

il Bollettino

dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America



2019 • VOLUME 12 • NUMBER 2

Cari Amici,

Welcome to volume 12.2 of *il Bollettino*! In this issue you will find exciting news about what we do at the Calandra Institute and what is happening in our communities.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute. Much has been accomplished over the years, and much still needs to be done! Our activities will commemorate this milestone and address many concerns of our community as we move forward.

We continue to enjoy support from many. As always, we are extremely grateful for the support of Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez's Office of CUNY and Interim President William Tramontano's Office of Queens College.

I wish you all a *buona lettura* and look forward to seeing you at future events.

—Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

DIASPORE ITALIANE: ITALY IN MOVEMENT

A SYMPOSIUM ON THREE CONTINENTS
Melbourne, Australia • New York, United States • Genova, Italy

On June 27–29, 2019, the Calandra Institute cosponsored the third Diaspore Italiane conference, which took place at the Galata Museo del Mare and Museo della Commenda in Genoa, Italy. The conference, “Between Immigration and Historical Amnesia,” was attended by scholars from around the globe. Some of the presenters and topics included:

- Rosemary Serra, Università de Trieste, Old and New Migrations to New York City, Young Italians Tell Their Stories;
- Enrique Trindade, Museum of Immigration of the State of São Paulo, Brazil, Descendants of Italians Rediscovering the History of Immigration and Relating to Contemporary Migrations;
- Togay Massimo Özönaran, Levantine Heritage Foundation of Turkey, Tuesday's Tradition in Istanbul Saint Anthony of Padua Church: A Shared Space and Tradition;
- Gloria Pastorino, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Out of This World: The Dream/Nightmare of Being Rid of Migrants.

On October 18, 2019, a daylong Development Workshop for Content and Language Integrated Learning took place at the Calandra Institute.

FUORI COLLANA

The workshop, organized by Eugenia Paulicelli, Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY, was cosponsored by the Calandra Institute; the Italian American Committee on Education, the Italian program and Center for Teaching and Learning at Queens College; Fashion Studies at the Graduate Center and its Fabric of Cultures Project; the Italian Cultural Institute; and the Consul General of Italy in New York.

The workshop began with sessions on the subjects of Leonardo da Vinci's study of textiles and fashion and language learning methodologies and later engaged participants in hands-on laboratories with a variety of modules focused on the theme of the day and classroom activities at the middle-school and high-school levels. Teachers received a certificate of attendance at the end of the workshop.

Speakers included Carmel Coonan (Ca' Foscari, Venice); Annavaleria Guazzieri (director of Education, Consul General of Italy in New York); Nicola Lucchi (Queens College, CUNY); and Eugenia Paulicelli (CUNY).

Devotion, Artistry, and the Cult of St. Joseph

MARCH 19–21, 2020 • XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

This international interdisciplinary conference will explore the historical and contemporary devotion to and depictions of Saint Joseph. The conference—a collaboration between the Calandra Institute, Cabrini University, and Xavier University of Louisiana—will convene at Xavier University, New Orleans. The first day of the conference will be dedicated to visiting sites of St. Joseph devotions in New Orleans. The following two days will consist of conference paper presentations and discussions with community members.



1979–2019: FORTY YEARS OF THE CALANDRA INSTITUTE

On September 19, 2019, the Calandra Institute celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a reception and dinner at Il Gatopardo restaurant in Manhattan. Remarks were delivered by Francesco Genuardi, consul general of Italy in New York; José Luis Cruz, CUNY executive vice chancellor, on behalf of CUNY Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez; Queens College Interim President William Tramontano; and Anthony Tamburri, dean and distinguished professor, Calandra Institute, Queens College.

The original principles of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of forty years ago continue to serve as the foundation for what the Institute does today. Over these past four decades the work of staff members has contributed to what is the first and only think tank dedicated to Italian American and Italian diaspora studies.

The quest for knowledge is one of the main goals of the Calandra Institute. This intellectual curiosity is something the Institute hopes to instill in its audiences, faculty fellows, and attendees of various symposia and conferences. All of this contributes to a greater good: a more expansive education of the general collective, so that the various perceptions of Italian Americans can be further developed within a greater sociocultural context.



TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

SUMMER 2019 EPISODE HIGHLIGHTS

In June *Italics* interviewed artist John Avelluto, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Avelluto's work revels in mash-ups of images, products, and ideas where Italy and the United States converge. His exhibition at the Calandra Institute was on view May 7–September 13, 2019.

In July *Italics* hosted Stefano Albertini, director of Casa Italiana and professor of Italian at New York University. Albertini's areas of expertise include Nicolò Machiavelli, the nineteenth-century novel, church and state relations, literature and cinema, and contemporary Italian history and politics. This year Albertini celebrates twenty-five years as its director.

ITALICS



Maloik, by John Avelluto



Stay tuned for exciting new programming this season!

Italics premieres the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 pm and is rebroadcast the following Wednesday at 10:30 am and 3:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 am, and Sunday at 6:30 pm on CUNY TV Channels 25.3, 75, 77, and 30, in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

Italics can be viewed on demand at



cuny.tv/show/italics



@ItalicsTV



youtube.com/ItalicsTV

The Calandra Institute announces a new video platform, **Calandra TV**, as a complement to the regular *Italics* television program on CUNY TV.

The Italian Prisoners of War in Massachusetts during World War I, by Flavio G. Conti and Alan R. Perry

This study integrates newly accessible historical documentation, acquired at military archives in Rome, to canvass the history of Italian Prisoner of War detainment in the Boston area during World War II. All told, from the late fall of 1942 through early 1946, more than two thousand Italian soldiers were stationed at Camp McKay, Ft. Andrews, and Camp Myles Standish. They had agreed to collaborate with U.S. authorities, were organized into Italian Service Units (ISUs), and provided needed labor primarily on the Boston waterfront with the scope of aiding the Allied effort to defeat Nazi Germany. These soldiers were among the best treated prisoners of the war and received great material advantages from both the Roman Catholic Church and the Italian American community in New England. Local parishes sponsored dances and other social events, donated rosaries and missals, and priests celebrated Mass, heard confessions, and represented the POWs to U.S. officials. For their part, Italian American families and social associations also provided needed care, hosting gatherings of POWs, fostering friendships, and offering a valuable cultural point of reference.

The prisoners served admirably, for the most part, with little labor disruption and workplace desertion although a major public brawl did take place between a group of POWs and local citizens. This event occurred against the backdrop of wide suspicion for the Italian soldiers on the part of native stock Bostonians. Indeed, during the summer of 1944 protests erupted nationwide that denounced the perceived lenient treatment given to Italian soldiers, many of whom only fifteen months prior had been trying to kill Americans. Fortunately, the work performance of the Italians, the information campaign enacted by US authorities, and the intervention of Italian American societies helped overcome the turmoil.

Much of the intimate histories within each company level ISU has never before been told since files located in military archives in Rome were previously unavailable to researchers. Now, information found in personnel dossiers—unit assignments, pay schedules, sick leaves, reprimands, and the like—can complete the stories provided by unit histories and the Provost General's files found at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland.

More than seventy years have passed since the end of the war, and fortunately new historical documentation allows us to get an accurate pulse on the Italian POW experience in the Boston area. This information enriches our understanding of the overall historical situation of Italian detention nationwide during the war.



Cooperating POWs together with Italian Americans in Plymouth, Massachusetts, April 29, 1945. Aldo Raimondi is standing first on the left. The soldier sitting first on the right is a U.S. Army sergeant who chaperoned the Italians. On the back of the photo Paolina Calelera wrote her greetings. Photograph courtesy of Alice Carolo.

The Criminal Body: Italian Racialization and Erasure in the Dime Novel, by Nancy Caronia

The Italian criminal stereotype was incorporated into the American dime novel as early as 1872. In general, this genre flattens Italians into a homogeneous group of duplicitous and treacherous brigands and organized-crime members no matter what side of the Atlantic the narrative is centered on. That this genre shaped public consciousness by exploiting national narratives, racist discourse, and criminal tropes has not been denied, but the way white American heroics were promoted by fostering a fear of Italian immigrants and Southern Italian brigands has gone unexplored. Engaging at the intersection of the Italian paese and the American city, the Italian criminal figures one finds in dime novels force a reconsideration of the Italian American gangster in American movies. These portrayals also shed light on the ways that political upheaval, fears, and anxieties around Italian unification and American westward expansion and reconstruction helped to shape public discourses regarding immigrants and immigration policy in the United States.

The Calandra Institute will host its twelfth annual conference April 23–25, 2020. The theme “Italian Borderlands: Restrictions, Breaches, Encounters” will build on recent books, symposia, and conferences investigating similar themes of Italian borderlands. The conference proposes a transnational, mobile, and inclusive approach to Italy and “Italians”—including inhabitants of the nation-state, members of the diaspora, and former colonial subjects—as it positions itself at the border in an attempt to elucidate the consequences and possibilities that border studies suggest and to gain a deeper understanding of class, gender, and race.

Borders can be concrete parameters, and they can also be metaphorical markers. Either way, the border as a political, economic, cultural, and personal site, one to be policed, extended, breached, opened, celebrated, and/or erased, has long been of interest to those concerned with Italy. The areas of scholarly inquiry are as infinite as the varied Italian and Italianate borders themselves.

Irridentism and colonialism were policies the newly created nation-state officially promoted and enacted as a means to augment the scope of its boundaries. Italian immigrants, in turn, extended the boundaries of their

respective villages and towns through transnational networks and diasporic realms. In the twenty-first century a global economy, digital communications, and migrants and refugees arriving to Italy, among others matters, have brought renewed attention to the question of political borders.

In addition, larger concepts of boundaries—those not necessarily tied to geopolitical questions—have come to inform collective and self-identities in ways that also connect to changing notions of Italy and Italian borders. In the cultural realm, a binary border demarcating inclusion/exclusion is a constantly articulated and negotiated site of discursive and performed authenticity even as it is disrupted or otherwise ruptured, leading to hybridic possibilities and formations. The “real Italian” embodied in such phenomena as a globalized and transcultural cuisine, or new migrations to and from Italy, are examples of enforced and ever-contested identities. If ethnicity can be understood as both identity construction and display, negotiated at points of encounter between various groups, as anthropologist Fredrik Barth proposed, then the boundary itself can also be seen as a dynamic source of cultural expressivity.

FILOMENA COPPOLA: CHASING THE DISAPPEARED

Featured on this newsletter's cover is a detail from an eight meter long pastel drawing by Australian artist Filomena Coppola. The installation “Chasing the Disappeared” uses the markings of the Tasmanian Tiger (Thylacine) to explore cultural loss. Coppola states:

It is not until things are gone that we mourn their loss and wish for their return. The markings are symbolic of the loss of the first generation of Italians that came to Australia in the 1950s, with their passing we lose stories, dialects, recipes, and memories that marked the early crossings to Australia. I am reflecting on the passing of the first wave of immigrants and the losses; the genealogical dis/connection to Italy; the local dialects of the 1950s that migrated with them, and the dis/connection to the Catholic faith. As the first generation born of Italian immigrants we wanted to assimilate and dilute the cultural differences, yet the second generation born in Australia is strongly claiming their Italian identity, sometimes without a direct connection to the language, culture, or the country itself.

I have chosen to make the drawing eight meters in length as it is a direct reference to a rug that consisted of eight Thylacine skins which is now in the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. The Thylacine markings are drawn vertically and repeated to create the sense of a seismic reading; a line of fossilized backbones; markers of time; journeys across continents; or sound waves which carry the silent voices and dialects. The work is drawn to look like fur, thus appearing tactile and inviting to the viewer. The drawing is a direct reference to lineal time which the viewer participates in as they walk the length of the drawing. It will represent time past and time ahead; looking back on what has gone before and ahead to what is yet to come.



On the cover and above: *Chasing the Disappeared*, pastel on paper, 2012, 108 x 800 cm and two panels each 108 x 80 cm. ©Filomena Coppola.

For more information visit filomenacoppola.com

As publishing grows ever easier with blogging, on-demand printing, and individual e-book services, the work of the publisher—the careful selection of a text, editing the manuscript, typesetting and designing the physical volume, developing marketing campaigns, and reader outreach—is trivialized if not altogether ignored.

In March 2019, Nicholas Grosso partnered Literaturhaus with Bud Parr and Richard Nash to launch HAUS RED: a seasonal newsletter that recounts the story of a featured title and traces its path from the writing and editing processes through to production, marketing, and sales. In each newsletter, a featured title is juxtaposed with a nexus of other titles and themes to offer readers and writers alike an intimate, singular view into the worlds of independent book publishing and the ongoing conversation every new piece of art enters.

Volume 1 features *Queen Solomon* by Tamara Faith Berger. Published by Coach House in 2018, the story epitomizes the line from Oscar Wilde—*Everything in the world is about sex except sex. Sex is about power*—finding itself at the crossroads of the role of Israel in the Middle East, sexual consent, and religious awakening. The issue also features a review from Noam Chomsky on *Gaza: An Inquest into Martyrdom* by Norman Finkelstein and from Alicia Kennedy on Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

The newsletter is a celebration of the art and business of publishing. With the ever-increasing corporatization of the field, whittling away at the mid-sized publishers and publishers independent of investors and stockholders, literature today is often selected based on financial projections, leading to innovative or challenging works being passed on in place of “safer” investments. HAUS RED seeks to offset this trend by spotlighting the passion and dedication of individuals in and around independent publishing and their commitment to the art and craft of their trade, harking back to the prototype of modern publishing, Aldo Manuzio and the Aldine Press that mixed a well-considered editorial line with cutting-edge technology and design.

Earlier this year Literaturhaus was awarded a grant and included in a consultancy program by Community of Literary Magazine and Presses. HAUS RED Volume 2 was released in September 2019.



AD MEMORIUM

FRANCESCO DURANTE 1952–2019

Francesco Durante, journalist, essayist, historian, translator, editor, and cultural broker passed away August 3, 2019, on his island home of Capri. He was sixty-six years old.

Parallel to his distinguished career as a journalist, Durante was also a scholar and translator of extraordinary accomplishments. First as professor of comparative literature at the Università di Salerno, then as professor of Italian American literature and culture at the Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, Durante introduced two generations of students to a literary and cultural tradition that had previously been scorned in Italy.

Durante was the artistic director and driving force behind the Festival Salerno Letteratura. He was delighted to have poets Peter Covino and Annie Lanzillotto reading their work in the cortile of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples last year.

Of all of Durante's scholarly and editorial achievements, the two volumes of *Italoamericana* stand out as colossal monuments to the culture of Italians in the United States. Close to nine hundred pages each, these two books document like no other the cultural history of Italians in the United States from 1776 to 1943.

The dialogue between Italy and Italian America is dynamic and strong due in great part to the indefatigable work of Francesco Durante. The debt we owe to him in this regard is immeasurable.



BUON NATALE

Rosaria Musco

In the home of Pulcinella, *Buon Natale* is no more. All across Naples, *Buon Natale* has been replaced by *Merry Christmas*. Pulcinella must be turning in his grave!!

This was my discovery this past December when my family and I spent Christmas in Naples, in my mother's hometown of Afragola. She had not been back to Afragola in fourteen years and longed for a good Neapolitan Christmas. I was excited too because I had not celebrated Christmas there since I was a pre-teen. I looked forward to recapturing memories and making new ones with my own child. I remembered how magical it all was. In Naples, you sensed the holiday spirit everywhere you went, and of course the seasonal cuisine was amazing. We would play tombola, and my mother's aunts would call out the numbers and add their own colorful Neapolitan twists, filling the air with laughter. My grandfather on Christmas day would wear a suit. The street vendors would walk around with their carts and yell out their wares; chestnuts, fish, fruit, and vegetables, and the guy with the knife-sharpener cart. My cousins and I would play out in front of my grandfather's house and see all the comings and goings.

During this trip last Christmas I planned to buy a couple of traditional decorations, something, anything, that had *Buon Natale* written on it so that I could proudly make it part of my Christmas decorations in the U.S. Every store I went in, I got the same response: "No, Signora: mi dispiace" (No, madam; I am sorry). I asked my aunt and cousins, and they all said the same thing, "We hadn't really noticed . . . but now that you mention it out: yes, I suppose it's true."

One day spent walking around San Gregorio Armeno, the mecca of artisanal nativity sets, crèches,

and Christmas decorations, I thought to myself, "I will surely find something here." But to my utter dismay, the story was identical. Every ornament, every knickknack, had *Merry Christmas* on it. Almost at the end of the street, I once again entered one of the stores and gave my speech to the salesman behind the counter. His response was this: "No, Signora. We now cater to the masses. Everything is fast and easy. The nativity sets now come in a package, and they are already put together. Unfortunately, people don't have the time anymore. I agree with you it is a shame!" The closest ornament I managed to find had the word *Auguri* (best wishes) on it.

After weeks spent celebrating the holidays in and around Naples, I was finally rewarded one night when, walking around Via Toledo, we came upon an artist who had just finished drawing a floor mural of the nativity, and underneath it said, "Buon Natale." Finalmente!

And with that I say, *Buon Natale a tutti!*

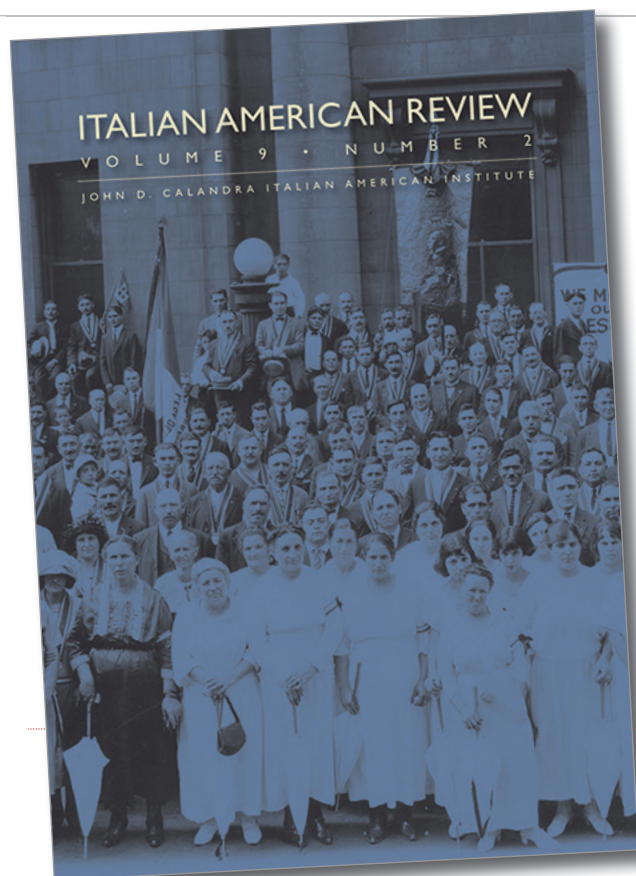


PHOTON CLASS NAMED AFTER ITALIAN SCIENTIST

IN PIAZZA

Professor Robert R. Alfano, Distinguished Professor of Science and Engineering, together with his research team at City College, CUNY, have discovered a new class of photon that may help give improved access to brain imagery. These unique photons "propagate deeper in brain tissues . . . and neuron cells, giving more fundamental information of the brain than the conventional photon forms," according to Alfano.

He named the photon class after Ettore Majorana, a theoretical scientist from Catania, Italy, who studied with Enrico Fermi and whose mysterious disappearance on a maritime crossing from Palermo to Naples has confounded both fellow scientists and international police for years. Majorana Photons are believed to be the first class of photons ever to be named for an Italian scientist.



ITALIAN AMERICAN REVIEW

The *Italian American Review* (IAR) features scholarly articles about Italian American history and culture, as well as other aspects of the Italian diaspora. The journal embraces a wide range of professional concerns and theoretical orientations in the social sciences and cultural studies. The IAR publishes book, film, and digital media reviews and is currently accepting article submissions.

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2 includes:

- Italian Prisoners of War in the Boston Area during World War II, by Flavio G. Conti and Alan R. Perry
- The Criminal Body: Italian Racialization and Erasure in the Dime Novel, by Nancy Caronia
- Max Corvo: From Immigrant to World War II Hero, by Salvatore J. LaGumina

For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org.
Under the publications menu, click on *Italian American Review*.

FALL 2019 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

Guido Culture and Italian American Youth: From Bensonhurst to Jersey Shore, DONALD TRICARICO, Queensborough Community College, CUNY

CANCELLED

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Defining Italian American Identity in the United States through Opera during the Mass Migration Period, DAVIDE CERIANI, Rowan University

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

The Divo and the Duce: Promoting Film Stardom and Political Leadership in 1920s America, GIORGIO BERTELLINI, University of Michigan

WRITERS READ SERIES

Tuesday, September 24, 2019

Three Bordighera Press writers—Kathy Curto, Maria Terrone, and Rita Esposito Watson—read from their works.

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

Juliet Grames reads from *The Seven or Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna* (Ecco, 2019)

DOCUMENTED ITALIANS

FILM AND VIDEO SERIES

Monday, October 28, 2019

Il Signor Jackson (2018), 40 minutes
Anton Evangelista, dir.

Free and open to the public, all events begin at 6 pm at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor, New York NY 10036.

RSVP by calling (212) 642-2094. Seating is limited and cannot be reserved in advance.

