

Giacomo Carito

*Under a blue sky, along a
margin of white sand*

L'immagine di Brindisi nella
letteratura nordamericana (1861-
2005)

I ed. *Under a blue sky, along a
margin of white sand*
Brindisi: Pubblidea, 2005.

Proposte per una nuova interpretazione della storia di Brindisi

19

*Under a blue sky, along a margin of white
sand*



*Società di Storia
Patria per la Puglia
Sezione di Brindisi*

Con gli auspici, l'adesione e il patrocinio di



Rotary Club Brindisi Valesio



Fondazione "Tonino Di Giulio"



In_Chiostri



Brindisi e le antiche strade



Adriatic Music Culture – Brindisi

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Giacomo Carito

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*Società di Storia
Patria per la Puglia
Sezione di Brindisi*

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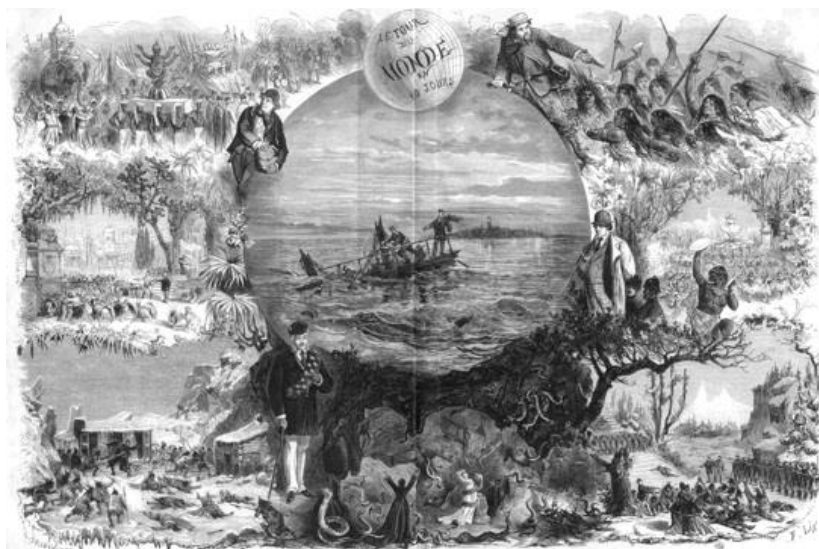
*Under a blue sky, along a margin of white sand**

* Brindisi è così descritta da Lew Wallace (1827-1905) nel 1893 in *The Prince of India Or Why Constantinople Fell*.

I ed. *Under a blue sky, along a margin of white sand*, Brindisi: Pubblidea, 2005. Il presente lavoro, edito in inglese, è stato scritto nell'occasione della visita a New York, dal 19 al 23 settembre 2005, del sindaco Domenico Mennitti assieme a una delegazione dell'Amministrazione comunale, composta dal presidente del Consiglio comunale Nicola Di Donna, dall'assessore all'Urbanistica Massimo Ciullo e dal capo ripartizione all'Urbanistica Carlo Cioffi, per partecipare a una serie di eventi che seguono i contatti avuti nell'ottobre 2004 in occasione delle celebrazioni annuali del NIAF-*National Italian American Foundation*. L'organizzazione, fondata a Washington nel 1975, rappresenta gli oltre venti milioni di cittadini italo- americani che vivono oltreoceano e si propone di aiutare la comunità italiana negli Usa a mantenere vivi i propri valori e le proprie tradizioni. Oltre al Comune di Brindisi, è presente anche l'amministrazione comunale di Lecce con il sindaco Adriana Poli Bortone. Entrambe le delegazioni sono ospiti del NIAF. Il tutto, rientra nell'ambito della presentazione del progetto *Città Salento*, al quale aderisce anche il Comune di Taranto. Nell'ambito di tali iniziative è prevista anche la presentazione del progetto *Città d'Acqua*, presso la sede dell'Autorità Portuale di New York, alla presenza dei rappresentanti del Comune, della Amministrazione Provinciale, della Camera di Commercio, dell'Assindustria e dell'Autorità Portuale di Brindisi.

1. Da Brindisi verso l'India

Non radi sono i riferimenti a Brindisi nella letteratura statunitense; la città è interpretata come porta d'oriente, sede di venerande memorie classiche, punto estremo d'Italia, ultimo limite dell'occidente. La fama di Brindisi quale porto capolinea dei collegamenti con l'India è ben espressa ne *Il giro del mondo in ottanta giorni* pubblicato il 1873 dal francese Jules Verne (1828-1905).



Il viaggio è reso possibile nei limiti temporali stabiliti andando in India per la via di Brindisi in soli 20 giorni:

«That is true, gentlemen», added John Sullivan. «Only eighty days, now that the section between Rotherham and Allahabad, on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, has been opened. Here is the estimate made by the Daily Telegraph:

- *From London to Suez via Mont Cenis and Brindisi, by rail and steamboats7 day*
- *From Suez to Bombay, by steamer13 days»*

Regolare servizio fra Brindisi, raggiunta da Fogg in treno, e Bombay, per la via di Suez, è effettuato dal piroscafo *Mongolia* che, appartenente alla Compagnia *Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation*, costruito in ferro, con un carico di duemila ottocento tonnellate e cinquecento cavalli di potenza, doveva arrivare alle undici del mattino di mercoledì 9 ottobre a Suez. Il *Mongolia* faceva regolarmente la spola tra Brindisi e Bombay passando per il Canale di Suez ed era uno dei piroscafi più veloci della compagnia, facendo sempre più di dieci nodi all'ora tra Brindisi e Suez, e nove e mezzo tra Suez e Bombay.:

The steamer Mongolia, belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Company, built of iron, of two thousand eight hundred tons burden, and five hundred horse-power, was due at eleven o'clock a.m. on Wednesday, the 9th of October, at Suez. The Mongolia plied regularly between Brindisi and Bombay via the Suez Canal, and was one of the fastest steamers belonging to the company, always making more than ten knots an hour between Brindisi and Suez, and nine and a half between Suez and Bombay.

Si rileva che buona parte di quelli che s'imbarcano a Brindisi sono diretti in India:

The greater part of the passengers from Brindisi were bound for India some for Bombay, others for Calcutta by way of Bombay, the nearest route thither, now that a railway crosses the Indian peninsula. Among the passengers was a number of officials and military officers of various grades, the

latter being either attached to the regular British forces or commanding the Sepoy troops, and receiving high salaries ever since the central government.



In un testo dell'inglese Philip R. T. Gurdon (1863-1942), ufficiale dell'esercito britannico e amministratore coloniale, *The Khasis*, edito il 1907, si rilevava come, presso la popolazione Khasi, gruppo etnico della Meghalaya nell'India nord-orientale, l'avvento dei missionari gallesi e la parziale diffusione dell'istruzione inglese avessero in alcuni casi prodotto nomi riferibili anche a itinerari internazionali e al porto di Brindisi: «*The advent of the Welsh Missionaries and the partial dissemination of English education has in some cases produced rather peculiar names. I quote some instances: U Water Kingdom, Ka Mediterranean Sea, Ka Red Sea; U Shakewell Bones, U Overland, Ka Brindisi, Ka Medina, Ka Mary Jones, U Mission, and Ka India*».

2. «*In questo mondo, viviamo tutti a bordo di una nave salpata da un porto che non conosciamo, diretta a un porto che ignoriamo*» (Fernando Pessoa).



Geo. H. Heffner.

L'americano Geo. H. Heffner in *The Youthful Wanderer; or An Account of a Tour through England, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and the Rhine, Switzerland, Italy, and*

Egypt. Adapted to the Wants of Young Americans Taking Their First Glimpses at the Old World, edito il 1876, indica Brindisi quale tappa ineludibile nella visita del *vecchio mondo*. Nel tragitto da Roma a Brindisi evidenzia come molti italiani siano evidentemente a volte in condizioni di fame. Chi non è stato in quei luoghi, rileva Heffner, non può immaginare la povertà che regna in alcune zone del sud Italia, specialmente tra Napoli e Brindisi. Riferisce d'aver visto bambini che correvano molto poco vestiti se non con una camicia, generalmente strappata in ogni parte; alcuni, sotto i sei o otto anni, non avevano neanche un filo di vestiti sul corpo. Rimane colpito dall'immagine di un anziano che arava con una coppia di buoi, come di consuetudine in Italia, accompagnato dalla moglie ben vestita mentre lui indossava solo una camicia che arrivava alle ginocchia e un cappello. Heffner ricorda d'aver passato una domenica a Brindisi, notando che la gente non rispetta il riposo festivo. Riferisce che tutte le persone indossavano abiti vecchi e strappati, e di non aver potuto vedere un cappello, una giacca o un paio di pantaloni su nessuna delle centinaia di persone che affollavano la piazza del mercato tutta la domenica, che sembrasse nuovo o almeno acquistato negli ultimi anni! Heffner riparte lunedì 26 settembre, imbarcandosi sul piroscafo *Avoca* diretto ad Alessandria. Annota ancora: «Brindisi, come Havre, è uno dei posti più belli al mondo da lasciare! Quasi tutto riguardo a esso è ripugnante. Ho visto molti bambini lì che forse non si sono mai lavati in vita loro!».

XIX. Rome to Brindisi.

Many of them are evidently sometimes in a famishing condition. But few who have not seen, can form an idea of the poverty which reigns in some sections of Southern Italy, especially between Naples and Brindisi. I saw children running

about in this section, that had little of clothing save a shirt, which was generally torn in every part; some few, below the age of about six or eight years, had not even a thread of clothing upon their bodies. An elderly man that was plowing with a pair of oxen, as is the custom in Italy, was accompanied by his wife who was well dressed, but he wore only a shirt that reached to his knees, and a hat. I spent a Sunday at Brindisi, and observed that people keep no Sunday there. All the people wear old and tattered garments, and I could not see a hat, a coat or a pair of pantaloons on the person of one of the hundreds that thronged the market-place all Sunday, that looked as if it had been new at any time within the last few years!

XX. On the Mediterranean.

On Monday morning, September 26th, at 4:00 o'clock a.m., I stepped on board the steamship "Avoca" to take passage for Alexandria. Brindisi, like Havre, is one of the finest places in the world to leave! Almost everything about it is repulsive. I saw many children there that have possibly never seen a washing day in their lives! I sailed for Egypt with great reluctance, for I had already my misgivings about the property of tourists from civilized nations going thither for sight-seeing. Well one does see sights there--but, such sights!

Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918) «*American educator and diplomat*», nella sua autobiografia, ricorda un suo viaggio da Londra ad Alessandria d'Egitto nell'inverno 1888-89:

Now came a sudden change in all my plans. My health having weakened somewhat under the influence of this rather sedentary life in the London fog, I consulted two eminent physicians, Sir Andrew Clarke and Sir Morell Mackenzie, and each advised and even urged me to pass the winter in Egypt.

Shortly came a letter from my friend Professor Willard Fiske, at Florence saying that he would be glad to go with me. This was indeed a piece of good fortune, for he had visited Egypt again and again, and was not only the best of guides, but the most charming of companions. My decision was instantly taken, and, having finished one or two chapters of my book, I left London and, by the way of the St Gotthard, soon reached Florence. Thence to Rome, Naples, and, after a charming drive, to Castellammare, Sorrento, Amalfi, and Salerno, whence we went by rail to Brindisi, and thence to Alexandria, where we arrived on the 1st of January, 1889.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps

3.«Poiché l' europeo non conosce il proprio inconscio, non capisce l'Oriente e vi proietta tutto ciò che teme e disprezza in se stesso». (Carl Gustav Jung)



Lewis Wallace

Lewis Wallace (1827-1905), autore di *Ben Hur*, onorato dallo stato dell'Indiana il 1910 con una statua nello U.S.

Capitol, in *The Prince of India or why Constantinople fell*, pubblicato il 1893 rese la Brindisi del XV secolo metafora a un tempo della possibilità d'incontro tra Islam e Cristianesimo e di limite dell'Occidente. L'emiro, proponendo ricordi della sua infanzia, si riferisce a Brindisi: «Il mio primo ricordo è di essere portato in braccio da una donna all'aperto, sotto un cielo blu, lungo un margine di sabbia bianca, con un frutteto da una parte e il mare dall'altra. Il suono delle onde che s'infrangevano sulla riva è vivido nella mia memoria; così come il colore degli alberi nel frutteto che ora mi è familiare come il verde delle olive. Altrettanto chiaro è il ricordo che, rientrando in casa, sono stato portato in un edificio di pietra così grande da sembrare un castello. Ne parlo, così come del frutteto, del mare e del fragore delle onde, tanto con riferimento a ciò che ho visto in seguito quanto con fiducia nella mia memoria».

1, II, 6

The prince and the emir

Then, without the slightest interruption, the Emir changed his speech from Greek to Italian.

«My earliest remembrance is of being borne in a woman's arms out of doors, under a blue sky, along a margin of white sand, an orchard on one hand, the sea on the other. The report of the waves breaking upon the shore lives distinctly in my memory; so does the color of the trees in the orchard which has since become familiar to me as the green of olives. Equally

clear is the recollection that, returning in-doors, I was carried into a house of stone so large it must have been a castle. I speak of it, as of the orchard, and the sea, and the roar of the breakers, quite as much by reference to what I have subsequently seen as from trust in my memory».

Here the host interrupted him to remark: «Though an Eastern, I have been a traveller in the west, and the description reminds me of the eastern shore of Italy in the region of Brindisi».

Nei pressi dell'antica città di Brindisi ha il suo castello il conte Ugo Corti. Questi, il 1451, offre la sua spada al servizio dell'imperatore di Costantinopoli. Egli aveva lasciato Brindisi alla ricerca di onori all'estero; aveva compiuto il pellegrinaggio al Santo Sepolcro, e a Gerusalemme si era procurato una serie di preziose reliquie, che desiderava offrire al *basileus*. Aveva conoscenza delle lingue araba e turca; aveva combattuto contro i pirati berberi di Tripoli, molti facendoli prigionieri e mettendoli poi ai remi. In caso d'accettazione della sua offerta di aiuto chiede d'avere un ancoraggio tranquillo per la sua galera.

2, V, 3

Mirza does an errand for Mahommed

The sailing-master saluted profoundly, resumed seat in his boat, and started back to the ship, leaving the captain of the guard to open the envelope and read the communication, which was substantially as follows:

«From the galley, St. Agostino, May 5, Year of our Blessed Saviour, 1451».

«The undersigned is a Christian Noble of Italy, more particularly from his strong Castle Corti on the eastern coast of Italy, near the ancient city of Brindisi. He offers lealty to His Most Christian Majesty, the Emperor of Constantinople, Defender of the Faith according to the crucified Son of God (to whom be honor and praise forevermore), and humbly represents that he is a well knighted soldier by profession, having won his spurs in battle, and taken the accolade from the hand of Calixtus the Third, Bishop of Rome, and, yet more worthily, His Holiness the Pope: that the time being peaceful in his country, except as it was rent by baronial feuds and forays not to his taste, he left it in search of employment and honors abroad; that he made the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre first, and secured there a number of precious relics, which he is solicitous of presenting to His Imperial Majesty; that from long association with the Moslems, whom Heaven, in its wisdom impenetrable to the understanding of men, permits to profane the Holy Land with their presence and wicked guardianship, he acquired a speaking knowledge of the Arabic and Turkish languages; that he engaged in warfare against those enemies of God, having the powerful sanction therefor of His Holiness aforesaid, by whose direction he occupied himself chiefly with chastising the Berber pirates of Tripoli, from whom he took prisoners, putting them at his oars, where some of them now are. With the august city of Byzantium he has been acquainted many years through report, and, if its fame be truly published, he desires to reside in it, possibly to the end of his days. Wherefore he presumes to address this his respectful petition, praying its submission to His Most Christian Majesty, that he may be assured if the proposal be agreeable to the

royal pleasure, and in the meantime have quiet anchorage for his galley.

Ugo, Count Corti».

In prosieguito è proposto il ritorno dell'emiro nella sua terra d'origine; qui riconosce i luoghi della sua infanzia.

2,V,4

The emir in Italy

While settling this point, the conversation had with the Prince of India in the latter's tent at Zaribah arose to mind, and he recalled with particularity all that singular person said with reference to the accent observable in his speech. He also went over the description he himself had given the Prince of the house or castle from which he had been taken in childhood. A woman had borne him outdoors, under a blue sky, along a margin of white sand, an orchard on one hand, the sea on the other. He remembered the report of the waves breaking on the shore, the olive-green color of the trees in the orchard, and the battlemented gate of the castle; whereupon the Prince said the description reminded him of the eastern shore of Italy in the region of Brindisi. It was a vague remark certainly; but now it made a deeper impression on the Emir than at the moment of its utterance and pointed his attention to Brindisi. The going to Italy, he argued, was really to get a warrant for the character he was to assume in Constantinople; that is, to obtain some knowledge of the country, its geography, political divisions, cities, rulers, and present conditions generally, without which the slightest cross-examination by any of the well-informed personages about the Emperor would shatter his pretensions in an instant. Then it was he fell into a most unusual mood. [...]

The story of the sack of a castle was of a kind to have wide circulation; at the same time this one was recent enough to be still in the memory of persons living. Finding the place of its occurrence was the difficulty. If in the vicinity of Brindisi--well, he would go and ask. The yearning spoken of did not come alone; it had for companion, Conscience, as yet in the background [...]

There were vessels bound for Venice. One was taking in water, after which it would sail for Otranto. It seemed a fleet craft, with a fair crew, and a complement of stout rowers. Otranto was south of Brindisi a little way, and the castle he wanted to hear of might have been situated between those cities. Who could tell? Besides, as an Italian nobleman, to answer inquiry in Constantinople, he would have to locate himself somewhere, and possibly the coast in question might accommodate him with both a location and a title. The result was he took passage to Otranto [...]

While there he kept his role of traveller, but was studious, and picked up a great fund of information bearing upon the part awaiting him. He lived and dressed well, and affected religious circles. It was the day when Italy was given over to the nobles--the day of robbers, fighting, intrigues and usurpations--of free lances and bold banditti—of government by the strong hand, of right determinable by might, of ensanguined Guelphs and Ghibellines. Of these the Emir kept clear.

By chance he fell in with an old man of secondary rank in the city much given to learning, an habitue of a library belonging to one of the monasteries. It came out ere long that the venerable person was familiar with the coast from Otranto to Brindisi, and beyond far as Polignano.

«It was in my sturdier days», the veteran said, with a dismal glance at his shrunken hands. «The people along the shore were much harried by Moslem pirates. Landing from their galleys, the depredators burned habitations, slew the men, and carried off such women as they thought would fetch a price. They even assaulted castles. At last we were driven to the employment of a defensive guard cooperative on land and water. I was a captain. Our fights with the rovers were frequent and fierce. Neither side showed quarter».

The reminiscence stimulated Mirza to inquiry. He asked the old man if he could mention a castle thus attacked.

«Yes, there was one belonging to Count Corti, a few leagues beyond Brindisi. The Count defended himself, but was slain».

«Had he a family? »

«A wife and a boy child».

«What became of them? »

«By good chance the Countess was in Brindisi attending a fete; she escaped, of course. The boy, two or three years of age, was made prisoner, and never heard of afterwards».

A premonition seized Mirza.

«Is the Countess living?»

«Yes. She never entirely recovered from the shock, but built a house near the site of the castle, and clearing a room in the ruins, turned it into a chapel. Every morning and evening she goes there, and prays for the soul of her husband, and the return of her lost boy».

«How long is it since the poor lady was so bereft »

The narrator reflected, and replied: «Twenty-two or three years».

«May the castle be found?»

«Yes».

«Have you been to it?»

«Many times».

«How was it named»

«After the Count--_Il Castillo di Corti».

«Tell me something of its site».

«It is down close by the sea. A stone wall separates its front enclosure from the beach. Sometimes the foam of the waves is dashed upon the wall. Through a covered gate one looks out, and all is water. Standing on the tower, all landward is orchard and orchard--olive and almond trees intermixed. A great estate it was and is. The Countess, it is understood, has a will executed; if the boy does not return before her death, the Church is to be her legatee».

There was more of the conversation, covering a history of the Corti family, honorable as it was old--the men famous warriors, the women famous beauties.

Mirza dreamed through the night of the Countess, and awoke with a vague consciousness that the wife of the Pacha, the grace of whose care had been about him in childhood--a good woman, gentle and tender--was after all but a representative of the mother who had given him birth, just as on her part every mother is mercifully representative of God. Under strong feeling he took boat for Brindisi[...]

He sat on the slab an hour or more. At intervals the outcry, which he doubted not was his mother's, rang in his ears, and every time he heard it, conscience attacked him with its whip of countless stings. Why subject her to more misery? For what other outcome could there be to the ceaseless contention of fears and hopes now hers? Oh, if she had only seen him when he was so near her in the road! That she did not, was the will of Allah, and the fatalistic Mohammedan teaching brought him

a measure of comfort. In further sooth, he had found a location and a title. Thenceforward, and not fictitiously, he was the Count Corti; and so entitling himself, he determined to make Brindisi, and take ship for Genoa or Venice in the morning before a messenger could arrive from the castle [...]

From Brindisi the Emir sailed to Venice. Two weeks in «the glorious city in the sea» informed him of it thoroughly. While there, he found, on the «ways» of an Adriatic builder, the galley in which we have seen him at anchor in the Golden Horn [...]

Thus far the Count had been successful in his extraordinary mission, yet he was not happy. He had made three discoveries during his journey—his mother, his country, his religion. Ordinarily these relations--if we may so call them--furnish men their greatest sum of contentment; sadly for him, however, he had made a fourth finding, of itself sufficient to dash all the others--in briefest term, he was not in condition to acknowledge either of them. Unable to still the cry heard while retiring from his father's ruined castle, he surrendered himself more and more to the wisdom brought away from the box of the Madonna and Child in the angle of the road to Brindisi--God and Allah are the same. Conscience and a growing sense of misappropriated life were making Count Corti a very different person from the light-hearted Emir of Mahommed [...]

2, VI,13

Mahommed in Sancta Sophia

The passage was safely made. From Brindisi he rode to Castle Corti. To his amazement, it was completely restored. Not so much as a trace of the fire and pillage it had suffered was to be seen. His reception by the Countess can be imagined. The proofs he brought were sufficient with her, and she

welcomed him with a joy heightened by recollections of the years he had been lost to her, and the manifest goodness of the Blessed Madonna in at last restoring him--the joy one can suppose a Christian mother would show for a son returned to her, as it were, from the grave.

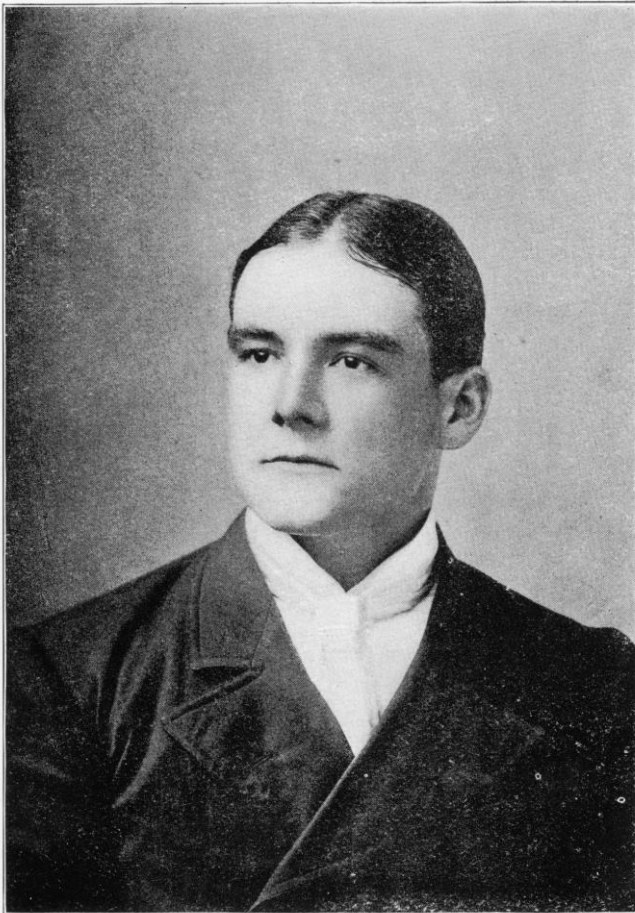
Then the Countess told him a man had presented himself some months prior, with a letter purporting to be from him, containing directions to repair the Castle, and spare no expense in the work.

«Fortunately», she said, «the man is yet in Brindisi».

The Count lost no time in sending for the stranger, who presented him a package sealed and enveloped in oriental style, only on the upper side there was a tughra, or imperial seal, which he at once recognized as Mahommed's. With eager fingers he took off the silken wraps, and found a note in translation as follows:

«Mahommed the Sultan to Ugo, Count Corti, formerly Mirza the Emir».

4. *«Perché l'isola? Perché è il punto dove io mi isolo, dove sono solo: è un punto separato dal resto del mondo, non perché lo sia in realtà, ma perché nel mio stato d'animo posso separarmene»* (Giuseppe Ungaretti).



RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916), autore di racconti romantici e brevi romanzi, fu il giornalista più conosciuto della sua generazione. In *Adventures and letters of Richard Harding Davis*, edite da Charles Belmont Davis è riferimento a Brindisi quale grande porto mediterraneo:

Off Malta - March 1, 1893.

DEAR MOTHER:

Tomorrow we reach Brindisi and we have already passed Sicily and had a glimpse of the toe of Italy and it is the coldest sunny Italy that I ever imagined[...] I was on shore about five hours and saw some interesting things and with that and Brindisi and the voyage I can make a third letter but Tunis is writ on my heart like Calais.

Florence - May 16, 1897.

DEAR FAMILY:

The train from Brindisi stopped at Rome on the way back and I went to see the Pages.

5. «*Un buon viaggiatore non ha piani precisi, il suo scopo non è arrivare*» (Lao Tzu).



John Kendrick Bangs

John Kendrick Bangs (1862-1922) fu il creatore di quella che sarebbe stata chiamata «*Bangsonian fantasy*», ossia «*the school of fantasy writing that sets the plot wholly or partially in the afterlife*». In *The Water Ghost and Others*, del 1894, delinea l'itinerario consueto per chi dall'Europa voleva recarsi in estremo oriente:

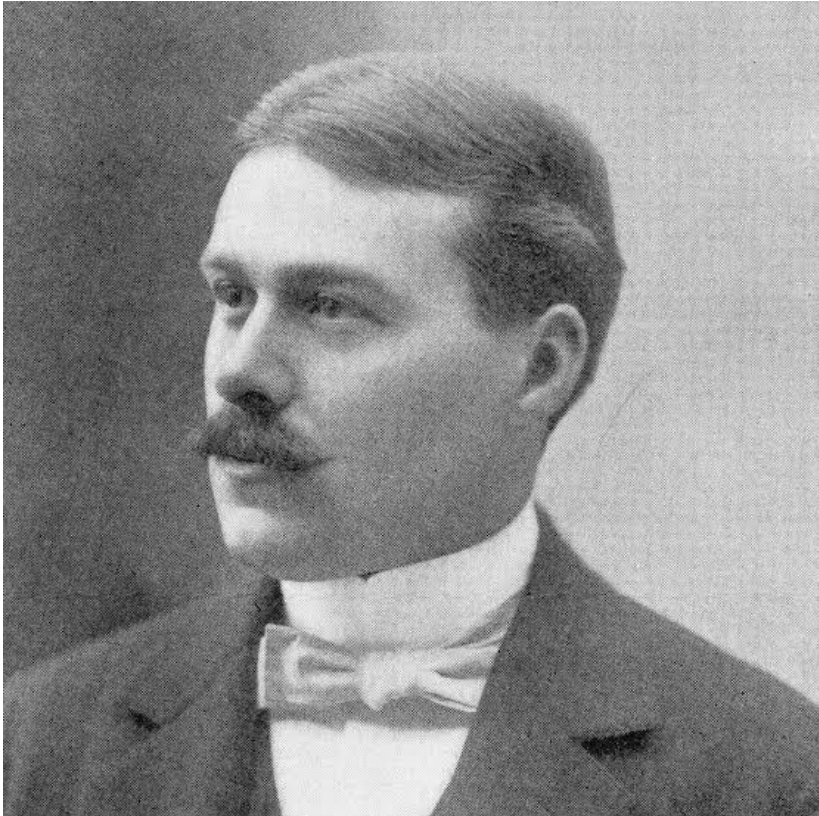
«Well, I'd like to know», I put in, my anger returning--"I'd like to know who in Brindisi you are, what in Cairo you want, and what in the name of the seventeen hinges of the gates of Singapore.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps

6. *«Guidato dal tuo odore verso climi
affascinanti, vedo un porto fitto
d'alberi e vele ancora affaticate
dal fluttuare dei marosi»*

Charles Baudelaire



Robert W. Chambers

Robert W. Chambers (1865-1933), artista e scrittore americano, fratello di Walter Boughton Chambers, architetto di fama mondiale, menziona Brindisi in due sue opere. In *In the quarter* del 1894 vi si sofferma come luogo d'incontro per antonomasia:

«*Oh -- I'll explain, if I know what you want explained. We were at Brindisi, were we not?*»

«*Yes.*»

«*On our way to Cairo?*»

«*Yes.*»

«*In the same hotel?*»

«*Yes.*»

«*But I had no acquaintance with madame, and had only exchanged a word or two with you, when you were suddenly summoned to Paris by a telegram.*»

Braith bowed. He remembered well the false dispatch that had drawn him out of the way.

Lo stesso può dirsi per *The Tracer of Lost Persons* del 1906:

Turning to Burke, the Tracer continued: "Fortunately, the Scythian Queen broke down off Brindisi. It gave us time to act on your cable; we found these men aboard when she was signaled off the Hook. I went out with the pilot myself, Mr. Burke

7. «*Gli italiani perdono le partite di calcio come se fossero guerre e perdono le guerre come se fossero partite di calcio*» (Sir Winston Churchill).



Stephen Crane (1871-1900), scrittore statunitense, poeta, conosciuto per i suoi racconti e romanzi brevi, in *Active Service*, apparso nel 1899, riferito alla guerra greco-turca, ben evidenzia il ruolo di Brindisi nelle relazioni internazionali:

He then began to proclaim trains and connections. "Dover, Calais, Paris, Brindisi, Corfu, Patras, Athens. That is your game. You are supposed to sky-rocket yourself over that route in the shortest possible time, but you would gain no time by

starting before to-morrow, so you can cool your heels here in London until then. I wish I was going along” [..]

From Calais to Brindisi really nothing met his disapproval save the speed of the train, the conduct of some of the passengers, the quality of the food served, the manners of the guards, the temperature of the carriages, the prices charged and the length of the journey.

In time he passed as in a vision from wretched Brindisi to charming Corfu, from Corfu to the little war-bitten city of Patras and from Patras by rail at the speed of an ox-cart to Athens.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps

8. «*Non so niente della letteratura di oggi. Da tempo gli scrittori miei contemporanei sono i greci*» (Jorge Luis Borges).



Lilian Bell (1867-1929) “*was The New Woman personified. Smart and witty, fashionable yet the-girl-next-door type, she was a popular writer of her era. The cover of *Abroad with the Jimmies* (a book recounting a vacation taken with friends), shows a woman in a plain skirt, slightly-pigeon-fronted*

shirtwaist, boater, and a parasol: the all-American, ideal woman. It was with this broad appeal that she made men and women both laugh at and ponder life in the early 1900s."

In *As Seen By Me* offre una viva descrizione di Brindisi, in cui sbarca proveniente dalla Grecia:

From Corinth the road skirts the sea, and all these white plains are devoted to the drying of currants. At Sikyon, called "cucumber town," but originally, with the mystic beauty of the ancient Greeks, called "poppy town," the American school at Athens has made some wonderful excavations. It has discovered the supports of the stage of the famous theatre there. Then, still with the sea before us, we are at Aegium, a name full of memories of ancient Greece. It has olive, currant, grape, and mulberry plantations, and lies shrouded and bedded in beauty and romance. There, over a high iron bridge, we cross a rushing mountain torrent and are at Patras, in the moonlight, with our big ship waiting to take us across the Adriatic Sea to Brindisi. [...] We arrived at Brindisi at four o'clock in the morning. Brindisi at four o'clock in the morning is not pleasant, nor would any other city be on the face of this green footstool. We were in quarantine, and we had to cope with a cross stewardess, who declared that we demanded too much service, and that she would not bring us our coffee in bed, and who then went and did it like an angel, so that we patted her on the back and told her in French that she was "well amiable," although at that hour in the morning we would have preferred to throttle her for her impertinence, and then to throw her in the Adriatic Sea as a neat little finish. Such, however, is our diplomatic course of travel. We walked in line under the doctor's eye, and he pronounced us sanitary and permitted us to land. We were four hours late, but we scalded ourselves with a second cup of coffee and tried for the six-

o'clock train for Naples, missed it, sent a telegram to Cook to send our letters to the train to meet us, and then went back to the ship to endure with patience and commendable fortitude the jeers of our fellow-passengers. Virtue was its own reward, however, for soon, under the rays of the rising sun, which we did not get up to see, and did not want to see, there steamed into the harbor alongside of us the P. & O. ship Sutly, six hours ahead of time (did you ever hear of such a thing?), bearing our belated friends, the Jimmies, from Alexandria. They had been booked for the China, which was wrecked, so the Sutly took her passengers. The Jimmies had bought their passage for Venice, but we teased them to throw it up and come with us, and such is our fascination that they yielded. The love which reaches the purse is love indeed. So in a fever of joy we all caught the nine-o'clock train for Naples.

[in Napoli]

But we had not even got through the custom-house at Brindisi, when Gaze's man recommended us to have our trunks corded and sealed, for they are sometimes broken open on the train. We thought this rather a useless precaution, but Jimmie has travelled so much that he made us do it. It seems that the King has admitted that he is powerless to stop these outrages, and so he begs foreign travellers to protect themselves, inasmuch as he is unable to protect them.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

9. «L'India è un continente nel quale sono degni di interesse soprattutto gli aspetti umani» (Alberto Moravia).



Sara Jeannette Duncan (1861-1922), canadese, poligrafa instancabile, femminista, fra il 1880-1922 fu attiva in Canada, Stati Uniti, India, Asia meridionale, Gran Bretagna, Europa. In *The Pool in the Desert* del 1903 si sofferma sui collegamenti Brindisi – Bombay:

'Colonel Innes got the telegram this morning. She wired from Brindisi,' Mrs. Gammidge said.

'Does he seem pleased?' asked Mrs. Mickie, demurely. *'He said he was afraid she would find it very hot coming up here from Bombay. And, of course, he is worried about a house. When a*

man has been living for months at the Club--'

'Of course, poor fellow! I do love that dear old Colonel Innes, though I can't say I know him a bit.[...]

'My wife,' said Colonel Innes, 'is looking extremely well.'

'She seems so, indeed,' Madeline replied.

'She is delighted with "Two Gables". Likes it better, she says, than any other house we could have got.'

'What a good thing!'

'It was a record trip for the Caledonia, thirteen days from Brindisi to Bombay. Was she telling you about the voyage?'

'No,' said Madeline impatiently, 'she didn't mention it. How shall I tell the men to put down the hood, please? A rickshaw is detestable with the hood up--stifling! Thanks. I beg your pardon.

The Caledonia made a good run?'

10. «*Gerusalemme appare non come una città che ha già raggiunto un ideale a cui tutti dovrebbero tendere, ma come il luogo in cui questo ideale è il più contrastato, è il più difficile, il più smentito dai fatti, e dove dunque l'accanimento della speranza che non cede è segno e stimolo per ogni altra città minacciata da conflitti ed inimicizie*» (Carlo Maria Martini)



Carlos Janes (1877- 1944) in *A trip abroad. An Account of a Journey to the Earthly Canaan and the Land of the Ancient Pharaohs. To Which Are Appended A Brief Consideration of the Geography and History of Palestine, and a Chapter on Churches of Christ in Great Britain* del 1905 riferisce sui collegamenti fra Brindisi e la Palestina. Si trattava di un itinerario molto frequentato da viaggiatori statunitensi. Il reverendo metodista Elisha Ezra Caster (1835-1914) seguì questo percorso nel 1891. Come è riferito in “Historical Messenger, Newsletter of the Commission on Archives and History, Detroit Conference-United Methodist Church” , Spring, 2005,

After a detour to see the ruins of Pompeii, they boarded a train to Brindisi where they embarked on an Austrian vessel. They traveled in sight of the coast of Greece (an independent nation at this time) and Crete (then a part of the Ottoman Empire) and arrived at “one of the historic cities of the world” Alexandria, Egypt on April 29. Alexandria was the departure point for Palestine.

Janes preferisce alla via Napoli – Brindisi – Alessandria quella Napoli – Brindisi – Atene:

Leaving Naples, I went to Brindisi, where I took ship for Patras in Greece. A day was spent in crossing Italy, two nights and a day were taken up with the voyage to Patras, and a good part of a day was occupied with the railroad trip from there to Athens, where the hotel men made more ado over me than I was accustomed to, but I got through all right and secured comfortable quarters at the New York Hotel, just across the street from the Parliament Building.

Il 23 marzo 1906 si rappresenta, *as presented by The Henry Miller Associate Players*, a *The Savoy Theatre* di New York *The servant in the house* di Charles Rann Kennedy in cui è menzione della città:

My old friend in Brindisi, who recommended you, writes that you bore a very excellent character with your late employer in India; but there was one matter he didn't mention-- No doubt you will recognise its importance in a clergyman's family-- He never mentioned your religion.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

11. «Io viaggio non per andare da qualche parte, ma per andare. Viaggio per viaggiare. La gran cosa è muoversi, sentire più acutamente il prurito della nostra vita, scendere da questo letto di piume della civiltà e sentirsi sotto i piedi il granito del globo» (Robert Louis Stevenson)



Louis Joseph Vance (1879 – 1933) in *The bronze bell* del 1909 delinea il più veloce fra i possibili itinerari per raggiungere Calcutta da Londra:

Chapter VII

Masks and faces

Rutton's instructions had, moreover, been explicit upon one point: Amber was to enter India only by the port of Calcutta. In deferring to this the Virginian lost several days waiting in London for the fortnightly P. & O. boat for Calcutta: a delay which might have been obviated by taking the overland route to Brindisi, connecting there with the weekly P. & O. boat for Bombay, from which latter point Calcutta could have been quickly reached by rail across the Indian Peninsula.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps

12. «*Se a un uomo venisse concessa la possibilità di un unico sguardo sul mondo, è Istanbul che dovrebbe guardare*» (Alphonse De Lamartine).

Nel 1912 Robert Hoskins (n. 1837) dedica nel 1912 una monografia a Clara A. Swain (1834-1910), M.D., *First Medical Missionary to the Women of the Orient*. Ricorda che la dottoressa, missionaria metodista in India, a Gerusalemme incontra un gruppo di americani coi quali si reca prima a Costantinopoli e poi in Atene da dove nel 1896 s'imbarca per Brindisi.

At Jerusalem they met a company of Americans, and arranged to accompany them to Constantinople. On the way they stopped at Smyrna and made a hurried trip to Ephesus, arriving in Constantinople May 20. There they remained six days and then sailed for Athens. On June 2 they began their European tour, sailing on an Italian steamer to Brindisi, where they parted with their American friends. The three then visited Venice, Munich, Dresden, Cologne and Paris, reaching London June 27, and remaining there till July 4, when they sailed for New York.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps

13.«Nessuno è chiamato a scegliere tra l'essere in Europa e essere nel Mediterraneo, poiché l'Europa intera è nel Mediterraneo» (Aldo Moro).



Negli stessi anni Rex Ellingwood Beach (1877-1949) in *The Net*, del 1912, inserisce Brindisi in una lista di località che definisce gli estremi delle coste orientali italiane in Brindisi e Venezia e di quelle occidentali in Genova e Trapani:

«All Sicily blazed with the account of the assassination of the Count of Martinello and his overseer. All Italy took it up and called for vengeance. There went forth to the world by

wire, by post, and through the public press a many-voiced and authoritative promise that the brigandage which had cursed the island for so many generations should be extirpated. The outrage was the one topic of conversation from Trapani to Genoa, from Brindisi to Venice, in clubs, in homes, upon the streets. Carbineers and soldiers came pouring into Terranova and San Sebastiano».



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

14. *«Quando due persone si incontrano ci sono in realtà sei persone presenti: c'è ogni uomo come egli si vede, ogni uomo come l'altro lo vede, e ogni uomo come egli è in realtà»* (William James).



Elia Wilkinson Peattie

Elia Wilkinson Peattie (1862-1935) in *The precipice* del 1914 ricorda un incontro avvenuto su un piroscafo salpato da Brindisi:

«A fortnight after Mama's marriage, an interesting episode came Kate's way. Mrs. Barsaloux had introduced to the Caravansary a Mrs. Leger whom she had once met on the steamer on her way to Brindisi, and she had invited her to join her during a stay in Chicago. Mrs. Barsaloux, however, having gone off to France in a hot fit of indignation, Mrs. Leger presented herself with a letter from Mrs. Barsaloux to Mrs. Dennison. That hospitable woman consented to take in the somewhat enigmatic stranger».



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

15 «*Nessun impero violento durò a lungo: solo quello che è moderato resiste al tempo*» (Lucio Anneo Seneca).

L'importanza in età romana di Brindisi è ricordata da Henry Eldridge Bourne and Elbert Jay Bentos, in *Introductory American History* del 1912:

Farther down the coast of Italy were the cities Brindisi and Taranto, the Brundisium and Tarentum of the Romans.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

16. «*Smetti di sperare che i decreti degli dei possano esser piegati con le preghiere*» (Publio Virgilio Marone)

e



Willa Cather

Willa Cather (1873 –1947) è stata considerata la più notevole fra le scrittrici statunitensi. In *My Antonia* del 1918 ricorda gli ultimi momenti di vita di Virgilio in Brindisi e la sua volontà di non lasciar traccia di *Eneide*, ancora incompiuta e quindi ritenuta imperfetta:

«Cleric said he thought Virgil, when he was dying at Brindisi, must have remembered that passage. After he had faced the bitter fact that he was to leave the 'Aeneid' unfinished, and had decreed that the great canvas, crowded with figures of gods and men, should be burned rather than survive him unperfected, then his mind must have gone back to the perfect utterance of the 'Georgics,' where the pen was fitted to the matter as the plough is to the furrow; and he must have said to himself, with the thankfulness of a good man, 'I was the first to bring the Muse into my country'».



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

17. *«Il dovere, il dovere terrestre, il dovere di aiutare, il dovere di risvegliare; non c'è altro dovere, e lo stesso impegno dell'uomo verso la divinità e della divinità verso l'uomo è il dovere dell'aiuto»* (Hermann Broch).

Patrick Reardon nel «Touchstone Magazine» del 7 agosto 2005, commentando il popolare assioma *«you can't take it with you when you go»* fa riferimento agli ultimi giorni di Virgilio in Brindisi e alla sua volontà di portar con sé l'incompiuta *Eneide*

When Vergil died at Brindisi in Calabria on September 22, 19 BC, his Aeneid was not yet ready for publication, and he had left instructions with his literary executors to burn the manuscript in the event of his death. Vergil, that is to say, endeavored to take the work with him when he went.

Fortunately, Caesar Augustus would have none of it. Convinced that Vergil's great epic version of the Trojan origin of the Roman people would inspire them to an heroic sense of their destiny, finding thus their rightful place in history, Augustus ordered Vergil's wishes to be ignored and his work to be published. He was correct, and the Aeneid became a standard text in the teaching of Latin grammar and literature for the rest of time. Even if God had made no rule about not taking it with you, it is obvious that Caesar was quite prepared to do so.

It is good news, not bad, that man must take leave of what he makes. Because some things belong to history, we must not endeavor to keep joined what the Almighty's wise decree had determined to put asunder.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

18. «*Il giornalismo è un inferno, un abisso d'iniquità, di menzogne, di tradimenti, che non si può traversare e dal quale non si può uscire puri a meno di essere protetti, come Dante, dal divino alloro di Virgilio*» (Honoré De Balzac).

Edith Wharton (1862-1937) nel suo più che quarantennale apporto al dibattito culturale statunitense, fu «*a born storyteller, whose novels are justly celebrated for their vivid settings, satiric wit, ironic style, and moral seriousness. Her characters, such as Ellen Olenska in The Age of Innocence, Ethan Fromme, and the charming but ineffectual Lily Bart in The House of Mirth, are some of the most memorable in American literature*».

Menziona Brindisi dapprima in *The Reef* del 1912:

«*Mrs. Murrett?*»

«*Why, yes. Sophy's gone to India with Mrs. Murrett; they're to meet at Brindisi*», *Sophy's sister said with a calm smile*

e successivamente in *The Glimpses of the Moon* del 1922:

«*Providence?*» *his hostess interrupted. «Don't talk as if you were at a prayer-meeting! He had an exhibition in New York ... it was the most fabulous success. He's come abroad to make studies for the decoration of my music-room in New York. Ursula Gillow has given him her garden-house at Roslyn to do. And Mrs. Bockheimer's ball-room--oh, Fulmer, where are the cartoons?» She sprang up, tossed about some fashion-papers heaped on a lacquer table, and sank back exhausted by the effort. «I'd got as far as Brindisi. I've travelled day and night to be here to meet him», she declared.*

*«But, you darling», and she held out a caressing hand to Susy,
«I'm forgetting to ask if you've had tea?»*



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.

19. *«La pace non è una paradisiaca condizione originaria, né una forma di convivenza regolata dal compromesso. La pace è qualcosa che non conosciamo, che soltanto cerchiamo e immaginiamo. La pace è un ideale»* (Hermann Hesse).

Ernest Hemingway (1899- 1961) in *A Farewell to Arms*, pubblicato il 1929, fa riferimento, come scenario, al fronte italiano durante la prima guerra mondiale. In una conversazione, in cui si discute di problemi militari Brindisi è metafora di estremo limite del suolo d'Italia, riecheggiandone sia il ruolo che nella realtà in quel momento la città svolgeva che memorie di storia romana:

«Ma” dissi «in passato gli austriaci ne prendevano sempre nel quadrilatero intorno a Verona. Li lasciavano scendere alla pianura e poi gliele davano».

«Si» disse Gino «ma quelli erano francesi e i problemi militari si risolvono più chiaramente quando si combatte nel paese degli altri».

«Si» dissi «quando si è nel proprio paese non si può agire in modo molto scientifico».

«I russi ci sono riusciti, per prendere in trappola Napoleone».

«Sì, ma avevano molto territorio. Se si cercasse di ritirarsi per prendere Napoleone in trappola in Italia, ci si troverebbe a Brindisi”

«Una città orrenda» disse Gino. «C'è mai stato?»

«Solo di passaggio»

«Io sono un patriota” disse Gino «Ma non mi riesce di amare Brindisi e Taranto»¹.

¹ E. HEMINGWAY, *Addio alle armi*, in *Romanzi*, I, a cura di F. PIVANO, Milano: Mondadori, 1992, pp. 439-40.



Brindisi. Ph. Enzo Claps.