



Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

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Tutto Italiano

Benvenuto a *Tutto Italiano*

Florence is the home of the Renaissance. It was there that some of the greatest creative minds turned their thoughts into words, paintings, buildings, sculptures, and music, changing the history of the world.

At a gathering in 1546, a discussion of the artists of the time led to a book that – even with its shortcomings of erroneous information and a heavy focus on the artists of Florence – is considered a masterpiece. *Vite de' più eccellenti Architetti, Pittori, e Scultori, Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, chronicles the artists of the thirteenth through the early sixteenth centuries. First published in 1550 with an expanded edition published in 1568, *Vite* was written by writer, architect, and painter [Giorgio Vasari](#), who is considered to be one of the first art historians. Vasari was the first to describe the period as *Rinascita*, Italian for rebirth ... revival ... renaissance. The book includes some fictional accounts of the artists' lives and has various translated editions. Even so, it provides an insider's view into the lives of acclaimed artists who are better known for their visual accomplishments.

[Giorgio Vasari: Abridged Biographies](#)

[Medieval Sourcebook: Lives of the Artists, Selections](#)

The Renaissance City

A [recent article in the Travel Section](#) of *The New York Times* provided an overview of Florence, with some highlights of the city. The article included restaurants, gardens, museums, hotels, and other information.

One highlight is [Palazzo Medici Riccardi](#), designed by [Michelozzo di Bartolomeo](#) for Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici in 1444. It's often referred to as the first Renaissance palace, a new type of building – a large square with straight windows, pillars, and rusticated (rustic, stone-like) exterior surfaces. In 1659, the building was sold to Marquis Gabbriello Riccardi, and renovations, over a period of sixty years, included extensions and interior changes to a Baroque style. The building was purchased by the city of Florence in 1874 and a museum was established on the first floor in 1929. Since then, the museum has expanded.

[Palazzo Medici Riccardi](#): History, Museum, Exhibits

[Architecture in Renaissance Italy](#)

Another prominent highlight is [Villa Bardini](#), a fourteenth century hilltop home that has been converted into a cultural center and houses two museums. One exhibits the artwork of twentieth century realist [Pietro Annigoni](#), who was inspired by the artists of the Renaissance (view his painting [La Strega](#)). The other [museum showcases the magnificent sculptured dresses](#) of fashion designer Roberto Capucci.

[The Roberto Capucci Museum](#), article in *The Florence Newspaper*

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