

Italy-city: a G-local Community

Piero Bassetti (October 13, 2008)



Italy-city is a virtual space that transcends formal boundaries and legal barriers. About 200-250 million people of Italic origin can meet here.

About 15 years ago, I coined the word *italicità* or “italicity” based on the idea of a virtual meeting place, a new kind of piazza, where the 200-250 million people of Italic origin (Italians, Swiss, Dalmatians, descendents of Italians, Italophiles...) throughout the world could meet in a place that transcends formal boundaries and legal barriers. Italicity can be compared to a commonwealth of cultures, experiences, and ideals—a community that seeks to unite all those who have ‘Italic’ roots.

The Italic community itself has several key characteristics: a millenary culture, a way of life marked by quality, and a special taste for uniqueness. But, in addition to these qualities, there are also certain characteristics that can mirror some Italian defects. For example, there is a cosmopolitanism that is far from Italian provincialism; there is more internal unity, which was learned by peoples that

are less factious than we are; and there is a familiarity with societies and institutions that have an older and more penetrating liberal and democratic tradition, such as the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Great Britain, or France.

There have always been Italic. It can be said that Marco Polo, the explorer who united two distinct and far apart civilizations, was the first Italic. Throughout history, many other “proto-Italic” left their homelands to establish themselves in other parts of the world. Just like those who came to Italy or Italian Switzerland attracted by art and culture, these people should also be considered the predecessors of the current Italic. Goethe, who wrote his famous Italian Journey, was certainly a predecessor of the current Italic.

Today, italicity is made up of many components throughout the world that form a network. The scope of this network is not to revolve around Italy; rather, it is that of interacting with one another in the best and most direct way possible. The Italic of Buenos Aires can communicate, express opinions, and do business with the Italic of New York who can do the same thing with the Italic of Sydney.

Like all free and open communities, italicity offers many opportunities as well as the invaluable bonus of a shared identity, especially during this time of globalization when many traditional values are cast by the wayside. It is important to emphasize that the Italic identity is not an act of disloyalty toward the person’s country of residence but, instead, it is the key to belonging to a rich and complex value system. The Italic “piazza” is not a place of nationalistic claims; instead it is a place that promotes the togetherness of those who share a common matrix in their life experience (who can also hold the richness of regional communities and the vitality of dialects).

To consider an additional membership, that of Italic, belongs more to the act of conversion rather than secessions as it is neither exclusive nor excluding. The Italic are favored by their large diaspora, which is present in every corner of the earth. This diaspora knew how to gain the respect and often the admiration of its various new homelands. Italian emigration is no longer a humble migration in search of food. Today, the Italic business and cultural community is recognized everywhere and the Internet seems to be the ideal way to link these communities. In this postmodern world, where technology has leveled the dimensions of time and space, the Italic “piazza” cannot avoid coinciding with the various aspects of the web. The Internet is the best way to reach other people. In fact, the web can both speak to and give voice to a diverse audience by surpassing geographic location as well as national, linguistic, and professional boundaries.

Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance to remember that although the Italic union is attainable, it has nothing to do with an exclusive membership; it has to be gained through a gradual development of consciousness that is not in contrast with the rights and duties of citizens born and raised on American, Argentine, or Australian soil. To feel Italic is not in conflict with feeling Italian, Swiss-Italian, Italian-American, etc.; on the contrary. In fact, one of the first results of the new “glocal” experience (belonging to a shared community with a global dimension, but still expressing it through its local components) is the ability to simultaneously belong to separate, distinct cultures.

It can be said that there is an Italic piazza (Italy-city) wherever and whenever an Italic enters into relationship with another Italic. While the Italic piazza doesn’t coincide with that of the ideal Renaissance City nor with De Chirico’s metaphysical one, the Italic piazza does indeed see, in both, its own cultural ascendance. Italic live by the values that have been distilled and consolidated throughout centuries of *civitas italica*. These values are not just shared and shareable values; they are the springboard for new belongings and additional togetherness that at the moment are not completely imaginable. The Italic piazza will be the catalyst of future political alchemy.

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