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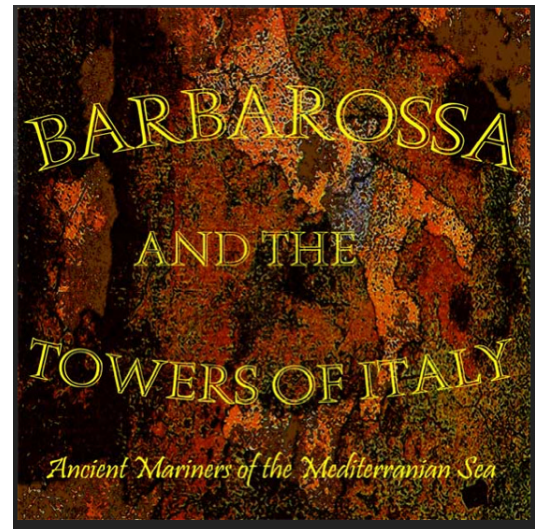
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“BARBAROSSA AND THE TOWERS OF ITALY”

WINS ACCOLADE AWARD OF MERIT: SHORT DOCUMENTARY

Ispani, Italy -- October 2010 -- Thousands of ancient watchtowers - “**torries**” in Italian - survive along the coasts of Italy, **but very few people (even those who live near them) know much about their fascinating history and purpose.**

Barbarossa and the Towers of Italy, a new documentary film, **reveals the never before told story of their rich history.** And now ***Barbarossa and the Towers of Italy*** earns another award recognition: **The Award of Merit: Short Documentary from The Accolade.**



The Accolade
Film, Television, New Media
& Videography Awards

The Accolade recognizes producers, established and emerging, who demonstrate **exceptional achievement in craft and creativity.** Undiscovered and first-time producers are often recognized.

The Accolade is unique. It is an awards competition, not a traditional film festival. Awards go to those filmmakers, television producers, videographers and new media creators who produce fresh, standout productions. **It is a showcase for cinematic gems and unique voices.**

It isn't easy to win an Accolade as the judging standards are high and winning means the creativity exhibited by the entry is outstanding and stands above other productions.

The film has also earned a **Telly Award**, in the **Television and Film** category. The **Telly Awards honor the very best local, regional, and cable television commercials and programs, as well as the finest video and film productions, and work created for the Web.** Some former Telly Award winners in the Television and Film category are ESPN, NASA, PBS, BET News, and Penn State University.



No one can say for sure when the first coastal watchtowers were built along the shores of Italy's Ionian and Tyrrhenian coasts and on the islands of Sardegna and Sicily. The cone shaped watchtowers built by the Nuragic people on Sardegna date back to 1500BC. The more modern ones built by the Greeks are from 350BC.

These watchtowers are situated in some of the most beautiful and spectacular places on the planet, and have survived attacks by man and nature for thousands of years. **Many have been restored and are in use today as modern day B&Bs, restaurants and hotels.**

Narrated by veteran tv and film actor **Alex Cord**, the film begins by visiting the history of the more ancient watchtowers, then focuses on history of the Torres constructed by the so-called Saracens and the Normans who built them to guard against the invasion from each other's armies, and also as a defense against marauding pirates roaming the Mediterranean Sea. Thousands of Torres were constructed, each one in view of the next. But they are all based on the defense system originally developed by the Nuragic tribes. Every speck of the sea was guarded by the watchful eyes of those in the Torre. Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, the **Torre Vigili** looked for the first telltale sign of sails appearing on the horizon, and whenever invaders were spotted, they sounded the alarms that struck terror in the hearts of all who heard them.

The famous Torre at Velia on the southern coast of Campania built by the Greeks around 340BC, was round in shape. The early Italian/Roman towers like those constructed on Sicily and Sardegna were also circular. It wasn't until around 1100AD, and then for about 500 years thereafter, that square Torres were built by the Normans and the Spaniards. Most of the Torres featured in the film are square. Some of the larger fortress towers would house people from the village, smaller ones acted as watchtowers only.



Who were the sentries of these towers? Were they soldiers or local volunteers? How did they exist while on these remote promontories? Information on the life of the **Torre Vigili** from the early periods is rare, but by visiting many individual villages the producers were able to gather information on the towers located in each area. Historian Angelo Guzzo has been honored with national awards by the Italian government several times for his work regarding the history of the Torres along the southern coast of Campania. He explains the duties of the people that lived and worked in the Torres in his book, "Sulla Rotta Dei Saraceni." (On The Road Of The Saracens) According to Guzzo, the operation of Torres required sentries, horsemen, boatmen, soldiers and officers. Guzzo describes the sentries as being older people or people with physical handicaps. The reason for this is unknown, but one could assume it was because sentries merely had to watch for signs of



Roberto Negrias
as
"Khayr Ad-Din"



Alberto Santoriello
as
"the First Mate"

sails, while others sounded the alarm by riding into the countryside, rowing small boats to warn communities along the seacoast, starting fires, ringing bells, and had other responsibilities that required agility and strength to perform.

The film takes the viewer over centuries of time through the eyes of the Vigili of the towers and the ferocious line of "Saracen Pirates." Re-enactments of the life of the Vigili in the Torres and pirate attacks are based on historical accounts. Many of the locations with the most dramatic and beautiful surroundings and the most interesting Torre history are featured.

The re-enactment of the attack on the town of Ispani was shot in Ispani, which has changed little since the 1500's. Many of the local extras are decedents of survivors of pirate attacks.

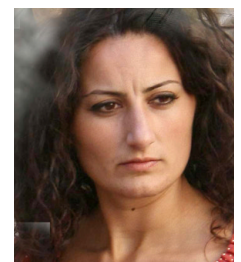
There were many pirates down through the ages with the name of "Barbarossa," (Red Beard) but none were more famous than the "Barbarossa Brothers."

These four brothers were the sons of an Albanian seaman who was captured by Turks on the island of Lesbos, circa 1470. When given the choice of becoming a galley slave or converting to Islam, he quickly



Giancarlo Guercio
as
"Antonio"

became a Muslim and raised his sons to become known as "the Barbarossas." Only his son Aroudj had the red hair and beard that qualified him as a "Barbarossa," nevertheless the Europeans referred to them all as "The Barbarossas." But the Moors referred to the other brothers by their given names: Elias, Isaak and Khayr Ad-Din. Elias, the first to die, was killed while fighting off the coast of Crete. Aroudj was captured by the Knights of Rhodes, but was released when the Governor of Aladia paid his ransom. After his release he joined with his brothers Isaak and



Grazia Pellegrino
as
"Gabriela"

Khayr Ad-Din and the three became the most daring and bloodiest Corsairs to attack and pillage the southern coasts of Italy during the first part of the 16th century. After the death of Aroudj circa 1518, Khayr Ad-Din in an act to honor his brother, dyed his hair and beard with henna and became a Red Beard, a “Barbarossa.” Khayr Ad-Din was feared more than any other pirate of that time period.

The entire Mediterranean Sea was his hunting grounds. Khayr Ad-Din would attack whole fleets of ships. He was bold but clever, never attacking without all of the information he needed to succeed. He seized Tunisia and became the Pasha of Algiers. Later he became an Admiral of Suliman’s navy and commanded up to 135 galleys. It was his exploits that marked his family in the annals of time. Even today, as Turkish warships leave Istanbul, they fire canon shots in his honor as they past his tomb and memorial statue.

An example of some of the more interesting aspects of the history along the southern coast of Campania is the Cilento area, designated as a World Heritage Site. Covering hundreds of square miles, it has dozens of medieval towns and an ancient ruin, like the city of Paestum, built around the middle of the 5th century and for hundreds of years was thought to be a mythological Greek city. But around the beginning of the 19th century ruins were found, and a hundred and fifty years later major excavations were started.

The Torre at the ancient city of Velia, which now sits on a hilltop hundreds of yards from the seacoast, 2300 years ago sat at the port where the sea lapped at its base.

What makes this film so exciting, is that the story of the Torres has never been told and is unknown to the world. The success of the Pirates of the Caribbean series will make this true to life Pirate saga a must see for all ages.

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Barbarossa and the Towers of Italy

has screened in the **Levante International Film Festival, Italy**

the **Ispani Festival di Cinema, Italy**

the **Black Swamp Film Festival, Toledo Ohio**

and has earned an **Honorable Mention** at the **San Diego Christian Film Festival**



Barbarossa and the Towers of Italy

Tony Schweikle, Director / Cinematographer
Herbert A. Schweikle III, Producer
Peter Wooley, Producer / Production Designer
Phyllis Alden, Executive Producer
Gilbert Galindo, Original Music

Cast

Narrated by **Alex Cord**
Roberto Negrias as Khayr Ad-Dim
Giancarlo Guercio as Antonio
Grazia Pellegrino as Gabriela
Alberto San Toriello as the First Mate

www.barbarossaandthetowers.com

Director / Cinematographer **Tony Schweikle**
is available for interview by appointment
pending scheduling availability.

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For **Full Information** on **The Accolade**:

www.accoladecompetition.org

www.theaccolade.com

Coming Soon, also from director Tony Schweikle

THE CARDINAL'S TREASURE

by Tony Schweikle

The Pope, a Cardinal, Knights of Malta, Suleiman the Magnificent, the infamous Saracen pirate Barbarossa, and the people of the small fishing village of San Donato are all in a high stakes race to find the lost, hidden treasure.

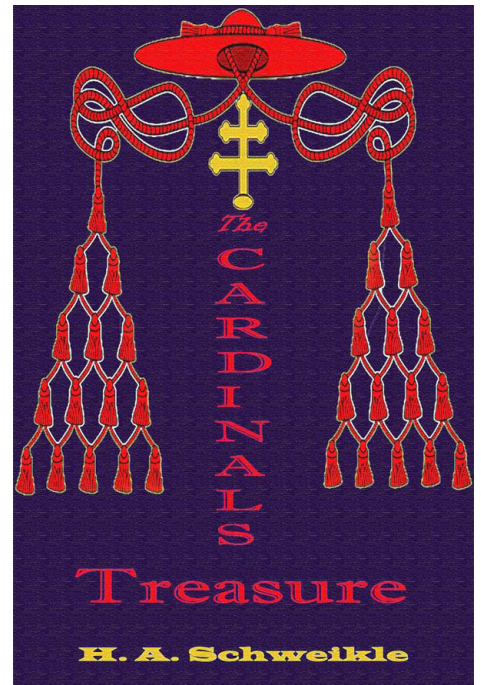
Ispani Italy -- July, 2010 -- Director **Tony Schweikle's** new novel expands on the legend of the Saracen pirate Barbarossa, in the thrilling story of ***The Cardinal's Treasure***, to be released soon.

Near the end of the twelfth century the Crusaders had reigned over the city of Acre in the Kingdom of Jerusalem for a hundred years, but then Muslim forces re-captured Acre in 1291. An unknown Crusader escaped with an ancient Holy Quran and made his way back to Rome. The Quran was then hidden away in a secret Vatican vault on the island of Capri along with other precious religious artifacts.

In 1454 Sultan Mehmed's obsession with returning the Holy Quran to the Turkish Empire resulted in a pact with an evil and greedy Cardinal.

For a large sum of gold, the Cardinal would allow access to the vault during a faux pirate attack on Capri. This treachery however, did not go un-punished. In the end the Cardinal paid dearly for his sins against the church. The pirate's ship was damaged by a violent storm off the coast of southern Italy, forcing the pirate to abandon his ship, hide the treasure in a cave, and attempt an escape in small rowboats to reach Sicily and a Saracen stronghold on that island. But another storm destroyed the rowboats, and all perished except two young cabin boys who were rescued by Italian fisherman.

In 1532, descendants of the two boys began the search to find the lost treasure. Word of the search got out, and soon those racing to find the treasure included the Pope, a Cardinal, Knights of Malta, Suleiman the Magnificent, the infamous Saracen pirate Barbarossa, and the people from the small fishing village of San Donato.



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