

Casa editrice Laterza

## The invention of Italy



London - October 25<sup>th</sup> 2013 - May 9<sup>th</sup> 2014

A century and a half after Unification, Italy is no longer simply a *geographical expression*, as Prince Metternich described it in 1847.

But how was the nation invented? And how has the idea of Italy evolved to the present day, both at home and abroad? Italy's current identity is founded on numerous elements, ranging from food and art, to politics and religion, heroes and villains, and to events both dramatic and trivial. It is a fascinating story that will be told by some of the most distinguished Italian and British historians.

**Lectures will take place on Fridays at 18.30 at the Italian Cultural Institute, 39 Belgrave Square, London S.W.1**

FREE EVENT Booking on line [www.icilondon.esteri.it](http://www.icilondon.esteri.it)

### PROGRAMME

**October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**CITY STATE: 1176: Federico Barbarossa and the Battle of Legnano**

**Alessandro Barbero**

Every country has looked for one or more "strong narratives" in its own history in which to identify its origins. In Italy this role has been assigned to the heroic deeds of the medieval communes with Federico Barbarossa's attempt to curtail their independence likened to a foreign invasion. The Lombard League's victory over Barbarossa at Legnano in 1176 has become one of the defining moments in the history of the Italian nation and of its struggle for independence. Today, in a very different climate, it is possible to reveal the other side of this story: the emperor's defeat and the failed attempt at state-building that could have altered the course of Italian history.

Alessandro Barbero is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Piedmont Orientale in Vercelli.

**November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**FINANCE: 1379: Murder of a Genoese merchant in Lombard Street**

**Amedeo Feniello**

Night time. On Lombard Street lies the corpse of a man surrounded by onlookers. A merchant, by the look of him. The victim of a brawl, perhaps, taunted and murdered by some ill-intentioned fellow. But these are only rumours. Nobody is giving anything away. There is a conspiracy of silence. Months go by and the investigation drags on. There are some clues. At

first it's just a hunch. Then the murderers are identified, one accomplice and one guilty party, who repents and gives a completely different account of events. It is the account of a conspiracy for the control of wool: England's gold, foundation of the nation's fortune, not least because as Matthew of Westminster would proudly declare, "all the nations of the world are kept warm by English wool". Gold then, which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries would prove to be the real foundation of the success of Italy's burgeoning capitalism.

Amedeo Feniello was recently guest Director of Studies at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris.

**November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**

**RENAISSANCE: 1520: Tiziano, Alfonso d'Este, Bacchus and Ariadne**

**Sheila Hale**

On 17 November 1520 Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, penned a furious letter to his ambassador in Venice. Alfonso was a formidable warrior: deadly in battle he also designed and built his own weapons of mass destruction. But on that particular day he knew that his lethal arsenal would be useless because the object of his fury was an artist, a then relatively unknown Venetian painter. He ordered his ambassador in Venice to tell Titian that he was still awaiting "that canvas" which he must deliver quickly "so as not to give us cause to be saddened and angered with him". "That canvas" was Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, now in the London National Gallery. The Duke continued to fume, but it would be two years before he saw it. This story takes place at the heart of the Italian Renaissance, when powerful rulers needed artists as much or more than the greatest artists needed them.

Sheila Hale is an author and journalist.

**December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**COUNTER-REFORMATION: 1541-1549: the last frescoes of Michelangelo**

**Massimo Firpo**

Michelangelo painted his final frescoes in the Vatican: the *Last Judgement* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel, completed in 1541, and the *Conversion of St. Paul* and the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* on the two side walls of the Paoline Chapel, completed in 1549. Both of these works, and the *Last Judgement* in particular, unleashed a storm of criticism and censorship which immediately after the death of the great Tuscan artist led to the interventions of the *braghettoni* to conceal the nudity of the bodies. In reality the masterful images of those frescoes hid other, perhaps more serious heresies, preserving to this day in the most sacred sites of the papal liturgies the traces of an age of religious experimentation, doctrinal conflict and profound internal dissent among the highest authorities of the Catholic Church, with respect to whom Michelangelo was both participant and interpreter.

Massimo Firpo teaches Modern History in the Arts and Philosophy Faculty of the University of Turin.

**January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**LANGUAGE: Dante, Manzoni and Meneghello**

**Giulio Lepschy**

Dante is traditionally known as the father of the Italian language, created by his drawing on his mother tongue, the speech of Florence between the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries. This language, codified by Pietro Bembo at the beginning of the Sixteenth century, was to become what we now call Italian. The formation of modern Italian has also been attributed to the most important Italian novelist of the Nineteenth century, the Milanese Alessandro Manzoni. This was due to the prestige both of the final version of his novel and of his political and linguistic writings. Luigi Meneghello, the author of *Libera nos a malo*, one of the most striking books produced in Italy in the Twentieth century, noted that, where he grew up, people spoke a language (i.e., a form of the Vicentino dialect) which was not written, and wrote a language which was not spoken (i.e., literary Italian). We shall examine the notion of linguistic *standard*, and in particular try to answer an apparently straightforward (but in fact problematic) question: how exactly did Dante, Manzoni, Meneghello *pronounce* their language? And how are we supposed to pronounce it when quoting them?

Giulio Lepschy is Emeritus Professor at the University of Reading; Honorary Professor at University College London; Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto. He is Fellow of the British Academy and of the Accademia della Crusca, as well as Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Turin.

**January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**MAFIA: 1893: the killing of Emanuele Notarbartolo**

**John Dickie**

At sunset on 1 February 1893 the banker Emanuele Notarbartolo was stabbed to death in a train a short distance from the Sicilian capital, Palermo. The mafia was, and remains, the main suspect in the murder. However the assassins, and the man or men who are thought to have given those assassins their orders, would never be convicted. Notarbartolo was Italy's first "eminent corpse" – its first mafia victim from among the social elite. The Notarbartolo affair lasted more than a decade, implicating politicians, entrepreneurs, the judiciary, and the police in a complicated web of corruption and cover-ups. The three protracted trials that arose from his murder, celebrated in Milan, Bologna and Florence, created a media storm that brought many Italians from outside Sicily face-to-face with the mafia issue as never before. For the first time ever, all the main consequences of the mafia's place in Italian life were made manifest: the public's hunger for news alternating with fatigue; its fascination and frustration with the courts system; society's profound mistrust of politicians; and the mixture of shame and resentment which Italians felt at what foreigners would make of the whole spectacle. The Notarbartolo affair continues to hold a mirror up to contemporary Italy.

John Dickie, historian and journalist, is Associate Professor of Italian Studies at the University College of London.

**February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**RISORGIMENTO: 1864: Garibaldi in London**

**Lucy Riall**

One hundred and fifty years ago, in the spring of 1864, Giuseppe Garibaldi left his island home of Caprera and came to Britain. Although ostensibly a private visit, Garibaldi's arrival on these shores gave rise to an extraordinary outburst of popular feeling. Hundreds of thousands of Londoners came out to greet him and the visit provoked huge press interest and a fashion for red shirts, as well as Garibaldi songs and Garibaldi pubs. How can British enthusiasm for this Italian hero be explained? To what extent did it reflect broader cultural and political links between Britain and Italy? And what traces of this relationship remain today? My lecture will seek to answer these questions.

Lucy Riall is professor of History at Birkbeck, University of London and holds the Chair in the Comparative History of Europe at the European University Institute in Florence.

**February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014**

**FOOD: 1891: Pellegrino Artusi and the Unification in the kitchen**

**Massimo Montanari**

In 1891 Pellegrino Artusi published a recipe book called *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* which he would continue to work on for twenty years, with subsequent additions and amendments made with the help of his male and female readership. In part owing to the "inclusive" spirit of the work, the book was a huge publishing success in the twentieth century. For the first time ever a single recipe book contained all the typical dishes of Italian local cuisine; just a few years after the birth of the Kingdom of Italy, Artusi's was a deliberate political project designed to favour the country's cohesion. The social aspect of the work was also important, mixing as it did the recipes of the affluent landed and middle class with those of the working populace, and it is one of the secrets of its success. Artusi drew on the most diverse sources from throughout Italy, in a survey of that ongoing exchange of theory and practice that has always characterized the history of Italian cooking. An exchange which in part was already commonplace and which would continue in the decades that followed, making the kitchen table a strategic locus of unification and of strong national identity.

Massimo Montanari teaches Medieval History and the History of Food at the University of Bologna, where he also directs the Masters in "History and Culture of Food".

**March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**FASCISM: 1922: Mussolini and the March on Rome**

**Emilio Gentile**

On 30 October 1922 the King of Italy requested that the head of a party of armed militia form the government of a parliamentary regime, the same militia that in two years had smashed working class organizations, persecuted rival parties, humiliated the State's rule and imposed dictatorial dominions in many provinces of northern and central Italy. For the first time ever in

the history of the liberal European states an armed party had come to power and publicly proclaimed its desire to suppress civil and political liberties. Never before in the history of European parliamentary governments had a thirty-nine-year-old politician been nominated prime minister, a man who had been a Member of Parliament for just sixteen months, who had absolutely no experience of public administration and who, up to a few months before taking power in a monarchical State, had professed to be a Republican. This was the conclusion of the March on Rome. An Italian anti-Fascist called it a "comic opera". A German anti-Fascist described it as an "evil day, for Italy and for Europe." These conflicting judgements persist among historians to this day.

Emilio Gentile is Professor Emeritus at the University of Rome La Sapienza.

### **March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014**

#### **REPUBLIC: 1948: christian democrats, communists, socialists and liberals**

##### **Christopher Duggan**

The elections of April 1948 were the first to be held in the Republic after the promulgation of the new Constitution in January of that year. They were held against the backdrop of the incipient Cold War, with Italy increasingly polarized between the Christian Democrats and the Church on the one hand, and the parties of the far left on the other. Through an examination of the language, imagery, programmes and electoral tactics of the main parties, this lecture will consider how the new State sought to position itself in relation both to its Fascist past and to its anticipated democratic future.

Christopher Duggan is Professor of Italian History at the University of Reading where he directs the Centre for Modern Italian History.

### **April 11<sup>th</sup> 2014**

#### **LIFESTYLE: 1960: the economic miracle and 'La dolce vita'**

##### **Simona Colarizi**

In just over a decade Italy had emerged from the material and moral ashes of the Second World War and a searing civil war that spelled the end of Fascism. A new democratic and republican State had been born, but the changes with respect to the past were not limited to institutions and politics. As elsewhere in Western Europe the Golden Age had also dawned in Italy, which experienced a genuine economic, social and cultural revolution. The primarily agricultural country was transformed into an industrial power, ranked seventh among the world's greatest. A miracle – this was the exact term used to define those years of tumultuous growth in Italy, the years of Federico Fellini's "La Dolce Vita" which captured both the highs of the economic boom but also growing nostalgia for a world of tradition and certainty that was forever past.

Simona Colarizi teaches Contemporary History at the University of Rome La Sapienza.

### **May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

#### **FOOTBALL: 1982: Pertini and the world champions**

##### **John Foot**

In 1982 Italy won the World Cup in a 3-1 victory over West Germany. The Italian President, the diminutive anti-fascist ex-partisan Sandro Pertini, celebrated in the stands. On the way back from the match an intrepid photographer captured an impromptu game of cards involving Pertini, Dino Zoff, Franco Causio and manager Enzo Bearzot. In front of them stood the World Cup trophy. Meanwhile, in Italy itself, a wild party had just got underway and would continue for days. The game itself attracted a record TV audience, never equalled before or since. Italy was united in sporting triumph. This talk will look at the links between national identity and the national team, and the ways in which that identity has been strengthened and weakened by its relationship with national sporting prowess and occasional disaster.

John Foot teaches Contemporary Italian History in the Department of Italian in the University of Bristol.

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