

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
MORMON STUDIES

Volume 3

Spring 2010

PUBLICATION DETAILS

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The *International Journal of Mormon Studies* is a European based internationally focused, peer-reviewed online and printed scholarly journal, which is committed to the promotion of interdisciplinary scholarship by publishing articles and reviews of current work in the field of Mormon studies. With high quality international contributors, the journal explores Mormon studies and its related subjects. In addition, *IJMS* provides those who submit manuscripts for publication with useful, timely feedback by making the review process constructive. To submit a manuscript or review, including book reviews please email them for consideration in the first instance to submissions@ijmsonline.org.

International Journal of Mormon Studies (Print) ISSN 1757-5532
International Journal of Mormon Studies (Online) ISSN 1757-5540

Published in the United Kingdom.

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<http://www.ijmsonline.org>

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EDITORIAL

David M. Morris

Editor

Once again, it is with great pleasure that we publish another issue of the *International Journal of Mormon Studies* (IJMS). This issue brings together a combination of scholars from different parts of the world and academic disciplines. Drawn from Mormon and non-Mormon perspectives, the articles found herein provide interesting insights to Mormonism globally, encouraging further attention and examination. Following on from the successful *European Mormon Studies Association* (EMSA) conference in Torino, Italy (2009), we have published here many of those papers that were presented during that conference. We are grateful for the submissions and support.

Like all aspects of modern life, and the worldwide recession, financial constraints have not left a journal as this and organisations such as EMSA untouched, and we are particularly grateful to those who have supported us financially, who no doubt would prefer that we do not mention them by name. We are, nevertheless, grateful. As editor I am particularly indebted for the efforts of Kim Östman and Zachary Jones who not only bring a professional and academic eye to this journal, but also selflessly give of their time and talents. We also extend our appreciation to those who blind peer reviewed the articles and took time to review publications that have an international flavour. We hope as an editorial board that you will enjoy the contents of this issue.

ORIANA FALLACI, THE MORMONS AND ME:
A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

Michael W. Homer

Some of the most enduring stories concerning nineteenth-century Mormons has been written by famous authors who utilized polygamy as a backdrop in books of historical fiction. After Brigham Young moved the church to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, and announced to the world that the church practiced polygamy five years later, many fantasy writers began to write about polygamy. Thereafter those seeking lurid details about the way Mormons lived used these stories as primary sources for their works. Terryl Givens has identified fifty-six novels written between 1850 and 1900 that utilized Mormonism as a backdrop or plot device because it was “salacious, lucrative, pious, chivalrous, and patriotic all at once.” Mormon polygamy was considered illicit sex and illicit sex has always sold books.

Eventually prominent writers, such as Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Zane Grey, wrote stories about Mormons in the West. Similar accounts were also written by European writers who were hugely popular in their own countries including Germany’s Balduin Möllhausen and Karl May, France’s Jules Verne and Albert Robida, Belgian George Simonin, and Italy’s Emilio Salgari. These stories have remained in print for decades after their deaths and the distorted snapshots they made of frontier America are now frozen in time. They are the key sources from which thousands of Europeans have formed their opinions concerning Utah and the Mormons, not only in the nineteenth century but also in the twenty-first.

Oriana Fallaci was very popular in Italy prior to her death in 2006. She was born in Florence, Italy, in 1929. Her father Edoardo was a cabinet maker and a political activist. Fallaci joined the Italian resistance movement during World War II and later claimed that she helped run weapons past German soldiers on her bicycle.



Figure 1. Oriana Fallaci (1929–2006).

Fallaci began her journalistic career in her teens when she became a special correspondent writing about crime for the Italian paper *Il mattino dell'Italia centrale* in 1946. But she achieved worldwide fame during the 1960s when she began working as a war correspondent. During this period she was a special correspondent for the political magazine *L'Europeo* and wrote for a number of leading newspapers and *Epoca* magazine. She spent seven years in Vietnam, both in the north and south, and was eventually thrown out by the corrupt leadership in the south. She reported on revolutions in Latin America including Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Bolivia and in Mexico. She was shot by police during demonstrations in Mexico protesting the enormous amounts of money spent by the government on the 1968 Olympics. She also reported during the Lebanese civil war and during the first Gulf War.

As a war correspondent Fallaci developed a particular talent for doing interviews with famous people, or as she wrote, with “those bastards who decide our lives.” She interviewed Muammar Qaddafi, Ariel Sharon, the Shah of Iran, Haile Selassie, Lech Walesa, Indira Gandhi, Ayatollah Khomeini, Willy Brandt, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Deng Xio Ping, Golda Meir, and Henry Kissinger. During her 1972 interview with Henry Kissinger the former Secretary of State agreed that the Vietnam War was a “useless war” and he compared himself to “a cowboy leading the caravan alone astride his horse, a wild west tale if you like.” Kissinger

later wrote that it was “the single most disastrous conversation I have ever had with any member of the press.”

During the early 1970s Fallaci interviewed Alexandros Panagoulis who had been a solitary figure in the Greek resistance against the 1967 dictatorship. Panagoulis was captured, heavily tortured and imprisoned for his (unsuccessful) assassination attempt against dictator and ex-Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos. Following her interview she began a long drawn-out love affair with him until he died in 1976, under controversial circumstances, in a road accident. Fallaci maintained that Panagoulis was assassinated by remnants of the Greek military junta and her book *Un Uomo* (A Man) was inspired by the life of Panagoulis.

Fallaci eventually wrote thirteen books which were translated into 26 languages and published in 31 countries. After publishing *Inshallah* in 1992 (a book about the Lebanese Civil War) she began what she hoped would be her *magnum opus*, an epic tale about her family’s history. But this writing project was interrupted by 9/11. Thereafter the former liberal journalist discontinued her family saga and published three international bestsellers which contained vitriolic criticism against Islam and support for United States President George W. Bush’s war on terrorism. In 2001 she wrote *The Rage and the Pride* which sold more than 1,000,000 copies in Italy and in which she attacked radical Islam. In 2004 she wrote *The Force of Reason* which also sold more than 1,000,000 copies in Italy and which argued that the fall of the west had commenced because of radical Islam and that western-style democracy, with liberty, human rights, freedom of thought and religion, could not co-exist with radical Islam.

Finally in 2004 she wrote *Fallaci Interviews Herself and the Apocalypse*, in which she continued her attacks on radical Islam and began to see Christianity, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, as the only possible foil for terrorism. She continued on this path until she finally succumbed to cancer in 2006. Although Fallaci was a best-selling author for more than forty years before she died, many younger Italian readers are only familiar with Fallaci’s anti-Islamic books which were written after September 11, 2001.

Following Fallaci’s death her ultimate book, *Un cappello pieno di ciliege* (A Hat Full of Cherries), which chronicled her family’s history, was published. Although she had devoted nearly a decade to writing the book it was unfinished at the time of its publication. Of particular interest here is the portion of the book which contains the story of a family member who travelled to Utah where she described “first hand” the evils

of polygamy. This portion of the novel was utilized in exactly the same way that previous famous authors have used the Mormon subplot to add some excitement to her tale. While Fallaci was beginning to do research on her epic family novel she contacted Massimo Introvigne, an Italian scholar of minority religions in New York. Introvigne was having dinner at Siro Maccioni's Le Cirque restaurant, which was then located in the Mayfair Hotel and a favourite gathering place for Italians in Manhattan, when he was called to a house phone by a waiter. He was quite surprised to learn that the caller was Oriana Fallaci who was living in New York. In her typical hurried tone, Fallaci did not explain why she wanted information about 19th century Mormonism, but simply told Introvigne that she had read material by him on Joseph Smith and the Mormons, had learned from the scholar's secretary in Italy that he was in New York, and wanted to tape-record an interview on Mormon history. Although she was feeling too sick to interview Introvigne in person they later completed a telephonic interview. The interview was arranged for the following day. It lasted something less than an hour, and Introvigne suggested that the journalist try to get a direct feeling of the "new Mormon History" at that time blossoming in Utah by meeting somebody from Salt Lake City.

Introvigne also recommended that Fallaci contact me because I had written about the original Italian converts who immigrated to Utah during the 1850s. Soon thereafter Fallaci contacted me and said that she was interested in doing research concerning why a small group of Waldensians (a group of Protestants who had resided in Italy since the thirteenth century) had converted to Mormonism and left their homeland to reside in Utah. She retained me to advise her concerning the Waldensian migration to the United States and about the first Italians who converted to Mormonism in the Waldensian valleys.

I explained to Fallaci that in 1849 Brigham Young instructed three of his apostles—John Taylor, Erastus Snow, and Lorenzo Snow—to travel to Europe to organize missions in Scandinavia, France, and Italy. The Mormon hierarchy had monitored the revolutionary activity that had disabled the continent for almost two years and it was convinced that these events created an opportunity to expand the church from England—where missionaries had labored since 1837—to the European continent. In June 1850 missionaries arrived in Denmark, France, and Italy, and soon thereafter others were sent to Switzerland and Prussia.

Lorenzo Snow commenced his missionary activities among the Waldensians, a Protestant enclave in north-western Italy, because he

believed, based on a RTS tract he had read in England that they were a remnant of the primitive church who would recognize the message of the restored church. The Waldensians were concentrated primarily in three valleys in Piedmont and are the oldest and until recently they were the largest (they are now greatly outnumbered by Pentecostals) Protestant minority in Italy. They are pre-Reformation Protestants, who left the Roman Catholic Church in the early thirteenth century, espousing proto-Protestant ideas. They joined the Calvinist Reformation at their Synod of Chanforan in 1532.

Snow and his band of missionaries published tracts and began preaching to the Waldensians. The missionaries received resistance from both the Protestant clergy and the larger Catholic population. In 1852, *L'Armonia*, a conservative Catholic newspaper labelled Joseph Smith as a "new Muhammad" and detailed the Mormons' practice of polygamy. They also complained that the government had allowed the Waldensians to publish a newspaper and build a temple in Torino and warned that the Mormon missionaries would soon seek to do likewise. They also warned that the Mormons were attempting to convert the local population and take them to Utah where they would be forced to practice polygamy. The Protestant clergy also compared Mormonism with Islam and attacked the practice of plural marriage.

Despite this war of words the Mormon missionaries eventually converted two hundred Waldensians (or roughly one percent of the entire Waldensian community) and more than seventy of these immigrated to Utah. Most of the Waldensians who converted were part of the so-called revival movement who were dissatisfied with the current state of affairs in their church. Fallaci seemed quite pleased with this history and I eventually met her in Italy and introduced her to the Waldensian valleys and many of the primary sources concerning their history. We also discussed Italian history, particularly the Italian Risorgimento, since it created the environment in which Italy unified and made possible the introduction of Mormon missionaries into the country. I also advised her concerning the migration of the first Italian Mormons to Utah.

When the famous Italian author asked me what fee I would charge her for my services I told her that I would require her to locate an Italian edition of Alexandre Dumas *Storia di Casa Savoia*. She said no problem. Although I never received the book she did send me the following hand-signed "Apology" (A ballad):

I am the woman who
Made Khomeini laugh.

I am the woman who
 Made Gheddafi and Kissinger cry.
 I am the woman who
 Made Deng Xiao Ping remove
 The gigantic portraits of Marx
 and Engels and Lenin and Stalin
 from Tien An Men square.

I am the woman who
 Made Golda Meir shout:
 "She is a genius!"
 and the king of Ethiopia yell:
 "Throw her out! In the garden!"
 (Which they did, and there was
 a huge lion in the garden.
 Have you ever been face to face
 with a huge lion in the garden?)

I am the woman who
 Escaped her execution in Hungary
 and survived the massacre of Mexico City
 where she laid for hours
 with three bullets in the morgue.

And yet, and yet, and yet, my friends,
 I am also the woman who
 did not get the f***ing "Storia di Casa Savoia"
 for Michael Homer.

I apologize.

Oriana Fallaci
 Turin, April 1997