



UPDATE

Italic Institute of America
“*Italian Pride on a Classical Foundation*”

September, 2022

www.italic.org



On the Right Track

by John Mancini, Executive Director



I am not a cockeyed optimist, but the vibes I’m getting all point to a banner year for our Institute.

We just published the second volume of our historical trilogy on 20th Century Italy, titled *Italy Between the Wars* (1919-1940). It cements our place as an educational resource for the community.

This report and its predecessor *Italy and the Holocaust*, as well as our other activities, are made possible by your generosity and a grant from NIAF (National Italian American Foundation). Fortune may also favor us with that NYS legislative grant for \$10,000 that we have been pursuing without success, due to Covid-19 and the state’s financial woes. The state is still running us ragged but I am cautiously optimistic.

One of the plans for that grant money is an upgrade to our website, tentatively called *Italian Jukebox* - a sample of Italian music of every genre with lyrics and commentary. Want to hear and understand Opera arias or Neapolitan hits? Just go to our Jukebox

The project will add another dimension in our mission to educate the general public. Individuals, Italian language teachers and students can access the Jukebox as an entertaining tool deepening their passion for Italian culture.

These are just some of the reasons for my optimism. Wish us luck!

A Female Marco Polo

This is Vienna Cammarota, a 72-year-old grandmother who has decided to walk from Venice to Beijing to duplicate Marco Polo’s trek in 1275. So far she has done about 1,000 miles and reached the Balkans. Only another 13,000 miles to go! She will pass through 15 countries carrying a 20-lb. backpack. No campfire meals or sleeping al fresco for this Italian lady, as long as the money lasts she will stay at hotels and dine properly.



Vienna is doing this to affirm her womanhood and the equality of the sexes (sorry, no gender fluidity at stake). And for good measure she says, “I want to eradicate those prejudices about women and the fact that a woman alone and of my age cannot or should not accomplish this kind of feat, to be an ambassador of my land and above all to bring a message of peace.”

Marco Polo had one leg up on Vienna. He didn’t start walking from Venice but took a boat to Syria before hoofing it to China. It also took him four years. Vienna expects to reach Beijing by 2025.

You can track her (and donate) at <https://camminoconvienna.it/en>



The Sistine Chapel: The Untold Story

Old Bones Speak

The Romans usually cremated their dead, so finding a skeleton to extract DNA from doesn’t happen often. However, among the finds

from Pompeii stored in a Naples museum scientists found a full skeleton of a man about 40-years old. The bones were recovered and cataloged around 1933. Archeologist at the time believed he was a blacksmith. In a stroke of luck, the man's skull had a long stretch of DNA that had survived the lava and millennia. Interestingly, his DNA was similar to Sardinian residents as well as people in Italy.



Pompeii was already ancient in Roman times and quite cosmopolitan, being a seaport. Clearly, ethnic diversity was a common trait in most Italian cities during the empire.

New Report Published

It's titled *Italy Between the Wars*, and it is the second volume in a trilogy covering our research into those harrowing times when the globe was plunged into bloody wars and genocide.



Our first report, *Italy and the Holocaust* (2015), examined Italy's unique role when caught up in Hitler's "final solution."

These reports are balanced and often at odds with "standard" versions in post-war histories. The trilogy will be completed in 2023 with *Italy at War*, a revealing look at why Italy entered the Second World War and suffered defeat.

The reports are 57-pages each in a reader-friendly format we call "exhibit style." Pages are self-contained briefs with documentary photos, pull quotes, and supporting references.

Two of the reports are available for purchase now. See the enclosed Response Card.



Lamborghini's Terzo Millennio (Third Millennium)
A prototype electric vehicle

Telling Like It Is

Bob Allegrini (below) is a long-time associate of the Italic Institute in Chicago. In fact, he was once our national president.

He was invited to address the Italian Senate about the image of Italy in the United States, the perception of Italians in America, and Italian stereotypes.



Allegrini during his address to the Italian Senate

Bob delivered the good news that Italy is the tops in the USA. "*But does this admiration translate into a constant respect and trust towards the Italian people and the country itself? I must admit that this is not the case,*" he asserted.

Allegrini continued with a cautious: "*Italians must realize that the Italian American community is one of their greatest assets and they must do more to support it because Italian Americans are immensely proud of their legacy. They are the first to come to the defense of Italy when it is attacked unjustly just as the National Italian American Foundation regularly does.*"

Truth be told, the Italian Republic cannot control the media images that have distorted some perceptions. Nevertheless, Italian authorities should refrain from honoring those media individuals who distort perceptions in the name of "art."

Electric Italian Supercars?

Master automakers Ferrari and Lamborghini will have all to do competing in the coming world of electric vehicles. Tesla's Model S Plaid can reach 60-mph in just 2 seconds, faster than any Ferrari or Lamborghini.

In 2017, Lamborghini designed its Terzo Millennio to compete and budgeted \$1.7 billion to bring it to life. Instead of batteries, it will use supercapacitors that require no chemical reactions. Each wheel will have an electric motor to control torque individually and stabilize the ride like a Formula One auto.

The first step toward the Terzo Millennio will be a plug-in hybrid in 2023 and a fully electric fleet by 2024.

Did you know Lamborghini is owned by the Volkswagen Group—along with Audi, Volkswagen, Bentley, and Porsche? Of the 10 million cars the Group sells annually, only about 1,000 Lamborghinis are sold in the U.S.

They Made Their Mark

You can tell the character of a nation and a people by the individuals they produced. The Italic people, far and away, have a limitless pantheon of remarkable sons and daughters. We honor some of them here.

Letizia Battaglia, 87, fought the Sicilian Mafia with her camera, documenting victims left to die in the streets and the perpetrators as they stood trial for their crimes. Her black & white photos shocked her nation and forced it to mobilize against its domestic terrorists.



Her first photo in 1980 was of the slain Governor of Sicily being held by his brother only moments after the assassination. That governor was Piersanti Mattarella; his brother Sergio went on to become the President of Italy today.



Leonardo Del Vecchio, 87, made eyeglasses glamorous. A workaholic, born in poverty, Del Vecchio founded Luxottica in 1961 to make eyeglass frames into stylish

apparel. In 1988, he convinced Armani that eyeglasses could be chic, then on to Bulgari, Chanel, Brooks Brothers, even buying retailers like Lenscrafters, Pearl Vision and Ray-Ban. His vision empire made him a multibillionaire, adding to Italy's luxury exports monopoly. Italians, it seems, can make gold of anything.

Paul Vance's real name was **Joseph Philip Florio**, 92, but he changed it after a song he wrote, *Catch a Falling Star*, became a Perry Como hit in 1957. But his most famous song was the sexy *Itsy Bitsy Bikini* in 1960. The song was inspired by his 2-year-old daughter at the beach. Her Aunt Lena had made her a bikini and when some boys razzed her she quickly covered up in a blanket to walk to the water.



Domino's Pizza, 7 years. That's how long the American pizza chain lasted in Italy until bankruptcy. In 1960 a couple of Irish brothers named Monaghan in Michigan bought a pizzeria from Dominick DeVarti. The place was called *DomiNick*, but when the Monaghan's began making the pizzas, Dominick had second

A Reminder

You don't need to spend a dime to access a wealth of opinion, history, and information. Just visit our website www.italic.org to share our world of things Italian.

It's the only Italian American website with a Research Library, a Video Gallery, educational publications, and an interactive blog platform.

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thoughts and forbade the brothers from using his brand name as more pizzerias were purchased. Someone figured *Domino* was close to *DomiNick*, and it sounded Italian.

There are some 15,000 Domino stores around the world but only the few in Milan failed. The company blames Covid-19 and local competition. Maybe it was a matter of taste.

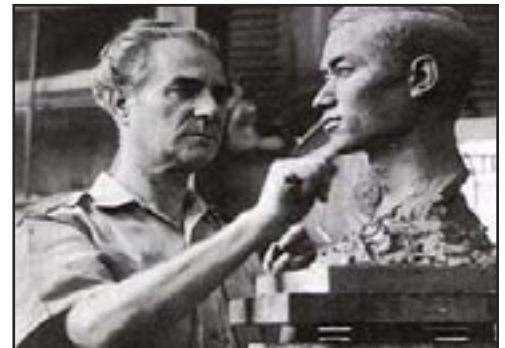
This is one obituary that won't make Italians sad.

Asian Art

In 1923, the Thai government invited Italian sculptor Corrado Feroci to teach Western sculpture at the royal palace. He stayed in Thailand longer than he planned, and by 1943 Feroci founded the University of Fine Arts in Bangkok. The war was going on at the time with the Japanese occupying the country. So long as Italy was part of the Axis, the Japanese tolerated him. However, when Italy switched sides, Feroci feared imprisonment.

He quickly became a Thai citizen, divorced his wife in Italy and married a Thai student.

He died in 1962 but has been revered in Thailand ever since. The nation commemorated his birth in 1992 with a stamp and his birthday is honored annually, although he is now buried in Italy.



Accessing the Media

Our media-savvy Rosario Iaconis offered his opinion on Italian politics last month. The media, as well as our Italian cousins, need to hear from our community on this subject. A conservative Italy with European and global clout is in all our best interests.

You can follow Rosario on his Italic Institute FaceBook page, below:



Victory for Meloni's coalition could be a game-changer for Italy

Though the media are aghast at the prospect of Giorgia Meloni becoming Italy's next prime minister, the parliamentary elections on September 25 will reinforce the hallowed principle of popular sovereignty – the proposition that the ultimate authority of the state resides with the people (“The new face of the radical right is on display in Italy”, *Opinion*, August 19). As modern politics goes, the “seed of Aeneas” is a serious republic with a sophisticated, well-educated electorate. And the notion that Italians cannot

be entrusted to elect their own leaders – a belief held by more than a few in Brussels – is as repugnant as it is anti-democratic.

Yes, Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia party (Brothers of Italy) is decidedly rightwing, but the party's fealty to Atlanticism, a market economy and the EU remains rock-solid. Moreover, unlike her coalition partner Matteo Salvini, whose Lega Nord began as a secessionist northern movement, the Brothers of Italy is genuinely nationalistic. Whereas the Lega's founder, Umberto Bossi, was once

convicted for insulting the Italian flag, Meloni fervently embraces the tricolore.

As for the spectre of Il Duce, Meloni is no modern-day Mussolini. Despite the commentator's rhetoric about a resurgence of the blackshirt ethos, there are no squadristi anywhere on the Italian peninsula.

Fascism in Italy has long since been cast into the ash-beap of history. Indeed, as Ben Hall notes “it would be a stretch to say the Brothers are a fascist party”.

More importantly, a victory for Meloni's coalition might prove a game-

changer in Italian politics. Should her rightwing alliance secure a two-thirds parliamentary majority, Meloni and co. could bring about the creation of a directly elected presidency via a constitutional amendment.

Plus, if she ascends to Palazzo Chigi, Meloni would be the Italian republic's first female premier, underscoring a major feminist triumph.

Rosario A. Iaconis
Chairman, The Italic Institute of America
Adjunct Professor, Social Sciences Department, Suffolk County Community College, Selden, NY, US

A Placemat is Rediscovered

When we asked our Chicago associate Frank Di Piero to field-test a paper placemat (right) we created in 1994 to see if it still has a market, he jumped at the chance. As a local businessman himself, Frank knows many Italian product vendors around town. These educational placemats were designed for patrons of Italian restaurants, pizzerias, etc., to read as they eat. Our only problems are storing and distributing them. We haven't produced them since the 90s and our stock is limited. But we take requests...no charge. As you can see, they are still popular.



By the way, Frank has his own weekly podcast “Keepin’ It Real with Frankie D.” Tune in some time for some great interviews.

That's Frank in four of the photos below.



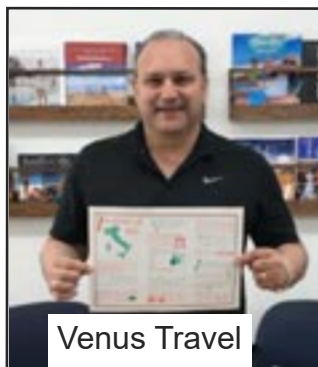
Societa' Santa Fara di Cinisi



Caffè Pronto



Johnny G's Meat and Deli



Venus Travel



PizzaBoy



Pasta Fresh