

Glossary

A

abbacare v. to daydream

abbacchiato slang for someone
beaten down physically or
mentally

abbacchio n.m. baby lamb that has
been nourished only by its
mother's milk

abbaiare v. to bark

abboffarsi or *abbuffarsi* v. to stuff
oneself to the bursting point

abbondante adj. abundant, plentiful

a cazzo (an approximation) poorly
executed

acqua n.f. water

addio n.m. farewell

affetto n.m. affection

affezione n.f. affection, attachment

agio n.m. a sense of comfort and
ease

aiutino n.m. a little bit of help

albergo n.m. hotel

alla burchia in a hurry, piled up at
random, higgledy-piggledy

alla frutta literally "in the fruit,"
slang for being fed up

allegro adj. quick, lively

altissimo adj. very high
(*altissimo coglione* a highest-level
idiot)

altro n.m. other

allievo n.m. pupil

al verde in the green, out of money

amabile adj. lovable, adorable

amami love me

amante n.m.f. lover

amaretto n.m. almond biscotto

amato adj. beloved

amatore (n.m.), *amatrice* (n.f.)

a lover of something, such as
wine, music, or the fine things in
life

amicizia n.f. friendship

ammucchiato adj. heaped together

amore n.m. love

amoroso adv. amorous

anche adv. also

anguria n.f. watermelon (used
more in the north of Italy)

anima n.f. soul

animato adj. spirited

ano n.m. anus

anno n.m. year

aperto adj. open

GLOSSARY

- appetito* n.m. appetite; used also to reference an unbridled romantic passion
approfondire v. to go deeper
ardore n.m. ardor
argento n.m. silver
arrapato adj. horny
arrugginito adj. rusty
arte n.f. Florentine dialect for a guild
artigiano n.m. artisan
asciugamano n.m. towel
aspettare v. to wait
assaporare v. to taste, savor, enjoy
attimino n.m. tiny little moment
audace adj. bold, audacious
autista n.m. chauffeur
autoaffondare v. to self-sabotage
autoveicolo n.m. motor vehicle
avaro n.m./adj. miser; stingy, tight
avvocatuccio n.m. small-time lawyer
azienda n.f. business, company
Azzurri n.m. Blues, the national Italian team
azzurro-azzurro adj. intensely blue, sky blue
- B**
- babbo* n.m. daddy
baccalà n.m. dried cod, slang for someone who is uptight
bacino n.m. tiny little kiss
bacio n.m. kiss
bambino n.m. baby
bancho n.m. counter, origin of “bank”
barcollare v. to sway or move like a boat
barzelletta n.f. funny story
basso adj. low
bastardo n.m. a bastard
battesimo n.m. baptism
battibecco n.m. bickering, a noisy argument over something trivial
becchino n.m. gravedigger
beccone n.m. a big cuckold
beffa n.f. prank
- bel canto* operatic singing
belli di natura natural beauties
bellino n.m. little beauty
bello adj. (m.), *bella* (f.) beautiful, nice
beltà n.f. beauty
benestanti adj. well-off
bestemmiare v. to swear
bestia n.f. beast
bicchiere n.m. glass
bimbo n. (m.), *bimba* (f.) a child
birboncello n.m. rogue
bistecca n.f. steak
bloggista n.m. blogger
boccaccesco adj. spicy, racy, dirty, lewd
bollente adj. boiling hot
bontà n.f. goodness
bottega n.f. shop
brache n.f. (pl.) breeches, trousers, slacks, and their makers
braghettoni slang for big underpants makers (used for the painters who covered Michelangelo’s nude figures)
brama n.f. romantic craving, longing
bricconcella n.m. a troublesome sprite
briccone n.m. rascal
brigata dei crusconi n.f. literally “brigade of crusty ones” (became the Accademia della Crusca)
brindisi n.m. toast
bronzo ignivomo fire-vomiting bronze (cannons in opera lyrics)
bugiardino n.m. little liar; the term doctors use for the patient information insert for a prescription drug
bugiardo n.m. liar
buona forchetta hearty eater
buonanotte n.f. good night
buonasera n.f. good evening
buongiorno n.m. good day, good morning
buongustaio n.m. food lover

- busta* n.f. envelope
bustarella n.f. bribe, envelope with money inside
- C**
- caballo* n.m. vernacular for nag, morphed into *cavallo*, for horse
cacio sui maccheroni cheese on macaroni
cafone n.m. an ignorant bumpkin (*cafone impertinente* an officious ass; *cafone maleducato* an ill-mannered fool; *cafone ripugnante* a disgusting boor; *cafone rozzo* a crude slob; *cafone sciocco* a tasteless boob; *cafone senza gusto* a tasteless jerk)
calcio n.m. soccer
caldo adj. hot
calduccio adj. nice and warm
calzini, calzette, calze, calzettoni, calzettini n.f. (pl.) socks in various dialects
calzoncichi di Gesù Bambino pillows of stuffed pasta fried and then sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon; served at Christmastime
cambusa n.f. galley on a boat
cambusiere n.f. person who prepares food on a boat
camera n.f. room
camerata n.f. salon, club, association; also a dormitory or big bedroom shared by several people
canti carnascialeschi n.m. (pl.) carnival-related festivities
canti della risaia n.m. (pl.) songs of the rice field
canzoniere n.m. songbook
caotica adj. chaotic
capire v. to understand (*ho capito* I've understood)
capo n.m. head, boss
capomastro n.m. master builder
caponi n.m. (pl.) big heads
- cappellacci alla zucca* squash pasta shaped like crumpled caps
caput mundi head of the world
carità n. charity
cartellate n.f. sweets named for the cloths that cradled the baby Jesus, served at Christmastime
casa n.f. house, home
castello n.m. a castle
castrato n.m. a singer castrated before puberty to preserve his high voice
cavalier servente or *cicisbeo* n.m. an Italian man who flagrantly courted married women
cavallo n.m. horse
cazzo n.m. vulgar slang for penis
cazzone n.m. a prick, prat, fool
cazzotto n.m. punch
cenci n.m. rags
Cenerentola Cinderella
cenone n.f. a great holiday dinner
censore n.m. censors
centro n.m. the heart of the city
c'era una volta once upon a time
certo adv. certainly
cervellone n.m. big brain
chiacchierare v. to chat
chiarissimo adj. most clear
chiaroscuro n.m. the contrast of darkness and light
chiesa n.f. church
chiocciola n.f. snail; @ key of computer keyboard (*scala a chiocciola* spiral staircase)
ciambellone n.f. ring cake
ciao informal way of saying "hi" or "bye"
cielo n.m. heaven, sky
cinema muto n.m. silent films
cinetografo n.m. a machine that recorded, developed, and projected films
Cinquecento n.m. 1500s
città n.f. city
civetta n.f. literally, an owl; also a flirt (*civettino* a precocious boy)

- flattering a pretty woman;
civettone a boorish lout flattering a pretty woman; *civettina* an innocent coquette; *civettuola* a brazen hussy)
coccolona adj. cuddly
cocomero n.m. watermelon (used more in south of Italy)
coglione n.m. literally “testicle”; more generally, loser or fool
colpo della strega n.m. strike of a witch, term for a back spasm
colpo di fulmine n.m. stroke of lightning; love at first sight
colombeggiare v. to kiss like doves, bill and coo
colti adj. educated
cominciamo v. (first-person plural of *cominciare*) let’s get started
commosso adj. moved, touched
commovente adj. moving, touching
complimenti n.m. compliments, regards
conciossiacosachè conj. a pretentious literary term for “since”
conquistatore n.m. ladies’ man
contrappasso n.m. punishment perfectly suited to the crime or sin; most famously used by Dante in his *Divine Comedy*
copia n.f. abundance (used in literature and poetry)
cornice n.f. picture frame
corona n.f. crown (*tre corone* the three crowns of Italian literature: Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca)
cosa n.f. what, thing (*cose dell’arte* the things of art or artistic matters; *cose italiane* Italian things)
coscia n.f. thigh
cotoletta n.f. cutlet
cotto adj. literally, “cooked”; slang for having a crush on someone
croce e delizia n.f. torment and delight (from Verdi’s *La Traviata*)
crusca n.f. chaff or bran
cucina n.f. cooking, kitchen (*una cucina italiana* an Italian kitchen; *cucina del ritorno* homecoming cooking; *cucina principesca* princely cooking)
culo n.m. coarse term for buttocks (*culetto* sweet little baby bottom; *culoni* big butts, nickname for Americans)
- D
da asporto to carry away
damerino n.m. dandy
Dantista n.m. Dante scholar
darci del tu to use with each other the informal “you”
denaro n.m. money
desiderio n.m. desire, longing
deus ex machina “god from a machine” (Latin)
difficoltà (*difficoltà* in contemporary Italian) n.f. the technical and aesthetic challenges of creating works of beauty
dire v. to tell, to say (*dimmi* tell me, informal; *mi dica* tell me, formal; *dire pepe* tell pepper or use “salty” language)
disinvolto adj. spontaneous, free and easy
dito n. finger (*dita degli apostoli* “fingers of the apostles,” crêpes filled with sweetened ricotta)
diva n.f. goddess, movie star
dizionario n.m. dictionary
dolce adj. sweet
dolcezza n.f. sweetness
domani mattina tomorrow morning
domenica n.f. Sunday
donna n.f. woman (*donnaccia* ugly woman)
doppiatore n.m. film dubber
dove adv. where
dubbio n.m. doubt

E

ecci the sound of a sneeze
ecco here
emozionante adj. exciting
emozionata adj. excited, moved
essere v. to be
estremità n.f. extremity; poetic
 word for foot
etichetta n.f. etiquette; label

F

faccia n.f. face
facoltà n. faculty
falsificatore n.m. forger,
 counterfeiter
fare v. to make or do (*fare una bella*
 or *brutta una figura* behave in a
 way that gives either a good or
 an ugly impression; *fare respirare i*
morti making the dead breathe;
fare alla romana go dutch; *fare le*
fusa purr; *fare il fesso* make or
 act the fool)
farfalla n.f. butterfly
fazzoletto n.m. handkerchief
fegato n.m. liver; slang for courage
fettuccine n.f.pl. golden egggy
 noodles
fico n.m. fig; slang for “vagina”
fiction n. film for TV
figlio di buona donna son of a good
 woman, alternative to the vulgar
figlio di puttana (son of a whore)
fiore di zucchine n.m. fried zucchini
 flower
film parlato n.m. talking film
filone n.m. genre
fischiare v. to whistle (*fischiettare*
 whistle with joy)
fotoromanzo n.m. picture magazine
fregarsene v. literally to “give oneself
 a rub” (*me ne frego* “I don’t give a
 damn”)
fritta e rifritta adj. fried and refried;
 slang for a story that’s been told
 over and over again

frullone n.m. a sievelike device that
 separated wheat from chaff to
 produce flour
fuoco fire
furbo n.m. cunning enough to pull
 off a clever deception (*furbacchione*
 or *furbacchiotto* trickster)
furtivo adj. hidden, secretive

G

galeotto n.m. a seductive ploy or
 whatever brings two lovers
 together
gamba n.f. leg (*in gamba* on top of
 one’s game)
garbo n.m. pitch-perfect
 combination of style and grace
garbuglio n.m. muddle
gaudente n.m. pleasure-lover,
 -seeker
gelosia n.f. jealousy
giada n.f. jade
giallo adj. yellow
giudizio dell’occhio n.m. judgment of
 the eye
gola n.f. throat
golf n.m. a pullover
goloso adj. greedy (for food)
gomma Americana n.f. chewing gum
gradisca v. (from *gradire*) may it
 please you
grammatica n.f. grammar
gramo adj. wretched, miserable
(i) grandi n.m.pl. Italy’s greatest
 artists and authors
grazia n.f. grace, gracefulness
grillo n.m. cricket
grotta n.f. cave
grottesca adj. grotesque, artistic
 style based on drawings from
 Roman excavations
guerra n.f. war

I

idiota n.m./adj. idiot
ignorante adj. ignorant

GLOSSARY

- imbranato* adj. slang for clumsy or awkward
imparadisato adj. lifted into heaven
importantissimo adj. of great importance
incazzato adj. angered, pissed-off
inferno n.m. hell
ingarbugliarsi v. get oneself into a muddle
innamorati della lingua lovers of the language
innamorato adj. enamored
intermezzo n.m. intermission
invecchiare v. to become old
involto adj. rolled, wrapped up; parcel, bundle
inzuppato adj. soaked, drenched
italianissimo adj. very, very Italian
italianità n.f. the essence of being Italian
- L**
lacrima n.f. tear (*lacrime d'amore* tears of love; a type of candy)
ladro n.m. thief
lardo n.m. fatty tissue sliced from the subcutaneous layer of a pig's abdomen
lattuga n.f. lettuce
lecca lecca n.f. literally "lick-lick"; a lollipop
leggiadria n.f. gracefulness
leone n.m. lion
lettura n.f. reading
libretto n.m. little book; opera lyrics
lieta brigata n.f. a particularly amiable conversation group, from Boccaccio's Decameron
lieto fine n.m. happy ending
lingua n.f. language; tongue
lingue di suocera n.f. (pl.) pasta named for twisted mother-in-law tongues
lirica n.f. Italian word for opera; lyrics
litigioso adj. quarrelsome
- loggione* n.m. compressed gallery of cheaper seats in an opera house
luna rossa n.f. red moon
lupa n.f. she-wolf; historically used as slang for prostitute
lupanare n.m. brothel
- M**
macchina n.f. car
macedonia n.f. a mess; fruit salad
macinato adj. milled into flour
maestro n.m. title for conductor, instructor
magnifico adj. magnificent
magò n.m. magician
malavita n.f. bad life, criminal life
maleducato adj. ill-bred or rude
malocchio n.m. evil eye
mangiamaccheroni n.m. (pl.) macaroni eaters
mangiapreti n.m. literally "priest-eater"; anti-cleric
mano n.f. hand
medico n.m. doctor
melodramma n.m. a generic term for any story set to music
melomania n.f. a mania for music
membro n.m. limb; slang for penis
meno male thank goodness
meravolosamente (obsolete)/
meravigliosamente (current) adv. marvelously
meraviglia n.f. marvel or an extraordinary delight
merda n.f. vulgar slang for excrement
merenda n.f. snack
mezzogiorno n.m. the midday sun; term for southern Italy
minestra n.f. soup
minestra riscaldata n.f. old reheated fare
minestrone n.f. a big, hearty soup
mi piacerebbe I would like, it would please me
moglie n.f. wife

mozzo n.m. ship's boy
muscolo n.m. muscle

N

naso n.m. nose
nasone n.m. big nose
nastrino n.m. ribbon
nave n.f. ship
nebbiolo n. the Piedmont wine
 whose name (little fog) describes
 the region's typical weather
neutrino n.m. particle even smaller
 than the neutron, coined by
 Enrico Fermi
ninna-nanna n.f. children's song
nodi degli innamorati n.m. lovers'
 knots (type of cookie)
nonna n.f. grandmother
notaio n.m. professional scribes
novella n.f. news or novelty
nube n.f. cloud

O

occhi di Santa Lucia n.m. (pl.)
 literally "eyes of Santa Lucia,"
 circles of durum bread
opera n.f. work
opera amorosa n.f. labor of love
opera buffa n.f. comic opera
opera seria n.f. serious opera
osteria n.f. originally a tavern;
 casual restaurant

P

padrone n.m. master of the house,
 owner
pala n.f. shovel-like paddle that
 bakers used to slide loaves of
 bread from an oven
palco n.m. ornate boxes of an
 opera house
palla n.f. ball
pancia n.f. belly
pane n.m. bread
panforte n.m. strong bread; a
 Sienese specialty
panino n.m. a sandwich

panni n.m.pl. rags
pantaloni n.m.pl. pants
paracadutista n.m. parachute
 jumper
paradiso n.m. heaven, paradise
parlare v. to speak
parola n.f. word
parolaccia n.f. dirty or bad language
parolone n.f. big meaningless word
parterre n.f. the open area in front
 of the stage
pasticcio n.m. a hodgepodge,
 jumble, or mess; a common
 name for pie
pasticcio di maccheroni n.m. meat
 and macaroni pie
pazzo adj. crazy
pellerossa n. American Indian;
 literally redskin
pesce n.m. fish
petrarchino n.m. small book
 popular in Renaissance
petroliere texano n.m. Texas oilman
pezzo n.m. piece
piagnoni n.m.pl. snivelers and
 whiners; term for followers of
 the friar Savaranola in fifteenth-
 century Florence
piazza n.f. a town square
pici n.m.pl. rolled pasta, specialty
 of Umbria
piede n.m. foot
pietra dura m.f. hard stone
pioggia n.f. rain
piolo n.m. ladder's step, rung (*scala*
a pioli stepladder)
pizzo, pizzetto n.m. little piece of
 hair; goatee and mustache
poetucolo n.m. untalented poet
polentoni n.m.pl. big eaters of
 polenta; slang for northern
 Italians
polpettone n.m. a large meatball;
 slang for a worthless or banal
 movie
popolo magro n.m. the skinny or
 poor people

- porca miseria* the equivalent of “oh, damn”
porca vacca damn cow; often substituted for *porca putana* (damn whore)
pranzo n.m. lunch
precipitazione n.f. rain
prezzemolo n.m. parsley; slang for a busybody
primavera n.f. spring; also the title of Botticelli’s iconic painting
primo n.m. first course of a meal
principe n.m. prince
problema n.m. problem (*problemino* small problem)
prodigo n.m. spendthrift
pronto adj. ready
prosecco n.m. a sparkling Italian wine
psichiatra n.m. psychiatrist
pugno n.m. fist
punto affettuoso n.m. an affectionate period; Renaissance term for the exclamation point
purgatorio n.m. purgatory
puttana n.f. a whore
puttanesca n.f. savory sauce named for Italy’s ladies of the evening
- Q**
qualcosa n.f. something
- R**
raccolta n.f. collection
rammentare v. to remember (with the brain), for facts
rassettatura n.f. a reordering
riamato adj. reloved
ricco n.m. rich
ricordare v. to remember (with the
 7
rimembrare v. to remember (with the body), for physical sensations
rinascita n.m. rebirth (root of “Renaissance”)
risorgimento n.m. resurgence (*Il Risorgimento* was the campaign for the unification of Italy in the 1800s)
- Romanesco* n.m. local Roman dialect
rosolare v. to make golden, roast brown
russare v. to snore
ruvidezza n.f. roughness, used to describe Verdi’s powerful music
- S**
sacchetto n.m. small sack
saggio n.m. wise man
salame n.m. salami; slang for a silly fool
salvagente n.f. lifesaver
salvare v. to save
saper vedere to know how to see, a mantra from Leonardo da Vinci
sapienza n.f. wisdom
sbaffo n.m. smudge
sbriciolare v. to crumble
scala n.f. ladder, stairs
scalco n.m. carver, steward
scapigliati n.m.pl. loose, messy hair; members of Scapigliatura (an artistic movement founded in Lombardia in the late nineteenth century)
scarpetta n.f. little shoe; reference to soaking up the last of pasta sauce with a bit of bread
sceneggiatore n.m. playwright
scherno n.m. scorn, derision
scherzare v. to joke
schiaivo n.m. slave
sciacquare v. to rinse
scilinguare v. to babble
scilinguagnolo sciolto loquacity, gift of the gab, chattiness
scimmia n.f. monkey
scolatura n.f. the very last drop from a bottle of wine, dregs
scopa n.m. a popular card game, from word for “sweep”
scureggione n.m. an old fart

- secondo me* according to me
sedia, seggiola, or seggia n.f. chair, seat
sempre libera always free, from Verdi's *La Traviata*
seno n.m. breast or, more precisely, the delicate spot between a woman's breasts
settimana n.f. week
sfumatura n.f. nuance, subtle shading
signora n.f. lady
sistemarsi v. to organize one's life
smacco n.m. defeat, failure, humiliation, shame
smeraldo n.m. emerald
smoking n.m. tuxedo
società n.f. society
socio n.m. member of a group
sonetto n.m. little poem
sorella, suora, sore, serocchia, sirocchia, sorocchia, suoro n.f. sister, in various dialects
sorridere v. to smile
sostenitore n.m. supporter
sovramagnificentissimamente adv. in a very, very, very magnificent way, a word coined by Dante
spasimanti n.m.pl. literally "sufferers of spasms of love"
spasimo n.m. spasms
spazzare v. to sweep (*spazzamento* a good sweeping; *spazzatina* a dusting)
spazzatura n.f. trash
spazzola n.f. a brush (*spazzolino da denti* a toothbrush)
spezzare v. to snap, to break (*un cuore spezzato* a broken heart)
spiriti n.m. spirits
spiritoso ignorante clever ignoramus
sporaccione n.m. dirty old man
sporche adj. dirty
spot n.m. commercial
squillo n.m. telephone ring
stalla n.f. horse stall or pigsty
stella n.f. star
stile gonfiato n.m. inflated style (of opera lyrics)
storia n.f. history; story
strada n.f. road
stradaccia n.f. bad road
stronzo n.m. vulgar word for excrement; turd
strozzapreti n.m. priest-stranglers; type of rich pasta
stupire v. to amaze, surprise, astonish
stuzzicadenti n.m. toothpick
suina n.f. swine
- T
tacchino n.m. turkey
tavola imbandita n.f. an elegant table
telefoni bianchi n.m. (pl.) white telephones; comic movies popular in Italy in the 1930s
telefono azzurro n.m. twenty-four-hour hotline for abused children
tempio n.m. temple
tenerazza n.f. tenderness
terra n.f. land
terribilità n.f. terribleness, the word most associated with the forceful work and fierce temperament of Michelangelo
terroni n.m.pl. peasants who work the land
terzina n.f. type of rhyme
testa n.f. head
ti amo I love you (used only for the loves of one's life)
tic-tac sound of clocks
tiramisù n.m. literally "pick me up," popular layered Italian dessert
ti voglio bene expression of love and affection that means "I wish you well"; conveys "I want all good things for you"
tradizionale adj. traditional
tremare v. to tremble
tremendo adj. terrible
triste adj. sad

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GLOSSARY

turpiloquio n.m. the formal term
for foul language

U

ufficio n.m. office (now in use:
uffico)

università n.f. first defined as a
corporation, then as a body of
students

V

valigia n.f. suitcase

vangelo n.m. gospel

vecchio n.m. old

velina n.f. showgirl, scantily clad
woman on television (*velinesco*
slim and coy)

venticello n.m. nice little breeze

vento n.m. wind

ventre n.m. abdomen

vermicelli n.m.pl. little worms, type
of thin pasta

vincerò v. "I will win," from
Puccini's *Aida*

viola adj. violet

VIP n.m. very important person,
pronounced "veep"

viso n.m. face, used more in
written than in spoken Italian

vizio n.m. vice

voglia n.f. a wish, the first degree
of desire

voglio v. (from *volero*) I want

volgare n.m. vernacular; now
vulgar, gross

volto n.m. visage

Z

zanna n.f. animal's fang

zappa n.f. farmer, hoe

zerbinetto n.m. lady killer

zerbino n.m. doormat, person so
passive he is treated as a doormat

zia n.f. aunt

zio n.m. uncle

zuccotto n.m. sponge bombe filled
with ice cream

zuppa n.f. soup