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# EUROPE

## SINCE 1914

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE AGE OF WAR  
AND RECONSTRUCTION

Volume 1

Abortion to Chernobyl

*John Merriman and Jay Winter*

EDITORS IN CHIEF

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## Europe since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction

John Merriman  
Jay Winter  
Editors in Chief

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Maria Callas in the role of Medea, London, 1959.

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“wobble” on sustained notes, uneven transitions between registers from the top to the bottom of her range, as well as her overly forceful singing, rapid weight loss, insufficient training, and physical problems—were hotly debated and remain so in the twenty-first century. She retired from opera in 1965 after five years of drastically curtailed stage appearances; performed in a nonsinging role in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s film *Medea* in 1970; gave master classes at Juilliard in 1971–1972; and took on an ill-advised concert tour with the tenor Giuseppe di Stefano in 1973–1974.

Maria Callas will be remembered for the vocal and physical intensity of her performances, her dedication, her championing of the bel canto operas, and her seemingly instinctive understanding of the stylistic ethos of Italian opera. All sopranos who have attempted her great roles have performed in her shadow; Callas forever altered how people listen to opera and what is expected of an opera singer.

See also *Opera*.

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ROBERT LEVINE

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**CALVINO, ITALO** (1923–1985), Italian writer.

Italo Calvino was born in Santiago de Las Vegas, a suburb near L’Avana in Cuba, where his father Mario (1875–1951), an agronomist, directed an agrarian experimental station and a school of agriculture. His mother, Evelina Mameli, had a degree in natural sciences. His family moved to Sanremo in 1925.

After graduating from the University of Turin with a thesis on Joseph Conrad (1857–1924), Calvino took an active part in the Resistance. He served in the PCI (Italian Communist Party) until 1956. In the postwar period, he contributed to *Politecnico*, a magazine run by Elio Vittorini (1908–1966), with whom he then founded *Il menabò di letteratura* (1959–1967; The literary dummy), a journal of militant culture in which he published his study *Il mare dell’oggettività* (1960; The sea of objectivity). In 1964 Calvino married the Argentine Esther Judit Singer and moved to Rome, returning to Paris in 1967. He was a consultant for the Einaudi publishing house, where from 1971 he directed the series *Centopagine*. He contributed to numerous newspapers and reviews: in 1951 he wrote *I giovani del Po* [written in 1950–1951, serialized in 1957–1958; The young of the Po], *Il caffè*, *Il giorno*, *Le monde*, *L’espresso*, *Il corriere della sera*, and *La repubblica*. He moved from Paris to Rome in 1980.

With an introduction from Cesare Pavese (1908–1950), he published his first book, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (1947; *The Path to the Nest of Spiders*, 1957), a lengthy account of partisan conflict in Italy. His successive collections of stories ranged from allegorical fables to documentaries—



*Ultimo viene il corvo* (1949), *L'entrata in Guerra* (1954), *I racconti* (1958; *Adam, One Afternoon, and Other Stories*, 1983)—to which Calvino counterposed his “difficult life” works—*La formica argentina* (1952), *La speculazione edilizia* (1957), and *La nuvola di smog* (1958), translated in one volume as *Difficult Loves; Smog; A Plunge into Real Estate*, 1983—where a recurring topic is the flaws of consumer society, a theme that reappeared in his stories for children, *Marcovaldo; ovvero, Le stagioni in città* (1963; *Marcovaldo; or, The Seasons in the City*, 1983). *Marcovaldo* is a refined attempt to tackle in a fairy-tale idiom the theme, long broached but never definitively treated, of urban alienation.

The brief neorealistic “season” in Calvino’s work ended with *Ultimo viene il corvo*, where it becomes evident how Calvino’s inclinations to realism and to the fantastic are complementary. *Il visconte dimezzato* (1952; *The Non-Existent Knight & The Cloven Viscount*, 1962) marked an important turning point in Calvino’s oeuvre. The “realistic charge” in this novella (the genre that best suited him) is almost completely absent: the work’s interest lies in the reinvention of the eighteenth-century *conte philosophique* (philosophical tale), the reinsertion into modern poetics of the artificial Enlightenment narrative, and the potential of the allegorical fable to denounce contemporary reality in a satirical-ironic mien. *Il visconte dimezzato*, *Il barone rampante* (1957), and *Il cavaliere inesistente* (1959) comprise the trilogy *I nostri antenati* (1960; *Our Ancestors: Three Novels*, 1980). After the novella *La giornata di uno scrutatore* (1963; *The Watcher*), Calvino chose science-fiction themes and episodes for *Le cosmicomiche* (1965; *Cosmicomics*, 1968) and *Ti con zero* (1967; *T zero*, 1969). He attempted an experimental foray into metanarrative with *Le città invisibili* (1972; *Invisible Cities*, 1974), *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (1973; *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, 1977), and *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore* (1979; *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*, 1981).

In this phase of his literary studies, the works of the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) constituted an important point of reference, though not a model. The French novelist, poet, and painter Raymond Queneau (1903–1976) and Paris, a “city-laboratory,” were for Calvino a

methodological foundation more than a model. In Paris he pursued a line of work all his own, which brought him to a rereading of Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) and Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet; 1694–1778). What struck him most in Balzac was the sense he first had of the city as language, and as ideology, and his resulting capacity to “make the city become a novel.” In his 1974 introduction to Voltaire’s *Candide*, Calvino emphasized those themes that recurred in *Le città invisibili*: the ideal of delicacy as a poetic principle but also as a form of thought with something in common with the voice of reason. The allusion that Calvino makes to the idea of a readaptation of the *Milione* of Marco Polo (1254–1324) in the introductory chapter of *Le città* harkens back to a cinematic script about Polo’s voyage, written by Calvino in 1960 but never realized on film. In the description of invented cities there is continual allusion to real cities past and present. On the subject of the structure of the novel, the reader encounters a history where the void is juxtaposed with fullness, as Calvino declared. The fullness of invisible cities is represented by the dense dialogue between the founder of the Mongol dynasty in China, Kublai Khan (1215–1294), and the Venetian traveler Marco Polo, while the void is the series of invisible cities that the ambassador Polo describes to the great Khan. These cities do not exist; they are born from Polo’s imagination, from his desire to please the hearer and his taste for combining disparate elements in an attempt to construct the ideal city. The friction between the gelid beauty of invisible cities and the chaotic concreteness of the cities humans inhabit forms the theme of the novel, itself defined by three elements: lapidary, crystalline, and delicate prose; the use of the technique of ambiguity; and surrealism.

Calvino did not invent anything merely to invent, he simply concentrated on an actual impression and analyzed it in bits then re-projected on the cosmic void in which fantasy re-creates dreams. His analytical output is also noteworthy (*Una pietra sopra: Discorsi di letteratura e società*, 1980; *The Uses of Literature: Essays*, 1986; *Collezione di sabbia* [1984; *Collection of sand*]). Pieces written for *Il corriere della sera* are collected in *Palomar*, a volume comprising approximately thirty stories on Mt. Palomar. Posthumous publications include the



three stories entitled *Sotto il sole giaguaro* (1986; *Under the Jaguar Sun*, 1988), and *Lezioni americane* (1988; *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, 1988), which contains five of the six lectures that Calvino was supposed to have delivered at Harvard. He edited an anthology of fairytales, *Fiabe italiane* (1956; *Italian Folktales*, 1980), which he translated from their various dialects. He translated Queneau's *I fiori blu* (1967; *The blue flowers*, original title *Les fleurs bleues*, 1965).

See also Italy; Resistance; Surrealism.

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MARIA TERESA GUISTI

#### CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE.

Torture is violence deliberately inflicted upon another individual with the intention of making him suffer. Its basic psychological mechanism depends on the torturer's manipulation of the idea of the other's death; this manipulation is made possible by the fact that the torturer's power is absolute, that he controls both time and space for his victim. During the Algerian War of independence (1954-1962), torture was widely practiced by the French army in Algerian territory. It was also practiced by the police, both in France and in Algeria. It was considered by some an acceptable means in a struggle where the need for intelligence was regularly stressed, especially to combat terrorism. Others, however, disagreed; as evidence of the regular use of torture became public, a

campaign against torture developed throughout France.

#### HOW THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN

Although French law prohibited the use of torture and characterized it as a crime, repressive institutions regularly resorted to violence of this type. It was perpetrated by agents of the state under the supervision of their direct superiors. Given the ambiguous status of torture as illegal but legitimated violence, it was logical that France officially denied its existence or at best attributed it to the exceptions and excesses of deviant soldiers or policemen. However, study of the punishments inflicted reveals beyond the shadow of a doubt that these men were acting on orders they had received, in spirit if not in letter.

Police use of torture was a recognized reality before the war began, as attested to by precedents in Indochina and Madagascar, but also in Algeria at the beginning of the 1950s. Thus, on 2 November 1954, the writer François Mauriac could write in his weekly column "Bloc-notes": "at all costs, police use of torture must be stopped" (*L'express*, 2 November 1954). News of the fate of militant Algerian nationalists during the first two months of the war reached metropolitan France, giving rise to articles in communist and progressive newspapers such as *L'humanité* and *France-Observateur*, and even the weekly magazine *L'express*.

As yet there was no actual campaign against torture, only individual acts of protest that soon faded from view. Not until the beginning of 1957 did a widespread protest movement emerge, in conjunction with the release of several statements from soldiers on the methods used in Algeria in 1956. Previously, little had been known about violence committed far from metropolitan France, in a territory where censorship was increasingly strict and where, in any case, the military was operating beyond the scrutiny of journalists or other outside observers. Only members of the military were in a position to shape public opinion about crimes committed by the army because only very rarely did the Algerians themselves have access to the media.

Conscripts were thus the source of the first widespread campaign to inform the French public about torture, in the spring of 1957. All of them waited until they had returned to France and left