



ITALY

SICILY NO MORE FISHING

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FAITHFUL MUSLIMS AT THE ETTAKWA MOSQUE IN THE CASBAH OF MAZARA DEL VALLO AT THE END OF THE COMMON PRAYER ON FRIDAY. IN ADDITION TO THE FAITHFUL FROM THE HISTORIC TUNISIAN COMMUNITY, MANY YOUNG AFRICANS AND ASIANS WHO HAVE COME TO SICILY MORE RECENTLY REGULARLY ATTEND THE MOSQUE.

THE MOST ARAB CITY IN ITALY OPENS THE DOORS OF HIS CASBAH

THE NAMES MAZARA DEL VALLO OR MAHDIA DEL VALLO COME FROM THE TUNISIAN CITY WHICH MOST OF THE TUNISIAN FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN MAZARA FOR DECADES ORIGINALLY CAME FROM. MAZARA: THE FISHING TOWN WHICH NO LONGER HAS FISHING BOATS AND FISH, AND WILL SOON ALSO LOSE ITS FISHERMEN. MAZARA AND THE CASBAH: THAT CLUSTER OF SMALL INTERSECTING ALLEYS, THE ORIGINAL NUCLEUS OF THE ARAB CITY ON THE COAST THAT WAS THE FIRST TO BE TOUCHED BY THE FATIMID DYNASTY COMING PRECISELY FROM MAHDIA IN 827. A CONNECTION THAT RETURNS OVER TIME, WHICH IS TINTED BLUE AND WHITE IN THE CASBAH TODAY, JUST LIKE THE ARCHES AND DOORS THAT MAKE US FEEL LIKE WE'RE IN TUNISIA, AND COMES OUT IN THE TUNISIAN DIALECT MIXED WITH THE SICILIAN DIALECT OF MAZARA IN THE VOICES OF CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE YARDS.

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF MAZARA INCLUDES CITIZENS OF MOROCCAN AND MACEDONIAN ORIGIN, AS WELL AS DOZENS OF MUSLIMS WHO HAVE COME FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND ASIA IN RECENT YEARS, AND CONTINUES TO BE A STRONG REFERENCE POINT FOR MIGRANTS WHO PASS THROUGH SICILY TOWARDS THE MAINLAND. ITS YOUNGER GENERATIONS ARE CHILDREN FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE DIVIDE, WHO ARE NOSTALGIC FOR THE TUNISIA THEY SEE ONLY A FEW DAYS A YEAR. THE GENERATIONS THAT PRECEDED THEM WERE FULL OF SAILORS AND FISHERMEN WHO ARE NOW TIRED OF SEA LIFE AND IMAGINE A FUTURE IN NORTHERN EUROPE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

MAZARA HAS OPENED THE DOORS OF ITS CASBAH, WHICH WERE CLOSED AND FEARED UNTIL 10 YEARS AGO, AND HOPES THAT BEYOND THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE OF COMMUNITIES WHICH RESONATES IN THE MU'ADDHIN'S CALL TO PRAYER IN THE MOSQUE, THERE MAY BE SOME REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS CHILDREN'S FUTURE WHO AT THIS POINT ARE LEAVING THE ISLAND JUST LIKE THE SICILIANS. AND PERHAPS EVEN A BIT OF CONTAMINATION. TO AVOID FEELING LIKE FATIHA, A COOK IN A TUNISIAN RESTAURANT IN THE CASBAH THAT PROVIDES MEALS TO MANY TOURISTS, "NI 'CCA NI 'DDA. NEITHER HERE NOR THERE", AFTER SO MANY YEARS IN MAZARA. BUT SHE SAYS "HAMDULILLA - THANK GOD, I AM WELL".

TEXT BY MARTA BELLINGRERI



THE PALAZZO DEL SEMINARIO IN PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA, THE MOST CENTRAL AND IMPORTANT SQUARE IN MAZARA DEL VALLO. THE SQUARE IS HOME TO THE CATHEDRAL, THE BISHOP'S PALACE, THE SEMINARY PALACE AND THE DIOCESAN MUSEUM. IT IS A MEETING PLACE FOR CITIZENS, WHERE THEY OFTEN ENJOY STROLLING AT THE WEEKENDS.



END-OF-YEAR PARTY AT THE TUNISIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MAZARA DEL VALLO. THE STUDENTS SING THE TUNISIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM AND PERFORM TRADITIONAL DANCES AND SONGS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS.



68-YEAR-OLD COOK FATIHA OF THE TUNISIAN RESTAURANT "EYEM ZEMEN" (OR "THE EARLY DAYS") OPENED THE RESTAURANT IN 2000 IN THE CASBAH OF MAZARA DEL VALLO. THE WOMAN HAS LIVED IN MAZARA SINCE 1974, WHERE SHE JOINED HER HUSBAND WHO HAD COME IN 1969; SHE HAD BEEN PROMISED TO WED HIM EVER SINCE THE AGE OF 9. SHE RAISED HER THREE DAUGHTERS AND ONE SON HERE; TWO OF THEM HAVE SINCE MOVED AWAY FOR WORK.



A FOOTBALL MATCH DURING THE TRAINING SESSIONS OF MAZARA CASBAH, THE YOUTH SOCCER TEAM IN MAZARA WITH PLAYERS OF MAINLY TUNISIAN ORIGIN; THEY HAVE WON AT THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS. EVERY SUNDAY AFTERNOON THE BOYS MEET UP WITH AHMET, A FOOTBALL COACH AND ROMA RIGHTS ACTIVIST OF KOSOVAR ORIGIN.

ISIDORO IS ONE OF THE VOLUNTEER TEACHERS AT THE CASA SPERANZA COMMUNITY IN MAZARA DEL VALLO, WHICH WORKS WITH YOUTH IN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES; IN THIS PICTURE THEY ARE ALL OF TUNISIAN DESCENT.



PROMENADE OF MAZARA DEL VALLO, WHERE SEVERAL MAZARA RESIDENTS GO FOR THEIR MORNING JOG. THIS PHOTO SHOWS TWO FRIENDS IN MAZARA DEL VALLO, ONE FROM MAZARA AND THE OTHER FROM TUNISIA.



Tutto halal

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ORIGINALLY FROM MARRAKESH, MOROCCO, RACHID HAS LIVED IN MAZARA, ITALY FOR 35 YEARS. HE WORKED AS A TRADER FOR YEARS, AND RECENTLY OPENED A BUTCHER SHOP WITH "HALAL" MEAT, WHICH IS CUT ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC TRADITION. IN ADDITION TO HIS MUSLIM CUSTOMERS LIVING IN MAZARA, HE HAS ALSO SOLD HALAL MEAT TO MAZARA-BORN RESIDENTS FOR YEARS.



THE FAITHFUL MUSLIMS AT THE ETTAKWA MOSQUE IN MAZARA DEL VALLO BEFORE THE COMMON PRAYER ON FRIDAY. THE CALL TO PRAYER INVITING THE FAITHFUL TO PRAY RINGS OUT FROM THIS BUILDING WHICH IS USED AS A MOSQUE IN THE CASBAH OF THE CITY CENTRE. OUT OF RESPECT TO NON-MUSLIMS, THE CALL TO PRAYER ONLY SOUNDS DURING THE DAY AND NOT AT DAWN OR IN THE EVENING.

A MECHANIC PROFESSION, KAIS WORKS IN THE TUNISIAN RESTAURANT IN THE CASBAH "EYEM ZEMEN" ("THE EARLY DAYS"), WHERE HE HELPS HIS MOTHER FATIHA IN THE KITCHEN AND WAITING TABLES. KAIS WITH HIS DAUGHTER, BORN FROM A MIXED MARRIAGE WITH A WOMAN FROM MAZARA WHICH WAS CELEBRATED IN CHURCH SON 4 AUGUST 2011. THE COUPLE CAN BE SEEN TO THE LEFT IN THE PICTURE, BUT ARE CURRENTLY SEPARATED.



THE AUDIENCE FULL OF MOTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE TUNISIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S STUDENTS IN MAZARA DEL VALLO AT THE END-OF-YEAR PARTY.





ONE OF THE TUNISIAN CLUBS IN THE CASBAH OF MAZARA DEL VALLO KNOWN AS NADI, WHICH DOZENS OF MEN OR BOYS COME TO DAILY, ESPECIALLY IN THE AFTERNOON TO PLAY CARDS AFTER THE WORKING DAY.



A VIEW OF THE GIUSEPPE MAZZINI WATERFRONT AND THE CATHEDRAL'S FAÇADE AND BELL TOWER IN MAZARA DEL VALLO.



AHMED, 30 YEARS OLD, PLUMBER FROM MAHDIYA,
LEFT TUNISIA TO LOOK FOR BETTER WORK'S
CONDITIONS IN ITALY. AFTER HIS LANDING
IN LAMPEDUSA, HE JOINED A FRIEND
LIVING IN ITALY SINCE 2004.



THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, WHICH HAS A BAROQUE STYLE TODAY BUT STILL REVEALS TRACES OF ITS ORIGINAL ARAB-NORMAN STYLE. MAZARA IS THE FIRST SICILIAN CITY WHERE THE ARABS LANDED IN 827. THERE IS A MOSQUE ABOUT 200 METRES AWAY; THREE TIMES A DAY ITS LOUDSPEAKER ANNOUNCES THE CALL TO PRAYER TO THE FAITHFUL MUSLIM.

ONE OF THE YOUNG FEMALE STUDENTS OF THE TUNISIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MAZARA DEL VALLO AT THE END-OF-YEAR PARTY.





ONE OF THE FAITHFUL MUSLIMS GOES TO THE ETTAKWA MOSQUE IN MAZARA DEL VALLO FOR THE COMMON FRIDAY PRAYER. THE CALL TO PRAYER INVITING THE FAITHFUL TO PRAY RINGS OUT FROM THIS BUILDING WHICH IS USED AS A MOSQUE IN THE CASBAH OF THE CITY CENTRE. OUT OF RESPECT TO NON-MUSLIMS, THE CALL TO PRAYER ONLY SOUNDS DURING THE DAY AND NOT AT DAWN OR IN THE EVENING.



26-YEAR-OLD TUNISIAN RAPPER FA'EL IN MAZARA DEL VALLO; HE WAS BORN IN SIDI BUZID, TUNISIA AND HAS ONLY BEEN IN ITALY FOR THREE MONTHS. WITH THE ART NAME GASMIX, HIS RAP LYRICS CONTINUOUSLY MIX THE TWO LANGUAGES, TUNISIAN AND SICILIAN DIALECT. HE IS MARRIED TO ILARIA, A SICILIAN FROM SCIACCA WHO LIVES IN MAZARA; FA'EL HAS THREE CHILDREN, BUT DOESN'T WANT ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP.

ONE OF THE MAIN STREETS IN THE CENTRE OF THE CASBAH OF MAZARA DEL VALLO, CURRENTLY MOSTLY INHABITED BY RESIDENTS OF TUNISIAN ORIGIN, AND CONSTANTLY FREQUENTED BY RESIDENTS OF MAZARA AND TOURISTS. UNTIL 10 YEARS AGO THE CASBAH WAS A CLOSED-OFF, NEGLECTED PLACE; THANKS TO ITS ENHANCEMENT AND DECORATIONS, TODAY IT IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING ATTRACTIONS FOR TOURISTS. ITS CONSTRUCTION DATES BACK TO THE TIME OF THE ARABS IN SICILY IN THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES. MAZARA IS THE FIRST SICILIAN CITY WHERE THE ARABS LANDED IN 827.

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VIA DEL TURCO





TUNISIAN SAILOR AND FISHERMAN SAMIR HAS LIVED IN MAZARA DEL VALLO FOR 25 YEARS AND CONTINUES HIS ACTIVITY ON THE SEA IN LARGE BOATS, DESPITE THE CRISIS OF THE LAST TEN YEARS WHICH HAS REDUCED THE NEED FOR SAILORS AND FISHERMEN. HIS WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN WHO GREW UP IN MAZARA CURRENTLY LIVE IN FRANKFURT, AS "THERE IS NO WORK, ONLY THE SEA". THIS PICTURE SHOWS HIM ON A BOAT ON THE MĀZARO RIVER IN MAZARA DEL VALLO.



A FOOTBALL MATCH DURING THE TRAINING SESSIONS OF MAZARA CASBAH, THE YOUTH SOCCER TEAM IN MAZARA WITH PLAYERS OF MAINLY TUNISIAN ORIGIN; THEY HAVE WON AT THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS. EVERY SUNDAY AFTERNOON THE BOYS MEET UP WITH AHMET, A FOOTBALL COACH AND ROMA RIGHTS ACTIVIST OF KOSOVAR ORIGIN.

SEIMA CHEMLI, 26 YEARS OLD, TRANSLATOR AND CULTURAL MEDIATOR AT THE POST OFFICE OF MAZARA DEL VALLO, HAS A FULL-TIME DEPENDENT CONTRACT. SEIMA GRADUATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SIENA AND IS ABOUT TO COMPLETE HER MASTER'S THESIS. SHE WAS BORN IN MAZARA TO TUNISIAN PARENTS, AND FEELS SHE IS FROM BOTH MAZARA AND TUNISIAN. SHE TRIES TO GO TO TUNISIA AT LEAST ONE WEEK EVERY YEAR. THIS PHOTO SHOWS HER ON THE WATERFRONT IN MAZARA DEL VALLO.





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