

THE
LONDON
LIBRARY

A guide to the Italian collections

Scope of the collections and collecting policy

The London Library's remarkable Italian collections represent an extensive resource of research level interest covering a variety of subject areas, but with particular strengths in Fine Arts, Literature and History.

Since its inception in 1841, the London Library has actively collected material relevant to Italian studies and its remit. In the past, for selection and acquisition purposes, the Library relied on the expertise of eminent scholars and Italianists, many of whom were members of the Library.

The Italian émigrés and political exiles Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), a personal acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) founder of the London Library, gave his advice on the Italian materials to be acquired and provided Carlyle with a list of *desiderata* which constituted the original core of the Library's Italian collections.

The Italian Collections have grown steadily over time – suffering, perhaps inevitably, during the two world war periods (1914-1918 and 1939-1945). They include books in Italian, published in Italy or about Italy, reflecting the interest of the British public for Italy, its culture and its civilisation. The Library has continuously maintained an active acquisition policy and benefited from several important donations and bequests. Valuable works have been donated to the Library by keen collectors of Italian materials and distinguished scholars such as historians A.J.P. Taylor, G.M. Trevelyan and the Dante scholar Paget Jackson Toynbee, to mention a few.

To capture the full extent of the Collections it is necessary to draw attention at the outset to their presence in many sections not labelled as “Italian”. There are notable strengths in: Art, covering all periods and aspects; Literature, including important critical editions; History, with an emphasis on the Renaissance and the Italian Risorgimento; Biography; and good representation in other subject areas. In those sections where only a token presence is to be found, the Library is nevertheless keen to augment the collections further. Even in those fields, such as Italian Philosophy, the Library holds the representative work of all major authors and a selection of others.

Italian material in the Social Sciences is acquired more selectively. All influential authors are represented however and the Library holds the work of writers and scholars such as: Gaetano Mosca, Antonio Gramsci, Norberto Bobbio. Works by historical scientists (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo Galilei, etc.) are acquired but collecting is otherwise limited to the history of science and modern developments at a general reader level. With a few exceptions (e.g. Gianni Rodari) children's books are not purchased.

Within the Italian Collections, books are acquired primarily in English and Italian, although other languages are represented too. At its core are approximately 25,000 items in Italian. It is recommended that the online catalogue is consulted for locations of specific works.

For further information, suggestions or comments on the Italian Collections please contact Andrea Del Cornò
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Literature

The Library acquires materials in all areas of Italian literature. The Italian Literature Collections include all the major Italian writers, from Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Ariosto and Tasso to Foscolo, Leopardi, Manzoni, Verga, D'Annunzio, Calvino, Sciascia and Moravia.

The Library maintains a strong collection in all areas of Italian literature and drama, from the medieval and Renaissance periods onwards, including literary philosophy and theory. Critical studies, scholarly editions and works of reference are present too. The Dante Collection merits special mention. A sizeable number of works were donated in 1910 by the Dante scholar Paget Jackson Toynbee, Fellow of the Oxford Dante Society. In addition to several editions of Dante's complete works and critical commentaries both in Italian and English, the Library possesses the series *Lectura Dantis* for the years 1889-1934, *Il giornale dantesco* for the years 1894-1915 (v. 1 to v. 23), the original edition of Paul Colomb de Batines's *Bibliografia dantesca* published 1845-1846, and the monumental *Enciclopedia dantesca* [R.R. Lit. Dicts., Italian, Dante] published by the Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana. Of note are the *Comedia di Dante degli Allagherii col commento di Jacopo di Giovanni della Lana*, published in 1864-1865 in honour of the city of Bologna, birthplace of Jacopo della Lana, author of one of the first commentaries on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and the so-called *Dantino*, one of the smallest-sized editions of the *Divine Comedy* ever produced using cast-metal moveable types (its dimensions are 57 x 34 mm).

The fiction section [L. Italian Fiction] complements the holdings and offers a rich array of works from the "classics" to more contemporary authors such as Umberto Eco, Andrea Camilleri, Elena Ferrante and others. The section includes scarce works which are no longer readily available but still part of the Italian literary canon.

Located on the 3rd floor of the Literature Stacks in the St. James's Building, the Italian Literature Collection is arranged within the following subject subdivisions:

L. Italian Anthols.: includes poetry and prose anthologies and collected works of more than a single author.

L. Italian Drama, Hist. of: includes works and studies of general criticism on Italian Drama and its history.

L. Italian Fiction: includes a wide range of novels and short-stories, all in the original Italian. All major authors, past and present, are represented.

L. Italian Fiction, Trans.: includes translations of Italian fiction into languages other than English.

Please note that Italian works of fiction translated into English are to be found in the main **Fiction** section of the Library in the Central Stack.

L. Italian Lit., Hist. of: includes works on the general history of Italian Literature and comprises standard works from dating from the 19th century such as *Storia della letteratura italiana* by Girolamo Tiraboschi; *Compendio di storia della letteratura italiana* by Natalino Sapegno; *Letteratura italiana* edited by Alberto Asor Rosa, etc.

L. Italian Lit.: includes editions of collected works by all major Italian authors, in addition to individual works of poetry, drama and essays by a wide range of authors. This section includes scholarly editions, works of criticism and commentaries.

History and Biography

The History section [**H. Italy**], located on Level 3 of the Back Stacks, includes works covering the history of Italy and the Italian Peninsula from prehistory to the present with an emphasis on the Renaissance, the Risorgimento in particular, the First and Second World War periods and Fascist Italy. The depth of the holdings covering the Unification of Italy and the Risorgimento was praised in a letter by the historian G. M. Trevelyan which is preserved in the Library's archives. Post-1945 history is also well represented. The core of the Collection, dating from the 19th century, has been maintained and continuously augmented and the Library holds many 19th and 20th century standard historical works such as Spellanzon's *Storia del Risorgimento*, *Storia d'Italia: Annali* published by Einaudi and *Storia d'Italia* published by UTET.

Other notable holdings comprise Muratori's *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (including the Argelati edition dated 1723-1751), Muratori's *Annali d'Italia* and Alberti's *Historiae patriae monumenta*. In addition, the Library holds primary sources, such as the series *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, albeit currently incomplete, and other official publications.

The shelfmark **H. Italy, Constit. Hist.** (immediately following **H. Italy**) includes works on Italian governmental institutions and constitutional history.

The shelfmark **H. Italy, Social &c.** includes a rich array of works on Italian social, cultural, and economic history. Particularly well-covered are subject areas such as: the Italian "Economic Miracle" of the 1970s, the divide between the North and South, and the transition from the "First" to the "Second Republic", though some works on this latter topic may be found in **H. Italy** due to their specific content.

Several of the independent states, cities or geographical areas which constituted Italy before its unification in 1861 have been assigned individual shelfmarks as for example:

H. Milan
H. Naples
H. Piedmont
H. Sicily
H. Tuscany

A complete list of shelfmarks is readily available at the Issue Desk and on the Library's website. Works of history on circumscribed geographical areas may be found in **Topography** due to their specific content. Additionally present are shelfmarks for individual Italian kings and queens. These comprise biographies as well as works covering the history of the period. Examples include:

H. Carolina of Naples
H. Charles Albert, King of Sardinia
H. Murat (J.), King of Naples
H. Victor Emanuel II, King of Italy
H. Victor Emanuel III, King of Italy

The shelfmark **H. Colonies, Italian** includes works on all Italian colonies (additional materials can be found in the corresponding History section for a specific country, such as **H. Abyssinia**, **H. Eritrea**, **H. Libya**, etc.) and Italian colonialism generally.

The shelfmark **H. Army, Italian** includes works on Italian military history. A sizeable amount of additional material can be found in **H. European War I** for works relating to the First World War and in **H. European War II** for works relating to the Second World War. There are also individual shelfmarks relating to particular events or periods such as: **H. Renaissance**; **H. Turco-Italian War** (related to the Turco-Italian war of 1911-1912).

Please note the separate sequences for oversize books on Level 2 of the Back Stacks, such as: **H. Italy, 4to.** and **H. Italy, folio**. Each of these shelfmarks can be found in its alphabetical position in the History section, across Levels 2, 3 and 4 of the Back Stacks.

Material on the history of the Papacy is to be found under the shelfmark **H. Papacy**.

Material on the history of ancient Rome is to be found under the shelfmark **H. Rome (Ancient)**.

Material on the Mafia and organised crime in Italy is to be found under the shelfmark **H. Secret Societies**.

Material on Etruscans and Etruria is to be found under the shelfmark **H. Etruria**.

Biographies and autobiographies, including diaries and correspondence, of notable Italian figures, are located in the main **Biography** section on the 3rd and 4th floors of the Central Stack.

Most monarchs and rulers have been assigned their own shelfmarks within the **History** section on Level 2, 3 and 4 where biographical works and works covering specific periods can be found. The Library holds extensive biographical material on literary authors, artists, philosophers and statesmen. Members' attention is drawn to autobiographical materials and correspondence of literary authors being included in the **Literature** section.

Collections of biographies are to be found under the shelfmark **Biographical Colls.** located on the 3rd floor of the Central Stack.

The Library's wide-ranging collection of biographical dictionaries, shelved in the North Bay of the main Reading Room, under the shelfmark **R.R. Dicts., Biography**, includes a number of works on Italian authors, artists, and notable historic figures, such as the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, the *Dizionario del Risorgimento nazionale* by Michele Rosi, and the *Biographical and bibliographical dictionary of the Italian humanists and of the world of classical scholarship in Italy, 1300-1800* by Mario Emilio Cosenza.

Fine and Applied Arts¹

The Library's extensive collection of material on Italian, artists and architects – located in the Art Room, off the Main Hall on the Ground Floor and through T. S. Eliot House – represents one of the major strengths of the Italian Collections. All periods and aspects of Italian art are covered. Catalogues raisonnés and exhibition catalogues for art exhibitions held in the United Kingdom, United States and Italy are systematically acquired, together with catalogues of major museums and art galleries.

The Art Collections include an extremely rich array of material on Italian art, history of Italian art, and artists, primarily in Italian and English. Books in Italian on general art history and criticism are present too.

Within the Collections' arrangements, books covering more than one form of art are shelved at **A. Art**. Books on individual artists can be found in the subsections related to a specific form of art (e.g. **A. Painting, Caravaggio**; **A. Sculpture, Michelangelo**; **A. Architecture, Bernini**, etc.). Additionally other shelfmarks such as **A. Christian Art**, **A. Illumination of Manuscripts**, include a sizeable amount of works relevant to Italian art.

¹ For further details on the Art Collection holdings please refer to our Guide to Art Collections.

Works on Italian cinema and Italian film directors can be found in the section **A. Cinema &c.**

Throughout the art collections, it is important to note that for every subject area the sequences comprising oversized books (labelled **4to.**, **small folio** and **folio**) are as equally rich as the main book sequence (octavo).

Topography and travel

The Library's sizeable **Topography** collections are located on Level 1 of the Back Stacks. The **Topography** collections include archaeology, architecture, geography, local history, travel writing and some older guide books. Please note that in addition to the main subject sequence there are two further sequences for oversized books (labelled 4to., and folio respectively).

The shelfmark **T. Italy** covers a wide range of subject areas, comprising works on Italian geography, archaeology, and the history of individual towns and cities, including buildings, churches, museums etc. The collection includes some maps, plans, and a notable range of memoirs and travellers' impressions by foreign visitors to Italy particularly as part of the Grand Tour.

In addition to the shelfmark **T. Italy**, there are individual shelfmarks for several geographical areas. Examples include:

T. Piedmont

T. Riviera

T. Sardinia

T. Savoy

T. Sicily

A complete list of shelfmarks is readily available at the Issue Desk and on the Library's website.

Works on the city of Rome have been grouped under the shelfmark **T. Rome** – Rome being one of the three world cities (together with London and Paris) to which an individual shelfmark has been assigned. **T. Rome** includes works on Rome, its surroundings and the Vatican City.

The Library's main collection of **Guide Books** is located in the Issue Hall gallery. All guide books are available for loan.

In addition, the Library possesses the *Guida d'Italia del Touring Club Italiano* (54 volumes) held, for reference only, in the Reading Room.

Philosophy and Religion

The Library's **Philosophy** collection (located on the 3rd floor of the Central Stack) focuses on primary texts: the works of all major Italian philosophers such as Giordano Bruno, Giambattista Vico, Benedetto Croce, etc. are represented.

The Library's **Religion** section is located on the 5th floor of the Central Stack (oversize 4to. volumes are shelved in a separate single sequence **R. Religion, 4to.** on the 6th floor). This section includes various versions of the Bible in Italian or Latin shelved at **R. Bible, R. Old Testament, R. New Testament** and the shelfmarks **R. Italy, Eccles. Hist.** and **R. Church & State** covering the religious history of Italy and Church-State relations since Italian Unification. Volumes in **Religion, folio** are kept in secure accommodation but can be made available for consultation in the main Reading Room.

Languages, dictionaries, etc.

A wide collection of Italian language dictionaries is available in the main Reading Room at **R.R. Dicts., Italian** – ranging from the *Grande dizionario italiano dell'uso* edited by Tullio de Mauro to the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* edited by Salvatore Battaglia.

Older language dictionaries can be found in the **Philology, Italian** section (Basement) and are available for loan. The **Philology, Italian** section comprises a range of works, in both Italian and English, about the Italian language, including its history, grammar and usage, and dialects. Titles include: *Osservazioni della lingua italiana raccolte dal Cinonio* (1809-1813); *The Italian language today* (1979) by Anna Laura and Giulio Lepschy; *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (2006) by Tullio de Mauro. Dictionaries and glossaries of some of the most popular Italian dialects are also present as well as a facsimile reproduction of the *Vocabulario italiano* by Tesaurus Emanuele.

Science and Miscellaneous

Works by Italian authors are represented through the **Science and Miscellaneous** section (located on Levels 4, 5 and 6 of the Back Stacks) covering a great variety of topics. For example, works by Galileo Galilei can be found in the section **S. Astronomy**, and works by Antonio Gramsci can be found in the section **S. Social Science**. The Library possesses the fifty volume work *Scrittori classici italiani di economia politica* shelved at **S. Political Economy**. Other relevant shelfmarks include: **S. Food; S. Garden; S. Music; S. Opera**.

Bibliography and Library Catalogues

The **Bibliography** collection (located on the 5th floor of the Central Stack) comprises a good selection of Italian related bibliographies and library catalogues.

The section **Bibliog. Italian** covers bibliographies of books written in the Italian language or published in Italy across all subjects.

Bibliographies of books on Italian history can be found at **Bibliog. History, Europe** such as *Bibliografia dell'età del Risorgimento* and *Bibliografia dell'età del Risorgimento 1970-2001*.

Bibliog. Topography &c. (Gen.) includes bibliographies of works on particular places such as *Viaggiatori italiani e stranieri in Sicilia* by Giuseppe Pitrè or *Bibliografia storica delle città e luoghi dello Stato Pontificio* by Ranghiasci Luigi. Bibliographies of works of particular authors can be found at **Bibliog. Biog.** followed by the name of a particular author, such as for example **Bibliog. Biog., Verga**.

Bibliog. Libraries includes works on notable Italian libraries including the Vatican Library and the Vatican Secret Archives.

Library catalogues, including some Italian ones, can be found at **Bibliography (Gen.)**.

For details of online catalogues of libraries with collections of Italian interest see the section on Internet resources below.

Material on the history of Italian printing and the book-trade in Italy is to be found under the shelfmarks **Bibliog. Printing** and **Bibliog. Publishing**.

Reference works

The core Reference collection is located in the Library's main Reading Room (on the first floor of the St. James's Building).

At the shelfmark **R.R. Dicts, Italian** there is a range of reference copies of Italian-language dictionaries. Additionally, the section includes reference works on Italian literature, such as the *Oxford companion to Italian literature* (2002) and *Cassell dictionary of Italian literature* (1996).

The Library possesses general encyclopedias in the Italian language, shelved in alphabetical order (by title) in **R.R. Encyclopedias**. Titles include: *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti* [i.e. *Enciclopedia Treccani*] and the *Enciclopedia italiana* published under the editorship of Giovanni Gentile.

Some dictionaries and other works of reference such as *Dizionario del Risorgimento nazionale*, *Dizionario dell'Unità d'Italia*, *Dizionario della Resistenza* are located in their respective section and available for loan.

“Nozze” Special Collection

Originally part of the Italian Literature section, there is a Collection of nuptials – writings printed on the occasion of marriage - or “Per Nozze” publications. Outside Italy this collection represents a unique resource the importance of which is comparable only to the collection of nuptials or epithalamia held at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence.

The Library’s “Nozze” Collection (held within the Special Collections) amounts to in excess of 1700 pamphlets, bound together in 144 volumes and boxes numbered in sequence and divided into “Poetry”, “Prose” and “Miscellanea” according to their content. Of these writings, over 800 have been published anonymously. The earliest item within the Collection is *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo Don Francesco Medici Gran Duca di Toscana et della sereniss. sua consorte la Sig. Bianca Cappello* by Raffaello Gualterotti, dated 1579. Several works feature fine engravings and printers’ devices and, in some cases, the original bindings have been preserved. The Nozze Collection includes a number of publications which were not intended to celebrate marriage but rather different occasions, such as all kinds of anniversaries, the taking of religious vows and promotions. These, more correctly, are usually referred to as *ingressi*, *gratulatorie*, or *pubblicazioni d’occasione*.² Some of the works held by the Library appears to be unique and not recorded in any Italian libraries.

A facsimile collection of writing “Per Nozze” compiled by the archivist and local historian Luigi Fumi, published recently by the Istituto Artistico Orvietano, is available in the Literature section [**L. Italian Lit.**].

The Nozze Collection holdings are viewable through Catalyst under the tab “Collections”.

Rare Books Collections

The Library possesses a notable collection of early printed books dating from the early 16th century including various works in Latin and Italian, or otherwise printed in Italy. The earliest Italian book owned by the Library is *Commento di Hierony. B. sopra a piu sue canzone et sonetti dello amore et della belleza divina* by Girolamo Benivieni (a portrait of whom can be seen at the National Gallery). The book, a collection of ascetic poetry and a late example of incunabula, was printed in Florence and is dated 1500.

² Further reading: Pettoello, Alberta *Libri illustrati veneziani del Settecento: le pubblicazioni d’occasione*, Venezia: Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2005.

In among the riches of the Italian material within the Rare Books Collection, the work of the Venetian printer Aldo Manuzio merits special mention. The Library has in its possession a 1502 edition of Dante's *Terze Rime*. Other rarities include a first edition of Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, printed in Venice in 1505 by Aldus Manutius and a first edition of Antonio Corso's *Rime*, printed in Venice in 1550, of which only six copies are known to be extant.

Amongst the Italian authors represented are: Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Alciati, Palladio, Tasso, D'Annunzio, Marinetti.

Some of these works are enriched by splendid examples of woodcut illustrations and, in some cases, the original bindings have been preserved.

Material within the Rare Books Collection can be borrowed in compliance with the Library's rules or, when not available for loan, books can be made available for consultation at the Library.

Periodicals and Journals

The Library subscribes to a small number of current periodicals that are of interest for Italian studies. The Library retains open-access collections of early periodicals. This section includes amongst others the following journal titles:

Archivio Storico Italiano

La Critica: rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia

Giornale critico della filosofia italiana

Giornale de' Letterati d'Italia

Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana

Nuova Antologia

Nuova Informazione Bibliografica

Il Risorgimento italiano: rivista storica

Rivista Storica Italiana

Studi Medievali

Additionally, the Library possesses some facsimile reprints of journals and periodicals, such as a complete run of *La Rivoluzione Liberale*, the short-lived journal published under the editorship of Pietro Gobetti (**Old Periodicals, folio**); the *Apostolato Popolare* edited and produced by Italian exile Giuseppe Mazzini (**H. Italy, 4to.**), *Il Monitore Napoletano* (**H. Naples**); *Il Repubblicano* (**H. Bologna**).

The Library subscribes to *L'Indice dei libri del mese* a monthly journal of book reviews. Most current issue is available on request.

Societies Publications

The Library collects and holds various academies and learned societies publications (located in the Upper Basement, adjacent to the Times Room). Amongst publications relevant to Italian studies are: *Studi Veneziani*, published by the Fondazione Cini of Venice, works published by the Accademia dei Lincei and by the Regia deputazione di Storia Patria.

At the shelfmark **Societies, Hist. of** there are accounts of the history of several Italian societies and learned institutions.

Electronic Library

Through the Library's website members can access, via both the Library's terminals or remotely, a wide range of electronic journals, databases and other electronic publications (www.londonlibrary.co.uk/elibrary/index.asp). Amongst others, journals of relevance to Italian studies are *Italian Studies*, *Studies in the Renaissance* and *I Tatti*.

Additionally, the Library enables members to access JSTOR, the electronic periodicals archive providing access to back-runs of over 750 periodical titles, including, for example, the journals *La bibliofilia*, *Studi Storici* and *Italica*.

Italian newspapers

<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	https://www.corriere.it/
<i>La Repubblica</i>	https://www.repubblica.it/
<i>La Stampa</i>	https://www.lastampa.it/
<i>Il Sole 24 Ore</i>	https://www.ilssole24ore.com/

(of particular interest is the Sunday edition dedicated to fine arts, literature, history, science, books reviews, etc.)

Italian book reviews

<i>L'Indice dei libri del mese</i>	https://www.lindiceonline.com/
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Library catalogues

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

www.bnconfirenze.sbn.it

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma

www.bnccrm.librari.beniculturali.it

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana Venezia

marciana.venezia.sbn.it

EDIT: censimento nazionale delle edizioni italiane del XVI secolo

edit16.iccu.sbn.it

Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico OPAC SBN

opac.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/informazioni.jsp

Manus online: censimento dei manoscritti delle biblioteche italiane

manus.iccu.sbn.it

UK-based societies and organisations

British-Italian Society

www.british-italian.org

Friends of Italian Studies

Modernlanguages.sas.ac.uk/about-us/Italian-friends

Italian Cultural Institute London

www.icilondon.esteri.it/IIC_Londra

Italian Studies Library Group

<https://webislg.wixsite.com/islg>

Society for Italian Studies

www.sis.ac.uk

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