



# La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

March 2005

## ***“The Region of Le Marche” by Vito Tamboli***

Le Marche, the gem of the Adriatic Seacoast is located north of Abruzzi and South of Emilia Romagna. It's a province of quiet, subtle and happy Italian people pleased with their heritage and comfortable with their environment. They love good food, art, music and history. People that rather pedal bicycles than waste money on gasoline for their autos. It is an area that is more mountainous than plains. It is an area that is proud of its heritage and its future. A sure fire place to visit and leave with a happy remembrance of Italy as one would want to remember it.

Le Marche where food, art, music and history are fused into an area that believes that they truly personify Italy as it should be and seldom is!

Our speaker, Vito Tamboli, was born in Pesaro, Marche, Italy and arrived a year later in the United States. Vito received his Bachelor's degree from Boston College and M.B.A. from St. Louis University. Vito is a retiree of the United States Army, former Vice-President of SSM Healthcare, writer for *Il Pensiero*, published author and member of the Italian Club.

### **Next Meeting**

Wednesday

March 16th

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.

RSVP—Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960 or

ItalianClubSTL@aol.com

## **He was called God's sculptor, painter and architect, but was he also a theologian? MICHELANGELO AND THE VAULT OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL by Eugene Mariani, Ph.D.**

What was the theological message of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel vault (ceiling) frescos? To answer that question was the major purpose of the presentation. But first, as underlying theme, speaker Gene Mariani reviewed the Chapel's history and function and the scope, complexity, artistic challenge, and the figures of its ceiling. The Sistine Chapel, commissioned in 1477 by Pope Sixtus IV Della Rovere and completed in 1484, was the location of the Vatican's most important conclaves and liturgical ceremonies. On completion, the Chapel walls had been elaborately frescoed but its ceiling simply painted as a blue field with gold stars. In 1504, foundation settling caused major ceiling cracking and in 1508, Pope Julius II Della Rovere (the Warrior Pope and nephew of Sixtus IV) commissioned a reluctant Michelangelo to execute a new ceiling fresco. Julius initially wanted the new ceiling to depict the twelve Apostles plus appropriate "decoration". Michelangelo convinced Julius this was a poor plan and received from the pope "a free hand" to do as he wanted. What resulted was one of the greatest works in the history of art – a monumental masterpiece with over 300 figures covering an area of nearly 12000 square feet. The project was extremely challenging. There was the ceiling's complex architectural shape, described as a flattened vault with small side vaults having centered windows which overall consisted of crescent shaped areas (lunettes) over the windows; triangular areas (spandrels) above the lunettes; rectangular areas between the spandrels; four curved corner areas (pendentives) where the vault met the walls; and finally the vault's flattened "lid". Adding to the project's difficulty was having to work in fresco, considered the most challenging of all forms of painting;

having to master the technique of "foreshortening"; and working above one's head on a 60 foot high scaffold. Michelangelo used these architectural elements to portray different groups of figures. Depicted in the lunettes and spandrels were the lineal ancestors of Jesus, from Abraham to Joseph, spanning some 40 generations. In the spaces between the spandrels were 12 prophets and prophetesses who, according to Christian theology, had predicted the coming of Christ. Of these, 7 were Old Testament Prophets (ranging from Zechariah to Jonah) and 5 were sibyls (priestesses believed to be able to predict the future) from classical mythology. Pagan sibyls might seem strange figures for a Christian Chapel, but early Church fathers, including St. Augustine, had granted them "respectability" by declaring that their utterances actually foretold such things as the Virgin Birth, the Passion of Christ, and the Last Judgment. The pendentives depicted "four interventions by God acting through His servants to effect the salvation of the people of Israel from danger". The two altar wall pendentives depicted *the sacrifice of Haman* and *the Raising of the Brazen Serpent*. The entrance wall pendentives portrayed *the Slaying of Goliath* and *the Slaying of Holofernes*. Most famous are the nine rectangular panels comprising the "lid" of the vault with their scenes from Genesis. These are divided into three main groups: (1) "Origins of the Universe" which included *Separation of the Light from Darkness; Creation of the Sun and Moon; and Separation of the Waters from the Land*. (2) "Origins of Man" which included *Creation of Adam; Creation of Eve; and Temptation, Fall, and Expulsion*. (3) "Origins of Evil" which included

*(Continued on page 2)*

### ***The Vault of the Sistine Chapel***

***“What resulted was one of the greatest works in the history of art – a monumental masterpiece with over 300 figures covering an area of nearly 12000 square feet.”***

**L'Angolo Del Presidente** *by James Tognoni*

*My Fellow Members:*

There are many exciting activities coming up this Spring: Film and Opera Series at the Bocce Club, St. Louis Italian Film Festival at Washington University and more. Keep an eye on this publication and check the web site for announcements.

This month's column will be very short. I only have one thing to say...

**"WE NEED A TREASURER"**. Thanks to the efforts of Dan Viele the books are very well organized and the job is simple to execute. Please, I need someone to **contact me at 314-865-1005** so that we can fill this most important position.

*Ciao,*

*Jim*

jtognoni@earthlink.net  
314-865-1005

***Benvenuti, nuovi membri***

Rick Altilio, whose family is from the Salerno province; Pinuccia Alemani who resides in Cuggiono, Italy; and, Floyd Taddeucci, whose family is from Bagni di Lucca, Tuscany.

***"True Colors-Venice in Winter"***  
***by Stewart Halperin***

Stewart Halperin has invited the members of the Italian Club to join him at an artist's reception on

Friday, March 11  
6:00-9:30p.m.

Visions Five Gallery  
465 N. Taylor (at Olive)

*Exhibit will run through April 17th*  
*www.halperinphotography.com*

**St. Joseph Table**  
**at St. Ambrose Cafeteria**  
**5110 Wilson Avenue**  
**Sunday, March 13th**  
**Noon—3p.m.**

**3p.m- Mass in Italian**  
**Purchases from the Main Altar may be made**  
**after the 3p.m. Mass**

***Reminder:***

**Have you sent in your 2005 Italian Club dues? If not, please renew your membership today. Send your \$30 check to:**

**Dan Viele, Treasurer**  
**1931 Schoettler Valley**  
**Chesterfield, MO 63017**

**Biblioteca Sant'Ambrogio**

The newly formed St. Ambrose Church Library (Biblioteca Sant'Ambrogio) has a special section on Italian and Italian-American issues, but more materials (books and AV) are needed and would be very much appreciated. This can include subjects (in either Italian or English) such as history, grammar, dictionaries, literature, travel, religious, novels, biography, etc..

The materials should be fairly current and in good condition. Please take them to the St. Ambrose Rectory (entrance by side door buzzer) Monday-Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Any questions please contact Dorotea Rosso-manno-Phillips, 314-535-9748, or dorotea@aol.com.

Please note the inserted flyer that gives detailed information on our Spring Italian Film and Opera Series at the Italia-America Bocce Club and the St. Louis Italian Film Festival co-sponsored by Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Chicago, Washington University's Program in Film and Media Studies and the Italian Club of St. Louis.

**(Michelangelo, Continued from page 1)**

*Sacrifice of Noah, The Deluge, and Drunkenness of Noah.*

In addressing the ceiling's "theological message", Mariani referred to an article, *The Theology Behind Michelangelo's Ceiling*, by Jesuit historian John O'Malley who maintained that Michelangelo's ceiling proclaimed that the entire Old Testament points directly to one event - the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ; in Christian theology the pivotal event in all history. The ceiling describes how God created the world and the human race and although humanity frequently disobeyed Him, He continued to protect His people against many enemies until Christ would come to redeem them. As evidence, Michelangelo shows Christ's direct ancestors and presents prophets and sibyls who, through various pronouncements, "predicted" His coming to the world. A secondary question was "did Michelangelo develop these theological concepts himself or did he have help?" Scholars agree that Michelangelo truly was given a free hand by Sixtus IV to design the ceiling as he saw fit, but that, although he was comparatively well-educated and probably better prepared than most artists of his day when it came to conceiving such a complex pictorial program, no historian believes that he had sufficient theological knowledge to conceive such a plan alone and that someone probably helped him. Although no one is certain, most historians believe that the most likely "advisor" would have been Egidio da Viterbo, the Prior General of the Augustinian Order. Regardless of whether Michelangelo conceived the program alone or had help, it is thought that the designs must have been approved by the Master of the Sacred Palace (the Pope's official theologian), the Dominican friar Giovanni Rafanelli, whose job it was to review everything that went on in the Chapel. However there is no evidence Rafanelli or any other theologian ever tried to interfere with Michelangelo's plans in any way. *by Gene Mariani*

# TERZA PAGINA

## I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

**Antioco Casula** (Desulo, Nuoro 1878 - ivi 1957) fu uno dei maggiori poeti lirici in lingua sarda. Si arruolò nell'arma dei carabinieri e nella minuscola stazione di Tula compose i suoi primi canti, ispirati dall'aspro e affascinante paesaggio isolano, dai poveri pastori e dai banditi; i canti furono pubblicati sotto lo pseudonimo di Montanaru. Scrisse quattro raccolte di canti: *Boghes de Barbagia del 1904*, *Cantos d'Ennargentu del 1922*, *Sos Cantos de sa solitudine del 1933*, *Sa lantia del 1950*. In occasione della proiezione il 18 marzo a Washington University del film "La destinazione" di Piero Sanna, ambientato in Sardegna, vorrei presentare una poesia di Casula in lingua sarda.

### A Desulo

Di Antioco Casula

Fiera ruza in mesu a sos castanzos  
 seculare ses posta, o idda mia,  
 attaccada a sos usos de una 'ia  
 generosa, ospitale a sos istranzos.  
 Sos fizos tuos, pienes d'energia  
 chircana in donzi parte sos balanzos  
 cun cuddos cadditeddos fortes, lanzos  
 garrigos de diversas mercantzia.  
 Gai passende vida trista e lanza  
 giran s'isula nostra avventureris.  
 E cando intrana in carchi 'idda istanza,  
 tottu isclaman: -accò sos castanzeris-  
 E issos umiles naran: eh, castanza,  
 e chie comporta truddas e tazeris!

## In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

### I nuraghi: fascino di Sardegna



I numerosi nuraghi disseminati nell'isola di Sardegna occupano certamente un posto di rilievo fra i monumenti lasciati nel bacino del Mediterraneo Occidentale dalle varie culture che nell'antichità vi si sono succedute.

Il nuraghe è una struttura architettonica, o monumento, in [pietra](#) caratteristico della [civiltà nuragica](#). I nuraghi iniziarono ad essere costruiti in [Sardegna](#) nella media [Età del bronzo](#), attorno al [1660/1550 a.C.](#) Non è agevole indicare la loro precisa funzione, dal momento che esistono nuraghi di diversa collocazione (pianura, sommità di colli) e dimensione. Verosimilmente quelli

collocati sulle vette dei colli, a torre semplice, erano torri di avvistamento, mentre i grandi complessi, a più torri attorno ad un [mastio](#) centrale ed un cortile, avevano funzioni differenziate, sempre riferite però al loro essere il centro della comunità. Nell'[Età del ferro](#) (dal [900 AC](#) in poi) non vengono più costruiti nuraghi, ma si continuano ad usare le vecchie costruzioni, spesso come luoghi di [culto](#).

Il nome di questo caratteristico monumento deriva dal vocabolo *nurra*, che significa "mucchio", "accumulo", ma anche "cavità". Ed è forse proprio per questo doppio significato che il termine è stato applicato alla forma originaria del nuraghe, una costruzione venuta su per "accumulo" di grosse pietre con l'interno occupato da una camera coperta a cupola e pertanto "cava".

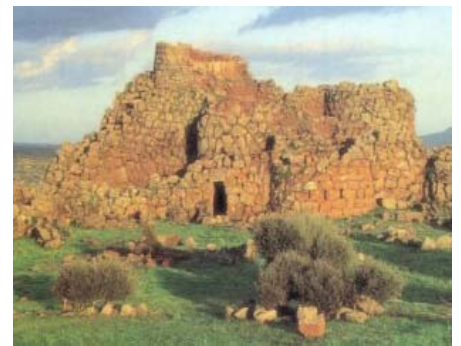
I nuraghi più importanti sono Su Nuraxi ([Barumini](#)), [Santu Antine \(Torralba\)](#), [Losa \(Abbasanta\)](#), [Orrubiu \(Orroli\)](#), [Palmavera \(Alghero\)](#), e S. Barbara (Macomer).



Il complesso nuragico di Su Nuraxi, così come è visibile oggi con il maestoso nuraghe circondato da un ampio villaggio, è il risultato di un'occupazione del sito durata quasi 2000 anni, dal 1600 a.C. circa, fino al III secolo d.C., in piena età romana.

In origine il nuraghe complesso era costituito da cinque torri, quella centrale, chiamata anche Mastio, e quattro torri laterali unite da mura rettilinee, all'interno delle quali si trova il cortile interno, dotato di un pozzo con sorgente attiva tutt'oggi. Le torri erano tutte formate da due piani sovrapposti e ancora oggi presentano intatto il soffitto del primo piano, mentre del secondo restano pochi filari di muratura ad eccezione della torre centrale, che conserva internamente entrambi i piani. Su Nuraxi è stato iscritto nella lista del patrimonio mondiale UNESCO nel 1997.

Il nuraghe Orrubiu è un poderoso esempio di nuraghe pentalobato, mostra una torre centrale circondata da un bastione a cinque torri, a sua volta racchiuso entro un antemurale munito di sette torri e rinforzato a sud-est da una seconda cinta con altre cinque torri.



Sono circa settemila quei nuraghi che, conservati più o meno bene, sono giunti fino a noi, ma all'origine e prima delle molte distruzioni cui sono andati incontro, il loro numero doveva essere certamente maggiore. Per ulteriori informazioni vedi:

<http://www.mondosardegna.net/nuraghi/nuraghi.htm>

**Buon viaggio in Italia!!!**



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ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS  
LA RONDINE

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## Prossime Manifestazioni

### FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS

#### And EVENTS

March 16- "The Region of Le Marche" by Vito Tamboli

April 20- "Those Mysterious Etruscans" by Dr. Anna Amelung  
Awards to Washington University Students

May 18- "Italian Opera" by Susan Wohl

*The Italian Club meets the third Wednesday of each month at da Baldo's Restaurant at 6:30p.m*

#### I MUSICI

Tuesday, April 5, 2005 8:00 PM

Formed in 1952 this twelve member string ensemble from Rome, who Toscanini called "the best chamber orchestra in the world", returns to the St. Louis New Cathedral. We have a chance to go as a group and receive preferred seating. Contact Jim Tognoni at (314) 865-1005 or e-mail: [jtognoni@earthlink.net](mailto:jtognoni@earthlink.net) if you are interested in attending. Our discounted ticket prices are as follows: \$29.75, \$21.25, \$12.75. Reservations must be made by March 15 to secure the space.

#### Italian Club's Spring Film and Opera Series

The Spring 2005 Film and Opera Series will begin in April. See inserted flyer for details.



ITALIAN FILMS & OPERAS – 2005  
SPRING SERIES AT THE ITALIA-AMERICA  
BOCCE CLUB

**LA BOHEME BY GIACOMO PUCCINI**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 8**

One of opera's most moving compositions and the world's most popular opera of love, truth, and fate. Follows the tale of six struggling Parisians who live a bohemian existence of love and laughter. A Franco Zeffirelli production. With Gianni Raimondi & Mirella Freni. (104 minutes)

**THE SECRET OF SANTA VITTORIA**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 29**

Starring international actors: Anthony Quinn; Anna Magnani; Giancarlo Giannini; Sergio Franchi. The townspeople of Santa Vittoria in northern Italy ban together humorously, heroically, cleverly, and defiantly to thwart the Germans' design to confiscate the town's world famous wines.

**STIFFELIO BY GIUSEPPE VERDI**

**FRIDAY, MAY 6**

High quality but neglected opera due to Italian censors' opposition to the plot. Deals with the plight of a stern Protestant minister who considers divorce and even murder after discovering his wife is unfaithful. Features Jose Carreras & Catherine Malfitano. (123 minutes)

**IL MARCHESE DEL GRILLO**

**FRIDAY, MAY 13**

Alberto Sordi plays the role of an early XIX century prominent Roman historical figure, a dissolute, decadent, cowardly, resourceful prankster who spares no one from bitter ridicule, not even his own aristocratic family, the Papacy, Napoleon, commoners, merchants and artists alike.

*Except for "Santa Vittoria" (which is in English) all programs are in Italian with English subtitles and begin at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Films are introduced by Dr. Antonio Perrone, and operas by Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips.*

Sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the Italia-America Bocce Club. The Bocce Club is located at 2210 Marconi Ave., on the "Hill," St. Louis, Mo. 63110.

*For further information contact Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips at 535-9748 or e-mail: dorotearp@aol.com*