

ABSTRACT

traduzione a cura di **Grazia Musumeci**

Aymard M., *The Mediterranean and Sicily: a sea with changing borders throughout history*

The author gives voice to some recent theories of historians who debate the idea of a Mediterranean sea where every single part refers to the whole. Its frail borders, in fact, decided uncertain situations that changed the geographical, political, economical and human horizons of Sicily and its people. The last example is the attempt to send back the African clandestine immigration.

Ligresti D., *The Basilian monk Eutichio Ajello and the baron Francesco Anca*

There was never a crisis of men, ideas and goods in Sicily, at the Spanish time, as some history book states. The author of this text describes portraits of Sicilian "scientists" who were perfectly aware of the knowledge and methods in use within the European scientific community. The monk was expert of art and antiques, while the noble man from Palermo is considered the "father of the Sicilian paleontology".

Mannino G., *The rocky necropolis of Montagnola*

On Mount Pellegrino, in Palermo, some old pots were discovered in the 1980s. They show the very first use of a cave as a burial grave -with prohibitive entrance for the people- in Sicily. The difficulty of reaching the entrance and the lack of food findings inside let the experts exclude the use of the place as a house.

Costanzo R., *A 18th century altar-piece ascribed to Luigi Borremans: a theory of purchase*

The study analyzes the coat-of-arms shown on an altar-piece at the Museo Diocesano in Catania. It was ascribed to the 18th century artist Luigi Borremans; on the basis of the analogy between these symbols and the Papardo (or Papalardo, Pappalardo) coat-of-arms – the family who lived in Pedara at the end of the 17th century – the author imagines a theory of purchase for this work.

Farruggio A., *Through the halls of the Town Gallery of Piazza Armerina*

The text invites us to a virtual journey through the halls of the Town Gallery of Piazza Armerina. The museum was founded in 1885 but only in recent times it was set inside the former monastery of Trinità, and opened in December 2011. The visitors route consists of 4 halls and shows works belonging to local churches -now destroyed or deconsecrated, paintings, portraits of very important people and other works by the local painter Giuseppe Paladino.

Calogero S. M., *The main altar of San Vincenzo Ferreri church, Ibla*

The study shows a brand new collection of documents about the purchase, planning and making of the main altar of San Vincenzo Ferreri church in Ragusa. The marble work was made by the catanese sculptor Tommaso Privitera, who also worked in most part of eastern Sicily at the end of the 18th century.

Bonasera M., *The perfect prince at the time of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies*

During the restoration works at the library of the Cutelli College (ancient building in Catania's city centre) they found a manuscript dating back to 1842. It describes the noble society at the time of its decay, while trying to celebrate and save its values and rules.

Nanzarelli M. – Uccello E., *Hand-made plants of the Carosello Cave, in Noto Antica*

Old Noto, which was destroyed by the earthquake in 1693 and never built again, is set on a tableland of Mt. Alveria surrounded (on three sides) by deep gorges carved in centuries by "angry" rivers. A path on the side of Carosello Cave leads us to ruins of rocky churches, tanneries and watermills (built by the Arabs). There were 20 of them, in the past, that were only replaced by electric watermills.

Sanfilippo M. V., *Giuseppe Bonaviri between prickly-pears and chumberas*

A portrait of the Sicilian writer who wrote about the intercultural and many-racial Mediterranean. He was in love with Spain and his writing and characters

are filled with this love for the Iberian land. In his universe, Don Quijote is the hero who fights against all the troubles of our time. The essay analyzes complicated issues like "journey", "meeting", "friendship" seen as micro-poems.

Patanè A., *The chapel of San Benedetto in San Nicolò l'Arena church, Catania*

A file reconstruction of the events that led to the building of the great chapel by skilled maestri like M. Biondo, T. Privitera, I. Marino, together with painters A. Cavallucci and N. La Piccola, built between 1780 and 1782, and completed between 1786 and 1790 after the will of abbot F.M. Hernandez from Caltagirone. The essay also contains an iconological analysis of marbles and sculpture.

Croazzo G. R., *M.A.C. – Hand-made majolicas from Caltagirone*

In 1950s, the M.A.C. cooperative of Caltagirone, became an example for all the other ceramists of the town with its great production of artistic majolicas and souvenirs. It also got some orders for public works.

Messina D., *A new view of Catania in a painting in Sant'Agostino church*

A very precious painting –probably by Alessandro Vasta (18th century), represents St. Emidio, the patron saint who protects from earthquakes. The work is particular because it shows a view of the city at the Baroque time. You can easily identify some of the buildings that characterize the new historic and cultural aspect of Catania after the earthquake of 1693. It also presents an historical analysis of the Saint and of the real paternity of the work.

Sanfilippo L., *Unpublished letter by Giuseppe Gemmellaro*

The reading of this document gives the hint to outline unknown connections in Catania, back in the 1840s: liberal Giuseppe Bruno and the Benedictine monk Giacomo Maggiore and the foreign naturalists. It gives interesting data to understand the reality of St Maria di Licodia between aspirations of independence and the age-long link with the Benedictines.

Spadaro A., *New data on the "San Rocco slaughter"*

Two inquiries were held in 1905 on the bloody facts of Grammichele. Both the government and the army investigated, plus doctor G. De Felice personally. The study compares two new documents: Gesualdo Libertini's private inquiry on the slaughter that took place in his constituency and De Padova's report ordered by the Catania Prefecture.

Auteri M., *Filippo La Vaccara and the freedom of superfluous*

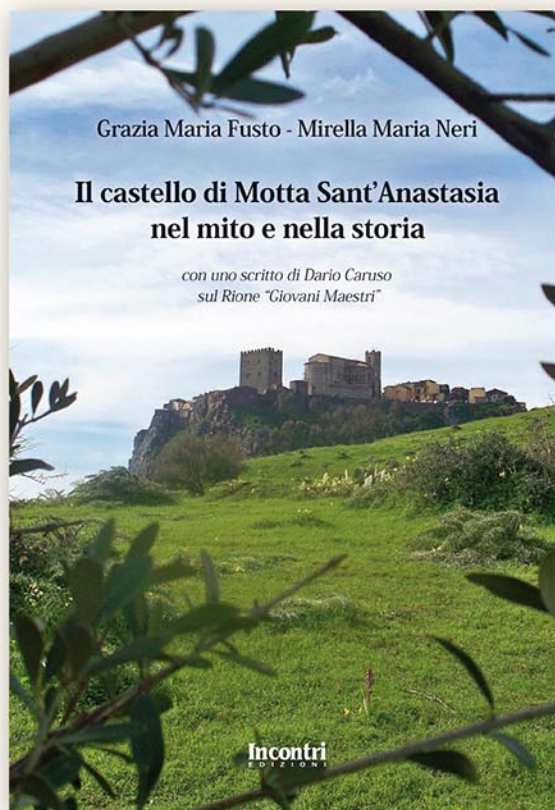
The last exhibition organized by the Fondazione Gruppo Credito Valtellinese, in Sondrio and Acireale, is the best chance to talk about the artistic route and news about the Sicilian artist Filippo La Vaccara, who received awards in Italy as well.

Reitano A. – Russo D., *Mount Etna's volcanic bombs*

Volcanic bombs are "lumps" of lava that took these particular shapes because of rotation phenomena happening between the moment of their ejection and the landing on the ground. Studying them means to understand the eruptive event. This essay sums up all previous studies of mathematicians, naturalists, chemists, geologists and volcanologists who studied the ballistic, volcanic and morphological aspects.

Bonacia E., *Votive aedicule in Mascalucia*

In Sicily the sacred pictures are both inside the churches and outside, as votive aedicule. In Mascalucia, a small town many times in danger because of Mt Etna's eruptions, there are over 40 aedicule dating back to past centuries. They were made in order to ask for the divine protection and some of these date back to the end of the 18th century. Others are more recent but still considered precious as prayer places for the people.



Grazia Maria Fusto – Mirella Maria Neri

“Il castello di Motta Sant’Anastasia nel mito e nella storia”

Prezzo: € 10,00

Editore: Edizioni Incontri

Anno pubblicazione: 2012

Numero pagine: 96

ISBN: 9788898013005

Le Autrici di questo lavoro sul castello di Motta hanno tracciato per grandi linee le vicende passate di questo antico borgo etneo, e lo hanno fatto con una narrazione semplice e persuasiva, documentata con scrupolo, e priva di inutili divagazioni. È un libro di facile lettura, che racconta la storia di un castello, che, proprio nel tempo in cui il Medioevo volgeva al termine, ebbe momenti di larga notorietà, cosicché lo storiografo Vito Amico lo definì «una fortezza celebre nei sicoli annali». Tanta rinomanza si deve soprattutto a due personaggi che hanno legato in modo indissolubile il loro nome a quello di Motta Sant’Anastasia: si tratta di Enrico Rosso, conte d’Aidone, e di Bernardo Cabrera, conte di Modica. Il primo, legato da parentela

con la nobile e potente famiglia dei Chiaromonte, fu uno dei protagonisti della vita politica siciliana durante il regno di Federico III d’Aragona, re di Sicilia, e ottenne incarichi molto prestigiosi. Pur essendo signore di circa venti castelli, ebbe particolare predilezione per quello mottese, di cui apprezzava l’ottima posizione strategica; lo abitò con la famiglia per circa venti anni, e lo adoperò per alcune spedizioni militari, peraltro poco fortunate. Cabrera, “gran giustiziere” e crudele assassino, agli inizi del XV secolo fu responsabile di “stomachevoli” persecuzioni a danno della regina Bianca di Navarra; costui, al contrario di Enrico Rosso, a Motta non venne volentieri, ma vi fu condotto con la forza e tenuto prigioniero per qualche tempo nell’oscura e maleodorante cisterna, profonda circa nove metri, che tuttora esiste all’interno del dongione. Quest’episodio, trasfigurato anche dalla leggenda, ha dell’incredibile, così come appare incredibile il grottesco tentativo di evasione di don Bernardo, che, calato dal suo carceriere da una finestra della torre, come ha riferito l’umanista Lorenzo Valla, si ritrovò nudo (durante la discesa gli caddero i pantaloni, non ben legati per la fretta), e impigliato in una rete predisposta per poterlo esporre al pubblico ludibrio. Le Autrici hanno arricchito il volumetto con molte altre notizie ricche di interesse e di curiosità per i lettori, e lo hanno integrato con un utile glossario, con numerose illustrazioni, con una nota bibliografica e con un opportuno indice dei nomi per renderne più agevole la consultazione.

Carmelo Neri



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