



## Cristoforo Colombo: In Difesa dell'Onore Perduto

di Generoso D'Agnese

C'era una volta Cristoforo Colombo, anzi c'erano tante statue del Navigatore di origini genovesi in varie città americane. E ora alcune di queste non ci sono più, anzi alcuni vorrebbero che non ce ne fosse nessuna.

In un 2020 segnato da una tragica pandemia e dall'assoluta incertezza per la salute di miliardi di uomini, una parte dell'America ha scoperto il desiderio di demolire i simboli di quello che viene considerato un retaggio razzista e colonialista della storia del Nuovo Continente. Senza peraltro avere la minima conoscenza di un percorso storico che vide i primi europei solcare l'Oceano Atlantico alla ricerca di un passaggio diretto per le Indie.

Ma questo poco importa a chi partecipa allo scontro tra il movimento Blm e l'America suprematista. Per i facinorosi, tutto ciò che sta in mezzo, tra il bianco e il nero, non ha alcun diritto di sentirsi offeso, siano essi italiani, ebrei, o immigrati cinesi. E le statue dedicate a Colombo possono tranquillamente cadere nella polvere o nel mare, se non fosse per la grande determinazione delle comunità italo-americane che non rimarranno immobili nel vedersi oltraggiare la propria memoria storica.



Christopher Columbus portrait by Sebastiano del Piombo

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## Celebrating a Cultural Legacy Columbus is honored during a tumultuous year



GIOVANNI SCIANNAMEO

Ceremony at the new Piazza Italiana at Holy Rosary Church. Please turn to page 6 for more photographs.

by Francesco Isgrò

On Columbus Day, in the midst of a pandemic, a highly contentious presidential election, and a growing revisionist movement to recast historical figures, many Italian Americans nationwide, some with increased vigor, celebrated, commemorated, and defended the legacy of the great Italian navigator Christopher Columbus.

In our nation's capital, in keeping with a long tradition, a Columbus Memorial Mass was celebrated by Fr. Ezio Marchetto at Holy Rosary Church, the National Italian Parish. Following the Mass, Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center Inc. hosted the annual Columbus Day ceremony sponsored by the Lido Civic Club. This year was made special in that the statue of a young Columbus, donated by the Lido Civic Club to Holy Rosary Church on October 11, 1992 -- the

500th Anniversary of Columbus' famous voyage -- was rededicated in its new location in Piazza Italiana, the large courtyard located at the new building.

At the ceremony, following the signing of the national anthems of Italy and the United States by Maria Marigliano, Holy Rosary Church's choir director, Fr. Ezio Marchetto blessed the Columbus statue and urged guests to reflect on the meaning of Columbus' historic voyage.

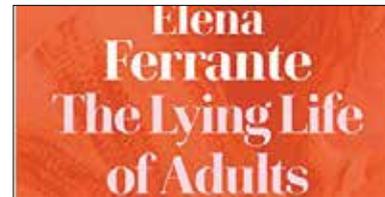
Lido Civic Club President Vincenzo Fragomeni, in rededicating the statue, noted in particular the growing movement to erase Columbus' legacy, along with "our collective resolve to not let history be forgotten." He called the systemic removal and destruction of Columbus statues across the country "a direct affront to Italian Americans everywhere. So today, and every Columbus day forward, let

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# Italy's Impressive Group of Nobel Winners in Science

## *Many of the Nobel Laureates also made their mark in America*

by Nancy DeSanti\*

The "brain drain" from Europe to America after World War II included not only famous German scientists, but also some brilliant young Italian medical scientists of that era.

With Italy's post-war economy in tatters and the infrastructure for medical research non-existent, a small group of Italy's "best and brightest" left for America. Eventually four of them won a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine: Salvador Luria, Renato Dulbecco, Rita Levi-Montalcini and Mario Capecchi. Remarkably, the first three were colleagues at the University of Turin.

**Salvador Luria** (1912-1991) was born in Turin to an influential Jewish family. He studied at universities in Turin and Rome and after graduating, he was awarded a fellowship to study in America. However, Mussolini's fascist regime had banned Jews from academic positions. Without funding for work in either the U.S. or Italy, Luria left in 1938 for Paris, where he later studied at the Pasteur Institute. But as the Nazis invaded France in 1940, he fled on bicycle to Marseilles and obtained a visa to the United States.

In 1969, Luria won the Nobel Prize for research at MIT on inique viruses that infect bacteria. He studied their genetic structure and showed that bacterial resistance to viruses is genetically inherited. Luria's work markedly enhanced understanding of the role of genetics in cancer. In 1974, he became director of the Center for Cancer Research at MIT.

Luria was also a political activist who protested against nuclear weapons testing, opposed the Vietnam War and supported organized labor.

**Renato Dulbecco** (1914-2012) was born in Catanzaro, in Calabria, but spent part of his childhood Imperia, in Liguria. Son of a civil engineer, he assembled a vacuum-tube radio as a child, so that his mother could listen to opera. After graduating high school at 16, he did his university studies in Turin.

In 1940, when Italy entered World War II, Dulbecco was sent to the French and Russian fronts. After the collapse of fascism, he joined the resistance against the German occupation.

After coming to the U.S. after the war, Dulbecco, a virologist, won a Nobel Prize in 1975 for research experiments he started in the 1950s. Dulbecco showed that certain viruses could insert their own genes into infected cells and trigger uncontrolled cell growth, a hallmark of cancer. His discovery provided the first solid evidence that cancer was caused by genetic mutations--a breakthrough that changed the way scientists thought about cancer and the effects of carcinogens.



Left, Rita Levi-Montalcini; right Mario Ramberg Capecchi

Dulbecco did most of his research at the Salk Institute for Biological Sciences in California. From 1992-1997, however, he worked on the Italian genome project. But when finances dried up, he returned full-time to Salk, where he spent his last years.

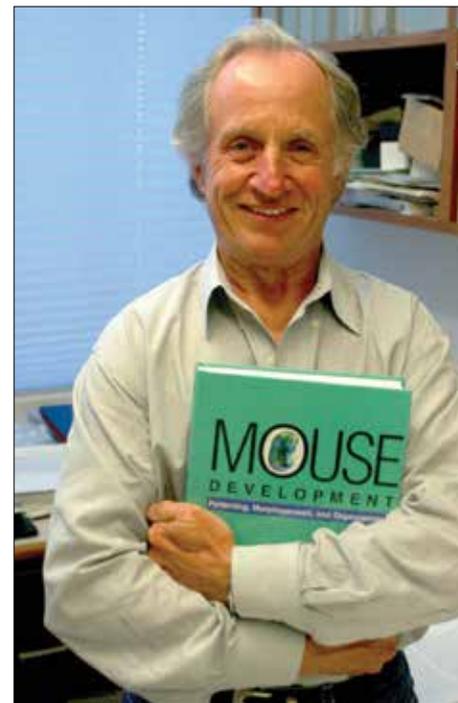
**Rita Levi-Montalcini** (1909-2012) was born in Turin to an affluent Jewish family. At first, her father would not allow her to attend the university because he felt it would hamper her marriage prospects. But she eventually convinced him to let her attend the University of Turin medical school, where she specialized in neurology and psychiatry.

After Mussolini came to power and Jews were barred from working in higher education and medicine, she set up a lab in her bedroom and used instruments she made from sewing needles. She examined the growth of nerve fibers in chicken em-

bryos, thus laying the groundwork for much of her future research.

As the political environment became more dangerous, she briefly fled to Brussels, returned to Italy and eventually left for the United States. She settled at Washington University in St. Louis, where she remained for 30 years, and retired in 1977.

At Washington University, Levi-Montalcini did seminal research in neurobiology. She discovered a protein known as nerve growth factor (NGF) and identified its chemical properties and molecular structure. This was the first time that a biochemical agent with power to control growth had been isolated and characterized. The implications regarding growth and disease (cancer) were prodigious and led to a Nobel Prize in 1986.



Levi-Montalcini spent her retirement years in Italy. From 2001 until her death, she served in the Italian Senate as a Senator for Life. In 2002, she established the European Brain Research Institute. When she died at the age of 103, she was the longest living Nobel laureate. Among her words of wisdom: "Progress depends on our brain. The most important part of our brain, that which is neocortical, must be used to help others and not just to make discoveries."

**Mario Ramberg Capecchi** (1937-) was born in Verona to an Italian father who went missing in action during the war and an American-born mother who was sent to the Dachau concentration camp as pun-

ishment for membership in an anti-fascist group. At age four, he was left to fend for himself, living as a street child for the next four years and almost dying of malnutrition until his mother, freed from Dachau, was able to find him. After the war, they came to the United States. He studied molecular biology at MIT and received his doctorate in biophysics from Harvard University.

Capecchi, a molecular geneticist, won a Nobel Prize in 2007 for discovering a method to create mice in which a specific gene is turned off, which he called knock-out mice. He found that this gene plays a key role in the control of embryonic development in all multi-cellular animals; it determines the placement of cellular development in the proper order along the entire axis of the body from head to toe. Capecchi is currently professor of human genetics at the University of Utah School of Medicine.

In addition to these Nobel Laureates, other Italian-born scientists came to the United States during the post-war era and contributed greatly to American medicine, among them Renato Baserga (Temple University), Claudio Basilico (NYU), and Dani Bolognesi (Duke University).

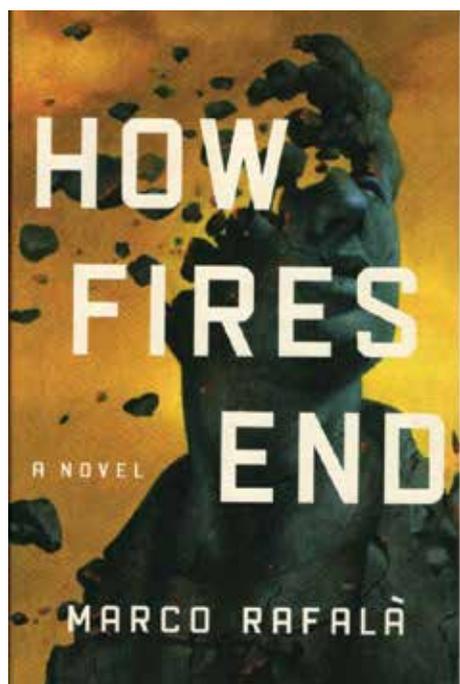
The 20th-century contributions of these Italian-born scientists echo those of their historical compatriots. Lazzaro Spallanzani (1729-1799), for example, is a founder of modern experimental medicine. Among other breakthroughs, he performed the first artificial insemination (of a dog) in 1789. Today, Rome's Spallanzani National Institute for Infectious Diseases bears his name. (During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was the first research center in Europe to isolate the genomic sequence of SARS-CoV-2.)

Currently, several hundred Italian medical graduates serve as research interns at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md. There, they learn state-of-the-art research methodology. Some remain to pursue careers in academic medicine, while others return to make contributions in their native land. Thus, a synergistic partnership between the two nations--in the medical arena--continues to this day.

*\*Note: William Sansalone, who has had a long career in academic medicine, contributed to this article.*

# New Books for Your Winter Reading List

*War stories, Italians in Baltimore, and the anticipated latest novel by Elena Ferrante*

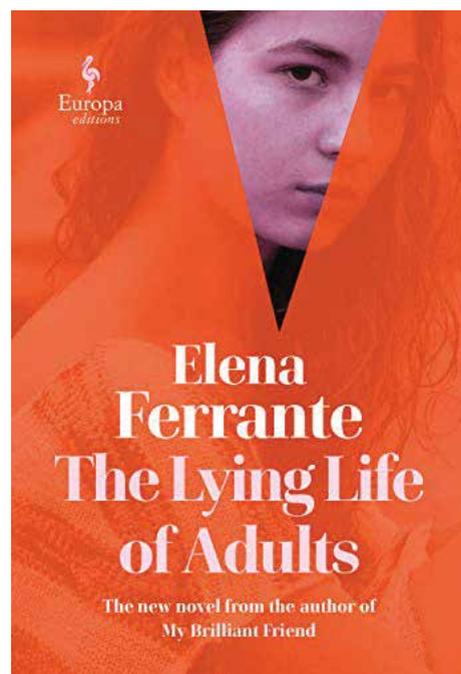


**How Fire Ends**  
by Marco Rafala  
Little A. New York, 384 pages

After soldiers leave the Sicilian hillside town of Melilli in the summer of 1943, the locals celebrate and give thanks to St. Sebastian, their patron saint. But a fateful moment changes the destiny of 9-year old Salvatore Vassallo when his twin brothers are killed while playing with an unexploded mortar shell. Salvatore's faith is destroyed, and his family fears that the family name is cursed.

With the help of an Italian soldier with fascist ties, Salvatore and his sister Nella get a second start in Middletown, Connecticut, in the immigrant neighborhood known as Little Melilli. They struggle to build new lives for themselves, but a dangerous choice to keep their secrets hidden erupts in violence decades later. When Salvatore loses his American-born son, David, he learns the price that sons pay for their fathers' wars.

Rafala is a first-generation Sicilian American novelist, musician and writer. In this debut novel, Rafala delves into the public as well as the secret wars of men. The tale is based on stories about the Allied invasion of Sicily that his father told him as a child. The stories form the basis of the novel's plot -- families hiding in caves on the outskirts of their village; praying fervently to St. Sebastian; and ascribing their survival to a miracle.



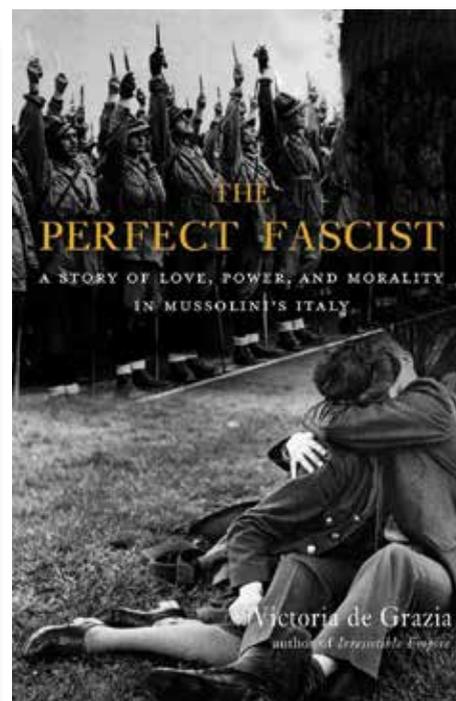
**The Lying Life of Adults**  
by Elena Ferrante  
Europa, 322 pages

"There's no doubt [the publication of *The Lying Life of Adults*] will be the literary event of the year," said *Elle Magazine*.

Named one of 2016's most influential people by *Time Magazine* and frequently mentioned as a future Nobel Prize-winner, Elena Ferrante has become one of the world's most read and beloved writers.

Her books *My Brilliant Friend* and *the Lost Daughter* were longtime New York Times bestsellers. *My Brilliant Friend* became a highly-popular television series. With this new novel about the transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, critics say Ferrante proves once again that she deserves her many accolades. In *The Lying Life of Adults*, readers discover another gripping, highly addictive, and totally unforgettable Neapolitan story. A powerful new novel set in a divided Naples

The story centers around Giovanna, a young girl in search of her reflection in her city of Naples. Family stories and resentments shape her young life. She moves within two Naples at odds with each other: a Naples that assumes a mask of refinement, and a Naples of excess and vulgarity. She moves from one to the other in search of the truth, but the complex fact remains that neither city offers answers or escape.



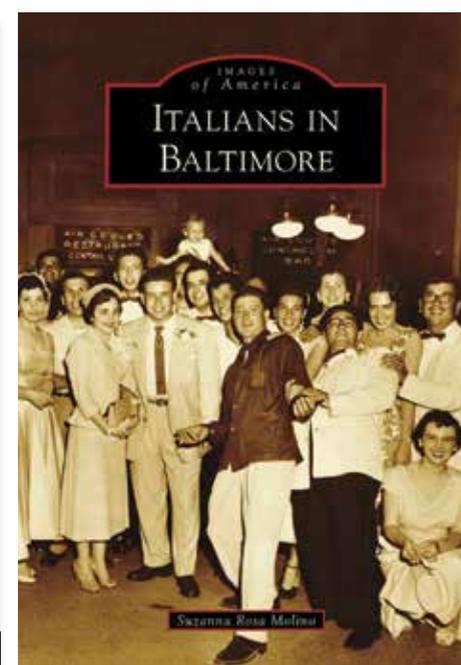
**The Perfect Fascist**  
by Victoria de Grazia  
Belknap/Harvard, 499 pages

When Attilio Teruzzi, one of Mussolini's *gerarch*i, or political enforcers, marries Lilliana, a young American opera star, his future seems golden. The wedding is attended by 600 guests and Mussolini himself gives his blessing.

But three years later, after being promoted to commander of the Black Shirts, Teruzzi renounces his wife. In fascist Italy, a Catholic country with no divorce law, he could only dissolve the marriage by filing for an annulment through the Church. The proceedings took an ominous turn after Mussolini joined Hitler: Lilliana was Jewish, and fascist Italy would soon introduce its first race laws.

*The Perfect Fascist* moves from the intimate story of an untenable marriage—reconstructed meticulously through family letters and court records—to an engrossing history of Mussolini's rise and fall. It paints in great detail a portrait of a vain Mussolini loyalist, a decorated military officer, and a model of the perfect Fascist man.

As one book critic in the *Wall St. Journal* put it: "The brilliance of Victoria de Grazia's book lies in the way that she has made a page-turner of Teruzzi's chaotic life, while providing a scholarly and engrossing portrait of the two decades of Fascist rule."



**Italians in Baltimore**  
by Suzanna Rosa Molino  
To be published in November 2020

Italian immigrants flocked to America beginning in the mid-1800s unaware of the hardships ahead, much like the harsh conditions they left behind in Italy. Despite discrimination, scarce employment, hunger, and drudgery, they courageously established trades, businesses, parishes, and solid family life in neighborhood enclaves nearly identical to their native villages.

Close to two centuries later, Baltimore's thriving Italian community marvels at the grit and backbone of their families in their conquest of Americanization. Fortified by love of today's famiglia, food, traditions, faith, and close-knit community,

Baltimore Italians celebrate their ethnicity while honoring those before them. These captivating photographs--cherished and generously shared by families of Baltimore's Italian immigrants--offer a brief yet fascinating insight into some of their rich history: who came from which village, how they paved the way, the jobs they worked, how they grew up, and the bravery displayed as they fought in wars for the United States.

They did not sacrifice their birthright to become American; instead, they humbly added to it and called themselves Italian Americans.

INTERVIEW: ARTIST DAVIDE PRETE

# Italian Excellence at the 2020 D.C. Mayor's Arts Award

*Local artist Davide Prete, among nominees for distinguished visual arts award*

by Daniela Enriquez

Like most events around the world these days, the 35th D.C. Mayor's Arts Award, hosted by Mayor Muriel Bowser to highlight excellence among D.C.'s artists, was recently held online.

One of this year's nominees was Italian-born local artist, architect and professor Davide Prete, who was nominated for the excellence in visual arts award.

Prete was born in Treviso, Italy and was introduced to the art of metalsmithing by his father Alessandro and the sculptor Toni Benetton. After obtaining a degree in architecture in Venice and working for several



Top, Sculpture by Davide Priete in front of the Capitol View Library in Washington, D.C. The V shape represents two pages of an open book. Above, Prete's interactive sculpture Sound Wave Art Park.

architectural firms, he moved to the United States, received a masters in sculpture, and in 2010 moved to Washington, D.C.

Here, he specializes in urban scale steel works and smaller scale sculptures using 3D printing and laser scanning. His works have been shown nationally and internationally.

We asked the artist a few questions about his latest projects in Washington, D.C.

**Voce:** Tell us something about the sculptures that resulted in your nomination.

As someone who started his career as an architect, I have always worked on sculptures for urban developments. In the past two years, while teaching at the University of the District of Columbia, I focused on public works and applied for

and won some contests in Washington, D.C.

I was tasked with creating a piece for the Capitol View Library. The new façade of the library was V shaped, so the idea of an open book came immediately to my mind. I wanted to show how freedom often comes as a result of reading and studying. The library is not only a physical space, but also a cultural institution for education and intellectual needs. That is why I created a sculpture shaped like two wings, two pages of an open book, and I let the neighborhood's people decide what to write on those pages.

Another contest I won was DC Playable Art 2020, for which I designed the sculpture in Fort Dupont/Greenway. The idea was to create something playful where kids could have fun, and that would also overcome traffic noise

piling layers of materials based on a digital model.

It also requires the application of several types of software and hardware. Living in Washington, D.C. allowed me to experiment hands-on with all the 3D printing techniques. In my studio, I now have more than ten 3D printers that can work with different materials, but the technique I use most is called binder jetting and consists of gluing together several layers of a special plaster.

**Tell us about your next project?**

My latest sculptures were inspired by mathematical models and needed new techniques to be created. I am currently researching an infiltration process that would make the printed pieces more resistant in order to use them for bigger sculptures. I hope to be able to present a public project in Washington, D.C. based on these techniques soon!

*(Editor's Note: A 3D sculpture by Davide Prete will be on display at Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center Inc.'s Italian American Museum of Washington DC (IAMDC). The museum is scheduled to be completed by December. More details to come.)*

and disruption. We decided to root the entire project in the "visualization of music" by creating a colorful form of a soundwave: the main piece is a long bench that crosses the landscape like a river and is a very interactive elements for kids.

**You work frequently with 3D printing. Can you describe this technique briefly?**

I have been studying 3D printing for a long time and worked with it for more than 10 years! 3D printing is a process that allows the creation of objects by

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## L'Ambasciatore Varricchio insignisce Patricia de Stacy Harrison e Anita Bevacqua McBride della NIAF dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana

L'Ambasciatore d'Italia Armando Varricchio ha conferito a Patricia de Stacy Harrison e Anita Bevacqua McBride l'onorificenza di Cavaliere dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana.

Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Presidente del Board della National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) e Presidente e Amministratore Delegato della Corporation for Public Broadcasting, è stata Assistente Segretario di Stato per l'educazione e gli affari culturali. Anita Bevacqua McBride è attualmente Vice Presidente del Board della NIAF per gli affari culturali ed è stata assistente del Presidente George W. Bush e Capo di Gabinetto della First Lady Laura Bush.

Nei loro rispettivi ruoli in seno all'Amministrazione USA Patricia de Stacy Harrison e Anita Bevacqua McBride hanno svolto un ruolo di fondamentale importanza per rafforzare le relazioni tra Stati Uniti ed Italia in



*Patricia de Stacy Harrison*

tutti i campi. Un impegno che continua ancora oggi in seno alla NIAF dove entrambe rimangono un punto di riferimento essenziale per cementare e valorizzare gli stretti legami tra l'Italia



*Anita Bevacqua McBride*

e gli USA presso la vasta comunità italo-americana e i tantissimi cittadini americani che condividono passione e amore per l'Italia.

"Sono particolarmente felice

di insignire, in rappresentanza del Capo dello Stato, Patricia de Stacy Harrison e Anita Bevacqua McBride dell'Onorificenza di Cavaliere dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica. La decisione del Presidente Mattarella - ha sottolineato l'Ambasciatore Varricchio - corona due straordinari percorsi personali e professionali. Leali al loro Paese, queste due donne straordinarie non hanno mai smesso di guardare all'Italia vivendo con orgoglio la loro identità, americana con origini italiane."

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## Cristoforo Colombo: In difesa dell'onore perduto

*Segue dalla prima pagina*

Accusato dagli storici wikipediani di essere un colonialista e schiavista, Cristoforo Colombo viene invece descritto dagli storici veri, come un uomo i cui rapporti con i nativi americani erano tutto sommato «benigni» e le sue intenzioni furono generalmente buone, considerando la cultura dell'epoca. Nella fretta di giudicare e deturpare, pochi attivisti ricordano oggi che Colombo fu arrestato e cadde in disgrazia anche per aver punito molto severamente coloro che abusavano dei nativi per ragioni non legate agli interessi della Corona di cui era rappresentante.

Nelle strade americane si assiste invece a un'ondata di distruzione, espressione di una marea indomita di anti-intellettualismo, di iconoclastia talebana, fine a se stessa nel quale l'appagamento personale dei manifestanti la fa da padrone. Non esiste nessuno spiraglio per una fase di ricostruzione critica degli eventi storici ma chiedere la conoscenza della storia è forse troppo a chi la storia

la vuole (ri)scrivere di suo pugno, piegata alla propria visione del mondo.

Gli italiani però resistono e difendono la loro storia. Perché se oggi esiste il Columbus Day lo si deve proprio alla loro ostinazione nel voler emancipare una comunità che fino agli inizi del Novecento veniva definita più vicina al colore nero che a quello bianco. Istituito negli Stati Uniti ben 400 anni dopo la morte di Cristoforo Colombo e in un giorno che forse non è nemmeno quello della sua, presunta, scoperta, il Columbus Day

In difesa di Colombo si sono costituiti diversi comitati e tra questi vi è anche il gruppo facebook amministrato da Angelo Sinisi: "La rimozione delle statue è un pericoloso segnale di razzismo contro le comunità italiane. Il gruppo nasce a seguito della rimozione ed in molti casi la distruzione delle statue di Cristoforo Colombo che stanno avvenendo negli Stati Uniti. Queste azioni, anche vandaliche, hanno provocato l'indignazione degli Italo Americani in America. Io sono

entrato in contatto con il comitato di Little Italy di Chicago dove ormai le comunicazioni sono frequenti ed abbiamo concordato insieme la creazione di questo gruppo per solidarietà e dare forza e coraggio ai nostri co nazionali oltre oceano, con l'auspicio che si possa arrivare ad un accordo pacifico e concordato tra tutte le parti in causa. Siamo arrivati ad accuse di ogni genere da stupratore a schiavista a responsabile dei genocidi avvenuti secoli dopo da parte di altri colonizzatori. Tutto questo senza tenere conto del contesto storico in cui si trovava ben 500 anni fa."

Il gruppo Fascebook è la risposta più immediata per mostrare la vicinanza degli italiani alla comunità italo-americana ma anche sensibilizzare la politica nazionale ed in particolare quella di Genova, città natale del navigatore italiano, per arrivare appunto ad una conclusione pacifica che possa riconoscere la verità storica. Altrettanto importante l'iniziativa del quotidiano online "UN MONDO DI ITALIANI" fondato da Mina Cappussi che con un articolo dal ti-

tolo "Nessuno tocchi Cristoforo Colombo! Sit in, ronde armate per difendere i simboli d'Italia" ha portato molti italo-americani di Philadelphia in piazza con una manifestazione condivisa e sostenuta da un'altra importante organizzazione, la Filitalia International e Foundation, che ha fondato a Philadelphia il Museo dell'Immigrazione Italiana, e dalla sua presidente, Paula Bonavitacola.

E non poteva mancare la voce della NIAF, che ha voluto prendere posizione sulle azioni vandaliche sulle statue di Colombo.

"La NIAF - si legge sul sito ufficiale della Fondazione - ritiene fermamente che, come cittadini, non dobbiamo cercare di negare la storia dell'America, né di cancellarla del tutto. La nostra nazione offre ampie opportunità di impegnarsi in un ragionevole dibattito pubblico sui vari aspetti dell'eredità lasciata dai personaggi storici. Tutti gli individui sono imperfetti, e tutti i monumenti a loro dedicati rappresentano solo un'istantanea della nostra storia, ora misurata rispetto alla sensibilità del XXI secolo."

# Columbus Statue Rededicated at its New Home in Piazza Italiana

*Continued from page 1*

us continue to honor the legacy of Christopher Columbus and the many contributions of the Italian American community to this great nation."

The Italian Embassy's First Counselor, Domenico Bellantone conveyed the greetings of Ambassador Armando Varricchio. Bellantone remarked that "Columbus Day is a distinctive moment of the Italian American community cultural identity. It is a symbol of the successful integration of the great American Italian community. This identity deserves to be honored and cherished even when we pay our tribute to the necessary historical analysis."

He noted that by connecting the two sides of the Atlantic in 1492, Columbus laid the foundation of the great relation

existing today between the United States and Italy, "relations deeply rooted in the common values of freedom and democracy." Bellantone praised the Italian American community, noting that it plays a crucial role in strengthening this relationship and ushering a new era of great cooperation across the Atlantic.

James P. McCusker, President of the National Christopher Columbus Association, urged guests to celebrate Columbus by reading about his life.

In his role as President of CISC, Francesco Isgro concluded the ceremony by stating, "Needless to say, not everyone is perfect and neither was Columbus. But we need to learn from history, not destroy it. Knowing our past gives us lessons to chart a better future."



*Joseph Feakes, James P. McCusker, Domenico Bellantone, Fr. Ezio Marchetto, Francesco Isgro, Vincenzo Fragomeni*



*Maria Marigliano*



*Members of the Lido Civic Club at the Columbus Statue re-dedication ceremony at Piazza Italiana*



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# Italian Jesuit's Legacy in America's Southwest

*Fr. Kino is subject of virtual lecture by Italian cultural historian, Prof. Alessandra Lorini*

by Nancy DeSanti

Visitors to the U.S. Capitol might be surprised to find a statue of a 17th century Italian priest on display. The answer: this Italian Jesuit with the unlikely name of Father Kino left quite a mark on the southwestern region of the United States.

Father Eusebio Kino may be best remembered as a missionary, but he was also an explorer, geographer, cartographer, astronomer and cattle rancher, as well as an agricultural innovator.

Father Kino was the topic of a lecture livestreamed from Italy on August 26, 2020 and sponsored by the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. The speaker was Alessandra Lorini, a cultural historian with a Ph.D. from Columbia University, who has taught American history at universities in Florence and Pisa. She said that on a visit to Washington, she went to the U.S. Capitol and immediately spotted the statue of Father Kino, which sparked her interest and led her to conduct research on him.

Eusebio Chini was born in 1645, into a noble family. His birthplace was Segno (now part of the town of Predaia), then in the sovereign Bishopric of Trent, which was part of the Holy Roman Empire. He adopted Francesco as second name, in devotion to Saint Francis Xavier, and became a priest in 1677. At Eichstatt in Bavaria, he was ordained and then completed his preparation for the foreign missions in Spain at the Jesuit College in Seville.

Later on, he changed his name to Kino. He was interested in going to the Far East but instead ended up in the American Southwest territory called New Spain.

The Italian Jesuit spoke Italian, German, Latin, Spanish and he had some knowledge of Native American languages, although he used interpreters. He taught the Indians how to cultivate fruits and vegetables unknown in those lands, and introduced cattle breeding, carpentry, and iron working.

In his travels in Sonora, Father Kino interacted with 16 different tribes. He opposed the slavery and compulsory hard labor in the silver mines that the Spaniards forced on the native people, a stance that was considered controversial at that time. Father Kino was also a writer, authoring books on religion, astronomy and cartogra-

phy. He built missions extending from the present day Mexican Sonora into present-day Arizona, and constructed 19 rancherías (villages), which supplied cattle to new settlements.

Father Kino was an expert astronomer, mathematician and cartographer, who drew the first accurate maps of Pimería Alta, the Gulf of California, and Baja California. He proved that the Baja California peninsula is not an island by leading an overland expedition there. He was a man of many talents,



and he enjoyed making model ships out of wood. His knowledge of maps and ships is not surprising since, in fact, he had been a mathematics teacher while training to be a Jesuit.

When Professor Lorini was in Baja California, she came across the definitive biography of Father Kino, "Rim of Christendom," by Professor Herbert Bolton, who retraced the steps on the "Kino trails." He



*Left, Fr. Kino statue in the U.S. Capitol. Above, Fr. Kino on a horse in Segno, Italy*

was known as the Padre on Horseback and the Pacific Coast Pioneer. Today there are three well-known statues of Father Kino in the Southwest, including one in Tucson, where there is also a parkway named after him.

Around 1930, Professor Lorini said, Father Kino's memory traveled back to Italy. In 1929, Mussolini wanted to Italianize his name back to Chini and statues of him were erected. The fascist regime wanted to appropriate his heroic image during a time when Italians were treated badly and they needed a positive image.

For a time, his nationality was questioned, maybe because he spent time in Germany while he was studying. But Father Kino had settled the question himself, saying "I am Italian by birth and German by education."

A monument to Father Kino was later erected in 2015 in the garden of Piazza Dante, just outside the historic center of Trento. There was no portrait of Father Kino in existence, so the artist picked a man in the town named Chini to be his model.

Well before that, in 1963, Father Kino was inducted into the Hall of Great Westerners of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma.

Father Kino's statue in the National Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol was inaugurated in 1965, and his statue is one of two representing the state of Arizona. He was selected for this honor by the late Senator Barry Goldwater and it was a bipartisan choice.

Two movies have been made about his life, "Padre on Horseback," made in 1977 with a Western cowboy flavor, and the Mexican movie "Kino," with rancheros retracing Father Kino's trails.

Professor Lorini said that nowadays, the Kino Border Initiative, a migrant service and advocacy organization named in honor of Father Kino, helps migrants, because she said if Father Kino were living today, this is what he would be doing.

Father Kino remained among his missions until his death in 1711. He died from fever in what is present-day Magdalena de Kino, Sonora, Mexico. His remains can be viewed in his crypt which is a national monument of Mexico.

Pope Francis on July 11, 2020, advanced the cause of Father Kino's sainthood by recognizing his life of heroic virtue, and declaring him Venerable.

Bonifacio Bolognani, a Franciscan scholar of Padre Chini, said it well:

"Some famous people have left a mark in history with the authority of their thought, others with the dynamics of their works, and therefore remembered by future generations. For some inexplicable reasons, however, there are people whose fate is to fall into oblivion. This is the case of Eusebio Chini whose work was revalued only at the beginning of this (20th) century by American historians.

The discovery surprised almost everybody in Trentino and in Italy for we had completely forgotten him. Nevertheless, his magnitude as missionary, historian, writer and geographer has gone down in history; today his name has become legend."

# Voce Italiana

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## VOCE ITALIANA

### A Reversal of Fortunes

"In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." This was the rhyme that, for many years, students in elementary school learned to celebrate Christopher Columbus.

Through the centuries, Columbus has had to endure all kinds of reactions: at one time, there was a petition for his canonization (to be made a saint) signed by numerous Fathers of the First Vatican Council, saying that "the discovery of the New World was pre-eminently the work of God, and held up to our admiration Christopher Columbus as a providential man, a messenger of heaven prepared by especial graces for the accomplishment of his special mission."\*

Recently, though, Columbus statues have been toppled and vandalized, blaming him as the root cause of all evils that befell Native Americans, and many places have cancelled the Columbus Day celebrations all together.

It had taken several years to establish Columbus Day as a federal holiday. The first celebration was declared in 1892 by President Benjamin Harrison as a way to placate Italian Americans and alleviate diplomatic tension with Italy after the lynching of 11 Italian immigrants in New Orleans. It was one of the lowest points of the history of Italian Americans presence.

Soon the Columbus Day Celebration became the Italian Americans' celebration of their heritage. In 1934, through lobbying

by the Knights of Columbus, and New York City Italian leader Generoso Pope, Congress passed a statute asking the American President to issue each year a proclamation designating October 12 as Columbus Day. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt responded by making such a proclamation. Eventually, through the continuous efforts

of Italian American groups and associations, Columbus Day became a federal holiday in 1968.

Columbus Day started as a symbol of hope for Italian Americans, to have a hero and an memorable figure when they were down and out, despised by a large segment of society and blamed for many ills of cities and neighbor-

hoods.

Today the reverse is happening. In a society where Italian Americans have accomplished great achievements in business, politics, entertainment, sports and the arts, and are looked upon as great achievers, Columbus is down and out for society at large.

When uninformed biases and historical ignorance dictate decisions and attitudes among the general public, truths and balance are the first to suffer. It happened to Italian Americans in past history, it is happening today with Columbus. A true historical reversal of fortunes! -Fr. E. Marchetto

\*Quoted in Chris Jackson, "Saint Christopher Columbus?" *The Remnant*, October 15, 2014

### Food for Thought

"Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves.

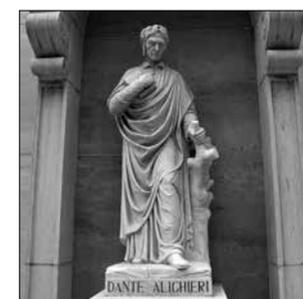
Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is ... Life is good when you

are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you."

--Pope Francis

"If you must go to excess on one side or the other, let it be toward indulgence, for no sauce was ever spoiled by a little sugar."

--St. Francis de Sales



### Mother Cabrini Memorial Unveiled in New York City

A memorial to Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian-American nun who worked with immigrants in New York City, was unveiled by Governor Andrew Cuomo on Columbus Day.

The memorial has views of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, a fitting location to pay tribute to the patroness of immigrants. The memorial's interpretive panels highlight Mother Cabrini's service to Italian immigrants and the poor in New York, including building dozens of orphanages, hospitals, and schools. The plaza features a mosaic created from stones from Mother Cabrini's birthplace of Sant'Angelo Lodigiano, Italy.

"In this complex world, may this statue serve to remind us of the principles that made us great as a country and as a people and the principles that keep us special on this globe - the values of Mother Cabrini: compassion, acceptance, community, freedom, faith, hope and love," said Gov. Cuomo.

Mother Cabrini was the youngest of 13 children, born in Lombardy in 1850.

Before migrating to the United States, she took vows and founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, an order dedicated to serving orphans.

In New York City, she taught at numerous churches and founded Columbus Hospital, later renamed the Cabrini Medical Center.

The memorial's sculptors are Jill and Giancarlo Biagi. Jill Biagi attended the University of Washington and studied art in Pietrasanta, Italy, with stone carving artisans. Giancarlo Biagi studied at Istituto d'Arte Stagio Stagi of Pietrasanta before moving to the United States. The couple

maintains studios in New York and Pietrasanta. Their sculptures are in museums around the world.

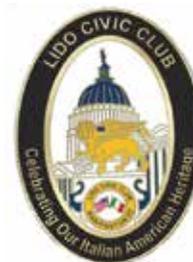
In 1946, nearly 30 years after her death, Mother Cabrini became the first naturalized U.S. citizen to be canonized. She is recognized as the patron saint of immigrants. Several schools, religious buildings and hospitals across New York are named after her. Mother Cabrini is buried at the St. Frances Cabrini Shrine in Manhattan, which she founded.



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## Sunday Mass at Holy Rosary Church Continues with Limitations

### First Communion, Confirmation are held with safety precautions

With the steady increase in attendance at the live Sunday Mass at Holy Rosary Church, a second Mass continues to be held.

The new Sunday Mass schedule is: 10:00 a.m. (Note the change from 10:30 a.m.), in Italian; and 12:00 noon in English.

Sunday masses will continue to be streamed on the Holy Rosary Church Facebook page.

First Communion continues to be celebrated on a series of Sundays in October and one on November 1, 2020 at the 12:00 Noon Mass. Confirmation was held on Sunday, October 18.

The number of attendees at each Mass is limited, in accordance to guidelines from the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. To attend the live Mass, register by contacting the parish office at 202-638-0165. Reserve before 3:00 p.m. on the Friday before the Sunday Mass you wish to attend. Attendees must receive approval, either verbally or by email before attending.

Register early as attendance numbers per Mass remains limited and the demand is increasing substantially.

In fairness to those receiving the Sacraments and their families and to those who regularly register or those on waiting lists, early registration each week is critical.

Masks or appropriate face coverings are required, as is the use of hand sanitizer, located at the entrance to the church.

All registered Mass attendees are requested to arrive no later than 10-15



*Grace Sola, 8 years old, daughter of Faduma Ali, received the Sacrament of First Communion on Sunday, October 11, 2020. Grace attends John Adams Elementary School in Alexandria, Va.*

minutes prior to the start of Mass to ensure that everyone is properly seated, so that Mass can begin on time.

In compliance with the D.C. and Archdiocese of Washington guidelines, and to remain within the approved attendance numbers at both Masses, the Church doors are closed to further entry when Mass is set to begin.



*The 10:00 am Mass is also broadcast online via the Facebook page of Holy Rosary Church.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- ◆ **October 31, 2020.** The National Italian American Foundation Virtual Gala.
- ◆ **November 1, 2020.** Mass in memory of Caduti in Tutte le guerre. 10:00 a.m..
- ◆ **November 8, 2020.** Veterans Day Mass at 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon.
- ◆ **November 14, 2020:** Lido Civic Club Past Presidents Night Virtual Gala.

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# Lorenzo Da Ponte: Mozart's Librettist, Brought Opera to New York

Lorenzo Da Ponte\* was born on March 10, 1749, in the small town of Ceneda in the Venetian inland. Jewish by birth he was given the name Emanuele Conegliano. In 1764, his father, Geronimo, then a widower, converted, along with his family to Roman Catholicism in order to marry a Catholic woman. Emanuele, as was the custom, took a new name from the bishop who baptized him: Lorenzo Da Ponte.

To continue his studies, he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1773. He excelled in his studies and began writing poems and sonnets, but also fell in love with a young Venetian girl.

Undeterred by his religious vows, he left the seminary, and moved to Venice to live with his lover. Venice, at that time, was the epicenter of decadence, epitomized by Casanova, and the forge of new ideas, political and cultural, epitomized by the Accademia Granellesca.

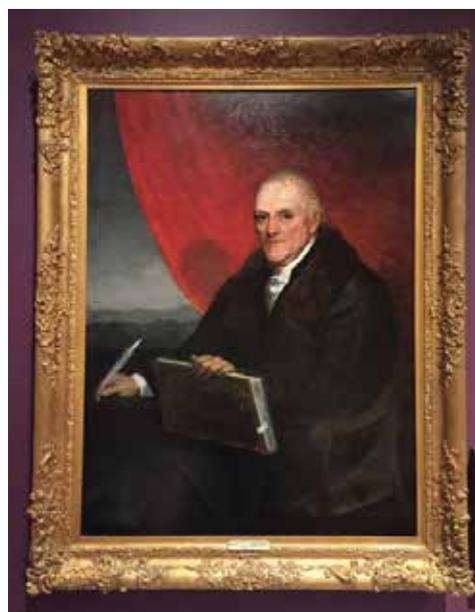
But even in a libertine Venice, a priest moving from one lover to the next and expressing scandalous Enlightenment political ideas, was not tolerated, and in 1779 he was banned from Venice for 15 years. He sought refuge in Vienna, Austria.

While in Venice, Lorenzo Da Ponte had met briefly Antonio Salieri who admired Lorenzo's sonnets. Arriving in Vienna, with Salieri's help, Lorenzo obtained the post of librettist to the Italian Theatre. Finally, Lorenzo Da Ponte had reached fame and economical stability and for the next ten years he was busy providing librettos for court composers, and poems for the various nobilities that gravitate around the court.

In Vienna, Da Ponte came into contact with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. As court poet and librettist, he collaborated with Mozart, Salieri and Vicente Martín y Soler. Da Ponte wrote the libretti for Mozart's most popular Italian operas, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, and Soler's *Una cosa rara*.

Everything came to an end with the death of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II in 1790, Da Ponte lost his patron. Dismissed from the imperial court in 1791, on his way to Paris with his new companion Nancy Grahl, he received news of the arrest of the king and queen and headed to London instead.

After a precarious start in England, exercising a number of jobs including that of grocer and Italian teacher, he became li-



Librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte

brettist at the King's Theatre, in London, in 1803. There he remained undertaking various theatrical and publishing activities until 1805, when debt and bankruptcy caused him to flee to the United States with Grahl and their children.

Landing in New York City, his first years were difficult; he made a living as store keeper and giving private Italian lessons.

After a short stay in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, he returned to New York where he opened a bookstore. Eventually he became friends with Clement Clarke Moore, and, through him, gained an unpaid appointment as the first professor of Italian literature at Columbia College. He was also the first Jewish-born member of the teaching staff and the first Catholic priest in an academic position.

In New York, he introduced opera and produced in 1825 the first full performance of *Don Giovanni* in the United States. In 1833, at the age of 84, he founded the first purpose-built opera theater in the United States, the Italian Opera House in New York City, on the northwest corner of Leonard and Church Streets.

Da Ponte died in 1838 in New York and he was honored with an elaborate funeral ceremony in New York's old St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mulberry Street. Like his friends Mozart and Casanova, he was buried in an unmarked grave in a Catholic cemetery on Eleventh Street, --Fr. Ezio Marchetto

\*From internet sources and the book: *The Librettist of Venice*, by Rodney Bolt. Bloomsbury, NY 2006



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# Chianti: The World's Most Famous Italian Wine

by Vittorio Vettori

Chianti is a wine of ancient origin. I like to think that the Etruscans, the splendid civilization which preceded the Romans, have discovered "Chianti," and developed and perfected its vineyards. As we know, the Etruscans were a very peaceful civilization that dedicated themselves to agriculture and viticulture.

Numerous artifacts recall the presence of the Etruscans, and Romans in the Chianti area, in Tuscany. But it was only at the beginning of the middle ages that the area began to acquire the landscape and architecture that distinguish it today.

The original name "Chianti" apparently is traced to the Etruscan name "Clante." Or maybe to the Latin name "Clangor," meaning the shrill cry of the birds, or the screeching of the trumpets. It is presumed that this area was rich in thick woodlands and hunters.

Chianti is not the name of a grape, as in many other wines. It is the name of a geographical area, in Tuscany. In fact, only eight well geographically designated areas of Tuscany can produce Chianti: Montespertoli, Colli Pisani, Colli Fiorentini, Colli Aretini, Rufina, Montalbano, Colli Senesi and Chianti Classico zone. Sangiovese grape is the main grape, or the only grape for all Chianti.

Chianti Classico, traditionally, is perceived to be the best area for the production of this magnificent, elegant and rustic popular wine, with ruby red colors tending to garnet with aging, scent of spices and wild berries, and good structure. It is produced in the heart of Tuscany, in the zone situated between the popular cities of Florence and Siena. That is why, when you buy a "Chianti," the Chianti Classico tend



*Above, Rocca delle Macie vineyards. right, the "gallo nero," black rooster seal of Chianti Classico; far right, Rocca delle Macie wines.*

to be a little more expensive. However, there are "Chianti" that are not from the "classico area" and are as magnificent, and very pleasurable to the palate.

If a Chianti, or Chianti Classico is labeled also "Riserva," that means that the wine has been aged at least a couple of years, normally two years and few months after harvest.

And, what about the symbol of "gallo nero" - the "black rooster" on a golden field? It is the historic symbol of Chianti Classico wine. It represents a "membership" to the "Consortium of the Chianti Classico," which reflects authenticity, tradition, and of course, quality also. The choice of that symbol was due above all to what the "black rooster" represents from the standpoint of history and popular tradition in that region.

Then we have the Chianti in "fiasco," the typical Tuscan style bottle, usually with a round body and bottom, partially or completely covered with a close-fitting straw. The basket is typically made of "sala," a swamp weed, sundried, and blanched with sulfur. The basket provides protection during



and divine."

There are many wonderful Chianti that you can enjoy today. Antinori Marchese Piero Antinori is certainly one of the most respected Chianti producers. But Cecchi, and Monsanto

Castello di Rampolla, Ruffino, Badia a Coltibuono, Rocca delle Macie, Castello di Verrazzano, Barone Ricasoli are also among the best Chianti producers.

But look around your favorite wine shop, you might discover some real Chianti gems -- and at very attractive prices.

Salute! Cent'anni!

transportation and handling, and also a flat base for the bottle to stand up.

Throughout its history the Chianti wine in the "fiasco" was enjoyed at the dinner tables of peasants and Popes alike. Even the great scientist Galileo Galilei had admirable words for the wine in the flask. "These traditional bottles can be unadorned and little presentable, but can contain an excellent wine -- glorious

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