



MAG

MONOGRAPHS

3 | 2024



new world

Index

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 3. New world
by Eleonora Fraschini | 30. Julissa Reynoso
by Ilaria Iaquinta | 52. Lella Costa
by Michela Cannovale |
| 4. Power Matrix
by Nicola Di Molfetta | 34. The state of women in diplomacy
by Ilaria Iaquinta | 58. Cristina Bowerman
by Letizia Ceriani |
| 7. Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi
by Letizia Ceriani | 36. Votes for Women!
by Mercedes Galan | 63. Aida Diouf Mbengue
by Benedetta Miarelli |
| 12. Albera Figari
by Nicola Di Molfetta | 38. Donatella Sciuto
by Eleonora Fraschini | 67. Sara Gama
by Giuseppe Salemmme |
| 16. Resede Ferioli
by Michela Cannovale | 41. The Matilda Effect | 71. The female footballers of 1933
by Eleonora Fraschini |
| 20. Anna Tavano
by Eleonora Fraschini | 43. Marina Valcarenghi
by Giuseppe Salemmme | 76. Vetiver
A short story by Nicola Di Molfetta |
| 23. Top 10 of Italian Finance | 48. Matriarchal societies: being is more important than having
by Julia Gil | 81. Will a Woman Save Us?
by Nicola Di Molfetta |
| 26. Dominae
by Benedetta Miarelli | | |

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New world

by Eleonora Fraschini

“Everything is possible if you believe in it” is the concept most often found at the conclusion of the articles you will read in this issue of Monografie. What makes it different from previous ones is that it is primarily composed of interviews with women: we have selected women who, in our opinion, have distinguished themselves in their professional fields. Among these, we have given particular attention to those who have chosen sectors traditionally considered to be the preserve of men.

The invitation to pursue one’s dreams, therefore, should not be read as a naive mantra, uttered by someone who has never faced reality, because our interviewees are quite the opposite. They are people who are building a New World (hence the title of this issue) by engaging in the fields of law, politics, finance, science, art (including culinary art), and sports. It’s a world that is not being shaped by wiping the slate clean of what came before, but one that enriches the past with new rights, roles, nuances, and words. Female rector, lawyer, notary, soccer player. If language is a mirror of reality, its structure must also evolve when the world around us grows. To some, these terms may seem superfluous, to others even dangerous (so much so that they propose punishing their use with a fine!), but Orwell teaches us that one cannot conceive of change without the right words to express it.

This change is not a mirage, but a journey we have already been on for centuries. About 1500 years ago, the famous jurist Domitius Ulpianus emphasized that women should “be excluded from all civil or public affairs” and therefore could not aspire to become “judges, nor exercise a magistracy nor practice as a prosecuting or defense lawyer nor become administrators.” One wonders what he would have thought reading the stories of professionals who have reached the pinnacle of their careers in these very fields.

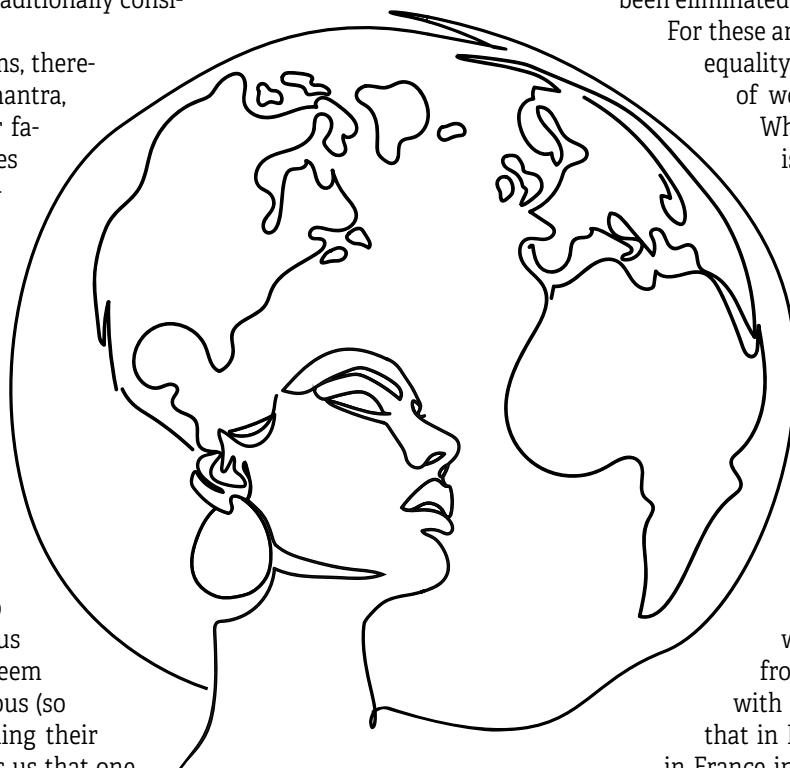
Certainly, in our country, the journey has been particularly long: it was only in 1963, following a ruling by the Constitutional Court, that it was established that women could access all public offices, professions, and jobs, including the judiciary, in various roles, careers, and categories, without limitation of duties. Previously, there were a series of restrictions due to the legacy of fascism, which had not even been eliminated by the Constitution.

For these and other professions, after achieving equality “on paper,” there is still a great deal of work to be done at a cultural level.

What emerges from the interviews is that preconceptions are difficult to eradicate from people’s minds, not only when it comes to external judgments, pronounced by superiors and managers in the workplace, but also within one’s own family. The pressure due to feelings of guilt and lack of cooperation from family members often leads women to self-limit or even abandon their careers. However, the psychological factor is not the only one to consider: as many professionals have rightly pointed out, what working women need is concrete support from the state. If we compare ourselves with other European countries, we see that in Italy there is still much to be done: in France in 2019, about 60% of children under three had access to a care service, compared to 28%

of Italians. French parents can also take advantage of a law that allows part-time work for the first three years of a child’s life and a fiscal policy that provides benefits for couples with children. The Italian welfare system is still quite lacking, as demonstrated by the fact that, in times of pandemic, it was mainly women who abandoned work to devote themselves to family responsibilities.

In short, the foundations and ideas for building the New World are not lacking, nor is women’s desire for change: it’s time to stand by their side.



Power Matrix

Or, if the world were feminine

by Nicola Di Molfetta

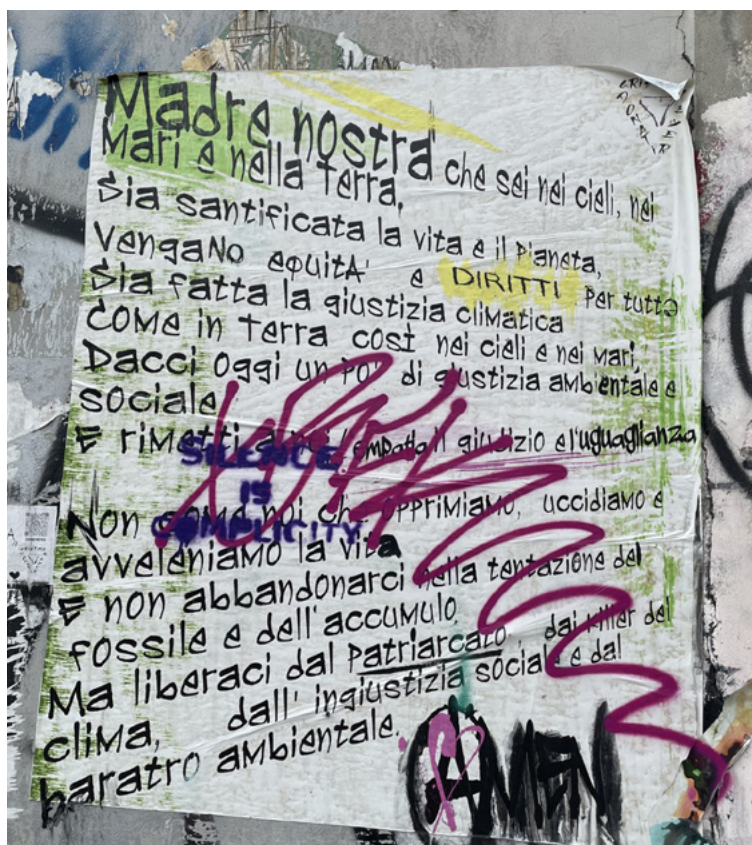
Words are political because they can represent reality and shape it. Is it possible to imagine a feminized society? If we name it, the answer is yes. Just as it's possible to hold an entire dissertation on the issue of the feminine evolution of the communities we live in using only pink words. Not just to attempt a lexical acrobatics for its own sake, but to grapple with the extreme difficulty required by any form of redefinition of reality following a totally unprecedented driving force, or rather, matrix.

If the Earth were governed by women, in fact, besides being a rhetorical hypothesis, it would also be a perspective for reflection that would require the total redefinition of all the dialectical and cultural frameworks with which we are accustomed to approaching any dimension of our lives.

Imagination. Construction. We must start from here. Today, the patriarchal organization of most contemporary communities is a direct derivation of hundreds of epochs governed according to logics and morals of non-feminine inspiration. A condition of things that has stimulated and continues to encourage, among others, the fight against gender disparities. An activity far from sterile if one thinks of the numerous battles for civilization that have arisen from it (which we discuss in this edition of MAG Monographs) and which have contributed to initiating the evolution of modern societies, so long hoped for.

The utopia is called transformation. And it represents the next and absolutely more ambitious phase of substitution, which, instead, is the stage so far predominantly reached and measured in terms of percentages and statistics. Women at the top. Women in political, economic, financial institutions. Numbers. Variations. In the Americas, according to the analysis of Women in Parliament, there are almost 40% of elected female parliamentarians. In Europe, the situa-





tion is constantly improving by several percentage points. But more can be done. It must be done. Because substitution is not enough. Being content with the presence of a woman in the chair or in the position once held by other personalities is an almost negligible achievement, a harmless variant of the previous reality that continues to function according to masculine plots, and resistant to any idea of effective integration. If we then add that often these “elected” women, not only are co-opted as a result of triangulations and logics pleasing to the most crystallized patriarchal authorities, but they conform to them and obey them, transfiguring their natural inclination to diversity into a test of mimesis that does not affect creation at all, then it is well understood that the aspiration must be quite different.

Here too, to understand each other, it can be useful to reflect on some symbolic figures. Do you know what 2228 is? The date when, it is hypothesized, parity will actually be achieved for women between private care activities (such as home or offspring) and paid activities. The family will be the true frontier to conquer in order to definitively consider the whole work of refoundation concluded.

And in the meantime? In the meantime, work is being done on the cultural planting of this new conception. The initiatives in this direction are truly innumerable. Let's take the most pop ones which, as often happens, are also the most indicative of the trends in progress and their penetration into the cellular plots of societies. Some evidence? In the first weeks of 2024, the publishing house Bompiani published four literary works that evoke stories of women. The *Eternal Girl* (Andrea Piva), *Funeral Songs for Almost Dead Girls* (Cherie Dimaline), *The Girl Factory* (Ilaria Rossetti), *Letters to a Girl Who Doesn't Answer* (Davide Orecchio). Not to mention television series and their novel heroines, from Wednesday Addams to Eleven, passing through Italy's first female lawyer, Lidia Poët, who became the protagonist of a Netflix series assuming the features of Matilda De Angelis. An action lawyer, foul-mouthed, rebellious, sexually uninhibited. A lawyer never seen before, almost like her colleagues, bellicose matrimonial lawyers, represented by another episodic film entitled to the Battaglia family, a matriarchal micro-creation in which the strong, indeed very strong woman has the face of Lunetta Savino.

Queen women. But what would society be like if they were really (only) in command? Writer Naomi Alderman tried to answer and wrote *Electric Girls* imagining a female dystopia in which lightning-throwing girls are ready to incinerate anyone who bothers them and reduce antithetical versions of their species to a condition of substantial slavery. “People abuse authority because they can,” Alderman declared, years ago, to an important English newspaper. This is a consideration that cannot leave one indifferent. Because, if in a society conceived and governed by women one should not live better, then we should ask ourselves whether this rewriting of reality is actually desirable or not.

Are we sure that once reaching the summit of social organization, the woman would not do like Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth who invokes dark forces to fill her all "with the most atrocious cruelty"? Who can say. History, however, counts numerous testimonies of feminized communities. Indeed, more than history, archaeology tells us. Anthropologist Marija Gimbutas has documented with her work that in old Europe, the one preceding Sumerian and Greek civilizations, there were women's societies (led by women) that were egalitarian and peaceful. That matriarchal age of humanity ended at the end of a real war between sexual spheres that could have been told to subsequent generations through mythological events such as those concerning the death of Medusa or the war against the Amazons.

The latter, with their history, challenge, before any other argument, the idea that a female (or even feminist) society would necessarily be devoid of deviations such as the obsession with competition, violence, and oppression. In a word, peaceful. Without needing to disturb classical mythology, however, we know well that many modern leaders have been capable of decisions of extreme hardness and that tears and sufferings have not come only from the initiatives and decisions of the other half of humanity called to guide our lives. A story that is widely known is that of the Falklands War, started by the will of the then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. But this analysis would risk appearing even naïve. How many women have governed the Earth after World War II and up to the contemporary age? It is calculated that less than 5% of the personalities to whom leadership has been entrusted have been female. The statistic, to be credible, would need much higher numbers. Also because, if one looks at individual stories, there will always be a story that contradicts another. Like that of the Moso population in China where the dabu, the matriarch, is elected from among the most capable women aged between 40 and 65, although it is not excluded that a younger woman may be chosen. The dabu does not command society but constitutes its basis. The dabu has no social privileges, as this would contravene the idea of equality that is the foundation of this society. She works hard like anyone else and discusses the most important issues on which she cannot make unilateral decisions. The opinion of each person is listened to in order to ensure that every decision is welcomed with satisfaction. And women are also assigned the responsibility of administering wealth and property, as well as sacred ceremonies. But China is not close. And certainly the Moso influence on the rest of the nation and its customs has been zero.

We could be content with less. And consider a first conquest achieved in the social evolutionary scale when the women who command (and there are already some) will know how to use this position to multiply the opportunities for social, economic, professional, artistic growth, and so on, in favor not only of other members of the gender (which would already be a lot) but of anyone who has the necessary qualities, and therefore of the affirmation of a more equitable and supportive organization of society. Every word is political, we said. And politics is a feminine word that means the art of living together.



Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi

In November 2023, Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi, former vice-rector of the Catholic University and undersecretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See, becomes a judge of the Constitutional Court. She told us her story as an academic, woman, mother, and judge.

by Letizia Ceriani

In December 2023, the Constitutional Court modified the heading of its rulings by inserting the phrase 'lady and gentlemen judges,' changing a formula that had remained unchanged since 1956. The intention, it is assumed, was to promote cultural change starting from language, which has always fulfilled the arduous task of shaping reality, contributing to the development of social changes that can be shared by all. 1956 is the year when the Constitutional Court, established in 1948 at the end of the Constituent Assembly's work, became operational. Since then, every nine years, fifteen 'gentlemen' judges have been appointed: one-third by the President of the Republic, one-third by Parliament in joint session, and one-third by the Supreme Magistrates (Court of Cassation, Council of State, and Court of Auditors).

To have a 'lady' judge on the Court, we had to wait until 1996: her name was Fernanda Contri, and she was appointed by Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. In these 68 years of the Italian Republic, only eight women have held the position of constitutional judge, and there have never been more than three out of the total: after Contri, Maria Rita Saulle, Marta Cartabia (the



first woman president of the Court in 2020), Daria de Pretis, Emanuela Navarretta, and Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi were appointed by the Head of State, Silvana Sciarra was the first chosen by Parliament, while Maria Rosa San Giorgio was the first elected by the Court of Cassation.

The relationship between women and the judiciary has always been complicated, despite Law N. 66 of 1963 sanctioning the entry of women into the profession. Since then, progress

has taken its course, as evidenced by the latest data, updated to March 2024, shared by the Statistical Office of the CSM (Superior Council of the Judiciary): the female quota today exceeds the male one, with a percentage of 56.2% - there are 4,071 male magistrates and 5,229 female magistrates. However, it is also true that women continue, only in a low percentage, to hold semi-managerial roles, and in very few cases, top positions.

Gender equality is still far off; nevertheless, 'a climate of full appreciation prevails,' assures

«The Constitutional Court is the guardian of the Constitution and must also act as its interpreter, establishing a series of principles that must then be adapted to the changing social context»



Judge Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi, who arrived at the Constitutional Court on November 14, 2023, on the 'call' of the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella.

Her story is studded with «unexpected» events, unplanned, occurring almost providentially. Today, Sciarrone Alibrandi is one of the three women who make up the constitutional body, along with Emanuela Navarretta and Maria Rosa Sangiorgio. She divides her time between Milan and Rome, is married, a mother of three children, and throughout her journey, she has discovered that there are no impossible missions.

The first woman to enter the Constitutional Court was Fernanda Conti in 1996, 50 years after the birth of the Republic, and she was also the first woman to access the CSM (Superior Council of the Judiciary). However, it took another 23 years before a woman became president of the Constitutional Court - it was Marta Cartabia in 2019. Today, how is the gender gap perceived?

Within the Court, the number of women pre-

«When one finds oneself juggling multiple areas, one must resign oneself to not being perfect, because otherwise one gets caught up in the mechanism of always trying to be at one's best, which in the long run is detrimental»

Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi was born in Milan in 1965. After attending classical high school, she studied at the faculty of law at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (UCSC) and then completed a doctorate in civil law in Ferrara. Before becoming a full professor of economic law at the faculty of law, she taught at the Rimini campus of the University of Bologna and in Piacenza. From 2013 to 2022, she held the role of vice-rector of UCSC. From 2020 to November 2023, she was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Vatican Financial Information Authority; from 2021 to 2022, she chaired the Gender Equality Plan Team of UCSC. On January 1, 2023, she was appointed under-secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education at the Holy See, led by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça. On November 14, 2023, she was invited by the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella to take the oath as a judge of the Constitutional Court.

sent continues to be low, because I believe at no time have there been more than three women out of fifteen judges. The path to be taken is still long. From a qualitative point of view, however, in my opinion, there is a context where one doesn't feel the slightest difference between man or woman, indeed, starting from the president, there is a climate of full appreciation. There is awareness that having a mixed board is an enrichment, because the contribution is different, the characteristics are different as is the way of approaching problems and creating synergy... it is undoubtedly a richness for everyone. The male and female contributions are complementary.

What do you think is the reason why there are still so few women in institutions?

It's a cultural issue and it's also related to the fact that today there are relatively few women in top positions in the judiciary and universities (which are the pools from which nominations are drawn). It takes time.

Your path before arriving at the Constitutional Court?

After finishing high school, to tell the truth, my dream was to become a journalist: I chose law because it seemed to me that it could give me a good foundation for understanding our legal system and institutional dynamics, regardless of the path I would have chosen. In studying law, however, I became passionate about it and thought about taking the exam for the judiciary, but I abandoned the idea and started a PhD. Then opportunities arose to stay in university, and I became a professor of economic law. Then I was vice-rector for ten years. In general, I've always wanted to do something that could have an impact on society, but my path has been long and full of unexpected events that I hadn't planned at all and that somehow happened.

Over the years, has your family always supported you?

Family has been fundamental for me; I got



married young, at the beginning of my career, towards the end of my PhD. Considering that starting a family was an essential condition for me, I wouldn't have been able to do anything if we hadn't found a balance in the family to keep both the work and private perspectives together. Especially in the early years, when I was a professor working away from home, and I was divided between Trento, Rimini and Milan, I had small children and if I hadn't had a very collaborative husband and two very present grandmothers by my side, I would have hardly been able to go on.

It wasn't easy to juggle the various parts, I imagine. What kept them together?

Obviously, it wasn't a walk in the park, but what saved me was not seeking perfection. When you find yourself keeping multiple areas together, you have to resign yourself to not being perfect because otherwise you get caught up in a mechanism of always trying to be at your best, which in the long run is detrimental. You should always do your best, of course, but free from the slavery of perfection. Paradoxically, combining family life with work was more difficult for me at the beginning, with my firstborn. When the children became three, the family unit was already somehow an entity that held itself together, and my commitments weighed less. To tell the truth, I never considered it an impossible "mission" and I experienced that in fact it wasn't. We have many more resources than we imagine, infinitely more; we feel the limits more strongly when we doubt our possibilities. With a good dose of commitment and sacrifice, everything is possible.

You were also undersecretary at the Dicastery for Culture and Education in Vatican City. The appointment came from Pope Francis. What remains with you from that experience?

This is one of those life events that happened to me completely unexpectedly. It was unfortunately a brief experience, because it lasted just under a year, but I remember it as an intense and touching experience. First of all, it made me understand deeply, and from the inside, that the Church has a universal breath and plays, today as in the past, a fundamental role in the field of education. Pope Francis had

a brilliant intuition by integrating the fields of education and culture into a single Dicastery, creating important and fundamental synergies for contemporary society. I then had the great gift of working together with Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, still head of that Dicastery, whom I consider a truly enlightened and enlightening figure.

And in the Vatican, what space is given to women?

Pope Francis in his pontificate has given enormous impetus to the role of women, and even before that to the role of the laity, valuing them within the Church and placing them in a series of key positions, even within the organization of the Holy See. Pope Francis, in this respect too, has broken down barriers and this,

**«Women are proactive,
and, above all, they
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in my opinion, is a very innovative feature of his pontificate. With specific regard to women, he has repeatedly and in various areas stated how precious women are, in any organizational context, because women are proactive and, above all, they know how to work as a team and take care of the people around them. Where there is a woman, we are more skilled at working together and this is a fact and is a typically and irreducibly feminine trait.

After the Vatican, the appointment to the Constitutional Court comes directly from the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella.

This too was a completely unexpected fact for me. It's a job of great responsibility: the Constitutional Court is called upon to verify the

conformity to the Constitution of all the rules and provisions that are part of our legal system. New rules and laws, but also norms that have been in force for some time but whose constitutional consistency needs to be verified today. The Constitutional Court is a bit like the guardian of the Constitution, which means that it must also interpret it, allowing constitutional principles to remain an effective reference even in a profoundly changing social context.

What topics have you been dealing with recently?

Among our various tasks, we deal with assessing the admissibility of referendums or deciding on conflicts of power between state bodies, but I would say that the first, the constitutionality check, is the main one. The topics the Court deals with range widely, from rulings on end-of-life and assisted suicide, to those on environmental protection, as well as many concerning the division of legislative powers between the State and the regions. After seven months, I realize even better the fundamental importance of this body, which must function adequately and should be better known by citizens. More capillary work should be done on this, especially among young people and in schools, because knowledge of constitutional bodies is part of citizenship rights.

How do you think the world has changed today for those who choose the legal profession?

I have the impression that the attractiveness of legal professions is decreasing. So much so that, if we look at the trend of enrollments in law faculties, the numbers are constantly declining. There are many reasons for this decline, also related to the structure and organization of universities: law is a five-year faculty, while all others - except medicine - are built on a 3+2 structure and this is penalizing. But the crisis that law is experiencing is much deeper.

What do you mean?

No society can do without Law, with a capital L, but this concept is no longer so clear. Law is a word that has a dual etymological meaning: "ordinamento" means to order in the imperative sense of commanding, but also to



put in order. The ordering function is essential, because otherwise the community would have no social order. It's a beautiful, very noble and always profoundly current function. Unfortunately, instead of emphasizing the ordering and creative dimension of law, it is often depicted today in a reductive and even somewhat caricatural way: a world dominated by pettifogging lawyers who wallow in a sea of laws incomprehensible to the common citizen. This doesn't ennoble the field of legal disciplines, rather it debases it.

It's true that in Italy we live with a real regulatory obesity...

Today more than ever there would be a need for jurists with a vision, who are able to operate a profound simplification of the entire regulatory framework, now heavy and cumbersome. At the same time, there is a need for people to deal with putting order in society, writing the rules, and then worrying about

their application in a way that is consistent and coherent with the values shared by society. There is a need for a rediscovery of law, but in this slightly higher and not hyper-technical dimension.

And the language also calls for a change.

Certainly. And from this point of view, technology can be an excellent opportunity. Artificial intelligence has changed the perspective, but to use it adequately, we need to revise the language, the way of formulating norms, judicial acts and sentences... Technology can allow us to rewrite the law, making it simpler and more accessible even to the common citizen, bearing in mind that being simple doesn't mean being simplistic. We are taking some steps in this direction at the Constitutional Court too, for example by accompanying the most complex and important sentences with press releases and even podcasts that make them more easily understandable.

What would you say to a young woman who wishes to pursue a career like yours?

I would tell her to be brave and not to be held back by seemingly insurmountable obstacles, because, with the right determination and without becoming slaves to one's ideal model, realizing one's aspirations is possible. On the part of the institutions, however, there is still much work to be done. In our country, family policies, incentives for maternity, conditions for reconciling work time and family time, are still really scarce and adequate resources must be invested in this and space given to creative solutions. This also seems to me the only way to curb the migration of our young people abroad; it happens for many reasons, but it is a fact that salaries do not reflect life expectations, both work and private. It is essential, therefore, that salaries are adequate to the work and can be used, especially by young people, to build attractive and desirable life projects.

Alberta Figari

New President of Tim, of counsel at Legance. From practicing in a traditional firm to a career in a law firm.
For the first time, she tells her story as a professional and a mother

by Nicola Di Molfetta

Year 1995. In the meeting room of one of the country's most important investment banks, about forty people enter in dribs and drabs. Their faces are tired but satisfied. They have been working for days on the documents for an important stock market listing. They take their places around a brown walnut table, forming a row of blue jackets and white collars that is only interrupted in some places by silk blouses and pastel-colored suits. The women in that room can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And one of these is Alberta Figari. She is 31 years old. She graduated six years ago. She recently joined Clifford Chance where she started working right after completing a master's degree in law at King's College in London.

In Italy, at that time, there were a total of 12,357 female lawyers registered with the Cassa Forense. They were just 21.2% of the total registered in the Bar Associations. Few, very few. Although already many more compared to just 10 years earlier, when there were 3,450 women lawyers in the country, or 9.2% of the entire national legal population.

Figari obtained her "position" in the English law firm after participating in a job fair in London. It was a crucial moment for the expansion plans of that structure which, among other things, had decided to open in Italy as well. "The little or much that I have managed to achieve in life," Alberta Figari tells *Mag Monografie* today, "is certainly the result of commitment and passion for this work, but also of a bit of luck, as I like to remember, in the sense that I found myself in the right place at the ri-



ght time." It was the end of the 1990s, a "magical" and perhaps unrepeatable period for those who wanted to pursue a career in the world of business law. Corporate finance activity (to be clear, IPOs, takeover bids, and M&As, especially on listed companies) was so in its infancy, from both a regulatory and technical point of view for our market, that the spaces available to those who wanted to get involved resembled "prairies."

At the beginning, she was also tasked with handling the judicial activity of the English law firm, recalls the lawyer who has been with Legance since 2021 (a firm that counts over 400 professionals, including 69 partners, 13 of whom are women) where she is now of counsel, after being appointed president of Tele-

com. "Here in Milan at Clifford, we were seven. Silvio Riolo (who then, in 2009, founded Rccd, now Crccd, ed.) and I also dealt with the firm's litigation, having acquired a good background in this sector of activity in the early years of our profession. We spent our days working on extraordinary operations and running to the clerk's office to file deeds, appeals, and various documents."

Figari graduated in Law from the State University of Milan, with Professor Pier Giusto Jaeger (dean of Italian business law along with giants like Natalino Irti, Mario Casella, Alessandro Pedersoli and Berardino Libonati) with a "prophectic" thesis on the discipline of public takeover bids. But before starting to deal with corporate matters in private practice as well, she faced a very traditional internship path and spent four years at the De Rienzo Luzzato firm. "It was a classic-style firm but open to internationality," she recounts, "where we did a lot of civil litigation, but also bankruptcy and family law. There I spent some fundamental years for my training. First, because I learned to navigate the intricacies of the Court, acquiring a good knowledge of judicial proceedings. Second, because I understood that it was a type of activity that wasn't for me." She remembers that she couldn't understand why a trial could last so long. "I found myself writing 'conclusions' relating to cases that had started ten years earlier. However, I am convinced that that experience gave me an important competitive advantage during my career. In fact, I believe that every lawyer, at least at the beginning, should have a judicial experience." The reason is quickly said:



"It serves to have an overall vision of the activity one carries out; it serves to monitor risks; it serves to dialogue with clients. Starting directly from out-of-court work, in the long run, can prove to be a limitation. Not knowing how to make an urgent measure, what it means to go talk to a judge, what it means to produce evidence, can reduce the ability to analyze and view a certain issue, increasingly assimilating the civil-based lawyer to Anglo-Saxon colleagues who, by tradition, have very distinct professional paths between judicial and non-judicial activities."

The issue is fundamental and evidently fascinates Figari, who returns to the point to explain better. "The profession has changed a lot in the last thirty years. But I don't think Italian lawyers should become more Anglo-Saxon than they already are. I believe that, today, one can be a generalist in specialization. A lawyer who does corporate law doesn't have to be a

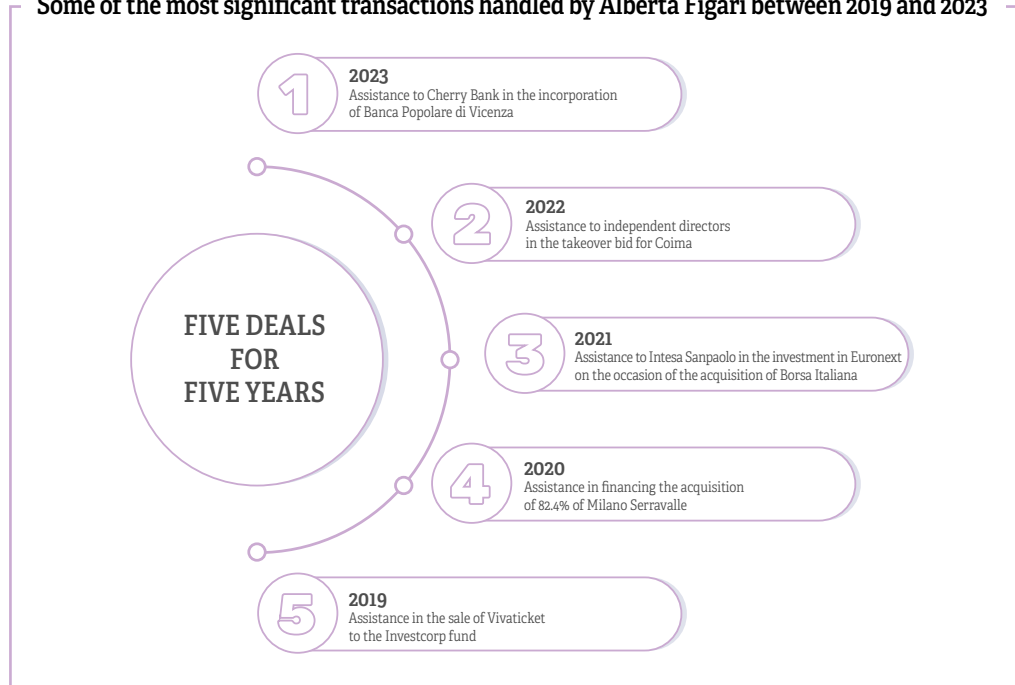
lawyer who only does M&A or IPOs. They must be able to move in their 'area of competence' in a transversal manner and therefore have the ability to range from the most typical activities to related ones, both to deal with them directly when they have the necessary knowledge, and to best direct their client when there is a need for further investigation, resorting to colleagues with specific expertise."

Listening to her speak, one perceives how things in Alberta Figari's professional journey happened gradually, thanks also to the fact that she was able to choose the direction that interested her most each time. "At Clifford, I initially dealt with litigation, as I said, along with project financing operations. Then I asked to do more corporate activity. From that moment, I started following privatizations together with Vittorio Grimaldi, Daniela Troilo, Nick Wrigley, and Filippo Emanuele, not to mention the takeover bid on Credito Romagnolo by Ca-

riplo and the first IPOs like that of Brembo, to name a few."

At 40, Alberta Figari became a mother for the first time. "By nature, I'm a very independent person," she says, "and this pushed me to wait a bit before deciding to start a family, despite being married for several years and knowing my husband since high school. But I was born to be a mother. I say this without mincing words. The first daughter, named Nice, like her grandmother, arrived right away. The second, a boy named Mattia, came a bit later." Last year, Nice took her high school diploma, while the youngest took his middle school exams. "I can say I'm a very present mother in my children's lives, together with my husband, who is also a lawyer (Carlo Pappalettera, now a partner at Cernelutti, ed.)." This is a very important aspect of the story we're telling. Because Alberta Figari emphasizes several times how the ability to count on a partner who supported her and,

Some of the most significant transactions handled by Alberta Figari between 2019 and 2023



above all, considered and respected her work and her choices, was fundamental in being able to reconcile family and profession. “My husband and I have built our extra-work life around our children; since their birth, we decided to dedicate every free moment to them. Over the last 20 years, I can calmly say that the week-

ends spent with my husband without the kids can be counted on one hand. Every morning we have breakfast together. Then the working and school day begins, and now also university. When they were younger, we always accompanied them to school. These are choices we have always been very convinced of, but they remain

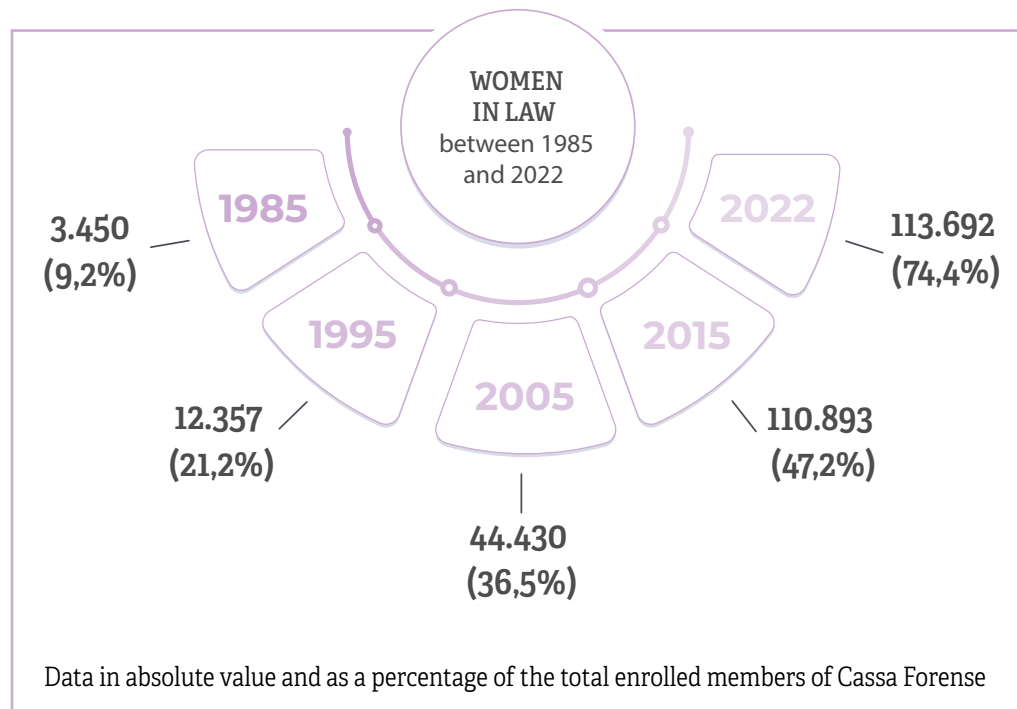
purely personal choices.”

However, Figari believes that to help women advance in their careers or simply to fulfill themselves professionally (“whatever the aspiration”), it’s appropriate that all possible means are made available. “I’m thinking of leave, smart working,” she says. “I don’t believe in remote work five days a week, but I’m convinced that giving a mother the possibility to carry out her work from home a couple of days a week can be very important. We must avoid that, overwhelmed by the fatigue of reconciling profession and family, many women say ‘why should I bother’ and give up their independence and their fulfillment.”

The point is that the system in which these careers are inserted is a system created by men and, at least until a few years ago, for men. Today things are beginning to change. Women in the profession are almost 50%. But their careers, especially in associated firms, still too often stop before partnership.

Many professionals are indicated as role models, reference models. But this is a definition that Alberta Figari doesn’t like. “I didn’t have a role model and I don’t think it’s right to tell a





young colleague: look at how I did it and then do the same. We are different people and we are called to build, each according to our own inclinations, our own role model." The lawyer also shares an anecdote on this topic. "This thing about role models is something that Anglo-Saxon lawyers really like. I remember that when I had the interview for partnership at Clifford Chance, the partner who interviewed me asked if, in the years spent at the firm, I had identified a particular partner who had inspired me and whom I would have liked to resemble. I said no. I indicated that I had met many professionals who, like everyone, had some characteristics that I liked and others that I liked less. So, my reference model was not based on the profile of a single person, but derived from the combination of a series of qualities that I had appreciated in different subjects and that I had decided to make my own. I found myself making the same considerations, I must say, even when I started to be part of boards of directors as an independent director, and in particular at Assicurazioni Generali. Even in that case, I didn't have a predefined role model: I observed and tried to grasp what I thought was the best from each person sitting around me: I can say, for example, that Gabriele Galateri was a great teacher on how to manage board meetings: with

education, but at the same time, with firmness. As I always said to him: you were born a President." And this, perhaps, says something about what Figari's style might be in the presidency of Tim, a role she has taken on a few months ago and of which she says she is "flattered," the first woman in the company's history. That experience on boards of directors is one that the lawyer defines as formative and of great interest. "It helps to understand the company from the inside and in particular the management dynamics. How certain decisions are made, how a CEO moves. Certain things, from the outside, are more difficult to learn." Having said that, Figari says she would like to see more female colleagues involved in these activities. "Sometimes it seems to me that we are in the presence of a closed circle, where we always report and promote among the same people." A circle of which she is a part? one is tempted to ask. "I wouldn't say so. In the sense that I don't chase these positions. I evaluate and select, when they are proposed to me. If I can, I indicate people who, in my opinion, are adequate, trying not to always make the same names. Also because I think that the contribution of a lawyer on boards can be very important, but I don't believe that there are people suitable for every type of role." And if asked if that, in the

future, could become her exclusive profession, she answers no: "I like to continue to also be a lawyer, a prerogative that I consider important to be able to guarantee myself a serene independence of judgment in every situation, while being aware of the commitment and responsibilities that the Telecom challenge represents and which I hope I will be able to fulfill to the best of my abilities."



Resede Ferioli

Bologna, 1950s: a woman speeds on her bike towards the law firm where she works as a secretary and tenaciously fights to establish herself as a notary. Cut. Lido di Spina, 2024. The same woman writes a book on the role of women in history and how not to educate girls in a male-dominated world. We talk directly with her

by Michela Cannovale

Lido di Spina is a small hamlet of Comacchio. The province is Ferrara, in the stretch where the Po River flows into the Adriatic. An area known for eel cooked in all ways, in summer it transforms into a popular seaside resort. Children running towards the waves, tourists playing paddle ball, while others prefer beach volleyball and still others love to relax in the shade. Bars and restaurants are full. And commotion. Commotion and chaos everywhere, as in any respectable riviera destination.

In winter, however, silence falls. Cafes are empty. Streets once again have dozens of free parking spaces. Beaches, stripped of umbrellas and deck chairs, take on that melancholic air that only the coldest months can give to the sea.

In Lido di Spina, summer and winter, lives Resede Ferioli, who for many years, until just over twenty years ago, practiced as a notary in Emilia-Romagna. Her third book, "Come non educare le fanciulle (in un mondo a misura di maschio)," published in January 2024 by Le Lucerne, is the story of her life from childhood to today, although the introduction emphasizes that "the story is entirely a product of my imagination regarding facts and people. However, it was inspired by vague occasional intuitions of the violence, pressures, and psychological mutilations that have been and still are inflicted on the female gender, mainly in



the family environment, experienced as guilt and kept hidden out of modesty, but considered by all to be legitimate because they adhere to established customs and traditions. I was inspired by real places and traditions, but especially by the environment of legal professions, a daily source of inspiration." I will only understand what exactly Resede means when talking about established customs and traditions after spending a morning in her company. In Lido di Spina, to be precise.

I'm brought here by a driver who picks me up directly in Bologna, where I spent the weekend. "Bologna-Ferrara by train," Resede had texted me, "is an agony I wish to spare you. The driver is already arranged for your return as well, as it is not my intention, after the interview, to abandon you to your fate in impractical lands." I thanked her and complied with my host's wishes, discovering that the driver, a retired policeman who used to drive the famous patrol cars, is none other than the husband of an acquaintance. "The lady's apartment," the driver informs me, "is in the tallest building in all of Spina, impossible to mistake." Arriving at our destination, I realize that the building is indeed quite tall, which creates a certain contrast with the surrounding marine panorama. My travel companion accompanies me to the ninth floor and takes his leave.

I hadn't found photos of Resede before our meeting, which is why I experienced it like those blind dates that give you a sense of positive trepidation. I recognize in her, once I enter the living room, the same impatience to see me in person after the numerous phone calls we've had over these months.

We take a brief tour of the house. She shows me the terrace as well. The view from up here is stunning. The height, however, doesn't prevent the summer noises from disturbing Resede's nights, who immediately tells me she's in the midst of a lawsuit against the manag-



ers of one of the nearby beaches. "They can't decide to lower the volume of the music. Too bad they didn't know they were dealing with someone who knows the law..."

Resede Ferioli moves from the Emilian countryside to Bologna in the 1950s to study law. In the small village she comes from, at the time of her birth, the "partecipanza agraria" was still active. That is an institution in force since the 1200s whereby land ownership is entrusted every twenty years only to male descendants of resident families. In the book, on this subject, it's explained that "minors, demented, interdicted are also allowed to participate, as long as they are male, as well as the male born ten months after the death of the participating father. For this purpose, during pregnancy, the head is assigned only to a piece of the woman, i.e. the pregnant womb, which is considered the sole subject entitled to rights. When a male is not born, the head assigned to the womb is devolved to the administration."

Resede's father, an only child, dies when she

is 10 years old. "Being born into this family, in this context, led me to think that as a female I didn't count for anything from a patrimonial point of view, and neither did my mother. That's what I had been taught and that's what I had learned. It must be said that the relationship with the rest of the relatives was fortunately not difficult: since we all lived on little, there was no master or slave. We all worked hard, we all collaborated."

To avoid the marginalization that befalls her as a have-not ("or, worse, submission to a potential husband, something my mother always taught me to stay away from," she points out, winking at me), Resede starts early working in the fields to save money for university and decides to attend a typing school with the touch-typing method.

Thanks to her skill with the typewriter, on which she types quickly without looking at the keyboard, at 18 she finds work as a secretary in a Bologna law firm. "One of our tasks was to copy criminal files granted on loan by

the court registry for only three days. Thanks to that typing course, I moved at triple speed compared to my other colleagues, which gave me more time to delve into the subject matter of the files in question and also to observe what was happening around me. In the office, I first learned a new way of speaking. After all, I came from a family steeped in working-class habits where only dialect was spoken..."

Resede uses what she earns working in the office for rent and university tuition, as well as to secretly pay the janitor of the Bologna university. "I didn't have time to attend classes because I had to work. But to take exams I needed the professor's signature, to whom the janitor submitted the various booklets, including those of non-attending students," she explains to me. And then she adds: "I got married before graduating. After the marriage, since I wasn't working at that time, I finally had time to study and take the last exams as an attending student."

As she talks to me, I notice we're surrounded by the most disparate objects that - she'll ex-

plain later - come from the three offices and three apartments where she worked and lived before retirement: in addition to books and documents piled here and there, I'm struck by the myriad of pitchers, demijohns, cups, saucers, statuettes, miniature galleons, ornamental pumpkins, and a large ceramic vase that bears the inscription COCAINE on its belly. "I loved this one like crazy. I got it from a pharmacy in Faenza that was closing down and for years I kept it on my office desk," she tells me, noticing my curious gaze. "I often went to Faenza to buy ceramics when I needed to vent, while I cross-stitched all the cushions myself. You know, it was a useful pastime during pregnancies..." Among the scattered kitchenware, I also identify a couple of ashtrays. "I was a heavy smoker, then I made a vow and had to quit by force."

After graduating in law from Bologna, Resede enrolls in the bar association. "But I had an accident: a head-on collision in the car that completely destroyed my knee, forcing me to have a bone transplant at 24 while I was three months pregnant. I'll just say that the baby started walking before me... The convalescence, however, at least allowed me to continue studying from home."

Thanks to a competitive exam passed with flying colors and while waiting to aim for the law firm once licensed, Resede, already mother of her second child, goes to work at INPS (National Institute for Social Security). "Executive category, because I had a degree." Here she experiences firsthand various signs of a "male-dominated world" and group bullying: "I was 26 years old and had 45 subordinates, almost all men, whose intolerance towards me, just because I was a woman, was quite evident." I ask her to explain better and she shows me the poem that one day they left on her desk. Here are some stanzas:

*If instead of being a boss with high functions
with your own office (which causes inhibitions)
you were just a woman from face down to knees
I'd like to talk to you for an hour but alone
please.*

*To be able to stick a finger in your pretty little
eye*

*and give you a kick in the shin so slender and
spry
I'd live so happily for all my tomorrow
to have had you for an hour at least in my
hands, you know.*

*It's useless that you change your dress so often
depending on whether old or young you feel
then
from the high-necked dress down to the bands
the character remains as it is when one's born,
understand.*

*Signed: Your subordinate The Mouse (who
gnaws)*

The new job brings Resede to her most coveted goal: a salary of one hundred and twenty thousand lire for fourteen months, which gives a new sense of independence to her life. For the first time, she enters a boutique and buys the dress she likes most, and no longer just the one she can afford. "That occupation," she tells me, "attributed to me a prestige I had never had before. Nevertheless, given the petty environment and the impossibility of deepening my still scarce legal knowledge, after two years I resigned."

This is how she starts working in her husband's notary office and, in 1973, mother of three, passes the competitive exam becoming

a notary herself.

As recalled in the chapter "The Woman Notary," the first Italian law reforming the notary profession, dating back to July 25, 1875, makes it clear that to practice the profession, one simply needs to be a citizen of the Kingdom and have reached the age of majority, while no reference is made to the female gender. Yet, distrust towards women jurists was widespread until more recent times. The President of the Court of Cassation Eutimio Ranelletti, in a small book from 1957 entitled "The Woman Judge or Grace Against Justice," emphasizes in this regard that "woman is fatuous, she is light, she is superficial, emotional, passionate, impulsive, stubborn, always approximate, almost always denied logic and, therefore, unfit to judge."

For a long time, Resede struggles to convince clients that a notarial deed, even when signed by a woman, is formally valid just like a man's signature, as well as she struggles to convince them that the check should be made out to her name and not to her husband's and that her husband will not come to verify the correctness of her work before the practice is concluded. "They took for granted that I was the deputy of the one who mattered. And when you're dealing with clients who treat you like this, you have to start from afar... I would say bluntly that I was the notary. IT'S M-E, do you understand? They always remained doubtful, they trusted only up to a point. In those times, the woman was still seen as abusive, she couldn't be a public official who officializes an act! The most one could aspire to was to be a secretary."

The turning point and true success come two years after the competitive exam, in 1975, with the reform of family law which introduces, among other things, special protection for the surviving spouse, granting them the right to ownership of half of the deceased spouse's assets as well as the right to inhabit the family residence. The reform also establishes community property as the legal regime. "In no time at all, the office filled up with wives who wanted to know what their rights were and who treated me as if I were a parish priest. It was widespread the idea that the notary was





the most suitable person to collect people's confidences, which they confided in me because I was obliged by my profession to maintain secrecy. It was mostly women who sought me out, but why am I telling you this? A man would never have confided in a woman..."

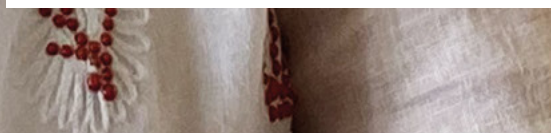
It's these stories, these confessions revealed in front of the desk that Resede draws inspiration from to write her book once retired. These are the "vague occasional intuitions of violence" that serve as inspiration for the author to enrich her personal story. From chapter 39: "How necessary this legislation (the family law reform, ed.) is, I verify very soon when a widow comes to ask for my help. She is visibly covered in bruises and confesses to me that her husband has recently passed away and that their only cohabiting son has decided that she must immediately leave the dwelling free because his partner doesn't want her around. At her refusal to leave, the son tries to make her clear out by all means, preferably violent ones."

"You see, the book is a summary of what I discovered about male chauvinism over the years and what I saw with my own eyes. Of the secrets that were told to me by women who didn't know who else to turn to. The priest, after all, told them to pray and their relatives kicked them out. From me, instead, they received listening and understanding."

Understanding. I wonder why she uses precisely this word and I realize that it's something that she too lacked in her relationship with her husband. "We worked in the same office and he offloaded all the less profitable and more boring tasks onto me, including accounting. In fact, I worked as a sort of little slave while he reminded me that I was as ignorant as a snake. Sure, he was a formidable notary, too bad that, like all men, he lacked emotional sensitivity. But I never complained, it wouldn't have served any purpose. I continued to make it work for me because that's how I had been instructed: this is what the education I had received said."

"You see," Resede continues, "in my time, the woman was simply an executor of superior orders, always behind the man. We dismantled this concept with great difficulty and thanks to the strength of many women who demonstrated having capabilities equal to or superior to those of their companions, brothers, colleagues, friends, neighbors. Thanks to the strength of women educated not to be afraid of being expelled from the social context just for revealing themselves as women."

The doorbell rings. It's my ride back to Bologna. It's time to go.



Anna Tavano

The percentage of women in top positions in the banking world is still low:
“a true cultural evolution that puts gender equality at the center is necessary”

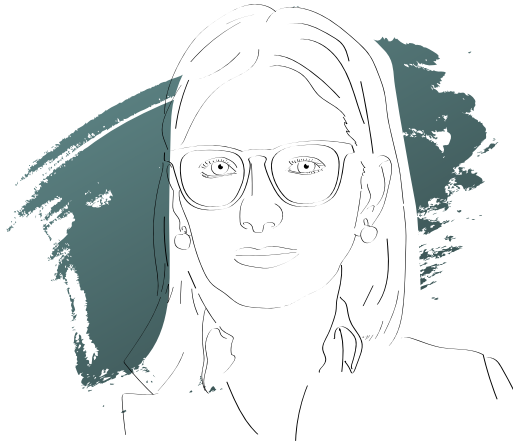
by Eleonora Fraschini

With a perhaps overused saying, we can say that in Italy, women in the world of finance and, above all, in top positions in credit institutions, can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

In a lineup of male names, Anna Tavano stands out, holding the position of head of global banking Continental Europe at HSBC. Today her work takes her traveling between Milan and Paris, but her experience began in Citi's London office, the bank where she grew for over a decade. In December 2018, she then moved to the British credit institution, initially as head of wholesale banking Italy, where she held positions of increasing importance. Dedication, resilience, and the ability to work under pressure are among the qualities that have allowed her to become one of the very few women in Europe to hold a top position in the world of finance, although, over time, she has understood that “success is not based only on technical skills or the ability to work hard. The real key, especially in leadership positions, is the ability to innovate, have a strategic vision, motivate and inspire teams.”

We know your successful professional path well. Can you tell us instead what happened before, why you decided to enroll in the Faculty of Economics and how your career began?

I was born into a family of entrepreneurs and



since childhood, my desire was to become “the doctor of companies” with the aim of solving their problems and helping them grow, dedicating myself to what I later discovered to be strategic and financial consulting. After high school, I moved to Rome to study Economics. Once graduated, I worked for a short period in an accounting firm, but I quickly realized it wasn't my path: I wanted to work in finance. I realized I had to overcome an obstacle: the English language. So, I decided to learn it directly in London and moved there where my career began, in a prestigious American investment bank. This stage represented a

fundamental passage in my personal and professional journey. For years I worked hard, almost non-stop: the world of finance was (and is) a very competitive environment. But also stimulating.

What did this experience teach you?

Here I learned the importance of loving what you do, of working while having fun. And I fully understood the meaning of dedication, resilience, ability to work under pressure. Over time, however, I realized that success is not based only on technical skills or the ability to work hard. The real key, especially in leadership positions, is the ability to innovate, have a strategic vision, motivate and inspire teams. It's also crucial to understand and manage your own emotions and those of others, creating a positive and productive work environment. It's also fundamental to create relationships based on trust with clients. I thus understood how important emotional intelligence is. All this represents for me the winning formula to excel in the financial sector and in any leadership position. These are the qualities that I try to cultivate in myself and encourage in my teams.

In your journey, who were your role models? Is there someone who particularly inspired you?

My inspiration model is my family. In parti-



cular, my father, an entrepreneur and hard worker, taught me the value of honesty and a strong sense of duty. He taught me the importance of keeping commitments made, because a given word must be honored. Since childhood, he placed great trust in me and made me very responsible. He taught me to work hard to get what I want, starting from the basics and doing a lot of “apprenticeship”. But the greatest gift was educating me to economic and mental independence. My mother was a model of sweetness and empathy. She always dedicated herself to the family, listening to me, advising me and supporting me. I lost her when I was 28, leaving a void difficult to fill. In my family, the fact that I was a woman never involved differences in education, rules or expectations. My brother and I had the same opportunities. My parents always told me that I could achieve great results if I committed myself to the fullest.

Which moments of your career do you remember with the most enthusiasm?

There are several moments in my career that I remember with particular satisfaction. One of the most significant was when I was offered my dream job at the bank where I worked. It was an opportunity I had pursued for years and it was finally coming true. I lived that period with great enthusiasm, always ready to learn and experience new things. It was the years between the '90s and 2000s, a phase of great ferment in the London financial world. I was working on an innovative product where there was ample space for creativity and proposing original solutions.

I nostalgically remember the energy and excitement of those days. A continuous challenge to improve “financial structures” and surpass competitors. There was great passion and desire to do, an electrifying atmosphere that always pushed us to give our best.



Have you ever perceived difficulties during your journey due to being a woman?

Difficulties are an integral part of my job and over time I have learned to manage them without being overwhelmed. In the early years of my career, in particular, I faced difficult situations. My clients were predominantly men, sometimes very senior and with long experience. At the beginning of a meeting, it happened that they didn't even give me their business card, others did it halfway through the meeting, some shook my hand only at the end. The prejudice was such that once a client explicitly told me that he couldn't work with me because not only was I young, a woman and from the south, but I also came "from the wrong side of Italy". He, originally from the northeast, believed that Italy was also divided between east and west. And I was from the southwest. I didn't let myself be beaten down. The result, a source of great satisfaction for me, is that over time this top manager learned to trust and respect me, proving to be one of my best clients.

The world of finance is still considered by many to be a male prerogative. In your opinion, what measures are necessary to ensure greater gender equality, even in top roles?

Rather than measures, I'd prefer to talk about "culture". A true cultural evolution that puts gender equality at the center is necessary. This change must start from families, from education, continue through school education, from the early stages, and continue in the world of work.

Merit as a "beacon": ensuring the same starting conditions and real gender equality allows rewarding and growing those who truly have skills and competencies. The future workers and managers of tomorrow must know that they are not alone and that there are many success stories that demonstrate that it is possible to achieve ambitious goals. For this reason, it is fundamental that women in top positions commit to being and acting as role models for young generations. Seeing concrete examples of women who have overcome obstacles and achieved success will help girls understand that, with commitment and determination, they too can realize their dreams.

In your experiences abroad, have you seen a different or similar situation? In what aspects?

It would relieve me to say that the situation is better abroad. Unfortunately, except for rare exceptions, it's not, at least in the world of finance. Even the countries that I imagined to be more sensitive to this issue are in reality very backward with few, very few, women in top positions, many biases and preconceptions and a long road ahead. For this reason, having a European role, I continue to commit myself personally to this issue in all the countries I'm responsible for.

What would you advise young women working in your sector?

To have courage. Courage to test themselves, to experiment, to not settle, to always take one more step, to ask even uncomfortable and difficult questions, to have their merits recognized. To always be themselves, authentic, genuine without giving up kindness and cultivating empathy.

It's essential to commit, study, be tenacious and gain more and more confidence in themselves and their abilities. It's fundamental to learn to react to failures, learn from mistakes and persist despite difficulties. You must always challenge yourself and have the strength to take risks like applying even for positions for which you don't feel completely ready. Try to always dare a little bit. I commit to supporting and promoting talents that have yet to express their full potential: I invest in them, give trust and try to provide the tools for their growth path. Finally, the advice I consider most important: have fun along the way and never give up on your dreams.

Looking at your future instead, what projects would you like to pursue?

I firmly believe in the concept of "giving back". I think it's important to give back to the community part of what you've received through the contribution of time, skills or resources to improve collective well-being and create a positive impact. I've had a lot and I'd like to give something back. This is what I'd like to do even more when I stop working.

Ten women of Italian finance

In recent years, more and more Italian female professionals have reached the top of the finance world

From credit institutions to funds, through private companies and state-controlled corporations: an increasing number of women are taking on prominent positions within the finance sector. The profiles of the professionals we have selected, which we present in alphabetical order, are decidedly varied: some of them have grown within the same company, while others have gained experience in different organizations. All of them have been able to face the difficulties explained in the previous article by Anna Tavano and achieve their goals.

Barbara Cominelli, ceo, JLL

Appointed ceo of JLL Italia in December 2020, Barbara Cominelli has led and strengthened the company's position in the real estate sector, focusing on a technological and data-driven approach. The manager comes from Microsoft, where she held the role of coo and deputy ceo, and previously worked for Vodafone as chief digital, operations and wholesale officer. She is currently a member of the strategic advisory board of Iliad, vice president of Confindustria Assoimmobiliare, and, since January of this year, part of the AI Technical Committee of Confindustria.



Giovanna Della Posta, ceo, Invimit

Giovanna Della Posta has been leading Invimit Sgr, a 100% Mef company engaged in the enhancement of public real estate assets, from 2019 to 2024. The Sgr structures projects of significant dimensions, open to co-investments between the State and private equity, enhancing the contribution of public presence not only with financial capital but also human resources. Among Invimit's initiatives worth mentioning is the launch of the Virgilio Project, the recovery and enhancement plan for Piazza D'Armi in Milan worth over one billion.



Nicole Della Vedova, finance director, *Snam*

Graduated in Business Administration from Bocconi University in Milan, where she also obtained a Master of Science in Finance, Nicole Della Vedova began her career at Accenture, then assumed prominent positions first at Eni and later at Maire Tecnimont. Over the last eight years, she has held roles of increasing responsibility at Enel, where she was appointed Head of Corporate and Structured Finance. This year, she joined Snam as Finance Director. During her most recent work experience, she was a member of the European Commission's Platform on Sustainable Finance.

**Elena Goitini**, ceo di *BNL* e responsabile *Bnp Paribas* per l'Italia

Since 2021 Elena Goitini has been leading BNL BNP Paribas in Italy, becoming the first woman to head a major bank in Italy. She subsequently became a member of the board and executive committee of ABI. Her race to the top of the credit institution was rapid, having joined BNL two years earlier as head of the Private Banking and Wealth Management division. Now her goal is clear: to make BNL one of the top three banks in terms of profitability. Her career in the world of finance began in 1993 at PwC, then continued in the Unicredit group.

**Anna Fanizza**, cfo, *Generali Real Estate*

Banca Generali has seen Anna Fanizza, who graduated with honors from Bocconi University, grow in her professional path. Joining Generali Immobiliari Italia SGR in 2006 as a Financial Analyst, Fanizza then held positions of increasing importance, becoming Head of Planning, Controlling & Finance within the CFO Department of Generali Real Estate SGR in 2015. Three years later, she became Head of Planning, Controlling & Finance International, and in 2021, she was appointed CFO.

**Anna Lambiase**, President, *CDP Venture Capital*

Anna Lambiase, a chartered accountant with a master's degree in finance from the University of Pavia and a master's from MIP, Executive School of Politecnico di Milano, founded Irtop Consulting in 2001. She has collaborated with over 100 companies, overseeing listening processes, valuations, business plan elaborations, m&a operations, and bond issues. A member of the GT Credit and Finance of Assolombarda, she is also vice president of AssoNext. In 2022, she was appointed to the board of directors of Invitalia, owned by the Ministry of Economy, and last October she was appointed president of CDP Venture Capital.



Alessandra Losito, General Manager of *Pictet Wealth Management*
 Alessandra Losito is the general manager of Pictet Wealth Management in Italy. She graduated in Economics from Federico II University, obtained a Master's in Economics and Finance, and holds the Chartered Financial Analyst qualification. She began her career in the financial sector at PwC, before moving to Borsa Italiana and then to Citi Private Bank. In 2005, she joined Pictet Wealth Management, taking over the leadership of the Rome office in 2017 and the Milan office in 2019. She is a member of the Italian Executive Committee.



Barbara Poggiali, chairman, *Fondo Italiano d'Investimento*
 Barbara Poggiali has been the chairman of Fondo Italiano d'Investimento Sgr since May 2022. She has always been a supporter of inclusivity and equal opportunities within companies. Throughout her career, which began at McKinsey & Company, she has held top positions at Leonardo, Poste Italiane and PosteMobile, and RCS Media-Group. In recent years, she has also been chosen as a non-executive director for various entities, including Epta Group, Fideuram Asset Management SGR, Prima Industrie Group and Erg.



Valentina Pippolo, partner e country head Italia
Bregal Unternehmerkaptal

Valentina Pippolo has a top-level education in International Business Studies from Maastricht University and, among other languages, also speaks Dutch. Before joining Bregal Unternehmerkaptal, she was a partner and head of Italy at Alpha Group and worked for Merrill Lynch. She is a board member of many important entities, including Safety21 and Italgel, acquired by Bregal in recent years.



Alessandra Ricci, ceo, *Sace*

Alessandra Ricci has been the ceo and general manager of Sace since May 2022. She began her career in 1995 at Mediocredito Centrale, holding managerial positions in the project financing sector for international projects in Europe and emerging markets for 10 years. In 2005, she joined Sace, the insurance-financial company specialized in supporting companies controlled by the Mef, where she assumed positions of increasing responsibility until becoming first chief business officer and then chief marketing & underwriting officer. From 2017 to 2020, Alessandra Ricci held the position of ceo of Simest, a financial company that supports the internationalization of Italian companies' activities.



Dominae

If the word “man” is etymologically linked to the Latin noun “humus” “woman” is instead the syncopated form of “domina” and is, therefore, inextricably linked to power

by Benedetta Miarelli

In 1586, Jean Bodin, a famous French jurist, asserted with extreme firmness that women should be confined to the most remote margins of civil life: “they must be kept away from all magistracies, places of command, judgments, public assemblies, and councils, so that they may occupy themselves only with their womanly and domestic affairs.” The past proved him wrong, as did the present, and so would the future.

The queens of contemporary monarchies

That a woman could be the most powerful in the world had already been demonstrated by Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt who, crowned at 17, held the fate of the world in her hands. So had the Byzantine Empress Isabella of Aragon, Catherine de Medici, and Elizabeth II.

It was in Westminster Abbey that the longest-reigning queen of England wore the crown for the first time, on June 2, 1953, while, for the first time in history, television cameras broadcast her advancing confidently in her long golden dress with her austere gaze. Her long reign coincided with the gradual transformation of the British Empire into the Commonwealth. Elizabeth II, a staunch conservative of institutional, moral, and religious traditions, faced prime ministers from the most diverse political backgrounds and with strong personalities, including Churchill, Thatcher, and Blair.

When speaking of long reigns, one cannot refrain from mentioning the former Queen of Denmark, Margrethe, who ruled for more than 50 years. Ascending to the throne on January 15, 1972, following the death of her father, she was the first Queen of Denmark - after Margaret the Great - following the abrogation by popular plebiscite of the constitutional norm that established the impossibility for the female line of the royal



Elizabeth II



Margaret Thatcher



Giorgia Meloni

family to ascend to the throne. A revolutionary coronation, therefore, as revolutionary were the choices made by the sovereign during her reign. For example, on September 29, 2022, she decided to remove the royal titles from the children of her second-born son Joachim, to allow her grandchildren to live a normal life. In early 2024, the queen then decided to abdicate in favor of her son: King Frederick X.

Contemporaneity has seen many “unconventional” queens. Among these is the former journalist and current Queen of Spain, Letizia. Defined by the Spanish press as “la reina hipster”, Letizia is passionate about cinema and literature and a feminist who ardently fights for gender equality and to extend the right to education to all young people.

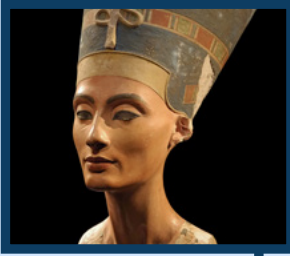
Beside her, Rania, the Queen Consort of Jordan, stands out; Máxima, Queen Consort of the Netherlands; Mathilde, the Queen Consort of Belgium; and Suthida, the Queen Consort of Thailand, appointed in 2019. There are also Jetsun Pema, the Queen Consort of Bhutan, and Silvia, the Queen Consort of Sweden, founder of the World Childhood Foundation and very active in projects promoting children’s rights and against exploitation and abuse. Then Sonja, the Queen Consort of Norway, and Masenate Mohato Seeiso, the Queen Consort of Lesotho, active in community development projects and promotion of health and education (such as her battle against the spread of HIV).

Democracies: Prime Ministers and Presidents

“Woman is analytical, not synthetic. Has she ever done architecture in all these centuries? Ask her to build me a hut, not to mention a temple. She cannot. Naturally, she must not be a slave, but if I were to grant her the right to vote, I would be ridiculed”.

While Benito Mussolini boasts that it is impossible to grant women the right to vote, not too far from him, the first woman in England to become Prime Minister makes her way in the academic world: Margaret Thatcher. Becoming a Conservative MP in 1959, Minister of Education from 1970 to 1974, leader of the Conservative Party from 1975, Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979. With her rigorous liberal policy, characterized by strict control of money supply, cuts in public spending, and large-scale privatizations, she favored economic recovery and reduction of inflation. Regarding foreign policy, she pursued the strengthening of ties with the United States and, thanks to the victory in the Falklands War of 1982, gained great public consensus.

Our peninsula, compared to England, experienced its first time with a woman holding the presidency of the Council of Ministers a bit later. It happened on October 22, 2022, when Giorgia Meloni’s party emerged victorious from the political elections.



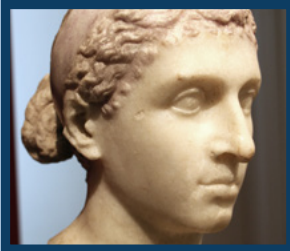
Nefertiti (c. 1370-1330 BC)

Egyptian queen of the 18th dynasty, wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten. She played a significant role in her husband's religious revolution and may have ruled as pharaoh after his death.



Artemisia I of Caria (5th century BC)

Queen of Halicarnassus and ally of Xerxes I of Persia. She participated in the Battle of Salamis (480 BC) as a naval commander, distinguishing herself for strategic skills.



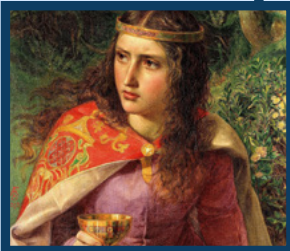
Cleopatra VII (69-30 BC)

Queen of Egypt, last sovereign of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Skilled politician and diplomat, ally of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.



Wu Zetian (624-705 AD)

Only female emperor in Chinese history. She ruled the empire during the Tang dynasty, promoting reforms and territorial expansion.



Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204)

Queen consort of France and then of England. Influential in the Crusades and medieval European politics.



Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504)

Queen of Castile and León. Unified Spain through marriage with Ferdinand of Aragon and financed Columbus's voyage.

Meloni's interest in politics was manifest since her adolescence when she began her militancy in the National Alliance as the head of the student movement. She then became president of Youth Action, then appointed vice president of the Chamber of Deputies and Minister of Youth - from 2008 to 2011 - in the IV Berlusconi government. In 2012, together with Ignazio La Russa and Guido Crosetto, she founded Fratelli d'Italia party, with which she would rise to government. It was a few days after her appointment that the President delivered a heartfelt speech to the Chamber for the government's confidence: «Among the many burdens I feel weighing on my shoulders today, there must also be that of being the first woman to lead the government in this Nation. When I dwell on the significance of this fact, I inevitably find myself thinking about the responsibility I have to the many women who at this moment face great difficulties and injustices to affirm their talent or the right to see their daily sacrifices appreciated. But I also think, with reverence, of those who have built with the planks of their own example the ladder that today allows me to climb and break the heavy glass ceiling placed on our heads. Women who have dared, by impulse, by reason, or for love».

Meloni's ascending parabola to government is part of a global context of growing female victories within politics. Just a month ago, Mexico celebrated a moment that will serve as a watershed in the country's political history: the rise to power of Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, the first woman to become Prime Minister.

Also, regarding the election of Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of Estonia, one can speak of a revolutionary event. Kallas is, in fact, the first woman to hold this position in her country. So it was also for Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, and for Tsai Ing-wen, President of Taiwan.

When speaking of firsts and moments of rupture with the past, it is impossible not to mention Kamala Harris: the first woman and the first African American woman to become Vice President of the United States, now officially in the running for the nation's highest office.

On November 7, 2020, when major American media announced her victory to the world, Harris addressed the nation that in 1958 had welcomed her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, from India: «I'm thinking about her and about the generations of women - Black women, Asian, White, Latina, and Native American women throughout our nation's history who have paved the way for this moment tonight. Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality, liberty, and justice for all, including the Black women, who are too often overlooked, but so often prove to be the backbone of our democracy. All the women who worked to secure and protect the right to vote for over a century: 100 years ago, with the 19th Amendment, 55 years ago with the Voting Rights Act, and now, in 2020, with a new generation of women in our country who cast their ballots and continued the fight for their fundamental right to vote and to be heard. Tonight, I reflect on their struggle, their determination, and the strength of their vision - to see what can be unburdened by what has been - I stand on their shoulders. [...] While I may be the first woman in this office, I won't be the last».



**Elizabeth I of England
(1533-1603)**

Queen of England and Ireland. Her reign, known as the Elizabethan era, was a period of great cultural development and naval power.



**Catherine II of Russia
(1729-1796)**

Empress of Russia. Known as Catherine the Great, she modernized Russia and expanded its territories.



**Victoria of the United Kingdom
(1819-1901)**

Queen of the United Kingdom. Her long reign, the Victorian era, was characterized by great imperial expansion and industrial progress.



Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)

First Lady of the United States and diplomat. Active advocate for human and civil rights, she contributed to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Indira Gandhi (1917-1984)

First woman Prime Minister of India. Led the country through wars and crises, implementing important economic and social reforms.



Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013)

First woman Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Known as "The Iron Lady," she implemented conservative economic policies and played a key role in ending the Cold War.

Of Indo-American origin, her higher education began at Howard University in Washington, where in 1986 she earned a degree in Political Science and Economics.

Continuing her educational journey, Harris further distinguished herself by obtaining a doctorate in Law from Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco in 1989.

Her rise in the legal field was rapid and characterized by a series of firsts. She began her career in 1990 as a deputy district attorney, and in 2004, she was elected district attorney of San Francisco. In 2011, she was appointed Attorney General of California. On this occasion too, Harris was the first Black woman to hold the position.

In the Pantheon of firsts in contemporary political history, a place of honor undoubtedly belongs to former Chancellor Angela Merkel. Born in Hamburg in 1954, her political ascent was consecrated with her membership in the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 1990. Within a few months, she held the role of Minister for Equality and Youth Policies, a position she occupied from 1991 to 1994. In the following four years, her cursus honorum continued with her appointment as Minister of the Environment and her election as president of the CDU in 2000. After the early elections of 2005, she became the first woman in Germany to obtain the position of Chancellor.



Kamala Harris

Julissa Reynoso

A journey of diplomacy and public service

by Ilaria Iaquina

Julissa Reynoso, who stepped down from her role as the United States Ambassador to Spain on July 14 to return to the law firm of Winston and Strawn, perseverance, resilience, and dedication to public service. Born in the Dominican Republic and rising from the Bronx to high diplomatic positions, her journey showcases remarkable achievements and the challenges she has overcome. In this exclusive interview, Reynoso shares her experiences and insights, providing a vivid account of her career and her views on the future of diplomacy and gender equality.

As Reynoso transitions back to private practice, her commitment to positive change remains clear. Her inspiring journey underscores the importance of resilience, inclusivity, and dedication in achieving one's goals and making a meaningful impact globally.

Your journey from the Dominican Republic to becoming the United States Ambassador to Spain is truly inspiring. Can you tell us more about this path and the pivotal moments in your career?

I was born in the Dominican Republic and moved to the Bronx, New York, at age seven in the 1980s. After attending school there, I received a scholarship to Harvard, followed by graduate studies in the UK and law school at Columbia. I began my legal career working for a federal judge in New York and then at a law firm. In 2006, I volunteered for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and, when she became Secretary of State, I joined her as a senior official. Later, I was appointed Amba-



sador to Uruguay. I returned to law practice in New York in 2014 and worked again on Clinton's 2016 campaign. After her loss, I remained in private practice until joining Biden's transition team in 2020, working at the White House. In January 2022, I became the United States Ambassador to Spain.

What inspired you to pursue a career in diplomacy and public service? Were there any specific experiences or individuals that influenced your path? You just mentioned Hillary Clinton...

Hillary Clinton played a significant role in my career. She provided me with incredible opportunities and has been a model of conviction and care for others. Her ability to inspire and lead has deeply influenced my path. She's

a mentor and a friend, and her example has been a guiding force throughout my career.

As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field, what unique challenges have you faced, particularly in diplomatic roles?

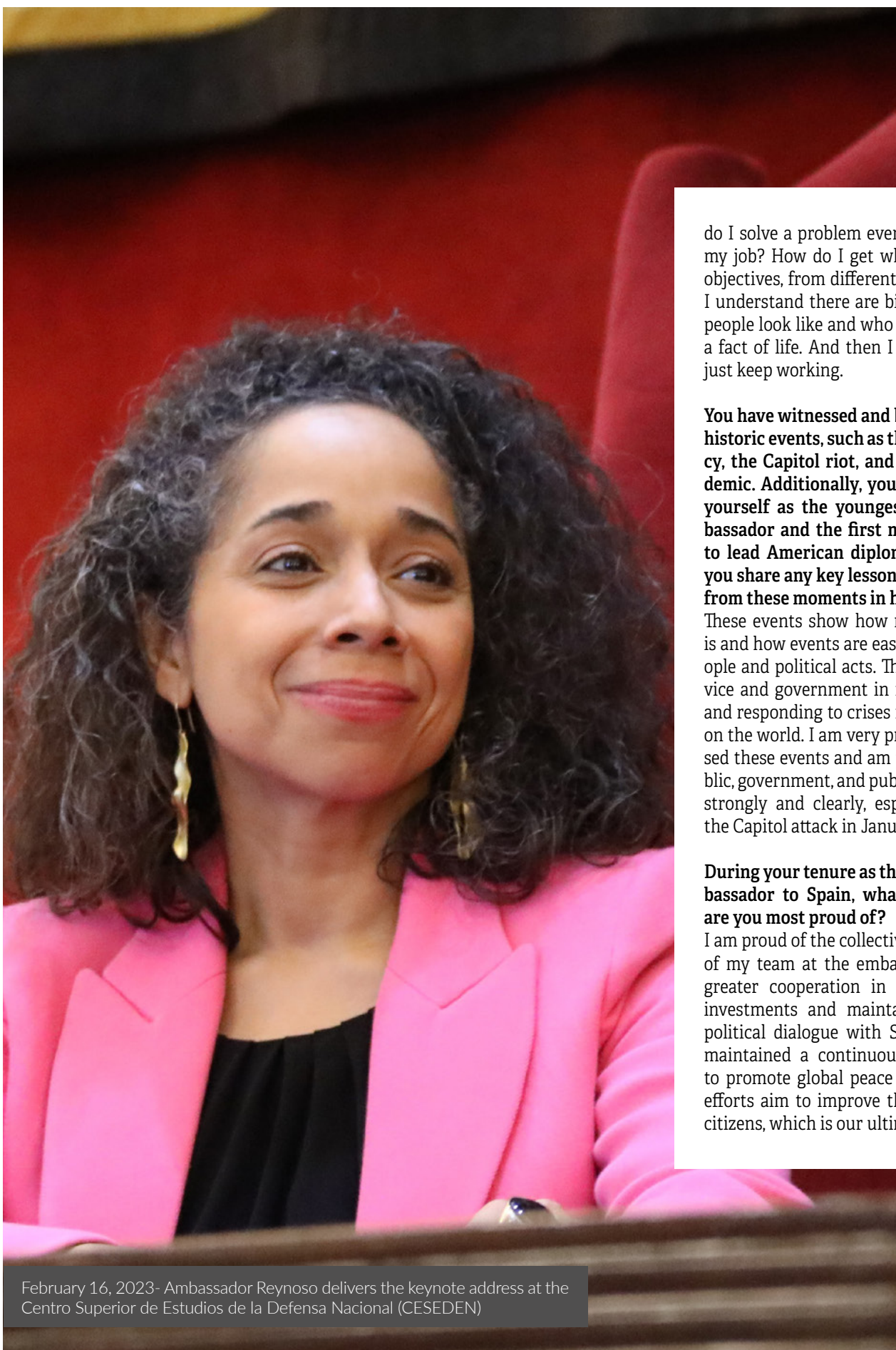
In such a field, you expect the unknown. My sex, race, and ethnic background can be seen as atypical. However, I always give people the benefit of the doubt and hope they do the same for me. When facing biases, which we all have, I approach them with patience and thoughtfulness, aiming for learning experiences for everyone involved.

Can you share specific instances where you encountered gender-based obstacles and how you overcame them?

When I first became an ambassador, I was one of the youngest and had to deal with assumptions about my experience and knowledge. To overcome this, I worked harder to be more informed and better prepared than my peers. I accepted this as a reality of the world and chose my battles wisely. I became comfortable in my own skin, ensuring I was well-prepared for meetings and discussions. I acknowledged my limitations and asked questions when needed. Over time, I learned to be open about my doubts and mindful of maintaining a balance, avoiding overthinking.

How have your experiences as a woman and immigrant shaped your perspective and approach in your diplomatic duties?

Honestly, I don't think about it too much. What captures most of my thought is "how



do I solve a problem every day? How do I do my job? How do I get what I want from my objectives, from different ideas and policies?" I understand there are biases based on what people look like and who they are, and that is a fact of life. And then I just keep moving, I just keep working.

You have witnessed and been part of several historic events, such as the Obama presidency, the Capitol riot, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, you have made history yourself as the youngest women U.S. ambassador and the first mixed-raced woman to lead American diplomacy in Spain. Can you share any key lessons or insights gained from these moments in history?

These events show how malleable the world is and how events are easily influenced by people and political acts. The role of public service and government in managing problems and responding to crises really has an impact on the world. I am very proud to have witnessed these events and am pleased that the public, government, and public sector responded strongly and clearly, especially in rejecting the Capitol attack in January 2021.

During your tenure as the United States Ambassador to Spain, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

I am proud of the collective accomplishments of my team at the embassy. We've achieved greater cooperation in research, increased investments and maintained a continuous political dialogue with Spain. We have also maintained a continuous political dialogue to promote global peace and stability. These efforts aim to improve the lives of everyday citizens, which is our ultimate goal.

February 16, 2023- Ambassador Reynoso delivers the keynote address at the Centro Superior de Estudios de la Defensa Nacional (CESEDEN)



May 12, 2023- President Biden hosted Spanish President Pedro Sanchez; Ambassador Reynoso seated along side Secretary of State Blinken and National Security Advisor Sullivan

Can you highlight some initiatives or policies you've championed that had a significant impact on U.S.-Spain relations?

Some notable initiatives include signing an agreement with NASA, enhancing research cooperation, and boosting commercial ties. These initiatives have led to economic growth and better employment opportunities.

In your view, how has the landscape for women in diplomacy and international relations evolved over the years? What changes have you witnessed?

There are more and more women in the business of diplomacy, though not enough. Having women in positions of leadership and decision-making is crucial for better understanding and diverse viewpoints. We contribu-

te to shaping better outcomes alongside our male colleagues.

How important is it to have diverse representation in diplomatic roles, and what measures can ensure more inclusivity in this field?

The world is incredibly diverse, with half being female, and having women at the table thinking through these problems guarantees a more informed process and decisions. Diverse representation is essential for reflecting the experiences of different citizens. Promoting opportunities from a young age and ensuring young people understand that these opportunities are available is crucial for inclusivity. Institutions should be welcoming and supportive of diverse backgrounds, fostering an environment where everyone feels they belong.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to enter the field of diplomacy or public service?

Be as studious as possible, open-minded, and surround yourself with diverse experiences and people. Continuous learning and a global perspective will make you a better diplomat. It's also crucial to be resilient and prepared to work harder than your peers. Building a solid network and seeking mentors who can guide and support you is also important.

In your opinion, why do women face significant challenges in reaching the presidency of the United States? When do you think we might see the first female president, and what changes or efforts do you believe are necessary to make this a reality?

I believe the country is ready for a female president. There have been strong female candidates in both parties. It's just a matter of time, and I'm optimistic about this prospect. The challenges are multifaceted, including societal biases and structural barriers, but progress is being made. Encouraging and supporting women in politics from a young age is key to overcoming these challenges.

Balancing a demanding career and personal life can be challenging. How have you managed to maintain this balance?

I enjoy time with friends and family, and I

try to keep myself grounded by maintaining lifelong friendships. Not taking things too seriously unless necessary helps me balance my career and personal life. Laughter and staying connected with people who have known me before my diplomatic career have been crucial in maintaining a sense of normalcy and balance.

What do you hope will be your lasting legacy as an ambassador?

I hope my legacy will be about getting things done and focusing on achieving good outcomes for people. Execution, follow-up, and ac-

countability are crucial for making a positive impact. I want to be remembered for my dedication to improving U.S.-Spain relations and for working towards the betterment of people's lives through effective diplomacy.

Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for the future?

I look forward to returning to my legal career. Balancing my professional and personal life, including registering my son in school, is a priority. I also hope to continue contributing to public service and making a positive impact in whatever capacity I can.



May 31, 2023- Ambassador Reynoso hosted a flamenco-inspired reception for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Also pictured are the former Vice President of the Government of Spain now President of the European Investment Bank and Maria Otero, former advisor to Secretary Clinton

The state of women in diplomacy

The 2023 landscape of female representation in global diplomatic roles

by Ilaria Iaquinta

The realm of global diplomacy has long been dominated by men, with women facing significant hurdles in reaching top leadership roles. Despite notable progress, women continue to be underrepresented in key diplomatic positions globally.

The 2023 Women in Diplomacy Index

As of 2023, women hold just 20.54% of ambassadorial positions worldwide, according to the 2023 Women in Diplomacy Index, published by the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA). This index charts the percentage of women ambassadors and permanent representatives from 169 of the 193 United Nations (UN) member states. The findings, based on over 12,000 ambassadorial appointments gathered from Ministry of Foreign Affairs websites and embassy pages, show a persistent gender gap in international relations.

Europe leads with an average of 28% of its ambassadors being women, followed by the Oceania cluster – including New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea – where women constitute 26.38% of ambassadors. The Americas boast a 25% share, driven by Canada and the United States, which have appointed 51% and 41% of their ambassadorial positions to women, respectively. In contrast, Africa's share is at 18%, Asia at 12%, and the MENA region at 10%.

Europe shows a resurgence within the EU, achieving a 29% representation of women ambassadors in 2023, up from approximately 23.5% in previous years. Finland stands out, with nearly half (49.5%) of its ambassadorial positions occupied by women. Spain has made significant strides, increasing its share to 32.5% in 2023 from 20.3% in 2018. Switzerland, with 35% of its ambassadors being women in 2023, continues to emphasise gender equality in its foreign policy. Conversely, Italy, though improving, still has only 12% of its ambassadors being women.

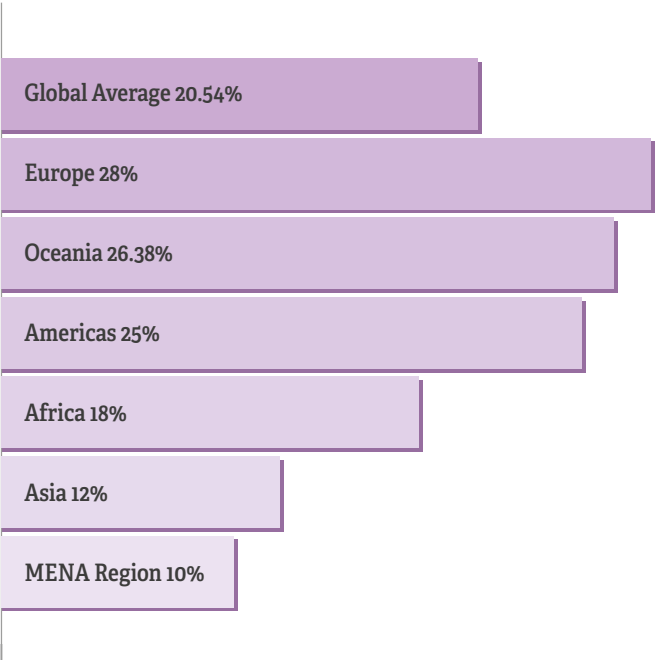
In the Americas, Canada leads with a 51% share of women ambassadors. The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) and North America (Canada, the US, and Mexico) average about 38% women ambassadors. Africa, despite its lower overall average, has bright spots such as Ghana (49%) and South Africa (39%). In Asia, the Maldives sets a high standard with 50% of its diplomatic posts held by women. The MENA region remains at the bottom with only 10% of its ambassadors being women, although Lebanon (24%) and Morocco (22%) are notable exceptions.

G20 countries have increased their average share of women ambassadors from 17% in 2018 to 21% in 2023. Notable improvements include Canada (+15% since 2018), the UK (+14.2%), Germany (+13.8%), and Spain (+12.2% since 2021). Conversely, some countries like Singapore, Colombia, Norway, and Sweden have seen declines in their percentage of women ambassadors.

Research indicates that the inclusion of women in negotiation processes enhances the prospects for sustainable peace and security. However, from 1992 to 2019, only 13% of negotiators and 6% of mediators in peace processes were women.

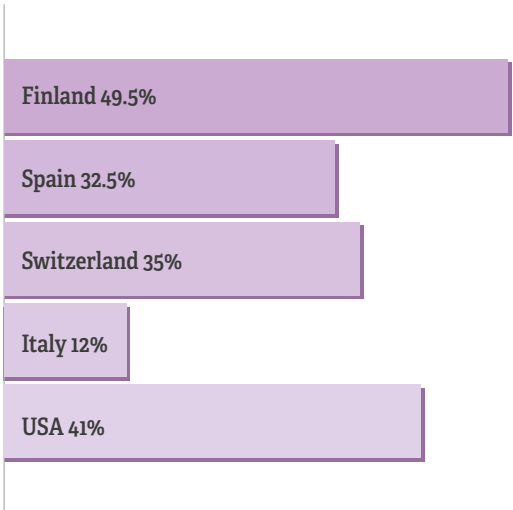
**Spain increased
from 20.3% in 2018
to 32.5% in 2023**

Percentage of Women Ambassadors 2023



Source: 2023 Women in Diplomacy Index

Countries - Percentage of Women Ambassadors



Source: 2023 Women in Diplomacy Index

Initiatives and challenges

Several initiatives have been launched to address these disparities. The Biden-Harris Administration's 2023 Women, Peace, and Security Strategy focuses on promoting women's leadership in peace and security efforts. This strategy emphasises the integration of gender perspectives in diplomatic training and the expansion of gender advisory roles across the Department of Defense and other agencies.

Specific programmes, such as "Ambassador for a Day" organised by the embassies of Canada, the UK, and the US, aim to inspire young women to consider careers in diplomacy. These programmes provide firsthand experience in diplomatic missions, fostering interest and building capacity among future female leaders.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist. Cultural barriers, limited mentorship opportunities, and work-life balance issues remain significant hurdles for women in diplomacy. Increasing the representation of wo-

Italy shows improvement but remains low at 12%

men in diplomacy is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic imperative. Diverse leadership teams bring varied perspectives, enhancing diplomatic effectiveness and fostering more comprehensive and sustainable solutions to global issues.

Votes for Women!

The legislative journey that led to universal suffrage
and the attainment of civil rights

by Mercedes Galan

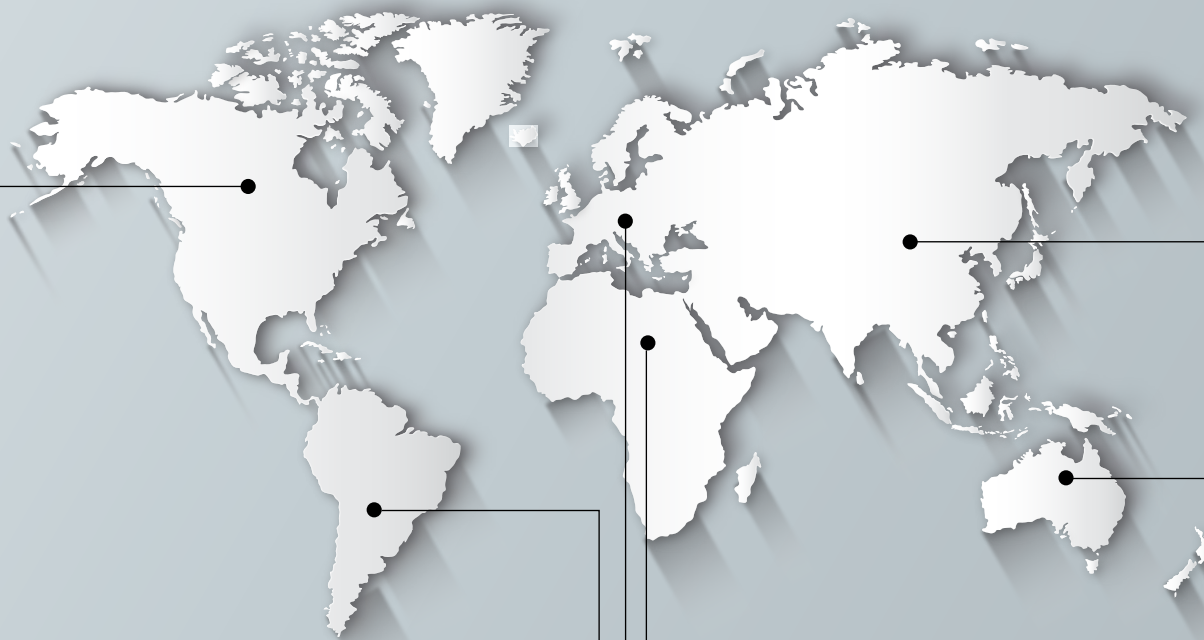
Throughout history, women have long fought for equality and recognition of their civil rights. From the first waves of the feminist movement to the current struggles for gender equality, the path towards the full realization of civil rights has indeed been long and full of challenges.

The moment we can identify as the starting point of the feminist movement for universal suffrage is the Seneca Falls Convention. In 1848, in the American town, a conference was organized attended by over 300 people, mostly women, who signed the Declaration of Sentiments. The document makes explicit reference to the right to vote, which is considered an important step in the process of improving the condition of women. The National American Woman Suffrage Association was founded in 1869 in the United States, a key organization in the fight for women's suffrage, founded by activists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. At the time of its creation, it had about 7,000 members, but over the years it reached two million members and became the largest voluntary organization in the nation. It played a fundamental role in the approval of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which in 1920 guaranteed women the right to vote.

In this important step, however, the Usa was preceded by New Zealand, which in 1893 became the first country to grant women the right to vote in national elections. In 1918, it was the turn of the United Kingdom, which approved the Representation of the People Act, granting the right to vote to women over 30 and all men over 21.

In Italy, we had to wait until after World War II to see women go to the polls: the first elections in which they could vote, but not be candidates, were the administrative ones in the spring of 1946. On June 2, 1946, on the occasion of the referendum to choose between Monarchy or Republic, several women were candidates for the Constituent Assembly and 21 of them were actually elected. The right to vote for women was then introduced into international legislation in 1948, with the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women's suffrage was also considered a right in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations in 1979, signed by 189 nations.

The path towards women's suffrage and civil rights has seen progress and struggles in various parts of the globe. The journey towards women's suffrage and civil rights has registered substantial progress globally, but much remains to be done. Women continue to fight for full equality in all spheres of life and progress varies widely depending on the region and cultural context.



North America

In North America, the United States and Canada were pioneers in the women's suffrage movement. The United States granted women the right to vote in 1920 with the 19th Amendment, thanks to a tireless and intense suffrage movement. Canada anticipated this step by granting women the right to vote federally in 1918. In Mexico, women's right to vote has been guaranteed since 1953.

Latin America

In America Latina, le conquiste nel suffragio femminile sono arrivate più tardi rispetto a quanto avvenuto in Nord America. L'Ecuador è stato il primo Paese della regione a permettere alle donne di votare nel 1929, seguito dall'Uruguay nel 1932. Brasile e Argentina invece hanno riconosciuto il diritto di voto alle donne rispettivamente nel 1934 e nel 1947.

Europe

Europe presents a diverse history regarding women's suffrage. Finland was the first European country to recognize women's right to vote in 1906. In 1918, it was the turn of the United Kingdom and Germany. In 1931, women's suffrage was also adopted in Spain, but women had the possibility to be elected from 1976. In Portugal, women also began voting in 1931, but only those with a higher education diploma. Italy had to wait for the post-war referendum, while Switzerland guaranteed the right to all women in 1971.

Africa

South Africa granted the right to vote to white women in 1930, but it was only with the end of apartheid in 1994 that all women could vote. White women in Southern Rhodesia obtained the vote in 1919 and Ethel Tawse Jollie, in 1920, was the first woman to sit in a national Commonwealth parliament outside Westminster.

Oceania

New Zealand set an example for the whole world by being the first country to recognize women's right to vote in 1893. Australia in turn passed the law in 1902.

Asia

The Philippines was one of the first countries in Asia to guarantee women the right to vote, in 1937. Japan recognized the right in 1945, after World War II, while India had to wait to gain independence from Great Britain in 1947. In Israel, women can vote since the birth of the State in 1948, the same year of the recognition of women's right to vote in South Korea. In Saudi Arabia, starting from 2015, women can also vote and be elected.

Donatella Sciuto

The first female rector in 160 years of history at the Politecnico di Milano explains why an academic career can be more difficult for a woman: "We lack welfare systems that facilitate the balance between work and family. Politics must intervene"

by Eleonora Fraschini

Marina Brambilla at Univeristà Statale, Giovanna Iannantuoni at Università Bicocca, Elena Beccalli at Università Cattolica, and Donatella Sciuto at the Politecnico: leading Milan's main universities – in some cases for the first time – are women. Milan is not an isolated case: Antonella Polimeni is the rector of La Sapienza in Rome, Daniela Mapelli of Università di Padova, Alessandra Petrucci of Università di Firenze, and, a few weeks ago, Anna Gervasoni's appointment for LIUC - Università Cattaneo was announced.

This is a very rare occurrence, given that our country's academic world has been led almost exclusively by Magnificent Rectors. The female presence becomes even rarer in universities renowned for teaching scientific subjects: STEM disciplines have long been considered the preserve of men.

With her degree in electronic engineering, however, Donatella Sciuto stands in stark contrast to this paradigm. During her career at the Politecnico di Milano, she has focused particularly on research and ICT, becoming a full professor of Computer Systems. Her experience has gone beyond the confines of the university; she has been a member of the supervisory board of the Human Technopole



«The challenge of all challenges is to ensure that technological development is an opportunity for collective growth and that our students are prepared for the future»

Foundation and is part of the Council of the Italian Institute of Technology, the technical-scientific committee of the National Cybersecurity Agency, and the High Council of the Bank of Italy.

To the vexed question of using the masculine or feminine gender for her position, Donatella Sciuto responds by quoting Ludwig Wittgenstein, an Austrian philosopher (with an engineering background): language reflects the structure of reality, so it is fundamental that it shows all its nuances, even those we are still learning to know. A perspective that goes hand in hand with her commitment to supporting inclusion and gender equality.

Let's start with the basics. After your appointment, do you prefer to be called "rettrice" (female rector) or "rettore" (male rector)?

"The limits of my language are the limits of my world": I always answer this question that many ask me (and not without reason) in this way. More simply, I would say that a limited vocabulary is the expression of a restricted world. I prefer the feminine because I recognize the role that women have assumed in this profession, increasingly numerous in leading Italian universities. It's a fact. Making language



ge reflect a changing, evolving reality is not trivial. After all, even the Crusca has approved the term “ingegnera” (female engineer).

What are the stages of your career that you consider most important in your journey?

Certainly my degree in electronic engineering, when out of three hundred freshmen at the Politecnico di Milano, women could be counted on the fingers of one hand - literally, we were three! This is still a fundamental stage for many girls today and was the first step that led me to where I am now. Then, of course, the intermediate grades of the academic career followed, and in 2010 the appointment as vice-rector. This passage, in particular, led me to look at the university with different eyes. It's a role that requires management skills and a broad vision that goes well beyond the interests of the individual. It requires vision, mediation, interaction.

According to the QS World University Rankings, the Politecnico di Milano is the best Italian university (38th at European level). And it's only the most recent of various prestigious recognitions. What challenges do you face as the leader of this university?

To begin with, the challenge is to work to ensure that this university remains prestigious. Newspaper headlines are certainly pleasing, but to be the first Italian university in international rankings requires a great collective effort (from professors to technical-administrative staff), especially in the face of global contexts that are highly competitive and more attractive than the Italian one. I could then answer by themes and say that the challenge is artificial intelligence or sustainability. But none of this is possible without talent. Only in this way can we have a positive impact on society. This is the challenge of all challenges: to ensure that technological development is an opportunity for collective growth and that our students are prepared for the future.

During your career, you have often dedicated yourself to issues of diversity and inclusion in the university environment. Which achievements are you most satisfied with?

I have been officially dealing with these issues at the university for 14 years. Given the importance, among my first formal acts as rector (a novelty for the Politecnico), I chose to appoint a specific vice-rector for this. To address the question, I am satisfied with initiatives such as the Girls@Polimi scholarships, free nurseries for employees, benefits for young female researchers after maternity leave, mentoring programs. I am also satisfied with the alias careers as well as Polipsi, the psychological support service for students in difficulty, and the increase in funds for the right to study. The Politecnico is an inclusive community, we have done a lot and we can do even better.

You are the first woman to lead the Politecnico di Milano. In your opinion, why has the role of rector in Italian universities almost always been held by men? What is changing?

It's a reflection of history. In 1992, we had only one woman leading a university, Bianca Maria Tedeschini Lalli at Roma Tre. Today we are sixteen. What happened from the early 1990s to today was the fastest increase in female employment ever to occur in Italy since the early 1970s, with the start of tertiarization. The university is not a world apart, it makes no difference. It reflects what is happening in various sectors of civil society and today reaps its fruits. I would add that for us, in university, change comes from below, without pink quotas or guarantee systems. All the more reason, it means that women are appreciated for what they prove they can do.

In your opinion, does a female professor encounter more difficulties than her male colleague in the path of growth at an academic level today?

It's still like this. We see it every year from the numbers we collect in our Gender Balance Sheets, but the difficulties are not due to lack of skills or obstruction. They often come from external pressures, exerted for the most part by the family and the lack of welfare systems that facilitate the reconciliation of work and family. Political interventions are needed. Universities alone can do little, even the most

virtuous ones. I emphasize a fact that should make us reflect: in the last twenty years, Italy has lost 70,000 female graduates, many of whom have chosen to pursue academic careers elsewhere.

Even the scientific world, in the past, was considered a male prerogative, while today more and more women are approaching STEM disciplines. What needs to be changed in terms of perception and culture to prevent women from being discriminated against in this field?

Women are not only more numerous but also more visible. We know that the so-called "Matilda Effect", the phenomenon by which the result of work done by a woman is attributed to a man, has erased the results of many female scholars of the past in the scientific field. Only in retrospect have we managed to trace important innovations back to female minds. Without models, it's difficult to imagine being able to change disadvantaged situations and replicate virtuous mechanisms. Whether it's due to "AstroSamantha" (Samantha Cristof-

retti, ESA astronaut, ed.) or perhaps a simple increase in interest, the fact is that freshmen enrolled in aerospace engineering are sharply increasing. That said, the distance in STEM is still great and difficult to bridge. In Italy, only about 16% of women graduate in scientific subjects.

In your academic journey, have you encountered any models that were particularly inspiring to you?

A great model for my generation and still very relevant for younger girls is that of Amalia Ercoli Finzi, the first woman to graduate in aeronautical engineering in 1962, with full marks and, not by chance, at the Politecnico di Milano. Amalia has an exceptional personality and an incredible ability to engage and intrigue. For me, she is a daily stimulus. However, I would like to add that models can also be found in everyday life, in mothers who know how to instill self-esteem and courage. Mine is one of those. She taught me that nothing is impossible. You just have to want it.



Polytechnic University of Milan

The Matilda Effect

Five Unknown Women Who Made History in Science

In the early 1990s, science historian Margaret W. Rossiter began to denounce the phenomenon whereby, especially in the past, female scientists were not recognized for the importance of their research. Thus was born the term “Matilda Effect” (mentioned by Rector Sciuto in the previous article), which refers to the lack of attribution of merit to women. She chose the name in honour of feminist Matilda Joselyn Gage, who in 1870 published the essay *Woman As Inventor*, in which she recounted that several scientific discoveries and inventions were the result of work by women who remained anonymous. Over time, this exclusion has led to the erasure of many female scholars from history, supporting the hypothesis that science was exclusively a male domain. Below are the profiles of five female scientists who remained in obscurity for a long time due to the Matilda Effect.



Nettie Stevens (1861–1912)

Nettie Maria Stevens was an American scientist who worked in biology and genetics. She was the first to discover that the difference between sexes is determined by the configuration of chromosomes. Stevens' research, based on observations of fruit flies, later allowed Thomas Morgan to win the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1933, while the scientist's work received no particular recognition. It was only in 1994 that she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Lise Meitner (1878–1968)

Lise Meitner was an Austrian physicist who collaborated, free of charge, with some of the most important scientists of her time. Among these were Max Planck, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Fritz Strassmann, and Otto Robert Frisch. In 1939, she developed the theoretical basis for the development of nuclear fission. In 1944, Otto Hahn won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, while she was ignored, despite having worked with him for thirty years and having enabled him to achieve that result.

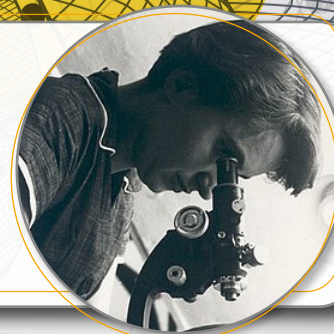


Alice Augusta Ball (1892–1916)

Fifty years before women crossed the threshold of most Ivy League universities, Alice Augusta Ball obtained a master's degree from the University of Hawaii. During her research, she identified the bacterium that causes Hansen's disease (commonly known as leprosy) and developed a specific remedy. After her death, the dean of the chemistry department, Arthur Dean, published the research without even mentioning her, so much so that the treatment method was attributed exclusively to him. It was only in 1922 that Harry T. Hollmann published an article to remedy the injustice, renaming the treatment as the "Ball method".

Rosalind Elsie Franklin (1920–1958)

Rosalind Elsie Franklin was a British chemist, biochemist, and crystallographer whose work was fundamental to understanding the molecular structures of DNA and RNA. Thanks to Photo 51, the much more famous James Dewey Watson and Francis Harry Compton Crick were able to develop the chemical model of the DNA molecule. However, they appropriated Franklin's scientific work without giving her due credit. Her study was not considered fundamental to the subsequent discoveries of the two scientists who, unlike her, won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1962.



Jocelyn Bell (1943)

Jocelyn Bell is a British astrophysicist. In the late 1960s, when she was a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, she recognized a repetitive signal never observed before in the paper traces of a new radio telescope. She decided to investigate its origin and discussed it with her supervisor, Antony Hewish. After a month, the glow reappeared, and it was Bell again who realized that the signals were authentic and not due to instrumental malfunction. Hewish made the discovery public in 1968, as "pulsar": signals emitted by neutron stars. The discovery was awarded a Nobel Prize a few years later, but it was given only to Hewish.

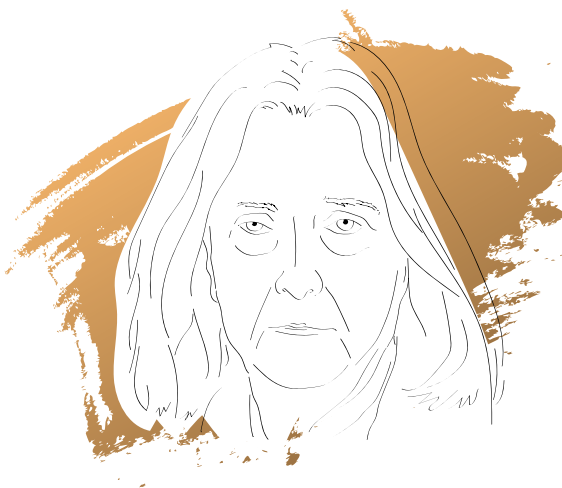
Marina Valcarenghi

She was a pioneer of psychoanalysis in Italian penitentiaries in the 1990s; but she's also a lawyer, an activist, a writer and a journalist. In the movie *Il popolo delle donne*, she explains the dynamics of gender violence, which in Italy is raising despite the decline of the patriarchal values. But she also warns about "separatist" feminism and claims: «Everyone is redeemable»ili»

by Giuseppe Salemmme

The first time I saw Marina Valcarenghi, I was sitting in a small armchair at the Cinema Beltrade in Milan. I was waiting for the film to start when her face filled the screen: she was seated at a desk in the "chostro della legnaia," a regular meeting place for law students at Milan Statale University. "Why is it that despite women's liberation, the increasingly evident crisis of patriarchy, and the weakening of male authority, rapes are increasing? Murders are increasing? Mistreatment is increasing?" she says. "I'll turn this around. It's precisely because there has been a rapid liberation of the female world; precisely because this has begun to open a chasm within patriarchy; precisely because men cannot bear being deprived of their tradition of female oppression... It's precisely for this reason that murders are increasing; that mistreatment is increasing; that rapes are increasing."

A few weeks after that trailer, I came back to watch *Il popolo delle donne* (The people of women) by Yuri Ancarani: a 60 minutes film in which Valcarenghi recounts what she has learned about gender violence in over ten years of psychoanalysis work with inmates. Her exposition is intense, passionate and captivating; and the camera almost never takes the



viewer away from her gaze. She's the only visible protagonist of the film; but the invisible ones, unfortunately, are many: 120 women were killed in Italy in 2023 for gender-based motives; and requests for help for episodes of domestic or gender-based violence from women were almost 14,000 (in more than half of the cases at the hands of partners or ex-partners).

The theater was full; I saw women of all ages, but also men. The film was released on November 13th, just two days after the news of another femicide: the killing of Giulia Cecchettin by her

ex boyfriend had sparked protests and solidarity marches throughout Italy. The timing, while sad, may have pushed the distribution of the film, distributed by the independent house Barz and Hippo, which almost a year after its release continues to organize screenings and meetings throughout Italy; and next year will bring *Il popolo delle donne* to schools, starting from Valle d'Aosta.

Months later, I met Marina Valcarenghi in her office, in the north-east area of Milan. She still seemed a bit overwhelmed by the media attention she has received because of the film: "I usually try to hide..." she tells me, laughing. She's eighty-four years old, but doesn't show it: she appears fit and extremely lucid. Apart from, she confesses to me, some minor knee problems, due to a past as a tennis player: one of her many parallel lives. The latest, that of a movie actress, began by chance.

"The project was born right here, in this room, two years ago," she tells me. "We were talking among friends, they were all men except for me; and at one point I made a speech that somewhat retraced what would later be the discourse of the film. Yuri Ancarani, the director, has been a friend of mine for a long time: he

«My father organized the anti-fascist strikes of 1943 and 1944. He was arrested and tortured for both; for the second, the largest one, he was deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp»

said to me, 'Okay, now you and I are going to make a film with what you just said.'"

Did you accept immediately?

Not immediately. But I liked the idea, and in the end I had a lot of fun: I was realizing a dream of mine and of many girls, after all.

Was it difficult?

Yuri explained to me that, even if I was playing myself, I still had to act. Because I had to behave as if I were talking to people, even though I only had three cameras in front of me.

Did you choose the filming location yourself?

Yes. That cloister was an important place for me: I studied law there, graduating in sociology, with a thesis on the "Southern Question" during the Fascist period.

So you had already come into contact with progressive ideas at that time...

Family matters a lot. My father, Aldo, lived a short life, but he was always politically active, even when it meant imprisonment, deportation or torture. As a socialist party member, he organized the anti-fascist strikes of 1943 and 1944. He was arrested and tortured for both; for the second, the largest one, he was deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp.



VISIONS



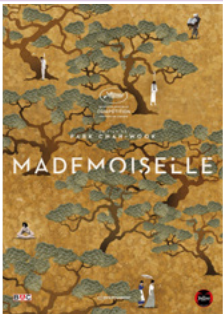
Daisies (1966) by Věra Chytilová

Directed by one of the pioneers of the Czech New Wave, and released two years before the Prague Spring, in just over an hour *Daisies* tells us the story of two girls (both named Marie), who decide, in a world falling apart amid death and war, to become naughty. How? By taking possession of their bodies, and using them: to dance like crazy and eat for free, most often at the expense of sugar daddies avant la lettre: men so unprepared for women outside traditional norms that they never really understand the girls' mockery. A truly fun, symbolic and magnetic movie.



Carrie (1976) by Brian De Palma

To quote psychoanalyst Marina Valcarengi, "women can be real jerks too." Carrie White isn't though: she's a shy high school student who dreams of being accepted by her peers. Her mother, a Christian fanatic who raised her under the yoke of constant guilt, and her schoolmates, who constantly mock and bully her, would probably fit that description. At least until Carrie unleashes her revenge upon them. But don't be misled by Carrie's plot: the film is much more than a classic and reactionary revenge movie. It's a monument of horror cinema, which put Brian De Palma on the map of greats for the first time, way before masterpieces like *The Untouchables* and *Scarface*.



The handmaiden (2016) by Park Chan-wook

Not only has he helped make Korean cinema known in the West, with masterpieces like *Oldboy*, *Snowpiercer*, or the latest *Decision to leave*; Park Chan-wook has also directed this great psychological thriller. A story of blackmail, subterfuge, and manipulation from which two girls manage to escape by discovering their "sapphic" side, transforming the film into an all-encompassing love story, whose inherent lightness melts away every attempt at opposition. The photography is magnificent, the plot twists many and well-done.



Suspiria (2018) by Luca Guadagnino

Rarely do remakes of masterpieces (in this case the 1977 horror film by Dario Argento) manage to even come close to the aura of the originals. But Guadagnino's *Suspiria* has its strength in not even trying. The key narrative elements are the only common threads between the two: Berlin as a setting, a dance school, an innocent girl who discovers a dark plot. But while, in the original, the darkness surrounds the protagonist and makes her a nothing more than a victim, the remake focuses on her development way more (also thanks to the excellent work of actress Dakota Johnson). We get to follow her as she develops awareness of her great power; but, above all, of her even greater will to use it. The movie culminates in an unforgettable initiation sabbath (scored by Thom Yorke of Radiohead, in his first original soundtrack).



Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (2023) by Anna Hints

A white, cis, straight male should in theory find little interest in watching a handful of women of different ages share the most significant moments of their lives between a sauna and a plunge in the snow (a tradition in Estonia, where the film comes from). That's why, while watching *Smoke Sauna Sisterhood*, I had conflicting feelings: "No one will ever see it who doesn't already agree with all the ideas presented in the film...," I told myself, as usual convinced that every film should save the world, or at least try. As I kept watching, however, I realized how much my utilitarian mindset was originated from a deep patriarchal matrix. It was men and their hubris who created a world where the value of all things is given by practical, tangible, measurable utility; for women, sometimes a safe space to share weaknesses, dreams, and regrets would be enough. A place to be told "I'm here for you, sister." And who knows, maybe us guys need it too...

◁It's always the oppositional behavior of a small minority that changes the world>

When the Americans came to liberate it, he was in such bad shape that he was placed among the dying: it was his comrades, people from all countries who ended up there, who asked about him to the American who ran the field hospital. Apparently, he had been a reference presence even inside the camp: and in fact, I know all these things because his friends told me. When I tried to ask him, he never opened up: he just said it had been "an unpleasant stay" (laughs).

After all these stories you must've heard, I guess you couldn't help but be interested in politics yourself...

I remember when I snuck into a theater where Piero Calamandrei came to speak to high school students; I was still too young, I wasn't allowed in. But yes, I've always been involved in politics: in high school, at university. But without ever joining a party: not even with Marco Pannella (a notorious Italian activist and politician of the "radical party", in the second half of the 20th century, e.n.), a great friend of mine who tried many times to convince me. He would say to me, "Come on, you're already working with us anyway, we're doing the same things!"

What "things" in particular?

In the 70s, since I had a law degree, I contributed to various laws: about the conscientious objection to military service, abortion rights, divorce, and nuclear power. It was a lively era for Italian politics.

Were there also "feminist" ideas, as we know them today?

I don't define myself as a feminist.

Why not?

As a young woman, at the beginning of my political engagement, I used to go the meetings

of the "historical" Milanese feminists group: activists as Lia Cigarini and Lea Melandri, were all from my generation. I was interested in working in a group that wasn't a party, where no membership cards were required, where I was free. But I wasn't: especially at the beginning, the separatism from the male world was terrible. They didn't talk to men. But I have two brothers, a father, a husband, lots of friends and comrades, how could I not talk to them anymore? I was truly outraged. I told them: "Don't you understand that it's exactly the opposite? That here we need to change both us and them? That there's a new synergy to be built?"

Which is also what you say in the film.

Exactly. After witnessing several generations after mine, I became convinced that it's always the oppositional behavior of a small minority that changes the world. My dad used to tell me this already, when I asked him how it was possible that so many people had approved of fascist policies: he told me that even then fascists were a minority. It was certainly true: even in '68 we were a minority. Widespread all over the world, but still a minority.

A minority like the LGBT community?

The whole gender debate leaves me totally indifferent. They started with an acronym, now

they've added a "plus". But in the end, it's the same old stuff, there's who goes in front and who goes behind (laughs). I really don't think about it.

And what do you think about? Or rather: what do you think we should be thinking about?

I think we should stop thinking so much about gender, and we should think about doing things. At 80, I don't do study groups anymore: we've studied what we needed to, and we've transmitted it, or at least we've tried to. Now, for whatever time I have left, I want to act, to seek out people. I believe that's what we should be doing today. I've said it in some debates after the film: look for a field of intervention now, do things. We did them.

Those were different times...

Ours was a lucky generation. When we didn't know what to do, we would do things like going around masked on Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Some dressed as pirates, some as traffic wardens, some as gypsies, to catch people's attention. And we had signs with provocative phrases written on them: for example, I remember I wrote "Mamma is good, eat her."

How were the reactions?



Some people laughed, some mumbled; but that meant we could talk! And even if they didn't agree with us, we learned how to approach people. I remember, for example, a lady asking me what the phrase about mamma meant. I had thought of it in an oppositional sense between new and old generations, but I had sensed that with that woman the message wouldn't have stuck. So I changed it: I told her it meant that we shouldn't take advantage of mother's benevolence, that mom isn't a full refrigerator to constantly draw from. And she understood, we made a connection. She told me it was too late for her generation, but she confessed: "Sometimes with my daughter I do feel like an empty refrigerator." For us, that was a political action.

Is making a film like "Il popolo delle donne" also a political action?

It's a work of dissemination. At the first screening of the film, I noticed that a young man next to me left crying: so I think emotions were stirred, and reflections too. Now it will go to schools; and it will be accompanied by a booklet that summarizes the themes of the film.

In the film, you manage to describe male-female violence well as a result of both a conscious motivation ("I hit her because she doesn't want to go to bed with me," for example), but also an unconscious one: that is, as the last refuge of man in the face of a changing society, an "exemplary" punishment for the woman who emancipates herself from pa-

«Judges can be sexist too. I've had several as patients: in fact, I think it would be good for almost all of them to go to therapy»

triarchy. When did you reach this awareness?

After my political engagement, I worked as a journalist for a period. Then I entered analysis, and I really enjoyed discovering the motivations for many of my behaviors. So I embarked on this new path: only later did I discover that my father's graduation thesis was about "political psychoanalysis." And perhaps his life experience also pushed me to work in prisons like Opera and Bollate. That experience made me understand a lot about freedom, violence, and male-female relationships. We need to analyze both men and women, not just one of the two.

And what did you understand?

That almost everything in us is born without us realizing it, including violence. But also that everyone is redeemable: even many of those that national news defines as "monsters," and who certainly behaved as such. But it's always possible to understand what brought them to that place: how you grew up, in what environment, with what idea of women or people...

In the film, you give some concrete examples of the people you encountered...

In one of my groups, I met a man who worked at the farmer's market and occasionally, with an excuse, would seclude himself with a woman and rape her. He was convinced he wasn't doing anything wrong: "they were into it," "they liked it too," "it was instinct." So I asked him if he expected his daughter would undergo the same treatment. His realization started there: only by pivoting on a strong feeling like love for his daughter he was able to understand the suffering he had caused. Because in his own way he was an honest person, he wasn't a psychopath.

However, you're also very critical of the prison institution.

Since I worked there, yes (laughs, e.n.). And now it's much worse. Fortunately, we managed to abolish criminal asylums: it was me, in the early '70s, who asked the then Justice Minister Zagari to enter three of those structures. Things came out that were appalling... Then in 1975 I published *I manicomi criminali* (The Criminal Asylums), the book that started the trials that led first to the arrest of the directors of two of those asylums and then to the overcoming of that system.

Could it be that the problem with prisons or asylums is, at least in part, the same that turned you away from the "historical" feminists. Separatism; or, in a broader sense, the existence of opaque, isolated worlds instead of understanding and transparent ones. What do you think?

My guiding criterion in seeing the world is always to ask myself: "Is this against repression? Is it for freedom?" If the answers are yes, then that's my field, that's something I want to work on: women, prisons, asylums. This is what ties together my role of political intervention. Always through concrete acts.

What was your reaction to seeing Italy's first female prime minister coming from a far-right party? Who also asks to be called "il presidente" (the president, using the masculine form)?

It amused me tremendously. It only confirmed what I used to say fifty years ago at the first feminist meetings: "do you think all women are good and all men are bad?". Toxic behaviors exist among us too, for example in how we compete with each other. We must be careful not to take part in the process of semi-divinization of women; who can instead be real jerks, exactly like men. And Meloni is the example of this, just in a more acceptable package.

Since we're on the topic: in the film, you also denounce those judges who, in trials on sexual violence, dwell on painful and unnecessary details...

Judges can be sexist too. I've had several as patients: in fact, I think it would be good for almost all of them to go to therapy, because it's a tough job, especially in criminal law. I've witnessed this male chauvinism directly: when I graduated, women couldn't be judges; and while I was studying, it was still normal to hear that it was a right thing because we had menstrual cycles and hormonal disturbances. It's true that in a very short time women came to represent more than half of the Italian judiciary; but we still need time, probably a few generations, to solve the problem at its root. What we can demand in the meantime is that judges don't ask questions that aren't necessary: that's when the lawyers of the injured party should object.

Matriarchal societies: being is more important than having

Anna Boyé, photographer and anthropologist, recounts her experience after 20 years of studying matriarchal societies around the world

by Julia Gil

“I thought I had found, in each of these communities, my place in the world”: these are the words of Anna Boyé, photographer and anthropologist, specialized in matriarchal societies. After 20 years of research, the photojournalist has been able to travel and live with these systems where women play a hegemonic role.

But the truth is that, in the anthropological debate, there is no evidence that matriarchy has existed as opposed to patriarchy at any time in history. What there is, according to the photojournalist, are societies that have another way of socializing the group, with different structures, where women's authority is not coercive. In short, “societies where both men and women occupy different spaces, they are complementary, and that does not make them unequal”, shares Boyé.

Complementary Figures

After traveling around the world, Anna Boyé has been able to live in six of these matriarchal societies. The communities of Huilloc and Quero, located in Peru; the Mosuo, in China; the Minangkabau, in Indonesia; the Juchitecas, in Mexico; and the Bijagó, in Guinea Bissau. In all of them, she has discovered that women have a moral authority. “When you ask the women of these communities how they act, how they are, they answer: it has always been like that”, Boyé says. In Bijagó, talking to a couple in the middle of the jungle about the courage to make decisions, the man confessed that he would love to know how to make them, but it was much harder for him than for her. Just as we have customs, programs and education,” says the photographer, “it’s the same there”.

Since 2004, she has been able to discover that the concept of power does not exist. These systems have a great respect for women's bodies, which is intrinsically linked to respect for nature. All this, together with a way of being, of women, very dialogic, which is passed on from generation to generation.

On the other hand, she was able to observe that the figure of the man is very much loved and respected. In many of these societies, the con-



Mosuo community, China



Minangkabau community of Sumatra, Indonesia

tact with the hierarchies of the State is through men politics falls on them. And it is not that they obtain an authority for it, but that their figure stands as that of a mediator of the ideas of the group. "The truth is that they have been somewhat distanced from the country's politics," explains the anthropologist. In the Minangkabau community, they follow state norms, but retain many Hadar traditions, which are the matriarchal traditions of the early 1st century.

The Common Good

"This more generous idea of life," Boyé explains, is what defines all the communities he has traveled to and met. These matriarchies, in general, are based on the idea of the common good. Communities where children are educated in the culture of agreement and consensus. Peaceful communities, such as Minangkabau, where Boyé was able to see how the younger ones are not allowed to be angry for more than three days, for the good of the group. "We have moved towards individualism and, above all, towards achievements for the future," Boyé explains, adding that, in his experience, they live much more in the idea of the present. "This idea that we have, this perception of the long-term uncertainty of life, they don't have," he concludes.

Comparison with Western society

"I thought I had found, in each of these communities, my place in the world," Boyé says. Likewise, he would choose the less individualistic idea

of life if he had to replicate just one thing in the Western society in which he lives. "Especially that, at some point in our education or in our lives, someone would put a mirror in front of us and say: who are you?" she confesses. A practice, which mothers teach their children from an early age, oriented not only towards studies and professional achievements. According to Boyé, after the trips, it was hard for her to adapt again, because she felt like an outsider.

However, they are not perfect societies, according to the anthropologist. "Perfection on this planet does not exist - confesses Boyé - but they are closer to this more consensual idea, more of dialogue, more loving of reality". To give an example, these societies have a much more holistic idea of wellness, related to the healing of the soul and emotions. Boyé explains that one of the things she most admires about modern societies is the medicine and technology to which we have access, and which has helped to cure certain illnesses, although she is equally fascinated by this different way of conceiving wellness.

Feminist Movement

On the other hand, when asked about the feminist movement and the revolutionary struggle for equality, Anna Boyé, makes it clear that history has undervalued women. Despite this, she sees personal revolutions as possible, as a commitment of both women and men. "We have to think and rebuild a different world instead of focusing on what has been lived until now," she says. According to Boyé, this is necessary because



Bijagó community, Guinea Bissau



within a woman there is a masculine part and within a man, a feminine part.

"I perceive the change as the moment when women can express the world in which we want to live, that is, that we have enough voice in the family, in politics, with our partners, daughters, sons, and with ourselves," she confesses. However, according to her, this change does not have to follow a radical path, quite the contrary. It is a process that must begin based on a much more anthropological education, with much more cultural diversity.

For this reason, the anthropologist carries out outreach work in universities, institutes and schools to share her experience and knowledge. "I can't cover so much on my own, but when each one of us can feel that we are part of this evolution, we will see that this revolution is personal and is neither feminist, nor sexist, nor patriarchal," she says.

The Future

Although there is still a long way to go, there is always the possibility of mobilizing ourselves to these matriarchal communities with the objective of getting to know other different cultures, another way of seeing life and, above all, of feeling it. For the past four years, the anthropologist has been organizing, together with small groups of people, trips to these peculiar regions.

In short, despite the fact that these matriarchal societies look much more to the present and do not focus on the future, for us it is inevitable to maintain a hopeful vision of the situation of women in society. "I am positive, I believe that in the future it will be better, we will become more human, we will become deeper, more spiritual, more loving," Boyé concludes.

Lella Costa

Today she leads the artistic direction of the Carcano Theater in Milan. An actress and author of theatrical texts, she has been treading the stages of Italy with her monologues since the 1970s. A passion she discovered by chance, starting from a psychoanalysis seminar where she simulated a schizophrenic attack. With this interview, we delve into the threads of Lella Costa's personal and professional life, discovering how one cannot survive without the other.

by Michela Cannovale

Lella Costa. A name that needs little introduction for those who follow Italian theater. Actress, comedian, cabaret performer, playwright, writer, humorist, and voice actress, famous especially for her theatrical monologues. But also a true Milanese: born in the Lombard capital in 1952, she obtained her classical high school diploma at the Giosuè Carducci lyceum and studied Literature at the State University. Shortly after, she began attending courses at the newly born Milanese theatrical school Quelli di Grock and graduated with Ernesto Calindri at the Filodrammatici Academy, also in Milan.

In 1980, she debuted with her first monologue: it was "Repertorio, cioè l'orfana e il reggicalze", by the then debutant Stella Leonetti. "From there, I dedicated myself consistently to acting, and a few years later I also started writing my monologues alone, which initially were mostly stand-up cabaret and then transformed into more structured dramatic texts. And I've never stopped, essentially because I believe this is the craft I've learned to do best and that I'd like to continue doing for as long as possible," she tells me at the beginning of our interview.



Indeed, Stella Leonetti's text was followed by countless others: "Adlib", in 1987, of which she is also the author, and then "Coincidenze, Mal-sottile, Magoni"; "La daga nel loden"; "Stanca di guerra", written together with Alessandro Baricco; "Un'altra storia" and, in 2000, "Precise Parole". In the new millennium, there are also "Traviata, l'intelligenza del cuore"; "Alice, una meraviglia di paese"; "Sherazade"; "Amleto"; "Se non posso ballare non è la mia rivoluzione"; "Le Nostre Anime di Notte" and various

others, up to "Otello, di precise parole si vive", dated 2024.

On stage, Lella Costa is also an activist: she talks about women, inequalities, discrimination, patriarchy, male chauvinism, the parable of human beings. In 2021 she also took on the role of artistic director of the Carcano Theater which, together with Serena Sinigaglia in artistic co-direction and Mariangela Pitturru in programming, she was able to bring back to new life after the closure due to the pandemic. "Our program," she had said, a few weeks before the reopening, "will have to balance between classic titles and contemporary ones, breaking the logic of name for name's sake. We will proceed by contamination, by mixing, by métissage. The content and the proposed path will be at the center of our attention."

How did you discover your passion for theater?

At the time, I was already attending university and doing occasional but fun jobs in the publishing sector. The passion for theater was a bit unexpected, which I discovered in a rather bizarre way. Among the various interests I was trying to cultivate then, there was the study of



the psyche. Those, after all, were the years of the Basaglia law, and in Milan, there was great ferment around the theme of psychoanalysis, also due to the contributions of psychiatrist Enzo Morpurgo who had founded popular psychotherapy clinics whose main theme was the relationship between social class and mental health. I decided to take part in it too. During our meetings, we were asked to simulate the encounter between patient and therapist, and so it happened to me too: I had to reproduce a schizophrenic attack, and my colleagues loved the simulation. It was a moment of enlightenment for me: I realized I could do something I didn't know I could do. As if, right at that moment, many pieces of my life, until then only intuited, all came together like in a composed puzzle. I thought that this sudden vocation should at least be investigated, and from there, indeed, the enrollment in the Filodrammatici.

How old were you?

I was 24 years old, and this is an important point in my biography because it's a passion I discovered late. Once it was believed that the vocation for the arts - especially that of the stage - was the famous "sacred fire" that possesses you when you're still an infant. But not only that: I came from the world of publishing, of culture, and another widespread prejudice was that a person who had read too many books and stored too much information could hardly be reconcilable with theater. The actor is an empty sack that directors and authors fill as they please, it was said, but the sack must be empty.

Do you believe that the fact of having read a lot was partly responsible for your attraction to theater?

Certainly, I was greatly influenced by the writings of Peter Brook, Tadeusz Kantor, Ariane Mnouchkine, and James Joyce, with his final monologue of Molly Bloom, which I find incredible. Indeed, these were my inspirations, which not coincidentally also passed through a very strong relationship with reading.

What do you think about cinema instead?

That it's not my craft. I need the relationship with the audience, to immediately see the reaction to what is brought on stage. I don't have the patience to wait for the film to be released in theaters. Let me also say, by the way, that I don't even have a face suitable for cinema...

What do you mean?

I'm not particularly photogenic, I have a small and long face, so I don't take light well. And since all these motivations have always been very clear to me, I've never been stubborn about seeking a role of this type.

What does the relationship with the theatrical audience give you?

Well, I love the audience. How can I say... for me, being on a stage is first and foremost pure pleasure. The fact of being in front of a living audience somehow gives meaning to what I do. For this same reason, I also try to limit rehearsals without an audience as much as possible. And not because I let myself be influenced by the spectators' reactions or because I want to ingratiate myself with them at all costs, but because the presence of humans offers rhythm and meaning to the scene. It offers me, above all, to see all the energy I put into my work come back - but multiplied a hundredfold! And I'm not a mystic, but let me say that this story of energy is simply extraordinary. It's lifeblood. There, it's lifeblood.

Do you ever get agitated before going on stage?

Well... (short pause, she thinks for a moment) I'd say I get emotional, I'm always happy, and I almost always get agitated, yes, especially when there's a debut, but I never panic. That, no.

What's the most difficult test you've had to face since entering the world of theater?

Actually, I've always worked in great harmony, and most of the time being alone on stage with my monologues. Surely there have been moments of contrast, moments when I left slamming the door and shouting "If things are like this, you won't see me again!". But this is normal. In fact, I dare say vital. It's part of the game. Rather, I've always considered it fundamental to have many people around me, someone who watches me from the outside while

I'm on stage. Also because, you know, my job is already quite self-referential, if then I have no one watching me, I risk falling into a series of even serious traps...

So nothing has ever affected your relationship with theater?

Perhaps the most difficult tests were when serious, painful things happened in my personal life, and I still had to go on stage. There, on those occasions, I struggled, but even this never conditioned my relationship with theater.

How difficult is it to interpret a character's emotions when personal life isn't going right?

Actually, it's tiring, as I was saying, but not difficult, precisely because the moment you cross the threshold of the stage, you really enter another world. It's even a relief to be able to do

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it because it allows a suspension of personal pain. In fact, you're somewhere else. And it's no coincidence, in this regard, that the verb "to entertain" is linked to this meaning: it doesn't have much to do with laughter, but with being taken elsewhere. And this taking elsewhere applies to the audience as well as to the actor. It's a cure, therefore, not only lifeblood, but also a cure.

Do you think it's more difficult for a woman to succeed in the world of theater?

I believe it's difficult for everyone at this moment. Certainly, for those who are young, today, it's much more complex and tiring compared to thirty years ago. For women, in general, everything is more tiring: we continue

to have to fight against many prejudices, especially since we started to cover the roles of authors and directors and not just interpreters.

Why, what prejudices exist against a woman author?

Just think that the first authors worthy of some notoriety date back to the twentieth century, not before. And not because there weren't any, but because no one staged them. And if no one stages you, it's difficult to cultivate an audience and reputation. Everything that is new, in general, arouses suspicion. And everything that is new and feminine arouses suspicion plus a slight annoyance, as if the goal of women was to impose themselves at all costs in sectors and fields not of their competence! As far as theater is concerned, as authors and directors we still struggle a lot, precisely because we have to make up for centuries of non-existence, at least formal.

Have you ever felt belittled as a woman?

Let's say that no one has ever dared to belittle me, since I've always been quite fierce regarding gender issues. However, I've often witnessed a purely decorative use of female beauty. Not on me, but on other women, and I find it totally intolerable. We must also pay attention to this: not only to the discriminations or small prevarications that we personally suffer but also to those experienced by the women around us, also because this is what then allows us to make the famous "network".

But is feminism still relevant according to you?

Not only is it relevant, but it's indispensable. Then, over the last century, different ways of declining feminism have emerged: today's feminists don't resemble those of my time so much, but what matters is that there's always a feminist point of view on the world. And if it weren't so, we would definitely lose the world!

Why do you speak of "times"? What's the difference between yesterday and today?

The difference lies in certain battles that had never been fought before, from the right to vote to access to various professions, from abortion to divorce. I mean, do we realize that once women couldn't perform certain jobs because - according to objections - for five days



a month they couldn't guarantee lucidity and quality of judgment? This reminds me, by the way, of a historic phrase uttered in 1946 by Teresa Mattei, the youngest woman elected to the Constituent Assembly. A colleague told her: "Miss, you want to admit women to the judiciary! But do you know that on certain days of the month women don't reason?" "No," she replied, "but I know that many men like you don't reason all days of the month."

And today do we live in a more equal world compared to that of Teresa Mattei?

Well, first of all, we live in a country where until 1996 sexual violence was considered not a crime against the person, but against morality, which says a lot about the vision of women, dignity, equality. So no, even if things have improved, we haven't achieved equality at all, and this doesn't depend solely on men, since many women are still more or less healthy carriers of a strongly patriarchal culture without even realizing it.

Do you think this also applies to younger women?

For the younger ones, there's perhaps more hope. Keep in mind that I have three daughters, and what I see is that they are much braver than I was at their age, much more used to traveling, to not needing ballast, roots, therefore more inclined to live with fewer ties. But they are also very scared of the future. Beyond what I see in my family, my experience of meetings with many girls gives me this same image, combined with an extraordinary amount of skills, intelligences, creativity, curiosity. Do you know, for example, that more than 70% of the theater audience, of people who read, who go to the cinema, and in general who participate in cultural events is composed of women? Then, however, this doesn't correspond to an equally balanced representation in the rooms of power...

What values have you tried to pass on to your daughters?

All the values I've transmitted, I've passed them on in practice: coherence, decency, justice above all. That said, I've also long hoped that my daughters would forgive me for choosing this profession despite their presence.

Forgive you for what exactly?

For having had another great love in my life, namely my job. I strongly wanted to pursue my career and I tried not to make my daughters pay for it, using very banal correctives that I hope have worked.

For example?

For example, I've never worked in summer, spending all the school holiday periods with them. I've never forced them to follow me on tours, unless they wanted to. For many years, I participated in tours returning home to sleep in the evening. Then, in fact, it's never arithmetic that governs affective relationships, especially between mother and children, so it's not that if you do many right things then everything is fine.

Do you think a father would have the same thoughts?

Absolutely not, so much so that a man is never asked how he managed to reconcile work and family. But I see that it still applies to many women, who are happy to have been forgiven by their children for having dedicated time to



«We have to fight against many prejudices, especially since we've taken on the roles of authors and directors, and not just performers anymore»

work. I believe, in this regard, that we are the first not to forgive ourselves enough: working is fine (but not great!) if there's economic necessity, but "I want to work because I like it like crazy" is something that still doesn't sit well at all, that we still can't tell ourselves. Always because of that famous patriarchy, because what we're told is "if you want to have this freedom - the freedom to work - then don't have children, stay alone."

Speaking of freedom, in an interview with Il Giorno you said that theater is a bulwark of freedom. What did you mean?

Theater is free because, on one hand, those who manage it freely decide to stage a certain story. In the same way, the audience decides to be there just as freely. Spectators are also free to say I like it, I don't like it. Yet, you know, no one would ever dream of saying "I didn't like this show so no one else should see it." Never. This might seem obvious to you, but I think it's important to reiterate it since it's a bit what's happening in our country. More and more often it's being said "I don't like this, so no one can do it," generating a drift on the rights of

freedom, don't you think? What bulwarks do we have left, then?

Perhaps those related to the relationships we manage to create and maintain. For example, today you lead the Carcano Theater together with Serena Sinigaglia and Mariangela Pitturru. How do you function together?

We function very well, I'd say. There's no programming or decision that isn't made collegially. Sometimes even with heated discussions, as it should be, but, well, I feel extremely honored and privileged to have had the opportunity, together with them, to give the Carcano a centrality in the life of Milanese people again. To gradually and politely introduce various forms of contemporary theater alongside traditional prose. Many spectators thank us because they bring their children with them and the children also like what they watch, because everyone has the opportunity to discover new things, because the theater has returned to being full of life. It's a wonderful thing, and I hope we'll be able to go on like this, doing wonderful things together.

Cristina Bowerman

Cristina Bowerman was born in Cerignola in the Foggia area, but immediately after graduating in law, she flew to America where she stayed for more than a decade and decided to turn her passion into a profession. Returning to Rome for a six-month project, she ended up putting down roots there, leading the Glass Hostaria restaurant to a Michelin star in 2010. Today, Bowerman moves effortlessly between the two continents, guided by a creativity and curiosity that distinguish her in the global culinary landscape.

by Letizia Ceriani

Being a female cook, or rather, being a chef leading a brigade in an androcentric and elitist world like that of the restaurant industry, is a topic that continues to raise questions and provoke deep reflections on the socio-economic context that serves as a backdrop.

Women who run businesses in Italy today do not reach 50% of the total. According to the latest figures shared by FIPE, updated to the year 2023, female-owned businesses – in which gender participation is over 50%, averaging between participation shares and attributed roles – in our country would be 110,806, equal to 28.2% of the total. However, the number of female employees is high, exceeding half. Peeking into the Michelin Guide, we discover that Italian female chefs who boast at least one Michelin star are more than 40, out of a global total of 169, and this is certainly a good number. But prejudices, although decidedly stale for today's context, remain stubborn. As early as the 1500s, the difference was emphasized between the "cuciniera" (female cook), dedicated to mostly executive tasks, and the great chefs of noble kitchens. Only in the nineteenth century did some enlightened chefs begin to acknowledge the creative female contribution in the kitchen, laying the foundations for a, albeit phlegmatic, occupational revolution. In the early twentieth century, personalities stood out who contributed to writing not only books and recipes, but the history of gastronomy, such as Ada Boni, Amalia Moretti, Anna Gosetti della Salda. The story was very different in the United Sta-



«I say that life is like an empty backpack: you fill it, perhaps with things you think you don't need, and then one day you find yourself in the middle of a forest, without food, without anything, and you discover that those useless things save your life»

tes, where the epic of the American dream found space in all sectors, including the gastronomic one. Think of Julia Child, a cook and intellectual, who made history with the television program "The French Chef", or the now eighty-year-old Alice Waters, chef and owner of the Californian restaurant Chez Panisse and, among other things, founder of Slow Food in the States. The references, overseas, are not condensed in the indications of the Red Guide, but intend to represent the melting pot of styles, cultures, initiatives that populate the stars and stripes continent. In Italy, the image of the woman, queen of the domestic hearth, not chef, professional, entrepreneur... persists. But is it really so?

Cristina Bowerman (née Vitulli), born in 1966 in Cerignola in the Foggia area, stands out among the exceptions. Her passion for cooking was born when she realized, thanks to American culture, that a chef could be a professional. Bowerman divides her time between Italy (more precisely Rome, where she directs the Glass Hostaria restaurant, which boasts a Michelin star and three Gambero Rosso forks) and the United States, where she moved shortly after graduating in 1992 and remained until 2004.

Driven by her love for food and aesthetic curiosity, she becomes a bearer of a language, that of food, «which expresses the culture of a people, of a subject, and is the common thread that unites all countries of the world».



A life based on the Italy-United States axis, marked by passion and research. A law degree, a Culinary Arts degree in America, then in Italy the journey at Glass Hostaria until grabbing the star in 2010. Did you always want to become a chef?

Apart from those of model, singer, and dancer, which I never considered, I dreamed of many other careers (laughs). I've always had a great passion for foreign languages, since I was a child, and I believe I inherited it from my maternal grandfather, a man who did photography, worked with wood, went fishing, was passionate about opera, and had even graduated from the university of the third age and loved to travel... I took a lot from him.

Certainly, a non-linear and decidedly multifaceted journey.

After linguistic high school, I wanted to get a degree in interpreting, but the only university was in Trieste, and that year there were rumors that the region would no longer support it and that it would probably close, which meant I would have had to go outside Italy to continue that type of study. I decided to enroll in law school, and I was very happy about it, but most importantly, it helped me in my life journey by giving me a solid legal foundation that has aided me in my entrepreneurial activities. Life is like an empty backpack: you fill it, maybe with things you think you don't need, and then one day you find yourself in the middle of a forest, there's no food, there's nothing, you open this backpack and discover that those useless things can save your life.

But cooking has always been present.

In my family, it has always been a common trait for everyone: the love for food. My parents have always been passionate, albeit in different ways. My dad would be considered a foodie today. He frequented many "norcinerie" (places in Southern Italy where cured meats and general food products are sold), everyone in the city knew him. With him, I ate my first white truffle and my first oyster. My mom, on the other hand, was more adventurous. I remember she cooked - without telling us - donkey liver and read about the properties of soy steaks when I was only 15 years old... She made particular flavor combinations but was, and still is, also a very skilled artisan, her homemade pasta remains the best.

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«I inherited my passion for cooking: with my father,
I ate my first white truffle and my first oyster;
from my mother, I got creativity and curiosity»

After graduating, you left for America and stayed there for twelve years. What did you discover?

When I moved to the United States, I was like a magnet for all my friends; I remember that every Friday evening the door of my apartment was open, I cooked practically for a day and a half, many people came to eat at my place, I made many friendships through food. How many Saturdays spent cleaning sea urchins to prepare spaghetti...

Food was your calling card in a sense.

Food was perhaps the thing I felt most comfortable with. I really wanted to integrate into American culture, to become American in every way, but food was always the thing that brought me back home. So much so that I went to the Japanese restaurant about twice a week because Italian sushi, as we know, is Puglian... and it reminded me of home.

But during that period, you weren't cooking professionally.

At that point, I had been working in the graphic design world for ten years, and I had never thought about changing careers. In reality, I changed by choice, because I followed what made me happier, I didn't leave one career for another because the first one wasn't going well.

And what made you change your mind?

Work, in our social structure, is a very important part of the individual. We express ourselves through our work to reach our full potential, it's a duty we have towards ourselves. Only those who are afraid don't do it. Because what blocks us is the fear of failure. The passion for cooking then became my job when I

realized, and I owe this to American culture, that a chef could be a professional. Indeed, a cook could be a professional.

Is there a difference between a chef and a cook?

There's a lot of confusion between the two words. The chef is a cook in charge of a brigade. We often and willingly call everyone a chef, but in reality, it's not like that. Anyway, in the United States, the culture had already developed where the cook or chef were professionals in every respect, and so with the cultural background I came from – my mother and father always told me that I had to become a professional – at that point, I became more interested in cooking and, due to a series of combinations, including an interview with Elena Arzak, who had graduated in culinary arts at the Cordon Bleu high cuisine academy. I thought that if she, the daughter of one of the greatest chefs of our century, went to university, imagine if I shouldn't do it too! After the interview, I coincidentally discovered that the Cordon Bleu school would also open in Austin, my city.

A sign of destiny.

Everything started from there. For the next eight months, I worked three jobs to save money, I left everything, and in this case, America helps a lot; I asked for a loan and enrolled in the academy. In the United States, they also recognized my law degree, I was lucky, and I attended courses in psychology, public speaking, communication, mathematics, and algebra. Everything served a purpose.

And what brought you back to Italy?

Actually, I came to Italy with the idea of

staying for six months, I had no intention of returning, my life was, and is, in America now. Even today, I have one foot here and one foot there. But I return every two months. I travel everywhere, from Tampa to San Francisco. I arrived in Rome with the idea of staying for about six months; I wanted to open my restaurant, I already had the project done, the investors... My idea was to create something very close to the work of chef David Bull who did haute cuisine inspired by Thomas Keller (American chef but of French school). I had fallen in love with this type of cuisine.

What specifically?

I've always been very attracted to aesthetics, I like beautiful cities, beautiful things, glasses, shoes, and also beautiful dishes. I came here to Italy with that idea. I went to the Michelin-starred restaurant Convivio of the Troiani brothers, which was a great school. From there, work led to more work and, within perhaps eight months, I was in partnership with Andrea Golino, we had a catering business together and we had taken over the management of a restaurant. I found myself diving into something not knowing if I would fail or not. One day they took me to Glass Hostaria for a glass of wine and at the time I knew the restaurant wasn't doing well at all and that they would close soon. I then proposed to the owner Fabio Spada to rent the kitchen to do all my work and at that point something clicked and I found myself leading the restaurant's kitchen. The fundamental problem with Glass was that there was a huge discrepancy between the proposed cooking style, very trattoria-like, and the totally modern context. Gradually we bridged that gap.



Surely you've never lacked initiative. Although fine dining, it must be said, has always been a very male environment. What's the gap between Italy and America from this point of view?

I always say that the whole world is the same. That is, the things that happen in Italy, also happen in the United States and in Africa, everywhere, to a greater or lesser extent. I would say that the fundamental difference between today and perhaps five years ago is that today there's an awareness that this is a problem, that discrimination still exists today. The point is that everyone focuses on the tentacles, on the secondary effects of this discrimination and no one focuses on the head of the octopus, that is, the main problem. We can talk from now until the end of our days about how women are discriminated against, about how much violence is done to women and that nothing is done, about how there are no ways to protect and prevent, about how there is little access to credit, for example, for women. We can talk about all these things but these are all secondary effects. Until there is awareness, but above all important legislative action that prevents this type of discrimination, nothing will change.

And what could be done concretely?

I'm talking about a political will that can be transformed into serious legislative action against cases of violence and stalking, but also facilitated access to credit for women, which is still not at all taken for granted today, especially in Southern Italy. When I held the role of president of Ambassadors of Taste, I always insisted on this topic. The United States, from this point of view, are light years ahead.

Meaning?

I don't want to say that there's less discrimination against women, so much so that all the MeToo initiatives were born there. Perhaps starting from that movement, something was activated and invested in all areas. In the United States, if someone shouts there's someone who listens, while in Italy, often willingly, there's someone who shouts and no one listens. There must be awareness at a global level.

Are there also more women chefs?

Here the percentage of awarded women chefs is quite high, also because in Italy we have Michelin as a reference point and then immediately after we have Gambero Rosso and that's it. At a global level, looking for example at the 50 Best Restaurants, the number of women is always lower compared to men, but it's not true that there aren't any. Perhaps the fundamental difference lies in the fact that in the United States it's more possible to start a career from scratch, without having someone behind

cris... bowerm...

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you, a husband with a restaurant for example. It should also be said that the horizon is much broader than what we see today and the waters are definitely choppy, even in Italy, but - again - there's always that important part, sometimes, of discrimination that despite being vocalized remains silent. And it's often still men who speak and less women. It's women first and foremost who need to start dreaming big again.

How?

It's a cultural problem. Today it's often said that families should teach boys how to fully respect a woman, starting with language. Paola Cortellesi has been great for me, also because her comedy has always been based on those themes, certainly. That film, which everyone talked about, in my opinion, was the result of many years in which she fought for equality.

A change of perspective is necessary, but isn't it also true that your profession doesn't facilitate balance with private life? The work rhythms scare the new generations a lot.

Certainly, but the problem is always the same, both for women and men, unless we start from the assumption that it's the woman who has to stay at home to take care of the children and the man who has to go to work. I was clear from the start with my ex-partner, when we consciously decided to have a child: the first thing I said was that, even as a mother, I would never give up my career. And he was collaborative right away. It all depends on the premise. But is there a political and legislative will to help create this equality?

We still don't live in a society where the roles of mother and father are on the same level.

In the United States, it's very common for the "breadwinner", the one who brings money home, to be the woman; in Italy it would still be scandalous today. It's an attitudinal, cultural fact, which should, however, be transferred to the legislative level. If we start from the assumption, as I said at the beginning, that work is how we express ourselves, and a woman finds herself giving up work, at that moment she's giving up herself.

And what is kitchen work for you?

For me, cooking expresses the culture of a people, of a subject, and it's the common thread that unites all the countries of the world. Everywhere, if we think about it, the first topic of conversation is always cooking. Why? Because food is the only thing that unites us all and it's a theme that helps to bond, to build relationships. I discovered it while traveling. If we all traveled a bit more, there would be less racism, less discrimination, because we would understand that we are all the same, we just have different habits. Deep down, we have the same desires. I rediscover it every day, even in front of a plate of spaghetti with tomato sauce.



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Aida Diouf Mbengue

Aida Diouf Mbengue, the first Italian content creator with a veil, is as far as possible from what one might prejudicially imagine.
"I started wearing the veil at seven, they didn't force me, I liked it."

by Benedetta Miarelli

Someone, some time ago, told me that Via Savona is one of the longest streets in Milan.

However, I had never fully realized the truth of this statement until I found myself looking for Aida Diouf there.

Aida walks with a confident step and head held high. A black silk veil frames her gaze and her large dark eyes. She greets me with a welcoming smile as we sit across from each other on the colorful chairs of a toast bar.

I ask her to tell me anything about herself. «I'm the first black content creator with a veil, I'm an activist and an aspiring actress», she laughs, while ordering a toast with scrambled eggs, chicken, and avocado.

Aida Diouf, in fact, was the first girl in Italy with a veil to break into TikTok's algorithm, and her rise has been exponential from the beginning: «I uploaded my first video in 2019, in three days it reached 900,000 views and my followers went from 50 to 10,000. So, I decided to continue, to see how it would go».

A real explosion, then, which is easily explained by looking at her profile: «My videos are ironic, funny, but they want to make people think. I want to send a message, not in a severe way but by joking about it. I want to destroy the clichés and prejudices that people might have about me». So, I ask her what



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preconception she thinks she has debunked through the publication of her videos online. She confesses that one of the comments she receives most often is «I didn't think a girl with a veil could be funny».

Aida is not afraid to joke about anything. She's not even afraid to be herself, without compromise. She's not afraid to flaunt a cyclamen pink dress matched with the color of her veil along with extravagant makeup, breaking every stereotype or religious preconception.

As I notice the sinuosity of the folds of her veil falling on her beige tube dress, I understand how confident Aida is in wearing it. I curiously ask her when she started wearing it: «I put on the veil at seven, they didn't force me, I liked it. I liked watching my mother, the most important person in my life and the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, wearing it. It was a purely aesthetic decision. As I grew up, I got to know my religion more deeply and consciously decided to wear it».

A powerfully independent choice made by the very young Aida, who already showed the resoluteness I now see in her face: «There are different forms of freedom and wearing the veil is one of them», she states. I therefore ask her if, because of this assertion of her freedom, she has ever encountered difficulties. «Yes, once in high school I had to do an internship, and they forbade me to do it unless I took off



the veil. I burst into tears, but I said no. It was the first time something like that had happened to me».

That Aida is incredibly determined is also evident from her proxemics, from how she confidently occupies the space around her and how she has never stopped looking me in the eyes since we met. It's the same self-confidence that overwhelms you when, scrolling through the "for you" page on social media, you come across one of her videos. It's a mixture of comedy and depth that characterizes the videos published by Aida on her channels, which manages to keep her viewers "glued" to the screen.

Her fanbase today counts more than two million followers, and I can't help but ask her what it feels like to become a role model for so many women, girls, and children. For those same children who, likely, had never seen role models like them. «I'm proud of it, it's what I dreamed of since I was little»; then a shadow of regret falls on her smile, «it's beautiful... but with this comes a lot of responsibility, people forget that you're a human being, that you can make mistakes».

So, Aida, for some, is "not Senegalese enough", for others "not Italian enough", and for still others, "not Muslim enough". «They think you must be perfect in everything you do. I suffered a lot from this, then I told myself that I just had to be Aida, that I'm a person and that it's my right to make mistakes».

While Aida forcefully claims a right that already resonated in the Latin maxim of Saint Augustine of Hippo and which, however, despite its millennial echo seems to clash with the enormously performative and result-oriented society we are immersed in, I ask her what is the greatest danger that, in her opinion, one

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From then on,
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runs today by showing oneself on social networks. «You often feel judged, exposing yourself on social media is psychologically heavy as is constantly reading what people think of you. Having people follow you is beautiful, but sometimes this coincides with a total lack of privacy. Another danger we run by being on social media is that of losing the person we are, of creating a character that is not consistent with ourselves».

Speaking of characters, I'm curious to know how the greatest passion that animates Aida was born: acting. «I was six years old; I didn't speak Italian well yet, but my teacher Patrizia loved theater. We did a show set in an African village; we were constantly dancing to the rhythm of music. I moved so well and got so into the plot that, despite not speaking Italian, the teacher assigned me the lead role. From then on, my passion never faded».

As I imagine Aida, small but already incredibly confident, dominating the stage of her elementary school, I ask her who is the actress she looks up to: «I really like Millie Bobby Brown and Ariana Grande. I also love sitcom actors, like Will, the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. I see myself in the way the lead actors act, and I





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I don't want my role to be chained to preconceptions.

The veil should be invisible to the viewer's eyes, one should be able to see what's behind Aida and not the veil Aida wears>

love their settings». Speaking of TV series and protagonists, my mind immediately projects to a much-debated theme in the discussion of contemporary cinema on which I can't help but ask her opinion.

I believe that each of us has found ourselves, while sitting comfortably on our couch or while battling with our neighbor's elbows at the cinema, wondering if an actor has been inserted in a role just to "fill the diversity box".

So, I try to steer the conversation towards representation and the excessive stereotyping of roles that I often find myself questioning. «It's impossible to find roles. Castings go by categories, a black girl will never be the protagonist, will never have another storyline if not the one that sees her oppressed», Aida responds. «She will always be seen in relation to the veil she wears, not as a person».

Indeed, cinema has seen many periods of transition and breaking with the past. So, I ask her what she thinks can be done, now, to change something, to break this glass ceiling. «We need to deconstruct prejudices», Aida continues, «what the Caucasian protagonist can do, a black girl should be able to do too. I don't want my role to be chained to preconceptions. The veil should be invisible to the viewer's eyes, one should be able to see what's behind Aida and not the veil Aida wears».

Sara Gama

She became the symbol of a new generation of female footballers; Mattel even made a Barbie-doll that looks like her. Former captain of Italy's National team and current leader of Juventus Women, she has won a lot and has become a reference point for those looking to understand the phenomenon of women's soccer: "The great challenge of the coming years is to increase the overall number of players"

by Giuseppe Salemmme

Sara Gama decided to read Article 3 of the Italian Constitution in her speech at the Quirinale in front of President Sergio Mattarella: to speak about equality, participation, and the fundamental role that the Italian Republic ("which is all of us," added the 1989-born footballer) plays in ensuring the concrete realization of these principles. It was July 4th, 2019, and Gama had just led Italy's women's soccer team to the quarter-finals of the 2019 World Cup: a competition the Azzurre hadn't qualified for in over twenty years, in which they equaled their all-time best result, dating back to 1991. Success on the pitch was only surpassed by that among the fans: broadcasted for the first time by Italian's public television, the Women World Cup viewership numbers were record-breaking, with a peak of over 7 million people tuned in for Italy-Brazil.

Let's jump forward. On February 23rd, 2024, Sara Gama played her last match with the National team in Florence, against Ireland. She had been wearing it since the under-17 selection which she joined in 2005; she later led the under-19 team to victory in the 2008 European Championship, as both captain and Mvp of the competition. In between, a career that began in Trieste, where she was born to a Congolese father and an Italian mother; and continued not only in Italy, but also in Paris, with Psg, and Los Angeles, with the Pali Blues, until her transfer



from Brescia to Juventus in 2017. With Juventus Women, she has already won five Scudetti, three Italian Cups, and four Super Cups (which add up to the Scudetto, Cup and two Supercups already won in Brescia). She has also managed to graduate in languages, with a thesis on the history, reality, and future of women's football. When I meet her, via Zoom, it's a July morning, and Gama has just finished training: the preparation for what will be her eighth season as Juve's captain has just begun. But her deep knowledge of the sport of which she has beco-

me an icon (to the point that there's even a Sara Gama Barbie doll in a black and white jersey) immediately becomes evident.

When you started playing, women's football had little (if any) consideration in Italy. Today, it has achieved significant numbers and attracted investments and spectators. You have witnessed this journey first-hand: when would you say the shift happened?

It was indeed a journey; or rather, many parallel paths that then came together in a collective consciousness that began to take hold.

If you had to identify a precise moment?

In the 2015/2016 season, the Italian football federation (Figc) imposed on all first and second division clubs to open their youth academies to female players under 12; and opened up the possibility for top clubs to acquire titles or affiliate with women's teams. At the same time, there was also a strike by us female players. That's when the foundations were laid for the creation of women's teams in professional clubs: Juventus Women, for example, started playing in Serie A in 2017.

What changed for you female players from that moment?

We drastically changed our preparation: it's



«In the 2015/2016 season, the Italian football federation (Figc) imposed on all first and second division clubs to open their youth academies to female players under 12; and opened up the possibility for top clubs to acquire titles or affiliate with women's teams»

one thing to train 3 or 4 times a week, in the evening; it's another to do it once or twice a day, in a professional club, with top facilities and dedicated staff. It was one of the pieces that led us to qualify for the 2019 World Cup after twenty years; that extraordinary journey, which made us known to the general public, was another important point. Two years ago, riding that wave and also thanks to a great deal of sports policy work, we achieved recognition of professional status: a certification of the fact that the work we do is now in all respects equal to that of the boys. A big step: we are the first female team sport to become truly professional in Italy.

And outside of Italy? You've had experiences in the Usa and France as well...

I'd leave aside the Usa, where women's football has had a different development: in the 1970s,

a law (Title IX) forced schools and universities to invest the same budget in women's sports as in men's. But in each European country, the journey has been different: I can tell you this also because I had the opportunity to study it for my degree thesis.

Tell me about it.

Women's football historically originated together with men's football, in England, at the end of the 19th century. But in 1921 it was banned, and the same thing happened in Italy during fascism. But starting from the 1970s, even here in Italy, we had a moment of great development and interest, even entrepreneurial, towards women's football. Those were years of great popularity: we were even ahead of other European countries.

And then?

Then everything stopped. While other countries progressed: in France in the 2000s, they chose to replicate the "Clairefontaine" model for women as well: academies were built across the country in order to take charge of the mental, physical, and technical development of athletes. In 2013, I chose to go to France myself, because I could become a professional there. But then they slowed down again: this very year will be the first one in which all their first division athletes will be professionals.

In short, individual development policies still count a lot.

Of course, and there's still a lot of work to do. Now for Italy, the further step is represented

by the promotion of sports in the territory: if you want to increase the numbers of the movement, it's essential to give girls (but also women) teams, spaces, structures, skills; the demand is definitely there. But development can't just come from professionalism: it's important that Juventus has a women's youth sector, but not everyone can play for Juventus. So the big challenge for the coming years is to increase the number of registered players, which is still low in Italy: about 40,000.

If there's a lot of demand, it's also because you and your teammates represent a new generation of female players that girls today can look up to. While you were growing up, who were your idols?

As a child, I only watched men's football; wo-



men's football almost didn't exist then. But I didn't have any particular idols: I followed my favorite team, Juventus; and I watched a lot of football, maybe even more than today. But if I had any role models, it was in life: figures like coaches or teachers. For today's girls it's different, I think: the mere fact of seeing someone walking that path means you don't have to imagine it from scratch. We weren't the first generation of women footballers, but surely had to invent it for ourselves, kind of.

Is there a football-related memory that you particularly cherish, from before you became a footballer?

It's periods, more than particular moments. When my grandfather gave me a Juventus shirt, which I wore to go around. Collecting player trading cards or watching matches outdoors with my friends in the summer.

And as a footballer?

I've been lucky to have quite a few. Winning the Under-19 European Championship, the match against Fiorentina at the Stadium in front of 40,000 spectators, the first Champions League nights... But also the childhood and early adolescence memories: the first training sessions with the boys' team, at seven years old; my debut in Serie C at 14, followed by Serie B and then immediately Serie A. Those are the years that shape you.

You had a dream in front of you...

I didn't have any dream, I just thought about playing. What dream could I possibly have? I didn't have the prospect of becoming a footballer. Just playing was enough for me: I've always liked playing football more than anything else.

I don't know if you follow the NBA: lately a player of great talent, Caitlin Clark, seems to have silenced for the first time even in the Usa that "macho" undercurrent that saw women's basketball as not up to par with men's. Can great stars like her, or like Marta and Megan Rapinoe in women's football, be shortcuts to grow a movement?

I think what really helps is having more than one famous face. At some point, the individual inevitably fades, and then, if there's no "after", you have a problem. A sign of a movement's growth is the ability to renew its central fi-

«I didn't have any dream, I just thought about playing. What dream could I possibly have? I didn't have the prospect of becoming a footballer»

gures. Which are needed anyway: our sport is entertainment as well, and people want to see themselves in their favorite athletes. But one person alone can't make an entire discipline: they can give you visibility or secure resources for a period; but in the long term, there will have to be someone in decision-making roles who decides to invest them in the right way so that "flow" doesn't run out.



Women's football has been living a century-old debate about rules. Today we know that, especially in Italy, its roots lay in the attempt to prevent women from "polluting" the perception of masculinity that surrounds this sport. But since you're talking about entertainment value, and in sports like basketball or volleyball the rules are actually different between men and women, I ask you: what do you think about proposals to narrow fields or goals, shorten times or shrink the ball for women's football? Does it make sense to try to accommodate the different physicality of the female body to grow the movement even more?

It's a topic that comes up often, and there's Ifab (the association responsible for football rules, ed.) that has been dealing with it for several years. What I've always said is: let's start by bringing women's football to the same level as men's in terms of preparation. We're absolutely not at that level yet: just among the 10 clubs in our Serie A there are enormous differences. We haven't yet seen where we can arrive. Then obviously men and women will always have physical differences: but we currently have enormous room for improvement, not only from a physical point of view but also a technical and tactical one. If, once these things are sorted out, we realize there's a promising and practically feasible solution, then we can experiment. But now these discussions are absolutely premature.

However, the debate on rules also concerns the sport of football in general. Lately, there's been a lot of talk about the possibility of moving from continuous time to effective time, for example: what do you think?

I don't know the details well enough to express an opinion. We all hear people talking about it, but in these things you need to go deep, you need reliable statistics and data to talk about it. What I can tell you is that there has already been an epochal change, and that's the five substitutions rule: having the possibility to change 50% of outfield players during the match radically changes the approach to matches. Every year, in football, we deal with many micro-regulatory adjustments; but this has been a macro change, of which we may not have yet felt the full impact.

The female footballers of 1933

The Italian women who defied fascism for the love of sport



June 12, 2021, Milan. It's a hot and sunny day, but Lombardy is in the yellow zone and, in some cases, it's still necessary to wear masks outdoors. In Sempione Park, a small gathering can be noticed, due to an official ceremony attended by Mayor Beppe Sala: it has been decided that one of the park's paths will be named after the Calciatrici del '33 (Female Footballers of 1933). It's an unusual choice, considering our country's toponymy: in Italy, less than 5% of streets are named after women, while men have given their names to about 40% of our streets. As explained on the totem located nearby, this is the first street named after a women's team. The footballers in question are 13 girls from Milan who, in 1933, in contrast to the fascist regime, formed Italy's first women's football team, which played several matches before being disbanded.

Their story has been told by journalist Federica Seneghini in the book "Gioviette. Le calciatrici che sfidarono il Duce" (Young Women. The Female Footballers Who Defied Il Duce). The text has been well received by readers, translated into Spanish ("Las futbolistas que desafiaron a Mussolini", Alta Marea), and has inspired a theatrical performance to be held soon in Locarno and Paris. It is well known that in Italy, in 1968, the first unofficial women's football championship was held, while in 1986 a competition regulated by a structured Federation was established. However, few knew the story of these girls.

Rosetta and Marta Boccacini, along with their older sister Giovanna and other friends – Zanetti, Strigaro, Lucchi – started playing football for fun in the park. Soon, however, they discovered a true passion, which led them to found a football team, the GFC - Gruppo Femminile di Calcio (Women's Football Group). The female players had to face a series of obstacles and were often harshly judged by sports newspapers and politicians. Initially, the regime didn't seem too averse to their "game": the girls obtained permission from Leandro Arpinati, president of CONI and FIGC, to continue with their "experiment," albeit with a series of limitations. Nicola Pende, director of the Institute of Individual Biotype and Orthogenesis in Genoa, stated that "no harm can come to the aesthetic line of the body, nor to the statics of female abdominal and sexual organs in particular, from a rationalized game of football not ai-



med at championship". "Football game, yes, but for pure enjoyment and in moderation!" was the rule the girls adhered to in order to continue cultivating their passion. The team gained increasing visibility, and one day, among the spectators, were Giuseppe Meazza with Ambrosiana-Inter. Soon, however, things took a turn for the worse: the hierarchy Achille Starace imposed the closure of the GFC and transformed the young football prospects into athletes of other sports, in order to make them participate in competitions that could bring prestige to Italy.

But why were gymnasts and skaters well accepted while female footballers were not? Marco Giani, curator of the essay published in the appendix of "GiovINETTE", explains that the players were subject to various prejudices. First, the idea that there are games for boys and girls, and football, during the fascist regime, had become the emblem of virility. The second risk was of a "hygienic" nature: it was feared that ball impacts could damage a woman's body and make it difficult for

her to fulfill her duty as a mother. For this reason, at a certain point in the story, the girls find themselves forced to put young boys in goal, to play with a light ball, and to limit themselves to ground-level shots. "Viragos are certainly not needed for the health of the race, the robust conformation of our future generations, and the progressive selection of the superior Italian type. What we need are authentic women", read the newspapers of the time. There were also a series of moral criticisms: many contested that the "game of football" took away women's grace, a quintessential feminine virtue, and that sports uniforms were a ploy to attract male attention.

However, the Female Footballers of '33 were not discouraged: "I love the game of football very much, a tenacious love of mine, not a flash in the pan", declared Rosetta Boccalini in an interview published in Calcio Illustrato, "my companions have so much passion and goodwill: we will never fade away".

And indeed, albeit with varying fortunes, women's football has survived to this day. In particular, at the 2019 World Cup, the Azzurre of the Italian national team reached the quarter-finals, generating widespread enthusiasm for the first time. "It was precisely from this success that interest in the story of the Female Footballers of '33 began," says Federica Seneghini, "it was the first time that the matches were broadcast by RAI, and in general there was considerable interest from the media. From here came the idea first of an article and then of a novel for everyone that talks about passion for football but also about female liberation and fascism".

"In 2019," Seneghini continues, "the success of the National team allowed the players to get noticed. Thanks to media visibility and the obtaining of new rights at the contractual level, their conditions have improved". Along with working conditions, the perception of women's football by the public and the press has also improved, which until a few years ago commented on the sport in a way not very different from what happened in the 1930s. We are, after all, in a country where, in 2016, the Olympic female archers were defined in a national newspaper as "the trio of chubby girls".

Returning to football, however, just crossing Italian borders shows a different context: "In the Anglo-Saxon world, the quintessential male sports are American football, hockey, and rugby. So it was easier for women to enter the world of football. If we look instead at countries more similar to ours, like Spain and France, we see that the difference lies in the realization of investments aimed at growing the sector. The possibilities are there, we just need to believe in them".





E' in... avanzata costituzione a Milano un Gruppo Calciatrici, che ha già raccolto notevoli adesioni, di cui potete ammirare le prime tredici. *Da sinistra:* Piccicci, Glingani, Boccalini I, Bolzoni, Carozzi, Ricci, Loverro, Bedetti, Mantoan, Banetti, Boccalini II, Stringaro e Torri.

First official group photo. Source: Il Calcio Illustrato, March 1933



Vetiver

A short story by Nicola Di Molfetta*

Entering room 237 on the sixth floor of the Grand Hotel by the sea, lawyer Arnaldo Marini was pleased to find his luggage already arranged, just as he had requested: shirts hung up and his suit for the gala evening perfectly ironed. The essence of luxury was in the attention to detail: of this, by now, lawyer Marini was fully convinced. "Shirts hung up and suit for the gala evening perfectly ironed as you requested, Counselor!" "Thank you, dear." "Thank you, Sir!"

He adored that sound in the voice of the Grand Hotel by the sea staff. The tone that clearly expressed a capitalized deference, every time attendants and workers addressed him.

At not even forty years old, lawyer Arnaldo Marini already had much to be proud of: two degrees, the first in Law and the second in Economics and Business; a Master's in Laws from Columbia University in New York; the title of partner in one of the most powerful and wealthy law firms in the world. To all this, then, were added the respect and obeisance of the staff of the Grand Hotel by the sea, a facility that over the years had hosted heads of government, great artists, and legendary names from the world of sailing. Winston Churchill, Clemente Mastella, Pablo Picasso, Alberto Sordi, and Giovanni Soldini: a pantheon in which, now, one could also read his name: Arnaldo Marini, written in capital letters: responsible for organizing the annual members' meeting of the Italian branch of Right & Fight LLP.

Luxury, for lawyer Marini, was a necessary gratification after all that work. One thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven hours billed in just the first seven months of the year. If fully deserved, as in his case, luxury was to be considered a fundamental and inalienable right. And that this was his case, assuming anyone wanted to discuss it or question it, was proven by the fact that at only 38 years old, he had already managed to climb the entire hierarchical ladder of the firm, arriving one step away from the top.

Marini Arnaldo, born in Lunigiana, from a lineage of marble workers. The first lawyer in the family. The first Marini to leave home to move to Rome. The first citizen of the small town of Colonnata to deal with transactional advisory. Complicated stuff, transactional advisory. "Then one day you'll explain to me exactly what it is you do," his uncle Luca would say to him every Christmas, who had attempted Law studies in the 1990s, but then had given up after winning the

competition for the Treasury of the Municipality of Massa. Arnaldo, after years and years of attempts, smiled and satisfied him by reducing his world to a word that, he knew very well, could mean everything and could mean nothing: "Consulting, uncle. I do business consulting. I buy and sell companies, company shares, majorities, minorities. Some say I help the rich get richer. I don't know if it's always like that, but I do my job and I do it well. Do you know how much they gave me in bonus this year?"

The department in which Arnaldo Marini "operated" (who, among other things, loved using medical jargon to describe the relevance of his work) was the first in terms of revenue in the Italian office of Right & Fight. And this meant that that department, every three years, could, indeed, had to express the managing partner of the structure. The boss. The man in charge. Alvise Saldutti, head of transactional advisory, had been leading the Italian office of Right & Fight since the year the law firm had acquired his boutique specialized in corporate law, a glorious sign founded almost sixty years earlier by Professor Manfredi Saldutti, poet and partisan. Saldutti (Alvise, third in line of succession in the dynasty of Saldutti, corporate lawyers), was the man who had changed Arnaldo Marini's life. The lawyer who had mentored him. The man who had led him to earn his first million. The one who had accompanied him, step by step, up to that last turning point. Another appointment with history. The moment when the first Marini lawyer would also become the first Marini managing partner of an international firm, as well as the youngest managing partner ever in the local office of the law firm founded in Sheffield in 1873.

The die was cast. There was nothing that, at that point, could go wrong. The program for the following day included the meeting for the distribution of the annual profit, the appointment of new partners, and the election of the new managing partner. This would be followed by a dinner in the hotel's restaurant, which had just been awarded its second star. And to close the evening, a performance by the stand-up comedian, Rutto. A genius. Even if Saldutti didn't know him. "Never heard of him!" he had said when Marini had outlined the program. "Of course you don't know him, counselor, because you are the past. While this is the time to think about the future. Ask the young people if they know who Rutto Righetti is, and you'll see what they tell you..." he would have liked to retort. But he made do with the shower of WhatsApp messages with which his colleagues had complimented him on the choice. "Great Marini!", "You're the new wave!", "We couldn't take any more free jazz evenings", "Ruttooooo!!!!". It would be them, that year, the tipping point in the electoral assembly. Marini knew it. In the months leading up to the appointment at the Grand Hotel by the sea, he had moved to please them and capture their consent. He had distributed prebends and conferred mandates that would have increased by a few tens of percentage points the performance bonuses they would pocket before Christmas: money necessary to buy houses, maintain wives, entertain mistresses, and indulge in some more or less legal whims.

To be certain of the endeavor, Marini had equipped himself to exceed the absolute majority of consents. *Abundans cautela non nocet*, Saldut-

ti had taught him. No problem. The executive committee of the firm had given the green light to the promotion of four new partners and he, with the approval of his commanding general, had sponsored three of the four nominations that had reached the finish line. Three authentic talents. Three women who from that moment on would have had a clear debt of gratitude towards him. His insurance for the assumption to the empyrean of Right & Fight Italia had the face and names of Sara Menichini, Asia Parboni and Giulia Carella Lattanzi. All three born and professionally raised in Right & Fight. All three members of the transactional advisory department. All three hired by Saldutti on his recommendation and accompanied over the course of ten years up to the position of counsel: the antechamber of partnership. Menichini had been the youngest managing associate of the organization, and in the last three years had consistently "overperformed" compared to the assigned budget targets. Parboni, in addition to being a professional "endowed with very rare legal intelligence," as Saldutti loved to repeat, was also the niece of Egipto Parboni, the lord of logistics, president of Confindustria Pavia, one of the richest men in the entire Po Valley and a great friend of the outgoing managing partner. Lattanzi was the youngest of the group, the most talented, one who had made herself noticed by working hard and proposing initiatives that over the years had contributed to increasing cross-selling between different practice areas and to increase, as advocated by lawyer Saldutti, the ESG sensitivity of the structure which, thanks to her work, had won the 125:2022 certification for gender equality. The three new partners, the following day, would have guaranteed at least three votes more than necessary for Marini's triumph, dolphin of Saldutti, designated heir to the throne of his professional fief, new managing partner of Right & Fight Italy for the 2039-2041 triennium and the first Marini at the top of the national and international legal services market in the history of the house of Carrara marble workers.

Caught up in the euphoria of that wait, the man decided to repeat the ritual that every year preceded the day of work and leisure planned by the program of the partners' meeting at the Grand Hotel by the sea. Room 237 was a smoking room. And he, once a year, just once, smoked a cigar to remind himself what his success tasted like. That mixture of coffee, peat, and ashtray. It was the smell of men who mattered. Those who, when he was a child, on Sundays in Colonnata, walked down the main street wearing wide-brimmed hats and gray coats with fur collars. Those who smoked Tuscan cigars leaving a trail as they passed. A scent mixed with tobacco and white musk. Among the details of that immersive experience in his idea of luxury, Arnaldo Marini demanded every year that the olfactory decor of room 237 be precisely the famous white musk air created only for the Grand Hotel by the sea by fragrance designer Cheri Bas. Distracted by the excitement for the anticipation of the following day, eve of his umpteenth professional Christmas, lawyer Arnaldo Marini hadn't noticed that the hotel management had dramatically failed to respect his will regarding the olfactory decor of room 237, which should have been the olfactory decor of all the rooms where the de facto and in pectore partners of Right & Fight LLP had been housed. The essence of luxury was in the attention to detail. And this, for Arnaldo Marini, partner of the transactional advisory depart-



ment, next managing partner of the firm in Italy and organizer of the event that once again this year was being hosted by the Grand Hotel by the sea, was a fundamental detail. For six years his requests had always been the same. Luggage arranged, suit ironed and white musk air everywhere. The chemical formula of the idea of luxury according to Arnaldo Marini consisted of these three simple elements. Such a failure was not tolerable. It was not admissible. It had to be remedied. And it had to be done immediately. He called nine. "We're sorry Mr. Marini, we received instructions to that effect. This year, instead of white musk, we were asked for Rosciani's vetiver air. Fragrance produced on site. An excellent zero-kilometer perfume. A sustainable choice was made. But if you wish..." And by whom? What had happened? Who had interfered? "I don't know and I don't want to know. But at least for my room I demand, please, Cheri Bas's white musk air. Is that possible?" "Of course it's possible. We'll see to it right away. We apologize again..." "Counselor." "Pardon?" "We apologize again, Counselor! Please, let's not take liberties worthy of the Miramare guesthouse." "Absolutely not, Counselor. We'll see to it right away."

It took less than twenty minutes. To make up for the incident, the management of the Grand Hotel by the sea offered lawyer Marini an apéritif by the pool so that he could relax while waiting for suite 237 to be re-furnished with the correct fragrance and be ready to welcome its most faithful guest, who took little time to forget that small lapse in style of the structure, consoled by the bubbles of the glass of Grand Siècle that was served to him along with excellent salted almonds and a small plate of butter cookies with chocolate chips and Sichuan pepper. He considered it a perfect dinner.

Arnaldo Marini went to bed exhausted from the excitement and slept like a baby. Among the pillows lined with flanders, his dreams floated frothy in the white musk air and he saw himself as a snow-white bride walking down the central nave of the cathedral of Right & Fight LLP, at the end of which Saldutti stood upright in his gray pinstripe suit, ready to lift the veil of his long wait and bless him with a kiss on the forehead, new managing partner of the firm, while a chorus of English partners intoned a celestial melody.

The following morning, Arnaldo Marini woke up in a good mood. He had breakfast with a soy cappuccino and a brioche filled with an organic pomgranate jam. Then he joined the rest of the partners in the Napoleon room of the Grand Hotel by the sea, to start the proceedings. Everything went as planned. The lawyer looked satisfied at Saldutti when the vote of the assembly officially sealed the promotion of Menichini, Parboni and Lattanzi, new partners of Right & Fight Italy. His qualified majority was secure. There had been a time when it was enough to make money rain to establish who had the right to command in a law firm. But it was no longer the moment. Menichini, Parboni and Lattanzi would be his attacking trio in the match for the election of the managing partner heir to lawyer Saldutti in which it was clear that Arnaldo Marini had no competitors. No one who had come out into the open, at least. Capita-



list democracy was a quirk that international law firms had imposed on their adepts around the world, forcing them to do politics to gather internal consensus and thus conquer a gentle power. The form always had to be safeguarded. And what could be gentler than a partnership composed of a twenty percent quota of pink robes ready to support the long-awaited generational change? After the coffee break, they would finally vote. Marini thought that the maximum would be to pass by acclamation. Forget urns and ballot counting. Just a long and thunderous applause that Saldutti would try to quiet, with his usual grace, smiling and moving up and down his wrinkled hands covered with that soft white hair of a man from the twentieth century. "Well done Marini. Very well done." "Thank you Counselor. I owe everything to you!" "You owe everything to yourself. To your commitment..."

That quarter of an hour of waiting passed very slowly: the longest coffee of Arnaldo Marini's life. And when finally the whole group of partners had returned to the Napoleon room to resume work, the lawyer had a pleasant feeling of déjà vu. He took his seat with the lightheartedness of students on the morning of the last day of school. But before the vote was opened by individual declarations, a hand was raised in the room,

not to applaud but to ask for the floor.

Four slender fingers, with nails finely painted acid green and a family emerald sparkling on the right ring finger, drew attention to stigmatize the scene of the day before by the managing partner in pectore. Colleague Marini and his white musk whim. Everyone had known. And the thing had been considered embarrassing, as well as deserving of the utmost blame. Taking the floor was the new partner, Giulia Carella Lattanzi, head of the ESG working group and focus leader of the Sustainability & Well-being focus team. Her voice filled the Napoleon room with a grave tone of dismay. Lawyer Marini, evidently, had not read the newsletter curated by the ESG working group and promptly forwarded to all participants in the meeting of that day, in the magnificent setting of the Grand Hotel by the sea, a week before departure. The document, in a clear and exceptionally concise manner (precisely to meet the time needs of the firm's partners), explained the decision to review past choices regarding olfactory decor and promote a conscious and sustainable change. The decision to perfume the rooms with zero-kilometer vetiver had been taken in observance of the firm's commitment to the environment. "Who says that an ESG-compliant law firm can do little for the

E?” The E of environment. The argument, usually, was dismissed with a joke. Instead, Giulia Carella Lattanzi, in her crescendo speech, explained that the issue had to be taken tremendously seriously: not only in observance of the commitments made by the structure on the occasion of the presentation of the last sustainability report, but also to protect the public image and reputation of the law firm that had put its face on the issue of its carbon footprint worldwide.

Who really was Giulia Carella Lattanzi? Was it possible she was revealing herself to be the worst of the Bovarys? The future of Right & Fight LLP, 166 years of history since its foundation in Sheffield, had to be conscious and sustainable. And therefore, she said stentorian, it absolutely could not smell of white musk. But in what sense? Arnaldo Marini was left speechless. And his silence took on the shades of embarrassment when that woman, presumed ally, and ungrateful pupil, pressed him asking if he knew what white musk was produced with? Whether, according to him, it was a vegetable or animal essence? The trite rhetoric of the question suggested the right answer. But that wasn't the point. Marini, lawyer Arnaldo Marini, indeed, Lawyer Arnaldo Marini with a capital L, the deference of the staff of the Grand Hotel by the sea and the name inscribed in marble in the pantheon of the most illustrious guests ever of that magnificent place overlooking the Gulf, had no intention of lending himself to the charade that everyone seemed to be following as if hypnotized by Lattanzi's words. That speech flowed like lava and apparently off the cuff. Was she improvising or was it all calculated?

Lost in that whirl of arguments, Marini stopped listening. He had felt the blow. But now he had to seek help. His eyes began to scan the room, chair after chair, hoping to catch a supportive glance. The eyes of someone who would say to him, “What the hell does she want? What is she talking about? Are we really making a tragedy out of white musk air?” Marini's gaze was knocking. But no one was opening. They were all caught up in Lattanzi's harangue. Including his mentor, lawyer Saldutti. Was it possible that he was tolerating this inappropriate outburst on the day of his coronation? This wasn't the plan. This wasn't what they had prepared for. “Counselor, at least you, look at me. Let me understand that I have permission to intervene to stop this woman who keeps talking and I no longer know what she's saying...” But Saldutti was like all the others. Enraptured. In fact, he was nodding. He wasn't just attentive to what Lattanzi had to say. He agreed.

No, no, no. It couldn't be. This wasn't really happening. But what had Lattanzi got into her head. Someone who had entered the firm only because she had made eyes at her boss during the selection interview. Someone who had accepted being told, “I chose you not because you were the best among the candidates, but because you had the most beautiful smile.” Someone who, every time that old fool Saldutti introduced her to a client saying “I am the mind, and she is the leg,” laughed with that fake embarrassment typical of those who don't understand that it's a joke that only hides an enormous truth. Saldutti had taken her on the team because he had been fascinated. Her rebellious attitude, the black bob, never a trace of makeup, the large ethnic necklaces from the craft

market, the aviator frames for her glasses, the fake hippie skirts and the evenings at the sailing club, the same frequented by the Saldutti family, where she was the godmother of the book club and of any initiative in favor of and in support of the most just and fashionable cause at that moment. Giulia Carella Lattanzi knew everything about juvenile prisons, the conflicts tearing apart Central Africa, cancer research, migrants' rights, bees at risk of extinction, and was able to affix an ethical judgment to anything: thoughts, jobs, foods, clothes, and clearly perfumes.

“But why, what the fuck is this white musk made of?” Marini knew that the answer was within reach of his tablet, so he started tapping on the screen of his electronic device in search of useful arguments to end Lattanzi's rant who talked, talked, talked, showing indifference to the attention that others paid her, absorbed by the odorous issue that prevented the continuation of the proceedings. She was addressing Arnaldo Marini. It was he who had to understand. It was he who had to admit the error. His stale youth, his provincial climbing. He too was a man of the past. One who didn't know that white musk has nothing to do with the musk of woods and Christmas nativity scenes. It is, instead, an essence derived from the odorous glands of a small deer: the musk deer (*Moschus Moschiferus*) native to Central Asia, which during the mating period marks its territory by sowing small balls full of oil and which the perfume industry hunts mercilessly to produce this essence that should be banned and made illegal. “But it says here that today white musk perfume is produced synthetically...” Marini tried to reply, torn apart by that barrage of arguments aimed at demonstrating his ignorance and inadequacy. Those words fell on deaf ears, while Lattanzi concluded her lengthy speech praising the miraculous qualities of *Chrysopogon zizanioides*, a miraculous plant, known to most by the name of vetiver, a vegetable that was becoming the symbol of the ecological revolution. The applause that accompanied the end of Giulia Carella Lattanzi's speech buried poor Marini's attempt to counter-argue as he sank into the chair next to the presidency table under the contrite gaze of Parboni and Menichini. They were the only ones who seemed surprised to him. The only ones not clapping their hands raw and giving the impression of not knowing what was happening.

Lawyer Saldutti stood up and that was enough to restore order and silence in the Napoleon room of the Grand Hotel by the sea. Before opening the vote for the election of the new managing partner, the old lawyer said he was struck by such awareness and clarity of thought. He said that this episode should make everyone reflect. He said that it was from the small things, from the details, that one could distinguish the sincerity of the intentions of a law firm that wanted to make a difference in the market and in society. He said that it was time to send a strong signal. And that Right & Fight Italia deserved a woman in command. Eighty percent of those present agreed with the senior partner who, at the end of the ballot count, was pleased with the choice. He invited those present to “support Lawyer Lattanzi in the burdensome task that awaits her in these years so challenging for the profession and for the world in which we all live.” Then, he took a sip of spring water and sat back down next to the pile of smoking ashes of Arnaldo Marini, his eternal heir, and failed successor.

Will a Woman Save Us?

by Nicola Di Molfetta

If I had been born a woman these days, I would feel a bit of pressure. All the contemporary narrative loads the members of the "category" with salvific responsibilities, calling them to live up to expectations that want them to be more intelligent, more sensitive, more empathetic, more reasonable than the men who, in these first four and a half million terrestrial years, have done as they pleased with results that lovers of political correctness would define as chiaroscuro.

Despite the complexity achieved by human knowledge, the times we live in are times of simplification. And even this argument ends up in the cauldron of issues to be resolved by taking sides. For or against. Deciding whether or not to believe that if in the near future the world becomes a better place, it will only be thanks to women.

But is it really so? And who can say? Certainly, if the women in whom we are to place our blind trust are like Mrs. U. who lived on the third floor of my first Milanese apartment building, I truly believe that the end of the world will be slow, extremely painful, and probably not so far away. I don't think I've ever met a person so antithetical to the ideal profile of the woman savior of creation as Mrs. U. from the third floor of my first Milanese apartment building.

So? What's the point of all this talk about women, the female question, gender equality, and so on? If it can really serve any purpose. Well, I believe it serves a lot, indeed, a great deal. Because we need to change perspective. The New World we think of when we call for a turning point in policies for civil rights and for the affirmation of the principles of equality and parity, is a refounded world in which gender, sex, religion, ideologies will be disintegrated and sciences, starting with economics, along with technologies will be employed for the well-being and progress of all humanity that will no longer have to be divided into first, second, third or fourth worlds, because it will no longer want to accept the existence of hunger, misery and disease at any latitude of the globe.

The female question must be ridden because it can be a powerful lever, useful for undermining the (dis)order that governs our existences and refounding the entire system based on well-being and beauty. This is the opportunity to seize. It won't be a single woman, or women as a category (which doesn't exist) who will save the world. It will be people who do not resign themselves to a state of affairs in an obvious phase of degeneration. People who believe that another world is necessary.

