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Editorial Policy

Annali d'italianistica seeks to promote the study of Italian literature in its cultural context, to foster scholarly excellence, and to select topics of interest to a large number of Italianists. Monographic in nature, the journal is receptive to a variety of topics, critical approaches, and theoretical perspectives. Each year's topic is announced ahead of time, and contributions are welcome. The journal is published in the fall of each year. Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as attachments in Word. Authors should follow the journal's style for articles in English; articles in Italian should also conform to the journal's style sheet for articles in Italian. Visit the journal's website (<https://annali.org/>) for further information on the contributions' style. For all communications concerning contributions, address the Editor in Chief of *Annali d'italianistica* at annali@elon.edu.

Review Articles and Dialogues with the Authors

This section occasionally publishes extensive review articles and dialogues and interviews with authors. Prospective contributors should contact one of the Co-editors in chief ahead of time.

Italian Bookshelf

The purpose of *Italian Bookshelf* is to identify, review, and bring to the attention of Italianists recent studies on Italian literature and culture. *Italian Bookshelf* covers the entire history of Italian culture and reviews books and journal issues exclusively on the basis of their scholarly worth. To this purpose, junior and senior colleagues will be invited to collaborate without any consideration of academic affiliation and with an open attitude toward critical approaches. Contributions to this section are solicited. Scholars who intend to contribute are encouraged to contact the editors. Book reviews, to be submitted electronically, should be sent to italianbookshelf@gmail.com.

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The tables of contents of all issues are available online. The abstracts of all essays are available starting with volume 38 (2020). As of volume 16 (1998), each issue's introductory essay, and all book reviews are available online with their full texts. As of the 2008 issue, book reviews are published exclusively online.

Annali d'italianistica
2025
Volume 43
**DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:
FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

Technology has advanced greatly and is shaping all branches of knowledge, including the Humanities. Within this rapidly evolving context, *AdI* intends to devote its 43rd monographic volume to Digital Humanities (DH) and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The volume will be edited by prominent scholars, and each has formulated a specific section, whose description follows. We are interested in contributions that address a specific theoretical or practical dimension of the DH and AI debate, such as, for example: how has DH enhanced Italian Studies in scholarship and teaching; how is Italian Studies responding, reacting, and contributing to the challenges brought about by these technological advancements? Are there concrete examples of generative AI applications adopted in the classroom or in research that can provide models or guidance at this stage? Which specific aspects of Italian Studies are or will be affected the most, such as language/culture instruction, theoretical or technological approaches to traditional issues, career paths, etc.? Are there Italian writers, artists, or scholars who have tackled the challenges posed by emerging technologies and who can help us face the present challenges?

The Editors of the volume welcome approaches focusing on both theory and practice according to the following five thematic sections.

I

Artistic Practices and AI in Italian Studies.

To be edited by Adele Bardazzi (a.bardazzi@uu.nl)

This thematic section delves into the intersection of contemporary Italian literary works, including intermedial works, and recent advancements in AI with the aim to investigate to what extent, if at all, it can be helpful to approach these works from an Italian Studies perspective. The inquiry thus intends to investigate how to situate AI-generated works within Italian Studies as well as World Literature. We welcome contributions focusing on questions of authorship, originality, and creativity.

II

Digital Game-Based Scholarship, Teaching, and Learning.**To be edited by Brandon Essary (bessary@elon.edu)**

Video games are ubiquitous. According to a substantial body of research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), they are powerful teaching and learning tools. Many games have complex narratives imbued with literary elements that treat serious topics. These games offer the chance to engage students and scholars with the study of Italian literature, culture, history, and the humanities more broadly, in an engaging, digital way.

III

Author and Authorship Between DH and AI.**To be edited by Paola Italia (paola.italia@unibo.it)**

Through DH and AI, the authorial function can be investigated in all types of manuscripts: from *autograph* to *apograph*, and from *apocrypha* to *fake*. The application of automated methods to famous literary cases have shown the usefulness of an integrated approach not only in the resolution of philological cases, but also in investigating more analytically the mechanisms of literary creation and the multiple forms in which authorship expresses itself at the moment of fragmentation and sharing in the digital ecosystem of textual responsibility.

IV

The AI Emergenc/e/y.**To be edited by Massimo Riva (massimo_riva@brown.edu)**

As generative AI applications, Chatbots and similar technological advancements become more accessible and pervasive, at a societal level, scholars and teachers of Italian Studies face both theoretical and practical dilemmas. Combined with other pre-existing pressures targeting in particularly the humanities, these new difficulties may perhaps amount to an existential challenge to our profession, in addition to many others. This section intends to look at concrete applications of generative AI in the classroom or in research that can provide models or guidance at this stage of technology.

V

Born-Digital Literature and Hybrid Archives.**To be edited by Michelangelo Zaccarello (michelangelo.zaccarello@unipi.it)**

In the last decades, hybrid archives, which combine paper materials with digital (usually magnetic) resources, have flourished. This section seeks to investigate the first authors to adopt a personal computer for their literary creations, and to assess the difficult task of securing their documents, conceived and written in digital form, as well as to evaluate the normative practices for their acquisition and preservation, integrating them into a methodologically sound editing protocol.

This volume will be published in the fall of 2025. Interested scholars are invited to contact the appropriate guest editor of the theme related to their topic, submit a 300-word abstract, and provide a short biographical note. The abstract and biographical note will be due by 31 December 2023. Guest editors will provide to each contributor guidelines to follow and deadlines to respect. Articles will be due by September 2024. Early submissions are encouraged.

Authors should write in the language they are most familiar with, either Italian or English. Typically, articles range between 6,000 and 10,000 words. They should conform to the style-sheet of *Annali d'italianistica* for “Notes” and “Works Cited” (<https://annali.org/publishing/>). All articles will be refereed according to the peer-review policy of the journal (<https://annali.org/peer-review-statement/>).

For any questions, please contact one of the guest editors:

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INTRODUCTION

FASCISM IN ITALIAN CULTURE: 1945-2023

For the past seventy-eight years the ghosts of Fascism have haunted the culture of the Italian Republic. Even though Mussolini's regime, as a concrete political project, was successfully defeated during World War II, Fascism has still not disappeared from the Italian political imaginary, remaining a fundamental part of Italy's collective memory, informing the political discourse promoted by the country's democratic institutions, and subverting the interests of civil society. Debates about the nature of Fascism, its relationship with other dictatorships, and its potential return under new forms have repeatedly circulated across Italian media and have characterised all seasons of Italian politics. These debates have not only affected the discourse surrounding political figures such as Scelba, Fanfani, Craxi, Berlusconi, and Renzi, but have also acquired a renewed centrality in more recent years, as the exhaustion of Western democratic institutions, repeated financial crises, and the electoral success of right-wing populist movements across Europe—which in Italy led to creation of the Meloni government, the first guided by the heirs of the post-Fascist tradition—have given new urgency to the confrontation with Italy's Fascist past.

Italy's persistent fascination with Fascism is closely linked to the historical, political, and cultural mechanisms that attended the birth of the Italian Republic in the wake of the Second World War. Born out of the Antifascist Resistance during the 1943-45 Civil War, democratic Italy was established on the ashes of Mussolini's dictatorship and the ruins left by the German and Allied occupations. The post-war Constituent Assembly of the new Republic enshrined anti-Fascism in the new Constitution, by denying—at least in principle—any attempt to re-launch the Fascist party. A new collective identity was crafted, one centred on anti-Fascism, which aimed to break with the past and create a society that could drastically diverge from the course that society had followed under Fascism. Even in opposition, therefore, the identity of the Italian Republic has been inescapably linked to Fascism from the beginning. If the Resistance has constituted the (always contested, always necessary) point of origin of the renewed nation, Fascism has constituted, on an ontological level, the immediate past of the Republic, the *raison d'être*, the severed root from which Italy once grew, and which might yet grow again.

Italy's Fascist past is unavoidable. Too much of the country's twentieth-century history is bound up with it: the memorialisation of World War I, colonial expansion in Africa, the racial persecutions in the colonies and across the Italian

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peninsula, the Spanish Civil War, the aggressive military campaigns of the Axis War, the Holocaust, the Allied and German occupations during World War II, the Civil War, and the Resistance. None of these events can be understood without reference to Fascism. Yet, confronting Fascism is never only a matter of remembering the past. Continuities between the regime and the democratic Republic are at least as significant as are the many discontinuities that occurred after Mussolini's defeat. Numerous Fascist officials and functionaries continued to serve the Italian state after 1945. The imposing material heritage of public buildings left by the Fascist regime continues to characterise cities throughout the Italian peninsula. Even more importantly, perhaps, numerous cultural attitudes, including expressions of the sexist, paternalistic, racist, xenophobic, and nationalist ideologies that reached their apogee in Mussolini's Italy, continue to influence the culture of the Italian Republic.

The unavoidable presence of this difficult history means that Italians' relationship with Fascism and its manifold legacies is never simple. Often, this relationship consists of silence, the attempt to ignore a shameful historical period covered with blood, which had been spilled with the complicity of whole swathes of Italian society. Instead, in many instances this relationship is expressed through a strong condemnation of Mussolini's project, nurturing political commitment, activism, and the belief in the necessity of looking after Italy's fragile democracy. Yet, for many, the relationship has also included feelings of nostalgia for the regime and its charismatic leader, an indulgent attitude towards the crimes of the dictatorship, a revisionist desire to re-evaluate some aspects of that history, even a renewed support for neo-Fascist movements.

In Italian culture these different attitudes towards Fascism have tended to co-exist, generating a national memory culture that has been at once highly divided but also syncretic in its capacity of keeping together the perspectives and attitudes of extremely diverse political families. The presence of conflicting narratives, together with the widespread conservatism that has usually characterised the Italian electorate, often fascinated by populist leaders, has usually been understood as a sign of Italy's unresolved relationship with its dictatorial past. This interpretation has been embodied in a ready-made motto, which holds that Italy has failed to *fare i conti con il passato*. This perspective appears legitimate when calling for more critical accounts of Fascism, demanding that Italians dedicate themselves to understanding the social mechanisms that made the dictatorship possible, as well as confronting the crimes that the Italians committed as colonisers, invaders, occupiers, enforcers of racist laws, and perpetrators of the human rights violations that were integral to the geopolitical and anthropological revolution that Fascism aimed to attain. The same phrase also works in defense of democratic and anti-Fascist values, demanding that we take the responsibility to safeguard the continuity, indeed that we fight in the present against the racist, xenophobic, ethnonationalist, and discriminatory attitudes that were inherent to the Fascist worldview. While this is all to the good, there is nevertheless some

reason to doubt the validity of the claims that Italians have never managed to *fare i conti con il passato*. An excessive insistence on the limits, insufficiencies, and flaws of Italian memory culture risks conveying a false picture of what is instead a complex relationship with the past.

To assess the varied and often contradictory efforts that Italian culture continues to make, to understand, narrate, and remember Fascism, it is necessary to adopt a truly interdisciplinary approach, weaving together the perspectives about the Fascist past that have developed across media and the arts since the end of World War II. This effort seems particularly important today at a time when the historiographical understanding of Fascism is moving towards greater levels of consensus. While the study of Fascism has long been controversial, leading to divergent interpretations that reflected the conflicting political traditions of their proponents and generated harsh polemics from their opponents, in the past three decades the situation has begun to change. Thanks to works by historians such as Emilio Gentile, Pier Giorgio Zunino, Filippo Focardi, Nicola Labanca, Michele Sarfatti, Giulia Albanese, Alessandro Campi, Sergio Luzzatto, Richard Bosworth, Paul Corner, Victoria De Grazia, Christopher Duggan, Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Roger Griffin, John Foot, and many others, we now have a thorough understanding of the functioning of the Fascist dictatorship as well as the mechanisms that regulated the formation of Italian collective memory in the post-war era. To further enrich the understanding of how the Italian Republic has established a relationship with its dictatorial past, it is fundamental to expand the horizons of enquiry beyond the perimeter of historical research and embrace an in-depth study of cultural production. Only in this way can we develop a more thorough appreciation of the varied ways in which the Italians have addressed the Fascist past. This special issue is an attempt to aid that development, hosting nineteen articles by literary and cultural studies scholars, film and media specialists, historians and visual culture scholars, that reconsider the contributions of literature, cinema, and the visual arts to the conceptualisation of Fascism within the culture of the Italian Republic.

The volume is divided into five sections, which reflect the diverse arts and media that the articles explore. Such dividing lines are at best provisional, an attempt to aid readers in navigating the articles, and they should not be seen as rigid boundaries, which would impede an understanding of the manifold ways in which Italian culture has negotiated its Fascist hauntings. Multiple continuities and similarities run indeed across the articles that make up the volume. For instance, numerous authors have relied on similar theoretical frameworks, such as those of cultural memory studies, theories of intermediality, gender studies, and postcolonial thought, which have proved particularly fruitful in addressing the cultural representation of Italy's dictatorial past. Together with the close reading

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of specific artworks, several contributors have prioritised the study of critical reception, which constitutes a particularly valuable tool to reflect on how artistic representations of Fascism have affected the public discourse. Moreover, across the volume, a number of topics recur, such as the condemnation of Fascism through anti-Fascist cultural practices, the reflection—or the lack thereof—on the idea of responsibility for the past, the articulation of the myth of *italiani brava gente* and its deconstruction through processes of implication, the long-lasting impact of the interpretations of Fascism developed by the political and historiographical discourses, and the identification of areas of resistance to remembering as well as critical perspectives about the Fascist past that fostered the development of Italy's democratic culture.

Section One, entitled “Literary Mediations,” includes articles about Italian poetry and prose. **Samah Abdo** investigates Franco Fortini's verses in *Foglio di via*, showing how this collection of poems approaches Fascism through a series of stylistic and formal solutions that lead the poet to go beyond the hermetic tradition and anchor his verses to his autobiographical experiences under the regime. Abdo argues that it is this strong referential link with reality that informs Fortini's political and civic commitment and his poetic treatment of Fascism. **Guido Bartolini** reconsiders two novels by Vasco Pratolini and Alberto Moravia, *Un eroe del nostro tempo* and *Il conformista*, identifying in the two texts a common dialectic between normality and abnormality that generates two interrelated but eventually divergent conceptualisations of Fascism. Through a close reading of these texts in dialogue with their postwar critical reception, Bartolini discusses some of the limits of Italian memory culture, which tended to conceptualise Fascism as a form of deviance, and shows how Moravia's often misunderstood novel articulates a courageous critical account of Italians' implication in the dictatorship. **Anna Taglietti** focuses on Giuseppe Berto's oeuvre, reconstructing the author's shifting perception of Fascism. Disillusioned by Italy's defeat in the war, Berto disavowed his previous Fascist sympathy without however embracing the postwar celebration of anti-Fascism, which he perceived as both illiberal and opportunistic. Operating at the margin of the literary field, Berto develops what Taglietti considers an honest reflection on the Fascist experience, which relied on irony and on the existential and psychoanalytical traits of his writing. Wielding an intermedial approach, **Mara Josi** analyses Elsa Morante's *La Storia* and its 1986 cinematic adaptation by Luigi Comencini through theories of cultural memory studies and affective narratology. Josi considers the narrative strategies through which the novel and the film put forward a strong indictment of all forms of fascism, emphasising in this way the relevance that the novel and its adaptation had in Italy's memory culture. Reading one of the contemporary authors whose literary production is most closely linked to the Fascist experience, **Fabrizio Miliucci** explores the complex role that Fascism plays in Antonio Pennacchi's oeuvre. Miliucci shows how in narrating the history of the marshland reclamations in the Lazio region, Pennacchi

approaches Fascism as a question of identity, of belonging to his local community of Latina. Yet in Pennacchi's works, Miliucci argues, Fascism goes beyond a historical or ethnographic reconstruction, becoming the means to express a mythical conception of time in which a mild condemnation of the main crimes of the dictatorship are combined with an empathy towards the defeated of history.

The subsequent two sections of this special issue concern Italian cinema. Section Two, "Cinematic mediations," includes articles that analyse individual films. **Lorenzo Fabbri** moves from the disruptive power of Maaza Mengiste's literary depiction of Italian colonial atrocities to analyze the political, ethical, and mnemonic significance of the 1945 compilation documentary *Giorni di gloria* and its remediation in the 1962 documentary *All'armi siam fascisti!*. Fabbri explains how the films weaponize an archive of obscenities and insurgencies that not only address the Fascist past through a radical anti-Fascist perspective but also contest capitalist hegemony and promote the decolonisation of Italian national culture. **Valentina Geri** reconsiders one of the gems of Italy's comic cinema, Dino Risi's 1962 *La marcia su Roma*. Objecting to more conventional readings, which have tended to see the film as rather too lighthearted, simplistic and perhaps even apologetic in its representation of Fascism, Geri shows that it is possible to use Risi's work to articulate a more complex narrative of Italy's Fascist past, which both questions the myth of *italiani brava gente* and reveals the responsibility of ordinary citizens under the dictatorship. **Sarah Patricia Hill** adopts disability studies to show how the depiction of anti-normative bodies in Italian films has functioned as a metaphor for ideas about national identity, providing new insights into the Fascist past. Using comedies of the 1960s as case studies, Hill argues that depictions of bodily distress and impairment attest to a gendered anxiety that stemmed not only from the rapid changes that consumerist society caused to gender norms but also from the traumas that World War II and the fall of the Fascist regime brought about. **Rebecca Bauman** offers a comparative study of Italian and German fascist-themed cinema. Discussing films by Fellini and Schlöndorff, Scola and Sanders-Brahms, Cavani and Fassbinder, Bauman reflects on the use of cinematic spectacle for conveying fascist history, arguing for the emergence in the cinema of the 1970s of a transnational memory aesthetics that combines Hollywood conventions, practices of the French New Wave, and politically engaged perspectives, and forces the audience to confront fascism through a dialectic of ambivalence and repulsion.

In Section Three, "Cinematic Interventions," articles address the discourse that surrounds cinema, discussing film reception and the processes of adaptation. **Maurizio Zinni** delves into three decades of film criticism, analysing how Marxist intellectuals discussed some of the most important films about Fascism. Offering a tripartite periodisation running from the end of the war to the 1970s, Zinni detects the tensions within left-wing culture, noting how the discourse around the cinematic representation of Fascism became a crucial field to advance ideas about Italian politics and society. The importance that film reviews play for

the understanding of how the past is interpreted and remembered in a given time is also at the centre of the article by **Thomas Cragin**. Focusing on the critical reception of the Taviani brothers' 1982 film *La notte di San Lorenzo*, Cragin argues that this was the object of very divergent interpretations on the Left and the Right, a reflection of the film's capacity to connect with two different memory narratives and to bridge the anti-Fascist activism of the 1970s and the late twentieth century's anti-partisan revisionist thinking. **Luca Peretti** reconstructs through archival research the numerous attempts that have been made to adapt Ennio Flaiano's *Tempo di uccidere* for the big screen. The history behind films that were never realised and the analysis of Giuliano Montaldo's 1989 adaptation reveal the troublesome relationship that Italy established with its colonial past, demonstrating how Flaiano's story worked as a palimpsest that could both overlook and highlight critical aspects of colonial history. Presenting her upcoming essay film *Family Remains*, which reconstructs the vicissitudes of her grandfather and his two brothers who lived through the Fascist *ventennio*, **Giuliana Minghelli** uses her own positionality and family history to develop a heartfelt reflection on the Italian memory of Fascism. Combining philosophy, historiography, and literary and cinematic criticism, Minghelli argues for a memory from below that can further historical understanding by regaining the sense of the personal and everyday life under the regime, which constituted a series of affected experiences whose transgenerational transmission was already disrupted, prior to the fall of the regime, by Fascist education. The article is closed by an extensive excerpt from the film script that showcases the elegant and poetic language of Minghelli's intervention in Italy's mnemonic culture.

In section Four, "Monuments and Visual Art," articles approach the material and visual heritage of Fascism. **Lara Pucci** considers the difficult re-semanticisation of Fascist monuments in postwar culture by studying a little considered source: the picture postcards portraying Fascist-era sites that continued to be posted after the fall of the dictatorship. Facilitating the encounter between private citizens and public architecture, the postcards combined different temporalities and spatialities, argues Pucci, contributing to the normalisation of the architecture of the regime as cultural heritage. **Elgin Eckert** brings us to South Tyrol, a multicultural area where the development of the memory of Fascism was strongly affected by the tensions between the Italian and German speaking communities. Exploring Fascist heritage through the study of the well-known Victory Monument in Bolzano/Bozen and the little-considered Alpini Monument in Brunick/Brunico, Eckert contextualises sites of memory in relation to South Tyrol's history and politics, and she advocates for curatorial practices that can transform heritage sites into spaces for critical reflection over past wrongs. Closing the section is **Francesca Billiani**, who discusses contemporary street art, focusing on works by artists such as Jorit and Cibo and the murals created in the popular neighbourhoods of various Italian cities closely intertwined with the history of anti-Fascism. Tracing the connections between these forms of public

art and the projects commissioned during the regime, she explores both the continuities and discontinuities between Fascist and contemporary visual culture, showing how recent murals articulate an anti-Fascist discourse crafted around the political censure of fascism as a transnational phenomenon.

In section Five, “Cultural and Media Studies,” **Jessica Harris** centres her analysis on the African American actress Lola Falana, active in Italian cinema and television in the late 1960s and 1970s. Embodying at once Italy’s fascination with American stardom and the sense of otherness generated by her blackness, Falana’s career provides a privileged ground to explore the contradictions of postwar Italy, pervaded by American cultural imperialism and the continuities with Fascist culture. Harris proves the survival of a latent Fascist rhetoric in the culture of the Republic by showing how the postwar discourse around Blackness cannot be disentangled from the racist attitudes of the Fascist era and the colonial mentality that began with Liberal Italy. **Andrea Ventura** reconstructs how RAI television programmes addressed the Fascist past from the postwar years to the reform of public television in 1975. Through careful archival research, Ventura showcases the fundamental pedagogical and opinion-making function of postwar public television, arguing that the study of television programmes can reveal crucial aspects of the evolution of Italy’s attitudes towards its dictatorial past throughout the decades. Focusing on one of the main literary cases of the past few years, **Maria Bonaria Urban** studies the first volume of Antonio Scurati’s tetralogy on Mussolini’s life. Combining literary criticism with theories of cultural memory studies, intermediality, and media studies, the article reveals the relevance of the Scurati phenomenon for contemporary Italian memory by reconstructing the media ecology in which it was published, the ways it was re-mediated, and how it was received by common readers. Besides studying the novel, the article shows the fundamental role of Scurati himself who, acting as a public intellectual and memory activist, becomes an active agent in the construction of the meaning of his novel and in its dissemination across contemporary mass-media.

Taken together, the essays included in the five sections of this special issue of *Annali d’italianistica* indicate the range and complexity of Italy’s cultural memories of Fascism. In literature, cinema, television, the visual arts, and beyond, Italians have depicted and dissected the Fascist past—and the neo-Fascist present—in ways that necessarily call into question the truism that the country has never managed to *fare i conti con il passato*. In many ways, the opposite is true: albeit partial, fraught, compromised by silences, and unable perhaps to balance the ledger, efforts to come to terms with the history of Fascism have characterised the decades that span from the end of World War II to the present day. This volume attempts to capture something of the nature of these efforts, and something of their evolution in recent years. We hope that it provides not only

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new perspectives on Italy's complex cultural memory, but also renewed inspiration for further research in the years to come.

Guido Bartolini
Charles Burdett
Charles L. Leavitt IV
Giacomo Lichtner
Giuliana Pieri