



by Lucy Gordan

An Exiled Claimant To The English Throne

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, into a large, second-generation Irish-American family, **Mary Jane Cryan** has American, Irish, and Italian (through marriage) citizenship.

She moved to Rome in 1965 immediately after graduating from D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York, to teach English and history in one of Rome's several international schools.

Besides teaching, her by-line appeared frequently in Italy's English-language press for 10 years before she moved to Moscow in 1987 with her Italian banker-husband and their two daughters. During her three-and-a-half years there she was a staff writer for *Moscow Magazine*, the city's first Western-style, English-language monthly which she helped to found with the International Women's Group.

After her return to Rome, Cryan contributed to the best-selling *Eyewitness Guide to Rome*, *Fodor's Italy Upclose*, *Living and Working in Italy* and *Superoccasioni/Designer Bargains in Italy*. In 1993, tired of the Eternal City's hustle and bustle, she and her family moved 68 kilometers north to the charming medieval town of Vetralla. She co-authored *Buying a Home in Italy* about this experience and has gone on to write three splendid volumes about local history; all published by Davide Ghaleb Editore in Vetralla: *Affreschi: Exploring Etruria* (2001), *Vetralla: The English Connection* (2001), and *Travels To Tuscany and Northern Lazio* (2004).

Lucy Gordan, fellow long-time American resident of Rome, recently interviewed Cryan for *Inside the Vatican* in her Vetralla home, one of the town's few historical *palazzi* to have survived the American bombardments of 1944. —*The Editor*

Your home is stunning; tell me something about its history.

MARY JANE CRYAN: Palazzo Pieri-Piatti is bigger than Vetralla's *Duomo* (cathedral) in square meters. *Ingegnere Alarico Piatti* was a

very famous Piedmontese engineer. He constructed the Trans-Siberian railway. Sadly, in 1932, his descendants lost their inheritance playing roulette in San Remo, so the *Palazzo* was divided up into apartments. This room you're sitting in now used to be the *dopo lavoro*, or recreation center, of the Fascist Party.

You have been a teacher, journalist, volunteer guide in St. Peter's during the 1975 Holy Year, "a trailing wife" (to use your terminology) in Moscow, mother, and author—in short, a Renaissance woman—what do you consider your profession?

MARY JANE CRYAN: Researcher, historian, and recently travel consultant. I'm very involved in promoting tourism and local culture here. That's why the logo of my website is "Etruria: Beyond Rome Before Tuscany." Although I no longer teach, I help to design and set up semester abroad programs for American colleges and high schools. Besides my books, I'm also a staff writer for the Italian monthly *Ville e Casali* (Country Homes) and publish *Elegant Etruria Newsletter* e-mailed monthly to thousands of international readers on request. At the moment I'm busy promoting my latest book.

What is *Travels to Tuscany and Northern Lazio* about?

MARY JANE CRYAN: I'm fascinated by historic travel in Italy. Here I've translated the travel diaries of **Henry Cardinal Stuart**, Duke of York. This book shows what Tuscany and northern Lazio were like in the 1700s. It offers rare, previously unknown descriptions of towns, travel, and life in 18th-century Italy.

How did you choose its format?

MARY JANE CRYAN: I wanted a book that would not seem too scholarly. I'm looking for a wider readership, a popular history, a practical book that



Author Mary Jane Cryan writes about an exiled English cardinal who was a claimant to the throne...





The funeral monument of the Stuart family, in the Vatican basilica.

Right, portrait of Henry, in the Scottish College in Rome. Below, a medal with "Bonnie Prince Charley" and Prince Henry Stuart



people will use while they're traveling.

Most people are caught by a book's cover; they then look at the illustrations. Others check out its index; that's why I've made mine so complete. I've tried to make my bibliography state-of-the art and user-friendly; it includes the websites about the Stuarts and the places Cardinal Henry visited. I'm hoping that *Travels to Tuscany and Northern Lazio* will be used as a university text in tourism degrees, by travel agents and consultants, hikers and trekkers, art and book collectors, museum directors, and other niche travelers like Cardinal Henry.

Why a translation if Henry Cardinal Stuart was Scottish?

MARY JANE CRYAN: The diaries were not written by the cardinal himself – he was too important – but, under his supervision, by his mysterious secretary and alter-ego, Don **Giovanni Landò**. They were to be the official version of Cardinal Henry's life. Landò faithfully chronicled the daily schedule of His Royal Highness: his meetings, his meals, his upset stomach, his dress, and daily constitutions. The cardinal's supervision, his censorship, is visible. Some entries have been crossed out; others added because Landò had forgotten something the cardinal wished remembered.



A thumbnail bio of the cardinal?

MARY JANE CRYAN: **Henry Benedict Stuart** was born at *Palazzo Muti* in Rome's Piazza SS. Apostoli on March 6, 1725 to **James III** (1688-1766), exiled claimant to the English throne, and to **Maria Clementina Sobieska**, a goddaughter of Pope **Clement XI** (hence Clementina) and a Polish princess. He was baptized by Pope **Benedict XIII** in the

Palazzo's private chapel.

Henry traveled to France in 1745 ready to support his older brother **Charles** (1720-88), better known as "**The Young Pretender**" and "**Bonnie Prince Charlie**," in the Scottish Jacobite rebellion. However, after Charles was defeated at the Battle of Culloden on April 16, 1746 and it was clear the Stuarts could never return to Scotland, Henry returned to Rome and entered ecclesiastical life. He was very young, receiving the tonsure at *Palazzo Muti* from Pope Benedict XIV in 1747 (when he was 22). Only a year later he was created cardinal during a secret consistory. On October 2, 1758, Pope Clement XIII named him Bishop of Corinth and on

July 13, 1761, Bishop of Frascati. In 1763, the same year of his first voyage to Pisa, on January 24th to be exact, he was appointed Vice Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, making him the most important cleric in Rome second only to the Pope, who was still Clement XIII. When on January 31, 1788, Charles "The Young Pretender" died a broken man in *Palazzo Muti*, the cardinal became royal claimant as Henry IXth, for he was the last of the direct male line of James II and the last pretender to press a claim to the English throne.

Henry was a skillful diplomat, accomplished musician, composer, and dancer, a *bon vivant* whose favorite food was game, and patron of the arts. He used his considerable wealth to establish the Frascati seminary, furnishing it with a library, works of art, and a printing press. Although he was appointed Cardinal Bishop of Ostia in 1803 by Pius VII, he continued to live in Frascati, where he died, at age 82, on July 13, 1807. His funeral was held four days later in Rome's magnificent Baroque church, Sant'Andrea della Valle.

For many years, Henry was buried together with his father and brother in the Scots College, then on Via Barberini and now a bank, though you can still see all the Scottish symbols on its facade. Since 1815, when the British government, during **George IV's** reign, commissioned their funerary monument, sculpted by Canova, they've been buried in the left transept of St. Peter's. They're opposite the tomb of Henry's mother, one of only three women buried in the Basilica. The others are **Queen Christina** of Sweden and **Matilde of Canossa**.

The male Stuarts' original tombstones are in the chapel of the "new" Scots College on Via Cassia 745. Father **Christopher McElroy** can show them to you. The English College also has lots of Jacobite artifacts.

And what of the secretary, Landò?

MARY JANE CRYAN: We know very little about him, except that he was one of the 76 members of the cardinal's household in 1764. The only anecdotal key to his personality is his handwriting. In my introduction you can find its analysis over the years by Dr. **Giovanni Quattrocchi**, a graphology expert of the courts in Rome and Rieti.

How did you become interested in Henry Cardinal Stuart?

MARY JANE CRYAN: A marble portrait bust of him, probably also by Canova, still in the City Hall of Vetralla, was the starting point of this book. I began with only one fact: the date 1802 – when the bust, a gift from a once powerful cleric, was installed in Vetralla's Council Chamber in remembrance of the cardinal's only visit here on October 21, 1776, when he interceded to save the town's forest on Mount Fogliano. However, his personal motive for coming – remember this is during the Counter-Reformation – was to recuperate the English Catholic connection here. With this second date in my possession as well, after many long hours in the new manuscripts section of the New British Library near Euston Station, I tracked down the text of his "Voyage to Viterbo," 1776. I was the first reader to open those pages. I could still feel the sand on the parchment because in those days, after they'd written with a quill pen, they threw sand on the parchment to absorb the ink. Unseen material!



Above, Palazzo Pieri-Piatti, where Mary Jane Cryan lives, and, below, the location of Vetralla between Rome and Florence



The other two earlier trips?

MARY JANE CRYAN: While I was transcribing the Viterbo trip, Landò's text mentions a previous visit to Montefiascone, in 1763, while enroute to Pisa. So on another trip to London, I unearthed the text of "Voyage to Pisa" again in the New British Library.

A year later I received an e-mail from **Noel McFerran**, a Stuart specialist and creator of a website dedicated to the Jacobites, www.jacobite.ca. She said she'd found mention of Cardinal Henry's visit to Florence in a 1764 letter conserved in Windsor Castle's archives. So on a third trip to the British Library I found "Second Voyage to Pisa and

Florence, 1764." My book is only about Henry's travels, not his foibles, problems or politics. I'm not a Jacobite expert, though I do know that there were moments when the brothers were not on speaking terms with "The Old Pretender" – a very difficult menage.

What was the reason for these trips?

MARY JANE CRYAN: Month-long spa cures – drinking the waters – for Henry's digestive problems, relaxation away from his duties at the Roman Curia, and political networking. He was "our man in Rome." After his visits in Tuscia and to Tuscany and Umbria, it was all right for the local officials who'd hosted him to ask him for favors.

During the summers of 1766-70 he had the health-giving waters, the *cura dell'acqua di Pisa*,



A marble bust of the cardinal given to Vetralla in memory of his visit in 1802.

shipped in glass bottles to him in Rome: the first documented use of bottled mineral water! He was unable to leave Rome because of the death of his father in 1766 and of Pope Clement XIII in 1769.

During the 18th century, many travelers to Italy – on the Grand Tour – kept diaries; how do these differ?

MARY JANE CRYAN: One, Cardinal Henry was *not* a foreigner. Two, Cardinal Henry didn't write them himself. Three, they are not literary. Unlike those of most Grand Tour travelers, the cardinal's diaries were not written for publication. They were official diaries, written for the record, like today's authorized biographies, to explain the man and what a great patron he was, to show off his best qualities: how cultured, how generous... a kind of propaganda. If you like, they were and had an agenda... They

barely describe the landscape at all. It wasn't considered important. My book contains previously unpublished material from the official diary of a very cultured, international man. I haven't found his private diary yet. What fun it would be, but I doubt it exists.

If not their literary merit, what is their importance? Their extremely detailed lists of the artworks the cardinal saw?

MARY JANE CRYAN: Yes, because these lists help monitor the losses to the region's cultural patrimony over the past 250 years. They also mirror the changing aesthetic taste and artistic priorities of his era and how they differ from our own.

I think my book is perfect for a certain kind of niche, specialized traveler. "Travel in the Footsteps of....". Coming from Lowell now everybody goes there to see where **Jack B. Kerouac** was born. "Footsteps" travel is the future for cultural tourism in this area.

What do you consider these diaries' most significant entry?

MARY JANE CRYAN: What I like to do is to take the book with me when I go a place that Cardinal Henry visited. For example, to go to the Cathedral of Orvieto, reading the description of what it was like then. To see what's still there nowadays; to see what was considered important then and nowadays isn't there anymore, like the huge sculptures. Landò describes them one-by-one and in great detail, but they went out of style in 1800 and were removed.

Whereas the frescoes of Signorelli, which are *the* artwork to see in Orvieto today, are hardly mentioned.

The roads, although now paved, are much the same topographically, still very windy and steep. I consider Cardinal Henry the "original slow traveler." Everybody now yearns, "Oh, 'slow travel,' 'slow food,'" but he's the man who knew how to do it. He enjoyed his food and his travels, but didn't try to do too much; he didn't "do" five towns in one day like many modern tourists.

Am I right that the texts of these trips are only small parts of Henry's diaries?

MARY JANE CRYAN: Heavens yes. The complete diaries make up 36 volumes bound in brown leather and stamped in gold. They begin in 1748 when Henry was created cardinal.

Since the diaries are in Italian and Henry died

in Frascati, how did the diaries end up in England and not in the Vatican Library like most of Henry's magnificent book collection?

MARY JANE CRYAN: That's the mystery; there's a lot of controversy about what happened after the cardinal died. Henry had lost almost all his riches when the Papal States were invaded by Napoleon's troops in 1798 and Henry had to flee first to Naples and then to Venice.

A certain **John Coxe Hippisley** was instrumental in getting the elderly cardinal an English government pension from George III.

When Henry died in 1807, out of gratitude he bequeathed the Stuart's crown jewels to George IV (still the prince of Wales) and the Stuart portraits and a few artifacts still in his possession to Hippisley. In 1813, Hippisley negotiated the sale of the 18th-century Stuart papers to the Royal Library at Windsor.

To get back to the diaries, they were not part of Hippisley's inheritance.

Some people were worried they would have uncomplimentary entries about the British Crown, others about the Stuarts, apparently about Bonnie Prince Charlie's descendants. The diaries seem to have been hidden, pages stolen or changed, and then they were spirited away by Abbot Lupi to England on a ship from Civitavecchia. In 1877 they were donated to the British Museum by **Maria Otway-Cave**, the eldest daughter of **Sara, Baroness Bray**.

Your two earlier books?

MARY JANE CRYAN: *Affreschi – Exploring Etruria*, which I wrote with **Norman Roberson**, is 42 travel essays, little flashes of different things to see when you visit Tuscia, a precious travel companion. Nothing else exists in English, except Kennet and Young's book, *Northern Lazio: An Unknown Italy*, and that's very outdated. *Vetralla: The English Connection* is self-explanatory.

So Cardinal Henry Stuart isn't the only English connection to Vetralla?

MARY JANE CRYAN: Oh no. Throughout the centuries, Vetralla has had numerous contacts with the royal families of England. Like Cardinal Henry's bust, in Vetralla's town hall – on the wall of the staircase leading up to the Council Room, there's a marble plaque with the coat-of arms of **Henry VIII** and his ambassador to the Papal Court, Cardinal **Christopher Bainbridge**, which dates to

1512. Contacts with the Tudors finished after 1530 when Henry broke with the Catholic Church to marry **Anne Boleyn**, but then began again with the Stuarts. As I said before, Henry's motive for visiting Vetralla was to recuperate its English connection.

Cardinal Bainbridge and Cardinal Henry both had a tight bond to the English College on Via Monserrato, although two centuries apart. The College was originally founded as a hospice for English pilgrims in 1362. Pope **Gregory XIII** established it as a seminary in 1579, so that priests could preach the Catholic faith to their countrymen. Cardinal Bainbridge, the archbishop of York, died in the College and is buried in its church. Cardinal Henry, whose offices

were in the nearby Cancellaria or Ministry of the Church's Treasury, was a frequent visitor.



An emblem of the Stuart family. Both Henry Stuart and his brother "Bonnie Prince Charlie," are buried in St. Peter's

How can your books be purchased?

MARY JANE CRYAN: From my publisher, Davide Ghaleb Editore, dghaleb@tin.it or from my website, www.elegantetruria.com.

Your next book?

MARY JANE CRYAN: Thanks to the generosity of Monsignor **Leonard Boyle**, then Father-Rector of San Clemente, the Irish Dominican church near the Colosseum, and later the Prefect of the Vatican Library, I wrote the thesis for my Italian *laurea* or university degree on the Irish volunteers in Pope **Pius IX's** army. Grateful for Pius IX's generosity immediately after the potato famine, 1,000 strapping young men, disguised as pilgrims, from Dublin and County Kerry, came to Rome as volunteers, not mercenaries, to protect the Pope. Garibaldi had the English helping him, so naturally whatever the English did, the Irish had to do the opposite. One day, while moving a stack in San Clemente's Archives, a shoe-box of their letters, long forgotten, fell to the ground; Father Boyle gave me access to them.

I'd like to expand my thesis into a book. I'm intrigued by the *Risorgimento*, the Unification of Italy, from the Church's point-of-view. If it hadn't been for some of the articles written by Irish journalists in the Dublin papers in 1859, the *Risorgimento* might have turned out differently.

Other projects?

MARY JANE CRYAN: I'm a consultant for the celebrations being planned for the 200th anniversary of Cardinal Henry's death in 2007.