the sites (both psychological and environmental) of these intimate and complex
encounters with the natural world. Overall, The Art of the Landscape serves as a
wide-ranging and poetic account of the aesthetic contemplation of the natural
world and of humanity’s place within it.

ELENA C. NAPOLITANO
University of Toronto

Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature. Ed. and trans. Robin
ISBN 978.0.8020.9834.4 (cloth), 978.0.8020.9561.9 (paper) $24.95 .

This slim volume is a curious mixture of imaginative fiction and factual reminis-
cence intended, in the words of the editor who assembled and translated it, to
enable readers “to discover, appreciate, and think about the variety of different
ways in which Italian authors and witnesses have spoken about the Mafia as well
as related figures or myths bearing upon it” (4). It is hoped that this will also make
it possible for distinctions to be drawn between images of this organization in
Italian (and more particularly Sicilian) society and its current representation in
popular American culture: The Godfather, for instance, or The Sopranos.

There are ten literary selections arranged in broadly chronological order
depicting the operation of the Mafia or its precursors from the nineteenth centu-
yry and earlier through the Fascist era to more recent times. Seven of them were
written by women. Readers familiar with Italian literature will recognize some of
the writers included: Giovanni Verga, for instance, whose short story “The Gold
Key”, first published in 1884, begins the collection, or Grazia Deledda, another
Sicilian, represented here by “The Hired Killer” (1928). Some of the most mem-
orable contributions, however, are made by Sicilian authors less well known to
North American readers: Luigi Natoli’s “The Blessed Paulists”, which appeared
between 1909 and 1910 in the Giornale di Sicilia, or Giuseppe Nuccio’s
“Testagrossa Agrees” (1911), and Livia de Stefani’s “The Mafia at My Back”
(1991). The narrative voice, style, and mood in these stories and excerpts differ
greatly, but together they provide a varied and convincing image, however dark, of
the role secret societies, and the Mafia especially, have traditionally played in
Sicilian culture over the centuries.

These literary selections are followed by four “Testimonies”, all of them pro-
vided by Sicilian women within the last twenty-five years, concerning the often
devastating impact the Mafia has had on their own lives or on those of their loved
ones, and the manner in which they have bravely tried to retaliate by working pro
bono publico and openly denouncing the criminals and their political cronies oral-
ly, in print, and in pictures.

A brief introduction of twenty pages supplies a succinct cultural and historical
framework for all these selections and the organization to which most refer, although
the first recorded reference to the Mafia as a criminal association dates only from the
1860s. In this introduction, rather than immediately after the selection itself, are also to be found the sources for the material chosen by the editor, although some further details are given in the division entitled “About the Authors”, which appears after the last “Testimony”. The volume is concluded with a “Selected Bibliography” (of two pages), a “Selected Film Chronology” (one page), and a bibliography on “History and Criticism” (three pages), all of which are most useful and would make the volume a valuable addition to courses on Italian culture and history.

Unfortunately, the quality of the English into which the original Italian has been translated makes such a recommendation difficult, if not impossible: the editor’s English prose is vitiated by errors of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax too frequent to be able to be overlooked in an academic review such as this one. Prepositions, admittedly a challenge for many translators, are at times unidiomatic or incorrect (e.g. “with their presence,” 33; “on their own accord,” 107; “at the service of,” 145), infinitives are split (e.g. “to actively manage,” 9), negatives doubled (e.g. “did not trust him hardly at all,” 88), intransitive and transitive verbs confused (e.g. “black pitch that shined like marble,” 88), vocabulary misused (e.g. “swear it on the saint evangelists,” 36; “[he] was reduced to Piazza Rivoluzione,” 63; “the murder of an excellent cadaver,” 150), and the syntax is at times surprisingly warped. What, for instance, is to be made of a sentence like this: “But my intolerance for the very hypothesis of a punishment inflicted upon me required that I exclude any fear of revenge taken out on my administrator’s back, according to the workings of evasion of a form of servitude” (126)? Or this: “Now everything was understandable, that repulsion expressed to her by that maternal voice, which expressed only pleasure, rendered dirty by the surroundings and presence in the midst of which it manifested” (165)? These and other serious shortcomings seem to result from the translator’s misplaced preference for literal renderings, which can violate the spirit of the target language; but others, too, may in some measure be responsible for such errors, increasingly common in an age of print-ready copy and overworked in-house editors. I hope the money will be found to produce a revised edition of this interesting volume with the necessary emendations, the sources of the selections more clearly indicated, and perhaps even a snapshot or two by Letizia Battaglia, that passionate modern photographer of the Leopard’s timeless lair.

D.R. Gamble
Memorial University


Ferrari’s book purports to be an example of the perspective held by someone born in the U.S.A. and, according to Ferrari’s own words, “drawing on my intimate knowledge of both Italian and American culture, thereby paying full respect to both my Italian and American origins” (188) on the nature and charge of the mito