Amari, the founder of Islamic studies in Italy, spent 30 years researching and writing Sicily's history during the island's two-plus centuries under Muslim rule (9th-11th centuries). His *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* was a work of the highest scholarship, but it had a political purpose too: Amari wanted to prove that Sicilians didn't need tutoring about democracy and freedom from northern Europeans, because they had lived for over two hundred years under Islamic law.

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