On Pascarella's *Discovery of America,* or, On Being Gullible

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Abstract. This is an introduction to a humorous epic in sonnets about Columbus and the discovery of America, by Cesare Pascarella. We do not fully analyse the excerpts we discuss from his epic, but we also consider sonnets by Pascarella not in the epic, with a brief foray to sonnets by other poets in Rome's dialect (Trilussa, later than Pascarella). Rather, the thrust of this paper is to signal Pascarella's treatment of the theme of gullibility in the deliberately warped myth of Columbus that Pascarella puts in the mouth of the narrator, a storyteller at a Roman tavern. We also consider Pascarella's treatment of Americans (real of fake) and America and its discovery in his prose (though not in his travelogue).

Keywords: Historical Imaginary; Discovery of America; Christopher Columbus; Cesare Pascarella; Humour in epics; Dialectal poetry (in the Roman dialect); Gullibility; Competence vs. Incompetence.

1. Introduction

Literary works of humour about history have received attention, in the context of French humour studies, in a thematic issue of *Humoresques*, edited by Annie Duprat (2009). Retelling history getting it humorously wrong is a feature of a literary work in prose with illustrations by Jules Dépaquit's (1928 [1929]), namely, his posthumous *Histoire de France pour les mômes.* This is the subject of a study by Vernois (2009). Dépaquit's work is a parody of a primary school textbook. On the cover, which describes Jules Dépaquit as mayor of the Parisian neighbourhood of Montmartre ("maire de la Commune libre de Montmartre", renowned for its goliardic spirit), children run riot in class, while one boy, standing on top of the back of the teacher's chair, is about to crown him with a donkey's mitre.

Humorous and rather fanciful retelling of a country's history, or then of one particular hero (Napoleon) was the subject of three literary works, the first by Touchatout, this being the pen-name of Léon Bienvenu, and the other two by Amable Beaupaume. This is the subject of a study by Doizy (2009). "Touchatout"'s *Histoire de France tintamarresque de Touchatout,*

revue et mise en désordre par Léon Bienvenu, was first published in instalments in the satirical periodical *Le Tintamarre,* starting on 29 April 1866, then in book form in 1868, next as separate instalments in 1871–1872, and then again in book form in 1876. Then in 1870 Amable Beaupaume published, in emulation, *La Rome tintamarresque, histoire drolatique et anecdotique de Rome depuis sa fondation jusqu'au Moyen Âge.* In 1872, Beaupaume published *Napoléon I^er^, histoire tintamarresque du grand homme* (Doizy 2009, p. 87, n. 2).

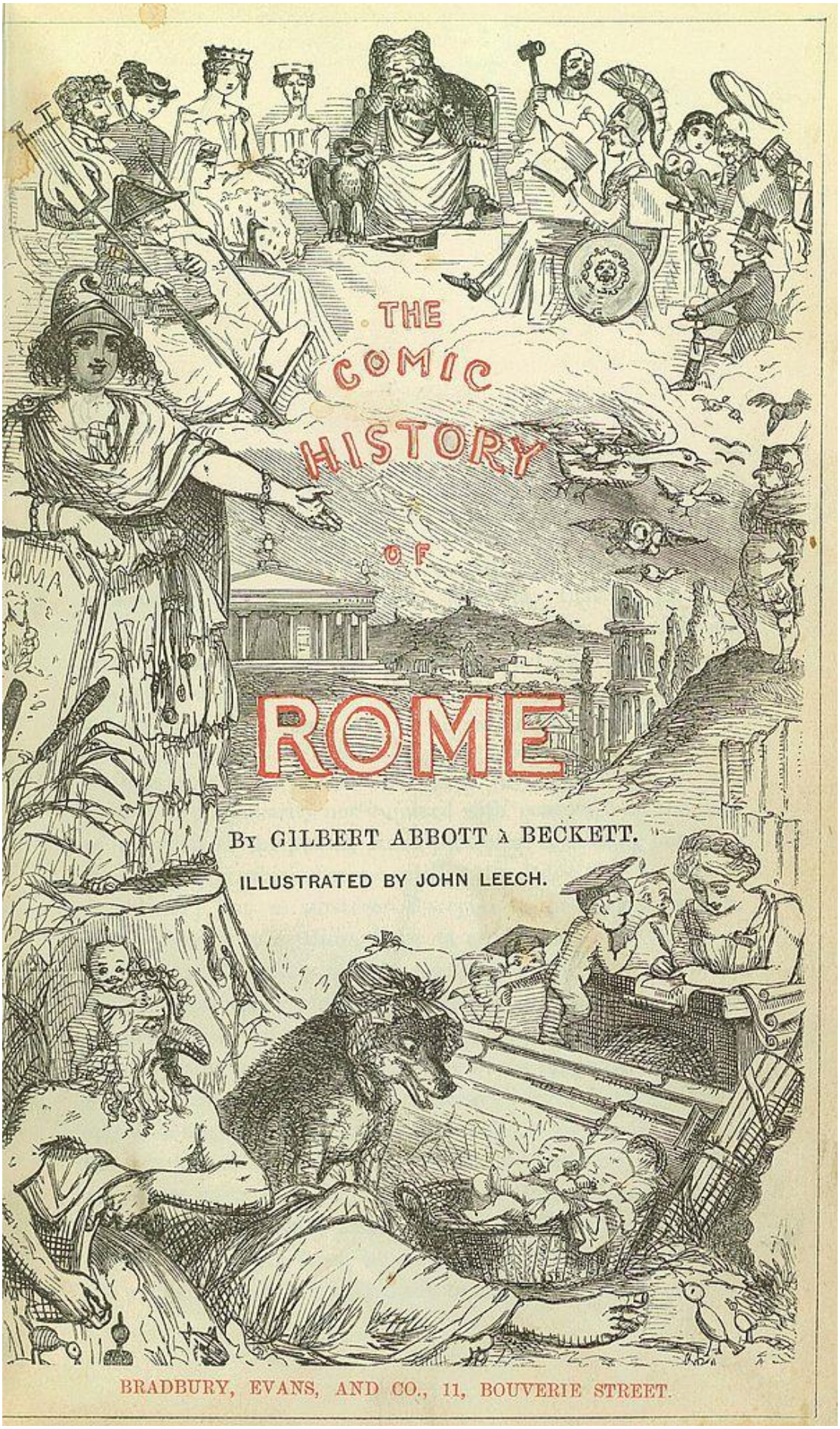
As for Britain, in the 1920s, *Punch* magazine published W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman's text *1066 and All That,* a burlesque history of Britain. That tradition continues at present with books or stage productions for children, but the aim now is mainly to get children interested. *The Comic History of England* and *The Comic History of Rome* appeared in 1847–1848 and in the 1850s, with text by Gilbert [Abbott à] Beckett (1811–1856) and funny illustrations by John Leech (1817–1864). Cicero wears a British lawyer's wig. See the Appendix.

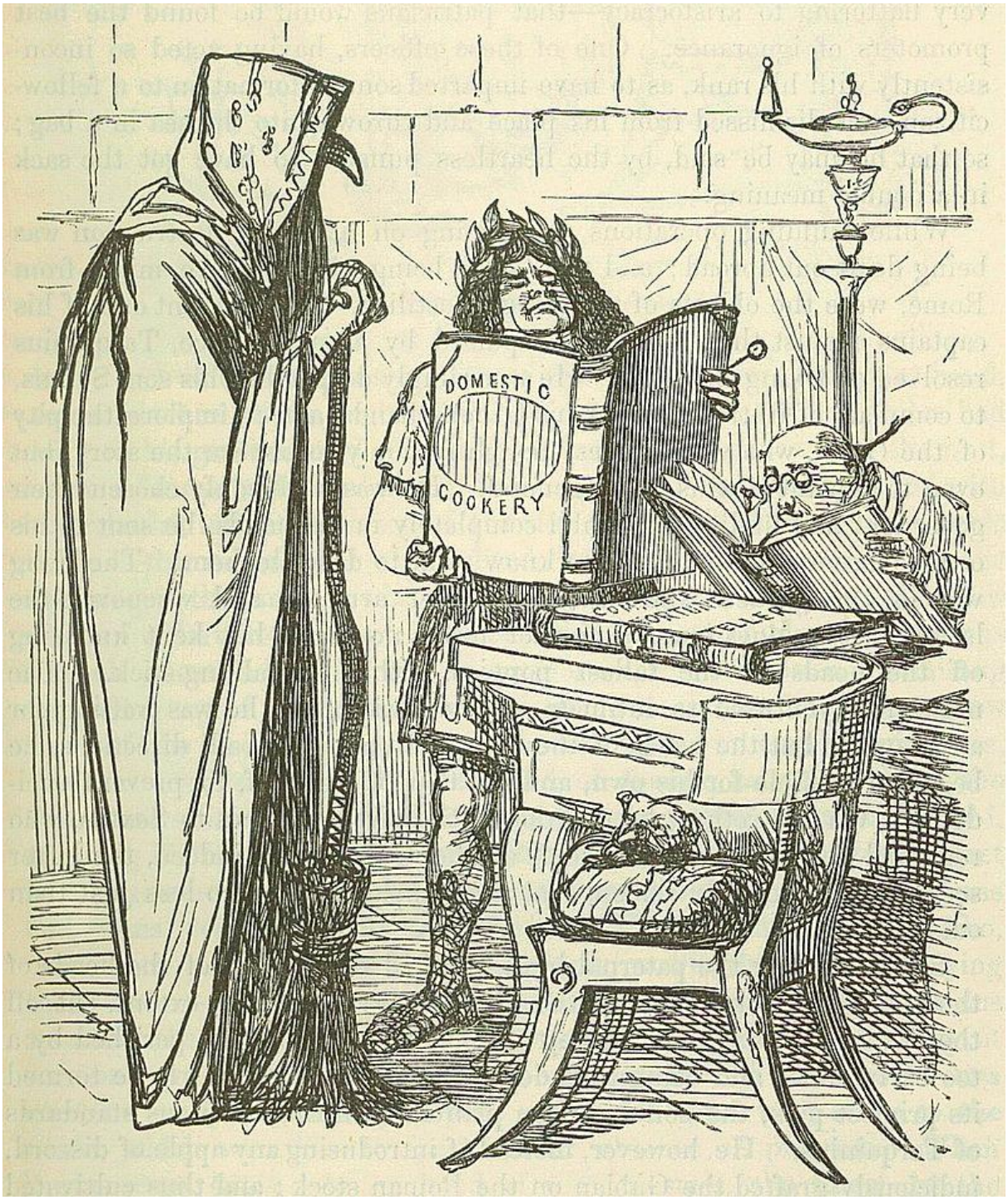
The foregoing is evidence of the existence of the genre of literary works of humorous or burlesque history (cf. the Gauls' mock-epic *Astérix* in the comics), and is preamble to concerning ourselves with a literary work, akin by genre, from another national literature. In the present study, we turn our attention to a remarkable humorous retelling of history from the Italian *belles lettres.* This paper is about how America comes through in a charming epic in the Roman dialect by Cesare Pascarella, a masterpiece of compassionate humour.

Cesare Pascarella. Pascarella did not need to travel, in order to imagine what he wrote in his epic about Columbus' discovery of America, and yet he did eventually travel to India, South America, North Africa, Japan, and China, and left insightful diaries of those travels. There is good reason to remember Pascarella at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. He was born in 1858, and died in 1940. The sesquicentennial of Cesare Pascarella's birth was in 2008.

What Pascarella has to say, by posturing naïveté, about Columbus' America actually says a lot about Europe, and about human nature in general. Pascarella's humorous epic is told through the imagination of a Roman who stays in Rome, and whose reference system is firmly and materially bound to living in Rome, even though he also entertains general ideas about the Italian nation. This was at a time, the 1890s, when masses of poorer Italians were leaving their country, hoping for a better future in the Americas. It was then a time when America was quite present in the Italian popular imaginary, and it is important to realise that the storyteller's complaint about Columbus having to leave Italy in order to pursue opportunities abroad, projects back in time a complaint that was acutely relevant to Italy when Pascarella was writing. Pascarella's narrative we are considering here is cast in the form of a narrative poem, a sequence of sonnets, supposedly performed at a Roman tavern by a storyteller with whom listeners interact. To say it with Bosello (2007, p. 1358):

> In the fervid imagination of the narrator, Christopher Columbus's enterprise is a combination of simplicity and extravagance, its magnificence reduced and made strange by the popular perspective of the narrative.. Thus, the sense of the epic and legend that permeates the event is overturned through the register of the grotesque, in which the poet's detached and ironic spirit is ever present. After the publication of the poem, Pascarella undertook a triumphant tour of readings throughout Italy.

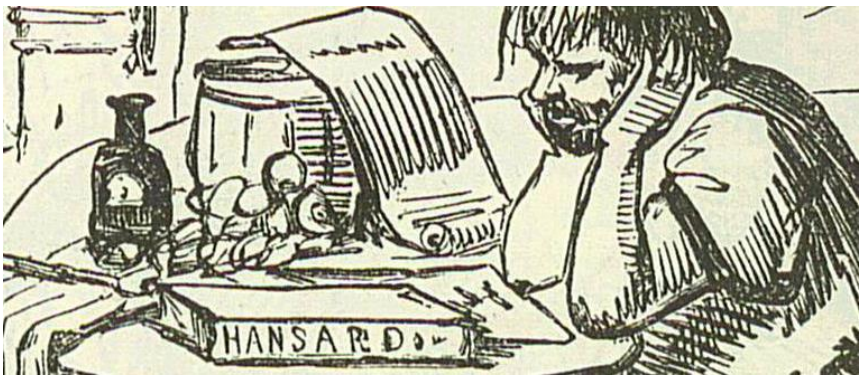

THE
COMIC
HISTORY
OF
ROME
By GILBERT ABBOTT A BECKETT.
ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN LEECH.
BRADBURY, EVANS, AND CO., 11, BOUVERIE STREET.

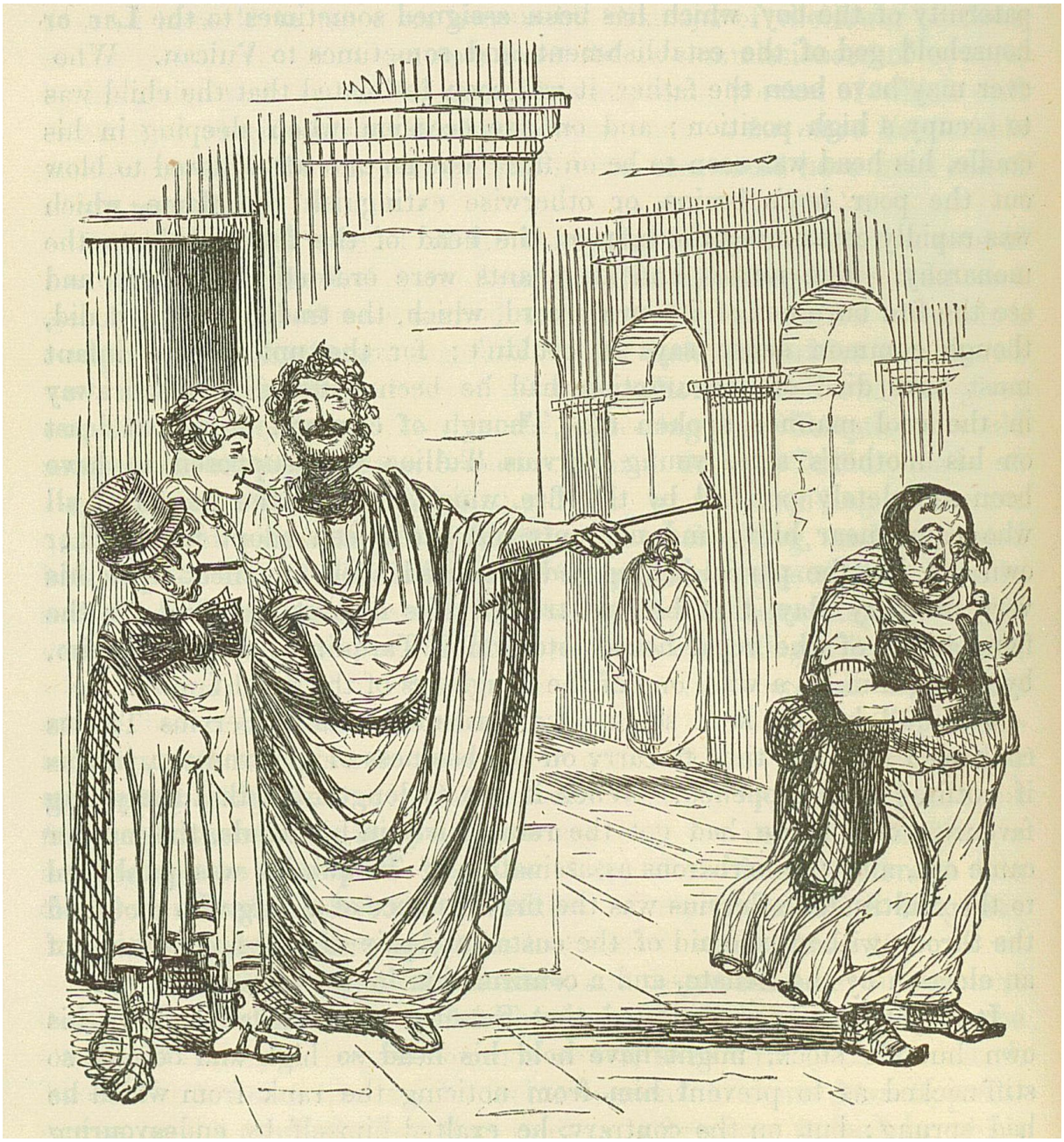


This illustration, "Tarquinius Superbus [with the fake nose] has the Sybilline Books valued", was drawn by John Leech, from p. 35 in Gilbert Abbott à Beckett's *The Comic History of Rome* (Beckett 1850s). In burlesque history there is ample opportunity for producing funniness by mixing ancient and contemporary features: the Sybillae are likened (or rather deflated) to the likes of 19th-century British fortune tellers, whose books (books they *owned:* in the second quarter of the 19th century, not infrequently working-class people in Britain tried to better themselves by acquiring some instruction from books and almanacs) consist of a handbook of their profession, *Complete Fortune Teller,* and (as they were women) *Domestic Cookery*. Beckett's explicitly declared intent was instructing children in Roman history. In contrast, Pascarella's *Discovery of America* does not quite fit in the genre of burlesque history: there is (in my opinion) sincerity in the epic intent, the metrics is skillful, and it is a deeply compassionate book. The working-class and (unlike Pascarella) somewhat inadequately informed storyteller (a) funnily mixes in inappropriate modern features, and (b) makes general remarks about the lack of reward for persons of talent and about the dishonesty of those who benefit from the formers' toils; he also decries Italy's contemporary woes, e.g., if you have got talent, you need to go abroad.

An irate Sabine mother brandishes an umbrella (which she would presumably do in 1851, in the illustrator John Leech's own days in England) at the Roman who is kidnapping her (apparently satisfied) daughter and who wears boots like a modern soldier (Leech often mixed elements of modern uniforms into his depictions of ancient Roman soldiers). The Roman soldier carrying the young woman stares mockingly at the older woman who is attacking him with the umbrella (his mocking, sanguine expression is one that according to a modern Italian stereotype sits well with how the character of modern Romans is imagined, but presumably Leech had not thought of *that*). This is a detail from "The Romans walking off with the Sabine women", an illustration on p. 10 in *The Comic History of Rome*.

This illustration by Leech, "Scipio Aemilianus cramming himself for a Speech after a hearty Supper", appears on p. 240 in *The Comic History of Rome*. On the spine of the book on the table on the side of the sheet of paper of the speech, one can read HANSARD. That is to say, Scipio Aemilianus is made to consult the record of speeches and other verbal interventions made at the Houses of parliament in London. There is a double cultural dislocation: temporal (an anachronism) and geographical. In Pascarella's *The Discovery of America*, anachronisms abound as the modern Roman storyteller has modern elements from his own Rome intrude in the account of Columbus, but as Columbus is in the Iberian Peninsula (and convincing the wrong queen: the Queen of Portugal instead of the Queen Castile), there also is a geographical dislocation when Columbus is made to describe the kind of ships he requires by reference to the riverine boats carrying goods into modern papal Rome.



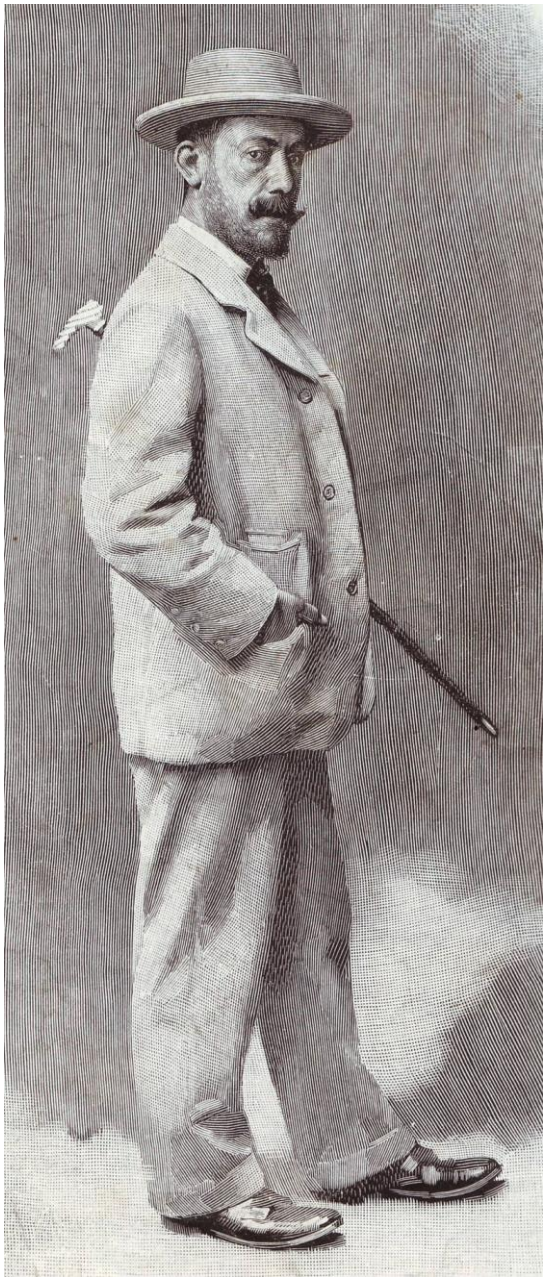


In the illustration "Debtor and Creditor", on p. 28 in *The Comic History of Rome,* John Leech inserted a 19th-century London stereotype about Jews as lenders, and the smart, handsome Englishmen who borrow from them, and sometimes manage to defraud the creditor. In this image, the creditor has sidelocks (to identify him as being Jewish), and wears supposedly Oriental shoes instead of Roman sandals. One of the Romans wears a 19th-century top-hat. The creditor realizes that the used garments and shoes he was given as pawn are not worth what he thought at first, as the shoe he is staring at is broken. This kind of anachronism reminds of Benito Mussolini quipping that he believed indeed that there were Jewish rag-dealers already at Rome's foundation (whereas dealing in rags was a constraint imposed upon Jews in Papal Rome). In *Punch* in the mid-19th century, Jews were not infrequently disparagingly represented as rag-dealers wearing several hats on top of each other (so they would not have to carry them in their hands).

A pastel portrait of Cesare Pascarella, made in 1892 by a fellow painter, Arturo Rietti, a Triestine.[1] The portrait is at the library of the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome. Rietti also painted a portrait of Pascarella without a hat, in August 1930, but that portrait was lost and there is no reproduction of it. Rietti did not like the 1892 potrait, but Pascarella did not let him destroy it.

Our present concern is with Cesare Pascarella's *La scoperta de l'America* — a comic, yet deeply compassionate epic of 1893 (published in 1894, after eight years on work on it), a monologue addressed by the narrator, a storyteller at a Roman tavern, to interlocutors who very sporadically interfere, structured as fifty sonnets in the Roman (*romanesco*) dialect of Italian. (Pascarella often read this work in public). It is a work that among the other things, reflects about being Italian. Pascarella also wrote a much longer work, left unfinished, on Italian history, and it, too, is an epic made up of sonnets; 267 of these are extant, out of the planned sequence of 350 (Pascarella 1961a). Haller (1992) provides a treatment in English of the work by Pascarella we are considering. Studies in Italian include, e.g., Antonelli (2000). The epic itself can be accessed on the Web (Pascarella, n.d.), at the website of 'Roma virtuale', under 'la lingua e la poesia'. The online edition includes the original verse, along with a translation into standard Italian with linguistic notes.

[1] Arturo Rietti was born in Trieste in 1863. A lifelong Greek citizen, he was the last-born son of Alessandro Riettis, a Jewish merchant from the island of Zante, and Elena Laudi, a Triestine Jewish woman. Arturo Rietti was an Irredentist, wishing for Trieste to be part of Italy, but after the annexation, he was never a supporter of Fascism. In 1882–1884 he lived as his brother's guest in Tuscany, and painted peasants and other workers in realistic (Verist) style. As a poertratist, he was influenced by an older generation of Triestine painters. With the disapproval of his uncle Vitale Riettis (his guardian since his father's death), but with the support of his mother and grandmother, from 1884 Arturo Rietti was trained formally in painting at the art academy of Munich. He then moved to Milan, and later lived there and in Trieste. He was embittered by the racial laws of 1938. He left Milan for the countryside to escape air raids (his flat was destroyed), and died in February 1943. This information is partly based on https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arturo_Rietti



Left: A portrait of Cesare Pascarella by an unknown illustrator, published on the front cover of the monthly *La Tribuna Illustrata*, 5(6), in Rome in 1894.

Below and bottom left: Other portraits of Pascarella.

Cesare Pascarella.

2. Roman Sonnets: Remarks about the Genre

We need to say something about sonnets in the Roman dialect. Giuseppe Gioachino Belli (1791–1863), the poet in Rome's dialect, clearly was one of Italy's most vivid poets of the nineteenth century, for all of his complex relation to his times. He left a quite extensive corpus (2279 sonnets), portraying Roman society, especially the popular classes, without idealising those he portrayed. In his *Sonetti romaneschi,* Belli set the tone for Roman poetry: it is in sonnets, and it's mainly comic, a sanguine description of social life.

This provided a powerful model for subsequent generations of dialectal poets from the same city. Another major poet in *romanesco* was Trilussa (his actual name: Carlo Alberto Salustri, 1871–1950). Belli's concrete, humorous sonnets have had and are still having a huge

impact on how Romans conceive of poetry in their dialect and how they expect it to be. The same is also true of the poetry in the *giudaico romanesco* dialect of the Jews of the old Ghetto in the Trastèvere quarter (especially Crescenzo Dal Monte's sonnets in the Jewish dialect are rather often mentioned in a Jewish milieu).

3. Puns in Roman Sonnets: A Few Examples

The impact of Belli, whether direct or indirect, is also felt in how members of the public in Rome approach literary comic expression in the local dialect. Puns are frequent. For example, a selection of letters sent to the broadcaster Mike Bongiorno,[2] the *compère* of television and radio quiz contests, was published in book form (Pellegrini 1972: it was a bestseller), and a select few appeared along with an interview he gave a weekly (de Garzarolli 1972). One of these was a letter from Rome, dated 18 December 1970. The sender (Gianantonio R.) described himself as a former officer of the Carabinieri, currently an employee at a big commercial firm, and besides, he wrote, "suono sonetti" (i.e., "I author sonnets"). He enclosed a sonnet by himself in the *romanesco* dialect, cruelly lampooning Mike Bongiorno, and explained in the letter: "Ovviamente non si deve offendere se lo tratto un po' male nella poesia: è solamente questione di metrica e di rima." ("Obviously you should not take offence at my somewhat mistreating you in the poem: it's just a matter of metre and rhyme.") The title was 'Giovedí TV' ('Thursday on the telly'). After a hyperbolical description of the TV presenter's ugliness and rote talk, then with faint praise for his female assistant, quite significantly that sonnet ended by punning, which is in line with tradition:

> E ditemi perché, quanno è saputo
> ch'er Bongiorno se vede de matina,
> qui dovemo cibasselo a la sera!?!
>
> ["And tell me why, whereas it is well known
> That (as per the proverb) the nice day [*Bongiorno*]
> is seen [i.e., you can tell how it's going to be]
> from the morning,
> Here we have to swallow it down in the evening?!"].

Some authors of sonnets in *romanesco,* but, with two major exceptions, not Pascarella in the epic under consideration, make much of punning. Belli often did. In De Lullo's sonnets, puns are pervasive. Maurizio De Lullo, born in 1941 in his native Rome, is a painter, as well as a satirical poet in the Roman dialect. One of his poems (De Lullo and Levi 1991, p. 72) is set on the motorway from Rome to Fiumicino airport. Two cars have stopped at some station, and while the VIP they were each carrying is away inside, one of the two drivers explains that he is carrying the president of Armenia, that they are late for his plane, so would the other driver please let him bypass him once they resume their trip. The other driver, who was carrying the Pope, is indignant: "M'hai detto 'n prospero! Er presidente Armeno! / M'avessi detto «Arpiù»! Ma quello è «Arméno»!!!". That is to say: "It's quite stupid, what you told me! The president *armeno!* / Had you told me *ar più* (the one who is more, the most)! But that one is *ar meno* (the lesser one)!!!".

[2] Mike Bongiorno, living in Milan, is himself not felt to have any Roman identity. He was born in the United States as Michele Bongiorno, to mother from Turin and a father whose own father was from Sicily. It was in Milan's San Vittore prison that the future broadcaster was (along with journalist Indro Montanelli), after he was arrested by the Germans. He was conducting a clandestine life, in fear because of his American nationality. He was eventually exchanged for another prisoner, and sent to the United States.

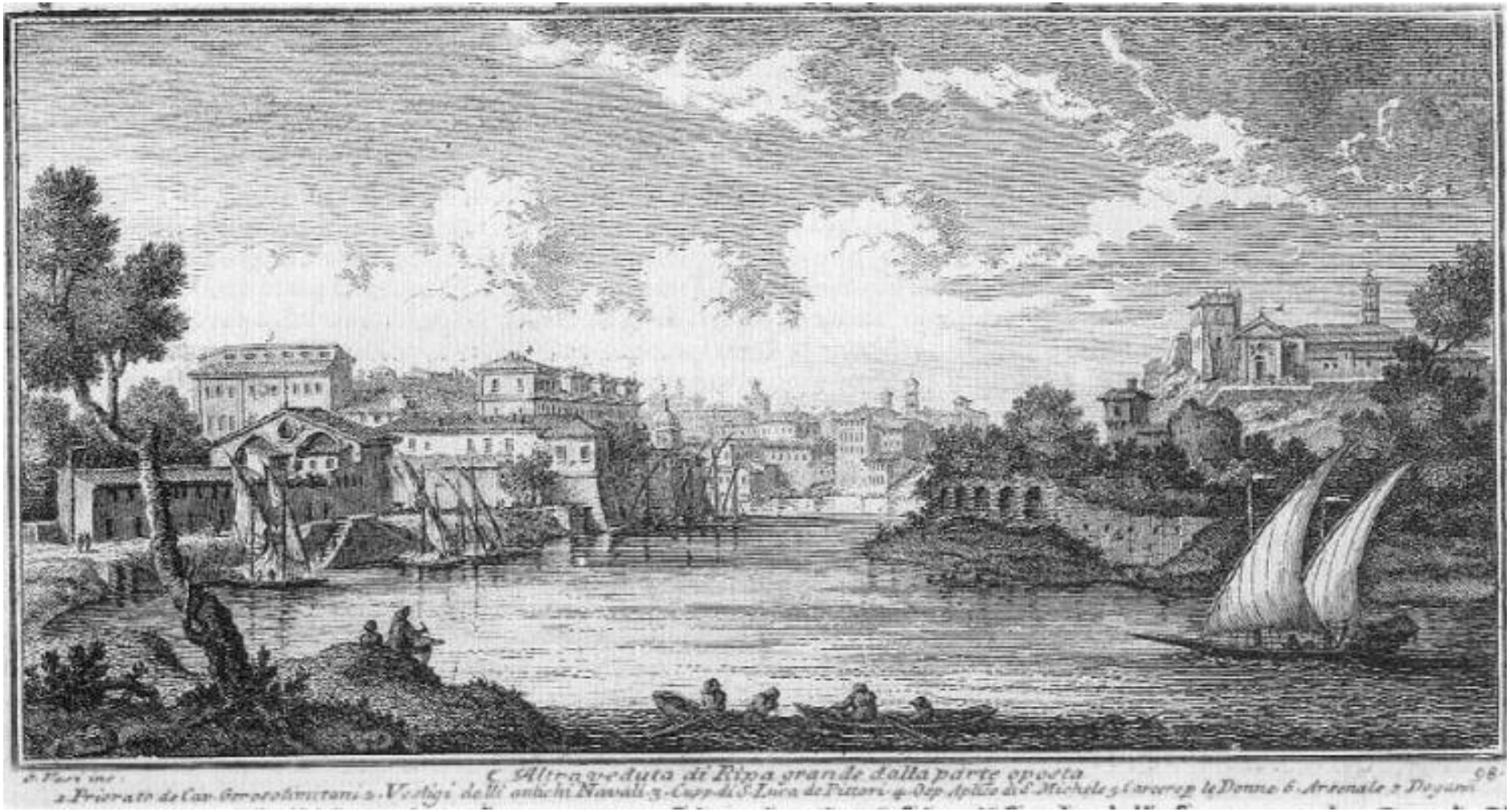
4. A Pun in Pascarella: Columbus and the King of Portugal

In Pascarella's epic about Columbus, it is the King of Portugal, not of Spain, who agrees to fund the expedition that results in the discovery of America. Pascarella humorously has the narrator display incompetence in the form of crass imprecision, simplifications, and conflations: for example, the King of Portugal, having delegated decision-making, would not give Columbus ships, which he then obtains from the Queen his wife (sonnets 10–12) — not the Queen of Castile. Columbus threatens to go elsewhere; she asks him about the size of the vessels, and he states that more or less, they should be like the ones that carry marsala wine to Rome's riverine port at Ripa Grande. Then she grants his wish on the spot.

Such telescoping enables a convenient focus. Columbus impresses the King (sonnet 4) with the argument (sonnet 3) that the world is like a *portogallo* (orange): there is as much skin (land) as there is juice (sea). Still, in the gist the narrator is both adequate and cogent, in pointing out human factors involved, both social and emotional. Pascarella skilfully controlled the parameter of competence (of both the characters, and the narrator), in order to obtain an array of effects. The King of Portugal had asked Columbus (in the last line of sonnet 2): "Ma st'America cè? Ne séte certo?" ("But this America does exist? Are you sure?"). Sonnet 3 follows:

> — Ah! fece lui, me faccio maravija
> Ch'un omo come lei pò dubitallo!
> Allora lei vor dì che lei mi pija
> Per uno che viè qui per imbrojallo!
>
> > ["Ah!", Columbus retorted: I am amazed
> > That a man like you could doubt it!
> > So you are implying that you take me
> > For one who's come here to swindle you!]
>
> Nonsignora, maestà. Lei si consija
> Co' qualunque sia ar caso de spiegallo,
> E lei vedrà ch'er monno arissomija,
> Come lei me l'insegna, a un portogallo.
>
> > ["No, Ma'am, Your Majesty (f.). Just take advice
> > From anybody able to explain it to you,
> > And you'll see that the world resembles,
> > As you teach me yourself, a Portugal/orange."]
>
> E basta avecce un filo de capoccia
> Pe capì che, dovunque parte taja,
> Lei trova tanto sugo e tanta coccia.
>
> > ["It just takes a bit of brain
> > To understand that wherever you cut,
> > You'll find as much juice as peel."]
>
> E er monno che cos'è? Lo stesso affare.
> Lei vadi indove vò, che non si sbaja,
> Lei trova tanta terra e tanto mare.
>
> > ["And the world, what is it? It's the same.
> > Just go where you want, you can't go wrong,
> > You'll find as much land as sea."]

An engraving by Giuseppe Vasi showing the port of Ripa Grande ("great bank", as opposed to the port of Ripetta, i.e., "small bank"), on the right bank of the River Tiber in Papal Rome. It served to unload goods into the city in the 18th century. The façade of the buildings is extant, and its colour is ochra.



Another plate by Giuseppe Vasi, showing Ripa Grande from the opposite side, i.e., from south ("Altra veduta di Ripa grande dalla parte opposta"). Pope Innocent XII (r. 1691–1700) had the beach of Ripa Grande turned into a riverine port for unloading goods coming from the sea (these are now unloaded downstream from Rome). The project was by Mattia de'Rossi and Carlo Fontana. A customhouse was also built. The Port of Ripa Grande blossomed in the 18th century and declined in the 19th.

The following is the first quatrain of sonnet 5:

> Je capacita sto ragionamento?
> — Sicuro, fece er re, me piace assai
> E, vede, je dirò che st'argomento
> Ancora nu' l'avevo inteso mai.
>
> ["Are you convinced by this reasoning?".
> "Yes, sure", said the King, "I like it a lot,
> And see, I'll tell you, this argument —
> I had never heard it before."]

5. A Precedent in a Sonnet by Belli

Whereas Pascarella intended the world-as-an-orange model[3] for humour, so that the tone of his epic would be unmistakably defined, Giuseppe Garibaldi instead had used an orange similitude to poignantly convey how those duped were exploited: referring to the treatment of his own 1860 fighters in united Italy, he once said that people had been treated as oranges: once the juice was squeezed out of them, they had been thrown away.

It wasn't Pascarella who had introduced into poetry in the Roman dialect the pun about *portogallo* 'orange' and *Portogallo* 'Portugal'. Already Giuseppe Gioachino Belli, the foremost author in that dialect, had done so in his own sonnet *Er Portogallo*, dated 27 November 1832. The text follows; it is a dialogue between a daughter and her mother, and the latter reproaches the former her ignorant, for all of her own ignorance:

> «Cuanno ho pportato er cuccomo ar caffè,
> mamma, llà un omo stava a ddí accusí:
> er Re der portogallo vò mmorí
> per un cristo c'ha ddato in grabbiolè.
>
> ["When I took the coffee-pot[4] to the cafe,
> Mum, there was there a man who was saying:
> 'The King of Portugal was angry to death
> Because he fell off his coach'."]

When Belli was writing, the news item about the King of Portugal mentioned in the sonnet was a current episode about the actual King of Portugal, Dom Miguel of Bragança (in Italy, he is referred to as "don Miguel di Braganza"). He reigned in 1828–1834. The House of Bragança had been reinstated to the throne in 1820, and Dom Miguel's rule was dictatorial. But in 1833, the constitutional regime was inaugurated in Portugal. The girl had gone to the cafe with a coffee-pot to fetch some coffee to bring home, and overheard somebody commenting on the news in the newspaper. The sonnet continues as follows:

> Che vvò ddí,[5] Mmamma? dite, eh? cche vvò ddí?
> Li portogalli puro ciànno er Re?
> Ma allora cuelli che mmagnamo cquì,
> indove l'hanno? dite, eh, Mamma? eh?»

[3] Cf. the following, quoted from Pearson (2017, p. 509): "'La terre est bleue comme une orange' (The earth is blue like an orange), Paul Élouard would write in *L'amour la poésie* (*Love, Poetry*) in 1929: 'Jamais une erreur' (Never an error), he continues; 'les mots ne mentent pas' (words do not lie)".

[4] Romanesco *cúccomo;* cf. Italian *cúccuma,* Latin *cŭcŭma,* Arabic and Hebrew *qumqum.*

[5] The actual pronunciation at present is *Ke vor dí?* The sense is "What do you mean?", lit. "What does it want to say?".

["What does it mean, Mum? Tell me, what does it mean?
Do the oranges (*portogalli*), too, have a king?
If so, the ones we are eating here,
Where do they have it? Tell me, Mum, wouldn't you?"]

«Scema, ppiú ccreschi, e ppiú sei scema ppiú:
er portogallo è un regno che sta llà,
dove sce regna er Re che ddichi tu.

["You stupid! The more you grow up, the more stupid you become.
Portugal is a kingdom that is there,
Where the king reigns you were talking about."]

Ebbé,[6] sto regno tiè sto nome cquà,
perché in cuelli terreni de llaggiú
de portogalli sce ne sò a ccrepà».

["Well, that kingdom has this name,
Because in those lands over there,
There are a looot of oranges (*portogalli*)."]

More colourfully: you'd burst open and die, so many oranges there are [if you eat them]. The Italian verb *crepare* means 'to crack', 'to split asunder', but is also a vulgar term for 'to die' (like British English *to snuff out* or *to pop off*, and American English *to croak*).

6. Italian Realities when Pascarella Authored *The Discovery of America*

We have mentioned in the introduction that Pascarella has his storyteller tell his audience at the tavern that Italy had failed the talented Columbus, as he had to seek opportunities abroad, and that this was typical of Italy:

> This was at a time, the 1890s, when masses of poorer Italians were leaving their country, hoping for a better future in the Americas. It was then a time when America was quite present in the Italian popular imaginary, and it is important to realise that the storyteller's complaint about Columbus having to leave Italy in order to pursue opportunities abroad, projects back in time a complaint that what acutely relevant to Italy when Pascarella was writing.

Several expletives mark the storyteller's account, in *La scoperta de l'America,* and these interjections punctuate the narrator's speech with markers of Catholic identity. Still, at one point Pascarella has the narrator express dislike for, and mistrust of, what priests can do (Columbus may risk ending up between the clutches of the Spanish Inquisition). This reflects Pascarella's politics. When Pascarella published his epic, it wasn't quite a quarter of century since Rome ceased to be ruled by the papal administration.

Rome was conquered by the Kingdom of Italy, recently unified under the crown of Piedmont's House of Savoy, in 1870, shortly after the protector of paper rule, Napoleon III, was defeated by Prussia, and France would no longer intervene to prevent Rome's annexation to Italy. Pope Pius IX, having lost his temporal power, lived in self-imposed seclusion inside the Vatican Palaces.

[6] The actual pronunciation is *Embé.* The Italian term is *ebbene. Embé* is used either for an initial 'Well,...', or for 'So what?'.

The devout were instructed to refrain from participation (as either candidates, or voters) in elections for Italy's parliament, but the clerical camp was active in municipal politics throughout Italy. The Italian monarchy was redeveloping Rome's built environment to suit the new national values. The following example provides an illustration for the clash of political cultures in Rome in the period between annexation to Italy in 1870, and the First World War. When the secularist and republican Ernesto Nathan (1845–1921, a London-born Jew of Italian extraction),[7] was mayor of Rome in 1907–1913 (see e.g. Ugolini 2003; Isastia 2010), in the clerical press his name would be distorted into *Sathan* (Marchi 2011). To them, he was the Devil, and their tirades against Nathan were a variation on the theme.

7. The Talented, the Incompetent, the Duped, and Pascarella's Epic: Using America in Order to Say Something about the Old World

Pascarella's Columbus is, at the very same time, talented, and one who is duped. A subnarrative has the American natives duped by his expedition. But Pascarella is forcefully conveying the notion that talent is unrewarded inside Italy, and even when it finds a willing ear elsewhere, merit will remain unrewarded while the genius is alive. Posthumous monuments are no real reward.

Therefore, Pascarella's *La scoperta de l'America* ends with a lament and reproach about the state of affairs in Italy, and Pascarella's and Columbus' present times are conflated. In sonnet 46, a member of the audience asks the storyteller where was Columbus from. The reply, in sonnet 47, begins by expressing consternation: while Columbus was alive, they made him miserable, but once dead, everybody would like to count him among fellow nationals. Sonnet 47 ends by stating that Columbus was Italian. Sonnet 48 vaunts how replete with talent Italy is, and lists well known characters. Sonnet 49 begins thus:

> E che òmini! Sopra ar naturale.
> Che er monno ce l'invidia e ce l'ammira!
> E l'italiano ci ha quer naturale
> Che er talentaccio suo se lo rigira.
>
> > [And what men! Above normal.
> > The world is envious of us and admires us because of them!
> > The Italian has that knack of his
> > For making use of his remarkable talent.]
>
> Pe 'n'ipotise; vede uno che tira
> Su 'na làmpena? Fà mente locale
> E te dice: sapé, la terra gira.
> Ce ripensa e te scopre er canocchiale.
>
> > [For example, does he (the Italian: Galileo Galilei) see one who
> > Raises a Candelabrum? He focuses,
> > And tells you: You know, the earth revolves.
> > He thinks it over, and disvovers the telescope.]

[7] Jewish emancipation was one of the things resented by the clericals, in Rome and elsewhere (Marchi 2011, Nissan 2008 [2010]).

E quell'antro? Te vede 'na ranocchia
Ch'era morta; la tocca co' 'n zeppetto
E s'accorge che move le ginocchia.

[And that other one? (Giovanni Galvani) He sees a frog
That was dead; he touches it with a rod,
And notices that it moves its knees.]

Che fa? Te ce congegna un meccanismo;
A un antro nu' j'avrebbe fatto effetto,
L'italiano t'inventa er letricismo.

[What does he do? He devises a device.
Another one would not have thought of it.
The Italian [Alessandro Volta, conflated with Galvani]
invents electricity.]

Also Columbus was that way, the storyteller claims. He discovered whatever he discovered because he was Italian. A foreigner would have found nothing. Columbus found the incredible, but had he had backing, he would have accomplished the impossible. Had he had the marine instruments available at present, he would have discovered twenty Americas (a pun: see in the next section).

All along the epic, Pascarella is telling us something about human nature. America, once discovered, is an exotic marvel, and actually Pascarella's storyteller blends in African exotic items as well. It is as though whatever is exotic is syncategorematic, belonging to the some category, and therefore in the same bucket the storyteller fits the exotic produce of newly discovered America and the exotic produce of Africa (or otherwise of the "Turk": see in the next section).

Pascarella also briefly tells us about how things start to go wrong in the relations between Europeans and Native Americans. Hostility develops from the newcomers flirting with local women; and this is an earthy way for the storyteller to state the matter to his listeners at the tavern, evoking a theme familiar to them from their social competence in their own surroundings.

8. Telescoping Columbus (hi)story to Say Things about Italy, European *mores,* and the Gullible Natives of the New World

In the epic *La scoperta de l'America,* fabled America enables Pascarella to indulge in humorous national self-gratulation (yet, in sonnet 47, he mocks the claims of various nations that would have Columbus as their own), as well as to make considerations about life, either in general, or in his own Rome; "the world is nasty" (46): *er monno è brutto*.

Life themes include, e.g., the need for backers for achieving anything: this turns up as soon as sonnet 2 ("They started to believe him, yes Sir, / But as usual, in this pig of a country, / If he wanted support with the expenses / Of discovery, he had to go abroad": the truth of which Marconi was to discover shortly after this epic's publication), and as late as the very end (sonnet 50). "And that one, instead, found the incredible. / Had he also had backers, / He would have done the impossible. // Had he had the maritime instruments / That one can found nowadays, / He would have discovered twenty [Americas]!" (a pun: *inventa* 'discovers', vs. *ventina* 'twenty').

Other life themes include: bureaucracy and delegating decisions (at the court of Portugal: sonnets 6–8, 11–12); the nefarious impact of priests (9); practical negotiation (12, 22); marrying off one's daughter being difficult in Rome, but without problems for Native

Americans (37–38); the effects of envy and ingratitude (41–45): the King would imprison the impoverished Columbus, says Pascarella, at the Longara (42), i.e., the prison of Regina Coeli in Rome.

A Cockaigne utopia in America is in one sense underwhelming: it was chicory plants that were taller than Columbus' men (26). The forest was impassable, and of the beasts, the elephant is mentioned. Savage natives (*l'omo servatico*), worse than lions, would eat a man, trousers included (28). But when one is found and asked about his identity (29), "E, fece, chi ho da esse? Sò un servaggio." ("Who am I supposed to be?", he said. "I am a savage.")

Because of Rome's provincialism, the exotic was invariably cast as being a Turk: the American native king is a *surtano* (sultan), covered with gold and with a feathered headdress (30) *che pareva un musurmano* ("so that he looked like a Moslem"). Asked whether he is an American, he replies that he has no idea (30). "We", the civilised, do have money, and the government takes it (33). The natives have no taxes, and are equal (34). It was flirts with local women that bred hostility (34–36).

9. Returning from the Americas, and Columbus' Identity

To escape the row, Columbus's expedition seizes assets in haste and leaves America (39). What they bring back includes (40):

Servaggi incatenati, pappagalli,	Savages in chains, parrots,
Scimmie africane, leoni, liofanti,	African monkeys, lions, elephants,
Pezzi d'oro accusì, che pe portalli	Such pieces of gold, that to carry them
L'aveveno da mette sur carretto;	They had to place them in carts,
Le perle, li rubini, li brillanti	As to the earls, rubies, and gems,
Li portaveno drento ar fazzoletto.	These they carried in their handkerchief.

We are going to come back to the misascription of Africans as though they were Americans, something that Pascarella shows in his prose to have happened also in real life in his own days. In the lines of verse we have seen, it is the ignorant storyteller who is responsible for the mix-up.[8]

Pascarella deliberately let historical inaccuracy affect t his retelling of the far past: this is also the case of the ancient Roman history (about Republican Rome, but of the emperors only about Augustus and Nero) in his unfinished epic poem *Storia nostra* (*Our History*).

In contrast, when Pascarella was writing verse about Italy's Risorgimento, he was careful to be historically accurate (quite possibly, because Cesare Pascarella was an ideologically committed patriot, whose father had fought in Italy's 1818 First War of Independence): he had already done so in *Villa Gloria* (1886), whose 25 sonnets he had written during a visit to India.[9] He strove to be accurate in the second part of *Storia nostra*, which leaps from Nero to

[8] Mix-up even funnily affected an episode in Pascarella's own biography: aged 12, he was made to study at a seminary of the Jesuits in Frascati, but when on 20 September 1870, the Kingdom of Italy quickly conquered Rome (until then ruled by the Pope), Pascarella, upon hearing the cannonade, fled from seminary and reached Rome by foot in order to see for himself. He was still wearing the clerical garb of the seminary, and in the mood of the day this attracted to him dislike from members of the public (Scalessa 2014). His own views were not clerical in the least.

[9] Note the worldplay in the title: *Villa Gloria* ('Glory House'), about a battle at Villa Glori (*Glori* being a family name). "*Villa Gloria* (1886) is a poem in 25 sonnets that tells of the vicissitudes and misfortune of the enterprise of Giuseppe Garibaldi at Villa Glori in 1867, presented from the low perspective of a Roman from the plebeian neighborhood of Trastevere. A powerful impression of truthfulness emerges from the crude expressions of the

the diffusion of Christianity and the Barbaric Invasions, then to just a few sonnets about medieval Rome or Saracen raids, and from there to the Napoleonic period and next, to Italy's national movement.[10]

In Pascarella's *Discovery of America*, there are two categories of incompetents: the Native Americans, who are duped and grossly shortchanged by the sailors as soon as these realise how naïve the locals are (31–32); and Europeans other than Italians. We have already seen in Section 6 that when the narrator is asked where Columbus was from, exactly (last verse of sonnet 46), he first says that it's once dead, that long-suffering Columbus is being claimed, and that the French cannot claim him even though they would wish to boast of him as a fellow-countryman, and concludes sonnet 47 by saying that Columbus was Italian (rather than Genoan: avoiding such precision on purpose).

Illustrious Italians, or then some place were their busts are found in Rome, are enumerated (48). Italians have talent: one of them [Galilei], on seeing a lamp moving, realised that the Earth rotates, and invents the telescope; another one [Galvani], on seeing a dead frog, touched it with a cane, and on seeing it move its knees, invents electricity (49). It is being an Italian, says Pascarella, that enabled Columbus' discovery: had it been some foreigner, he would have discovered nough (50).

10. Na(t)ive Americans, and a Deliberately Naive Narrative by a Well-Travelled Author

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Pascarella is ambivalent: as soon as his narrator relates about how naive and incompetent for protecting their assets the Native Americans were (31–32), he defends their character (33–34): they wouldn't harm one unless unharmed; the Native Americans' state of nature is in some respects preferable. As for being an Italian, it takes going abroad to be able to marshal resources in order to make one's talent come to fruition (50). The word *giocarello* 'toy' is applied to both the first native met (29), and to the duped Columbus, used and thrown away (44).

The narrative in *La scoperta de l'America* is deliberately naive. And yet, in 1882–1885 Pascarella made a series of journeys through Africa, India, Japan, China, and the Americas:

commoner, who relates the facts as a witness, without any reflections going beyond the events themselves. Even thopugh *Villa Gloria* offers moments of great participation, the work is weighed down by patriotic rhetoric" (Bosello 2007, p. 1357). The narrator of Villa Gloria is the character of a plebeian Roman who had taken part in the expedition into Latium of seventy men, ending in the death of the Cairoli brothers. Pascarella deriverd his material for this epic from a conversation he had at a tavern in the Trastevere neighbourhood with a person who had actually participated in the fighting at Villa Glori.

[10] Scalessa (2014) remarked about Pascarella striving for historical accuracy in his narratives of the Risorgimento: "Apparso postumo per cura della Reale Accademia d'Italia (Mondadori, Milano 1941), il manoscritto si presenta lacunoso e comprende un totale di 267 testi, alcuni dei quali incompleti. La prima sezione si sofferma su episodi della storia di Roma, sorvolando sull'epoca imperiale (a parte Augusto e Nerone), fino alla diffusione del Cristianesimo e alla calata dei barbari. Dedicati pochi sonetti al Medioevo dei papi e degli antipapi e a quello dei pirati, un salto vertiginoso porta direttamente a Napoleone e poi al Risorgimento. La scelta di due grandi blocchi tematici trova ragione nelle parole del popolano narratore: per il primo parla la sua origine, che, pur con qualche anacronismo, lo autorizza a descrivere i fatti di Roma antica senza ricorrere all'ausilio di libri di storia; per il secondo garantisce la sua partecipazione diretta ai recenti accadimenti risorgimentali (*Li fatti che so' successi ieri*: sonetto CCXXVI), che gli permette di soffermarsi sul fuggitivo Pio IX e dilungarsi sulle imprese di Garibaldi. Gli artifizi retorici adottati sono a un dipresso i medesimi della *Scoperta*, ma la maggiore aderenza al vero storico nella seconda parte (probabilmente anche verificato sui testi sul Risorgimento che presenziavano la biblioteca del poeta) è accorgimento quanto mai studiato; esso rientra in quella poetica del vero, frutto di osservazione diretta, che Carducci aveva già riconosciuto a *Villa Gloria*".

the United States, Argentina, and Uruguay.[11] He reported on this in his diaries (*Taccuini:* Pascarella 1961b), sometimes in a sharp and caustic tone, and his text is supplemented with sketches (he also was a formally trained painter, and there are many references to this in his prose).

In his old age, deaf and avoiding public engagements, Pascarella studied English in order to read Stevenson and Conrad in the original. In 1882, Pascarella, together with D'Annunzio and Scarfoglio, travelled to Sardinia, expecting to find there an archaic world. Their travel to Sardinia is the subject of Mulas (2007).

Incidentally, Paolo Orvieto, a scholar in early modern Italian literary studies, published (2007) in a journal in 15th-century studies (*Interpres: Rivista di studi quattrocenteschi*) an article entitled "I testi dei primi scopritori italiani e la tipologia dell'americano nella letteratura italiana" ("The Texts of the Earliest Italian Discoverers, and the Typology of the American in Italian Literature").

11. The Dimension of In/competence in *La scoperta de l'America*

The narrator himself claims competence, and extols the value of books of history (sonnets 4–5). He comes through as more competent that the public at the tavern, that assists to his storytelling performance and intervenes sporadically. One point in time is when the storyteller, having related that Columbus' expedition sighted land, offers to continue on the next evening, and the members of his public, enthralled, urge him to continue, and paradoxically ascribe to him inadequacy (24):

– Oh, mo' nun comincià che nun hai voja.	– Now don't tell us you don't want.
Domani?... Ma de che?! Daje stasera,	Tomorrow? How that? Come on, this
Te possin'ammazzatte, sei 'n gran boja!	evening! Drop dead, a lout you are!
Eh, già, si tu facevi l'avocato,	Of course, if you were a lawyer, a lot of
Sai quanti ne finiveno in galera!	people would have ended up in prison!
Dunque, sbrighete, sù, fatte escì er fiato.	So now hurry up, let yourself heard.

Pascarella humorously has the narrator display real incompetence, too, in the form of crass imprecision, simplifications, and conflations: for example, the King of Portugal, having delegated decision-making, would not give Columbus ships, which he then obtains from the Queen his wife (10–12) — not the Queen of Castile. (He threatens to go elsewhere; she asks him about the size of the vessels, and he states that more or less, they should be like the ones that carry marsala to Rome's riverine port at Ripa Grande. Then she grants his wish on the spot.)

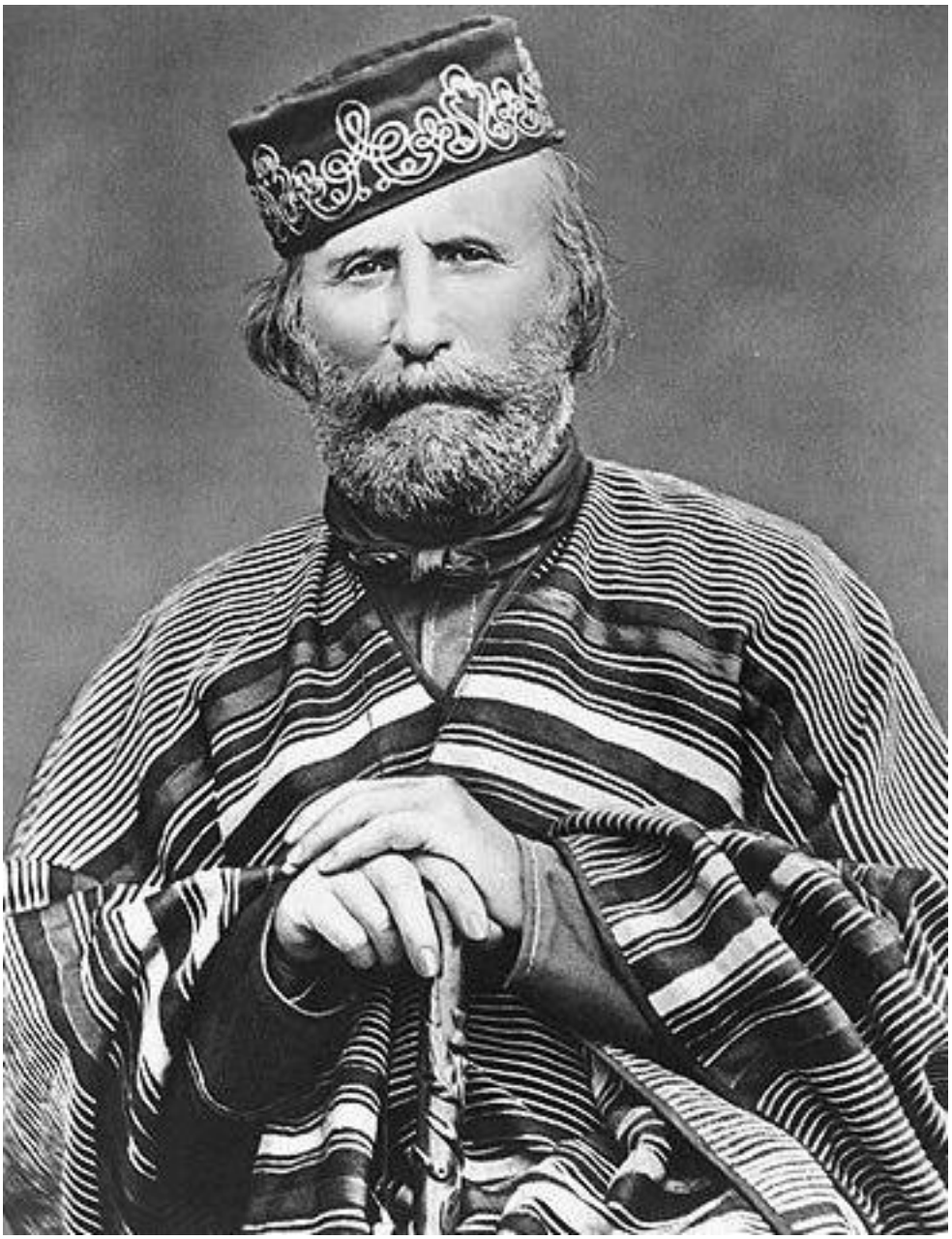
Such telescoping enables a convenient focus. Columbus impresses the King (4) with the argument (3) that the world is like a *portogallo* (orange): there is as much skin (land) as there is juice (sea). Still, in the gist the narrator is both adequate and cogent, in pointing out human factors involved, both social and emotional. Pascarella skilfully controlled the parameter of competence, in order to obtain an array of effects.

Incidentally, consider that whereas Pascarella intended the world-as-an-orange model for humour, so that the tone of his epic would be unmistakably defined, Giuseppe Garibaldi instead had used an orange similitude to poignantly convey exploiting of those duped:

[11] Pascarella visited India again in 1929. In 1930 he visited China and Japan. In the period 1931–1933, he travelled in the Mediterranean, and visited North America and the Dutch Indies, i.e., Indonesia (Scalessa 2014).

referring to the treatment of his own 1860 volunteer fighters in united Italy, he once said that people had been treated as oranges: once the juice was squeezed out of them, they had been thrown away.

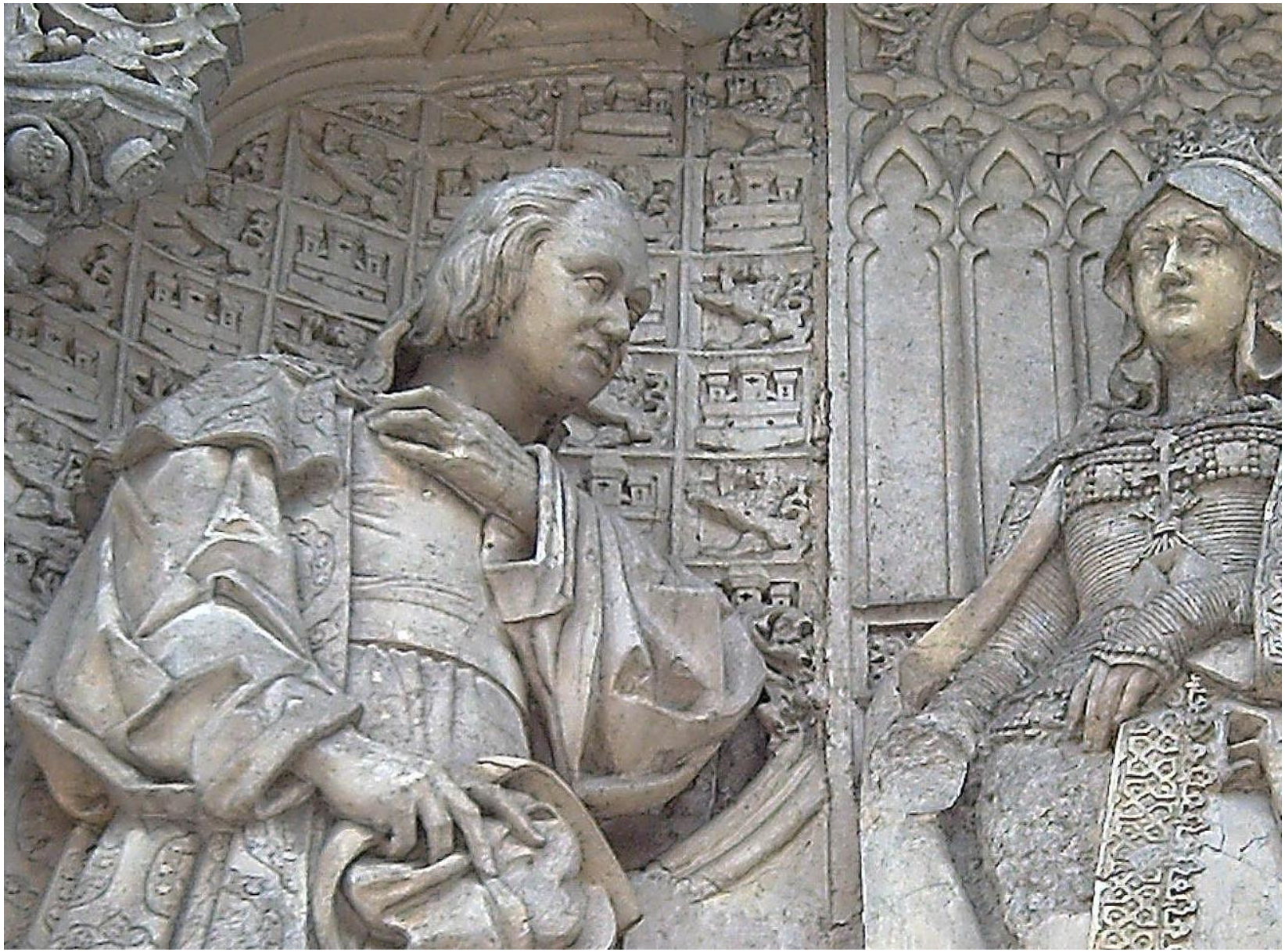
Garibaldi himself was more a soldier than a politician, and certainly did not consider his Thousand to be incompetents. This is an example of how incompetence and being duped do not go hand in hand. To Pascarella, too, it was not only the Native Americans, who in his epic are portrayed as incompetent, but also the quite competent Columbus, who were duped.



Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1866.

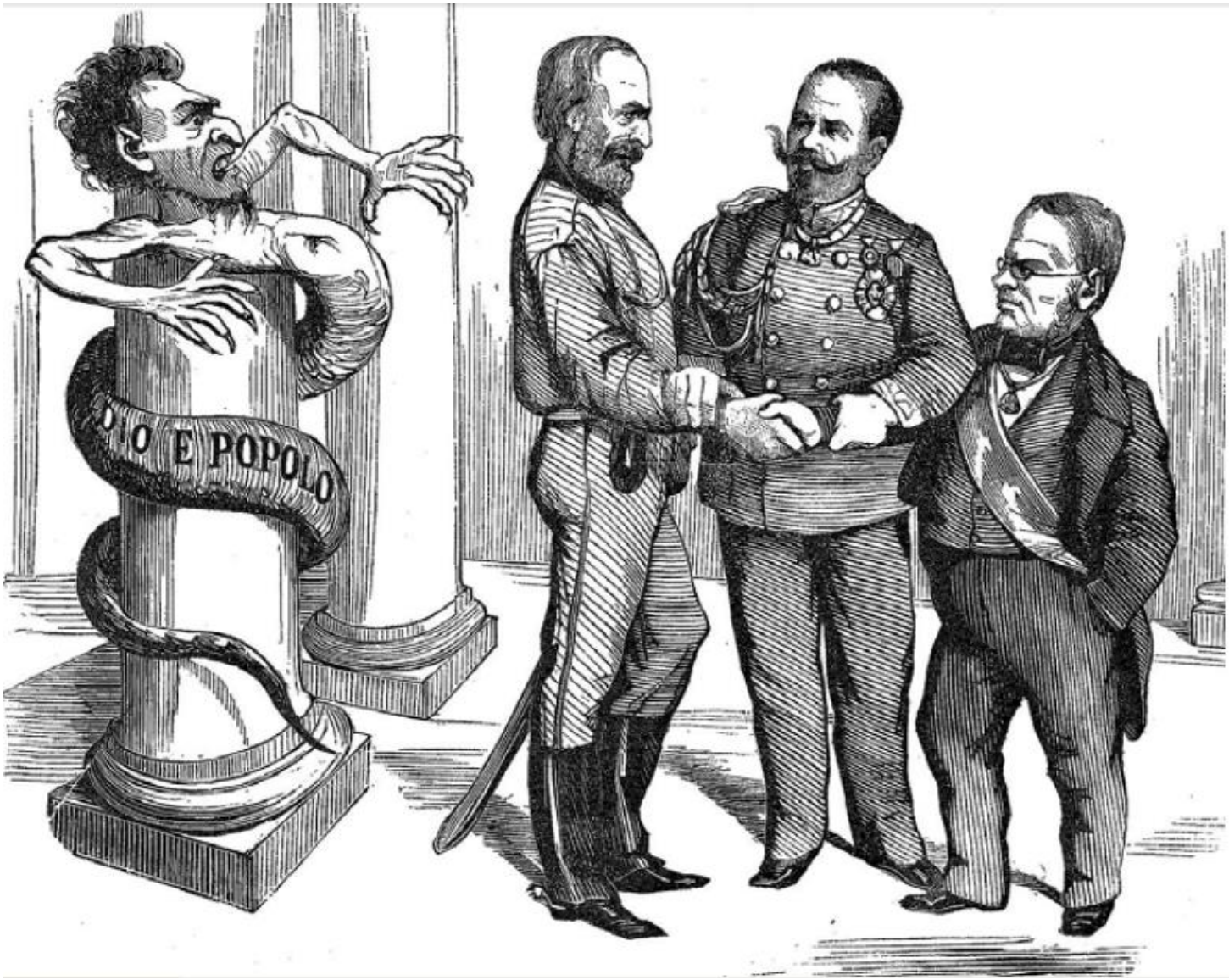
Columbus and Queen Isabella of Castile. Detail of the Columbus monument in Madrid (1885). Photograph by Luis García, placed in the public domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2638278

Detail of the former



This cartoon, drawn by Virginio, published by *Il Fischietto* in Turin inside the *Strenna del Fischietto* of 1861, shows why Garibaldi, shortly after he conquered Italy's South, was appreciated. The cartoon is captioned "Il GRAN BABAU della Diplomazia" ("The BOGEY of Diplomacy"). The personification of diplomacy is an old hag who is a scribe. Garibaldi is kicking her in the butt into a ravine. *Virginio* was the pen-name of Ippolito Virginio (1829–1870); like his brother-in-law and fellow cartoonist, Francesco Redenti (1819–1876, until his conversion in 1838, Cesare Vienna), Virginio was a Liberal monarchist, a supporter of Piedmont's prime minister Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour. As can be seen in this cartoon, Virginio was a good portraitist, not just a caricaturist, and in fact on occasion he was particular on providing a painstakingly drawn portrait inside a cartoon, even though it was a cartoon rather than an illustration. As we are going to see in the next few cartoons by other artists, Garibaldi was considered strong as a soldier, but his judgement was not trusted: according to these cartoonists, it was up to the monarchists to influence him, competing in this with Republican conspirators.

This cartoon is known by the title *Gli uomini del domani* (*The Men of Tomorrow*). Drawn by the staunchly pro-Cavour, Liberal monarchist cartoonist Francesco Redenti, it appeared in *Il Fischietto* in Turin on 29 September 1860. Redenti states that the Republican acolytes of the exiled Giuseppe Mazzini, who are shown wearing the hats of Jacobin revolutionaries, have reduced the heroic yet gullible Giuseppe Garibaldi to a toddler (he is depicted as such, inside a go-cart and sporting a toddler's facial expression displaying uncontained eagerness, even though he is bearded the way he was in real life), and are manipulating him. The caption is "Gli uomini del DOMANI hanno fatto del nostro EROE un bambino e lo costringono giocare con burattini di carta come se si trattasse con uomini di pelle ed ossa." ("The men of TOMORROW have made of our HERO a child and are forcing him to play with puppets of paper as though they were men of flesh and blood").



The Republican Tempter (the Serpent) is horrified, as Garibaldi (who has conquered Italy's South) is about to consign it to Piedmont's King Victor Emanuel II: the King is shown as he holds the forearms of Garibaldi and of the prime minister Camillo Benso di Cavour, so they would shake hands. "Dio e popolo" ("God and people"), inscribed in this cartoon on the Serpent's body, was the motto of Giuseppe Mazzini, the leader of Italian republicanism. The unsigned cartoon, which above it carried the title *Un desiderio* ("A wish"), and beneath, the caption "Una buona stretta di mano, e l'Italia è fatta" ("A good handshake, and Italy is made"), was published in *Il Lampione* of 29 September 1860. Either way, Garibaldi, the soldier, is presented by these cartoonists as liable to be influenced by politicians or then by revolutionary conspirators. Cavour is shown here as a short man because he was short and stocky, but King Victor Emmanuel II in real life was a very short man, whereas he is drawn in the cartoon shown here, out of deference almost as tall as Garibaldi. Seeking a remedy for the dynasty, Victor Emmanuel II was made to wed the tall and florid daughter of the King of Montenegro. Their son, King Umberto I, was tall; his son Victor Emmanuel III, very short again; out of deference to him, the threshold for rejecting conscripts was 1 cm shorter than he was.

In this cartoon by Redenti, published in *Il Fischietto* of 5 August 1862, Garibaldi's lips are being sewn, so that he could not make statements not to the liking of the rulers of the newly unified Kingdom of Italy. The captions is something being said to Garibaldi: "Out of his love of always for Italy, it is hoped that he will submit to some little surgery, in order to prevent that his tongue would paralyse the deeds of his arm" ("Pel bene che ha sempre voluto all'Italia, si spera che ei si rassegnerà a subire una lieve operazioncella, ad impedire che la sua lingua paralizzi l'opera del suo braccio"). These cartoons have appeared in an anthology of cartoons of the Italian national movement from 1848–1866 (Bibolotti and Calotti 2011). Garibaldi's face here is a caricature, but the other man drawn is a self-portrait of Redenti himself, I think. He is the utterer of the caption.

12. The Talented, the Incompetent, the Duped, and America, Through the Eyes of Other Authors

Olivia Harris has pointed out (1995, pp. 11–12):

> Columbus may be the most mythologised of European 'discoverers' of unknown lands and peoples, but there are many others. A salient figure of comparable stature is Captain Cook who also set sail into the unknown, and with his sailors and crew encountered populations that had no previous experience of white people. According to both academic and popular accounts, Captain Cook was a brilliant navigator, a humanist, and dedicated to exploration, to the advance of civilisation and the frontiers of knowledge. He was killed through the ignorance and error of the Hawaiians. These events have been made well known to anthropologists through the influential but controversial interpretations made of them by Marshall Sahline (1979, 1981, 1985). Columbus is often seen as heralding the dawning of the Renaissance; Cook, by contrast, typifies Enlightenment Man (Obeyesekere, 1992:7). In both cases their historical salience derives in part from the fact that their exploits and achievements exemplify a new spirit, the dawning of a new age. These metaphors of course flow naturally from the concepts of Renaissance ('rebirth') and Enlightenment (dawning). Recently Gananath Obeyesekere has published a critique of the work of both Sahlins and Todorov. His particular concern is the way that they accept uncritically the well-known story that the Europeans, whether in Hawaii or in the Americas, were believed to be gods. At the same time, they implicitly accept the enduring European idea that identifies history with the Europeans, and relegates the non-literate world to the domain of myth.

Some humorists from outside America moved there to stay, and some only visited there. Charles Dickens just visited, and went back to England with a bad opinion, replacing the good opinion of the United States he had previously entertained. Dickens feels dehumanised, having been turned into a spectacle and a hand-shaking machine; once disillusioned with America, he settles for a notion of inadequate manners and civilisation (Meckier 1984).

Immigrant American humorists such as the Hebrew-language, New York based Gerson Rosenzweig (1861–1914) had arrived into the new country with a partly already formed idea of the place, no matter how much more they were going to learn from direct experience while in the new country. This is all the more true so for Sholom Aleikhem, most of whose career as an author had been in Eastern Europe, even though the end of his life was in the United States. But Rosenzweig, like Pascarella with whom we are going to concern ourselves in the rest of this paper, was willing to weave a humorous myth of Columbus discovering America.

By contrast to such humorists who mocked incompetence found in the America, or the incompetence of newcomers to America, the storyteller in Pascarella's *La scoperta de l'America* relates how talented Columbus faced both Old World's and New World's incompetence, and how the two related to deception.

One needs to distinguish between a narrative about Columbus and the discovery of America, and a narrative, however hyperbolic, about life in America. In Rosenzweig's *Tractate America*, a satire which is formally a pastiche (Nissan 2012), the narrative about Columbus is brief and introductory to a satire about immigrant life in New York.[12] Columbus

[12] *Tractate America* (New York, 1892), by the New York-based Gerson (or Gershon) Rosenzweig (1861–1914), is a masterpiece of the Hebrew-language parody genre. It is the apex of the talmudic parody genre, whose beginnings were medieval. Starting with a cosmogony of the continents, then prescient Columbus' anguish lest his discovery be named after him, Rosenzweig mock-aetiologised the names *America* and *New York* jocularly. Rosenzweig then turns to enumerating unflattering categories which according to him feature in immigrant sociology. Therefore, his caustic deprecation is actually collective, communal self-deprecation.

He then proceeded to describe satirically aspects of life inside his own immigrant community, as well as to contrast such situations as the peddler faced with a hostile policemen, to what American institutions ensure in theory. Dagmar Börner-Klein (1998) discussed Rosenzweig's *Tractate America.* Independently, Nissan (2002)

is described as — having gained, by means of astrology, foreknowledge of the situation in America in the future owing to the influx of immigrants: here Rosenzweig mock New York's elite anti-immigrant rhetoric by ostentatiously endorsing it (Nissan 2013) — he prays so he would be spared his name being given to the place.

Sometimes it was a writer born in America who was concerned with woeful incompetence on the part of a local populace. In Brazil, Afonso Henrique de Lima Barreto (1881–1922) provided, in his short story *A Nova Califórnia,* a devastating picture of gradual but rapid degeneration of social behaviour, when the encounter of provincial citizenry with a scholar triggers the same effects as a diabolical temptation, disaggregating — through frantic greed — society in a small town. See Oakley (1983).

Robert Aldrich, in the 1979 western comedy film *The Frisco Kid*, tells a story of individual acculturation that dovetails with the negative stereotype entertained, in the 19th century and later, by old country Jews about the incompetence in Jewish matters of American Jews, tells the story of a newly graduated rabbi, the simpleton of his class, who on his way to California gradually takes liberties with his observance, but becomes quite competent to lead his flock in the Far West.

While mocking both the Western film genre, and 20th-century California, Aldrich's film recreated an image of both the West and California in which proleptically (by anticipation), some of the customs described were contemporary but injected back into the 19th century; e.g., the rabbi drugging himself unwittingly while among Native Americans, and then, while drugged, taking part (and introducing innovations) in a pagan rain dance that results in a downpour; or the cowboy who accompanies him subjecting him to a kind of attentions that the rabbi fails to understand, but viewers are expected to interpret the way the filmmaker intended (the cowboy's attentions, that the rabbi doesn't understand even when the cowboy gets physical, are sexual, and a reference to the *mores* of the second half of the 20th century. The final transformation of the protagonist's personality while in the wastelands occurs when, frightfully, the rabbi shoots to kill (and saves his own and the cowboy's life), whereas in San Francisco he confidently engages in a duel he wins.

In Catholic Italian immigrant culture in Brazil, Aquiles Bernardi's immigrant character Nanetto Pipetta (Bernardi 1956) is hopelessly incompetent and eventually dies because of that, but the friars in Bernardi's entourage also produced popular edifying narratives about edifying characters who are competent and succeed in Brazil. The language of those narratives from Brazil is *talian,* a variant of Italian based on northern Italian dialects — especially the ones of the Veneto region in northeastern Italy — and according to an estimate spoken by about five million people, and understood by ten million, in Brazil (even though actually 80,000 people, perhaps less, moved in 1875–1914 from northern Italy the Brazilian northeast).

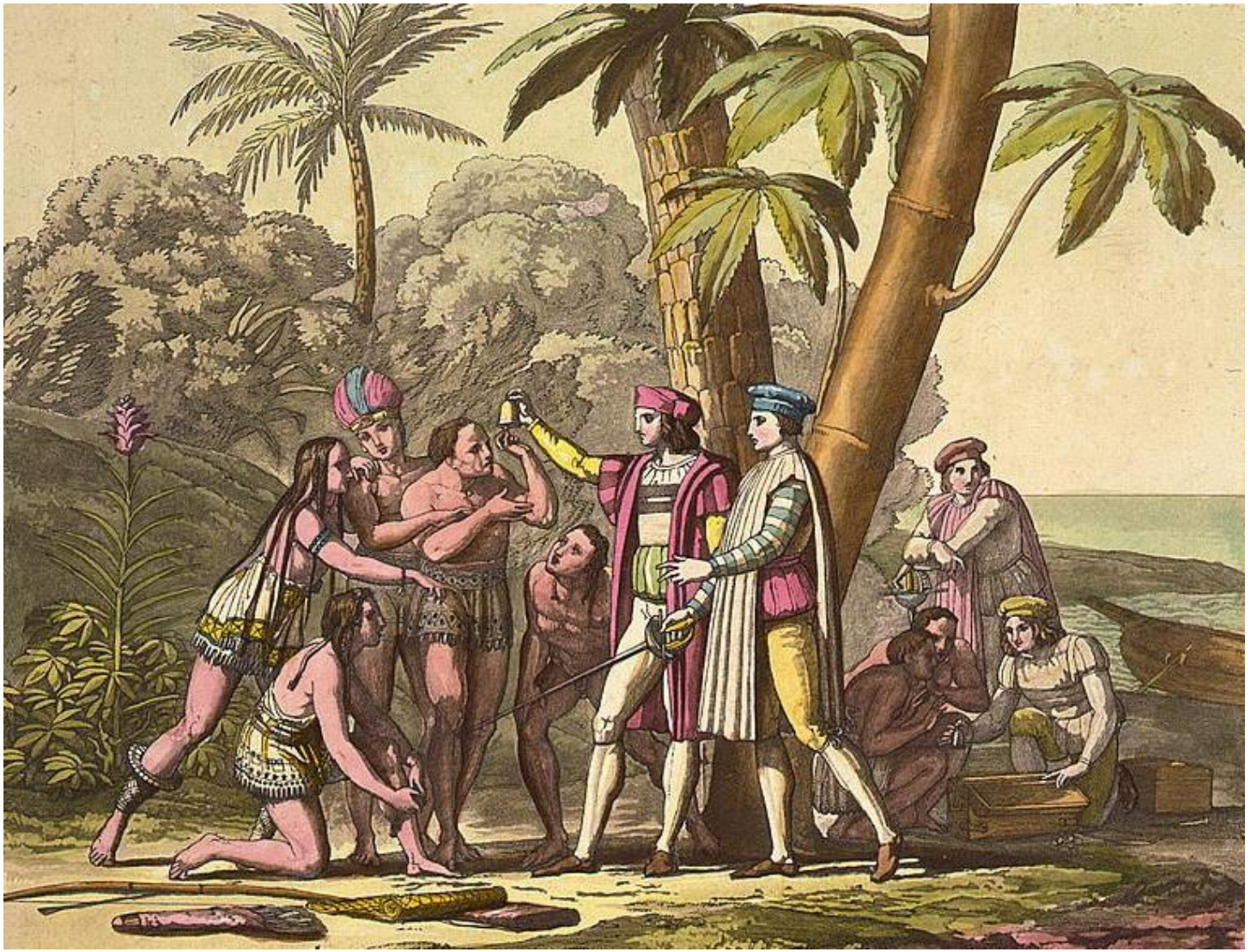
Caxias do Sul, where Aquiles Bernardi's book was published, is mainly inhabited by people of Italian descent. Bernardi's grotesquely titled *Nanetto Pipetta: Nassuo in Italia a vegnudo in Mèrica per catare la cuccagna* [= 'Nanetto Pipetta: Born in Italy, and Having Come to America to Find Prosperity'] is a central literary work in the communal culture of the Italian community in Brazil. See Zilio (2005), Anon. (2000, 2002). Nanetto Pipetta dies as an effect of his sheer socio-cultural incompetence. Italian immigrants to Brazil knew all too well that they were smarter. The numskull, Nanetto, shared in the same culture, but he lacked the basics for survival in any environment. Thus, this is not a self-deprecation satire, as the butt is not collective.

analysed the opening page of that text, in terms of graphically representing the goal-and-plan hierarchy of the narrative (and the narration), thus adopting an approach known from computational models of narrative.

Above: Christopher Columbus on his ship, imagined and painted[13] by Carl von Piloty.[14] Carl (also: Karl) Theodor von Piloty was born in Munich in 1826, and died in 1886 in Ambach am Starnberger See, Bavaria (a town also known as Ambach bei München).

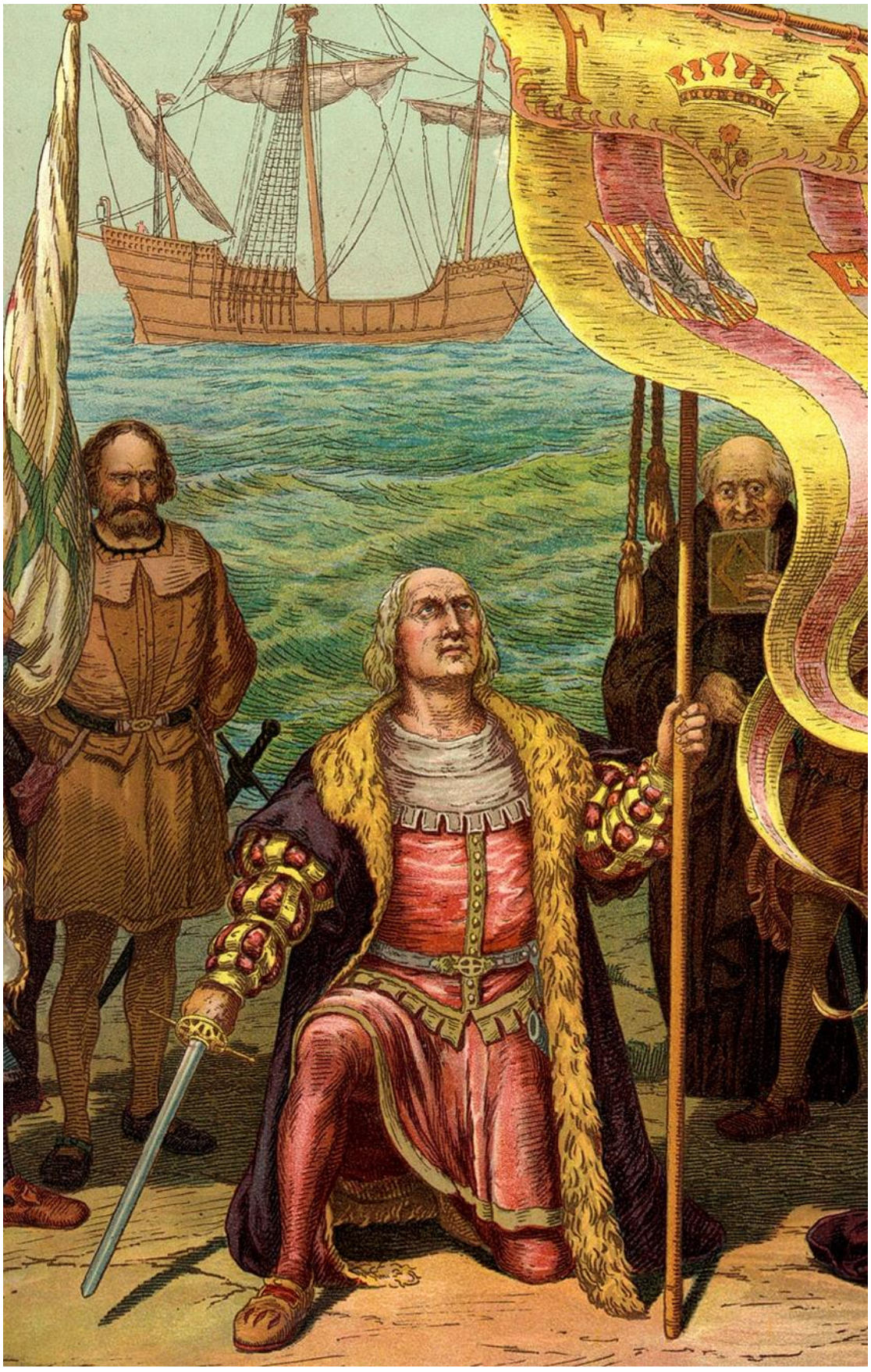
Right: a portrait of the painter.

[13] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christopher_Columbus_by_Carl_von_Piloty.png
[14] https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Theodor_von_Piloty



The Landing of Columbus. Christopher Columbus and others showing objects to Native American men and women on shore. (Library of Congress.) https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viaggi_di_Cristoforo_Colombo#/media/File:Christopher_Columbus6.jpg and http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/080_columbus.html

Columbus taking possession of the country where he landed. Published by the Prang Educational Co., Boston, 1893.
https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viaggi_di_Cristoforo_Colombo#/media/File:Columbus_Taking_Possession.jpg



Detail of the former.

Another detail. Yet another detail is shown on the next page.

13. Americans (Real of Fake), and America and Its Discovery, in Pascarella's Prose

In a playful speech, eventually collected in his authorised collected prose (Pascarella 1920), Pascarella's theme was the painters' manikin ("Il manichino"). The speech was devoted, in a humorous preamble dated 1 January 1885 prior to its original publication (as a booklet in 1885), to Onorato Carlandi, a fellow painter. The speech was the result of a bet between Pascarella and Carlandi at the artists' club, the Circolo Artistico. Pascarella sought to prove that speeches need not be tedious. He wrote "Il manichino", and read it at the club on 18 March 1884. He later returned to the theme in a text, "I manichini all'Esposizione di Torino" ("The Manikins at the Turin Exposition"), that appeared in the weekly *Fanfulla della domenica* of 7 December 1884 (Scalessa 2014).

The following is quoted from pp. 64–68 in the 1920 volume of collected prose, and shows how Pascarella, in the context of that speech, was thinking of Americans[15] as a source of riches, in the case at hand because they include very rich people who are eager buyers of art (but then, not necessarily because they are gullible), and prior to the discovery (or rather, "Invention"!) of America, those Americans, any Americans indeed, did not exist:

> Ci sono molti i quali affermano che il manichino c'era già prima che il mondo esistesse; e costoro aggiungono che basta gittare lo sguardo su tanti quadri, per vedere come su quelle pitture colui che si affanna con le braccia spalancate a creare tutto questo po' po' di mondaccio birbone, non sia altri che un manichino rivestito di stoffe aranciate e azzurre, campeggiante in una bella aureola di giallo di Napoli: ma questa può sembrare un pochino sballata, e così pare anche a me. Non teniamone conto. Scartiamola, e procediamo diritti per la nostra via. Però prima di addentrarci nella selva selvaggia delle induzioni, stabiliamo bene una cosa. Si conoscono o non si conoscono manichini preistorici? Qualcuno di voi potrebbe dirmi che i manichini preistorici esistono, e sono posseduti dal signor Dovizielli ma questo sarebbe uno scherzo e la gravità della mia conferenza ne andrebbe perduta. No, i manichini preistorici fino ad ora non si conoscono. Forse fra qualche mese, fra qualche anno, la scienza, che progredisce sempre nelle scoperte utili, inventerà anche il manichino fossile; ed allora sarà il caso di riparlarne: allora Temistocle Gradi ci farà sù un bel racconto. Paolo Lioy ci scriverà sopra un articolo per il *Fanfulla della domenica* e un Pascarella dell'avvenire lo illustrerà con una nuova conferenza. Auguro a quel Pascarella [p. 65:] dell'avvenire la fortuna di avere innanzi a lui un pubblico così colto, numeroso, e gentile come questo che ora mi ascolta. Assodato, adunque, come i manichini preistorici non esistano, io mi risparmio di sciorinarvi le teorie darwiniane, e vado innanzi.
>
> [There are many who claim that the manikin was there even before the world existed. They say in addition that suffice it to have a look at many paintings, to see how in those paintings, he who goes into the trouble, arms stretched out, to create all this bountiful amount of a knave of a world, is none else than a manikin wearing orange and blue cloth, standing out in a pretty halo died in Neapolitan yellow: this however may appear somewhat off mark, and I too see it that way. Let us ignore it. Let us discard it, and proceed straight away. Nevertheless, before we enter into the depth of the savage forest of inference, let us properly establish one thing. Do we know, or do we not know prehistoric manikins? Somebody in your midst could tell me that prehistoric manikins do exist, and are in the possession of Mr. Dovizielli, but this would be a prank, and would cause the gravitas of my speech to be lost. No, thus far prehistoric manikins are not known to exist. Perhaps in a few months time, in a few years time, science, which always progresses with useful discoveries, will also invent the fossil manikin; and then it would be proper to raise this issue again: at that time, Temistocle Gradi will devise about this a nice story. Paolo Lioy will write about this a report for the [satirical Sunday magazine] *Fanfulla della domenica*, and some Pascarella of

[15] In the same context, Pascarella states that an American buyer would supposedly exhibit a painting he bought at a gallery in New York. An American from the United States is meant. Consider however that there also were collectors in Argentina who were buying paintings in Italy. Achille Chiesa and Achillito Chiesa (son of the former) were shipping agents from Argentina, of Italian origin. They were art collectors as well as stamp collectors, but because of an economic downturn, they had to sell their collection in 1925 (Chiesa et al. 1925–1927; Melasecchi n.d., note 14).

the future will illustrate it with another speech. I which that Pascarella of the future the good luck of being faced with a public as learned, as numerous, and as kind as the one listening to me now. Having ascertained then that prehistoric manikins do not exist, I spare myself the need to expound to you the Darwinian theories, and go ahead.]

Assolutamente è chiaro, o signori, che il manichino ha dovuto comparire sulla superficie della terra subito dopo che l'uomo nella sua qualità di essere ragionevole, e di principe della natura, ha sentito il desiderio di possedere qualche cosa di falso somigliante al vero, ma che però cotesto vero non riuscisse a raggiungerlo mai. Mi spiego. Per ricercare l'origine del manichino, o signori, è necessario, logicamente parlando, di ricercare la origine dell'arte. Quando, o signori, è nata l'arte nel mondo? […]

[It is absolutely clear, Sirs, that the manikin must have appeared on the surface of earth right after man, in his quality as a reasonable being, and the prince of nature, felt the desire of possessing something false that would resemble the real thing, but such that would never attain that real thing. In order to research the origin of the manikin, Sirs, it is necessary, by dint of logic, to research the origin of art.When, Sirs, did art come into this world?] […]

Accertata adunque l'esistenza del pittore nelle prime epoche mondiali, è appunto a quelle epoche che risale l'origine del manichino. Difatti, ammesso una volta il pittore, bisognerà logicamente ammettere la differenza d'ingegno di codesti pittori. E, se ci sono pittori a corto di moneta, ora che governi, comuni e Provincie Dio solo sa quanto spendono e spandono per proteggere l'arte e gli artisti; se vi sono pittori con le tasche vuote ora che si pagano migliaia e migliaia di lire pochi palmi quadrati di tela dipinta; ma figuratevi quali eserciti interminabili di pittori affamati han dovuto passeggiare sulla superficie della terra quando non esistevano nè governi, nè comuni, nè provincie; quando non c'erano Accademie entro le cui pareti si raccogliessero le speranze migliori dell'arte; quando non c'erano mecenati; quando ancora non eran nate quelle famose lotterie per vendere i rimasugli delle Esposizioni; quando non c'erano negozianti di belle arti; **quando, o signori, non esistevano neanche gli americani, poichè a quell'epoca l'America ancora non era stata inventata**. [Added boldface]

[Thus, having ascertained the existence of the painter in the earliest epochs of the world, it is precisely to those epochs that the origin of the manikin is to be traced back. In fact, once one admits the painter, it is logically necessary to admit the difference of ingenuity among these painters. And, if there are impecunious painters, now that governments, town councils, and provincial administration spend lavishly, goodness knows how much, in order to protect art and artists; if there are painters with their pockets empty now that one has to pay thousands and thousands Liras for just a few handbreadths of painted canvas; just imagine how endless armies of hungry painters had to roam the earth when there were no governments, no town councils, no provincial administrations; when there were no Academies within whose walls the best hopes of art were gathered; when there were no patrons of art; when those famous lotteries for selling out the remainders of Expositions still did not exist; when there were no merchants of fine arts; **when, Sirs, there were no Americans either, because at the time America had not been invented [sic! Instead of 'discovered'] as yet**.]

Concludiamo. Ammesso il pittore, abbiam dovuto [p. 67:] logicamente ammettere il pittore affamato. Ammesso il pittore affamato, il problema dell'origine del manichino è risoluto.

[Let us conclude. Having admitted that the opainter exists, by dibnt of logic we had to admit the existence of the hungry painter. Having admitted the existence of the hungry painter, the problem of the origin of the manikin is resolved.]

A me par di vederlo cotesto sventurato inventore. Un giovinotto alto e largo quattro volte me, con una folta capigliatura nera, spiovente sulle sue spalle quadrate con una barbettina a pizzo sul mento. A me par di vederlo, cotesto pittore allupato dell'antichità, con le mani strette nervosamente su la pancia vuota, passeggiare a passi concitati innanzi alla porta del suo studio. Figuratevi che studio! Una capanna immensa costruita coi rami di quegli alberi che ora si vedono verdeggiare soltanto negli scenari delle operette fantastiche. Mi par di vederlo passeggiare e mi par di udirlo bestemmiare in sanscrito, come un turco, perchè il modello da lui fissato non arriva ancora.

> [I have a vision of that hapless inventor [of the manikin]. A young man, four times as tall and big as myself, with thick black hair, flowing on his square shoulders, and sporting a little pointed beard on his chin. I have a vision of this painter of antiquity as hungry as a hunter [literally: as a wolf], his hands clenched nervously on his empty belly, quickly going up and down in front of the door of his studio. Just figure out what a studio! A huge hut, built using the branches of those trees one can only see at present thrive in their green canopies in the backdrop of fancy operettas. I have a vision of him, walking hither and thither, and I imagine him blaspheming in Sanskrit, like a Turk [blaspheming like a Turk is an idiom in Italian; actually Italians tend to blasphemy a lot], because the model with whom he had an appointment was not arriving yet.]
>
> «Per gli Iddii immortali!...» è il pittore allupato che parla ed io traduco liberamente; «per gli Iddii immortali! Quel birbante di modello questa non me la doveva fare. È vero che gli son debitore di parecchie lire sanscrite; ma non gli ho io forse promesso di pagarlo ad usura quando il mio quadro otterrà il lauro della vittoria laggiù nella foresta delle sigillarie ove si terrà la prima esposizione mondiale? La stessa cosa ho promessa al padrone di studio, all'oste, al negoziante di colori, al corniciaio, che mi porterà qui fra non molto una bella cornice di felce dorata, e tutti costoro accondiscesero, e come possono si danno moto perchè il mio quadro abbia successo; e tu solo, vile ciociaro dell'Iran, birbante di un modello, tu solo, mentre tutti si danno moto perchè il mio quadro abbia successo, tu solo, mentre tutti si danno moto non [p. 68] vuoi star fermo? Va, sciagurato, anche senza il concorso della tua persona il mio quadro sarà finito ugualmente!». Questo mi par di sentir dire al pittore sanscrita e mi par di vederlo rientrare nel suo studio; mi par di vedergli adattare intorno a un bastone gli indumenti primitivi, che doveva indossare il modello, stringerli con una fune, rannodarli, allargarli, dargli approssimativamente la parvenza di una forma umana, e cominciare poi tranquillamente il lavoro.
> Non altrimenti, signori, è nato il manichino. Così. […]
>
> ["By the immortal gods!..." It is the painter as hungry as a hunter who is speaking, and I am supplying a free translation. "By the immortal gods! That knave of a model, doing this to me is really way too much. True, I owe him many Sanskrit Liras; but didn't I promise him to pay him a hundrefold once my painting will have won the laurels of victory there, in the sigillaries forest, where they are going to hold the first world exposition? I have promised the same to my studio's landowner, to the publican, to the dyes merchant, to the frame-seller, who is going to bring here in a short time a pretty frame of golden fern, and all of these have agreed, and they do whatever they can so that my painting will succeed; you alone, o vile Ciociarian from Iran, [Ciociaría is Latium's back of beyond,[16] with shepherds wearing the *ciocia,* plural *cioce*, peculiar sandals][17] while everybody else is moving frantically on my behalf, you alone stand by idly? Stay away, you wretch, even without your physical participation my painting is going to be completed nevertheless!" This is what, in my imagination, I hear the Sanskrit painter say, and I see him go back into his studio; and I see him adapt, around a stick, the primitive clothes, that his model was expected to wear, and I see him fasten them with a rope, tie them up, widen them, giving them the look of a human shape, and then begin his work calmly.
> Not otherwise, Sirs, the manikin was born. This is how it was.] […]

In this humorous narrative about primitive settings, Americans stand for modernity, they did not even exist prior to the discovery of America, and yet, their use is for their riches to end up in the pockets of European artists. Modern Americans, and Pascarella was meaning very rich Americans, ones whose riches in Pascarella's times were dwarfing Europe's rich, are a

[16] Cesare Pascarella's father, Pasquale, was of Ciociarian origin. While Rome was part of the papal States, Pasquale Pascarella enrolled in the Roman Legion (Legione Romana) and fought in Italy's First War of Independence, in 1848, fought by Piedmont against Austria. He wed Teresa Bosisio, a pious, illiterate Piedmontese. The couple ran a tobacconist's shop in Via Laurina in Rome.

[17] Cf. http://www.laciocia.it/storia.htm and cf. Mario Alinei's article (2011) about the etymology of *ciocia*. In Pascarella collected prose (1920), the next text was "In Ciociaria". In another text in the 1920 volume of Pascarella's collected prose, "Gita sentimentale" ("Sentimental Outing"), a text whose setting in in northeastern Italy, Pascarella referred (on p. 244) to peasants — when, women, and many children — asleep near the river Brenta, on the verge of leaving for America in order to work in its fields ("Intorno alla carretta dormivano in terra molte donne e moltissimi bambini: erano emigranti che abbandonavano i loro paesi per andare a lavorare in quelli d'America. Il crosciare delle acque del Brenta conciliava il sonno di quella povera gente").

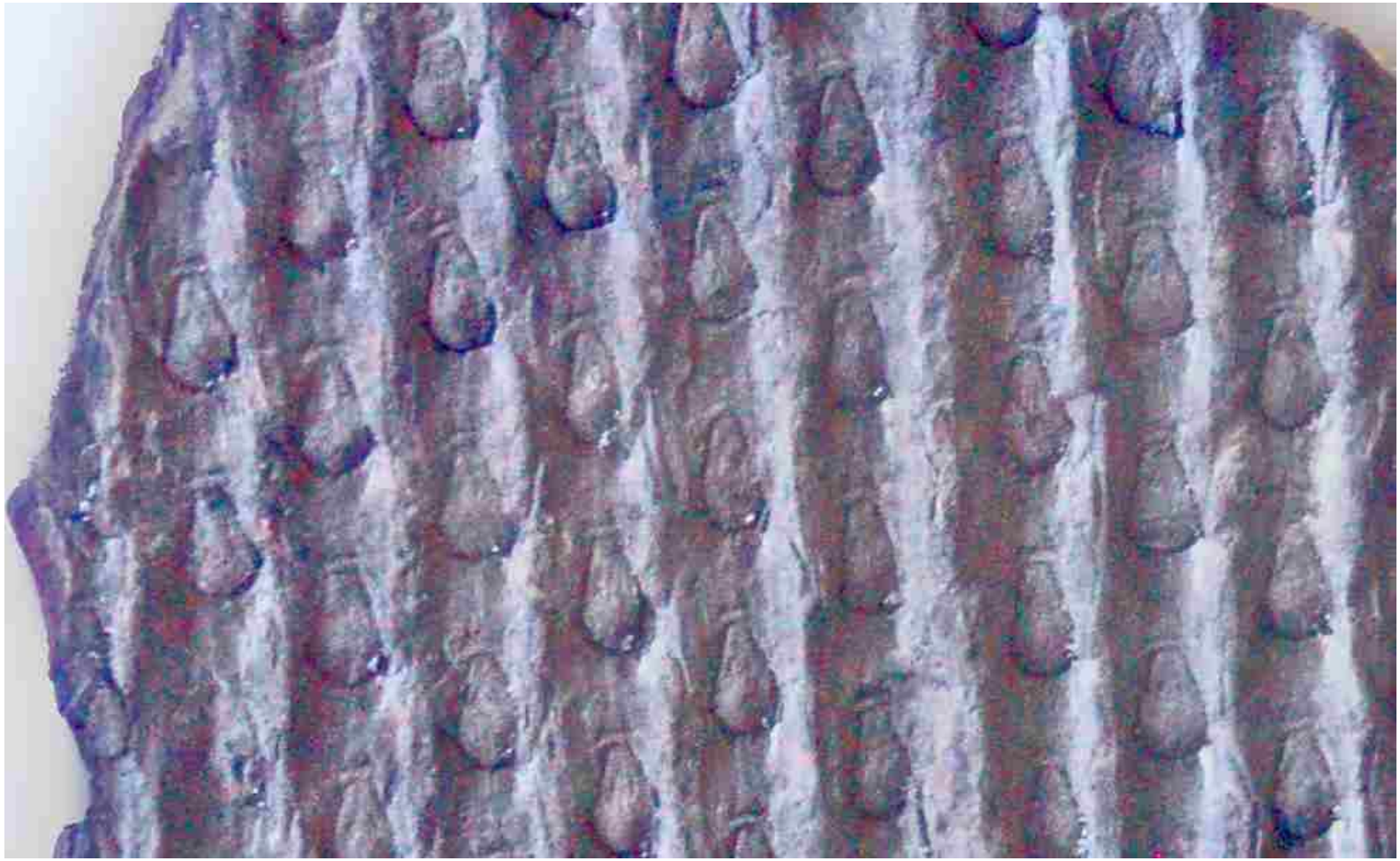
resource for Europeans to exploit. This is what Columbus' men do to the Native Americans they meet.

Cioce worn by men from Ciociaria.

Not unlike the deliberate inaccuracies in the *Discovery of America*, also in the passage quoted and translated from "Il manichino" we find Pascarella being cavalier about mixing up pears and apples, so to speak. The early painter is Sanskrit, and perhaps Pascartella did believe that the earliest culture was Sanskrit, because of the modern myth that originated with philologists in the late 18th century, mushroomed in the 19th, and had horrific developments in Euriope up to 1945: cf. Nissan (2010), Olender (1989, 1994, 2010). (I have no evidence of Pascarella being racist, and have evidence that he was not.) But then when describing the flora surrounding the early, Sanskrit-speaking painter, Pascarella describes it as being a forest of Sigillaria trees. These however are fossil (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigillaria), and their temporal range spans the Carboniferous to the early Permian periods (*ibid*.):

> ***Sigillaria*** is a genus of extinct, spore-bearing, arborescent (tree-like) plants. It was a lycopodiophyte, and is related to the lycopsids, or club-mosses, but even more closely to quillworts, as was its associate *Lepidodendron*. […] This genus is known in the fossil records from the Late Carboniferous period but dwindled to extinction in the early Permian period (age range: from 383.7 to 254.0 million years ago). Fossils are found in United States, Canada, China, Korea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

A *Sigillaria* tree from Stanhope, County Durham, England, preserved as a fossil from coal swamps dating from the mid-Carboniferous. The tree rotted away, while being covered in sand which left a cast. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stanhope_Tree_-_geograph.org.uk_-_2531669.jpg (photograph by Ashley Dace).



The texture of a fossil of *Sigillaria trigona*, on display at the National Museum in Prague. This is a detail of an image found at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/Sigillariaceae_-_Sigillaria_trigona.JPG

Further down in Pascarella's text "Il manichino", one comes across a painter relating about having sold to an American some small artwork for a huge sum (pp. 73–74 in the 1920 volume of collected prose):

> Ma sapete che scenette deliziose avverrebbero se il manichino parlasse!
> Per esempio, incontrate per via un artista, e voi naturalmente fermandolo gli domandate: — Come va?
> — Benone! — vi risponde lui tirandosi i peli radi della barbetta mefistofelica.
> — Che fai?
> — Lavoro.
> — E il quadro?
> — Quello piccolo? L'ho venduto.
> — E quello grande?
> — Ah, quello grande non ci penso neppure a venderlo.
> — Come? Non pensi a venderlo?
>
> [Can you imagine what delicious little scenes would happen if only the manikin would speak!
> For example, you meet an artist in the street, and of course when you stop him you would ask him: — How are you?
> — Not bad! — he replies, pulling the sparse hairs of his Mephistophelic little beard.
> — What are you doing these days?
> — I work.
> — And your painting?
> — The small one? I sold it.
> — And the large one?
> — Oh, I cannot even envisage selling the large one/
> — How that? You don't intend to sell it?]
>
> — No; perchè quello grande l'ho fatto per me. Ho venduto il piccino a un americano per ventimila lire. È poco, lo so; ma glie l'ho dato perchè la galleria in cui sarà esposto è una galleria di primo ordine; ci sono Meissonier, Gérome, Laurens, Makart. Via, si [p. 74] sta in buona compagnia. D'altronde, anche ventimila lire per un quadrettino non sono poche: capisco ciò che vuoi dirmi; ma, sai, i tempi sono cattivi...
> — Davvero. Guarda, giusto ora sta per piovere, ciao!
>
> [— No; because i made the large one for myself. I sold the tiny one to an American for twenty thousand Liras. It's on the cheap, I know; but I gave it to him because the gallery where it is going to be exhibited is a first-rate gallery; there are paintings by Meissonier, Gérome, Laurens, Makart. So my painting is in good company there. Let us admit it; twenty thousand Liras for just a little painting are not too little: I understand what you are trying to tell me, but you know, times are hard…
> — Quite. Look, it's about to rain. Bye!]
>
> Che direste se il manichino di quel pittore vi venisse a rivelare che il quadro venduto all'americano per ventimila lire, invece di stare esposto nella galleria di New York, sta sepolto in un armadio, nello studio, preda dei topi e delle tignuole?
>
> [What would you say if the manikin of that painter would come and reveal to you that the painting sold to that American for twenty thousand Liras, far from being exhibited at the gallery in New York, is buried in a cupboard, in the studio, prey to mice and moths?]
>
> E che direste se, per esempio, vedendo passare un professore serio serio, impettito nell'abito nero, superbo del suo cappello a cilindro lucente tra la folla dei cappellini a cencio, coi nastri delle commende all'occhiello; che direste se un manichino vi venisse a dire, come lui quel professore lo abbia conosciuto quando, con la camicia che gli usciva dalle maniche rotte della giacca, urlava contro le Accademie, e quando, non potendo altrimenti dileggiare quelle istituzioni, di cui ora è orgoglioso di far parte, chiamava il suo cane col titolo di professore?
> Ma il manichino, signori, è discreto, il manichino non parla. […]

> [And what would you say if, for example, upon seeing a professor passing by with quite serious a face, his chest outthrust in his black suit, proud of his shining top-hat in the midst of the crowd of little floppy hats, the ribbons of his decorations in his button-hole; what would you say if a manikin came over and told you how he came to know that professor at a time when, with his shirt coming out of the torn sleeves of his jackets, he used to shout against the Academies, and when, as he could not deride those institutions otherwise, whereas at present he is proud of belonging there, he gave his dog the title of professor?
>
> But the manikin, Sirs, is discreet, the manikin does not speak.] […]

In yet another text by Pascarella, "Le 'Capanne' di Ripetta" ("The 'Huts' of Ripetta") from his volume of collected prose, we are treated to an American claiming to be an inventor. That is to say, instead of America being discovered or, sometimes, "invented", bringing into being the Americans, there is an American who brings an invention to Rome, to the river Tiber. But then it turns out that this was a false American. He was none else but a swimming teacher from Rome. Rowers in boats him as well as praising the discovery of America.[18]

> Ma il maestro di nuoto delle «Capanne» di Ripetta non è soltanto un filantropo a tutta prova, un [p. 261:] nuotatore pronto a sfidare ogni rischio e un ginnasta degno di qualunque circo, anche equestre; ma è eziandio un pescatore senza rivali e un navigatore espertissimo, poichè il letto del Tevere lo conosce assai meglio di quell'altro letto ove ei suol dormire con la sua signora. E, come se ciò già non bastasse, a coteste belle qualità fisiche e morali che adornano il suo corpo e la sua anima egli ne può aggiungere ancora un'altra simpaticissima: quella di essere un maestro impareggiabile nell'architettare burle e mistificazioni, le quali ei suole romanamente nobilitare col nome di *fregature*, e di saperle mettere in esecuzione con una salsa così saporita di serietà allegra da conciliarsi quasi sempre il perdono dei burlati.
>
> [But the swimming teacher[19] from the "Huts" of Ripetta isn't just a tried philanthropist, a swimmer willing to face any risk, and a gymnast fit for any circus, even an equestrian one; he is also an angler with no rivals and quite expert a navigator, because he knows the bed of the river Tiber better than that other bed he shares with his lady. As though this wasn't enough, he supplements these nice physical and moral features ornamenting his body and soul with this other, quite likeable trait: that he is an unsurpassed master at devising pranks and practical jokes, which he ennobles in the Roman manner by calling them *fregature* (swindles), and which he knows how to carry out with such a savoury dauce of merry seriousness that almost always he obtains his victim's forgiveness.]
>
> Una volta, ricordo, venne annunciato sui giornali l'arrivo a Roma di un americano, un certo capitano Boyton, inventore di un vestiario nero nonchè insommergibile, che permetteva al suo proprietario di poter galleggiare in tutti i mari, per tutti i fiumi e su tutti i laghi del Globo. L'americano aveva fatto sapere, con manifesti appiccicati alle cantonate, il giorno, e press'a poco anche l'ora, in cui egli sarebbe giunto a Roma da Terni, percorrendo la Nera ed il Tevere, per mostrare la sua invenzione impermeabile ai pronipoti del console Cajo Duilio.
>
> [I recall one time, when the newspapers announced the arrival in Rome of an American, a captain Boyton, the inventor of almost unsinkable black clothing , enabling its owner to float on all seas, all rivers and all lakes of the Globe. The American had made known, by means of posters on the walls, the day and the tentative time he would arrive in Rome from Terni, through the rivers Nera and Tiber, so he would show his impermeable invention to the great-grandchildren of the Consul Caius Duilius.]
>
> I pronipoti del console s'erano già affollati sulle rive del fiume, ansiosi di ammirare l'*omo galleggiante*, quand'ecco che scorgono da lontano un gruppo di barchette imbandierate. Le

[18] Contrast this to an episode from the 1970s or 1980s, related with despair by a columnist in the economics newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, about an unnamed American president on visit, who, faced with a crowd of Communists shouting rabidly at him, told an aid: "Let us forget about this country". And forget they did. The columnist concluded: "Forgotten".

[19] Pascarella also published elsewhere a humorous poem about a swimming teacher plying his trade and advising his prospective pupil and then pupil.

barchette s'avvicinano e, mentre i vogatori gridano a perdifiato: **— Viva il Capitano! Viva Boyton! Viva Cristoforo Colombo! Viva la scoperta dell'America! —** in mezzo a moltissimi nuotatori, che galleggiano muovendo furiosamente le braccia e le gambe, tutti distinguono un [p. 262] uomo vestito di nero, disteso sulle acque bionde passare immobile, trasportato dalla corrente.

[The great-grandchildren of the consul were already crowded on the river banks, eager to admire the "floating man", when they detected in a distance a group of little boats carrying banners. Those boats approached and, whereas the rowers were shouting at the top of their voices: "Hurray for the Captain! Hurray for Boyton! Hurray for Christopher Columbus! Hurray for the discovery of America!" in the midst of a great many swimmers, who were floating by moving their arms and legs frantically, everybody saw a man dressed in black, lying on the blond water[20] and passing through motionless, carried by the stream.]

Dalle finestre, dalle loggette, dai mignani e dalle terrazze delle case, che si specchiano da secoli nelle onde gialle del fiume famoso all'universo, vien cavata fuori qualche bandiera; la folla accalcata sui gradini del porto di Ripetta applaude e saluta l'*omo galleggiante*; e questi, sempre immobile sul pelo dell'acqua, prosegue il suo viaggio fra una cagnara di casa del diavolo, e, arrivato a ponte S. Angelo, prende terra fra un multicolore sventolìo di stendardi e fra un assordante scoppiettare di crepitacoli e di applausi che l'acqua, buona conduttrice del suono, questa volta, aiutata anche dalla corrente, porta lontano lontano, forse fino al mare.

[From the windows and balconies of the houses,[21] which for centuries have been mirroring themselves in the yellow waves of the world-famous river, some banner was taken out. The crowd crammed on the stairs of the port of Ripetta applauded and hailed the "floating man". He, still motionless at the water's surface, continued his journey in the midst of a hellish uproar, and, having arrived at Sant'Angelo Bridge, he landed in the midst of a many-coloured waving of banners and a deafening letting off of crackers and clapping which the water, a good conductor of sound, this time, helped also by the stream, carrying far away, perhaps as far as the sea.]

L'animoso Boyton, il quale non era altri se non il maestro di nuoto delle «Capanne», prima di lasciare la riva di Castel S. Angelo ringraziò e salutò con suoni e con gesti, veramente non tutti americani, la gente addensata sul ponte Elio; e quindi, accompagnato rumorosamente dai suoi seguaci, se ne tornò glorioso e trionfante a Ripetta, ove sotto gli alberi fronzuti numerosi ammiratori gli offrirono un solennissimo e lauto simposio, non che i mezzi per potere agevolmente dimostrare come e quanto ei sapesse essere insommergibile non soltanto nell'acqua, ma anche nel vino.

[The courageous Boyton, who was none else than the swimming teacher from the "Huts", before he left the bank of Castel Sant'Angelo, thanked and saluted by sounds and gestures, to tell the truth not all of them American, the people crowded on the Elio Bridge. Next, accompanied noisily by his followers, he returned gloriously to Ripetta, when under the leafy trees numerous admirers offered him quite a solemn and rich banquet, as well as the means for him to easily prove that he was unsinkable not only in water, but also in wine.]

In the one text from the 1920 book of prose by Pascarella that had not been published before, "Il Caffè Greco" (originally of 1890, about artists in Rome), Pascarella mentions a painter working on a painting showing Columbus as he lands in America (p. 362), and hires as a model (as he wants to depict a Black man in newly discovered America) the protagonist

[20] It is a cliché that the river Tiber is "il biondo Tevere" ("The blond Tiber"). In fact, in Rome its waters are brownish yellow.

[21] The original has "Dalle finestre, dalle loggette, dai mignani e dalle terrazze delle case", that is to say: "From the windows, the *loggette* (arcades, colonnanded or arched ground-floor corridors open on the street side), the *mignani* (first-floor balconies above the house entrance, and almost as wide as the façade), and the balconies of the houses". The noun *mignano* is Roman, and it also denotes a long balcony-cum-corridor looking on an internal courtyard of a house. This other sense of the word is similar to colonnaded first-floor corridors open on the internal courtyard in affluent "courtyard houses" in the vernacular architecture of the Arab East. In Iraq, such a corridor is called ***ṭ****arma* (Nissan 2016; cf. Golany 1999, Edwards 2006, Warren and Fet**ḥ**i 1982, Noor 1986, Hyland and Al-Shahi 1986, IASTED 1988).

Via di Ripetta is a street in the historical centre of Rome, in the Campo Marzio quarter (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_di_Ripetta). Shown here is a painting by Bernardo Bellotto (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernardo_Bellotto_-_View_of_Via_di_Ripetta_in_Rome_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg), painted in 1742–1744, being a view of Via di Ripetta, and from 1964 at the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf, Germany. The size is 875 mm (34.45 in) × 1,490 mm (58.66 in).

Detail (no. 1) of the view of Via di Ripetta in Rome, painted in 1742–1744 by Bernardo Bellotto.

Detail (no. 2) of the view of Via di Ripetta in Rome, painted in 1742–1744 by Bernardo Bellotto.

Detail (no. 3) of the view of Via di Ripetta in Rome, painted in 1742–1744 by Bernardo Bellotto.

Detail (no. 4) of the view of Via di Ripetta in Rome, painted in 1742–1744 by Bernardo Bellotto.

Detail (no. 5) of the view of Via di Ripetta in Rome, painted in 1742–1744 by Bernardo Bellotto.

of much of the context, a Moor (originally a Muslim) who was brought apparently to Italy by missionaries (p. 360). Before being hired as a model by the painter, he had been exhibited as a ferocious cannibal from the pristine forests (*sic*) of Patagonia, and every evening is shown writhing inside a cage as a display of ferocity, and is thrown a live chicken which he plucks and then strangles as an example of that same ferocity. The narrator meets him later at the Caffè Greco. The African man is eventually on the verge of wedding a Roman girl with whom he has fallen in love, but they are forcibly separated by her father, who had been exploiting her as a prostitute. That is the real reason, Pascarella explains, why the father was opposed to his daughter liaison. But he would tell her: "Nun vojo turchi a casa mia" ("I don't want Turks [Muslims] in my home"). The girl, though frightened, told him that her Natale (Noel) is a Christian, but her father retorted: "Io a li cristiani neri nun ce credo" ("I don't believe in Black Christians"). The couple did not marry, but their liaison continued, until Natale died of tuberculosis (p. 363). After her father's death, the woman finds another harsh exploiter.

We see then a motif found in Pascarella's verse in his *Discovery of America,* also appear in "Il Caffè Greco": the painter figures out an African in the newly discovered America, and in this, the actual painter was not unlike the storyteller in the *Discovery of America*. At the freak show, Natale is "Americanised" into a Patagonian; Pascarella lays bare the mechanism by which colonised humans are represented according to the whims of their masters.

African people being exhibited in a cage was a phenomenon in the late 19th and early 20th century, when at German zoos there were cages not only for animals, but also for "primitive" humans. In the present contentxt, it is interesting that the "Moor" Natale was exhibited at a freak show by passing him off as a Patagonian cannibal. Also in Pascarella's *Discovery of America* there is a mix-up, a misascription of African things to America, which Pascarella puts in the mouth of the storyteller. We have also seen that Natale posed as a model for a painter who inserted his likeness in an imagined discovery of America.

In "Il Caffè Greco", Pascarella previously mentions a woman artist from America who eloped when she was sixteen, and came to Italy to study sculpture (p. 345). In "Il Caffè Greco", Pascarella also relates about liberal conspirators who used to gather at that café, passing themselves as artists and using false names and "passaporti americani, inglesi, maltesi o di altre parti del mondo" ("American, British, Maltese, or other passports"). The Papal police was wary of probing too much, lest in case of error, diplomatic incidents would ensue (p. 315).

14. The Pull of Carnival, and the Pull of Man's Inhumanity to Man

Among Pascarella's sonnets, one finds the sonnet *Li pajacci* (*The Clowns*),[22] whose focus is actually about the acrobats, not the clowns. The "trapeso americano", which how in the Roman dialect the trapeze is called (*trapezio* in standard Italian) brings about death in the situation described in the sonnet: it is unreliable, so again we are faced with the co-occurrence of unreliability with America. Whereas in the epic about the discovery, the natives at first trusted the newcomers, and in Pascarella's prose we come across various fake Americans, in the sonnet *Li pajacci* the acrobats die because they trusted the trapeze, which is not just a trapeze, but an American trapeze. A woman tells a male acquaintance about a deadly accident she saw at the circus; after the accident, clowns were brought in:

[22] Under the title *Li pajacci,* that sonnet opened the 1920 collection of Pascarella's sonnets, but a slightly different version had already been published (under the title *A li giochi de li cavalli,* 'At the Horses Games', which is how people would have referred to a circus) in July 1881, in *La cometa del 1881: Strenna del Capitan Fracassa* (a book published by the magazine *Capitan Fracassa*).

Si me ce so' trovata, sor Ghetano?	If I was there, Mr. Gaetano?
Quanno vennero giù, stavo lì sotto!	When they fell down, I was there, below!
Faceveno er trapeso americano;	They were doing the American trapeze;
Quanno quello più basso e traccagnotto,	When the shorter, sturdier one,
Facenno er mulinello, piano piano,	Doing a twirl, slowly slowly,
Se mésse sur trapeso a bocca sotto,	Put himself hanging down from the trapeze,
Areggenno er compagno co' le mano.	Holding his companion in his hands.
Mentre stamio a guardà, tutt'in un botto	While we were looking, suddenly
Se rompe er filo de la canoffiena,	The rope of the swing snapped,
Punfe!, cascorno giù come du' stracci.	Bang! They fell down like two rags,
Che scena, sor Ghetano mio, che scena!	What a scene, Mr. gaetano, what a scene!
Li portorno via morti, poveracci!	They took them away dead, too bad for them.
Sur sangue ce buttorno un po' de rena,	On the blood, they threw some sand,
E poi vennero fora li pajacci.	And afterwards the clowns came out.

This is one of several sonnets by Pascarella whose point is inhumanity in ordinary life. In his epic about the discovery of America, there is inhumanity towards the natives, as well as inhumanity in how Columbus is dealt with upon his return. Whereas sonnets like *Li pajacci* convey they message bluntly, in the *Discovery of America* there is a strong element of carnival. The latter was quite attractive for Pascarella because of his rebellious temperament in his youth, rebellious at school and then at art school, a result being that he often chose donkeys as a theme for his visual art,[23] and became masterly at conveying nuances in his different depictions odf donkeys, suggesting this or that human quality. And after all, we find carnival even in *Li pajacci:* after all, the setting is a circus.

Let us consider how Pascarella conveys a sense of release in a context where Carnival is explicitly evoked, when a group of artists go to eat a typical Roman Jewish dish at the Ghetto. This is the theme of his narrative prose "Carciofolata" ("The Outing to Eat Artichokes").[24] It was first published in the weekly *Fanfulla della domenica*, on 13 Aprile 1884.

In "Carciofolata", Pascarella described this scene (pp. 290–291 in the 1920 collection of his prose); in real life, he undertook such initiatives indeed:

> Nel silenzio viene da lontano un trillare leggiero di mandolini e le ultime case del vicolo si veggono colorire a poco a poco da una pallida luce giallognola. Due gatti balzan fuori da un mondezzaio e spariscono nella feritoia d'una cantina, e un cane «lupetto» si mette a correre verso il chiarore, abbaiando.
>
> [In the silence, a light trill of mandolins is coming from a distance, and the last few houses of the alley are seen to take colour, little by little, from a pale yellowish light. Two cats jump out of garbage, and disappear in the embrasure of a cellar, and a little Alsatian dog comes running towards the faint light, barking.]

[23] Scalessa (2014). Pascarella even defined himself "pittore d'asini" ("a painter of donkeys"). Pascarella's was a collaborator of various periodicals in Rome, with both verse and prose. According to an apparently inaccurate anecdote, he began collaborating with the magazine *Capitan Fracassa* in late March 1881 (he actually did as early as March the 9th), after a show at the Costanzi theatre, where Pascarella acted dressed as an ape, as part of a "Museum of impossible animals" staged by the members of the artists' club (Scalessa 2014). In 1888, Pascarella exhibited at the Bologna National Exhibition a bronze head of a donkey he had earlier modelled in clay. Pascarella was often invuted to declaim his verse, and Bizzarri (1941, p. 93, quoted in Scalessa 2014), "non vi fu dama romana che non avesse nel suo album un asinello del Pascarella" ("there was no Roman lady of rank who did not have in her album a little donkey by Pascarella").

[24] In *Il mio Novecento,* her posthumous memoirs of the 20th century, the Italian journalist Camilla Cederna (2011) pointed out that after the anti-Jewish racial laws were enacted in 1938, "sulle liste delle trattorie i carciofi alla giudia diventano carciofi all'ariana". That is to say: "On the menu at restaurants, the [Roman dish] *carciofi alla giudia* (Jewish-style artichokes) became *carciofi all'ariana* (Aryan-style artichokes)".

> I trilli dei mandolini si avvicinano; il chiarore cresce e all'improvviso una festa di luce e di colori, una allegrezza di suoni e di canti invade la stradicciuola. Le finestrelle, le loggette e i mignani s'empiono subito di ragazze dai begli occhi neri e curiosi e i portoncini e le scalette si affollano di giovinotti e di vecchi che allungano il collo verso il fondo del vicolo, da dove rischiarato con fiaccole e bengala s'avanza un gruppo numeroso e pittoresco di suonatori strimpellando mandolini e chitarre. Essi hanno in capo grandi tube ornate di fiori e son tutti vestiti con abiti vistosi di forme disusate, i quali fan ridere i giovani e ricordano ai vecchi gli anni lontani della loro adolescenza. Le esclamazioni di sorpresa e le dimande si incrociano fra i portoncini e le finestrelle: — *Che è successo?...* — *Che d'è?...* ***— È ritornato carnevale?...*** — *Chi so'?* E una voce, superando il frastuono delle voci, degli strumenti e delle risate di cui ormai il vicolo è pieno, risponde: — *So' li pittori che vanno a magnà' li carciofoli, in Ghetto*. — All'udire tali parole gli uomini battono le [p. 291:] mani e le donne sorridono.
>
> [The trills of the mandolins come closer; the faint light increases, and suddenly a feat of light and colours, a merriment of sounds and songs invades the alley. The little windows, the balconies are filled right away with girls with pretty black, curious eyes, and the little doors and short staircases are crowded with young and old men who protend their necks towards the end of the alley, from where, elightened by torches and Bengal lights, a numerous and picturesque group of players advances, as they strum on mandolins and guitars. They wear large top-hats ornamented with flowers, and all of them are dressed with showy, quaintly shaped clothes, which cause mirth among the young, and remind old people of their bygone teenage years. Exclamations of surprise and questions cross over between the little doors and little windows: "What happened?" "What is it?" **"Has carnival came back?" [added boldface]** "Who are they?" And one voice, overriding the clamour of the other voices, of the musical instruments, and of the lauyghter with which the aleey is by now filled, replies: "They are the painters going to eat artichokes in the Ghetto". Upon hearing these words, the men clap and the women smile.]

Then however, at the tavern, ran by a recognisably Jewish depiction of a man, Mr. Pacifico, with curly hair and a pot belly and yet described as a handsome man, as he tells people who want to come in that the place is already full with painters and only painters are admitted, the scene turns into a noisy charivari, he slams the door, and somebody breaks the glass-window. What is more, we are told before that as the painters hurry to take their place inside the tavern, they deliberately make a clamour with the cutlery. It is they who clamour first, before the crowd outside riots. This carnival scene is idyllic at first, but this being Pascarella, even though the carnival progresses, events turn too rowdy for comfort. We have seen precisely such an evolution of the situation in the *Discovery of America,* after Columbus' men land, and afterwards once the natives come to have reasons to want them out.

In "Carciofolata", the plot turns back to a benign situation, as one of the painters tries to begin a semi-serious speech about the botany of artichokes but is shouted down, and then Mr. Pacifico takes things in hand; food is served, and carnival is again benign (pp. 292–293):

> Il sor Pacifico si fa innanzi, accolto da una tramontanata di fischi, di urli, di applausi e di risate, sale sur una sedia e con le mani alzate fa cenni per implorare un po' di pazienza; poi scende ed apre la porta di un meschino cortiletto, dove alcuni omini vestiti di bianco, fra nuvole di fumo azzurro, si affaccendano intorno a caldaie nere, piene d'olio bollente, per estrarne i carciofi, che sembrano d'oro, e gittarli entro a canestre coperte da candidi tovaglioli.
>
> [Mr. Pacifico comes forth, welcomed by a storm of whistles, shouts, clapping and laughter. He mounts on a chair,[25] raises his hands, and gestures to beg for patience. He then descends from the chair of opens the door to a miserable little courtyard, where some little men dressed in white, amid clouds of blue smoke, are busy around black kiers full of boiling oil, taking out the artichokes, which appear to be golden, and throwing them inside large baskets covered with candid towels.]
>
> Appena il sor Pacifico apre la porta della cucina ne esce subito uno degli uomini bianchi, sorreggendo con le braccia robuste una di coteste canestre. Dopo [p. 293] qualche istante è vuota! Altre canestre colme di carciofi vengono recate sulle tavole, altre e poi altre, e non appena vi sono posate mostrano il fondo.

[25] Caleb stands on a bench, asks for silence, and then refutes the Explorers' report, in *Numbers Rabbah* 15:11.

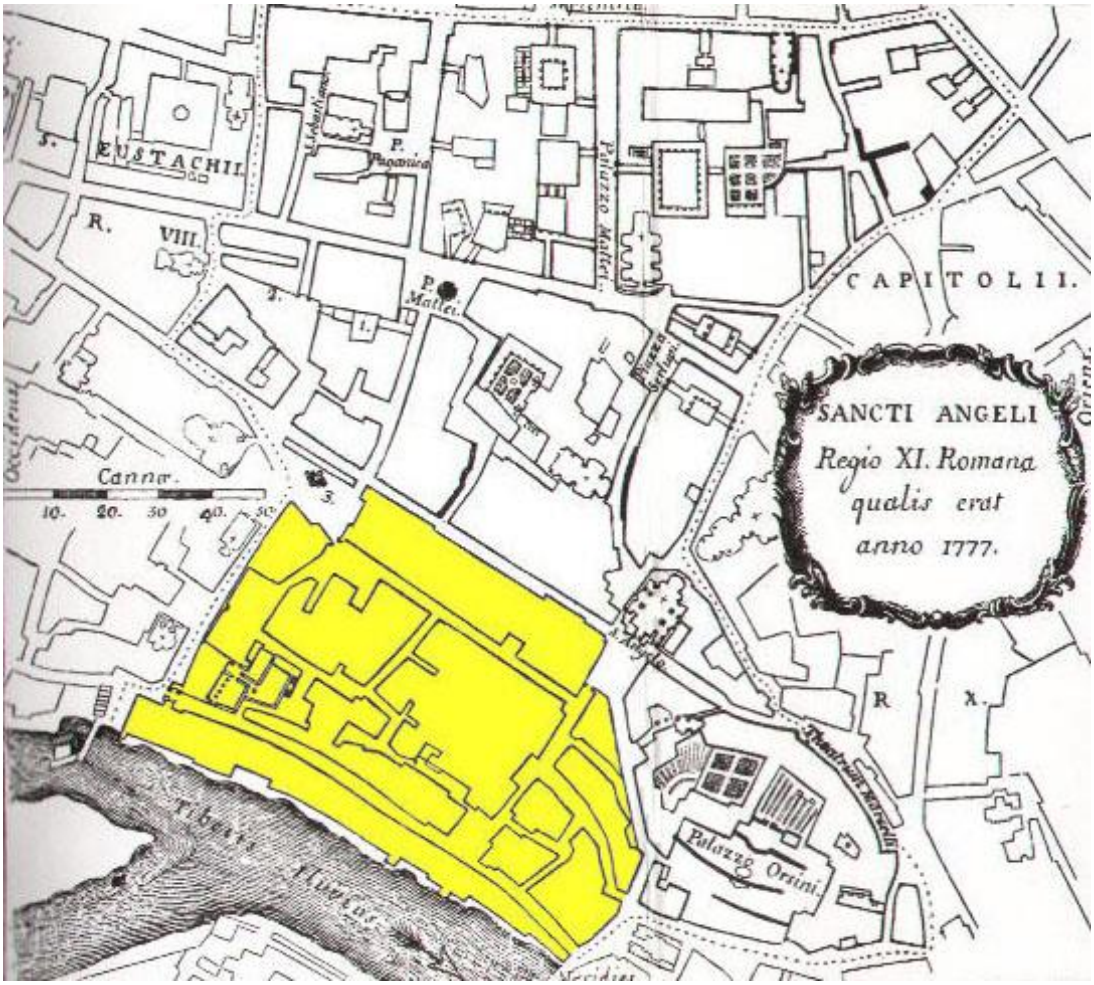
[As soon as Mr. Pacifico opens the door to the kitchen, immediately one of the men dressed in white comes out, supporting in his robust arms one of those baskets. In just a few instants, it is emptly! Other baskets full of artichokes are carried to the tables, then more and more of them, and as soon as there is cutlery, one sees the bottom of the basket.]

Tutti mangiano ghiottamente e bevono. I carciofi, si sa, prosciugano la gola e il vino per bagnarla non è mai troppo. I litri si vuotano senza contarli. E il vino dà un dolce calore alle vene, arrossa i volti, rinforza i corpi e intenerisce gli animi. I «filetti di baccalà», una specialità del locale!, vengono dopo i carciofi ad accrescere in tutti la voglia di bere; e quando una enorme zuppa inglese, scortata da qualche bottiglia di liquore, segue i «filetti», i ricordi gli aneddoti le rimembranze e le memorie si propagano da una tavola all'altra, recandovi ora una sincera allegrezza ora una soave mestizia.

[Everybody eats gluttonously and drinks. Artichokes, you know, dry up the throat, and the wine to wet it is never enough. Innumerable litres are emptied. And the wine gives a sweet heat to the veins, reddens the faces, strengthens the bodies, and softens the spirits. The stockfish filets (a speciality of this restaurant!), come after the artichokes, and increase in everybody the desire to drink. And when a huge trifle (literally: 'English soup'), escorted by some bottles of liquor, follows the filets, the memories, the anecdotes, the reminiscences, and things of which one is reminded propagate from a table to the other, bringing there sometimes sincere merriment, some other times suave melancholy.]

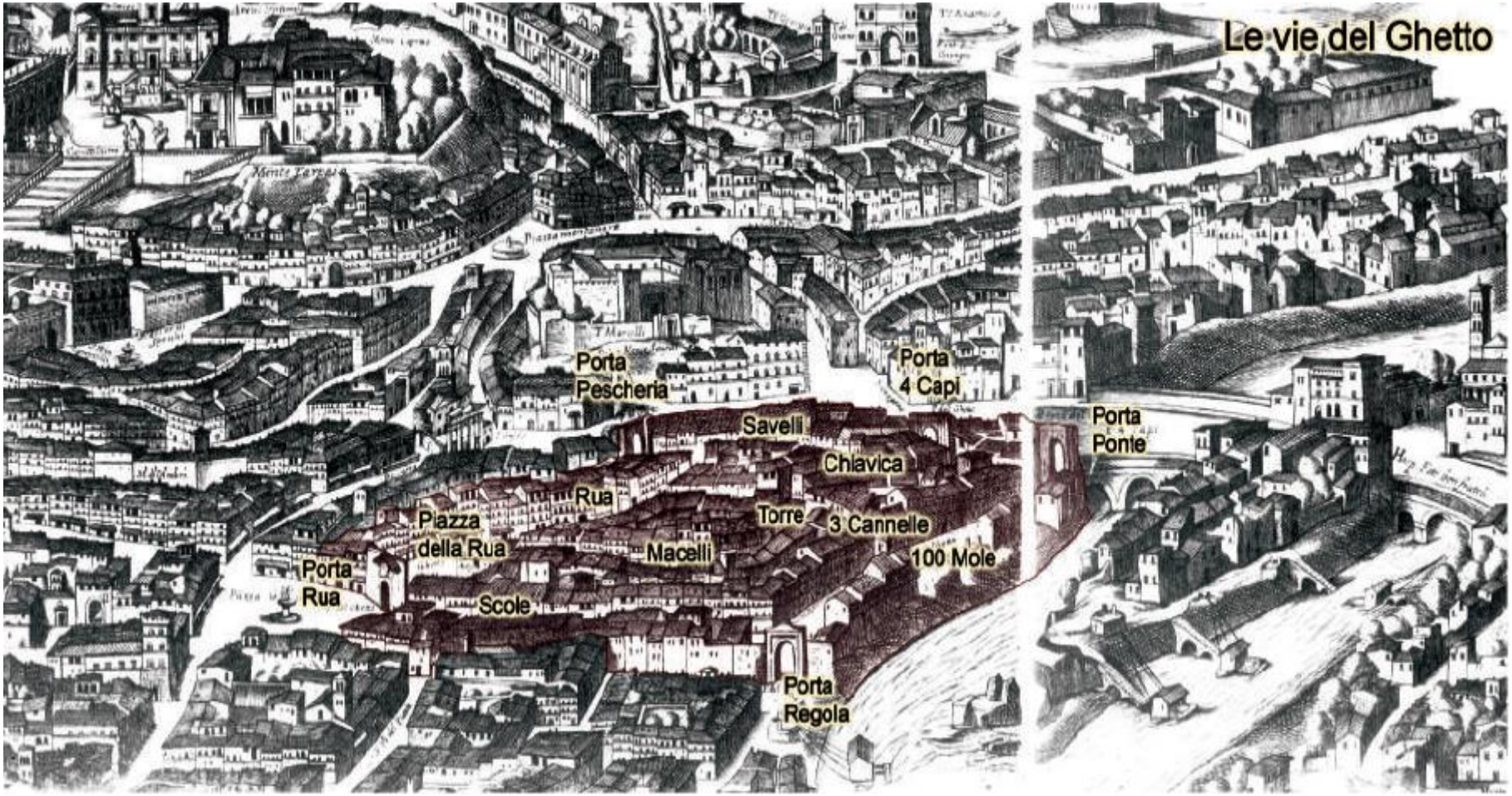
Carciofi alla giudía, a Roman, originally Jewish Roman dish, with tender hearts and crisp leaves.[26]

[26] "Artichokes of the Romanesco variety, which are harvested between February and April in the coastal region northwest of Rome, between Ladispoli and Civitavecchia, are the best for this dish. The artichokes are cleaned with a sharp knife, eliminating all the hard leaves with a spiral movement. They are then beaten together to open them. They are left for some minutes in water with lemon juice, then seasoned with salt and pepper and deep fried in olive oil. The last touch consists in sprinkling a little cold water on them to make them crisp. At the end they look like little golden sunflowers and their leaves have a nutty crunchiness. They are eaten warm." Quoted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi_alla_giudia (from which also the image is taken; it was uploaded in 2010 by Simone Lippi).



A map, published by Monaldini in 1777, and showing the area of Rome's Rione Sant'Angelo, part of whose territory was the Roman Ghetto[27] in which the Jews were confined until 1870. The area of the Ghetto is coloured in yellow here.[28] "The **Roman Ghetto** or **Ghetto of Rome**, Italian: *Ghetto di Roma*, was a Jewish ghetto established in 1555 in the Rione Sant'Angelo, in Rome, Italy, in the area surrounded by present-day Via del Portico d'Ottavia, Lungotevere dei Cenci, Via del Progresso and Via di Santa Maria del Pianto, close to the River Tiber and the Theatre of Marcellus. With the exception of brief periods under Napoleon from 1808 to 1815 and under the Roman Republics of 1798–99 and 1849, the ghetto of Rome was controlled by the papacy until the capture of Rome in 1870".[29]

[27] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto
[28] https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=26301077 or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto#/media/File:RioneSAngeloInRomaByMonaldini,_coloured_to_show_the_ghetto.jpg
This is a modification of the Wikimedia file RioneSAngeloInRomaByMonaldini.jpg
[29] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto



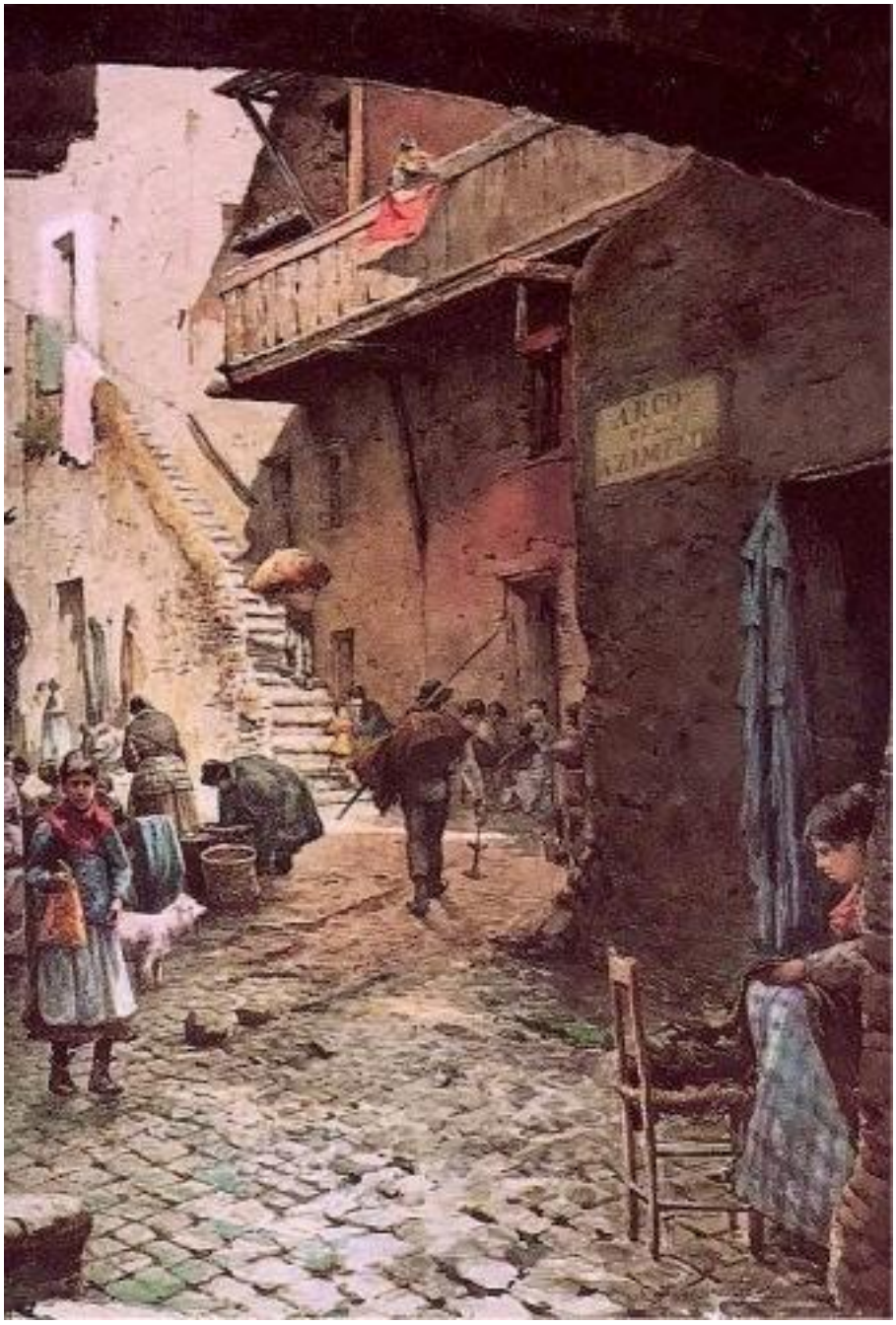
A bird's view of the Ghetto of Rome, from a source of 1693 (*Collezione Disegni e Piante, Disegno et prospetto, dell'alma città di Roma già delineato da Antonio Tempesta, di nuovo ritagliato, accresciuto, et abbellito* [...] *nel pontificato di N. S. Innocenzo XII. Con la cura di Giovanni Giacomo De Rossi, l'anno 1693*), with labels identifying the main streets of the Ghetto added by Micol Ferrara (2014).

An engraving by Giuseppe Vasi (1752), showing Piazza Giudia, part of which was inside the Ghetto, and part outside. The gate of the Ghetto is middle right.

An engraving of 1820: the Portico di Ottavia (the *porticus Octaviae*, from the Augustan era). It is often symbolically associated with the Ghetto of Rome. From the Middle Ages until 1885 its *propylaeum* hosted a fish market. https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_British_Library_-_Rome_-_Portico_di_Ottavia.jpg

Via Rua in Ghetto, a street inside the Ghetto of Rome, in a watercolour[30] (ca. 1880) by Ettore Roesler Franz (Rome, 1845 – Rome, 1907).[31]

[30] https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cd/ViaRuaInGhettoByRoeslerFranz.jpg
[31] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ettore_Roesler_Franz



The Arco delle Azimelle in a watercolour[32] by Ettore Roesler Franz (ca. 1880).[33] The *azimelle* (in standard Italian: pane àzzimo) are Jewish unleavened breads, which were produced in a bakery in this lane.

[32] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto#/media/File:ArcoDelleAzimelleInGhettoByRoeslerFranz.jpg

[33] The following is quoted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ettore_Roesler_Franz : "Ettore Roesler Franz (11 May 1845 – 26 March 1907) was an Italian painter and photographer of German origin. Roesler Franz was born in Rome. He was a specialıst in the technique of watercolor. His most famous work is a series of 120 aquarelles (water colors) named 'Roma sparita' (*disappeared Rome*), which depict with great realism parts of the city he supposed were going to be destroyed in the effort to modernize it. Many of his watercolors are in the Museum of Rome in Trastevere. In 1902 he was portrayed by Giacomo Balla in a famous painting exhibited at the Venice Biennale. He died in Rome in 1907".

15. Conclusions and Further Considerations

I. In this article, we have discussed facets of a humorous literary work of 1894 by Cesare Pascarella in Rome's dialect of Italian (*romanesco*), *La Scoperta de l'America*. It is an epic about Columbus consisting of sonnets. The lower-class identity and related limitations (in terms of lack of education) of the storyteller who is the narrator create a tension between the epic subject, and the means of the storyteller, means that are inadequate for weaving a real epic. And yet, the end result is not quite a mock-epic. Pascarella is not mocking Columbus. He is not quite, or not only, mocking his naive storyteller either. Rather, Pascarella uses the inadequacies of the narrator in order to effect a transfiguration: because of the discrepancies between what readers know about Columbus and what the storyteller is relating, general themes involving real pathos are brought to the foreground, and are conducive to general considerations about the human condition.

Much of the humour depends upon the posture by which the narrator, a storyteller at a Roman tavern or restaurant, naively distorts Columbus' circumstances. Pascarella also conveys through the narrator his own ideas about the fate of talented people in Italy, who have to go abroad, and also Pascarella's ideas about widespread injustice. Pascarella himself was well-travelled, whereas the narrator can only think of Columbus' discovery through his own local experience and very limited horizon. For sure, in shorter units of text in the *Discovery of America,* Pascarella also resorts to humorous devices such as puns,[34] and in a Sections 3 to 5 we have considered how these work in Roman dialectal sonnets indeed,[35] and in Pascarella's *Discovery of America* in particular.

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[34] Humorous puns are the subject of several studies. See e.g. Redfern (1984, new edn. 2000), Sherzer (1978, 1985, 1993), Brown (1956), Dynel (2010), Culler (1988), Zwicky and Zwicky (1986), Seewoester (2011), Hammond and Hughes (1978), Delabastita (1997), Adamczyk (2011), Hausmann (1974), Matthews (1973). Also see Smith (1979) on unhumorous puns, and e.g. Manurung et al (2008) and Waller et al. (2009) on automatically generated puns.

[35] This other example is about an ethnic name, in relation to the name of a country. Maurizio De Lullo, born in 1941 in his native Rome, is a painter, as well as a satirical poet in the Roman dialect. At the end of Sec. 3, we saw how one of his poems (De Lullo and Levi 1991, p. 72) is set on the motorway from Rome to Fiumicino airport. Two cars have stopped at some station, and while the VIP they were each carrying is away inside, one of the two drivers explains that he is carrying the president of Armenia, that they are late for his plane, so would the other driver please let him bypass him once they resume their trip. The other driver, who was carrying the Pope, is indignant: "M'hai detto 'n prospero! Er presidente Armeno! / M'avessi detto «Arpiù»! Ma quello è «Arméno»!!!". That is to say: "It's quite stupid, what you told me! The president *armeno!* / Had you told me *ar più* (the one who is more, the most)! But that one is *ar meno* (the lesser one)!!!".

Having considered a punning story in verse contrasting *ar meno* to *ar più* in the Roman dialect of Italian, let us turn to a funny story (also claimed to be an anecdote, again spuriously so) about misunderstanding of something that sounds like a dialectal Italian word (in Sicilian) for 'more'.

Avvenimenti Faceti is preserved in MS XI. A. 20 of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Palermo, and is a collection of facetious local anecdotes written by an anonymous Sicilian author, probably a cleric, an itinerant preacher, in the first half of the 18th century. Giuseppe Pitrè edited and published (1885) the book in the original Italian with insertions in a dialect which he recognised as being from the province of Messina. In Section 59, "Barbaggianne [*sic*] in Trapani" (Pitrè 1885, pp. 85–86) — the owl species *Tyto alba* (known in English as the White Owl, the Barn Owl, or the Screech Owl) is known in Italian by the names *barbagianni* (literally 'Uncle John') and *chiú* (after its call) — the following narrative is found:

> Non saprei in quale chiesa in Trapani c'era abitazione di barbaggianni nel tetto; e come cotali animali dormono il giorno e vegliano la notte, faceano del rumore una notte. Uno nulla di ciò sapendo, trovandosi nella chiesa in tempo di notte, apprese che quel rumore fosse cagionato da qualche anima di qualche defonto [*sic*] sepellito [*sic*] in quella chiesa, che si faceva sentire, domandando in quella maniera suffragj; e benchè si fosse atterrito da quel strepito, nulla di meno fattosi animo interrogò il barbagianne supposto: *Anima penante, cui siti?* E qui non rispondea il barbagianne. *Ave bisogno di suffragj?* Ne tampoco a questa. *Quante messe volete celebrate, forse tre?* I barbagianni sogliono mandare questa voce: *chivi chiù*; ed allora sciolse la voce [p. 86:]

II. At any rate, as explained in the introduction, Pascarella's *Discovery of America* is best viewed in humour research (if we are to adopt a comparatist approach), within studies into humorous retelling of history, the subject of Duprat's (2009) thematic issue of *Humoresques* entitled *Histoire, humour et caricatures.* Pascarella's humorous epic about Columbus has much to do, taxonomically, with such as Jules Dépaquit's (1928) *Histoire de France pour les mômes,* a parody of a primary school textbook — the subject of a study by Vernois (2009) — and with the *Histoire de France tintamarresque* (by Touchatout, this being the pen-name of Léon Bienvenu), a work discussed by Doizy (2009).

Kenneth Pratt (1966, p. 170) voiced a desideratum: "Pascarella is best known for his sonnet sequences, *Storia nostra, Villa Gloria* and *La scoperta de l'America,* this last should be translated into English". In contrast, Trilussa's satirical poems in the Roman dialect appeared in Grant Showerman's English translation already in 1945 (Trilussa 1945, reviewed by Sorvillo 1945). In his book review, Pio Sorvillo in sense killed with faint praise, or rather by paternalisingly conceding that Trilussa is supposedly no great poet, probably because he was a living dialectal poet. Some of Trilussa's poems in the original and in Pratt's own translation conclude his paper (Pratt 1966).

Reviewing Hermann Haller's (1986) *The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry,* where 67 pages of the anthology are devoted to poems from the Lazio region (whose capital is Rome), Hans-Erich Keller remarked (1989, pp. 53–54) that

> the choice of poets as representatives of their period is quite good; e.g., for Rome, Haller publishes poems by Belli (1791–1863), Pascarella (1858–1940), Trilussa (1871–1950), and Dell'Arco (1905–). It could be argued, of course, that Pascarella and Trilussa were practically contemporaries; however, their poetry is so different that the inclusion of both is more than justified, as in the case of Di Giacomo (1860–1934), Russo (1866–1927), and Galdieri (1877–1923), who are considered the greatest poets in Neapolitan dialect.

Haller's (1986) discussion of the *Discovery of America* translated some passages from it.

> quella bestiola: *chiù*. Sentendo quello *chiù*, apprese che volesse più di tre messe, e rispose: «Cinque vi bastano?» Il barbagianne proseguiva *chiù*. Dieci son buone? Chiù, si avanzò a maggior numero, e sempre udiva *chiù*, si diede in busca di messe raccontando il bisogno che aveva quel anima, e però dovea impegnarsi ogni fedele in libertà di quel penosissimo carcere; tanto girò sino che s'abbatte in uno che era consapevole dell'abitazione de barbaggianni, e gli disse: «O barbaggiannone, che ti sei lasciato uccellare de' barbaggianni», e gli decifrò non esser stata quella voce di anima penante; mà di un barbaggianni par suo.
>
> [At a church in Tràpani I am unable to identify, barn owls dwelt in the roof. As such animals sleep in daytime and are awake by night, one night they made noise. Somebody who knew nothing about that [i.e., about there being barn owls in the roof], finding himself at that church by night, thought that the noise was caused by the soul of somebody deceased and buried at that church, and that by making noise, it was asking for mass being said for that soul. He was terrified because of that clamour. He nevertheless found in himself courage enough to question what he thought that barn owl was: "O soul in torment, who are you?" The barn owl did not reply. "Do you need mass to be said for your soul?" There was no reply to this either. "How many masses you want to be said, perhaps three of them?" Barn owls have this call: *kivi kiyú*. That little animal finally called out: *Kiyú* [which in Sicilian is also the word for 'more']. Upon hearing that *kiyú,* the man thought that the soul in torment wanted more than three masses, so he replied: "Would five be enough?" The barn own repeated: *Kiyú.* "Would ten do?" *Kiyú.* He named a larger number, but kept hearing *Kiyú.* He therefore set to procure masses, by relating the need that soul had for them. Each and every faithful would have to be involved in the attempt to secure the release of that sould from torment. He went around and eventually found somebody who was aware that there were barn owls, and that one told him: "You *barbagiannone* ('big fool', literally: 'big barn owl'), you let yourself be buggered (literally 'birded' ['bird' being intended as denoting 'membrum virile'] in the sense 'made o fool of') by barn owls!", and he went on to explain that it had not been the voice of a sould in torment, but that of a *barbagianni,* quite like himself.]

Edward Bullough included in his (1920) *Cambridge Readings in Italian Literature* (reviewed by Gardner 1920) also texts in the dialect of Rome, the authors represented being Cesare Pascarella and Augusto Sindici.

The Roman dialect of Belli's sonnets from the first half of the 19th century is (by more than one author) considered to be popular and unadulterated, relatively to Pascarella's, and all the more so, to the poems of the even later Trilussa's. "Trilussa's language should not be a barrier to those who have a good knowledge of Italian. It is not the unmitigated romanesco of Belli which comes direct from the lowest strata of the Roman mob, right out of the horse's mouth. Pascarella's dialect is less inflexible than Belli's. Trilussa's is even more diluted" (Sorvillo 1945). Pratt pointed out (1966, p. 170–171):

> Controversy between the dialect writers has and does exist, generally taking the form of charges of linguistic impurity. Should one write as Belli, Trilussa, or as the man of Rome currently speaks? At the end of the nineteenth century, Giuseppe Martellotti (pseud. Guido Vieni) was taken to task for writing [p. 171:] dialect verse that smacked of Latin. This battle of words lasted for years. The fact that Martellotti was born in Viterbo and was a classicist (he translated some of Horace into romanesco) was used as a club against him. One of his critics offered to give him a one way ticket home, *Ttrovi chi tte ce mana in ferovia* [i.e., "Here, you've found who sends you there by rail". Endnote 8 explains that this was in a sonnet signed by one "Guido Vattene", i.e., "Guido, go away! (*vàttene*)"].

III. We have seen that in his *Discovery of America*, Pascarella did not refrain from criticising Italy sarcastically and conveying pain. And yet, Pascarella was not immune to even stale rhetoric about national history, or for that matter, Roman history. Pratt (1965) discussed the history of the idea of Rome as eternal. Among the other things, Pratt (1965, p. 27, fn. 9; p. 39, fn. 82) signalled the occurrences of that idea in Pascarella's sonnet sequence *Storia nostra.* "For an example of the longevity of this idea, in modern Romanesco poetry, see C. Pascarella, *Storia nostra* (Milan, 1961), 68 (sonnet lxxxv)" (Pratt 1965, p. 27, fn. 9). This is an exception to Pratt's remark: "It should nevertheless be pointed out that the Romans themselves, including the Romanesco poets, seldom used '*città eterna*', while foreigners writing of Rome seldom avoided some version of the relative phrases" (Pratt 1965, p. 39). In fn. 82, Pratt notes: "I have not found this image in the poetry of Belli, or later, in that of Trilussa. Cesare Pascarella, however in his sonnet sequence, *Storia nostra,* did include the idea in sonnet no. ii ('*Tutte località predestinate*…'), and a variation of the second terzina of that poem ('*tutti posti co' queli* [sic] *nomi eterni*…'), the edition of the Accademia dei Lincei (Milan, 1961), 8, 193".

Within Roman satirical poetry other than by Pascarella, one comes across, here and there, attitudes towards America, even the Americans as intruders. New arrivals from America are viewed negatively in a satirical poem in the Roman dialect by Trilussa, written as a dialogue between the Roman Eagle and the caged Roman She-Wolf. The Eagle complains that she is unable to flight higher than one metre, because of her captivity "Quanno provo a volà trovo un intoppo, / più su d'un metro nun arrivo mai…" ("When I try to fly, I find a stop, / More than a meter, I never go more…", Pratt's translation). "Historical sensitivity mingled with hostility to foreigners is well seen in Trilussa's poem 'L'Aquila Romana' (1911) in *I sonetti — Le storie Giove e le bestie* (3rd ed., Milan, 1962), 124f." (Pratt 1965, p.44, fn.108). Pratt (1966, p. 175) reproduced Trilussa's original poem, followed on p. 176 by Pratt's own translation. The lines bemoaning foreigners, and arrivals from America in particular, are as follows (along with Pratt's translation), after the she-wolf has heard the eagle's complaint:

La Lupa disse: — È un volo basso assai,	The wolf replied: "It's a low flight you score,
ma pe' l'idee moderne è pure troppo!	But for modern ideas it's more than the top!
È mejo che t'accucci e stai tranquilla:	It's better for you to curl up and stay cool:
nun c'è che l'animale forastiere	Nowadays there's only the foreign beast

che viè trattato come un cavajere	Who gets treated like a knight, to say the least,
e se gode la pacchia d'una villa!	And has a villa for his pad 'n pool!
L'urtimo Pappagallo de la Mecca,	The latest parrot from Mecca strutting,
appena ariva qui, se mette in mostra,	He puts on a show, just arrived here from home,
arza le penne e dice: Roma nostra...	Ruffles his feathers and says: Our Rome...
E quer che trova becca.	And whatever he finds, he starts in pecking.
Viva dunque la Scimmia der Brasile!	For the Brazilian monkey we'll sing Hooray!
Viva la Sorca isterica	Again Hooray for the mouse *isterica*
che ariva da l'America!	Who arrives from America!

Because of the turn of the century's heavy legacy in the Western history of ideas about women and hysteria, it may be that Trilussa was specifically thinking of American women in Rome. Or then, Trilussa may have been thinking of ideas coming from America, and being promoted hysterically.

IV. Prototypical, indeed mythical American individuals in Europe, and in Rome in particular, are something familiar from the novels of Henry James. In his article "The Myth of America in *The Portrait of a Lady*", Leon Edel wrote as follows (1986, p. 8):

> [Henry] James seems to have had another intention as well. This was to paint Isabel within a "myth" of America. In one of his early letters to W. D. Howells about his prospective novel he remarked, "My novel is to be an *Americana* — the adventures in Europe of a female Newman, who of course equally triumphs over the insolent foreigner" […] a female counterpart to his hero of *The American,* Christopher Newman […] His first novel had dealt with the fate of an American sculptor in Rome; his second had been the story of an American businessman who goes to Paris in search of a wife. Christopher Newman had decidedly been enveloped in certain American myths […] The direct use of recorded myths in a literary work offers no particular problem for criticism. […] The indirect or implied use of mytii, such as we find in James's *American* and in *The Portrait of a Lady,* calls for a "dissecting out" of die mydiological themes.

Needless to say, Henry James did not make his character of Isabel Archer into a "Sorca isterica". Rather (Edel 1986, p. 8):

> Christopher Newman had decidedly been enveloped in certain American myths — a teller of "tall tales" (Rourke [1931, i.e., in her book *American Humor,* pp.] 238–65), at ease with himself, and carrying his native world witii him into foreign lands. Isabel Archer's personality was modified in the writing of die novel; she became, as James again told Howells, "a great swell, psychologically: a *grande nature*" […] He endowed her with many American qualities and many American beliefs. In examining diese, it should be possible for us to discern the American mytii or mydis mat were in the background of her author's mind.

It must be said that in *Discovery of America,* Pascarella was explicitly, through his storyteller narrator, trying to extol the type of a great Italian (while deprecating conditions and attitudes in Italy that force the great to go abroad to ply their talent). Thus, by conveying a myth of Italy through a mythical Italian individual, Pascarella was engaged in an exercise that in some respects offers a parallel to what Henry James was doing: his novel *The Portrait of a Lady* was first published in 1881. Edel also wrote (1986, p. 9):

> Americans saw themselves as busy explorers and developers of die frontier. The myth of "free enterprise" was mere from me first. And one of its first tenets was that there would always be more frontiers. The United States was believed to be inexhaustible. Europe saw Americans as living in a paradise as well as a "land of opportunity". The Americans saw the Indians as a constant threat to survival, but also mythologized their rituals. The Europeans wrote of the Indian as a "noble savage". The European view of Americans was that they were children of fortune, descendants of intrepid voyagers at large in a savage and beautiful continent with gargantuan landscapes. Old dreams of utopias seemed to be coming true. The human imagination had foretold pilgrimages of adventure from the Greek and Roman voyagers to die journey of

> Columbus. The American Adam and die American Eve were untrammeled by many of die taboos of earlier civilizations (though some of these had been transported across the sea), and they created many taboos of meir own. With his command of die freedoms of a novelist's imaginary worlds, Henry James could bring about a meeting of diese mytiiologies of Old Europe and New America. He had observed and learned them from childhood, when his family had taken him abroad from New York to Paris, Geneva, and London and dragged him through hotels and pensions.
>
> Northrop Frye singles out James's late story "The Altar of die Dead" as an example of his particular mythic irony ([Frye 1957, pp.] 42–43). By "low mimetic standards", he observes, the story would have to be called "a tissue of improbable coincidence, inadequate motivation, and inconclusive resolution". He adds, "When we look at it as ironic myth, a story of how the god of one person is the *pharmakos* of another, its structure becomes simple and logical". By *pharmakos* Frye means "the character in an ironic fiction who has the role of a scapegoat or arbitrarily chosen victim". This gambit is familiar in James and is frequently used.
>
> Europe's myths went back into the remoteness of oral history. America's transplants derived from its mythic races and a myth-evoking environment. Through his transatlantic vision, Henry James refashioned these into his international novels. […]

Leo Edel, who published an edition of the short stories of Henry James (*CT* for short refers to Vol. 4), had this to say about two tales involving comedy (Edel 1986, p. 10, his ellipsis dots):

> In the works of James, *The Portrait of a Lady* is flanked by two significant comic tales in which Europeans and Americans write to one another about die worlds in which tiiey travel. The tales are called "A Bundle of Letters" (*CT* 427) and "The Point of View" (*CT* 467). In the latter — written after the *Portrait* — James seems to be summarizing what his imagination had already created. The French academician in Washington assails die democratic myth: "Everywhere the same impression, — the platitude of unbalanced democracy intensified by die platitude of die spirit of commerce ... the civilization is skin deep; you don't have to dig" (*CT* 504). The Europeanized American echoes this: "Every one is Mr. Jones, Mr. Brown; and every one looks like Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown. They are thin; they are diluted in die great tepid bath of Democracy! They lack completeness of identity; diey are quite without modelling" (*CT* 503). The patriotic Yankee in the story denies this: "a mighty tide is sweeping the world to democracy, and . . . this country is die biggest stage on which the drama can be enacted" (*CT* 513). The Briton, looking at the United States, sees with surprise, however, "the number of persons who are being educated in this country; and yet, at the same time, the tone of the people is less scholarly than one might expect" (*CT* 497). He is surprised at the permissiveness shown American children: "The position of a child is, on the whole, one of great distinction . . . they are a powerful and independent class" (*CT* 498–99). Finally we are given an aphorism, by a skeptical American, about the British aristocracy: "As for manners, there are bad manners everywhere, but an aristocracy is bad manners organized" (*CT* 515). James has been reading Tocqueville: his epigrams describe die American moeurs; and in describing he is also exploring the mythology of democracy.

Take the myth of the American bread-basket, America the world-provider (Edel 1986, p. 10):

> In "The Point of View" there is a conversation about die American bread-basket, implying the modern myth of America as the world-provider: "he wants people in America to behave as if Europe didn't exist. I told this to Mr. Leverett, and he answered that if Europe didn't exist America wouldn't, for Europe keeps us alive by buying our corn. He said, also, tiiat die trouble with America in the future will be that she will produce things in such enormous quantities that there won't be enough people in the rest of the world to buy them, and that we shall be left with our productions — most of them hideous — on our hands." The young lady reporting this says, "I asked him if he thought corn a hideous production, and he replied that there is nothing more unbeautiful than too much food." Still, she feels, "to feed the world too well, that will be, after all, a *beau rôle*" (*CT* 475). More than a *beau role*, it would become a part of the myth that the American continent is an inexhaustible breadbasket out of which a rich American uncle (Uncle Sam, himself a mythic figure) provides international assistance, with much generosity but little humility, and with a demand that he be universally loved for his benevolence. Moreover, he does not hesitate to use his bounty, whenever he believes it necessary, as an instrument of power or of punishment.

Another scholar of Henry James, Joseph Wiesenfarth, while discussing (1986) *The Portrait of a Lady*, makes idiomatics into a negative myth of Romans in the sense of doing what the Romans do, taken to be something wolves are supposed to do (*ibid.*, pp. 20–21):

> […] James puts Isabel through this extraordinary performance to demonstrate what a tight spot she is in — indeed, to demonstrate what it means for a once carefree girl now to have become a careful lady. James's realistic approach to Isabel's characterization shows her adapting herself painfully to her surroundings. When James, as Theodora Bosanquet reported, "walked out of die refuge of his study into die world and looked about him, he saw a place of torment, where creatures of prey perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of the doomed, defenceless children of light" […] To survive, accommodation is necessary. In Rome, Isabel does as the Romans do. She becomes super-subtle. Such are the measures the children of light must take to survive in the dark. *Il faut hurler avec les loups.* That is what it means to be a lady.
>
> But Isabel is not quite the Roman wolf that Madame Merle is. She avoids the trap that would make her so. […]

V. Let us take another view of perceptions of American women in Europe, and in Italy in particular, this time from a more recent past. Refer to the photograph *American Girl in Italy*, taken in Florence in 1951. The photographer was Ruth Orkin (1921–1985), an award-winning photojournalist and filmmaker. Raised in Hollywood, she moved to New York in 1943. She worked for several major magazines during the 1940s. Among the other things, she photographed several famous musicians. "In 1951, LIFE magazine sent her to Israel with the Israeli Philharmonic. Orkin then went to Italy, and it was in Florence where she met Nina Lee Craig, an art student and fellow American, who became the subject of 'American Girl in Italy'. The photograph was part of a series originally titled 'Don't Be Afraid to Travel Alone' about what they encountered as women traveling alone in Europe after the war. On her return to New York, Orkin married the photographer and filmmaker Morris Engel. Together they produced two feature films, including the classic "Little Fugitive" which was nominated for an Academy Award in 1953".[36] She eventually published two acclaimed books of photographs, *A World Through My Window* and *More Pictures From My Window*, of views of Central Park. The context of our using this photograph here is the experience or the perception of Americans in Italy in the few generations that go from the late 19th century, to the end of the 1940s. I understand that generally speaking, both the photographer and the photographee enjoyed their experience, even though in the picture the younger woman appears (so it seems to me) to be self-conscious, unsurprisingly given the rude behaviour by some of the onlookers. Mary Engel, Ruth Orkin's daughter who is also the director of the Ruth Orkin Photo Archive in New York, and who kindly granted permission (on 7 and 8 October 2016) to reproduce the photograph *American Girl in Italy*, Florence, 1951, in this particular study after I had explained my interpretation of it, kindly explained to me: "the woman in the photo clearly states in many articles, that she was not self conscious. She was strong and confident, and appreciating the men's glances" (email, 7 October 2016). Perhaps the discrepancy *vis-à-vis* the facial display can be explained out by noting that a person's attitude is often complex and non-univocal? All onlookers were male, because of the early hour in the morning. I reckon that the onlookers shown in the photograph are acknowledging (in the case of the old man) or responding to the unusual (which in the case at hand, was that very early in the morning it was unusual for women to be outdoors, as usually they were preparing breakfast). One can assume that the onlookers were also aware of the woman photographer being present. Mary Engel remarked about my previous text in this paragraph: "Your interpretation is correct, however, the woman in the photo clearly states in many articles, that she was not self conscious" (email, 7 October 2016).

[36] http://orkinphoto.com/prkinpress/biography/

American Girl in Italy, Florence, 1951. Copyright 1952, 1980 Ruth Orkin. Used with special permission of the Ruth Orkin Photo Archive. With special thanks to Mary Engel in New York, the director of the Archive (and Orkin's daughter).

Detail of *American Girl in Italy*, Florence, 1951. Copyright 1952, 1980 Ruth Orkin. Used with special permission of the Ruth Orkin Photo Archive.

Another detail of *American Girl in Italy*, Florence, 1951. Copyright 1952, 1980 Ruth Orkin. Used with special permission of the Ruth Orkin Photo Archive.

Yet another detail of *American Girl in Italy,* Florence, 1951. Copyright 1952, 1980 Ruth Orkin. Used with special permission of the Ruth Orkin Photo Archive.

From how I remember Italy in my childhood there in the 1960s, older generations may have known French, but rarely English. Apparently when Mussolini's daughter Edda married Galeazzo Ciano, she appreciated him (it used to be said) because he knew English, and she considered that chic. Of course, from 1944 or so, people had become accustomed to hearing soldiers speak English. It was more unusual to hear women speak English, though.[37]

[37] Also see e.g. a book review by Philippa Stockley (*Evening Standard,* London, 28 July 2016), a review entitled "Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London by Lauren Elkin". http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/books/flaneuse-women-walk-the-city-in-paris-new-york-tokyo-venice-and-london-by-lauren-elkin-review-a3306906.html

VI. Let us turn now to Dario Fo, a usually farcical playwright from Italy's North. "Although he has written and performed in several different genres, [Dario] Fo's preferred modes by far are the satirical farce and the *giullarata*, his signature one-man show, named after the *giullari*, the itinerant street performers of the Middle Ages" (Scuderi 2004, p. 65). Antonio Scuderi (2004, p. 69) mentions a *giullarata* by Dario Fo whose protagonist is Johan Padan (Italian *padano*, Lombard *padàn*, denotes 'of the Po Valley', the vast plain that takes up most of northern Italy). The title of that particular *giullarata* is in a Lombard dialect: *Johan Padan a la descoverta de le Americhe*, that is to say, "Padan John at the Discovery of the Americas". Scuderi explains (2004, p. 65):

> *Johan Padan a la descoverta de le Americhe* is Fo's only *giullarata* that consists of one long narrative rather than a series of sketches. The primary theme of this story of an Italian rogue who stows away with Columbus to the New World is the encounter between the Europeans and the Native Americans. Fo uses animals to create a symbolic code to convey and underscore the fascination of the Europeans with the New World; the sense of unfamiliarity between the two peoples and their respective cultures; and the bestial levels at which human beings can treat each other. The Europeans encounter new animals, such as pumas, turkeys, and iguanas, while in their ships they bring from Europe horses, donkeys, cows, and pigs, animals the Native Americans had never seen. One way of expressing Johan's marvel at discovering the New World is through his descriptions of the strange animals he encounters for the first time, such as flying fish, iguanas, and turkeys. In performance, the elaborate depictions of these animals, accompanied by Fo's extraordinary mime, express Johan's utter fascination. (But much like Defoe's description of the 'two mighty creatures' in Robinson Crusoe, in which one chases the other from the mountains and continues to pursue it into the sea, Fo's New World creatures are informed with a sense of the fantastic.)

In a footnote, Scuderi (2004, pp. 66–67, fn. 9) points out Fo's indebtedness to Pascarella:

> It is interesting to note that while in prison Gramsci had a copy of *Sonetti*, poems in Roman dialect by Cesare Pascarella (Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, iv, 2517 n. 2). In this passage on folklore he mentions Pascarella's 'La scoperta dell'America', which was a primary inspiration for Fo's *Johan Padan a la descoverta de le Americhe*, discussed in this study.

VII. What about the dream of prospective emigrants for the riches of America? "There is an emigrant who, looking for the golden-paved streets of America, doesn't realize he has found a huge diamond, in a short story titled 'Rubino', from Corrado Alvaro's *Gente in Aspromonte*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1930" (Di Biagi 1987, p. 149 note 4). Di Biagi (1987, p. 141) remarks:

> From the very first moment of its discovery, actually beginning with Columbus' journals, America has inspired some form of literature; and through the centuries it has developed a certain power of attraction for Italians. To mention just a few names, the eighteenth century dramatist Vittorio Alfieri celebrated American independence and the heroic feats of General Washington (whose name he wrote as "Vasinton") in five odes grouped under the title *L'America libera*. The first and never published work of Giovanni Verga, *Amore e Patria* (1857),[38] is an historical novel set in colonial America during the time of the Revolution; and in 1894 Cesare Pascarella wrote a grotesque epic in Roman dialect about Columbus' enterprise: *La scoperta dell'America*. Can these Italian writers, because of their interest in America, be considered somehow already Italian-American writers?[39]

Di Biagi (1987, pp. 143–144) provides a taxonomy of writers in Italian about life in America:

[38] See Verga (1979, pp. 180–187).

[39] "In her valuable book, The Italian-American Novel (1974), Rose Basile Green has outlined the theory of five different stages through which Italian- American fiction has gone. These five stages are identified as: 1) The early impact; 2) The need for assimilation; 3) Revulsion; 4) Counter-revulsion; 5) Rooting" (Di Biagi 1987, p. 142).

> [A] first category of Italian-American writers has been given by a few Italian writers. If we read literature as social history, only a small number of Italian books provides a record of mass emigration. […] Edmondo De Amicis, while crossing the ocean in 1889, found them on the docks and in vessels. He then published the chronicle of his journey with the title *Sull'Oceano* (1889). Maria Messina wept for those left at home: forgotten mothers, abandoned wives and deserted houses. Her short stories, *Piccoli gorghi* (1910), underscore the initial drama of separation. Also Giovanni Capuana, the theorist of "verismo" [i.e., the Italian version of French naturalism], describes *Gli americani di Rabbato* (1909). In his story a boy from the Sicilian village of Rabbato "makes" America in search of his elder brother. […] A second category may include the experienced writers; they represent a small group of Italians who attempted the American adventure by actually crossing the ocean. They are Italian writers who knew America first-hand and whose works are, at least in content, deeply "American". Some of them were travellers, who wrote journey notebooks, diaries, studies or reportages. Among this large group we find journalists, social or political observers, and even a dramatist such as Giuseppe Giacosa. Other experienced writers were actually failed emigrants: highly educated people who entered the immigrant communities with the real [p. 144:] intention of staying, but didn't. […] A third type of experienced writers is represented by those authors who, especially in contemporary times, use their American experience and stay as a theme of fiction. […] A third category is comprised of the "colonial£ writers: those Italian-born writers who immigrated permanently to America, lived in the Italian communities or — as they said — "colonies" in the early part of this century, and published their works mostly in this country. A certain level of education and a certain control of the Italian language enabled them to read and write in Italian. Their writings, however, stem from an Italian immigrant urban working environment: even if indebted to Italian literature, they no longer belong to it.

Clearly, what we have in Pascarella's *Discovery of America* is the imaginary of the Americas at moment of their entry into Western civilisation. We have considered other occurrences of the Americas from Pascarella's writings, other than his description of his travels.

VIII. Let us conclude this section, by signalling a now rather obscure literary work by the famous Silvio Pellico, about a family of northern Italian returnees from America, where they had become rich. America, the fabled America, had kept her promise. It must be said that it is a literary work that reflected the dislike by some (on its evidence, at any rate Pellico himself) of the emerging Jewish social visibility in Milan.[40] Silvio Pellico, born and deceased in Piedmont (Saluzzo, 1789 – Turin, 1854), was an Italian patriot and conspirator. He received a Catholic education, became secular in his youth (from 1809 he was based in Milan, and from 1816 in Magenta), and became very devout in prison, and such he remained for the rest of his life. It was because of his activity as the editor and an author in the magazine *Il Conciliatore* (founded in 1818), whose collaborators were involved in a secret society (the Federati), and especially because the Austrian police discovered compromising letters by Pellico to Piero Maroncelli, that they were arrested in 1820, imprisoned in Venice, condemned to death, but then sent to serve long sentences at the Spielberg fortress in Brno, Moravia. In fact, Pellico is best known in Italy, and in his own days in other European countries as well, for his memoirs of Austrian prisony, *Le mie prigioni* (Pellico 1832). The Austrian statesman Metternich averred that Pellico's book was more harmful for Austria than a lost battle. Pellico famous tragedy *Francesca da Rimini* had been premièred in Milan in 1815.

The novel of Pellico about the family of returnees from America is of 1819, but it has appeared again in 1983. It is entitled *Breve soggiorno in Milano di Battistino Barometro* ("The brief stay in Milan of Battistino Barometro"). It is a work whose humour is in debt to Laurence Sterne. It tells the story of an Italian family that has made a fortune in the United

[40] Jews had been excluded from Milan as late as the 1780s, even after the promulgation of Joseph II's *Judentoleranzpatent* throughout the Habsburg Empire; the reason for the delay was that the Duchy of Milan had already expelled its Jews during its Spanish domination, and the Austrian authorities in Milan were in no hurry to permit Jewish residence in a city that had none; applicants were rebuffed (Hamaui 2016).

States by manufacturing barometers. They then return to Italy. The son, Battistino Barometro, stays in Milan for a while, and Jewish businessmen try to lure him and his money. In the end, those Jews are ruined, and Battistino Barometro is not. A context in which to understand Pellico's *Battistino Barometro* is provided by a list of now obscure literary works supplied by De Voogt and Neubauer's book (2008) *The Reception of Laurence Sterne in Europe*, which has a chapter on Sterne's reception in Italy. The following is quoted from p. 203:

> With the Romantics the ambivalent laughter-tear was further dramatized and, rather than implying a subtle psychological transaction, it was presented as an opposition of contraries. The 'sensibility' of Sterne quickly became identified with the 'sentimental' of the Romantics. Consequently there were many examples of weak Romantic imitations. These include: *Lo Spettatore Italiano* (The Italian Observer, 1822) by Giovanni Ferri di san Costante, *Viaggio e meravigliose avventure di un veneziano che esce per la prima volta dalle lagune e si reca a Padova e a Milano* (The journey and marvellous adventures of a Venetian who for the first time leaves the laggon for Padua and Milan, 1823) by Luigi Bassi, *La fidanzata ligure* (The Ligurian fiancée, 1828) by Carlo Varese and *Viaggio sentimentale al camposanto colerico di Napoli* (A sentimental journey in the cholera cemetery of Naples, 1837) by Lorenzo Borsini. These are some of the most derivative pieces at the expense of Sterne, all heavily sounding the chords of the pathetic. Some other imitations stand out somewhat more positively, since some original linguistic and stylistic experiments on the Sternean pattern are attempted. These include *Avventure e osservazioni sopra le coste di Barberia* (Adventures and observations on the Barbary Coast, 1817) by Filippo Pananti (which benefits from a true understanding of Sterne's works since the author lived in London and could appreciate Sterne in the original language), and *Breve soggiorno in Milano di Battistino Barometro* (The brief stay in Milan of Battistino Barometro, 1819) by Silvio Pellico, *Viaggio di tre giorni* (A three-day journey, 1823) attributed by Luca Toschi […][41] to Luigi Ciampolini, *Viaggio di un ignorante* (Journey of an illiterate, 1857) by Giovanni Rajberti and *Il buco nel muro* (The hole in the wall, 1862) by Domenico Guerrazzi.

Silvio Pellico,[42] portrayed about 1850, at any rate after his release from prisony at the Spielberg fortress. The painting is at Palazzo Barolo[43] in Turin.

[41] See a discussion in depth of Italian Sternean "travellers" by Luca Toschi (1982).
[42] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Silvio_Pellico.jpg
[43] http://www.palazzobarolo.it

Appendix: Burlesque History in Contemporary Britain

Edmund Clerihew Bentley (1875–1956) is the English originator of the clerihew, a four-line poem of two rhyming couplets. The *Longmans English Larousse* defines as follows (Watson 1968, s.v. *clerihew*):

> a mildly witty, pseudobiographical verse of four lines of varying length rhyming aabb, e.g.
>
> Jonathan Swift
> Never went up in a lift;
> Nor did the author of 'Robinson Crusoe'
> Do so

King George III was the subject of sometimes cruel humour in his lifetime, but the following is a cruel clerihew by Bentley about him:

> George the Third
> Ought never to have occurred.
> One can only wonder
> At so grotesque a blunder.

Wikipedia at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerihew defines a clerihew as

> a whimsical, four-line biographical poem invented by Edmund Clerihew Bentley.[44] The first line is the name of the poem's subject, usually a famous person put in an absurd light, or revealing something unknown and/or spurious about them. The rhyme scheme is AABB, and the rhymes are often forced. The line length and metre are irregular. Bentley invented the clerihew in school and then popularized it in books. One of his best known is this (1905):
>
> Sir Christopher Wren[45]
> Said, "I am going to dine with some men.
> If anyone calls
> Say I am designing St. Paul's."

"A Clerihew is a comic verse consisting of two couplets and a specific rhyming scheme, aabb invented by Edmund Clerihew Bentley (1875–1956) at the age of 16. The poem is about/deals with a person/character within the first rhyme".[46] It does not need to be a named individual; the following is a clerihew about a history teacher:

> Dickie Dare
> Drove boys to despair
> With his crates and crates
> Of boring dates.

Bentley's very first clerihew was published by replacing "Abominated gravy" for the original "Was not fond of gravy", and was written during a chemistry lesson:

> Sir Humphry Davy
> Abominated gravy.
> He lived in the odium
> Of having discovered sodium.

It is significant that Bently published clerihews in a book (first published in 1905) to which he gave the title *Biography for Beginners.*

[44] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Clerihew_Bentley
[45] A Wikipedia page for that architect is found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Wren
[46] http://www.shadowpoetry.com/resources/wip/clerihew.html

In the Introduction to the present study, we remarked about burlesque history in France and Britain.[47] Concerning Britain in particular, we wrote:

> As for Britain, in the 1920s, *Punch* magazine published W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman's text *1066 and All That*, a burlesque history of Britain. That tradition continues at present with books or stage productions for children, but the aim now is mainly to get children interested. *The Comic History of England* and *The Comic History of Rome* appeared in 1847–1848 and in the 1851, with text by Gilbert [Abbott à] Beckett (1811–1856) and funny illustrations by John Leech (1817–1864); for example, Cicero wears a British lawyer's wig.

We included a sample of the graphics from *The Comic History of Rome.* It must be said that in terms of outreach, because of *Blackadder* and especially *Horrible Histories*, contemporary Britain is unsurpassed in the domain of bringing burlesque history to the masses. Let us begin with *Blackadder:* [48]

> ***Blackadder*** is a series of four BBC1 period British sitcoms, along with several one-off installments. All television episodes starred Rowan Atkinson as the anti-hero Edmund Blackadder, and Tony Robinson as Blackadder's dogsbody,[49] Baldrick. Each series was set in a different historical period, with the two protagonists accompanied by different characters, though several reappear in one series or another, for example Melchett (Stephen Fry) and Lord Flashheart (Rik Mayall).
>
> The first series, *The Black Adder*, was written by Richard Curtis and Rowan Atkinson, while subsequent episodes were written by Curtis and Ben Elton. The shows were produced by John Lloyd. In 2000, the fourth series, *Blackadder Goes Forth*, ranked at 16 in the "100 Greatest British Television Programmes", a list created by the British Film Institute. Also in the 2004 TV poll to find "Britain's Best Sitcom", *Blackadder* was voted the second-best British sitcom of all time, topped by *Only Fools and Horses*. It was also ranked as the 20th-best TV show of all time by *Empire* magazine.

Blackadder is set in a succession of historical periods, in turn, in British history:[50]

> Although each series is set in a different era, all follow the "misfortunes" of Edmund Blackadder (played by Atkinson), who in each is a member of a British family dynasty present at many significant periods and places in British history. It is implied in each series that the Blackadder character is a descendant of the previous one (the end theme lyrics of series 2, episode "Heads", specify that he is the great-grandson of the previous), although it is never specified how or when any of the Blackadders (who are usually single and not in a relationship) managed to father children.
>
> As the generations progress, each Blackadder becomes increasingly clever and perceptive, while the family's social status steadily erodes. However, each Blackadder remains a cynical,

[47] A bibliography of research about humour and history is provided in Verberckmoes (2009), by an author whose output in humour studies also includes Verberckmoes (2003a, 2003b), i.e., "Amerindian Laughter and Visions of a Carnivalesque New World" and "Parading Hilarious Exotics in the Spanish Netherlands" — studies relevant for what we have said about visions of the Americas, such as the one proposed by Pascarella.

[48] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackadder

[49] At https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogsbody the word *dogsbody* is defined as follows:

> A **dogsbody**, or less commonly **dog robber** in the Royal Navy, is a junior officer, or more generally someone who does drudge work. A rough American equivalent would be a "gofer", "grunt" or "lackey". […] The Royal Navy used dried peas and eggs boiled in a bag (pease [sic] pudding) as one of their staple foods circa the early 19th century. Sailors nicknamed this item "dog's body". In the early 20th century, junior officers and midshipmen who performed jobs that more senior officers did not want to do began to be called "dogsbodies". The term became more common in non-naval usage ca. 1930, referring to people who were stuck with rough work. The term dogsbody has not always been derogatory, with a number of people deliberately using it as their callsign or handle. The most famous of these is probably Douglas Bader, who was an RAF fighter pilot during the Second World War.

[50] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackadder

> cowardly opportunist, maintaining and increasing his own status and fortunes, regardless of his surroundings.
>
> The life of each Blackadder is also entwined with his servant, each from the Baldrick family line (played by Tony Robinson). Each generation acts as the dogsbody to his respective Blackadder. They decrease in intelligence (and in personal-hygiene standards) as their masters' intellect increases. Each Blackadder and Baldrick is also saddled with tolerating the presence of a dim-witted aristocrat. This role was taken in the first two series by Lord Percy Percy, played by Tim McInnerny; with Hugh Laurie playing the role in the third and fourth series, as Prince George, Prince Regent; and Lieutenant George, respectively.
>
> Each series was set in a different period of British history, beginning in 1485 and ending in 1917, and comprised six half-hour episodes. The first series, made in 1983, was called *The Black Adder* and was set in the fictional reign of "Richard IV". The second series, *Blackadder II* (1986), was set during the reign of Elizabeth I. *Blackadder the Third* (1987) was set during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the reign of George III, and *Blackadder Goes Forth* (1989) was set in 1917 in the trenches of the Great War.

The original television network that broadcasted *Blackadder* was BBC1. The original release was in the period going from 15 June 1983 to 2 November 1989. For example, Series 1 was set in the Middle Ages:[51]

> *The Black Adder*, the first series of *Blackadder*, was written by Richard Curtis and Rowan Atkinson and produced by John Lloyd. It originally aired on BBC1 from 15 June 1983 to 20 July 1983, and was a joint production with the Australian Seven Network.
>
> Set in 1485 at the end of the British Middle Ages, the series is written as an alternative history in which King Richard III won the Battle of Bosworth Field only to be mistaken for someone else and murdered, and is succeeded by Richard IV (Brian Blessed), one of the Princes in the Tower. The series follows the exploits of Richard IV's unfavoured second son Edmund, the Duke of Edinburgh (who calls himself "The Black Adder") in his various attempts to increase his standing with his father and his eventual quest to overthrow him.
>
> Conceived while Atkinson and Curtis were working on *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, the series dealt comically with a number of medieval issues in Britain: witchcraft, Royal succession, European relations, the Crusades, and the conflict between the Church and the Crown. Along with the secret history, many historical events portrayed in the series were anachronistic (for example, the last Crusade to the Holy Land ended in 1291); this dramatic licence would continue in the subsequent *Blackadders*. The filming of the series was highly ambitious, with a large cast and much location shooting. The series also featured Shakespearean dialogue, often adapted for comic effect; the end credits featured the words "Additional Dialogue by William Shakespeare".

In contrast, the setting of the second series was Elizabethan:

> *Blackadder II* is set in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603), who is portrayed by Miranda Richardson. The principal character is Edmund, Lord Blackadder, the great-grandson of the original Black Adder. During the series, he regularly deals with the Queen, her obsequious Lord Chamberlain Lord Melchett (Stephen Fry) — his rival — and the Queen's demented former nanny Nursie (Patsy Byrne). […] A quote from this series ranked number three in a list of the top 25 television "putdowns" of the last 40 years by the *Radio Times* magazine: "The eyes are open, the mouth moves, but Mr. Brain has long since departed, hasn't he, Percy?"

There also were specials. One of these is *Blackadder: The Cavalier Years:*

> This special, set in the English Civil War, was shown as part of Comic Relief's Red Nose Day on Friday 5 February 1988. The 15-minute episode is set in November 1648, during the last days of the Civil War. Sir Edmund Blackadder and his servant, Baldrick, are the last two men loyal to the defeated King Charles I of England (played by Stephen Fry, portrayed as a soft-spoken, ineffective, slightly dim character, with the voice and mannerisms of Charles I's namesake, the current Prince of Wales). However, due to a misunderstanding between Oliver Cromwell (guest-star Warren Clarke) and Baldrick, the king is arrested and sent to the Tower of London. The rest of the episode revolves around Blackadder's attempts to save the king, as well as improve his standing.

[51] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackadder This is also the source of the next two quotations.

Horrible Histories has had an even greater success, because its franchise encompasses more than television series. The following is quoted from the Wikipedia page for the franchise:[52]

> **Horrible Histories** is an educational entertainment franchise encompassing many media including books, magazines, audio books, stage shows, TV shows, and more. […] Horrible Histories first began as a book series. The series began in 1993 with *The Terrible Tudors* and *The Awful Egyptians*,[53] and the following titles continued the trend to describe British history through the context of the ruling dynasties, as well as explore significant worldwide cultures (often within the context of British history such as the Viking and Roman conquests on the British Isles). A series of specials and novelty books have been released, and the last book was announced to be released in 2013. […]

Writing in *The Telegraph* (London), Richard Preston stated: (2013)

> It is now 20 years since the first Horrible Histories books – Awesome Egyptians and Terrible Tudors – were published, so the first generation of children exposed to the grisly sensibility of Terry Deary and the cartoonist Martin Brown may now have children of their own. The output in those two decades has been extraordinary: there are now more than 100 titles, which have sold 20 million copies (eight million of those in translation), to 31 countries. There are sticker books, annuals, Horrible Histories Top Trumps, mugs, video games, roadshows and a magazine that was launched last autumn. The CBBC series was a relative latecomer to the party in 2009; before that, in 2001–2, there were two series of an animated version that never really took off, then in 2006 the Birmingham Stage Company secured the stage rights and has been touring with Horrible Histories stage productions ever since.
>
> Scholastic, the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books, is at the centre of all of this activity. It invented the Horrible Histories brand, copyrighted it and licenses the spin-offs. […]

The first *Horrible Histories* TV series, starting in 2001, was (unlike later series) an animated series. "A live-action series, styled as a sketch show, began airing on CBBC in 2009. It won many awards over its 5 series run, including some British Comedy Awards — the first children's show to do so. […] A rebooted version of the 2009 sketch show aired in 2015".[54]

Moreover, Rattus Rattus, a rat puppet character that used to introduce sketches was eventually replaced with a well-known actor and compère:[55]

> *Horrible Histories with Stephen Fry* was a re-version hosted by Stephen Fry instead of Rattus Rattus, released in 2011, and was aimed at an adult audience. […] *Gory Games* is a children's game show, and is a spin-off to the 2009 series. It is hosted by Rattus Rattus and Dave Lamb. Each episode has 3 contestants competing in challenges to collect Year Spheres. […] One of the first additions to the franchise was a series of magazines in 2003. A new magazine series was launched in 2012. […] In late 2003 the *Horrible Histories Magazine Collection*, a series of magazines based on Terry Deary's book series […] and released every fortnight. Some of the material was previously published in the Horrible Histories books on the same topics. Originally planned to be 60, the series was continued with an additional 20.

Gory Games was inspired by *Gory Stories*, a fiction-type subseries of the *Horrible Histories* book series (of these, an audiobook series also exists). The earliest few such books, published in 2008, included: Gory Stories: Tower of Terror (Terrible *Tudors*); *Gory Stories: Tomb of Treasure (Awful Egyptians); Gory Stories: Wall of Woe (Rotten Romans);* and *Gory Stories: Shadow of the Gallows (Vile Victorians).* Note the phonetic pattern in how titles were devised. For example, the first 16 issues of the magazine had the following titles: *The Gory Glory of Rome* (about the Roman Empire); *The Terrible Tudors: Horrible Henry* (about the Tudor king Henry VIII); *The Awesome Egyptians: Mummy Mania; The Vile Victorians: Cruel Britannia; The Measly Middle Ages; The Slimy Stuarts: Bombs & Broomsticks; The Groovy Greeks: Hits 'n' Myths; The Frightful First World War; The Angry Aztecs; The Bizarre Tsars; The Vicious*

[52] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horrible_Histories

[53] The alliteration in the title has an early modern precedent in British publishing: Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities* (London: Stansby, 1611); reprint (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Son, 1905). In 1608, Coryat set out on a tour across the European continent. He published his impressions of the countries in which he travelled.

[54] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horrible_Histories

[55] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horrible_Histories

Vikings; The Terrible Tudors: Misery Mary (about Queen Mary the Catholic); *The Savage Stone Age; Rotten Romans on the Rampage* (about the end of the Roman Republic); *The Awesome Egyptians: Fabulous Pharaohs;* and *The Gorgeous Georgians: Heroes & Villains* (the latter being about policemen and criminals in Britain's Georgian era).[56]

The following is about the *Horrible Histories* 2009 TV series:[57]

> The TV show carries over the graphic style and much of the content of the *Horrible Histories* book series. It maintains the franchise's overall irreverent but accurate focus on the dark, gruesome or scatological aspects of British and other Western world history, spanning from the Stone Age to the post-World War II era. Individual historical eras or civilisations are defined and named as in the books, with sketches from several different time periods combined within a single episode. Live-action sketches — which often parody other UK media or celebrities — and music videos are intercut with animations and quizzes. [...] The black rat puppet "host", Rattus Rattus, appears in short bridging segments, explaining the factual basis for each sketch.
>
> The creative team was largely recruited from the mainstream adult UK comedy scene. They took inspiration from such quintessentially British historical-comedy classics as *Blackadder* and the Monty Python films. The series was a critical and ratings success, eventually gaining a wide all ages audience through its non-condescending and inclusive approach. […]
>
> Sketches were filmed *en masse* and then cut into episodes by the producers based on creative rather than chronological or other educational considerations, in the manner of a more traditional sketch-comedy series. They often fall under a recurring banner — usually with its own short title sequence—but otherwise vary widely in length, visual style and approach. Many are recognisable parodies of other popular media or celebrities, in formats ranging from spoof commercials to mock TV shows, newscasts, magazines, video games and film trailers. Notable parody inspirations included *Masterchef*,[58] *Wife Swap*,[59] *Come Dine with Me*[60] and *The Apprentice*.[61] "Horrible Histories Movie Pitch", in which historical figures pitch their life stories to a panel of Hollywood producers played by *League of Gentlemen* actors Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, used the format of a commercial campaign for Orange mobile [phone] reminders.
>
> The show also created several popular recurring characters and concepts, notably "Stupid Deaths", in which a skeletal, platinum-blond Grim Reaper amuses himself while processing souls for admittance to the afterlife by forcing candidates from throughout history to relate the embarrassing details of their demise. HHTV News' Bob Hale and his eccentric-but-erudite in-studio reports provide a broader picture on historical events (such as the Wars of the Roses and the French Revolution), in a style reminiscent of presenter Peter Snow. The "Shouty Man", a parody of a typically ebullient infomercial host (like Barry Scott), pitches unusual historical products. […]
>
> No formal educational method was applied to the production, and no attempt was made to follow the official UK National Curriculum for primary school history. The show's creators were acutely aware of educational possibilities, but — in line with Deary's overall mandate for the franchise — saw their basic role as popularising history, inspiring further curiosity about the academic subject rather than attempting to teach it seriously. […] Throughout, emphasis was placed on meshing comedy with the demands of historical accuracy, as defined by the mainstream scholarly consensus on the topic. This stance sometimes encompassed traditionally accepted if not actually well-documented anecdotes, such as those involving Caligula. […] When an error was discovered, the effort was made to correct it whenever possible. This process is perhaps most noticeable in the evolution of a song featuring the four Hanoverian King Georges: lyrics in the original 2009 video incorrectly saying that George I had "died on the loo"[62] were correctly reassigned to George II for the song's reprise at the show's 2011 BBC Prom concert.

[56] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horrible_Histories
[57] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horrible_Histories_(2009_TV_series)
[58] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MasterChef_(UK_TV_series)
[59] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wife_Swap_(UK_TV_series)
[60] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come_Dine_with_Me
[61] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Apprentice_(TV_series)
[62] Is dying while going to stool something funny? Persons with a weak heart do die sometimes in the effort. My mother recalls that in her native Baghdad, her grandmother gravely reported about the demise (in such a circumstance) of a lady, her acquaintance, whose surname unfortunately happened to be *Kākā*. That however is a Kurdish word, literally meaning 'brother'. In my childhood in Milan, I once watched a television broadcast about dancing long-haired tribesmen in Kurdistan, and at one point, one of them addressed the Italian reporter as *Kākā,* "brother", which within the culture is a great compliment for a non-relative.

> Taking cues from what Deary describes as his "seriously subversive" attitude towards the mainstream British history education model meant that the show inevitably incorporated sociopolitical comment. Perhaps most explicitly, Scots-Jamaican nurse Mary Seacole was deliberately championed in both a sketch and later song as a forgotten heroine in the shadow of Florence Nightingale.[63] […] The producers did consider some topics intrinsically unsuited for an irreverent comic treatment, as for instance the Holocaust or the harsher details of slavery, and avoided them accordingly. […] The show sometimes acknowledged particularly emotive subject matter (the WWI Christmas truce, for example) by following up the sketch not with a joke, but a more sombre elaboration of the less comedic details. […]
>
> [The 2009 TV series] *Horrible Histories* was immediately, and almost universally, greeted with critical enthusiasm. On its debut, Alice-Azania Jarvis of *The Independent* described the show as "fun, filthy and genuinely engaging, in a peer-to-peer way" [(Jarvis 2009)]. Harry Venning in *The Stage* approved the "seriously funny, beautifully performed and endlessly inventive sketches" along with "plenty of crowd-pleasing fart and poo gags" [(Venning 2009)]. […] Most criticism of the show revolves around the accuracy and presentation of its factual content. The TV series, like the books, has been used by educators as a classroom aid and was endorsed by UK Education Secretary Michael Gove as useful for spotlighting "neglected periods of history" [(Paton 2013)]. However, writing after the final episode, Simon Hoggart in *The Spectator* noted that "There has been some whipped-up controversy about *Horrible Histories*", adding that "where the books make a rudimentary attempt to teach history as a series of interconnected events, the television show is basically gags, chiefly about defecation, gluttony, murder and torture. It's quite amusing, though whether it will pique an interest in the subject, or — as some say — merely encourage children to learn more about defecation, gluttony, murder and torture, we cannot know" [(Hoggart 2010)].

Preston (2013) began his report by concerning himself with the then latest *Horrible Histories* television series:

> In a little room on the top floor of a narrow Georgian building in Soho, the new series of CBBC's Horrible Histories is being assembled. The walls are covered with index cards felt-tipped with the names of sketches — Egyptian Wife Swap, Real Tudor Hustle, Georgian Come Dine with Me, Grand Designs: Vlad the Impaler — and the series producer Caroline Norris and the producer Imogen Cooper are shuffling them around as they try to piece together the running order for 13 episodes to be shown later this year.
>
> This is the fifth series Norris's team has made for the children's channel, based on the phenomenally bestselling books by Terry Deary, and faithful to their mission statement — 'history with the nasty bits left in'. While it has won a shelf's worth of children's television prizes, Horrible Histories long ago transcended the after-school audience, winning Best Sketch Show at the (grown-up) British Comedy Awards in 2010 and 2011, and it is now so well established in the comedy pantheon that its adult fans ask if they can make cameo appearances.

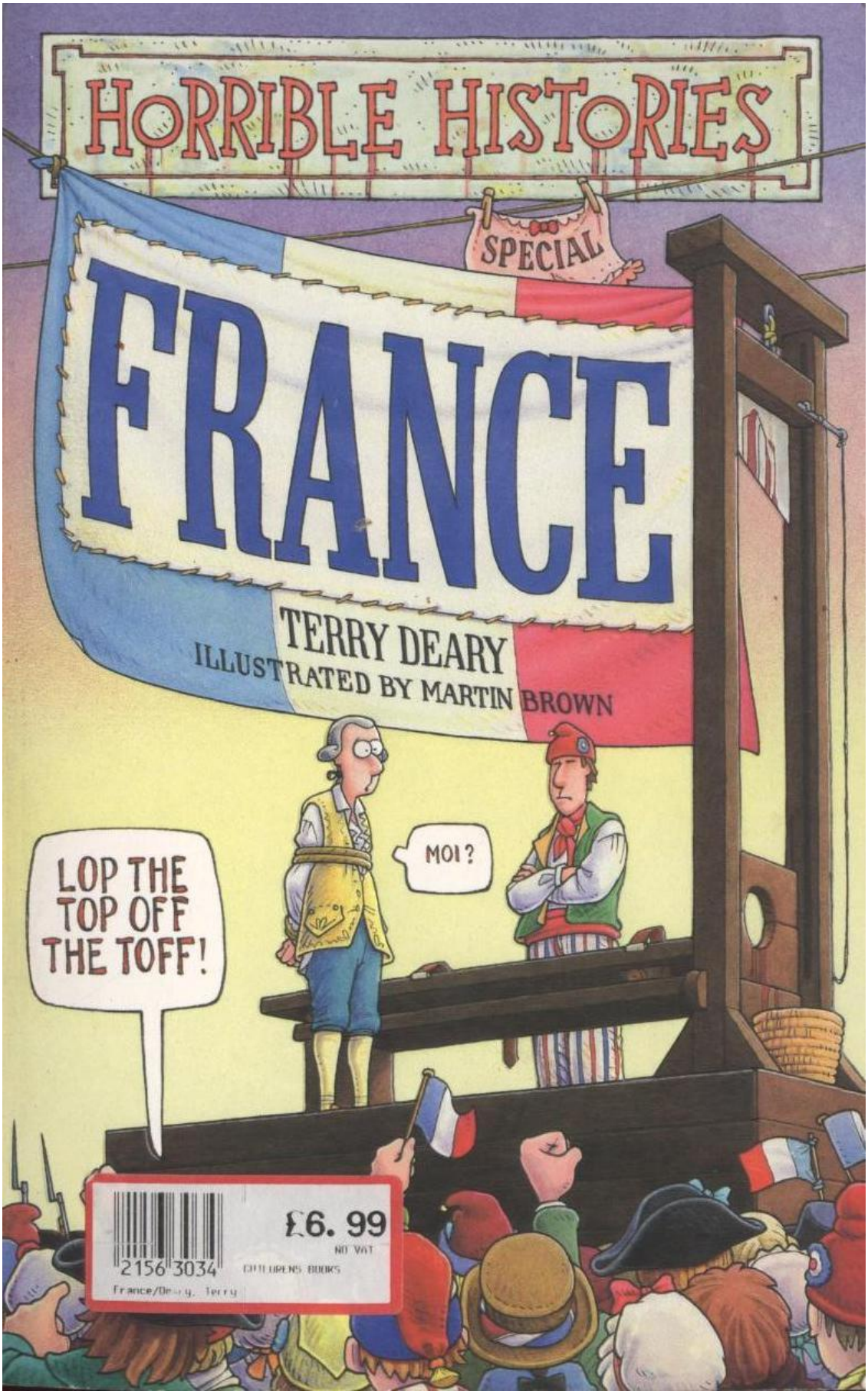
[63] In a news programme on BBC Radio 4 in June 2016, a lady professor associated with the Nightingale Society and commemoration of Florence Nightingale voiced her association's protest at the imminent erection of a statue commemorating Mary Seacole (about whom, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Seacole), at St. Thomas Hospital in central London, as though this would diminish Nightingale. While so doing, the professor tried to demolish the Afro-Caribbean nurse Seacole, as though the latter was merely a businesswoman (she did run a business in order to fund her nursing in the Crimea War).
In 2014, the Nightingale Society protested (on more reasonable grounds) to the BBC concerning a *Horrible Histories* sketch (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horrible_Histories_(2009_TV_series): "in September 2014, responding to a complaint from the Nightingale Society, the BBC Trust determined that the show had breached editorial guidelines in the sketch highlighting the controversy surrounding Mary Seacole's role in nursing history. In this sketch, Florence Nightingale says that she rejected the Jamaican-born Seacole's application to Nightingale's Crimean nursing corps because it was open to 'British girls' only. This was held to be imputing racially discriminatory motives to Nightingale — and thus implying them to be historical fact — without sufficient proof. In response, the BBC pulled the offending sketch from their website and announced it would be removed from future showings of the episode" (citing "BBC Rapped over Horrible Histories Florence Nightingale sketch", *BBC News*, 30 September 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-29426242).

Above: The puppet character Rattus Rattus.

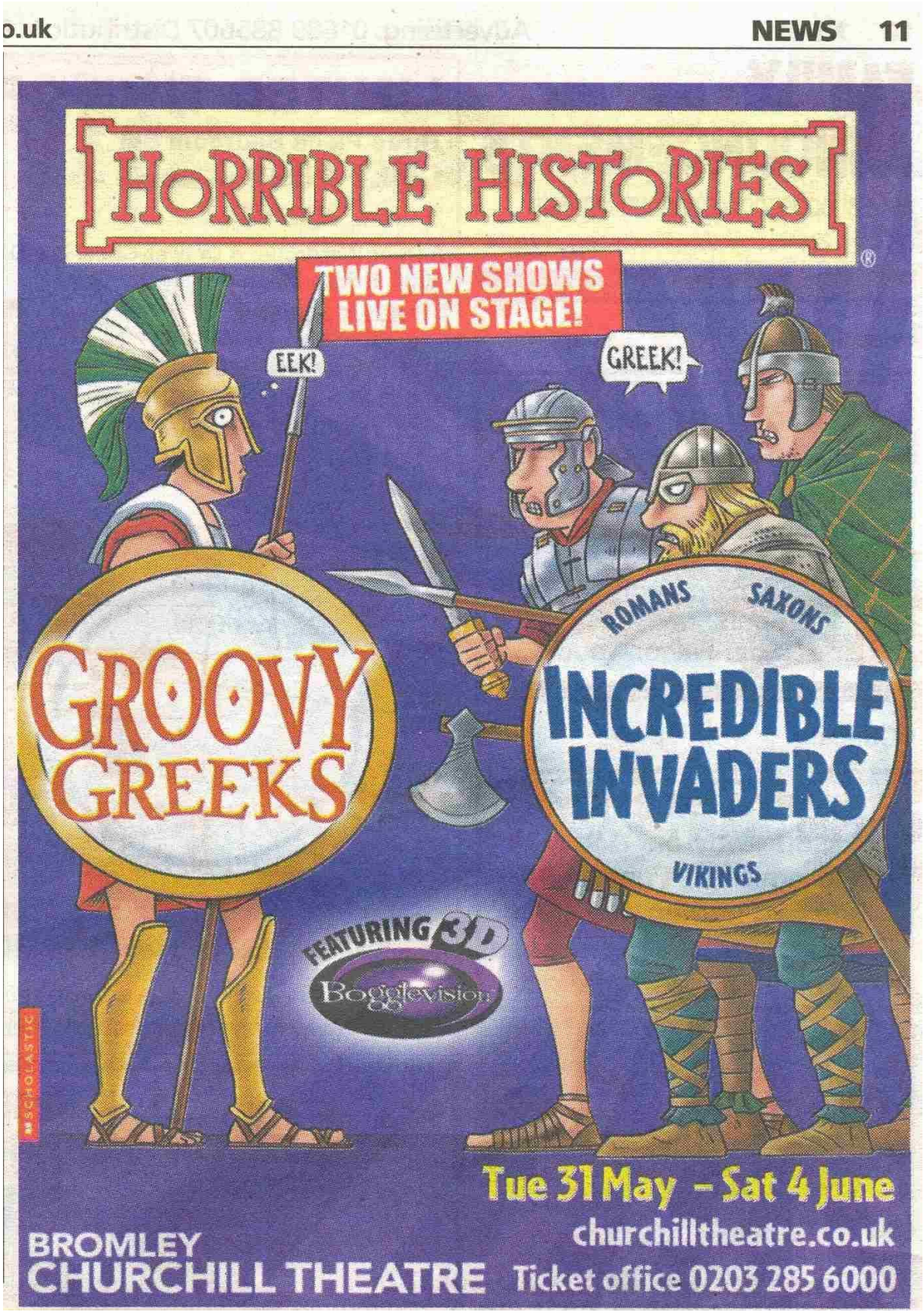
Right: Animated title cards[64] from *Horrible Histories* Episode 7 of Series 4. Original airdate 27 April 2012.

A BBC still showing Martha Howe-Douglas as a Georgian woman, Ben Willbond as a Viking man and Matthew Baynton as an Egyptian man, from *Horrible Histories*.

[64] Horrible_Histories_animated_title_cards.jpg



The cover of a *Horrible Histories* book. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Francehorrible.JPG



A 2016 advertisement from a South East London local newspaper for two *Horrible Histories* shows.

Cesare Pascarella.

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