will host Frank Ingrasciotta’s One-Man-Show, Blood Type: Ragù on either October 8 or Oct 14 at St. John’s University. The date has not been confirmed. Please check Gaetano Cipolla’s Facebook for the announcement. We expect that the event will be held at the Queens campus of St. John’s University, D’Angelo Center 416A at 6:15 PM. E-mail Gaetano for confirmation at gcipolla@optonline.net.

3. On November 10, 2017, we will host singer/performer Chiara Verzola, directly from Italy, in a show that will highlight the life and music of Rosa Balsistreri. Again we are awaiting confirmation from St. John’s University Conference Services. Please check Gaetano Cipolla’s Facebook page for the announcement or email him at gipolla@optonline.net. The event will be held at the Queens campus of St. John’s University, D’Angelo Center 416A at 6:15 PM.

For the events at St. John’s University refreshments will be served as usual.

Our events is free as always, to members and their guests.
DICHIARAZIONI DU SCOPU DA NOSTRA ASSOCIAZIONI


Circamu la canuscenza d’un senzu di cuntinuazioni ntra nui stissi, e picchissu amu pigghiatu un simbula anticu di li Siculi (la stirpi principali in Sicilia prima di lu stabilimentu di li Grechi) pi suttaliniari la seriità di lu nostru scopu e pi marcari nni li menti di la juvintù nostra un signu di l’antichità di la so eredità. Nui semu, prima di tuttu, intirissati ca la chiavi di l’arma Siciliana (la lingua di li nostri avi) fussi cunsirvata e studiata cu preggiu e attinzioni. Pi la fini di rializari st’intinzioni, ARBA SICULA invita a tutti ca ponnu vantari armenu un avu Sicilianu, a unirisi cu nui in un sforzu culittivu pi au-mintari la canuscenza di la nostra stissa eredità.

Stu disignu è pigghiatu di na midagghia d’urnamentu ca nchiudi na specia di cruci dicurativa. Un esemplari si trova nni lu Museu di Siracusa. Fu truvata a San Cataldu e fa parti di l’Adrano Hoard, la chiù granni cugghiuta d’uggetti di brunzu ca à statu truvata in Sicilia. Lu disignu è di circa 1300 anni avanti Cristu, di la civilità Sicula.”

Ristampammu ntà pagina precedenti a dichiarazioni dû scopu accussì comu fu scritta ntò primu numiru di Arba Sicula ntò 1979. A copiammu esatr-tamenti comu fu scritta senza fari currezioni. Comu si vidi, a lingua canciau nanticchia; semu forsi chìu attenti a comu scrivemu in sicilianu, ma mi pari
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR OUR ORGANIZATION

“ARBA SICULA is, above all else, the overdue reflection of a felt need by an established ethnic community of the United States of America to define, preserve and disseminate our ancient heritage in order to assure its undistorted survival. While our orientation is literary, our approach is historically evocative and intended to overlook no aspect of Sicilian culture as unworthy of our examination and analysis. The purpose of this effort is, therefore, to rediscover what is legitimately ours within the composite synthesis of a displaced island people possessing immediate roots in the Sicilian, Italian and American historical experiences, as well as far more ancient linkages to every nation of the Mediterranean.

We seek recognition of a sense of continuity within ourselves and for that reason have chosen an ancient symbol of the Sikel people (the predominant strain in Sicily prior to its settlement by the Greeks) both to underscore the seriousness of our intent and to stamp upon the minds of our youth a sign of the antiquity of their heritage. We are, above all, concerned that the key to the Sicilian soul (the language of our forefathers) be preserved and studied with attentive appreciation.

To the end of fulfilling these declared intentions, ARBA SICULA extends to all and any able to claim at least one Sicilian grandparent, an invitation to join us in a collective effort to increase our consciousness of our common heritage.

This design is taken from an ornamental pendant enclosing a sort of cross decoration from the Sikel civilization. A sample is in the Museum of Syracuse. It was found at San Cataldo and is part of the Adrano Hoard, the largest collection of bronze objects ever found in Sicily. The design dates from about 1300 years before Christ.”

We reprinted on these pages the statement of purpose published in the first issue of Arba Sicula twenty one years ago. We reproduced it exactly as it
ca in linea di massima amà statu fidili a l’ideali espressi nta sta dichiarazioni. Si
canciau l’edituri, non canciau u disidderiu di travagghiari pi ddi stissi motivi
ca ficiru nasciri a nostra società.

Forsi avissi a fari na brevi storia da nostra associazioni pî soci ca sunu novi
e oramai sunu sparsu in tuttu u munnu. Arba Sicula fu funnata ntô 1979 di
un gruppittu di siculo-americani di Brooklyn tra cui Gaetanu Giacchi, Joseph
Palisi, Alissandru Caldieru, Sebastianu Passioni, Mons. Santi Privitera e Mons.
Anthony Failla e autri ca si riunevanu ntà parrocchia di St. Finbar’s a Brooklyn.
Chisti si putissiru considdirari i soci funnaturi dà società, anchì si giustamentu
u titulu di funnaturi spetta a Gaetanu Giacchi ca fu ô principiu chiddu ca chiù
di tutti travagghiò pi purtari avanti l’organizzazioni.

I prìsidenti dà nostra associazioni hannu statu chisti: Joseph Palisi, 1979-
1980; Gaetanu Giacchi, 1980-1987; Mons. Santi Privitera, 1987; Charles
Cappellino, 1987-8; e Gaetano Cipolla, dû 1988-finu a ora. L’edituri di Arba
Sicula hannu statu sulu dui: Alissandru Caldieru dû 1979 fina ô 1986 e Gaetano
Cipolla dû 1987 finu a oggi. L’autra nostra pubblicazioni, Sicilia Parra, ca durau
pi na para d’anni, fu edita di John Randazzo, dâ sedi di Los Angeles. A secunna
serii di Sicilia Parra cuminciau ntô 1989 e cuntinua finu a ora cu Gaetano Ci-
polla comu diritturi e Henry Barbera comu Co-diritturi, fina ô 2000. Comu
Gaetano Cipolla foru allivati un poci di Giuseppe Provenzano ca fu num-
natu Edituri Associatu di Sicilia Parra. Sfortunatamente, Giuseppe si trasfiriu
in Europa na para d’anni arreri e ora, comu prima, a responsabbilità pi Sicilia
Parra è di Gaetano Cipolla.

Ntà prima fasi, Arba Sicula ebbi assai successu organizzannu reciti di puisii
e programmi nta li chesi e nta li scoli. Però u numiru di soci non superau mai
700-800 pirsunì. Ci fu un piriudu di decadenza a causa di malatii e di autri
cosi ca misi in piriculu l’organizzazioni ntô 1985-7.

Arba Sicula fu salvata grazzi di Mons. Santi Privitera e a Charles Cappel-
linu ca l’aiutarunu finanziamenti e grazzi di Gaetano Cipolla ca prima si
piggiaiu a direzioni dà rivista facennula maturari non sulu dû puntu di vista
dà grafica usannu u computer (i primi numiri si stampavanu cu na machina di
scriviri manuali) ma anchì pù cuntinutu e pà lingua, e poi ntô 1988 piggiaiu
a direzioni di l’organizzazioni comu Prìsidenti.

Arba Sicula ha crisciutu assai nta trentasetti anni, non sulu pù numiru di
l’abbunati, ma puru pì l’ottima riputazioni ca godi ntô munnu.

A società havi soci ca si trovanu principalmenti ntà zona metropolitana
di New York, ntà California e poi ntà tutti i Stati Uniti, macari nta l’Alaska e
l’isuli Hawai. Tra i rivisti italiani, Arba Sicula è a rivista chiù populari d’America.
A niautri nni pari picca cosa aviri quasi 2.000 abbunati, picchi pinsamu ca i
appeared without any corrections. As you can see, our language has changed a little. We are perhaps a bit more conscious of how we write in Sicilian, but I think that we have remained faithful to the ideals that prompted our predecessors to found this publication. If the editor has changed, the desire to work toward the achievement of the same goals that spurred our foundation has not.

Perhaps I ought to provide a brief history of our association for the members who are new to it. Arba Sicula was founded in 1979 by a small group of Sicilian-Americans living in Brooklyn composed of Gaetano Giacchi, Joseph Palisi, Alissandru Caldiero, Sebastiano Passione, Mons. Santi Privitera, Mons. Anthony Failla and others who met monthly in the basement of St. Finbar’s Church. These people can be considered founding members of the organization, even though the title of founder belongs rightly to Gaetano Giacchi, who at the beginning was the one who did the most to promote the organization.

The presidents of our society have been the following: Joseph Palisi, 1979-80; Gaetano Giacchi, 1980-86; Santi Privitera 1987; Charles Cappellino 1987-88; and Gaetano Cipolla 1988-present. The editors of Arba Sicula have been only two: Alissandru Caldiero from 1979 to 1986 and Gaetano Cipolla from 1987 to the present. Our other publication, Sicilia Parra was originally edited by John Randazzo of our Los Angeles Branch, and it was published for a few years. A new series of Sicilia Parra began in 1989 and continues to the present with Gaetano Cipolla as editor. Henry Barbera was Co-editor until 2000. As you may know, Henry passed away on Sept. 24, 2000. Gaetano Cipolla’s responsibilities of producing the newsletter were alleviated by the appointment of Giuseppe Provenzano as Associate Editor in 2003. Unfortunately, Giuseppe moved to Europe a few years ago, and now it’s again Gaetano Cipolla who is mainly responsible for Sicilia Parra.

During the first phase, Arba Sicula was very successful in organizing recitals and performances in churches and schools, but its membership never rose above 700-800. Then there was a period of stagnation because of illness and other reasons which jeopardized the organization (1985-7).

Arba Sicula was saved thanks to Mons. Santi Privitera and Dr. Charles Cappellino, who helped with donations, and thanks to Gaetano Cipolla who first assumed the duties of editor of the journal, making it more mature not only from a graphic point of view by introducing the use of computers and laser printers (the first issues of Arba Sicula were printed using a manual typewriter), but in its content and language. In 1988 Prof. Cipolla assumed the duties as President of the organization. Arba Sicula has grown a lot in thirty-seven years, not only in the numbers of subscribers, but also for the excellent reputation it enjoys all over the world. While we may think that our list of slightly less than 2,000 subscribers is small because we know that there are many Sicilian-

Arba Sicula XXXVIII

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Siciliani d’America sunu assai numirusi e n’avissimu aviri 10,000 almenu! Ma l’autri rivisti specializzati si cunsiddiranu furtunati si hannu 300-400 abbunati. Nautra cosa: tanti rivisti stannu in circulazioni dui, tri anni e poi fallisciunu.

Arba Sicula chist’annu fa trentasei anni di vita, di travagghiu pi dari n’idea chiù giusta dà cultura siciliana e dì so contributi ò munnu. E’ un traguardu ca attravirsamu cu umiltà e cu granni cumpiacenza pi chiddu c’avemu fattu, ma puru cà spiranza ca putemu rializzari ancora assai dicchiù nta l’anni dû terzu millenniu.

Arba Sicula ha statu n’ispirazioni pi tanti Miricani d’origini siciliana. Annu dopu annu am’â prisintatu u megghiu dà cultura siciliana, dannucci mutivi di essiri orgugliusi di essiri Siciliani. Autri società siciliani hannu statu funnatu nta stu paisi e guardanu a niautri pi ispirazioni e sustegnu. Arba Sicula cà so luci illuminau a Sicilia e ê Siciliani facennucci canusciri a tutti u megghiu latu d’iddi. Senza piccari di superbia, nta sti anni u nostru pisu s’ha fattu sentiri e pi chissu putemu essiri orgugliusi dî nostri contribbuti.
Americans out there, and we should have ten thousand subscribers, we are the most popular journal of Italian studies in this country. Other specialized Italian journals struggle along with 300-400 subscribers. Furthermore, many of them fold after two or three years.

Arba Sicula has been an inspiration to many Sicilian-Americans. It has made available to them the best of Sicilian culture, and year after year has offered them reasons to be proud of their heritage. Many other Sicilian organizations have been founded throughout the country, and they look to us as for inspiration and support. Without fear of sounding immodest, Arba Sicula, by shining a truer light on Sicily and Sicilians, has made a difference and can be proud of its contributions.
Puisia siciliana

A fogghia
di Salvo Basso

O fogghia,
tu ca sì misa
’nti la cchiù auta rama
e talij u panurama
a tutta stisa,
pensa ca l’autunnu è vicinu
e la terra a tutti chiama ...
Biata la fogghia ca nasci
nti la rama cchiù vascia
cà ‘n-terra talija ..., quannu idda casca
cchiù picca s’astruppia!
Sicilian Poetry

The Leaf
by Salvo Basso

O leaf, you
who happen to grow
upon the highest branch
and watch the panorama
in all directions,
consider that the fall is near
and that the earth is calling you...
Blessed is the leaf that is born
from the lowest branch
that looks upon the earth...
When it falls down
it won't get hurt as bad.
Ncardiddutu e lustru di menti
già di raciunieri
no millinovcentutrenta
cuomu *Kojack* tenenti
nsapunannu e rasulannuci
facci, testa e pila d’aricchi
ogni tantu proja i ngramagghi
di un uomu cattivu
senza figghi, sulu-suliddu
’n-cumarca di l’abbannunu.
Quann’e ’n-lena ciiciulia risulenti:
*“Ma iu ... mai muoru?”*
Chi vuliti ca ci dicu
vossignuria vurrica
macari a mia!
Grazi, grazi assai
pii crianza
e *binivulenzia*
ma corchi vota liggirai
’nto Currieri dilla Sira:
“Attruvatu stisu, piedi a palitta
causa u tanfu
ca *sbummicava sutta a porta!*
E ‘n-sichitanza ripichia:
*“Ma iu ... mai muoru?”*. 
Dressed to a “t” and sharp of mind
already an accountant
in nineteen hundred thirty
like Lt. Kojak
as I lather and shave
his face, his head
and cut the hairs inside his ears
once in a while he does complain
about the woes of a single man
without children, all alone,
abandoned to his solitude.
When he feels good
he whispers with a smile,
“But am I ever going to die?”
What can I say to you, I answer,
You are going to outlive me.
Thank you, thank you so much
for your good manners and benevolence,
but at one point you will read
in the Corriere della sera
"Found lying on the floor with his feet stiff"
on account of the smell
emanating from underneath the door.
And then he repeats
“But am I ever going to die?”
Amica fedele
di Rosaria La Rocca

Tu sì n’amica assai fedeli,
non t’ài firi i fari mancu na differenza
tra i to amici e macari nimici.
Tu, tu sì priziusa e travagghi
cu na divuzioni ca si senti
finu intra all’ossa to.
Ra matina a siara, ra notti funna
finu a ciaria ro iuornu.
T’addummannu tanti voti: fermiti arriposati,
nun c’è bisuognu ca ti rumpi l’ossa
e a carina d’accussì;
ma tu, taliannimi
mi facisti capiri
cu nuddu mai sà sentiri scartatu
e nun ci a essiri nudda differenza.
Mi misi a pinzari e capiu
cu tu sì na vera amica na sta terra,
e iu d’ora in poi ti ciamu:
amica fidelì e non ciù morti.
Faithful Friend
by Rosaria La Rocca

You are a faithful friend.
You are incapable of favoritism
among friends and even enemies.
You are real precious and you work
with a devotion we can feel
inside our bones,
from morning till the deep of night,
until the first light of dawn.
I’ve asked you many times to please relent,
to rest, for there’s no need to rush.
You’re breaking your bones and back this way,
but you just look and make me understand
that no one ever should feel slighted
and there should be no difference.
I pondered and finally understood
that you are really a good friend on earth
and I shall call you, from this day forward
a real true friend and Death no more.
Lu cantu di li surfari
di Alessio di Giovanni

E sempri di ddassutta veni un cantu
ca pari di ddu scuru lu lamentu,
si ferma un pocu...doppu, ad ogni tantu,
s’îsa chiù malanconicu, chiù lentu.

Ogni acidduzzu, pigghiuatu di scantu,
fuji ddu locu scuru, ddu spaventu:
Li timpi, muti, ascutanu ddu chiantu
e si va ntana macari lu ventu.

“Poviri surfarara sfurtunati,
comu lu notti jornu...” Ma si zzitti
ddocu la vuci, lenta a la calura
da quagghia ni li grutti amariati,
e resta, a la campagna, di d’d’affritti
lu leccu, acchiana ‘n celu e si rancura.
The Song of the Sulfur Mines
by Alessio Di Giovanni

And always from down there a song is heard
that sounds like the lament of that dark place
it stops a little while, then after that,
it then resumes but slower and more sad.

Each little bird, just flies away in fear
from that dark place, completely terrified.
The silent hills all listen to that cry
even the wind seeks out a hiding lair.

“Poor and unfortunate sulfur miners:
for them the day is night...” But there the voice
subsides, much slower in the heat

that seems to thicken in the bitter cave,
and on the countryside, mournfully,
the echo of those souls climbs to the sky.
Parrami di l’acqua e di lu celu
di Francesco Federico
(a Cristina poetessa)

Cuncedimi
li to palori
ntra li palori e lu sangu
parrami di l’acqua
e di lu celu
di la luna e li cumeti
di li jorna e li staciuni.

Cuncedimi
lu to sillabariu
di eroismi e di scunfitti
e mprestami li to ali

pi scunfinari a autri banni.
Speak to Me of Water and the Sky
by Francesco Federico
(to Cristina, a poet)

Let me have your words between the words and blood speak to me of water and of the sky of the Moon, the comets of the days and seasons.

Let me have your spelling book of heroic deeds and defeats and lend me your wings

so I can break through to other places.
Canzuna di vita, di morti d’amuri*

di Marco Scalabrino

Petru
siddu nasci
masculu
ti chiamu figghiu
*
li palori
sciddicanu ammutta ammutta
ntronanu la balataru
si ncantan ‘n-punta di la Ingua
scugnanu
tinti, scrusci, mpaiati.
*
vita morti.
Beni mali.
Diu omu.
E muntarozzi d’aschi
bummuli di lastimi mi vuscu
siddu appena m’allanzu
a ‘mmansiri ssi nsulti,
*
Aprili mutriusu gnuttica
stuccati azzenti
di sì e no.
*
e parru.
senza fila.
E mi ni mpipu.
Chi ssa sputazza
a mia mi fa campari
e arrunzu li bullletti nna lu stipu.
*
Na vita
tutta na vita
na vita sana
fina a l’ultimu
cu ssa testa.
O, cu ssa testa!
*
Mi spirciava di canciari rigistru

Arba Sicula XXXVIII
Song of Life, Death and Love
by Marco Scalabrino

Peter
if you are born
a male
I will call you son.
*

Words
push their way out
stunning the palate’s vault
get stuck on the tip of my tongue
pushing and shoving
mean, noises, in pairs.’
*

Life death.
Good evil.
God man.
And I earn little mounds of wooden chips
clay water coolers of sorrows
If I but try
to tame these insults.
*

Sulky April
its stinging lashes
of yes and no.
*

And I talk
unendingly
and I don’t give a hoot,
for the saliva
makes me go on living
and I crumple electric bills inside the closet.
*

A life
a whole lifetime
and entire life
until the end
with a head like yours
oh, with a head yours!
*

I was driven to change register
di ncapizzari crocchiuli di luci
di sulcari cu vommari d’olivu
la storia finiciusa di sta terra.
to join together bunches of lights
to cut furrows with an olive plow
in the troublesome history of this earth.
Volu a un ncantevuli giardinu”
Lu sonnu di nu mbriacu
di Rosario Previti

Lu corpu miu sentu divintari
Liggeru cornu nuvul’a lu ventu.
pi la gioia mi mis’a gridari
Vidennu lu magnificu purtentu.
La co sa chi mi fici cchiu stunari
Fu quannu ‘nta li spaddi gia mi sentu
Spuntari, bedd’e fatti, un paru d’ali
Quantu la me statura naturali.

La strana metamorfosi bizzarra
Di gioia lu me spiritu inchiu
E la natura ch’a lu cori parra
A fari na vulata mi spinciu.
In fini sent’un sonu di fanfarra
Pi stuzzicari cchiu lu me disiu
E ddocu iapru l’ali di vultura
E ‘nta lu spaziu vastu m’avvintura.

Vulai tantu aut’e luntanu,
Lu munnu, chi cridia tantu vastu,
Paria na birritta d’ortulanu;
Chi purtintus’e magicu cuntrastu!
E pinsari chi l’ omu, sanu-sanu,
S’attacca fittu fittu com’un crastu
A stu strumentu d’espiazioni,
Ristrittu tantu di dimensioni.

Vuiannu sempriora mi dicisi,
Cu ferma vulunta e summu zelu,
Di visitari tutti li pañi
Chi stannu ‘nta lu regnu di lu celu.
A certu puntu zammareddi ‘ntisi,
Sintiti quantu ora vi rivelu:
La prima tappa unni misi pedi
Era di Baccu la divina sedi.

Vittu nu ‘ ncantevuli giardinu

Arba Sicula XXXVIII
The Flight to the Enchanted Garden
A Drunkard’s Dream
by Rosario Previti
Translated into English by Joseph S Salemi

I felt my body rise up and grow light
As if it were a cloud upon the wind,
And I began to cry out "for pure joy
On seeing this portentous miracle.
But something that astounded me much more
Was when from out my shoulders I could feel
A pair of lovely, perfect wings sprout forth
Well suited to my natural shape and height.

This metamorphosis, bizarre and strange,
Filled up my spirit with the greatest joy,
Which naturally addressed my heart’s desire
And prompted me to undertake a flight.
At length I heard a fanfare’s stirring sound
That fired up my longing even more,
And thereupon I spread those vulture wings
To venture forth into the depths of space.

I flew so high and so far that the world
(Which I had once believed to be immense)
Seemed no more than a simple gardener’s cap.
What a contrast-haunting, magical!
To think that mankind, sane in all respects,
Commits itself in dull, sheep-like devotion
To this small instrument of expiation
So utterly restricted and minute.

Flying ever onwards, I decided
With firm conviction and the highest zeal
To visit all the countries that exist
In the heavenly realm. And at one point
I heard the skid of bagpipes. Listen now
To how much mystery I shall unfold:
The very first spot where I set my foot
Was the sacred dwelling place of Bacchus.

I saw a garden, mystic and enchanting,
Diliziuss’assai e populatu
Di Ninfi chi faciunu fistinu
Cu cann’e iammureddi ralligratu.
Vi giuru chi lu mastru iu cchiu finu
Stintass’a fari giustu copiato
Di Ii fattizzi nobil’ e garbati
Di st’ amurusì fimmini sciaquati.

Sensa nuddu velu, scummighiati,
Giusto cornu li fici la Natura,
Cu l’ occhì mei mensi spatiddiati
Vardava dda biddizza di scultura.
Azzardu quattru passì cansiati:
Vulia scansari d’iddi la cinsura,
Ma lu pianu fattu mi falliu
Ch’ognuna gia di mia s’accurgiu.
Delightful beyond measure, and filled up
With Nymphs who made a merry festival
With sounds of piping flutes and thrumming tabors.
I swear to you, the finest painting master
Would not be able to produce the likeness
Of the nobly formed and perfect figures
Seen in those lovely, love-provoking women.

They were unclothed, undraped, in just the state
That they were made by nature, all unveiled.
With eyes half shut I gazed upon that scene
Of sculpted, perfect beauty, and I risked
Some furtive glances at them, though I hoped
I might escape their notice and their censure.
This plan of mine, however, was in vain
Since each of them already had observed me.
Facitili passari!
di Piero Carbone

“Accuso le voci della paura che invitano a costruire muri.”
Mark Zuckerberg, aprile 2016

Let Them in!
by Piero Carbone

“I accuse the voices of fear
That invite people to build walls.”
Mark Zuckerberg, April 2016.

The Berlin wall fell down.
Why do they still build walls?
Once walls were made to keep the people in
but now they are to keep the people out.
The barbed wire is all rusty.
Children tear their hands on it.
They bleed and they cannot play.
Build walls and conscience dies.
But what are you doing?
Some people want to stop them.
What is the purpose of a wall
or of barbed wire?
A river,
history is a river.
It can't be stopped.
Let them in
Sequenza di sonnu
di Joseph A. Amato

Sintumi ntrasinu e nesciunu di li me jurnati. N’arrivanu come arrivava li circu equestri ntò paizi chì cappeddi a tubbu e li capimastri ca gridanu cu l’elefanti ca marcianu sulenni tinennusi li cudi chì probosciti sulu un pagghiazzu cu lu nasu russu chì scarpi lucidi ca puntanu a destra e a sinistra ci fa lu jabbu à simmetria di la parata mentri cavaleri spirlucenti cu cosci e culu traballanti furrianu attornu dintra li circu cummugghiatu i sIRRatura mentri na banna nica sona. Nui taliamu a mmucciuni sutta la tenna di tila mentri na tigri sauta supra na granni gaggia rumurusa. Un corpu di pistola e na frusta la fannu nchianari supra na’ autu sgabelu culuratu. Idda s’assetta e ringhia risintuta e ubbidienti, dannu zampati a l’aria, china di fantasmi dà furesta. E niautri ni sunnamu un munnu ca reclama pi la nostra attenzioni, pi sufriri lu sintimentu di l’assurdu ò circu di la vita cu la prisenza mutanghira dù cancru.
Dream Sequence
by Joseph A. Amato

Symptoms weave in and out of my days.
They come to us the way the circus comes to town:
Top-hatted and high-stepping ringmasters bark out,
Solemn-stepping elephants follow,
Tail in trunk,
A single red-nosed clown
With bright shoes pointing left and right
Mocks the symmetry of the parade,
While sequined riders
With bouncing thighs and groins
Follow the mundane sawdust ring around
While a small band plays on.
We sneak a peek under the flapping canvas tent
Just as a tiger bounds into the large clanging cage.
A whip and a pistol shot put it
On its colorful high wood stool
It sits up and growls,
Resentfully, obediently,
Pawing the air
Filled with jungle ghosts.
And we dream a world
Calling out for attention,
Suffer the sense
Of life’s circus nonsense
And cancer’s hushed presence.
Narrativa Siciliana

Don Sarbaturi Sciarmenta
di Saro Pafumi

Don Sarbaturi, vui chi ni pinsati di Santi?
Santi? Cui, Mangiabrocculi?, Chiddu ca iavi u carrettu e vinni pagghia?
Ma chi capisturu? Io parru di Santi veri, chiddi ca fanu i miraculi.
Comu mai, starnatina vi sbighgiasturu cu stu pinsaru religiusu? Ma quannu mai vui parrati di miraculi e di Santi, si nta cresia, mancu quannu vi maritasturu eruvi cu spiritu presenti?
Semu chiddi ca portunu a paroa dû Signuri. Nun circamnu dinari, si apriti e ci faciti accumudari, cacchi missaggii vamu a dari.
Ieri arsira, veramenti, tardi mi curcai e sugnu ancora ntô lettu, bedda matri assai.
Faciti cu comudu, nuiautri putemu spittari.
“Cu è chistu pirsunaggiu, vostru patri?” Mi dumannau.
“No! Chistu iè Santu Giddiuzzu Abati, u prutitturi di stu paisi”.
“Chi casu stranu, rassumighia a me ziu Saveriu, u calabrisi. Si fici, pinsati, diciannov’anni i carciri. Cu sapi, si si pintìu e divintau Santu?”
“Ma chi dicitì, comu vi po’ veniri stu malu pinsamentu. Iddu è San Giddiuzzu Abati, u nostru Santu, ca sarvau stu paisi in un tristi accadimentu. Pinsati ca a sciera, scinnennu mpitiusa, sippilliva casi, tirreni e ogni cosa. Iddu chi fici: chiamau na vicchiaredda, ci cunsignau lu so bastuni, dicennuci: ‘va, fatti tri voti a cruci ca manu ritta e ferma sta sciera maliditta’. Mancu finiu di farisi a cruci ca manu, ca tuttu tirminau, si stutau financu lu vulcanu. Si nun è miraculu chistu, io nun cridu mancu a Cristu”.

Arba Sicula XXXVIII
Don Sarbaturi, what do you think of saints?
Santi? Who Santi Broccoli-eater? The guy who owns a cart and sells hay?
No, what did you understand? I am talking of real saints, the ones who make miracles.

How come you woke up this morning with this religious thought? When have you ever talked about miracles and saints, if even when you got married you were in church barely in spirit?

This is what happened. This morning as soon as I awoke I heard knocking at my door. Who is it, I asked.

We are people who bring the word of God. We are not asking for money. If you open the door and let us in, we have some messages for you.

“Last night I went to bed real late and I am still in bed, Blessed Mother.”
“Take your time, we can wait for you.”

After about fifteen minutes I let them in the house. They were two young men, carrying a briefcase and had a strange accent. Foreigners it seemed. After the usual chit-chat they started talking about God, about the Lord, and about devils. They had a book in their hands that looked like a missal and they began to read strange things. I was listening without understanding any of their weird utterances. At a certain point one of the two young men got up and approaching the credenza began to look at a picture before which I keep a lighted candle all the time.

“Who is this person, your father? “He asked me.

“No! This is an image of Saint Giddiuzzu Abbot, the protector of our town.”

“It’s very strange indeed. He looks like my uncle Saveriu from Calabria. He was in jail for nineteen years, imagine that. I wonder if he repented and became a saint?”

“What are you saying? How can you come up with such a thought? He is sweet Saint Egidiu Abbot, our saint, the one who saved the town from a terrible event. The lava was flowing down the mountain, burying houses, lands and everything. What did he do? He called on a poor old lady, gave her his staff and told her: ‘Go, make the sign of the cross three times with your right

A diri u veru doppu stu ragiunari, a dumanna ca mi facisturu mi fa pinsari. Vuliti vidiri ca chiddi ca nuiautri chiamammu santi nun sunu, nè chiù, nè menu, ca sinzali?
hand and stop that cursed lava.’ No sooner had she finished crossing herself that the lava flow stopped and even the volcano was extinguished. If that is not a miracle I don’t even believe in Christ.”

“But you really believe that your saint, —what did you say his name was acidduzzu” (little bird)?— was the one who stopped the lava? These are priestly fantasies. There are no saints. They are people like you and me, perhaps with some good qualities, if we want to be benevolent about it, but they are more or less like some of our ancestors. At best, they can be called intermediaries. Only God can make miracles. He does not tell others to perform earth-shattering deeds. And do you know why? Because if the saints had such powers, they would feel like God themselves. This way of thinking and behaving is in our human nature, including saints, as you call them. Therefore, the Lord is only one. He has no father, no mother, no brothers, nor children and does not delegate making miracles to anyone or even to give advice.

To tell the truth after this way of reasoning, the question that you asked me makes me reflect a bit. Do you think we ought to start considering that the people we call saints are nothing more than simple “brokers”? 
Lu pizzu di l’ovu vugghiutu

di Carlo Puleo
Traduzioni in sicilianu di Lucio Zinna

Ernanu sempri li stessi stori di pirsumi appartenuti a coschi mafiusi e na pocolu di chisti, ntra l’urtimi anni, s’avianu pintutu.

Nta li so cuntura Marianu usava na ’ntonazioni ch’assimighiava a chidda di cuntastorii chi nta li tempi passati ricitavanu nta li chiazzu di li quarteri popolari. La manera di cuntari, li pausi a lu mumentu justu, accriscianu l’effettu. Vicinzinu, ancora picciottu ma già patruni di osteria, s’incantava ogni vota chi ci capitava di ascutarili. Già quann’era cchiù picciottu e servia a li tavuli, s’avia jncutu lu ciriveddu di li stori curiusi chi cuntavano li clienti e la so fantasia s’addumava. Marianu, chi lu canuscìa bonu, ci dava corda. Ma cuntannu e ricuntannu, cu la so granni ’spirienza, si firmava di bottu a un puntu ’mpurtanti di la storia, lassannu nta li spini a Vicinzinu chi, comu chiddu chi s’arrispighghia di lu ’ncantisimu, dumannava a bottu di cuntinuari: “E po’ cumu finiu?”

A stu puntu precisu arriva la richiesta: “Avanti, Vicinzinu, portami n’autru ovu e jinchimi lu biccheri!”

Lu picciottu si susìa annuiatizzu, ma prima di jirissinni ’ncucina circava di scunsigghiallu: “M’avì a scusari, ma dopu na cena accussì abbunanti, semu...
The Extortion of a Hard-Boiled Egg

by Carlo Puleo
Translated into English by Arthur V. Dieli

It was always the same story pertaining to hardened mobsters, and to a few of them in the last few years who had reformed.

In his narration, Marianu used the intonation that resembled that of the itinerant storytellers of old who held forth in the popular plazas. The style of narration, the pauses at just the right moment, heightened the effect. Vicinzinu, still a young man, but already the owner of a restaurant, was enchanted every time he happened to listen to him. When he was younger, and waited on tables, his fantasy had been excited by the strange stories some of the customers told, and they had filled his head. Marianu, who understood him well, led him on. Recounting stories from his vast experience he would stop abruptly at an important point short of the climax, leaving Vicinzinu like one being awakened from an enchantment, asking to continue: “And how did it end?”

At this exact point the request was made: “Before that, Vicinzinu, bring me another egg and fill my glass!”

The young man, a bit bothered, would get up, but before going to the kitchen he tried to dissuade him: “You must excuse me, but after such a hearty...”
già a lu quartu ovu. E comu la mittemu cu lu so colesterolu?"


Vicenzu arrivò cu l’ovu e lu biccheri chinu. Li pusò supra la tavula, s’assittò e aspitò disìusu di sintiri lu restu di la storia. Marianu sbatti adaciu adaciu l’ovu supra l’avlu di tutti dui li lati, poi lu fici firriari lentu lentu ntra li manu e cu na liggera pressioni. La scorcia si grapìu sana sana e l’ovu nisci fora biancu e beddu pulitu. Marianu lu taliì cumpiaciutu, ci misi un pizzicu di sali e nni fici un sulu muccuni. Affirrò lu biccheri e, dopu aviri fattu un signu di brinnisi, si nni vippi chiù di mità. Si passò la lingua nta la labbra e si priparò a cuntari. Vicinzinu lu taliava ’nsiccu, maravigghiuatu pi l’abilità c’avìa di nun lassari ’mpicciatu all’ovu mancu un pizzuddu di scorcia, comu spissu capitava a iddu, puru cu tutta la so maistria.


Marianu, nna lu riuni di Brancacciu, a Palermu, era canusciutu di tutti cu la ’nciuria “lu purcaru”, chi ci l’avianu ’mpicciatu quann’era ancora picciutteddu e travagghiava nta un purcili, dunnì li maiali eranu nutritici cu li rimasugghi di lu vinnitura di frutta e virdura di lu casteddu e lu scarti di li ristoranti e di li carnizzeri. Era puru ’ncarricatu di jiri firriannu ci un vecchiju furguni pi cogghiri sti rimasugghi.

Lu purcili si truvava dintra na parti di lu casteddu di Maredolci di la Favara, chi ci l’avianu appropriatu abusivamente na pocu di privati pi utilizzalu comu allevamento di porci e di cavaddi. La magnifica reggia di l’Emiru Giafar, cu la peschiera chi attornia lu casteddu di tri latati, era arridduicuta un ruderi. Puru Ruggeru Secunnu l’avia fattu addivintari la demoria di lu casteddu, chi l’avianu jutu fabbricannu n’ammassu di casuzzi abusivi, nna pocu appuiatu propiu ci la cinta muraria di lu casteddu, chi na vota era un locu di dilizzii.

Un jornu si prisintaru li vigili urbani cu li ’ncartamenti, dicennu chi li locali avianu a essiri sbarazzati picchi finarmenti stavano p’accumicciati lu travagghiu di restauru. E fu tannu chi Marianu persi lu so travagghiu e puru l’alloggiu, datu chi abitava nta una di sti casuzzi. Circu un novu travagghiu pi cchiù di na misata, senza putillu truvari e allura si fu accussì chi si ’mmintau n’autru mistieri, canciannu di tuttu puntu e appricannusi a vinniri automobili usati, adattannu li machini a secunnu di la crientela e pirmutannu li vecchi automobili...
meal, we are already at the fourth egg. How do we square that with your cho- 
lesterol?"

“You needn't worry about that! Go ahead and fill my glass. After the egg, 
Marsala is needed.”

Vicinzinu returned with the egg and the full glass. He placed them on 
the table, sat down, and waited, with anticipation, to hear the rest of the story. 
Marianu very gently tapped both sides of the egg on the table and then he 
slowly transferred it into his hand with gentle pressure. The egg shell opened 
without shattering and the egg came out white and clean. Marianu looked 
at it admiringly, added a pinch of salt, and ate it in one mouthful. He picked 
up the glass, motioned it in a toast and drank more than half. Wiping his lips 
with his tongue, he prepared to continue the story. Vicinzinu looked at him 
with wonder, amazed at his ability not to have left stuck to the egg the smallest 
piece of the eggshell, as often happened to him, despite his culinary mastery.

Marianu came to the restaurant twice a week, always late in the evening, as 
the clientele began to leave, knowing that in this way he would find Vicinzinu 
more available. After having put away a hearty meal he prepared for the cer-
emony of the eggs. He usually said that the egg stimulated his storytelling. The 
eggs and Marsala were not included on the check: a kind of contribution for 
his performance.

In the Brancacciu neighborhood of Palermo, Marianu was known by the 
nickname “the pig farmer”, which was hung on him when, as a kid, he worked 
at a pig sty, where the pigs were fed with the leftover fruits and vegetables of the 
zone, and the scraps of meat from the restaurants and butcher shops. He was also 
charged with the task of driving an old truck around to collect those leftovers.

The pig sty was situated in a part of an old castle of Maredolce di la Fa-
vara, which had been illegally expropriated by some folks for use as a stable for 
pigs and horses. The magnificent royal palace of Emir Giafar, with the fishery 
that surrounded the castle on three sides was reduced to ruins. Even Roger II 
had made it the home of his royal court. But in these last years the castle was 
abandoned and illegal ramshackle houses had been constructed around the 
castle, some even built against its boundary walls that once encircled a most 
delightful place.

One day the local police arrived with documents saying that the illegal 
houses had to be vacated because they finally were about to start the palace 
restoration. That was when Marianu lost his job and his residence since he lived 
in one of those mean little houses. He searched for work for over a month, 
without success, and that’s how come he adopted a new occupation, making 
a complete turnaround and applying himself to selling used automobiles, 
modifying the cars according to the needs of his clientele and altering the old
cu na diffirenza di prezzu. E accussì li machini chi vinnia Marianu firriavanu da un patruni all’autru, dopu avirili fatti risistimari di un meccanicu di so fiducia.


Nni l’urtimu quartu di seculu tanti amici e canuscenti di la so stissa età avianu pigghiatu la strata di la malavita e quasi tutti avianu finuti pi essiri ammazz-zati, nna pocu di lupara bianca e n’utra pocu fatti fora di raffichi di kalashnikov. Marianu avia la capacità di capiri subitu dunni tirava lu malu ventu e rifiutava tutti li offerdi di facili guadagni e propriu chista fu la so sarvizza.

L’osteria di Vicinzinu lu facia turnari cu la menti a li sirati spinzirati e giuiusi passati cu l’amici e li gran manciati e li vivuti di vinu diretamenti di li cannati. Di sti sirati arristarul sulamenti na picca di fotografii appizzati ’nta li mura di lu locali. Di tutti sti amici cu li facci risulenti l’unicu c’arristau vivu era Micheli, ma puru iddu appi un malu distinu e stava scuttannu vint’anni di galera.

automobiles and reselling them at a different price. And that’s how the cars
that he sold went from one owner to another after they were reconditioned by
a mechanic that he trusted.

But the rivals did not appreciate his competition and they began to spread
rumors that Marianu’s cars were repaired with parts from stolen cars. Marianu
paid no attention to these rumors because no one had the courage to tell him
to his face. This proverb was circulating in the region: “Si nun fai, viri. E si viri,
sai. / If you don’t do it, see. And if you see, you know.” And this is enough to
let you become complicit.

In the last quarter of the century, many friends and acquaintances of his
same age had taken the path to the crooked life and almost all of them had
ended up killed, some by the sawed-off shotgun and a few mowed down by
an AK 47. Marianu had the capacity to quickly understand where the crooked
life led, and he refused all opportunities for easy gain and it was precisely this
that saved him.

Vicinzinu’s restaurant made him recall the carefree evenings and the joyful
times spent with friends, the great meals and the drinking directly from the jugs.
Of those evenings, only a few photographs remained on the local walls. Of all
these friends with the smiling faces, Micheli was the only one who was still alive,
but even he had a bad destiny, and he was serving a twenty-year jail sentence.

One evening like the others, Marianu came to the restaurant and Vicinzinu
greeted him with a hug. After a good meal of *bucatini* with sardines and *spidini*,
he prepared, like the other times to narrate one of his tales. Vicinzinu anxiously
cleared the table and quickly brought him the usual hard-boiled egg and Mar-
sala, then he sat with him, wanting to listen to the latest happening. During
the first episode, there was a little musical tone that interrupted Marianu’s tale.
Vicinzinu pulled the telephone from his pocket and answered the call. It kept
him occupied for about five minutes. The annoyed Marianu then picked up
his story from where he had stopped, but at that point the enchantment had
been broken and the effect was not the same as the other times. The rosary of
the hard-boiled eggs finally came to an end after Vicinzinu bought himself
another novelty: the smartphone. He was by now completely fascinated with
the little games on this device.

Arba Sicula XXXVIII

45
Lu surici

di Francesco Lanza
Traduzioni in siciliano di Gaetano Cipolla

Vuliti ridiri di na cosa ca succidiu cu dda diavulicchia dà me jattareddà?
Già mancu smammata è gia maistra di l’arti so ca pari ca iu a scola.
Tutta so matri, pari, binidica!

Aeri sira eramut attornu a taula cu cannileri addumatu: jo cu lu scaldinu
sutta lu faddari e la curuna in manu ca ricitava lu rusariu, e lu sonnu ca mi calava
nta l’occi; dda pupa di me figghia cu l’augghia ntè jidita a cuciri pezzu pi lu so
curredu, pirdennuci la vista. Lu curredu si lu fa e comu ca nun ci bastanu sordi
pi la tila e lu filu pi raccamari ma stu maritu nun spunta mai e jo mi scantu ca
ci criscinu li fulinii attornu ad idda. Nun sacciu chi succedi oggi, ma un pezzo
di maritu è chiù raru d’un vicerè, e prima d’arrivaricci cu li boni e cu li tanti ci
havi a veniri la scumazzu a la vucca a sti poviri picciotti senza paci.

Nta na botta mentri mi stava addurmiscennu, la jattaredda sauta supra
lu taulu e cu la vucca stritta sciuscia e fa miau, miau, facennu normi, e jochi
e malizzii, rizzannusì lu pilu e cu l’aricchi tisi comu spari. Prima mi nni avia
addunatu ca nun c’era attornu comu fa sempri, jucannu cu la me faddedda o a
runfulira assittata ntra li mejammi, e avia sintutu che si riminava ntà cucina e
sutta lu furnu, ma nun putia pinzari a chiddu chi successi. Apru l’occi, sautu
nnarredi vidennula ca avia un suricittu nta la vucca ancora vivu ca mischineddu
faceva zuu zuu, trimannu comu na foggna, sintennussi la morti nocodu. E
idda chi fa? Prima di mancariesillu ci voli jucari nanticchia comu è ntà so natura;
apri la vucca e lu lassa e cu la ranfu lu teni a tiru; iddu sintutu che si rincadeva
li scappari e curri di ccà e di ddà comu un pazzu, nun sapennu comu e ennu.
Ma idda ci curri davanti e nun ci dà scampu. A ddu puntu chi aju a diri? Nun
ni potti chiù e gridaiu “Chissì!”

Me figghia ca era cu la testa calata supra la so pezza senza maritu e nun
si nn’avia addunatu di nenti isau l’occi e vidennu la scena ittau na schighia
longa un migghiu, iccannu l’augghia, lu filu e la tila e si nni iu supra lu lettu
gridannu: “Mamma mia!”, accussì fortì di far a curri lu faddari in casa, turcenn-
nusi tutta cu li vrazza e li jammi e li faddedda nta l’aria ca pareva pigghia di
li briganti. Vuliautri sapiti comu sunnu li schetti arraggiazi: un suricittu ci pari
un dragu ca si li putissi manciari nton vuccuni e strillanu tantu ca ci venunu
li convulsioni, ma si ci issi di notti un omu nta lu lettu iddi facissiru finta di
dormiri e senza diri ciu aspittassiru pi vidiri nzoccu chiddu ci fa.

A ddu scantu dunque la jattaredda pigghiau lu surici nta la vucca e s’à
scappau. Jo curri unni me figghia pi calmarilla. “O chi hai, locca ca si, pi gridari
Do you want to laugh? It involves that Devilish little kitten of ours. She was barely weaned and she was already mistress of her art, like she had gone to school for it. She was the spitting image of her mother, bless her!

Last night we were sitting around the table with the candle holder lit. With the heater under my skirts and the crown in my hands, I was reciting my rosary, barely keeping my eyes open from sleep; my darling daughter with the needle in her hands was busily sewing pieces of her dowry like her life depended on it. She is preparing her dowry and how. No amount of money was enough for her canvasses, threads and embroidery, but a husband never seemed to arrive and I was afraid that she would grow cobwebs around her. I don’t know what the problem is these days, but finding a husband is rarer than finding a Viceroy, and before they can catch one, for better or worse, these poor restless girls have to foam at the mouth.

I was about to doze off when suddenly the little cat jumped on the table and started to spit with her mouth tightly closed, meowing and playing around, with her fur standing straight on her back and her ears straight as arrows. I had noticed that she wasn’t around playing with my apron as she usually does or purring on my lap, and I had heard her hanging around in the kitchen and under the oven and the thought of what she was doing never even crossed my mind. I opened my eyes and I was taken aback a bit when I saw her. She had a tiny mouse in her mouth still alive who was shaking like a leaf, poor thing, feeling death upon him. And what does she do? Before eating him, she started to play a bit and amuse herself, as is the cat’s nature. She opened her mouth and dropped him, keeping him within reach of her claws, and he, thinking he was free wanted to run, poor thing, and ran around like crazy not knowing where to go and how. But the cat ran ahead of him and grabbed him with her ready claw and did not give him any respite. At that point, what can I say? I could not hold back and screamed “shoo!”

My daughter, who was bending over her husband-less embroidery and had not noticed anything, raised her eyes and seeing the scene, gave out a scream that was a mile long and, throwing her canvass, needle and thread in the air, she ran and fell on the bed while continuing to yell “Oh, Mama!” so loud the neighbors could hear her. Thrashing about with her arms and legs in the air, she acted like she had been assaulted by brigands. You know how angry unmarried girls are: to them a little mouse seems a dragon who wants to eat them in one
d’accussì. Nun lu vidisti ca era un suricittu chiù nicu dû to jiditu picciriddu? Nun è un orsu ca ti mancia.”

A idda ca ci battevanu i denti ed era janca chiù dû jornu di la morti, gridau: “Cacciati lu fora, cacciati lu stau muurrenu”.

“Nun ci pinzari ca ora pigghiu lu bastunu e lu cacciu. Chi minchiuna sì? Chistu è modu di scantarisi a morti pi nu suricittu di nenti? Levati ca nun c’è chiù e a stu puntu è già nta panza di la jattaredda. Ti scantasti veramenti ca ti manciava?”

E idda tuccannusi pettu e jammi comu si iddu fussi ddà dissi: “Mi pareva ca mi sautava ncoddu e si ’nfilava dintra di mia. Mi lu sintivu ccassutta.”

Mi misi a ridiri di tutti sti stupitaggini e dissi pi pigghiarla in giru.

“Si ti ’nfilava dintra ddu surici a cui tu penzi jorno e notti cu sapi che alligrizza e festi avissi fattu”

Si misi cu un parmu di mussu e alluntanannusi dissi sdignata:

“Vui sempri ddà vi nni jiti e pirchì nun faciti quacchi cosa pi procurarimiullu”

“Brava la povira nnuccenti”, ci rispunivu. “Tu chi si ciunca, oppuru brucia a mia unni ti brucia. Jo ë me tempi m’arranciavi senza aspittari l’aiutu di me matri!”

Calau l’occhi nterra, nun avennu chiù l’arma di parrari e lua scerra finiu. Idda ripigghiau la pezza e lu filu e jo lu scaldinu e lu rusariu.

Dopu, la jattaredda vinni comu ò solitu a giuccarisi supra li me jammi. Liccanusi li labbra, sazia e tranquilla comu si nun avia successu nenti, la birbanti!

E tuttu chistu pi nu suricittu!
gulp and they yell so much they bring on convulsions. But if a man were to slip inside their beds at night, they would make believe they are asleep and quietly wait to see what he would do.

The cat, reacting to the fracas, quickly took the mouse in her mouth and disappeared. I ran to my daughter trying to calm her.

“What’s the matter with you, dummy, screaming like that? Didn’t you see it was a tiny, little mouse smaller than your pinky? It was not a bear who was going to eat you!”

With her teeth chattering and whiter than the day of death, she kept screaming: “Chase him away, chase him away. I am dying!”

“Don’t worry about it,” I said. “Now I’ll get a stick and chase him out. How silly can you be? Is this a way to be so scared, dying of fright of a tiny, little mouse? Calm down, he is gone. By now he’s inside the cat’s belly. What were you afraid of, that he was going to eat you?”

And she, touching her breasts and her legs as though the mouse was between them, said: “I thought he was going to jump on me and that he was going to go inside of me. I almost felt him here inside.”

I started to laugh at her foolish shenanigans and I teased her saying: “I bet that if the mouse you think about day and night got inside of you, you would jump up and down with glee!”

Immediately she put on a long face and moving away she replied with disdain:

“You’re always harping on the same thing, but why don’t you do something to procure it for me?”

“The poor, innocent one!” I shot back. “What’s wrong with you? Are you dead? Is the itch that’s burning you mine? In my time, I managed it alone without waiting for help from my mother.”

She lowered her eyes and had no more courage to speak and the fight was over. She picked up her canvass, her needle and thread and I my heater and my rosary.

Afterward the little cat came to sit on my lap as usual and she was cleaning her lips, sated and calm as though nothing had happened, the little scoundrel! All this for a tiny mouse.
Saggistica

A liggenna di Taurmina


Na viduta di la Villa Pubblica di Taormina cu lu casteddu supra la muntagna. / A view of the Public Gardens with the Castle on the mountain.
The Legend of Taormina

Like for the rest of Sicily, the story of Taormina seems to be connected with the foreigners who have made it the playground for their eccentricities and extraordinary behaviors. According to this belief, the Sicans, the Siculi, the Elimians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Normans, the Aragonese and the Spaniards, without forgetting a few barbarian hordes such as the Vandals and the Visigoths, determined some more, some less, the fate of Sicily. I do not fully subscribe to this idea. In this scenario the people of Sicily are seen as spectators in a sport of conquest whose role seems to be to stand by and see who among the contenders will emerge victorious, not to cheer, because that does not seem appropriate to them, but to acquiesce to the new reality. In this regard, I am reminded of an event that occurred during the last invasion of the island by Garibaldi. In the battle of Pianto Romano between the Thousand volunteers and the Bourbon troops the mafia *picciotti* who had been recruited by the local “pezzi di novanta” in support of the Garibaldini, waited on the hills overlooking the battle field to see who was going to emerge victorious and they did not intervene in favor of Garibaldi until it was clear that he would be the victor. At that point, they joined the battle and were effective in securing the victory for the General. It would appear that Sicilians’ standing on the sidelines while their destiny is being decided by others is somewhat suspect and needs to be taken with a grain of salt.

What has occurred to Sicily is somewhat analogous to what has happened

Lu tiatru grecu-rumanu e l’Hotel Timeo,/ The Greek-Roman theatre with the Hotel Timeo below it.
di novanta” pi dari aiutu a li Garibaldini, aspitarunu nta li bausi unni eranu appustati a taliari pi vidiri cu stava vincennu la battaglia e nun intervinniru a fauri di Garibaldi finu a quannu la so vittoria ci parsi sicura. A ddu puntu, ntraseru nta la mischia e foru efficaci pi assicuraricci la vittoria a Garibaldi. Mi pari di putiri concludiri ca lu pinzeri ca li Siciliani stannu sempri di parti mentri u so distinu veni dicisu di altri è, pi diri picca, nu pocu suspetta e dumanna di essiri pigghiata cu nanticchia di sali.

Chiddu ca succidiu pà Sicilia è nanticchia analogu a chiddu ca succidiu a Taurmina. Sta bedda città supra la costa orientali dà Sicilia a menza strata ntra Missina e Catania ca si sporgi supra lu mari Ioniu di supra u Munti Tauru, di unni deriva u so nomi, Tauromenion, ha statu pi li ultimi centucinquant’anri l’attrazioni turistica chiù mpurtanti di l’isula. La pusizioni dû paisi a 200 metri supra u liveddu dû mari offri a li visitaturi un panorama ca ti leva u ciatu. Ta-liannu versu sud dà porta Catania, la gran muntagna di l’Etna pari immensa, occupannu metài di l’orizzonti; l’autra mità è occupata di Giardini Naxos a liveddu dû mari cu li paisi di la costa finu a Catania e doppu lu mari a sinistra. Taliannu nveci di Porta Missina si vidi Letojanni e Forza d’Agrò assemi a li muntagni, e lu mari ca cumincia a strincirisi ntra la costa di la Calabria avvicinannusi a lu Strittu di Missina. È ovviu ca Taurmina offri viduti straurdinarrii in tutti li direzioni, e chistu fussi sufficienti a farla divintari lu postu turisticu chiù
to Taormina. This beautiful little town on the eastern coast of Sicily half way between Catania and Messina that overlooks the Ionian Sea from atop Monte Tauro, from which it gets its ancient name of Tauromenion, has been for one hundred fifty years the premiere tourist attraction of the island. The town's location 600 feet high on a plateau of Monte Tauro affords the visitors the most breathtaking panorama. Looking south from Porta Catania, the magnificent Mt. Etna looms immense and occupies half of the horizon. The other half is occupied by the town of Giardini Naxos, which was the first place colonized by the Greek in 735 BC, and by the other towns that dot the lower slope of the Muntagna, as the Sicilians call it, and by the sea on the left. From Porta Messina you can see the town of Letojanni, and Forza d’Agrò and the sea that begins to narrow when it reaches the Strait of Messina. At night and in a clear day you can see the coast of Calabria on the north east. Clearly Taormina offers breathtaking views all around and this would be sufficient to make it the most attractive tourist spot of Sicily. Indeed, it was these views, in addition to its mild climate, the luxurious vegetation, the splendid bougainvilleas, geraniums and oleanders that flower the year round, that were responsible for making it a “corner of paradise” as the German Romantic poet Wolfgang Goethe said when he visited the town in 1787. But the views alone would not have been the catalyst for such affluence of tourists to the town. The nearby town of Forza d’Agrò has

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famusu di l’isula. E infatti sti viduti foru responsabili, juncennucci naturalmenti lu so clima moderatu, la so vegetazioni abbunnanti, li ciuri di bougainviillea, li marvuni e l’oleandri presenti tuttu l’annu, pi fari di Taurmina “un pizzuddu di paradisu” comu appi a diri lu pueta romantico tedescu Wolfgang Goethe quannu visitau lu paisedu ntò 1787. Ma li viduri suli nun pottiru essiri li catalisti pi n'affluenza di turismu accussì granni. Lu paisedu di Forza d’Agrò havi viduti assai simili e paragonabili a chiddi di Taurmina, ma nun havi lu stissu putiri d'attrazioni, lu stissu chiamu. A mia pari ca l'attrattiva di Taurmina ha statu promossa in gran parti di tutti ddi famusi cristiani ca hannu fattu d’idda lu so campu di jocu, un tiatru unni hannu misu in attu i so storii d'amuri, di gilusia, di eccentricità e fuddia, di narcisismo e piriirisioni. Sti visitaturi hannu criatu a liggenna di Taurmina, nun scrivennu libbri, ma vivennu li so fantasii nta li strati, li jardini, li spiaggi e li camiri di lettu dù paisi.

Menri Taurmina fu funnata da Andromacu, un grecu di Naxos, ntò 358 aC, vali a diri quasi 400 anni doppu ca li primi colonizzaturi greci arrivarunu ntò paisi ca oggi si chiama Giardini Naxos, e ha avutu na longa storii ntirissanti —fu unu di l’ultimi paisi a cadiri nta li manu di l’Arabi, doppu na resistanza ca durau pi decenni—a so reputazioni comu città di turismu cuminciu ntò diciottesimu seculu. Secunnu Gaetano Saglimbeni ca scrissi un libbu ntirissanti
views that may be comparable to Taormina’s, yet it does not have the same mystique, the same allure. I think that Taormina’s appeal has been greatly enhanced by the famous people who have made it their playground, a theatre in which they have enacted their stories of love and jealousy, of eccentricities and folly, of narcissism and perversion. These visitors have created the legend of Taormina, not by writing about it but by actually living out their fantasies in the streets, the gardens, beaches and the bedrooms of the town.

While Taormina was founded by Andromacus, a Greek from Naxos in 358 BC, that is about 400 years after the first Greek colonizers landed in what today is known as Giardini-Naxos, and has had a long and interesting history—it was one of the last cities to fall to the Arabs, resisting a siege that lasted decades, its character as a tourist town started in the late eighteenth century. According to Gaetano Saglimbeni who wrote an interesting book entitled I peccati e gli amori di Taormina, (The Sins and Loves of Taormina), a young German painter, Otto Geleng, spent some time there in the winter of 1863 painting what he saw. His works that captured in brilliant colors views of Mt. Etna covered with snow, counterbalanced by images of the almond trees blooming, winter and spring combined, set off against the deep blue of the Ionian sea must have appeared as amazing, almost incredible to the Parisians whose winters are cold and humid who saw the exhibition. To counter their suspicions Geleng published a challenge, “Come down to Sicily next winter and if you don’t find what you see in my paintings, I will pay the lodging for everyone.” Needless to say, in 1864 there was not even one hotel in Taormina. The few people who had begun to discover Sicily during the eighteenth century, traveling usually alone or with a guide, stayed in convents or in the home of some generous noblemen, or with people who had an extra room to rent, as did one traveler eighty years before in 1787, to be exact, who influenced so many to come
ntitulatu *I peccati e gli amori di Taormina*, un giovani pitturi tedescu, Otto Geleng, si truvau a passari un pocu di tempu a Taurmina nta lu nvernu dû 1863, pittannu tuttu chiddu ca videva. Cu culuri brillanti rinisciu a cogghiri viduti di l’Etna cummugghiata di nivi assemi a arburi di mennuli in ciuri, cumminannu nvernu e primavera, miscannuci puru lu scuru azzolu di lu mari Ioniu. L’insemi appi a pariri incredibili a li genti di Parigi c’havi nverni rigidi e umidi, quannu vittiru li quatri nta la mostra. Pi contrabbattiri li dubbi, Gelen lanciu na sfida: “Viniti ntâ Sicilia lu nvernu prossimu e si nun truvati zoccu haiu misu nta li me pitturi vi pagu l’albergu a tutti”. Mancu a dirlu, a Taurmina ntô 1864 nun c’era mancu un albergu. Ddi pochi turisti c’avianu cuminciatu a viaggiari in Sicilia ntô diciassettesimu seculu, viaggiavanu suli o cu na guida e alluggiavanu unni putevanu. Di solitu ntè cunventi o nta li casi di nobili ginirusi o cu genti c’avia quacchi stanza unni putevanu arranciarisi, oppuru comu fici un viaggiaturi famsu ottan’anni prima, ntô 1787, pi essiri pricisi, ca appi enormi influenza supra a tanti autri turisti ca vinniru ntâ Sicilia picchì iddu avia scrittu ca “L’italia senza la Sicilia nun lassa traccia nta l’animu: la Sicilia è la chiavi di tuttu.” Naturalmenti, ssu cristianu fu Wolfgang Goethe ca scrisi na bedda paggina supra a Taurmina, purtannula a l’attenzioni di li so litturi. Vidennu lu tiatru grecu iddu scrisi: “Lu spittaturi ca s’assetta supra lu scaluni chiù autu dû tiatru

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to the island because in his view, “Italy without Sicily leaves no trace upon the soul: Sicily is the key to everything”. Of course, that man was Wolfgang Goethe who wrote a beautiful page on Taormina and contributed greatly to enhancing its reputation. Seeing the Greek theatre Goethe wrote: “The spectator who sits in the highest seat of the theatre cannot help but confess that perhaps the spectators of a theatre have never had before them a similar scenery …”. But while many others came to admire Taormina’s beauty, it was Geleng who can be tributed with starting the tourist trade in Taormina. If people had accepted his offer they would have had no place to stay in town. So he was able to convince a hesitant Francesco La Floresta who owned a house just below the Greek theater to start renting some rooms. Geleng actually went on to paint a sign for La Floresta that said Hotel Timeo, using the name of a historian, who was the son of the founder of Taormina. The Timeo, which is now one of several 5-star hotels, was the first. That was how Taormina became a winter resort town, attracting the wealthy travelers from France, England and Germany.

It was Otto Geleng also who was instrumental in bringing Wilhelm von Gloeden to Taormina, another person who was to have a major impact on its tourist trade. Von Gloeden was barely 22 years old when he arrived in town. He was a sickly young man whose family was extremely rich and strongly connected with the German Emperor. He had come to town hoping to find a cure for his consumption. Taormina’s climate actually made him regain his

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nun po’ fari a menu di cunfissari ca li spettaturi di un tiastru nun hannu mai vistu nu spittaculu comu a chistu…”

Ma mentri tanti autri cristiani vinniru a ammirari Taurmina, fu Geleng chiddu ca merita di essiri ricanusciutu comu chiddu ca cuminciau lu turismu ntà città. Si quaccadunu avissi accittatu a so sfida nun avissi truvatu un postu unni dormiri ntò paisi. Allura Geleng circaru di cunvinciri a Franciscu La Floresta, lu patruni di na casa ca era sutta u tiastru grecu a affittari na para di stanzu a lu pubblicu. Ci rinisciu. Fu Geleng ca pittau la targa cù nomu di l’albergu: Hotel Timeo, ca era lu nomu di lu figghiu dû funnaturi di Taurnina, ca divintau un granni storicu. Lu Timeo, ca oggi è unu di li pochi alberghi di cincu stiddi, fu lu primu.

D’accussì Taurmina divintau un postu unni si praticava lu turismu di nvernu, vistu lu so clima mudiratu, attraennu ricchi viaggiaturi d’à Francia, l’Inghilterra e la Girmania.

Fu Otto Geleng ca cunzigghiau a Wilhelm von Gloeden, nautra pirsuna ca appi granni impattu supra lu turismu, a veniri a Taurmina. Von Gloeden aveva sulu 22 anni quannu arriva. Era malatizzu ma lu so famigghia era assai ricca e aveva forti legami con lu Mpiraturi d’à Girmania. Vinni spirannu di truvari na cura pi la tisi ca l’affliggeva. Lu clima di Taurnina in effetti l’aiutau a ripigghiarisi e cu la salute rinisciu in iddu la gioia di viviri ca s’avia ntrumintatu prima. Era un giuvini eccentricu ca si passava tutti i so piaciri apertamenti. Si faceva u bagnu cu l’acqua di mari ca vineva trasputtata supra li spaddi forti di giuvini ca nchianavanu di li trazzeri datu ca la strata rotabili ancora non l’avianu costruita. Era nu sforzu enormi ma ben pagatu; von Gloeden tineva aceddi di tutti li speci ntà so cosa e, comu a Geleng, aveva la passioni pi la pittura e la fotografia. Aveva puru la passioni pi carusi masculi ca fotografau a nuda, adurnannucci la testa cu fogghi di addauru o mittennucci un garofalu ntà bucca, in posi suggistivi. La nutizia di l’omosessualità di von Gloeden, lu so bizzarru cumportamentu, e la fuddia di li so festi nun misiru assai tempu prima di arrivari a li cantuni chiù friddi e chiù rigidu d’Europa. La fama di Taurnina comu di na città unni si praticava nu stili di vita chiù libbiru si sparsi. E fu d’accussì ca divintau un
health and with that a *joie de vivre* that had been dormant before. He was an eccentric young man who indulged his eccentricities openly: he took his bath in sea water which sturdy young men had to carry on their shoulders from Isola Bella or Giardini, quite a climb, considering that the winding road that lead to town had not yet been built. But the young men were well remunerated for their efforts. Von Gloeden kept and trained birds of all species in his house and, like Geleng, he had a passion for photography and painting. He also had a passion for young men whom he photographed naked adorned with laurel leaves and in suggestive poses.

The news of Von Gloeden's open homosexuality, his bizarre behavior, and the wildness of his parties did not take long to reach the colder and more uptight corners of Europe. Taormina's reputation grew as a city where a much more free lifestyle was allowed. Thus it became a haven for people who wanted to indulge their own sexual preferences without being persecuted or subjected to harassment. The list of gay writers and artists who flocked to Taormina is indeed long: from the famous Oscar Wilde, Anatole France, Roger Peyrefitte, Jean Cocteau, Jean Marais, Tennessee Williams, to Truman Capote, to name a few who have left many memories of their stay in Taormina. The old timers in town tell stories about some of these people. Tennessee Williams for example who stayed at the very expensive San Domenico Palace, would sit at a bar early in the morning with a bunch of newspapers and sip a glass of bourbon until lunch time. When the bourbon was finished he would refill it with a bottle of water bought at a supermarket, not from the bar. It was a tic of his, not because he was cheap. Williams was already an extremely rich man owing to the success of his plays that had been made into movies such as *A Streetcar Named Desire, A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, the Glass Menagerie, the Rose Tattoo.* Truman Capote was not as rich at least not while he lived in Taormina, but he liked to flaunt his importance and wealth. Once as Saglimbeni related, he handed a check for ten thousand dollars to the antiquarian Giovanni Panarello saying, “Buy me Isola Bella, I want to make it my summer residence.” Ten thousand dollar in 1955 was a large sum. And in
richiamu pi genti ca vuleva soddisfari li so priiferenzi sessuali senza piriculu di essiri pirsiguitatu o assuggittatu a violenzi. La lista di scrittori e artisti gay che vinniru a Taurmina è assai longa, a cuminciari di lu famusu Oscar Wilde, Anatole France, Roger Peyrefitte, Jean Cocteau, Jean Marais, Tennessee Williams, e Truman Capote, a minziunari sulu na para ca hannu lassatu tanti memori di lu so passagiu a Taurmina. Li vecchi Taumumisi cuntanu storii supra sti cristiani. Tennessee Williams pir esempiu ca alluggiava à San Domenico, s’assittava ogni matina ntòn bar a Palazzu Corvaja. Ordinava un bicchierì di bourbon e stava ddà tutta la matinata finu a pranzu, liggenusì i giornali. Quanu fineva lu bourbon incheva lu bicchierì pigghiannu na buttighetìa d’acqua ca s’avia accattatu ntòn nigozu. Nun era quistioni di essiri tirchiu. Williams era già riccuni avvenu guadagnatu un mari di sordi quanu nisceru li film *Un tram chiamatu disidderiu*, lu *Zoo di vetru* e *La rosa tatuta*. Truman Capote nun era accussì ricccu comu a Williams, almenu quanu viveva a Taurmina, ma ci piaceva fari la fiura dû spaccuni. Na vota, comu cunta Saglimbeni, ci desi a l’antiquariu Giovanni Panarello un assegnu pi deci mila dollari, na summa enormi a ddi tempi, dicennucci: “Accattami l’Isola Bella. La vogghiu fari la me residenza estiva.” Vuleva farisi beddu davanti a Tennessee Williams. Ma l’assegnu nun fu mai scanciatu, principalmenti picchì ntò so cuntu nun c’era nenti. Anni doppu l’Isola Bella fa accattata di un riccuni arabu pi novi milioni di dollari. Capote eventualmenti divintau riccu puru iddu pi lu successu dî film basati supra i so romanzi *Culazioni nni Tiffany* e *A sangu friddu*. Quanu stesi a Taurmina, Capote si cumpurtau comu un carusittu viziatu, un *enfant terrible*, aggressivu e nzulenti specialmenti cu li fimmìni, tantu ca na vota Peter Ustinov ci desi na bedda buffata ntà facci davanti a tutti doppu una di li so nisciuti offensivi.

Taurmina pari ca havi la calamita pi li pirsuni eccentrichi. Iddi venunu ntà città e vivunu li so strani modi senza problemi cu la cumplicità di li cristiani ca ncontranu. Pigghiamu pir esempiu la granni attrici Greta Garbo ca scumpariu di
doing so he wanted to impress Tennessee Williams. But the check was never cashed, primarily because there were no funds in Capote’s account. Years later the little island that juts out into the bay below Taormina was actually sold to an Arab tycoon for nine million dollars. Capote eventually became rich himself when his stories became successful films such as *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* and *In Cold Blood*. While in Taormina he often behaved like a spoiled brat, an *enfant terrible*, aggressive and insolent, especially with women, so much so that once Peter Ustinov slapped him in public following one of his offensive tirades.

Taormina seems to be a magnet for eccentric people. They come to town and seem to live out their eccentricities without problems with the complicity of those they meet. Take the great actress Greta Garbo who disappeared from the limelight at the height of her career as an actress. She was 36 when she disappeared from Hollywood. The enigmatic “femme fatale” who had an ambiguous reputation as either “a sphinx with an icy heart” or a “devourer of men” spent nearly thirty years from 1950 to 1979 off and on in the home...

Na viduta di Taurmina di la spiaggia di Giardini-Naxos. Supra lu puntu chiù autu c’è Castelmola. Taurmina è ntò menzu. /A view of Taurmina from the beach of Giardini Naxos. The highest peak is Castelmola. Below it is Taormina.
of a famous diet expert, Gayelord Hauser, who had a house on the road to Castelmola. She would walk around in town wearing dark glasses pretending her name was Harriet Brown, a pretense she insisted on keeping even with the servants in Hauser’s house, but many people knew who she was and always respected her desire to be incognito. She liked to take long walks sometimes even going up to Castelmola through country paths. In town she spent time in an antiquarian shop. While living in Houser’s villa, she kept to herself and never participated in the gatherings the owner organized for his famous guests. She never spoke to Marlene Dietrich, Rita Hayworth and Joan Crawford who were frequent guests. Houser organized fabulous parties at his villa but he was an eccentric too. He advised his clients to eat molasses, celery, carrots, lettuce, cucumbers and yogurt, while he sometimes stuffed himself on great plates of spaghetti with tomato sauce and Sicilian caponata.

Another eccentric was D.H. Lawrence, the English writer who spent some years working in Taormina. His wife Frieda had a long-standing affair with a mule driver from Castelmola named Peppino D’Allura. The story of the “erotic games” they played on the slopes of Castelmola and in a palmento (wine press building), became the best seller Lady Chatterley’s Lover. Lawrence insisted on having his wife relate to him every detail of her infidelities with the mule driver.
d’amuri cu un mulatteri di Castelmola ca si chiamava Peppino D’Allura. La storia di li “jochi erotici” ca iddi facevanu supra li bausi di Castelmola e ntôn palmentu divintaru la materia di lu best seller *L’amanti di Lady Chatterley*. Lawrence insisteva ca so muggheri ci cuntassi esattamenti tuttu chiddu ca faceva cu lu mulatteri.

Nautra eccentrica assai ginirusa fu certu Florence T revelyan, na signurina engli riccuna ca na vota arriva a l’Hotel Timeo cu cincu grossi cani. Lu patruni di l’albergu nun vuleva accittari li cani nta l’albergu, ma la signurina lu priavu cu tanta simpatia dicennu ca i cani eranu i so figghi e ca nun puteva campari senza di iddi. Lu patruni l’accuntintau dannucci du’ stanzi e nanticchia di giardinu pi li cani. Un jornu però la signurina criau un scumpigghiu picchì unu di li cani stava mali. Insisteva ca chiamassiru a un veterinariu. Ma a Taurmina nun ci nn’eranu. Vuleva ca mannassiru a chiamari a quaccadunu di Missina o Catania ma cu ddi distanzi putemu immaginari li cunsiquenzi dû ritardu. Finalmenti lu patruni suggiriu lu nomu di un famusu medicu. capo chirurgo di nu spitali di Bologna, ma nun vuleva chiamarlu pi assistiri un cani. Idda nsistiu di sapiri lu nomu e lu ndirizzu e lu direttamenti a so casa pi dumannaricci aiutu. Appi a essiri assai cunvincenti picchì riturnau cû dutturi ca curau lu cani malatu. La
A very generous eccentric was certainly Florence Trevely an, a wealthy English woman who arrived at the Hotel Timeo with five large dogs. The owner did not want to accept the dogs as guests at first, but after Miss Trevely an pleaded with him complaining that the dogs were her children and that she could not live without them, he found a solution by giving her two rooms and a portion of the garden in the back. One day, however, Miss Trevely an caused an uproar because one of the dogs was ill and she insisted to have a veterinarian. As there were no veterinarians in Taormina, she wanted to have a doctor come from Messina or Catania which would have taken a long time with foreseeable consequences. Finally, the hotel owner suggested someone who was the chief surgeon of a Bologna hospital but he hesitated to call him for a dog. She insisted on getting his name and address and she proceeded to go to his house to ask for his help. She must have been very convincing because shortly afterwards she returned with the doctor who took good care of the ailing dog. Miss Trevely an later married the doctor whose name was Salvatore Cacciola and lived in Taormina until her death in 1907. The beautiful public gardens of Taormina are maintained thanks to a generous bequest from Miss Trevely an.

The history of Taormina has also been written by the tantrums and whimsical behaviors of the people who have made it their playground. Saglimbeni related the story about two wealthy habitués of Taormina named Albert Stop-
signurina T revelyan can nun era comu li autriti zitelluni ca vinevanu a Taurmina
tannu, si maritau cu lu dutturi ca si chiamava Salvatore Cacciola e si stabilu pi
sempri a Taurmina e quannu muriu ntô 1907,lassau ntu lu so tistamentu na
grossa summa di dinaru pi manteniri la villa pubblica in bon ordini a spisi so.

La storia di Taurmina ha statu scrittu cu li rissi e strani cumportamenti dà
getti ca fici d’iddu la so sala di jocu. Saglimbeni cunta ca du’ riccuni habitués
di Taurmina ca si chiamavanu Albert Stopford e Robert Percyval Campbell si
odiavanu a morti. Stopford era un riccu nobili inglisi c’aveva l’abbitutini di ca-
minari avanti e arreri ntô corsu Umbertu distribuennu manci e manateddi supra
è spaddi di la genti ca lu salutava baciannucci la manu. Tutti lu canuscevanu
semplicemente comu “Mylord”. Era un monumentu di stravaganza e generosità
ma tutti cci vulianu beni, eccetu Campbell, naturalmenti ca era un canadisi ca
pussideva ferrovii ntu l’India e mineri di carbuni in autriti posti. Campbell s’avia
fattu costruirì na villa sfarzusa ntô centru dà città ca aveva puru un tiatru ca
puteva accumudari centu cristiani. La villa era un rialu pir lu so amicu, l’atturi
nglisi Miles Wood. Na sira i du’ baruni eranu presenti a un eventu musicali ò
San Domenico. A la fini dû spittaculu, Campbell si iazzau e passannu propriu
davanti a lu so nimicu, ca stava assittatu cu li spaddi a l’orchestra picchì tine-
va d’occhiu unu di li ballerini, e doppu avricci datu n’ucchiatazzu di sdegnu
pigghiau centu liri e li uffriu a vuci auto dicennu: “Centu liri pi li ballerini e pi
l’orchestra!” Mylord sautau ntall’aria e s’avvicinau a lu palcu e gridau, “Cincu-
centu liri pi li ballerini e pi l’orchestra!” mittennu lu so biglietto supra a chiddu
di Campbell. “Milli liri,” rispunniu Campbell. Mylord iazzavu la posta e gridau
“dui milli lire”. La battaglia cuntinuau fina a quannu Campbell uffriu “Cincu
milli liri”. Tutti dui nun canuscevanu bonu né u sicilianu né l’italianu. A stu
puntu lu baruni inglisi si vitti persu pi cchi nun aveva chì sordi ntà sacchetta e
s’appi a ritirari giarnu di bili nta la facci. Campbell però cuntinuau a vantaris
davanti a la genti: “Ahà, io più riccu di Mylord!” Lu nobili inglisi nun accittau sta
scufitta senza vinnicari lu so onuri. Si iazzavu, s’avvicinau a lu palcu, pigghiau
un minnulinu e ci lu rumpiu supra la testa a Campbell.

Chiddu nun fu l’unicu strumentu musicali ca finiu i so jorna supra la
testa di quaccadunu. Nautru incidenti mi veni a menti ch’avi a chiffrì cu li
atturi dû cinima ca venunu a Taurmina pi lu Festival dû film ogni annu. Tutti
canuscìnu la turbulenca e appassionata relazioni amurusa ntra Elizabeth
Taylor e Richard Burton ca ristaru famusi pi li scerri ca facevanu strati strati a
Taurmina. Nta una di sti scerri nun fu un minnulinu ca Liz ci rumpiu supra la
testa a Richard: fu na chitarra.

Testi curunati hannu avutu modu di visitari Taurmina: Eduardu VII e
Giorgiu V d’Inghilterra, Gugliermu II dà Germania, lu Granduca Paul dà Rus-
sia, re Gustavu Adolfu dà Svezia, re Alfonso XIII dà Spagna e puru re Faruk di
ford and Robert Percyval Campbell who hated each other. Stopford was a very
wealthy and noble Englishman who had a habit of walking up and down Corso
Umberto distributing tips and pats on the back to the people who kissed his
hand. They knew him simply as “Mylord”. He was a monument of extravagance
and generosity that everyone loved, excepting Campbell, of course, who was a
Canadian who owned railroads in India and coal mines in other places. Campbell
had built a sumptuous villa in the heart of the city that even had a theatre that
could accommodate a hundred people. The villa was his gift for his friend, the
English actor Miles Wood. One night the two barons were attending a musi-
cal show in the San Domenico Hotel. At the end, Campbell got up, walked
before his nemesis who was sitting with his back to the orchestra because he was
ogling one of the male dancers and after giving him a dirty look, took out a one
hundred lire bill and offered it as a tip, saying loudly: “One hundred lire for the
dancers and the orchestra!” Mylord jumped up on his feet and approached the
stage and said “Five hundred lire for the dancers and the orchestra!”, covering
the bill with his own. Campbell accepted the challenge: “A thousand lire!” said
the Canadian. Mylord then upped the ante: “Two thousand lire!” The bidding
continued until Campbell offered “five thousand lire!”. The Englishman had
exhausted all the cash in his pockets and there was nothing he could do except
walk away to his seat while Campbell kept boasting to the crowd: “I am richer
than Mylord!” But the English nobleman did not accept defeat without aveng-
ing his honor. Walking back to the orchestra Mylord grabbed a mandolin and
proceeded to break it on Campbell’s head.

That was not the only musical instrument that met its end on somebody’s
head. Another incident does come to mind, involving movie stars who flocked
to Taormina for the famous Film Festival held there every year. The turbulent
and passionate relationship between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton is
well known as are their famous fights that occurred in public in the streets of
Taormina. In one of them it was not a mandolin that Liz broke on Richard’s
head: it was a guitar.

Taormina attracted royalties from Edward VII and George V from Eng-
land, Wilhelm II from Germany, Grand Duke Paul from Russia, King Gustav
Adolf from Sweden, King Alphonse XIII from Spain and even King Faruk from
Egypt. The San Domenico has a parchment paper book with gold decorations
that is kept in a safe that recorded all the reigning monarchs and famous personal-
ities of the world of politics, art, music, diplomacy and the theatre who have
lodged there. The book was inaugurated in 1905 and the first person to sign it
was the Kaiser of Germany who donated a photo of himself in the garden of the
hotel covered with snow, an exceptional event, I mean the snow in Taormina.

At the beginning the people who came to Taormina were men almost
l’Egitto. Lu San Domenicu havi un libbru di carta pergamena cu decorazioni in oru ca iddi tenunu nta na cassiaforti ca cunteni tutti li nomi di li testi curunati e li famusi personalità di lu munnu dà politica, arti, musica, diplomazia e tiatru c’hannu alluggiatu nta l’albergo. Lu libru fu inauguratu ntò 1905 e lu primu a firmarlo fu lu Kaiser tedescu ca ci desi puru na foto d’iddu scattata ntò giardinu cupertu di niv, un eventu straordinariu, mi riferisciu a la nivi.


Comu a tanti siciliani, i Taurminisì hannu pigghiatu st’assaltu dî turisti cu pacenza e senza isterismi. Comu a li carusi di von Gloeden ca accittavenu di farisi fotografari cu curuni d’addau lui testa pi rassumighiari a ddi antichi fauni e satiri ca divintaru immortali nta lu puisii bucolichi di Teocritu, ddu so paianu di Siracusa, e accittarunu di fari parti di li fantasii erotici di
exclusively, but at the beginning of the twentieth century things started chang-
ing. Taking advantage of the London-Paris-Taormina Express that was created in those years (the railway station of Giardini-Naxos was built by the British) many wealthy ladies of the nobility in England began to travel alone to Taormina in search of adventure. They were primarily no longer young, unmarried or widowed, and they came to have fun on the beaches of Isola Bella and Mazzarò, enjoying the company of young fishermen who were eager to be of assistance considering the ladies’ generosity. Gaetano Saglimbeni claims in his book that many young Taorminesi became rich by inheriting villas or stocks for being the “boyfriends” of these wealthy ladies who made no secrets of their love interests. In fact, they openly paraded in Corso Umberto holding hands with their young flames. The London-Paris-Taormina Express carried also a special wagon from Germany which was renamed “The Train of the Barons” because it carried members of the German nobility who were answering von Gloeden’s message. Thus, it was a time of competition for the favors of the young men of Taormina.

Today the tourists who come to Taormina are no longer primarily from Germany, France or England. More than half of the visitors who arrive in July and August are Italian. Many foreigners still come to town as part of the cruises that arrive every week. You see them swarming through Corso Umberto wearing numbers and they return to the ship anchored in the middle of the Giardini bay after a few hours. At most they will have walked through the main street without venturing in one of the many alleys and narrow streets where the soul of Taormina sometimes appears. They are not the ones who give Taormina its character and reputation. Those who have left a mark on the town are the expatriates who have loved the town, returning season after season often re-

maining for years like the French writer Roger Peyrefitte who for twenty years was a regular guest at the San Domenico entertaining famous people like the German writer Thomas Mann, author of Death in Venice, and Vincent Auriol, former President of France.

Like most Sicilians, the people of Taormina have reacted to the onslaught of tourism with patience and without hysterics. Like von Gloeden’s boys who accepted to pose with wreaths in their hair to resemble the ancient fauns and satyrs that Theocritus, their fellow Sicilian from Siracusa, immortalized in his bucolic poems, and went along with the fantasies of a rich and generous patron without really understanding him, the people of Taormina seem to have an open mind that accepts diversity without condemnation while remaining true to themselves. They are good merchants and they have much to sell. It’s their little corner of paradise, a place of refuge from the rushing stream of life. Bianca of Navarra had this phrase sculpted at the top of the staircase above the courtyard of Palazzo Corvaja which was her summer residence: “Esto michi

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un riccu e ginirusu patruni senza capirlu, lu populu di Taurmina pari d’aviri lu ciriveddu apertu ca accetta la diversità senza cunnanna, ristannu sempri sicuru ntà so peddi. Sunnu bravi mircanti e hannu tanti cosi di vinniri. Chistu è lu so pizzuddu di paradisu, un posto di rifugiu luntanu di la mpituusa ciumara di la vita. Bianca di Navarra fici sculpiri na frasi supra la scala ca porta dintra u Palazzu Corvaja ca era la so risidenza estiva: “Esto michi locum refugi” (Chistu è u postu dû me rifugiu”). Li tanti stranizzi e eccentrici cumpartmentamenti di li visitaturi dà città nun hannu corrottu la popolazioni locali. Iddi sunnu cuscienti di abbitari un postu speciali e lu dimostranu attraversu la cura ca ci dunanu a l’ambienti. Unni talii talii si vidunu li bouganvillea ciurti. Ci sunnu marvuni in quasi tutti li barchi e i Taurminisi vannu orgogliusi di la so città e di lu contributu d’ognunu d’iddi.
locum refugi”. (This place is my refuge) The many eccentricities of the visitors to the city have not jaded the local population. They are all aware that they live in a special place and they show their awareness by their attentiveness to their surroundings. Everywhere the bougainvillea and oleanders bloom. There are geraniums in most balconies and they take pride in their city and in their own contribution to it.
Puisia degli emigranti italiani

Pir casu un membru di Arba Sicula, Teresa Mamo, mi mannu na scatola di libbri vecchi ch’avia ereditatu e ntra chisti, c’era un librettu ntitulatu *Poesia degli emigranti italiani* di Pellegrino Trapani, pubblicato u 20 marzu dû 1911 da la Stamperia Elettrica Italiana di New York. Lu librettu a ddi tempi si vinveva pi pochi centesimi e yo nni avia vistu autri di lu stissu tipu ca parravanu di l’esperienza di li emigranti tali e siciliani. Pi diri la virità Pellegrino Trapani nun pari un omu istruitu ca pussedi li canuscenzi ca si dumannanu a un veru puetu. I so versi sunnu spissu sgrammaticati, la punteggiatura è assai carenti, u so discursu nun è fluenti e pi traducirì li so ottavi appi a sudari setti camici. Spissu mi tuccau di inchiri li spazi vacanti dû so pinzeri, senza fari troppa viulenza a chiddu ca vulia diri iddu. Ma la storia chi cunta è di granni ntressi picchè parra di un periodu mpurtanti dà la storia di li siciliani d’America, di chiddu chi suffreru pi fari parti dà sucietà miricana. Li nostri novi generazioni sti così nun li sannu e avissiru a canusciri megghiu la nostra storia. Pubblicamu stì 34 ottavi pi dari na taliata a comu li nostri antinati appiru a cummattiri pi essiri accittati nta stà terra.

**Poesia degli emigranti italiani**

Di Pellegrino Trapani

1
A stu seculu chi semu prisenti,
Viu tuttu lu munnu rivutura,
Comu quannu si cuntrastanu li venti
E chi lu mari è misu ‘nfurtura,
Semu sparsi pi lu munnu tanti genti,
Chiddi ch’amu pruvatu la malura,
Divisi da l’amici e li parenti
E pi la nostra cattiva svintura.

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Poem of the Italian Emigrants

By chance one of the members of Arba Sicula, Teresa Mamo, sent me a box of books she inherited and among them I found a booklet entitled The Poetry of Italian Emigrants by Pellegrino Trapani, published on March 20th of 1911 by the Stamperia Elettrica Italiana of New York. The booklet sold then for a few cents and I had seen others of the type that talked about the experiences of Italian and Sicilian immigrants. To tell the truth, Pellegrino Trapani does not seem to be a learned man who possesses all the knowledge that is required of a good poet. His lines display faulty grammar, his punctuation is lacking and his discourse is not always fluent. I had to really struggle to translate his octaves. Often I had to complete his thought without doing much violence against what he intended to say. But his tale is of great interest because it discusses an important period of the history of Sicilians in America: what they suffered to become a part of American society. The new generations do not know these things and they ought to be better informed about our history. We therefore publish these 34 octaves to shine a light on how our ancestors had to struggle to be accepted in the land.

Poem of the Italian Emigrants

By Pellegrino Trapani
Translated by Gaetano Cipolla

1
Living in this century of ours
I see the world completely upside down,
just like when strong contrasting winds do battle,
creating heaving tempests in the sea.
There are so many people in the world
who have experienced the bad luck of being
separated from their relatives and friends
because of evil and unlucky fate.
2
Abbannunamu la nostra bandiera
Lu veru fiuri di la giuvintù,
E pi circari la nostra vintura
Truvannuni sutta di la schiavitù,
Ogni patri di famigghia si dispera
Pi quantu peni e guai chi ci sù,
Ca ha lassatu na famigghia ‘ntiera
E nun si sapi si la vidi cchiù.

2
E tuttu chistu dannu pirchì fu?
Pirchì lu munnu fu malu divisu
Ca cci su genti ca filici sù
Ca vivi cci annu statu mparadisu,
Mangiarizzi e liguri un vonnu cchiù
A muzzu senza nè misura e pisu,
E li puvireddi affritti di nù’
Nunn’amu vistu sazii di risu.

4
E ognedunu vidennusi prisu
Ha circatu lu modu di campari,
Di partiri pi l’America ha dicisu
Pi menzu, all’autri putiri mangiari,
Di li famigghi n’avemu divisu
Chiancennu tutti cu lagrimi amari,
Chi scuntintizza, chi cori dilusu
Pi dd’amara spartenza chi ama fari.

5.
E arrivannu a portu di mari
unu pi unu semu visitati
E ogniedunu cumencia a trimari
Siddu si trova cu l’ occhi malati.
Pirchì? Ci tocca c’ava riturnari
E ci arrestunu li grana cunsumati
Trema ca unn’avi cchiù dunni allugiarì
Siddu si trova li casi vinnuti.
2
We have forsaken our own flag
in the blooming flower of our youth
in order to seek out a better future
we found ourselves subjected to slavery.
Each head of family grows desperate
because of woes and trouble facing him,
for he has left behind a family
and does not know if he’ll see them again.

3
What was the cause of all this harm?
It was because the world was poorly split
between some people who live happily
being in paradise while still alive
who do not want to eat and drink because
they have so much of it they cannot count it
and the afflicted poor who do not have
enough rice to satisfy their hunger.

4
So everyone, considering his lot,
has tried to find a way just to survive,
deciding to depart for far America
so he could eat just like the other folks.
We have all split from our own families,
each of us shedding very bitter tears.
What great unhappiness, what disillusioned heart,
to have endured that bitter separation!

5
And once we managed to reach the port city,
we underwent a physical exam, one by one,
with fear inside our hearts in case
the doctors found infection in our eyes.
Why so? Because you’d have to be sent back
and you’d have wasted all the money spent.
You’d have no place to sleep if you went back
if you had sold your house to buy the ticket.
6
Cu è abili ni dicinu passati
E ni portanu dintra lu vapuri,
E ddi cucchetti avemu assignati
Dunni si dormi cu li spaddi duri,
Comu chi semu tutti arrisittati
La navi si cumencia a riminari,
Doppu un mumentu chi semu partuti,
Autru chi nun si vidi, celu e mari

7
E ogniedunu cumencia a pinsari,
Sapi quali sara’ lu mè distinu,
Sa quannu, di ccaà e scappari
E vidiri nautra vota lu tirrenu,
Li primi iorna è quietu lu mari
E viaggiari ni pari un fistinu,
E taluni si mettunu a sunan
Cu avi chitarra e cu avi mandulinu.

8
Ma doppu pocu iorna di caminu
Avveni ca lu mari eni ‘nfurtura
E nun si senti ne cantu ne sonu
Ca ogniedunu si metti ‘mpaura,
Sapi si ci aghiornu a lu matinu
Dicemu quannu chi la sira scura.
Nun c’è nessunu chi dormi sirenu
Ca cu avi fidi, a Diu s’adura.

9
E tutti quanti autru ch’un si spera
Quann’è l’ultimu iornu di viaggiu,
Cuntinuannu sempri la prighera
Di arrivari, e senza sdisagiu
Cc’eni cu dici la testa mi gira
E cc’è cu dici iu m’amaraggju,
Ammizzi ca cci sù li marinara
Chi ogni tantu dunanu curaggju.
6
Those who were fine, they told us, go ahead
and they drove us all on board the ship.
The sleeping berths where you would sleep
were then assigned to us, hard as a rock.
Once we were settled in our assigned places
the ship began to stir and leave the docks.
A little after we had left the pier,
except for sea and sky there's nothing else.

7
So everyone began to think not knowing
what his destiny would have in store for him,
wondering when the voyage would come to
an end and when he would see land again.
For the first days the sea remained quite calm
and sailing seemed to be a holiday.
Some people started playing instruments:
one a guitar, another played a mandolin.

8
But after a few days of sailing smoothly
it happened that the sea was hit by storms
and then the songs and music stopped,
for everyone began to be afraid
not knowing, when the dark of night would fall,
if in the morning they would see the sun.
No one could sleep serenely through the night.
Those who had faith, turned to adoring God.

9
And everyone had just one thought in mind:
when would the last day of the voyage be.
So they continued praying constantly,
hoping to reach their destination safe and sound.
There were some men who said, “my head is spinning,”
Others complained they were about to faint.
Thank God there were some sailors on the ship
who offered words at times of reassurance.
10
Cuntinuannu lu nostru viaggju
Chi circa a dieci iorna su passati,
Avveni ca lu mari eni chiù sagiu
Ca a la terra semu avvicinati,
Cu eni pocu mali, cu cchiù peggiu,
Cu cchiù, cu menu semu fasturnati
Li marinara li tinemu a seggiu
Quann’è l'arrivu pi vera viritati ?

11
Ni dicinu: nessunu vi scantati
Ca pocu tempu cc’ è di fari via,
E tutti supra a cuperta affacciati
Stamu cu na spiranza d’alligria.
Stamu cu l’occhi a punenti fissati,
E tutti quanti cu na firnicia
Mentri scupremu la bella citati
Di New York, comu si disia.

12
Comu la navi arrivata sia,
Chi gaudiu e chi cunsulazioni
Cu avi fidi, ringrazia a Maria
Ca ha arrivatu in salvazioni.
Comu si trasi nti la battaria
Guai, cu sbaglia la dichiarazioni
Pirchì lu fannu nesciri mpazzia
Ca torna e un ci sara’ rimissioni.

13
Cu si trova nta tali occasioni,
Nta lu numaru è, di li dispirati
Ca tenta pir vuscari tri carrini
E inveci cci accrisci puvirtati.
Fari nun ponnu ossirvazioni
A cu ci spiega li cosi chiariti,
E poi all’ultima conclusioni
Ci dicinu di grana, quantu aviti ?
10
Continuing our voyage, it appeared that after we had traveled for ten long days the ocean seemed to grow a bit more wise, perhaps because we were approaching land. Some people started to feel somewhat better while for some others it was a bit worse. but all of us were more or less distressed and we kept sailors under pressure, asking: “When are we really going to reach the port?”

11
They told us: there’s no need to be afraid. We have a little more to sail, not much. So everyone went up on deck to watch, leaning against the rails with hope to cheer. We all began to stare towards the west with restlessness inside our hearts. As we caught sight of New York City, a beautiful and welcomed sight it was.

12
What joy, what consolation we all felt on knowing that the ship had docked. Those who had faith, thanked Mother Mary for having brought them to salvation shore. Going inside the terminal, the Battery, woe unto those who made a minor error in declarations. They drove you mad with fear that they would send you back without recourse.

13
Whoever found himself in such a state would become part of those desperate men who while attempting to earn a few cents instead became much poorer than before. They could not even make an observation to those who tried explaining everything. And at the end the final question was: “How many dollars do you have on you?”
Chiddi chi avi li vonnu ammustrati,
E si su pocu, chissi suli aviti?
Di cchiù n’avia pir vera viritati
Ma in viaggiu, mi ni sunnu iuti
Ci dicinu, ebbeni, va scanciati.
E puru la tichetta vi faciti
Quantu chi vui lu trenu pigghiati
Pi lu distinu di unn’ è chi ghiti.

Di chiddu passu sennu libirati
Ognedunu di nui resta cuntenti.
Putemu diri ca semu scanzati
E di tutti li nostri impedimenti.
Poi pi dunnì semu distintati,
Ni dividemu tutti chidd’agenti
Comu chi nui essemu arrivati
Cu trova amici e cu trova parenti.

Li primi iorna nun si pensa a nenti
Sulu, pi quarchi cosa di mangiari,
Pirchì ognunu straccu si senti
Di lu longu viaggiu di mari.
Comu chi ci risetta un po’ la menti
Pi li stradi cumencia a caminari,
Mentri camina va prigannu santi
Si qualchedunu lu fara’ impiegari.

Amentri si cumencia ad irniari,
E ci veni na gran cunfisioni
Ca nun sapi la gioba addimannari
Si primu la truvira’ pi occasioni,
Cu nun lu sapi, ci fazzu sapiri
Lu mutivu di chista ragiuni,
Pirchì, cu ‘nglisi nun sapi parrari
Arragiunari nun po’ cu lu patruni.
They then demanded that you show them all you had and if not much they’d ask: “that’s all?” To tell the truth I had a little more but in the crossing I had to spend some. All right, they say, go and exchange them and while you’re there make sure you buy the ticket for the train that will take you directed to where your final destination is.

Having gone through this obstacle, everyone one of us felt quite relieved. We could say that we had been spared by overcoming all our impediments. Afterwards we were grouped according to the town that was our final destination. Once we arrived some people met their friends and others met their relatives outside.

Through the first days we thought of nothing, except for something to put in our stomachs. Because we felt fatigued and all worn out following the lengthy crossing of the sea. As we began to put our minds at ease, we started walking through the streets and while we walked around we prayed to saints that someone might give us a job.

Meanwhile some people started to feel nervous. They started to experience great confusion for they did not know how to ask for jobs. If they were lucky maybe they could find a job. If you don’t understand how difficult this was, I can explain it easily to you. If you don’t know how to speak English, you can’t communicate with your own boss.
18
Ma si li cosi ci vannu dabbeni
Iddu si ci metti a travaghiari,
E pir vuscarì un pezzu di pani
Così chi mai a fattu devi fari
Si piglia tuttu di suggizioni
Vidennu lu so bossu risguardari,
Si nun lavura a la pirdizioni
A la casa lu fannu riturnari.

19
Siddu pir casu fa qualche arruri.
Lu bossu si dimustra tantu tranni,
Cu la facciazza comu un tradituri
La prima cosa ci dici: guanni,
Eni lu signu ca sinn’avaghiri
E inutili è si ci arrispunni,
Pirchi in inglisi un sapì parlari
E ragiunari non po’ li so facenni

20
Cussì un puvureddu si cunfunni
Ca eni ingiustamenti disprizzatu,
Nun sa lu modu comu si difenni
cu la parola, è comu fussì mutu,
Puru mi ci truvavu nti ss’affanni
Quannu chi fu d’allura arrivatu,
Di quanti bossi è chi sunnu tranni
Capitavu cu unu lu cchiù ‘ngratu.

21
Ora vi cuntu chi aiu passatu
Una iurnata di forti caluri
Mentri lu fazzulettu aiu piggiaitu
Pi asciugari lu miu suduri,
Appena lu fazzulettu aiu sarvatu
Mi scuppau lu bossu pir d’arreri
Nti la facciazza, lu bruttu guastatu!
Guagliardamenti mi dissì: ghirari.
18
But if things turned out well for someone,
he then began to work in earnest.
And just to earn a piece of bread,
he would be asked to do many a job
that he has never done before. He grows
confused to see his boss observing him.
If he does not work at perdition's speed,
they will make him go back where he came from.

19
If then by chance he will make a mistake,
his boss will show himself to be a tyrant,
showing the ugly face of a mean traitor.
The first thing that he’ll tell him is: “go on!”
That is the sign that he will have to leave.
And it is useless to complain or speak,
because he does not know a word of English
and cannot offer explanations for his actions.

20
Therefore the poor fellow gets confused
for having been unjustly criticized;
he does not know how to defend himself
in words and it’s as though he were deaf-mute.
I too experienced such predicaments
when I had just arrived to this great land.
While there are many bosses who are mean
I found one who was meanest of them all.

21
Allow me to relate what I experienced.
It was a very hot and muggy day.
While I had taken out my handkerchief
to wipe the sweat off of my face,
as soon as I put back the handkerchief,
the boss appeared behind my back and said,
with a stern look that left no room for doubt
right to my face: “Get out of here!”
22
Iu sugnu rimastu a risguardari
Nun capennu stu bossu chi dicia,
E poi l’arnesi mi fici lassari
E m’ammustrau d’andari via,
Siddu lu tuttu vurrissi cuntari
Una iurnata nun ci bastiria
Quantu si pati pi un scutu vuscari
E cu nci cridi, pruvallu vurria.

23
Di cchiù un puvireddu s’arrinia
Quannu chi veni dd’agilatu nvernun
Ca vi lu giuru su la vita mia
Ca a pinsarici stissu mi cunfunnu
Pi fari intiera chista poesia
Putissi studiari quasi un’annu,
Ma pi nu sfurzari la memoria mia
La penzu chi la vaiu tirminannu.

24
Quanti piriculi cc’è, comu li sternu
A dirlu si cunfunni la me menti,
Ci basta sulu chiddu di chist’annu
Millinovicentu unnici prisenti,
A vinticincu marzu fu stu dannu
Chi pireru ntra lu focu tanti genti,
Centucinquanta! Oh, cunsidirannu!
Arsi su morti, ntra li fiammi ardenti.

25
A New York successi st’accidenti,
Un casu orrennu chi porta tirruri
Cunsidiramu cu avia parenti
S’hannu chianciutu cu forti duluri,
Un numaru ci fu di chisti genti
Chi si pottiru appena libirari,
E a pinsari, chi cori dulenti
Li so cumpagni vidennu abbruciai.
22
Not understanding what the boss was saying,
I stood right there just looking at his ugly face,
then he just made me drop the tools
and pointed to the way out of the place.
If I wanted to tell the complete story
a full day would not be sufficient!
How much we had to suffer for a buck
and if you don’t believe me, try your luck!

23
And furthermore some fellows would give up
when they felt icy winter come around.
I swear upon my very life
just thinking of it makes me go berserk.
In order to do justice to this poem
I’d have to work on it the whole year long,
but not to tax my memory too much,
I think I will conclude it presently.

24
There are so many dangers that my mind
grows quite confused as I try to give voice
to them. One such that happened just this year,
one thousand and nine hundred and eleven,
the twenty fifth of March, that’s when it happened,
one hundred fifty people lost their lives,
all burned alive inside a fire. Just think
of it: all burned alive in flaming hell.

25
This accident occurred in New York City:
an awful incident arousing terror.
Think of those people who had relatives,
how they must have all wept with bitter tears.
There were a few among the people there
who managed to survive the accident.
Think how their hearts ached when they saw
their fellow workers burning up like that.
26
Una parata poi vosiru fari
Pi a sti disgraziati fari onuri,
Tanti suciita’ cu li banneri
Sennu tutti di luttu lu culuri,
Iu firmatu a un puntu a guardari
Pi lu spaziu fu e di dui uri,
E sempre genti vidia passari
Ca ci ni foru un nummaru maggiuri.

27
Era na cosa di cunsidirari
a vidiri tutti ddi genti mparata,
Addulurusi nti lu caminari
Pinsannu a chidda disgrazia mgrandata,
Tutti quanti si ficiru vagnari
Pi essiri chìuvusa la iurnata,
Nun ci fu nuuddu chi detti narreri
C’ogni pirsuna si mustrau grata.

28
L’ America quant’è disgraziata
Ca piriculi ci sù di ogni sorti,
Pi sulu caminari nti la sirada
Si sta suggetti a piriculusa morti,
Si vusca qualchi cosa di munita
Tra piriculi caluri e friddu forti,
Si la furtuna ad unu l’aiuta,
E lì così nun ci vannu tanti storti.

29
Cu avi famiglia mpinseri si metti
Doppu chi un pocu di grana ha vuscatu
Tra d’iddu stissu na cosa rifletti
Riturnari di novu a lu so statu,
E pi rimpatiariisi si parti
Pirchì la mogli e li figghi a lassatu
Chi cuntintizza, avennu la sorti
D’aviri la famigghia arribbracciatu
26
Then afterward they held a big parade
to honor those unfortunate, poor people.
Many associations with their banners
that were all draped in mourning cloth were there.
I, standing in a spot, watched the event
that lasted for two hours, maybe more,
and I observed an even greater number
of people passing in parade before me.

27
It was a sight that prodded pondering
to see all of those people in procession,
somberly walking down the street in sorrow,
reflecting on that horrible misfortune.
Because it was a dark and rainy day,
everyone got soaked, but notwithstanding
there was nobody who stopped marching down,
showing how deeply they all felt the woe.

28
America, how horrible a land it is!
Because here dangers of all kinds do lurk.
Even just walking down the street
you are exposed to peril and to death.
You're able to make a few dollars here,
but you face dangers, heat and extreme cold,
if you're assisted by some luck and things
do not go seriously awry.

29
A man who has a family begins to think
after he has earned and saved some money.
He starts to think reflecting on one thing:
should he return to his preceding status?
And he decides to go back to his home,
back to the wife and children he had left.
What happiness to have the chance again
to hold his family in an embrace.
30
Doppu chi tutti sti guai ha pruvatu
Un misiru affittu povireddu
Di certi ricchi eni invidiàtu
Si ci vidunu un novu vistiteddu,
Pirchi? lu vonnu semprì strazzatu
Senza ne scarpi ne robbi dincoddu
Quantu ognidunu chi l’ha cumannatu
Lu pista comu lu tirrenu moddu.

31
Sempri voli guadagnari iddu
E lu poviru mai suspirari,
Pi lu lavuru dariccillu accoddu
E cumannallu cu poci dinari,
Vurria chi mai aumintassi nuddu
E cu poviru è, poviru stari,
Tutti l’aumenti avilli iddu
Comu fussì ch’eternu ha da campari.

32
Nun è ca penza mai ch’ava muriri,
Ca pensa d’acquistari li biglietti
Murissi misu ‘nmenzu li dinari,
Vacanti si li porta li sacchetti,
A chissa cosa dovissi pinsari
Ma, intantu si è ca nun ci avverti,
Di beni mai si po’ cuntintari
Mancu siddu ci nesci di li porti.

33
Sempri spera di essiri forti
Pi li poviri staricci suggetti,
Ma siddu eguali sarriamu tutti
Vidissimu cu fussiru li sperti,
Lu riccu havi tanti di cumporti
Lu poviru nichei ingiusti fatti,
Finalmenti poi veni la morti
E tutti così eguali ni sparti.
30
After he has experienced all these woes
a poor afflicted emigrant is subject to
the envy of the wealthy folks in town
who see him wearing a new suit of clothes.
Why? Because they want to see him wearing rags,
wearing no shoes, nor decent clothes at all,
so that the people who have always bossed him
can step on him as though he were soft dirt.

31
They think that they alone should earn the money
and the poor people never should complain.
The wealthy should dump work upon the poor
and boss them paying them with little money.
They'd like it if no one progressed at all,
so those who are poor will stay always poor.
All the increases should belong to them
as though they were to live eternally.

32
They don't think that they too will have to die;
They are forever busy getting currency.
But if they die submerged in money,
they will leave earth with empty pockets.
They should reflect upon this very thing.
Meanwhile they never realize this truth.
They're never satisfied with all their wealth
not even if it can't fit in their doors.

33
They always think that they are stronger
so they can keep the poor below their feet.
But if we were all equal to each other,
we would then see who the real smart ones are.
The wealthy have so many luxuries,
the poor instead are victims of injustices.
But then when death comes finally,
All things will be divided equally.
34
Iu fu natu cu na mala sorti
D’unnaviri stu senzu cultivatu.
Scusati donni e omini dotti
Siddu pir casu avissi mancatu.
Di Pelligrinu Trapani su fatti
E chisti versi chi v’aiu cuntatu,
La mia menti li studia adatti
Supra di chiddu chi aiu passatu.

New York 20 maggio 1911
34
I was born under an ill-omened star,
not to have cultivated this my skill.
Excuse me ladies and you learned men
if I by chance committed some mistakes.
These verses that I have related here
were made by Pellegrino Trapani.
My mind has here endeavored to relate them
based on the sorrows that I have endured.

New York May 20, 1911.
How can we frame Tanina Cuccia’s works in the context of the exhibition? I would say that they are essentially works that arise from faith, reflections and the doubts that anyone who believes sincerely in our modern times must confront. In the end, her paintings are simply this, laded with the semantic-sacred strength of orthodox religious learning, executed in good measure by abiding with the very refined and rigid formal canons prescribed since time immemorial for such images by the iconological tradition, but it reflects wisely and measuredly dosing the "deconsecrations" of contemporary art, under a light of an enigmatic intelligence that seeks a more complete dimension to give to one’s own faith. What are the subjects of the exhibition? It’s easy to guess: a Sacred Shroud in a diptych, angels, warrior saints, Virgins with Child, a most beautiful Crucifix, an uneven triptych. All of them are framed on wooden planks that are never regular; often they are old planks found in the houses of Piana degli Albanesi. Worm-eaten, worn out, lived through, beautiful in themselves on which the figures emerge always fragmented, allowing sometimes the naked wood to be seen at the margins or between the painting like some old medieval wooden painting just found that needs to be restored. Some works on the other hand are panels that are missing pieces, half eaten, like long lost works, relics of an archaic sacred art impossible to reconstruct, or pieces of a broken work that was then reassembled arbitrarily in which the empty spots, the lacunae, the disconnections allow us to see, on one
manciatizzi, vissuti, assai beddi in sé stissi, supra li quali li fiuri nesciunu sempri frammintati, lassannu ntravidiri quaccchi vota u lignu nudu è margini o ntra la pittura, comu nta n’antica taula medievali appena truvata ca havi ad essiri ristaurata, certi opiri sunnu inveci pannelli mutilati e manciatizzi comu si fussiru politici oramai pirduti, relitti di un sacru arcaicu mpossibili ca s’havi a ricostruirii o macari porzioni di na immagini frantumata e doppu ricumminata arbitrariamenti, unni li spaziii vacanti, la lacuna, la mancanza di connessioni, di un latu ni fannu vidiri tutta l’intrinsica biddizza dà materia di lignu e di l’autru latu nesciunu fora comu elementi formali essenziali pi l’equilibriu generali di la cumpusizioni. Chiddu ca esisti, (ed evi l’esistenza assoluta dû divinu!) esisti ancora chiossai in drammatica opposizioni a zoccu nun esisti, ò vacanti. Autri voti nta na cumplessa armunia lu frammentu iconicu a tempira veni ncastunatu cu precisioni ntra puri stesuri ca si qualificanu semplicimenti pi la varietà di li tecnichi e materii usati, comu l’argentu, la lamina d’oru, oppuru l’afrrescu; certi voti li fiuri sunnu puru accompagnati di brani di pittura a tempira ca sunnu essenzialmenti decurativi, evucativi di temi di ciurami,
hand, the intrinsic beauty of the wooden matter and on the other, they become formal elements in the general equilibrium of the composition. What exists (and it is the absolute existence of the divine!) exists even more in a dramatic opposition to what does not exist, the empty spots. At other times the tempera iconic fragment is set precisely among layers that are achieved with various techniques and materials like silver, gold leaf or fresco; sometimes the figures are
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comu nta lu signifi-
cativu “Concettu Teosoficu”. Nta sta
pittura comu nta
autri si ritrova pir
esempiu quacchi
cosa di la geniali
contaminazioni
dittorica di Klimt,
pirchí nta stessa pit-
tura si ncontranu,
si cunfrontanu,
dannusi valuri recip-
procamenti, valuri
spaziali, qualità co-
loristiche e formali
diversi. Nta opiri
comu “Palinsesto”
doppu, o in quac-
chi ancilu, li iconi
sunnu inseriti in
campituri segment-
tati cu vari culuri,
a voti piatti, a voti
sgargiati, incisi,
vilati, macari cu
l’inserzioni grafica
assai eleganti di
brani di li Sacri
Scritturi o di sem-
plici caratteri flut-
tuanti di l’arfabetu
grecu: nun si tratta
nta stu casu sulu di
nu furba strizzatina d’occhi a l’arti cuncettuali o segnica, ma di valurizzari, di
leggiri modernamenti un’arti ca è e rimani ionografica. A parti u fattu ca lu
grafismu decorativu, allurtimata, la prima arti segnica, nasciu ntò munnu biz-
zantinu prima e poi nta chiddu islamicu e chistu Cuccia lu sapi beni. Ammatula
li citazioni, i diversi riferimenti a l’arti cuntempurania, nta tuttu chistu non
putemu leggiri ni l’opira di Tanina Cuccia la deriva pessimistica di gran parti

Palinsesto /Palimpsest. Affresco, tempera with egg, vinyl mixture. 2005
also accompanied by portions of tempera that are essentially decorative, evocative of floral themes like in the significant “Concerto teosofico”. In this work, as in others, we find something of the genial painting contaminations of Klimt, because in the same painting spatial values, different colors and formal qualities meet, and confront and gain value from one another. In works like “Palinsesto,” then or in some angels, the icons are inserted in segmented fields with various colors, sometimes flat, at other times scratched, carved, veiled with insertions of very elegant excerpts from the sacred scriptures or simple floating characters of the

di l’arti dû Novicentu, quanto u romanticu, autenticu ricupiru di “frammenti”
di l’universu iconograficu e religiusu dà tradizioni nta stu nostru tempu, nta la
nostra estetica d’accussì scannaliata e saturata, circannu forsi nta lu spittaturi
cu sti priziusi relitti di lignu cunsumatu, chiddu ca avi a sciogghiri l’enigma, a
dari un sensu a un discursu suspisu, nтирrottu, frammintatu.

Biografia di la pittrici

Nata ntô 1964, si diplomau in pittura all’accademia di belle arti ntô 1986. Viviu a Chiana di li Albanisi finu ô 1989 e dû 1985 ha cultivatu a latu di
l’attività di pittrici chidda dû iconografu, rapprisintannu cu sta vesti la cultura
arbereshe, albanofula e bizzantina in diversi manifestazioni culturali. Dù 1988
ô 1991 fu responsabili di progettu nta li ricerchi etno-antropologichi supra li
basi di li quali fu criatu doppu lu museo etnograficu N. Barbato di Piana degli
Albanesi. Dû 1996 gran parti di li so interessi fu didicatu a l’insegnamentu di
li disciplini pittorichi ô Liceu Artisticu E. Catalano di Palermu.
Greek alphabet: it’s not a question of a sly wink to conceptual or sign art, but of giving value, of reading in a modern way an art that is and remains iconographic. Notwithstanding the fact that decorative graphism, at bottom, the first sign art, was born in the Byzantine first and then in the Islamic world, which is something that Cuccia knows very well. In spite of all the citations, the various references to contemporary art, we would have difficulty reading in all of this, in Tanina Cuccia, the pessimistic drift of a large part of twentieth century art, as much as the romantic, authentic attempt to recuperate the “fragments” of the iconographic and religious universe of the tradition in this time of ours, in our own esthetics, that are so saturated and shrewd, looking perhaps in the viewer, with these precious relicts of worn-out wood, the one who will complete the puzzle, giving a sense to a suspended, interrupted, and fragmented discourse

Painter’s Biography

Born in 1964, she received a diploma in painting from the Accademia di Belle Arti in 1986. She resided in Piana degli Albanesi until 1989 and from 1985 she has devoted her time to iconography while continuing her activity as a painter. As an iconographer, she has represented the Arberesh, Albanian-speaking and Byzantine culture in various cultural events. From 1988 until 1991 she was responsible for a project of etno-anthropological research on the basis of which the ethnographic museum N. Barbato of Piana degli Albanesi was created. From 1995 most of her activity has been devoted to teaching painting in the Liceo Artistico E. Catalano of Palermo.
Each issue of *Arba Sicula* will include readings for those of our members who wish to improve their knowledge of Sicilian. It will contain a reading selection, which could be in poetry or prose, chosen from our vast collection of Sicilian texts. The selections will be glossed with notes on grammatical points encountered in the reading, explanations on vocabulary items, exercises designed to facilitate understanding and command of the grammatical features involved. We assume that you already have some knowledge of Sicilian and that you have access to some Sicilian grammars such as *Learn Sicilian / Mparmu lu sicilianu* by Gaetano Cipolla or *Introduction to Sicilian Grammar* by J. Kirk Bonner.

This is the third reading and it comes from *Fiabe novelle e racconti popolari siciliani* collected by Giuseppe Pitrè and published by Edikronos, Palermo, vol II, 1982.

I recommend that you familiarize yourselves with the following vocabulary items and explanatory texts before diving into the story: Try to complete the exercises and check your answers against those provided at the end.

**LXIII**

*La Mammadràa*

Vocabulary items

*Figghia fimmina*: the addition of the *fimmina* (female) may be redundant considering that *figghia* is already feminine. However, it is common to emphasize the gender because *figghi*, which is masculine, identifies both male and female. Thus we also have *un figghiu masculu*, a male child.

*Munnidduzzu*: derived from *munneddu* which is a measure of solids. It is equivalent to ¼ of the *Tumminu*, a measure for land. The word here, however, means pail, a sort of container for the garbage. The suffix *uzzu, uzza* means usually little, small, cute. This tale contains numerous examples of suffixes. Sicilian like Italian is very rich in suffixes and they can be used to add a different significance to a word: Here are some suffixes that Sicilians use to alter the meaning of a word: *uni-una* (largeness) *nasuni* (big nose); *azzu-azza* (bad or poor) *buccazza* (big, foul mouth); *icchiu-icchia* (little, small) *ominicchiu* (little man); *eddu-edda* (little, cute) *rigginedda* (little queen); *uzzu-uzza*, (pretty,
cute) signuruzzu (sweet Lord); olu-ola, (young, little) cagnolu, figghiola (pup, little daughter); ittu-itta (little, dear) figghitru (little son); ognuolu-ognula (little) amarognulu (a bit bitter) virdognulu (greenish); less used are onciulu-onciula (little) niuromonciu (darkish); ignu-igna (little) russignu, (reddish). In Sicilian you can add two suffixes to a noun or adjective. Thus, if you add uni and azzu to armali you end up with armalunazzu, a big dumb animal; fazzulitteddu means a pretty little handkerchief.

Pigghiati: from pigghiari, to pick up, to take. Normally pigghiari is not used reflexively.

Va jetta: this is a special construction which is normally expressed as va a jittari, go and throw. It is typical of certain parrati. Thus you can say va pigghia (go take) va mancia (go to eat) etc.

La munnizza: the izza of munnizza is not a diminutive suffix. The word comes from the Latin immunditia, and it identifies manure, also known as fumeri, but here it refers to garbage, sweepings.

Iju: from iri, to go. Past tense, went.

Puzzangaru: a large hole in the ground with stagnant water.

A lu jittari: mentri jittava, as she threw.

Cei cadu: she dropped. The pail fell from her hands.

La Mammadràa: She is mythological figure, like the Mean Witch, the Evil Fairy of Sicilian fairy tales.

Dunami: from the verb dari, to give. (Give me) The first three persons of the conjugation are dugnu duni duna. Today it is being replaced by the Italianate do, dai da.

Pi l’armicedda: Armicedda: derives fro arma, soul. The diminutives eddu-edda means little, sweet, dear. The c is added for phonetic reasons. It would be awkward to pronounce armiedda without the c. Adding edda to chianta, plant will become chianticedda, little plant; ventu, wind, becomes vinticeddu, little breeze; ciumi, river, becomes ciumiceddu, little river.

Nca: It means ”so”.

Comu bè scinniri: it’s the condensed version of comu haju a scinniri, how can I come down?

Dda jusu: down there, elsewhere you might hear ddassutta.

Scupami la casa: from scupari to sweep.

Munnizzedda, tirricedda…crístianeddi: the author wants to underline the sweet nature of Rusidda for whom garbage, dirt and people are sweet, dear lovable. The suffix eddu is added to munnizza, terra and cristiani.

Piducchieddi, linnineddi: little lice, little eggs of lice.

Cimiceddi, purciteddi. The suffixes are added to cimici, purci (bugs, fleas). The t is added to purci because if you add eddu to purci you get purcieddu, which
is already a word meaning pig.

*S’ hannu a calari l’occhi pi taliariti:* they have to lower their eyes to look at you, meaning that your brightness would be blinding.

*Perni e diamanti:* pearls and diamonds.

*Un paru tinti:* a worn out pair, a cheap pair.

*Vicchiaredda:* from vecchia. Notice that when the accent shifts by adding *edda*, the *e* of *vecchia* becomes *i*, as in *vicchiaredda*. This is a general rule. We already saw *ventu* become *vinticeddu*, while *munneddu* became *munnidduzzu*. The same occurs with the vowel *o* that becomes *u* as in *Rosa, Rusidda*.

*Summiccedda:* derives from *somma*, sum. The same rule applies.

*Si nn’acchianau:* past tense of *acchianarisinni*, to climb up.

*Ci cuntau lu nebinu di la mpanata:* literally it means the content of the breaded tort. Basically she related the details of the story.

*Ladia quantu li botti di lu cuteddu:* as ugly as strikes with knives.

*Cerchi di faritillu dari:* try to have her give it back to you.

*Munnizzazza, tirrazza, cristianazzi:* the suffix *azzu-azza* generally denotes largeness and poor quality. Thus dirty garbage, foul dirt and evil people.

*Piducchiazzi, linninazzi, cimiciazzi, purciazzi:* convey the girl’s disgust as well as her unpleasant nature.

*Ti pozza nasciri un cornu fitenti:* may a stinky horn grow on your forehead.

*Di sti capiddi ti pozza cadiri fumeri:* may manure fall from your hair as you comb it.

*Stercu fitenti:* smelly dung.

*S’arricriau sta picciridda:* arricriarisi means to find joy and pleasure. Obviously here it is said ironically, meaning the opposite.

*Arristau:* from *arristari*, past tense. It is a common practice to add an *a* to verbs beginning with *r* doubling the *r* such as in *ristari* which becomes *arristari*. Thus *rinesciri, risbigghiari, raccamari, rigalari* etc., which become *arrinesciri, arrisbigghiari, arraccamari, arrigalari*. This occurs also with verbs beginning with *m, t*, like *minazzari, truvari* etc., which become *amminazzari, attruvari*.

*Ladia:* ugly, also written *laria*.

*Na criatazza di casa:* from criata, servant. A lowly servant.

*Lu signuri castia la ‘mmiriazza:* The Lord punishes ugly envy. The word *mmiriazza* derives from *invidia*, which may be pronounced *nvidia, mmidia* or *mmiria* depending on the *parrata*. Two rules are at play here: the combination *nv* in words generally becomes *mm* as in *nvitu* (invitation) *mmitu, nvintari, mmintari*. The *d* of *nvidia* changes to *r* in many places, thus *mmiria*. *Ridiri* becomes *ririri; vidiri* is pronounced *viriri*.
La Mammadràa

di Giuseppe Pitrè

lìnninazzi comu l’autri cristianazzi”. “Conzami stu lettu; dimmi: chi c’è ‘nta stu lettu?” “Cimiciazzì, purciazzì, comu l’autri cristianazzi”. “Chi si’ brutta,” cci dici la Mammadràa; “chi nta sta frunti ti pozzo nasciri un cornu fitenti; di ssi capiddi ti pozzo cadiri d’unu latu fumeri, e di n’ autru latu stercu fitenti”. S’ arricriau sta picciridda!


Palermo

Exercises

**Exercise 1: find antonyms for the following: (opposite meanings)**

1. Accuminzari: ___________________
2. Tinti ___________________
3. Nasciri ___________________
4. Trasiri ___________________
5. Pigghiari ___________________
6. Picciridda ___________________
7. Bedda ___________________
8. Scinniri ___________________
9. Pizzenti ___________________
10. Figghiu masculu ____________

**Exercise 2: Find synonyms for the following.**

Dacci ________________
Tinti ________________
Robbi ________________
Ladia ________________
Povira ________________

**Exercise 3: Complete the following sentences**

1. La Mammadràa viveva nta un ________________
2. Rusidda si scantava di la ________________
3. Nta la testa di la Mammadràa Rusidda truvau _________

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4. L’autra picciridda truvau ___________ nta lu lettu di la Mammadràa
5. Picchi era mmiriusa, Mammadràa castiau a ________________

Exercise 4. True or false:

1. La Mammadràa vivi nta l’acqua. ____________ 
2. La Mammadràa ci rialavu na stidda nta la frunti a la brava picciridda. ____________ 
3. L’autra picciridda riciviu riali priziusi di la Mammadràa. ____________
4. Quannu si pittinava li capiddi a Rusidda ci cadevanu perni e diamanti. ____________
5. All’autra nveci ci cadeva merda puzzolenti. ____________
6. La storia voli promoviri lu bon cori e la gintilizza ntê picciriddi. ____________
7. A cu è bonu nta la vita ci arrivanu cosi tinti. ____________
8. A cu è tintu, cosi boni l’aspettanu. ____________
9. La matri di Rusidda ristau affritta e scunsulata a la fini. ____________
10. La matri di la secunna picciridda era assai mmiriusa. ____________

Exercise 5: Change the meaning of the following words first to bad, ugly and then to sweet and little:

1. Cristianu ____________ ____________
2. Cimicia ____________ ____________
3. Cappeddu ____________ ____________
4. Cani ____________ ____________
5. Buttana ____________ ____________
6. Buttigghia ____________ ____________
7. Carusu ____________ ____________
8. Picciotta ____________ ____________
9. Armali ____________ ____________
10. Matri ____________ ____________
Answers to the exercises:

Ex. 1
1. finiri
2. boni
3. moriri
4. nesciri
5. jittari
6. vicchiar edda
7. ladia
8. acchianari
9. riccu
10. Figghia fimmina

Ex. 2
1. Dunacci
2. Brutti
3. Vistiti
4. Bedda
5. Ricca

Ex. 3
1. puzzangharu
2. Mammadràa
3. Piducchieddi, linnineddi, comu l’autri cristianeddi.
4. Cimiciazza, purciazzi, comu l’autri cristianazzi’.
5. L’autra picciridda

Ex. 4
1. veru
2. veru
3. veru
4. fausu
5. veru
6. veru
7. fausu
8. fausu
9. veru
10. veru

Ex. 5
1. Cristianazzu cristianeddu
2. Cimiciazza cimicedda
3. Cappeiddazzu cappidduzzu
4. Canazzu canuzzu
5. Buttanazza buttanedda
6. Buttigghiazza buttigghiuzza
7. Carusazzu carusuzzu (carusittu)
8. Picciuttazza picciuttedda
9. Amalazzu armaleddu
10. Matrazza matruzzu
Nniminagghi/Riddles

Pruvati a sciogghiri sti nniminagghi siciliani. Si nun ci rinisciti, cuntul-lati li risposti a p. 106 / Try your hand at guessing what is meant by the following riddles. The answers are on p. 106.

1. Oh chi cosa, mamma mia!
   Apprima stava dintra a lu patruni,
   ora u patruni sta dintra di mia.

2. Nta l’aqua nasci,
   Nta l’acqua pasci,
   Vidennu l’acqua,
   iddru sparisci.

3. Sugnu longa quantu n’ancidda
   Fazzu sangu ccu purtusi;
   Quannu nesciu dà me grutta,
   Tutti currunu scantusi.

4. Si sì pueta e sì l’armu ti abbasta,
   M’ha diri cu havi la ventri nni la testa.

5. Mmienzu dui timpi filici filici,
   nasci un saristanieddu e jetta vuci.

6. Nasci bianca
   E niura mori.

7. Un ha bucca e parra,
   Un ha peri e camina.

8. Sugnu dintra na cedda ncarzarata,
   E carzarata, t’inzignu la via;
   Lu juornu tu mi lassi abbannunata,
   La sira cierchi la mia cumpagnia.

9. La munachedda di Sarausa
   Havi la tonica rascusa rascusa;
Si la tuonica du’ feddi si fa,
Duci, duci si nni va.

10. Mentri ca ti spogghiu, mi fai cianciri.

**Dumanni faceti/Amusing Questions**

Sti dumanni sunnu nanticchia chiù difficili picchì sunnu basati su jochi di palori ca hannu diversi significati. Si nun li capiti, taliati li spiegazioni a la fini. /

The following questions are somewhat more difficult because they are based on *double entendre*, play on words that have several meaning. If you cannot understand the joke, look at the explanations at the end.

1. Chi c’è nta l’aria?
Frumentu!

2. Qual è la cascia ca nun si apri?
La cascia dû mortu.

3. Chi c’è nta lu mienzu dû patennostru?
Cc’è u purtusu.

4. Qual è u mulu chiù granni?
U muluni.
E u mulu minzanu?
U muliettu.
E u mulu chiù nicu?
U mulinu.

5. Cu è cca va nnavanti ppi jiri narreri?
Lu vecchiu.

6. Cu è c’ammurta cu culu?
La scupetta.

7. Quannu vidi un picciriddu ca cari chi fai?
Mi ntuppu u nasu.

8. Cu è ch’ammazza senza fari duluri?
L’urtulanu, quannu ammazza a virdura.

9. Quannu è ca la mugghieri dici fazzulettu?
   Quannu conza u lettu.

10. La fimmina ca nasci nò misi di maju, pirchi ngrassa?
    Pirchi è majalina.

11. Quali sù i frutti ca nni fannu doliri i spaddi?
    I pira.
    E i frutti ca nni fannu doliri u cori?
    I cutugna.

12. Supra n’arvulu cc’è trenta aucieddi.
    Tiru una scupittata e n’ammazzu quinnici.
    Quantu nni restanu?
    Mancu unu, pirchi l’autri quinnici volanu via.

13. Quali sù l’ossa chiù duci?
    L’ossa ‘i muorti.
    E la carni chiù duci?
    A carni dà zita.

14. Qual è u peri ca cianci?
    U peri dû saliciu.

15. I pieri pirchi fietunu?
    Pirchi ci sù i cipuddi.
Answers to the Nniminagghi / Answers to the riddles:

1. La sasizza- sausage
2. Lu sali- salt
3. La spata- sword
4. Lu pidditu- fart
5. Lu purpu- squid
6. L’oliva- olive
7. La littra- letter
8. La lanterna- lantern
9. La ficurinnia- prickly pear
10. La cipudda- onion

Answers to Dumanni faceti/ Explanation for the Amusing Questions:

1. The word *aria* has two meanings: air and threshing floor.
2. Once the coffin is closed it won’t be opened again.
3. There is a tree that makes beads that are used to make rosaries called the Paternoster tree. You see many of them in Palermo.
4. The suffixes *uni* (bigness) *ettu* and *inu* (smallness) are used here playfully because *mulinu* is not a big mule, but a melon; *muliettu* is a mullet and *mulino* is a flour mill.
5. The old, while advancing in age, are shortening their lifespan.
6. The shotgun when fired has a recoil with its butt against the shoulder.
7. When you see a child who is falling (*ca cari*) you don’t hold your nose, but if you see him (*cacari*) you will.
8. The play on words deals with the verb *ammazzari* which means to kill and (*fari a mazza*) to create bunches.
9. The play is with the word *fazzulettu* (handkerchief) which is similar in sound to *fazzu u lettu*, which means I make the bed.
10. The woman who is born in May is known as *majalina*, but the word also means piglet.
11. The fruits that cause pain to your back are the *pira* which can mean pears or beatings; the fruits that will give you a heartache are the *cutugna*, sorbs, which are bitter and can mean bitterness and unpleasantness figuratively.
12. The question asks: if I shoot thirty birds in a tree and kill fifteen of them, how many are left? The answer is none because the other fifteen flew away.
13. The sweetest bones are the *ossa di morti*, a delicious biscuit made usually around November that resembles the bones of the dead. They are white on top and brown at the base. The sweetest flesh is that of one’s beloved.
14. The play on words deals with *peri* which means foot, but is also used to identify trees. Thus *un pedi di ficu* is a fig tree, *un peri di saliciu* is a weeping willow.
15. Feet stink because that’s where the corns are. *Cipuddi* means onions but also corns, callouses.
Strictly Sicilian, the Immigrant Daughter's Cookbook
by Anna Figlia Phipps
Ricivi quacchi misi fa na copia autografata di un libbru di cucina assai beddu di una di li nostri soci ca sta a San Francisco, Anna Figlia Phipps. La signura Phipps mi mannau lu libbru parchì sugnu diritturi di Arba Sicula ma puru parchì l’aiutau a traduciri li tituli di li rizzetti in sicilianu. Anna nasciu a New York ma i so ginituri eranu di Palermu. Pi quasi tutta la so vita di adulta ha statu ntà California unni ha nzignatu nta li scoli pubblichi finu a quannu si ritirau. Sunnu anni chi travaggia supra stu libbru di cucina, cunsirvannu rizzetti e mparannu supra la cultura siciliana. La so divuzioni a la cultura e a la cucina siciliana emergi chiaramenti di stu libbru ca si presenta in forma assai ammirevuli. Lu libbru havi 290 pagini, rilegatu cu na copertina rigida a culuri e cunteni na ntroduzioni generali a la Sicilia, cu un brevi ma precisu profilu dà cucina siciliana, a lìttiratura, l’arti e la musica di l’isula, cu noti supra la lingua siciliana, i proverbi e li festi siciliani. Ogni sezioni dû libbru cunteni na brevi ntroduzioni prima di prisintari li rizzetti ca sunnu lu cori dû libbru. Li rizzetti sunnu chiarì, facili a mettiri in pratica e assai numirusi. Tantu pi dari n’idea di la ricchizza di stu libbru basta diri ca cunteni trentadui rizzetti di pasta, parchì comu dici la signura Phipps, i Siciliani amanu la pasta, forsi parchì iddi foru li veri nvinturi di chidda ca si chiama pasta asciutta. Comu si sapi nun fu Marco Polo ca purtau la pasta nta l’Europa pirchì già in Sicilia si faceva ntô nonu seculu DC. Scigghiemmu na rizzetta di un piattu assai populari, nvintata di Siciliani ca po’ essiri fatta in diversi modi. L’arancina have du’ nomi. A Palermu preferisciunu chiamarla comu si fussi un sostantivu femminili, arancina, come fa l’autori, ma a Catania lu chiamanu arancinu. Vuiautri lu putiti chiamari comu vuliti ma iddi sunnu diliziusi e vi inchinu la panza. Anna Phipps introduci li arancini chiamannuli “principessi” di lu manciari siciliano, riservannu a la milanzana lu titulu di riggina.

Arancine

Ingredienti
Miscugghiu di risu, 4-5 tazzi d’aqua, 2 tazzi di risu nun cotto
¾ di tazza di furmaggiu picurinu rumanu rattatu
½ cucchiarata di sali; 2 tazzi di risu; 2 ova,
1 cipudda di media grannizza, tagghiuzzata
Miscugghiu di carni, ¼ di tazza d’ogghiu d’oliva
1 libbra di carni di manzu macinata
2-3 cucchiarati di cuncintratu di pumadoru o ½ tazza di sarsa di pumadoru
¾ di spicchi d’agghiu tritatu
½ tazza di piseddi cungilati (opzionali); Sali e pipi a piaciri
2 tazzi di pani rattatu fattu di pani talianu o francisi; Ogghiu di frumentudinnia pi friiri
I recently received an autographed copy of a beautifully bound cook book written by one of our old time members, Anna Figlia Phipps who lives in San Francisco. The book was sent to me not only because I am the editor of *Arba Sicula*, but because I assisted Mrs. Phipps by translating most of the recipes into Sicilian for her. Anna was born in New York but her parents were born in Palermo. She has lived in California most of her adult life where she taught school until retirement. She has been working on the cookbook, gathering recipes and learning about Sicilian culture for many years. Her devotion to Sicilian culture and Sicilian cooking is evident from her impressive presentation. The book is 290 pages, hard bound and contains a general introduction to Sicily, with a brief but well-informed profile of Sicilian cooking, literature and music, notes on the Sicilian language, Sicilian proverbs and feasts. Each section of the book is prefaced with a brief but well informed introduction before delving into the heart of the book which consists of recipes that are extensive, easy to follow and clear. To give you an idea of how extensive this book is, it gives recipes for thirty two pasta dishes, owing to the fact that Sicilians love their pasta and have been credited by many as the real inventors of *pasta asciutta*. As we know, it wasn't Marco Polo who brought pasta to Europe because already in Sicily it was being made in the ninth century. We have selected one recipe for a very popular Sicilian invention, the *arancina* which can be made in many different ways. The *Little orange* also has two names. In Palermo they prefer to make them a feminine noun. Thus they call them *arancine*, as does the author, but in Catania they call them *arancini*. You can call them what you like but they are delicious and filling. Anna Phipps introduces the *arancina* by calling it princess of Sicilian food, while she reserves the rank of queen to the eggplant.

**Arancine-Rice Balls**

**Ingredients**
- Rice Mixture: 4-5 cups water 3/4 cups grated pecorino romano cheese
- 2 cups uncooked long-grain rice
- Meat Mixture: 1/4 cup olive oil ; one medium-sized onion, 1/4 cup of cloves
- 1 lb. ground sirloin or ground round; 2 eggs
- 2-3 Tbsp. tomato paste or 1/2 cup leftover tomato pasta sauce
- 1/2 cup frozen petite peas (optional)
- 1 cup grated pecorino romano cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups dry bread crumbs made from Italian or French bread.
- Corn oil for frying.
**Priparazioni**


Nta na padedda, riscardati l’ogghiu d’oliva, junciticci la ipudda e facitila cociri a focu mediu finu a quannu addiventa morbida. Junciticci la carnì macinàta e cucitìa finu a quannu la carnì nun è chiù rosa. Junciticci lu cuncintratu di pumadoru o la sarsa di pumadoru, l’agghi macinatu, li piseddi (si vuliti), furmaggiu rattatu Sali e pipi. Ammiscati tuttu nzemmula e riminati pi 2-3 minuti. Livatilu di sopra lu focu.


**Pasta chi sardi**
Preparation

Cook rice in lightly salted boiling water until tender but still firm (*al dente*), about 20 to 25 minutes. If rice is cooked ahead of time, add a bit more water if needed. When rice has absorbed all of the water and the rice is tender, remove from the heat and cool a bit. While still warm, add eggs and cheese. Rice may be sticky (not a problem!). Set aside.

In a skillet, heat olive oil. Add onions and cook over medium heat until softened. Add ground meat and cook until meat is no longer pink. Add tomato paste or tomato sauce, ground cloves, peas (if using), grated cheese and salt and pepper. Stir over heat for 2 to 3 minutes longer. Remove from heat and set aside.

Moisten hands with water. If you are right-handed, scoop 2 tablespoons of rice/cheese mixture into the palm of your left hand and make a ball. Cup your left hand and make an indentation in the center of the ball, using your right index finger or thumb. Place a heaping teaspoon of the meat filling in the dent in the center of the ball. Start closing the palms of your hand and roll, as though making a snowball. If any meat is peeking through, patch with a few grains of the rice/cheese mixture to cover. A good size is the size of a tennis ball, but you can experiment and make them larger or smaller. Roll in bread crumbs to bind.

Remember that with each new rice ball made, moisten your hands with water and then proceed until the rice and meat mixtures are all used. All of the *arancine* should be formed before you start frying.

To fry, I use a cast-iron kettle or deep Dutch oven. Heat oil until very hot and fry a few *arancine* at a time until they are golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.
La dea Demetra,* la matri di la terra, aveva na figghia ca era la chiù bedda di tutti. Si chiamava Prusèrpina. Àutri nomi eranu Persèfuni e Kori. Un jornu, mentri idda caminava tranquilla cu li so amichi cugghiennu ciuritti vicinu a lu lacu di Pergusa, nta lu centru di l’ìsula, la vitti Plutoni, lu diu di lu munnu suttirranu, e nni ristau quasi ntrunatu di quantu era bedda. Si nni nnamurau nta na botta e la vosi comu mugghieri. Fici àprüri la terra e nisciu cu lu so carru tiratu di quattru cavaddi ca ci nisceva focu di li naschi e pigghiannu a Prusèrpina nta li so brazza putenti, si la purtau cu iddu nta lu so regnu. La pòvira giuvini circau di risistiri, ma Plutoni era troppu forti.

La matri Demetra, quannu nun truvau chiù a so figghia, si dispirau chian-cennu. Poi notti e jornu la jìu circannu pi tantu tempu. Si biliau tantu ca la terra ca dipinneva d’idda cuminciau a ssiccaru. Li ciuri murevanu, li pianti ssiccanu, la terra nun produceva chiù nenti pi l’ omu. Giovi, lu patri di li dei, si prioccupau e ordinau a Plutoni di libbirari a Prusèrpina e di riturnariccilla a so matri. Iddu nun potti diri di no a Giovi, ma la notti prima di lassarila llibbira ci uffrìu a Prusèrpina un beddu granatu e idda si nni manciau nantichia, nun sapennu ca l’effettu di stu fruttu era chiddu di fari nàsciri l’amuri. Manciari li coccia di lu granatu era comu firmari un contrattu di matrimoniu. D’accussì, doppu aviri manciatu lu granatu, l’idea di èssiri maritata...
Two Native Sicilian Myths: Demeter and Adrano

The goddess Demeter who was the mother of earth, had a daughter who was the most beautiful of young women. Her name was Pruserpina but she was known also as Persefuni and Kori. One day as she was peacefully gathering flowers with her companions near Lake Pergusa, by the city of Enna in the center of Sicily, Pluto, the god of the underworld, saw her and was stunned by her beauty. He fell madly in love with her and insisted on making her his wife. He split the earth open and he emerged from it with a cart pulled by four horses breathing fire out of their nostrils, and, grabbing Pruserpina in his mighty arms, carried her with him to his underworld realm. The poor young woman tried to resist, but Pluto was much too strong for her.

When her mother Demeter could not find Pruserpina, she was thrown into despair and began crying. Then she began searching for her everywhere, night and day. She became so despondent that the earth which depended on her to flourish began to dry up. The flowers died, the plants dried up, the earth stopped producing anything.

The Goddess Demeter. (Watercolor by M. Baronello, 2005).
cu Plutoni cuminçiu a piaçirici a Prusèrpina. Iddu era forti e putenti e ìdda avia assaggiatu lu sapuri di l’ amuri. E fu d’accussì ca Plutoni s’accurdua cu Giovi e Demetra, accittannu ca Prusèrpina ristassi cu so matri pi li du terzi di l’annu, ma pi l’autru terzu avia a turnari nni ìddu. In Sicilia, si sapì, ci sunnu sulu tri stacìuni: la primavera, la stati e lu nvernì. Quannu Prusèrpina nescì di lu munnu suttirraniu, cuminçia la primavera e quannu torna nni so maritu, cuminçia lu nvernì. Picchissu Prusèrpina è la dea di la primavera e la Sicilia è la prima terra d’Europa ca si svighia di lu friddu dù nvernì.


* Demetra è lu nomu grecu. I rumani la chiamavanu Ceres
* Demeter is the Greek name. Romans called her Ceres.

Na scena di caccìa dù cignali cu l’aiutu di cirnechi a Piazza Armerina/ Hunting a boar with the help of the cirnechi in a Piazza Armerina mosaic.
for mankind. Jove, the father of the gods, grew worried and ordered Pluto to release Pruserpina and to give her back to her mother. Pluto could not say no to Jove, but on the night before he was to release her, he offered her a beautiful pomegranate and she ate a few grains of it, not knowing that the effect that this fruit produced was to engender love. Eating a few grains of it was like signing a marriage contract. So, after eating the pomegranate the idea of being married did not displease Pruserpina. He was strong and powerful and she had tasted the flavor of love. It was thus that Pluto reached an agreement with Jove and Demeter, accepting a condition according to which Pruserpina would stay with her mother two thirds of the year, returning to him for the last third. Sicily, as we know, has only three seasons: spring, summer and winter. When Pruserpina emerges from her subterranean world that’s when spring begins and when she returns to her husband that’s when winter starts. It is for this reason then that Pruserpina is the goddess of spring and Sicily is the first land in Europe that awakens from the cold of winter.

As regards Kori, professor Santi Correnti relates that when the women of Enna are frightened by something, instead of the usual expression of fear like “Matruzza” (Little Mother) or “Bedda Matri” (Beautiful Mother) they automatically cry out “Kori” This confirms how important the myth of Pruserpina/Kori was for Sicily and especially for Enna.

Un cirnecu nta un mosaicu di Piazza Armerina. /A Cirnecu dog as depicted in a mosaic of the Roman villa of Piazza Armerina.

Arba Sicula XXXVIII
Lu diu Adranu e li Cirnechi di l’Etna


Il ratto di Proserpina, na funtana di Catania/
The Rape of Proserpina, a fountain in Catania
Before the Greeks arrived, the local population of Sicily had a special cult for the god Adranu. According to the ancient writers there was a temple dedicated to Adrano on the slopes of Mount Etna. Adrano, according to the experts on the matter was a personification of the Mountain and the people saw him as the protector of the island. He was a gigantic man with a long beard who carried a lance, symbol of his protection. His temple was protected by a special breed of dogs native to Mount Etna known as the Cirnechi of Mt. Etna. They are a very intelligent breed that still exist. In fact, you can still see these dogs on Sicily. They are represented also in the mosaics of the Villa of the Casale in Piazza Armerina, as you can see in the photo below. The legend says that these dogs were free to roam around the temple and they never harmed anyone who came with good intentions. But if someone were to come with the intention of stealing, the dogs would eat him alive. For this reason, Sicilians say the following curse to people who are known to be thieves: “May you be devoured by the dogs!”

Pruserpina dopu ca si manciau lu granatu, di Dante Gabriel Rossetti./
Proserpina, shown with a pomegranate, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Tate Museum.
A dicembre dû 2015 lu professuri Giovanni Ruffino, di lu Centru di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani, orgnizzau na cunfirenza di quattru jurnati pi cunmimirari lu ducentesimu annivirsariu dà morti di lu granni pueta sicilianu Giovanni Meli. A la cunfirenza participarunu i chiù famusi studiusi dà lūttiratura siciliana. Fu tinuta in varii posti dà città, inclusi lu Palazzu di l’Aquilì, la Bibliuteca municipalu di Palermu e lu Palazzu Steri. La cunfirenza inclusi puru na visita a Terrasini e a Cinisi unni lu pueta avia statu pi un piriudu di tempu. Chiù di 300 pirsuni ca vinniru di li autri università siciliani, di l’Europa e puru di li Stati uniti foru prisenti. L’eventu fu cunzid-diratu un gran sucessu nun sulu pi lu gran numiru di cristiani ca vi participau, ma puru pirsuni ca vinniru na nova luci supra lu chiù mpurtanti pueta-sciensiazatu dà Sicilia. Mentri iddu era assai populari ntà Sicilia e nta tutta l’Europa duranti la so vita e macari dopu, lu ntressi pi la so opira ha declinatu ntà l’ultimu seculu. A causa di opinioni espressi duranti la so vita e dopu ca lu caratterizzavanu comu un pueta arcadicu ca si interessava principalmente di cantari pasturi e ninfi na atmosfera buccolica, la so reputaziunu suffriu. Lu fattu ca iddu scrissi li so opiri principalmenti in sicilianu certu nun aiutau a daricci lu so giustu postu.


Na ucchiata a l’indici di li Atti dà cunfirenza rivela la vastità dû volumi:

Franco Arato, *Un abbozzo di filosofia in versi: La Ragione.*
Alberto Beniscelli, *Tra Lucrezio e la nuova scienza: le affinità elettive, secondo Meli.*
Sergio Bonanzinga, *Giovanni Meli e il tarantismo siciliano.*
Lino Buscemi, *Giovanni Meli e la città.*
Maria Caracausi, *Il Meli italiano del poeta greco Andreas Kalvos.*

Arba Sicula XXXVIII
In December 2015, professor Giovanni Ruffino of the Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani organized a four-day conference to commemorate the great Sicilian poet Giovanni Meli on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of his death. The conference which was attended by the best known scholars on Sicilian literature was held in various places in the City, including the Council Room of the Palazzo delle Aquile, the Palermo public Library and the Palazzo Steri. The conference also included visits to Terrasini e Cinisi where the poet lived for a time. The event was attended by over 300 people coming from the other Sicilian universities, and from Europe as well as the United States. The conference was hailed by everyone as a success not only for the number of people who took part in it, but also for the novel light that was shone on Sicily’s most important poet-scientist. While he was immensely popular in Sicily and all over Europe during his lifetime and even afterwards, interest in his work had declined somewhat during the last century. Owing to the critical views expressed in his lifetime and afterward according to which he was an Arcadian interested primarily in singing about shepherds and nymphs in a bucolic setting, his reputation had suffered. The fact that he wrote primarily in Sicilian certainly did not help.

The conference was intended to present a more objective and better-informed assessment of Giovanni Meli’s work. A great deal of progress has been made as regards the period during which Meli lived and wrote and owing to the numerous studies focusing on the economic, literary, and social history of the period have made it possible for scholars to better able to evaluate his opus. Their efforts are now available in print. The proceedings of the four-day conference were published by the Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani in 2016. The volume edited by Giovanni Ruffino is one of the most important contributions to Melian studies since the publication of Giorgio Santangelo’s edition of the Opere, a two-volume work for the publisher Rizzoli in 1965.

A glance at the table of contents of the Proceedings reveals the scope of this volume: and vastness

Franco Arato, *Un abbozzo di filosofia in versi: La Ragione.*
Alberto Beniscelli, *Tra Lucrezio e la nuova scienza: le affinità elettive, secondo Meli.*
Sergio Bonanzinga, *Giovanni Meli e il tarantismo siciliano.*
Lino Buscemi, *Giovanni Meli e la città.*
Maria Caracausi, *Il Meli italiano del poeta greco Andreas Kalvos.*

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Nino De Vita, *Il mio incontro con Giovanni Meli.*
Matteo Di Gesù, *Lumi dell’eroticomico. Appunti sul Don Chisciotte e sulla narrativa in ottave del Settecento.*
Maria Di Giovanna, *I desideri e le gioie dell’ostrica. Sul Meli delle Odi.*
Antonio Di Grado, *Et in Arcadia ego.*
Rosalba Galvagno, *La pastorale siciliana da Giovanni Meli a Vincenzo Consolo.*
Fernando Giovale, *“L’apa fa meli; ed autru lu divora”. Don Chisciotte e Sancio tra “cortigianeria e intelligenzia”.*
Aurelio Principato, *Meli lettore di Prevost.*
Giuseppe Silvestri, *Giovanni Meli professore di chimica tra ’700 e ’800.*
Antonino Sole, *Giorgio Santangelo editore e critico dell’opera del Meli.*
Carmelo Spalanca, *II pensiero linguistico di Giovanni Meli.*
Salvo Zarcone, *Meli progressista?*  
Giovanni Ruffino, *Dalla grotta salina alla grotta perciata.*  
Immagini fotografiche di Paolo Chirco.

L’autru granni contribbutu ca havi l’obiettivu di rivalutari Meli e la so posizioni na la storia litteraria dà Sicilia è lu progettu ambiziuuzzu di l’editori di la Nuova Ipsa, Claudio Mazza, di pubblicari tuttu chiddu ca scrissi Meli, inclusi li opiri scientifichi ca nun hannu mai statu pubblicati. Meli fu nun sulu un granni pueta ma puru medicu e scienziatu ca cumminava la senzibilità puetica cu chidda di nu scienziatu. Meli fu lu primu prufissuri di chimica a l’università di Palermo. Lu progettu fu cuminciatu di la casa editrici di Palermo in collaborazioni cù prufissuri Salvo Zarcone ca era lu diritturi generali di la cullana. A oggi

Gaetano Cipolla, La traduzione dell’opera di Giovanni Meli in inglese.

Pietro Colletta, Modelli classici e ispirazione popolare nell’opera di Giovanni Meli.

Michel Delon, Nature et historiae dans la poesie des saisons.

Nino De Vita, Il mio incontro con Giovanni Meli.

Matteo Di Gesù, Lumi dell’eroticico. Appunti sul Don Chisciotti e sulla narrativa in ottave del Settecento.

Maria Di Giovanna, I desideri e le gioie dell’ostrica. Sul Meli delle Odi.

Antonio Di Grado, Et in Arcadia ego.


Rosalba Galvagno, La pastorale siciliana da Giovanni Meli a Vincenzo Consolo.


Fernando Gioviale, “L’apa fa meli; ed autru lu divora”. Don Chisciotti e Sancio tra “cortigianeria e intelligencija”.

Tobias Leuker, Anacreonte nelle Anacreontiche di Giovanni Meli.

Nicolo Mineo, Storia della Buccolica di Giovanni Meli nella storia del secondo Settecento siciliano.

Aurelio Principato, Meli lettore di Prevost.

Ida Rampolla Del Tindaro, Meli visto dai felibri siciliani e da G.A. Borgese.

Florence Russo, La ricerca dell’età dell’oro nell’opera di Giovanni Meli.


Giuseppe Silvestri, Giovanni Meli professore di chimica tra ’700 e ’800.

Antonino Sole, Giorgio Santangelo editore e critico dell’opera del Meli.

Carmelo Spalanca, Il pensiero linguistico di Giovanni Meli.

Nunzio Zago, Implicazioni anti-idilliche nella Buccolica di Meli.

Salvo Zarccone, Meli progressista?

Giovanni Ruffino, Dalla grotta salina alla grotta perciata.

Immagini fotografiche di Paolo Chirco.

The other very important contribution that aims to re-evaluate Meli and his standing in the history of Sicilian letters is the ambitious project by the editor of Nuova Ipsa, Claudio Mazza, to publish all of Meli’s works, including the scientific works that have never been published. Meli was not only a great poet but he was also a physician and a scientist who combined his poetic sensibility with that of the scientist. Meli was the first professor chemistry at the University
of Palermo. The project was initiated by the publishing house in Palermo in collaboration with professor Salvo Zarcone who was the general editor for the series. So far three volumes have already been published, as well as an elegant large-size edition of the *Don Chisciotte e Saniu Panza*. The plan is to publish all the works in 11 volumes. Unfortunately professor Zarcone passed away recently after losing a long-fought battle with cancer. While a new editor has not been announced, I am confident that the project will not be abandoned. As the editor for the fourth volume I am glad to say that the work is nearing completion and that the volume will be printed hopefully before the end of 2017. It is large volume of 535 pages that will include the Odi, Sonetti and Canzunetti, in the original Sicilian, translated into Italian with an introduction and notes and commentary on each poem. The volume will also contain variants between the published edition of 1814 and the original manuscripts digitized by the Palermo Public Library. These volumes are basically critical editions that will give scholars the tools essential for a correct interpretation of the poet's work. This in turn will go a long way toward restoring Giovanni Meli in his rightful place in the Pantheon of Sicilian letters.
Criscennu in Italia subsequente alla Seconda Guerra Mondiali, sinteva sempri miraviglia. Scantu e ntressi quannu me patri e i me zii parravinu di diversi stori di la guerra. Li so cunti eranu sempri chini di morti, surdati e civili friti. Me zii Natali diceva: “A guerra è na cosa complicata, ma l’azzioni è semplici. Tu spari a lu nnimicu e lu nnimicu spara a tia.” Si tuttu chistu è veru la cosa è assai chiù complicata e tanti cosi nun si vidinu subitu.

Ora doppu settant’anni, apprinnemu la storia di lu travagghiu piriculusu fattu di ddi curaggiusi agenti speciali Italu-Miricani ca opiravanu darreri a li linii nnimichi pi aiutari a li Miricani e li truppi allati pi scunfiggiri a li Nazi e a li Fasci.

Nta lu volumi The Office of Strategic Services and Italian Americans, scrittu di lu prufissuri Salvatore J. LaGumina, liggemu “la storia ca nun si sapi”. Li litturi mparanu cosi supra eventi storici dà guerra ca pi vari motivi hannu statu tinutu in secretu finu a ora. Travagghiannu supra li documenti classificati segreti, lu prufissuri LaGumina rivela ca li surdati e agenti Italu-Miricani desiru un grossu contribbuti nta la guerra contru i Tedeschi. La OSS fici centinara di operazioni militari darreri li linii dû nnimicu e fu na forza assai efficaci, na cosa ca fu ricanusciuta dopu la guerra quannu fu criata la CIA, (The Central Intelligence Agency) ca continua lu travagghiu cuminciatu cu l’OSS.

Li giuvini agenti segreti Italu-Miricani oltri a pussediri lu curaggiu, e la capacità tecnica di supravviviri, appiru bisognu di nautra qualità pi putiri purtti o successu li so opirazioni. Iddi canuscevanu la lingua taliana o lu dialettu dà zona unni opiravanu. Chiddi ca foru catturati di li Nazi e Fasci foru torturati e ammasszati pagannu pi l’amuri di la libertà e pi lu paisi di li so an-
Growing up in Italy right after World War II, I was always amazed, scared and eager to hear my father and my uncles exchanging war stories of different dimensions. Their stories were always replete with dead, wounded soldiers and civilians. My uncle Natale used to say “War is a complicated affair, but the action is simple. You shoot the enemy, the enemy shoots you!” While that is true, there is much more that meets the eye.

Now, more than seven decades later, we learn of the dangerous work done by brave Italian-American special agents operating behind enemy lines to help American and Allied troops to defeat the Nazis and the Fascists.

In the book *The Office of Strategic Services and Italian-Americans* by Professor Salvatore J. LaGumina, we read the “Untold History.” The reader here learns historical events that for whatever reasons have been kept secret all this time. Working with classified documents that have not been written about, Lagumina reveals that the Italian-Americans soldiers and agents made a substantial contribution toward the war effort against the Germans. The OSS conducted hundreds of operations behind enemy lines and was an effective force whose efficacy was recognized since it was the forerunner of an important agency of the US government, the Central Intelligence Agency.

All these young, Italian-Americans agents, beside possessing the courage, the fighting and survival skills, needed something else for the success of their operations. They were fluent in the Italian language or the dialect spoken in the area where they operated. Some of them, captured by the Nazis or Fascists, were tortured and killed paying the ultimate price for the love of freedom and for the country of their ancestors. Do these heroes deserve to be remembered? You bet!
tinati cù prezzu di la vita. Sti eroi meritanu di essiri ricurdati? Certamenti ca sì.

Grazzii a ëlu prufissuri LaGumina e a la so miticulusa ricerca ca illumina un argomentu assai cumplicatu, lu litturi po’ vidiri i nomi, li azioni, li posti, li dati e li circustanzi di li battagghi dà Secunna Guerra Mondiali. Sfortunatamenti, la giustizia spissu nun si trova mai specialmenti in tempi di guerra.


Thanks to Professor LaGumina and his zealous research on this complicated subject, the reader can learn with detailed accuracy names, actions, places, times and circumstances of the World War II struggle. Unfortunately, justice often is nowhere to be found, and much less in time of war!

In this book, the author does not spare us of the painful reality of regional discrimination among the Special Strategic Service Forces fighting in Italy for the same end and paying the same price. A paradox? And what about the thousands of Italian-American who were interned in camps while their kids were serving in the American Armed Forces!

The “Office Of Strategic Services and Italian-Americans” by Salvatore J. LaGumina deserves to be studied by every Italian-American, and by every Italian living anywhere, Italy included! The book contains many other interesting facts and reconstruction of historical events than I cannot relate in this brief review.
Libbra ricivuti / Books Received


___Sutter & Snediker, illustrated by Bebe Barkan, Cross-Cultural Communications, Merrick, NY 2016.


___Gambling in Macau, translated by Zhao Si, Cross-Cultural Communications, Merrick, NY 2017.


___*Sailing the Yangtze*, Chinese Translation by Hong Ai Bai, Cross-Cultural Communications, Merrick, NY 2014


Liliana Patti *Dumannu a lu specchiu, poesie in lingua siciliana*, Trapani, Edizioni Drepanum 2013.


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*Arba Sicula XXXVIII*


Alberto Varvaro, *Vocabolario etimologico siciliano N (versione provvisoria)*


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**Arba Sicula Also Recommends**

*Learn Sicilian/Mparamu lu sicilianu* by Gaetano Cipolla is the first college textbook for learning Sicilian. It contains a complete description of the language with a wealth of exercises and of cultural material written in a way that makes learning Sicilian fun. It is accompanied by a DVD with all the answers to the exercises as well as the audio for all the readings and dialogues.

*Three Marias: A Sicilian Story* by Roger Armbruster is an very engrossing novel that relates the stories of three generations of courageous and strong Sicilian women who share the name Maria. Their story begins in Sicily and ends in America.

*The Lady of the Wheel*, by Angelo Coniglio. This is an interesting novella that explores the Sicilian dilemma: how to make sure that infants that cannot be taken care of by their poor families receive the care they need.

*The King of Love and Other Fairy Tales*, G. Pitrè, is a bilingual (Sicilian/English) volume that contain 12 Sicilian fairy tales translated into English and amply annotated by Lorna Watson and Marina Di Stefano. This is a wondrous journey into the Sicilian imagination.
First to Last Picking, by Sebastiano Santostefano. This is a wonderful account of life in Connecticut for Sicilian immigrants after World War II. It is full of insights into Sicilian-Americans, their ways of coping and their struggle to become Americans while keeping Sicilian values alive.

Vincenzo Ancona’s Malidittu la lingua/Damned Language, recently reprinted in a new format and with two accompanying CDs or one DVD of the poet reciting his work in Sicilian. Ancona’s book is certainly well known to the members of Arba Sicula, especially those who live in the New York area. Ancona was an institution in the Castellammare del Golfo community and still is remembered with affection and admiration. His book had been out of print for a number of years, and it was reprinted in a more elegant edition at the request of many people.

Francesco Lanza’s Sicilian Mimes: a Gallery of Sly and Rustic Tales, is a classic of Sicilian humor that has delighted many generations of Sicilians since its publication in the 1920’s. The book had never been translated into English, like so many worthy others, and I felt that it had important things to say about Sicily and Sicilians, even as a parody of them. If you want to laugh at the same things Sicilians find funny, if you want to know what their taboos are, this is the book to read. Lanza’s whacky sense of humor is definitely worth experiencing.

After Laughing, Comes Crying: Sicilian Immigrants on Louisiana Plantations, by Joseph L. Cacibauda. This novel is based on the author’s ancestral research through the Mormon Church’s archive, books and newspapers and it follows the life of Giovanni Graci, a farmer in Sicily, his decision to leave the island, the crossing and his experience on a sugar plantation in Southern Louisiana. The story is emblematic of so many Italian immigrants’ tales, told with compassion and realism. An excellent guide to our shared past. 136 pages, $14.95. ISBN 188190169-6

Arba Sicula XXXVIII
**Tornu/The Return, Sicilian Poems**, by Antonino Provenzano, translated into English by Gaetano Cipolla. This is the second volume of poetry written by Arba Sicula’s Vice President, following his successful book *Vinissi/I’d Love to Come Back*. Provenzano’s style has grown freer and less attached to traditional forms, while keeping his sense of humor intact. This book confirms once again the talent and special gifts the poet showed in his first book and then some. 160 pages, $16.95. ISBN 188190171-8

**Sicilian Palimpsest: The Language of Castroreale and Its Territory**, by Ennio I. Rao. Prof. Rao has included a thorough and well researched summary of the major events of Sicilian history, touching also on Sicilian literature. His grammar is useful as well for all Sicilians wishing to learn the language. Prof. Rao’s comments in most cases are applicable to Sicilian at large. This is a most useful book for anyone interested in Sicily. 160 pages, $14.85. ISBN 188190170X

**Sicily The Trampled Paradise, Revisited**, By Connie Mandracchia De Caro, II Edition. This is a completely revised and updated version of the book that was sold out. Mrs. De Caro has added new chapters and expanded her narrative to enhance historical insights into the complex history of Sicily. ISBN 1881901-15-7 138 pp. paperback. Price: $14.95.

**Siciliana: Studies on the Sicilian Ethos and Literature**, by Gaetano Cipolla. This is a revised and expanded edition. It contains several new chapters that contribute to making this book a must for all Sicilians. ISBN 188190145-9, 258 pp. $18.00.

**Sicilian: The Oldest Romance Language**, by Joseph Privitera.
In this study, Dr. Privitera demonstrates that Sicilian is not a dialect nor a corruption of Italian. Dr. Privitera convincingly argues that Sicilian is the most ancient of the romance languages. In addition, he compiles a list of words derived from other languages such as Latin, Greek, Arabic, Spanish, Catalan and Provencal. ISBN 188190141-6, 2004, 96 pp. $12.00

**Introduction to Sicilian Grammar**, By J. K. “Kirk” Bonner, edited by Gaetano Cipolla. This is the first comprehensive grammar of the Sicilian language available for English speakers. It is also the first serious attempt at treating the various different forms of spoken Sicilian as expressions of the same underlying language. Dr. Bonner’s work ought to dispel the notion that Sicilian is not a language, but a dialect. Coming at a time when Sicilian is being threatened with extinction, this work is an invitation to Sicilians and Sicilian-Americans not to let the language of their ancestors fade away. Price $27.95. The price includes a copy of **The Sounds of Sicilian**, by Gaetano Cipolla This 32 page booklet is a description of Sicilian sounds accompanied by an interactive CD to teach students pronunciation. It should be bought in conjunction with **Introduction to Sicilian Grammar**. For $27.95 One can buy both, including shipping. ISBN 188190151-3.

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*Arba Sicula XXXVIII*
A Thousand Years in Sicily: from the Arabs to the Bourbons, by Giuseppe Quatriglio. This is the third edition of a classic. See the review of this book in the book review section. If you’re interested in Sicilian history, this is one book one ought to have. ISBN 0921252-17-X, 228 pp. $16.00.

History of Autonomous Sicily, By Romolo Menighetti and Franco Nicastro, Translated into English by Gaetano Cipolla. This is the most comprehensive history of Sicily from the signing of the Special Autonomy Statute for the Island in 1947 to the present. To understand the political, economic and social situation of modern day Sicily, this is your book. Price $18.00.

Altavilla, Sicily: Memories of a Happy Childhood, By Calogero Lombardo
“I wrote this book for the children of the family who will never know what this place was,” said Calogero Lombardo. This is more than a recollection of childhood memories. It is an interesting and insightful look at the reality of Sicilians written with wit and a sense of humor. ISBN 1881901-36-X. 168 pages, $14.00.

Don Chisciotti and Sanciu Panza, By Giovanni Meli, Introduction, Notes and Translation by Gaetano Cipolla. Revised edition. This is not a translation of the Spanish novel, but an entirely original rethinking of the archetypal couple of Don Quijote and his squire Sancho, written in verse and from a Sicilian perspective. This is an essential book to understand the Sicilian psyche. Gaetano Cipolla’s translation is superb. ISBN 1881901-33-5. 320 pages-Bilingual volume (Sicilian/English), price $18.00.

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This is a revised edition of Dr. Barbera's entertaining and well documented account of the eventful period that goes from the Norman conquest of Sicily to the death of Frederick II. This is required reading for all who are interested in Sicilian history. ISBN 1-881901-05-X. Paperback 160 pp. with illustrations. Price: $12.00.

**Remember Me Young**, by Cecelia Tumminello De Luso

This is the story of Sicilians who came to America with limited funds and no knowledge of how they would survive. Here they were forced into a results-driven world. Language and education were not always within their reach. Easy money was dangled in front of them. Listen as the ripples of War, Suicide and Abuse along with my Memoirs, Proverbs, Folklore and Unconditional Love unfold. ISBN 1-881901-94-7, 152 pp. $16.00

**The Poetry of Giovanni Meli**, introduced and translated by Gaetano Cipolla. This volume, too, was sent free to all members in good standing. If you missed out, you can still order it from Legas. It is the most impressive anthology of the poetry of the greatest Sicilian poet of all time. ISBN 978-1-939693-9-9, Bilingual edition 356 pages. It costs $24.00.

**Pirati supra la nivi/Footprints in the Snow**, by Nino Provenzano. This is the third anthology of poems by Provenzano in which he shows a greater command of his medium, while presenting a more reflective view of his world.

ISBN 9781939693150, paperback 128 pp. $16.00
The Autobiography of Rosina San Paolo, by Rosina San Paolo. This is an interesting autobiography that recounts the vicissitudes of a Sicilian family as they establish themselves in the US. Rosina, who finished the book when she was 91 years old, is still living and observing the same principles of Catholic Faith that have guided her through her long and fruitful life.
ISBN 9781939693143, 204 pp. $16.00.

A Sicilian-American Comedy by Joseph J. Corso Jr.

this is an episodic, fictional account of four generations of a Sicilian family: one part of which emigrates to America, while others stay behind. It is a tale of La famiglia, filled with acts of sacrifice and sacrilege, love and mlice, mystery and murder.

The Taste of Tradition: A Collection of My Sicilian Family’s Recipes, by Benedetta Lino.
The Taste of Tradition is a cookbook filled with recipes and poetry from a traditional Sicilian family. Many of the recipes have been passed down through the generations. This is a cookbook that will please everyone and will make a wonderful addition to cookbook collectors.ISBN 978-1-939693-17-4, 158 pp. $ 18.00

La puisia di Maria Nivea Zagarella:
This is volume XVI of the series Pueti d’Arba Sicula/Poets of Arba Sicula that introduces to American audiences a gifted and sensitive poet from Francofonte, masterfully translated into English by Gaetano Cipolla.
ISBN978-1-939693-18-1, 166 pp. $16.00
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Mr. Vincent Ciaramitaro, former owner of Joe’s of Avenue U in Brooklyn, has developed a web site that contains many of the recipes used in the famous Focacceria Palermitana. In addition the site contains information on the island’s traditions, history and legends. Check out his site at: www.siciliancookingplus.com

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