

Document Citation

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| Title | Christ stopped at Eboli |
| Author(s) | |
| Source | <i>San Francisco International Film Festival</i> |
| Date | 1981 |
| Type | program note |
| Language | English |
| Pagination | |
| No. of Pages | 1 |
| Subjects | |
| Film Subjects | Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (Christ stopped at Eboli), Rosi, Francesco, 1979 |

Friday, October 16 11:00 a.m. Palace 1981, S.F.F.F.



Christ Stopped At Eboli

(Eboli)

Italy, 210 minutes

Source: Libra Films, New York City. *Production:* Franco Cristaldi, Nicola Carraro. *Direction:* Francesco Rosi. *Script:* Tonino Guerra, Francesco Rosi, Raffaele La Capria. *Photography:* Pasqualino De Santis. *Music:* Piero Piccioni. *Leading Players:* Gian Maria Volonte, Irene Papas, Francois Simon, Lea Massari, Paolo Bonacelli, Giuseppe Persia.

When Francesco Rosi's adaptation of Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped At Eboli* was shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 1978, the reaction of audiences and critics was unanimously praiseworthy. It is one of the greatest Italian films ever made about the enduring spirit of that country's age-old, rural culture, and the intellectual coalescence of its effect with shifting, "modern" ideas. Although Levi described his experiences in Eboli, a remote, unyieldingly arid area in Southern Italy, during the 1930's, his moods and thoughts are timeless. The descendants of Eboli-then survive today, with the same sense of tribal dignity, because, for them, the invisibility of time's passing is accepted as if it did not exist; its inevitability is ignored. There are only customs, and a sad resignation to tragedy and death. During the Mussolini period, Carlo Levi was sent into exile by that regime because of his outspoken opposition toward anti-fascist activities. His encounter with the region, and the people there, was, at first, as difficult as if he had landed on Mars, without proper briefing. It soon becomes obvious to him that all of his education, the world of Rome, of fascism itself, become meaningless in the surroundings of Eboli. Out of Levi's writings and feelings, Francesco Rosi's film captures the love that grows between the exiled philosopher and his dour, rather mysterious villagers. Class attitudes, superstitions, dreams and ambitions are dramatized with compassion, and the film itself becomes a fresco of Italian immortalities. *Christ Stopped At Eboli* is being shown here in its uncut form, originally for theatrical release. However, for distribution purposes, a shorter version was shown in America.