

# Preface

The Italian Mafia is a general term indicating those criminal organizations originally routed in the South of Italy whose influences have been extending in the northern regions of Italy and in other foreign countries as well. Italian Mafia has attracted the attention of both media and scholars, who focused mainly on the well-known Sicilian Mafia, called Cosa Nostra and more recently, on Camorra, a criminal organization primarily operating in Campania. In the last few years, many scholars deemed that the field of studies concerning the Italian Mafia had little to add to the understanding of the phenomenon. I disagree. In fact, I strongly believe that there are many areas that are yet to be explored, and the present volume represents an attempt in that direction. Unlike other published works, this volume focuses on two relatively unknown Italian criminal organizations—the *'Ndrangheta*, based in Calabria, and the *Sacra Corona Unita*, based in Apulia. Neither of these organizations has received much attention in English-language literature.

The idea of editing this volume came to my mind while I was attending Graduate School at The Ohio State University. Researching the Italian Mafia, I realized that almost nothing about the *'Ndrangheta* and *Sacra Corona Unita* (SCU) was available in the English language. The scarcity of material was a sign of how little these two organizations have been examined outside Italy, and how little the general public knows about them. Nowadays, news about these two organizations appear more frequently in Italian newspapers, especially the *'Ndrangheta* after the *Operazione Crimine* in 2010—a crucial judicial operation that shed more light on the Calabrian organization.

The realization of this volume derives from the desire to redeem my land and open people's eyes on what is happening over there. As a child growing up in a neighborhood controlled by one of the most dangerous Mafia families in Bari, I felt their presence. Although, I am perfectly aware that this published volume will neither change nor defeat a criminal organization, I believe that spreading the knowledge of *Sacra Corona Unita* can foster awareness and inspire hope in future generations to avoid mistakes similar to the ones made by the past generations.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many people who helped me through this work. Special thanks go to all the Italian authors who believed in this project

and felt the obligation to describe these two groups outside Italy. I am honored to have worked with them.

I am especially grateful to the two clerks of the Tribunale di Bari, Dr. Francesco Susca and Nicola Pansini, who in several warm summer days, helped me in the search of important documents regarding the Sacra Corona Unita. Francesco Forleo, clerk of the Tribunale di Brindisi, merits a sincere and thoughtful appreciation for his professionalism that led me to a copy of the Statute of the Sacra Corona Unita, a document difficult to find in Italian judiciary archives. Francesco Flora, Maresciallo Aiutante of the Guardia di Finanza (Financial Police), who in his spare time searched for documents and reports of the 'Ndrangheta, difficult to find as well; the journalist of *La Repubblica di Bari*, Mara Chiarelli, provided updated information that lead to the realization of the map of the Apulian Mafia.

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