

CONTENTS

Foreword by John H. Coatsworth, Provost of Columbia University in the City of New York ix

Foreword by Armando Varricchio, Ambassador of Italy to the United States xi

Foreword by Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City xiii

Introduction 1

1 The Dawn of Italian Studies at Columbia University:
Lorenzo Da Ponte (1825–1838) 5

2 After Da Ponte: Eleuterio Felice Foresti and His Successors (1838–1911) 11

3 The Casa Italiana: The Realization of an Ambitious Dream (1920s) 19

4 Giuseppe Prezzolini, Controversial Casa Director,
and World War II (1930s and 1940s) 31

*Appendix A: From Lorenzo Da Ponte to Charles V. Paterno:
Libri Italiani at Columbia University by Meredith Levin* 59

Appendix B: Anatomy of the Casa Italiana's Façade by Francesco Benelli 65

*Appendix C: The Casa Italiana Educational Bureau: A Research "Fact-Finding Institution"
Studying the Italian-American Community by Javier Grossutti* 69

Acknowledgments 73

Notes 75

Color plates follow page 50

“Some day the story of the founding of the Casa Italiana will be written, based on memoirs in archives, on articles in little Italian periodicals of the time, on reminiscences of survivors. Then it will be discovered that the many flaws in the character of the Italians were counterbalanced by the wise moderation of the American administrators of the University, which had donated the parcel of land on the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 117th Street.”

Giuseppe Prezzolini

“Non esiste una storia della Casa Italiana. Si ha solo, in ciclostile, una Historical Survey of the Casa Italiana dell’allora Bibliotecario dell’Università, Roger Howson.”

Olga Ragusa

