

CALL FOR PAPERS

Eco Italie: Material Landscapes and Environmental Imaginaries

April 28–30, 2022

JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE
Queens College, City University of New York
25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor (between 5th and 6th Avenues), Manhattan

THIS EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE INSTITUTE.

In his 1930 fictionalized autobiography, *Jews without Money*, author Michael Gold speaks briefly about Italian immigrants' predilection for urban horticulture in the concrete wasteland that was once New York City's Lower East Side: "The Italians raised red and pink geraniums in tomato cans. The Jews could have, too, but hadn't the desire. When an excavation was being dug for a new tenement, the Italians swarmed there with pots, hungry for the new earth. Some of them grew bean vines and morning glories." This literary anecdote hints at the transposition and adaptation of agricultural knowledge and skills in Italian migratory spaces. It also suggests opportunities for examining other (inter)related topics from different temporal and spatial points in Italian environmental histories and cultures.

Agriculture is only one way to reconstruct the relationship between Italy and/or Italians and their environments. Indeed, in addition to horticulture, the realms of labor, migration, science, and the marketplace have been relevant in shaping Italian socio-ecological narratives and spaces. Italians have historically reimagined, reproduced, and transformed their identities alongside the environments they traversed, worked, and longed for, and continue to do so in the twenty-first century, creating hybrid spaces of Italianness around the world.

This interdisciplinary conference builds on the growing scholarship analyzing Italian histories and cultures from the perspective of the environmental humanities (e.g., Iovino's 2016 *Ecocriticism and Italy*; Verdicchio's 2016 *Ecocritical Approaches to Italian Culture and Literature*), the environmental histories of Italian migrations (e.g., "Environments of Italianness" special issue of *Modern Italy* 26.2, 2021), and the ecological dimensions of Italian colonialism and Fascist imperialism (e.g., Saraiva's 2017 *Fascist Pigs*; Malia Hom's 2019 *Empire's Mobius Strip*). Italians operating under diverse historical conditions within the national borders and beyond have participated in varied roles and perspectives in transforming the global environment.

The conference is open to a wide range of topics concerning the environment, broadly understood, from backyard gardening practices to industrial farming, from Fascist-era agricultural projects to the dumping of toxic waste by perpetrators of organized crime. At the forefront of this scholarly encounter is the dire global climate crisis and the science, activism, and everyday cultural shifts involved in preventing a future catastrophe. As in the past, the 2022 Calandra Institute conference proposes a transnational and inclusive approach to Italy and Italian mobilities, including inhabitants of the nation-state, members of the diaspora, current immigrants in Italy and their descendants, and former colonial subjects.

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SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- The politics and culture of climate crisis in Italy
- Marketing and consumption of landscapes (e.g., *agriturismo*)
- Aquatics and marine life (e.g., Mediterranean dynamite fishing, Venice's rising waters)
- Habitat destruction and the diminishing of biodiversity
- The role of new immigration in environmental practices in Italy
- Migrant farm labor (e.g., nineteenth-century Brazilian coffee plantations, twenty-first-century Italian citrus harvesting)
- Domestic gardening practices
- Farming (e.g., urban truck farms, California vineyards, Argentina's *pampas gringas*)
- Colonial spaces (e.g., internment camps)
- Fascism's planned projects of farming and land transformation, and Fascism's agenda of biological, botanical, and zootechnical imperialism
- Environmental depictions in literature, cinema, and the other arts and media
- Toxicity (e.g., dumping in Campania, the food chain)
- Migration and climate change
- Environmental justice
- The mobility of germs and the victimization of migrants as carriers of diseases
- Political and creative solutions (e.g., ecological architecture)

The official language of the conference is English. All presentations are to last no longer than twenty minutes, including audio and visual illustrations. Thursday evening is dedicated to welcoming comments and reception; sessions and panels will take place all day Friday and Saturday.

NOTA BENE: There are no available funds for travel, accommodations, or meals. There is no conference registration fee. The conference does not make arrangements with local hotels, so participants are responsible for booking their own accommodations.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: **SEPTEMBER 20, 2021**. Abstracts for scholarly papers (up to 500 words, plus a note on technical requirements) and a brief, narrative biography should be emailed as attached documents by September 20, 2021, to calandra@qc.cuny.edu, where other inquires may also be addressed. We encourage the submission of organized panels (of no more than three presenters). Submission for a panel must be made by a single individual on behalf of the group and must include all the paper titles, abstract narratives, and individual biographies and emails. Notice of acceptance or not will occur in early November 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE OUR WEB SITE: calandrainstitute.org.

The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, is a university-wide research institute of The City University of New York, dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in the United States.