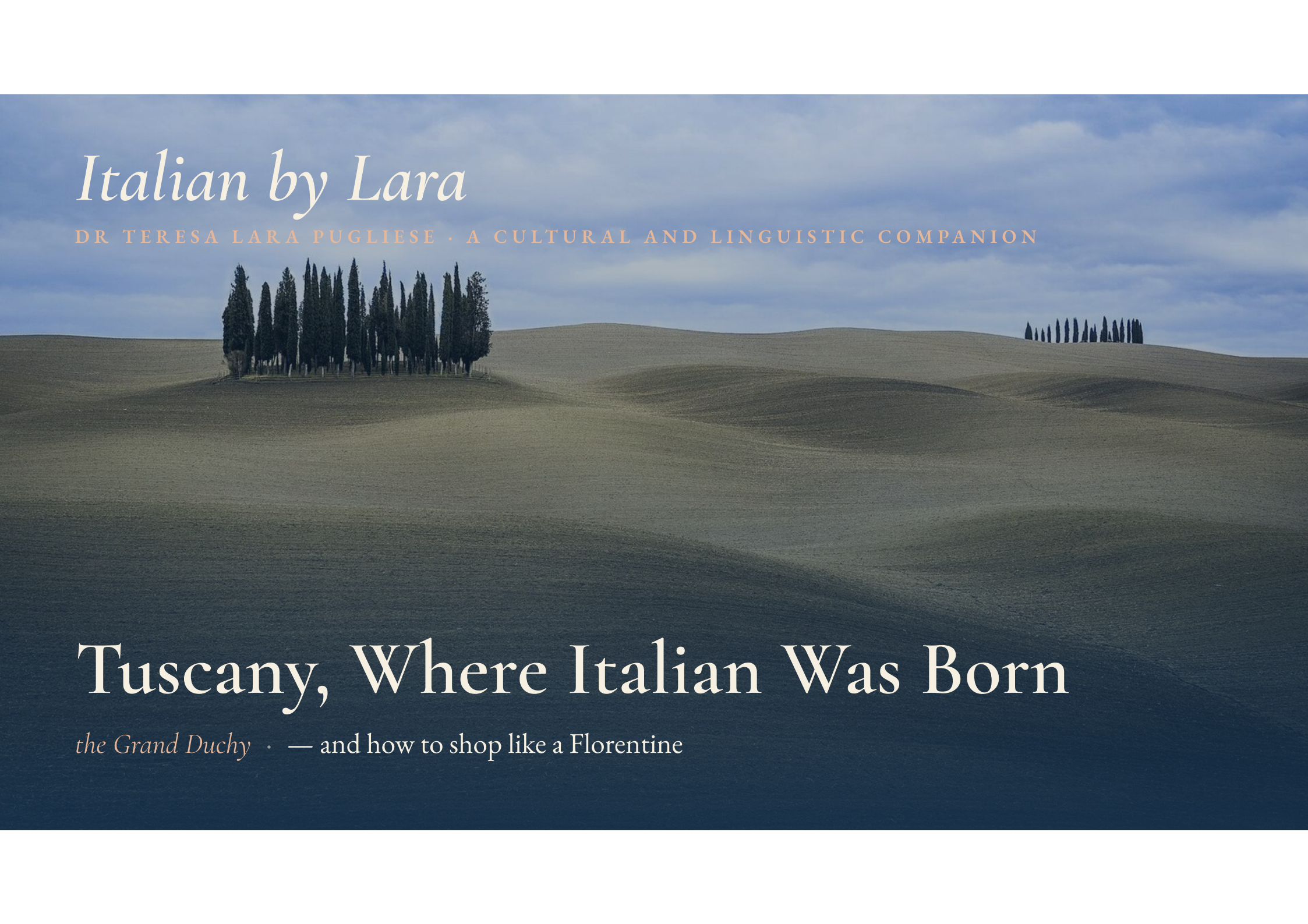




Italian by Lara

DR TERESA LARA PUGLIESE · A CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPANION

Tuscany, Where Italian Was Born

the Grand Duchy · — and how to shop like a Florentine

BENTORNATI — THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Two Nations Behind Us

- The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies — *visited*
- The Papal States — *visited*
- Today — the Grand Duchy of Tuscany

The smallest of our old nations — and maybe the most beautiful. Florence. Siena. San Gimignano.

Today the course keeps its biggest promise: how the Italian language was born here.



TYPE IT IN THE CHAT — EASIEST QUESTION YET... OR IS IT?

What language are you
learning in this course?

Go on — it is not a trick. Well... not entirely.

NOT EXACTLY. YOU ARE LEARNING FLORENTINE.

1861 — the Year Italy Could Not Speak Italian

~2.5%

of Italians spoke Italian at unification

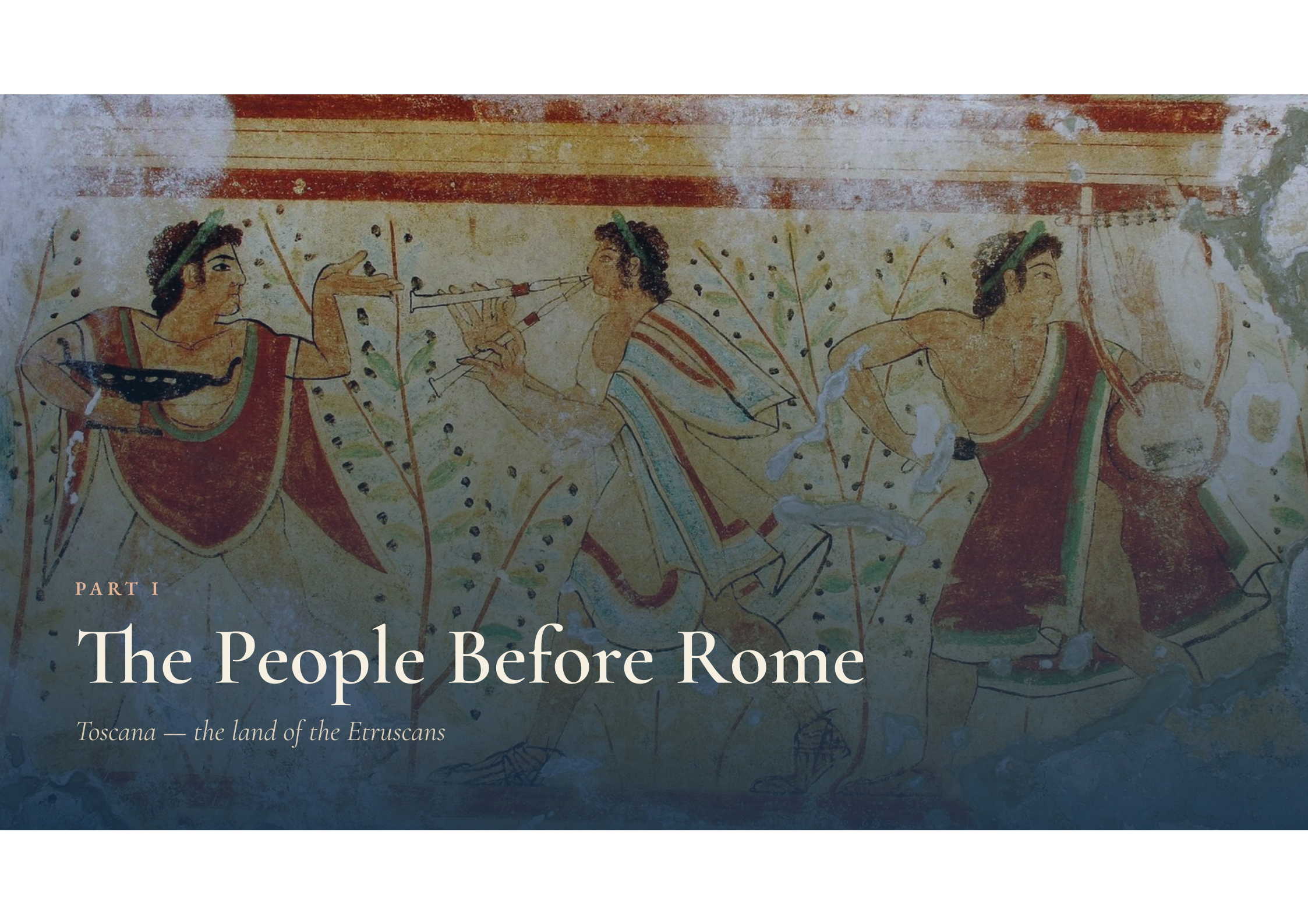
Out of every hundred Italians, **ninety-seven did not speak Italian**. They spoke Neapolitan, Venetian, Sicilian, Milanese — the languages of the old nations. The national language was, for nearly everyone, *a foreign language*.

MYSTERY ONE

Why did the speech of **one mid-sized city** — not Rome, not Naples — become the language of everyone? *The answer lies with a poet in exile.*

MYSTERY TWO

How do you turn a language **almost nobody speaks** into a language everybody speaks? *The answer lies with a wooden puppet.*

A fresco from an Etruscan tomb depicting three male figures in a musical performance. The figure on the left wears a red tunic and a green headband, gesturing with his right hand. The central figure, also in a red tunic and green headband, plays a long, double-reed wind instrument. The figure on the right, wearing a red tunic and a green headband, plays a large lyre. The background is decorated with stylized green plants and small black dots. The fresco is set within a room with a red and white striped wall.

PART I

The People Before Rome

Toscana — the land of the Etruscans

SAY THE REGION'S NAME, AND YOU NAME A VANISHED PEOPLE

Toscana — Land of the *Tusci*

Walk into an Etruscan tomb and you find no gloom — you find **banquets, music, dancing**, couples reclining together at dinner, smiling. The famous *Etruscan smile*.

The Greeks were scandalized: Etruscan women dined **with the men, as equals**, at the same table.

They looked at eternity — and decorated it like a dinner party.

A HALF-READ PEOPLE

Their language is only **partially deciphered** — not related to Latin, its origins still debated.

We only partly know who they were — and that is half their charm.

ROME, THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PUPIL

What Rome Learned in These Hills

The arch

the great Roman arch of every aqueduct —
and the Colosseum itself

The toga

with the gladiatorial games, the reading of
omens — even early kings of Rome

The vine

wine made in these hills and shipped, in elegant ceramic jars,
to what is now France — **twenty-six centuries ago**

The Chianti you will taste on this trip is not a **product** of these hills. It is a **habit** of these hills — one of the oldest habits in Europe.

ITALIAN BY LARA



CITIES THAT RULED THEMSELVES — IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The Medieval Manhattan

il comune

the self-governing city-republic — merchants, bankers and guilds; no king, elected councils, written constitutions

72

towers at the peak — pure ego, no practical purpose

I4

survive — the oldest sibling rivalry in Italy, frozen in stone

My tower is taller than your tower — therefore my family is greater than your family.

SIENA — THE MIDDLE AGES, CONTINUED

Il Palio

90 seconds — bareback riders, three laps of the Piazza del Campo

17 *contrade* — the Owl, the Dragon, the She-Wolf, the Snail, the Tower...

For life — a Sieneese is baptized into the contrada, marries in it, feuds for it

Calling it a horse race is like calling the Super Bowl a ball game. *Campanilismo in its purest surviving form* — and you will stand on that very square.



1252 · THE COIN THAT CONQUERED EUROPE

il fiorino

Named for the lily on the city's coat of arms — always the same weight, always the same purity of gold. Decade after decade, no cheating.

In a world where every prince debased his coinage the moment he needed cash, Florence simply... *didn't*.

From London to Constantinople — the dollar of the Middle Ages



THE PROOF IS IN YOUR WALLET — AND IN YOUR ENGLISH

The Bench That Became the Bank

il banco

the moneychanger's wooden bench in the street — the bench **is**
the bank



banca rotta

“broken bench” — smashed in public when a banker failed. Say it
quickly: **bancarotta... bankruptcy**

Invented here: double-entry bookkeeping · letters of exchange · branch
banking · credit — by 1400 the Medici were bankers to kings and popes.

*So you were not entirely wrong earlier — the whole world has been speaking a
little Florentine for seven hundred years.*

BORN 1265, NEAR THE DUOMO · EXILED 1302, FOR LIFE

Dante, the Exile

il Padre “the Father” — of the language you are learning

Banished from Florence on pain of being **burned alive** — twenty years wandering the courts of Italy.

He wrote that in exile he learned to eat *the bread of others* — hold on to that phrase; it comes back in a few minutes, and it will taste of Tuscany.

He died in Ravenna in 1321 — *and never saw Florence again.*



MYSTERY ONE — SOLVED

He wrote Paradise in the language of the street.

il volgare

the “vulgar tongue” of the Florentine street — not Latin. The intellectuals were appalled: scripture, in slang.

le tre corone

the three crowns — Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio: within one generation, Florentine was a literature.

1861

the new Italy chooses one language — not mighty Naples, not papal Rome. It chooses Dante.

You are learning the language of a poem. When you say buongiorno, Dante would understand you perfectly.



MONEY BECOMES BEAUTY

Il Rinascimento

Brunelleschi's dome, raised in the 1430s — the largest masonry dome ever built, *still today*. He learned from the Pantheon — and outdid it.

Michelangelo carved the David from a block other sculptors rejected as ruined. **Botticelli** painted spring itself.

Leonardo — a boy from the Tuscan village of Vinci; that is all “da Vinci” means — filled his notebooks in Tuscan.

And from **1865 to 1871**, while everyone waited for Rome, the capital of Italy was... *Firenze*. Of course it was.

MYSTERY TWO — AT UNIFICATION, 4 ADULTS IN 5
COULD NOT READ

The Hero Is Made of Wood

Le avventure di Pinocchio

Carlo Collodi — a Florentine journalist — 1883

Forget the cartoon. The real book is **one of the most serious books in Italian literature**, wearing a puppet costume.

Old Geppetto sells his **only coat, in the cold**, to buy Pinocchio a spelling book — a father freezing so his child can go to school.

Pinocchio sells the book for a puppet-show ticket — and every disaster that follows befalls a boy who cannot yet read the world.



MYSTERY TWO — SOLVED

Learn to read — or the world will ride you.

In the Land of Toys, boys who never open a book slowly turn into donkeys — and are **sold**. Collodi was not inventing a nightmare; he was describing the Italy of 1883.

~80%

of Italians at unification could not read or write — in the South, nine in ten

260+

languages — Pinocchio became Italy's schoolbook, then very nearly the world's most translated book

The language you are learning was born in a poet's exile — and delivered to the nation by a woodcarver's sacrifice.



A THOUSAND YEARS OF STUBBORNNESS, BAKED INTO A LOAF

Bread Without Salt

pane sciocco

in Tuscan it means both “unsalted”... and “*silly*”. Silly bread.

Salt was precious, taxed — and it came through the territory of **Pisa, the enemy**. Rather than surrender to a tax, Florence changed the recipe.

Unsalted bread does not compete with food — it **serves** it: salty pecorino, rich sauces, olive oil, la scarpetta.

Dante in exile: “how salty is the taste of other people's bread.” Not only a metaphor — homesickness, for a Florentine, has a flavor.

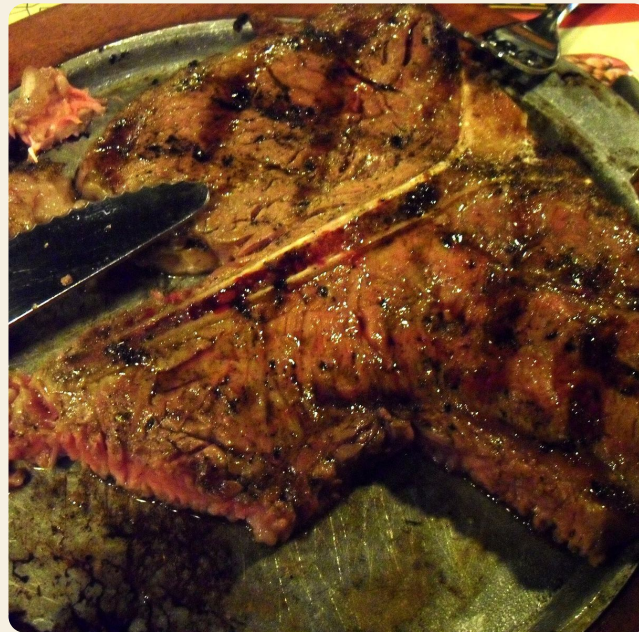
POVERTY, MADE INTO VELVET

The Tuscan Table



la ribollita

“the re-boiled” — yesterday's soup, thickened with stale bread. Nothing is thrown away.



la bistecca alla fiorentina

thick-cut Chianina beef, grilled rare — and rare is not a suggestion.



cantucci e vin santo

dip, soften — history dissolves on your tongue.

Baked twice — in Italian, *bis-cotto*. What Americans call *biscotti*, Tuscans call *cantucci* — the word was Tuscan all along, hiding in plain sight. Just like “bank”.

A BORDER DRAWN BY A BIRD

The Black Rooster

il Gallo Nero

the seal on every bottle of Chianti Classico

Two cities, one border, one race at cock's crow. Siena fed a magnificent white rooster royally. Florence **starved a scrawny black one** — and the furious bird crowed in the middle of the night.

The Florentine knight rode hours early — and nearly all of Chianti fell to Florence, **without a single sword drawn**.

Is it true? It is told — and in Tuscany, that is its own kind of true. Even the wine is a monument to campanilismo... and to reading the contract carefully.





THE PROMISE OF THE PRICES — KEPT AT LAST

Andiamo al mercato!

the two prettiest sounds · the numbers, gently · the shopping toolkit · a gift, like a Florentine

THE PRETTIEST SOUND IN THE SYSTEM — SOFT AS SILK, LIKE “MILLION”

GLI — the Silken Sound

tagliatelle

the glorious ribbon pasta, waiting on the stall

aglio

garlic — the soul of the kitchen

una bottiglia di Chianti

a bottle of Chianti — the sentence you will actually need

famiglia

family — the most important word in the culture, said like a caress

THE LAST SOUND — LIKE THE “NY” IN “CANYON”

GN — and the System Is Complete

gnocchi

the little potato dumplings — and their old friend *lasagna*, which you have pronounced correctly for years

signore · signora

sir · madam — you will BE one, twenty times a day: “*Prego, signora!*” — “*Grazie, signore!*”

Vowels · doubles · C and G · the silent H · QU · GLI · GN — **the reading system of Italian is now complete in your hands.** There is no word left you cannot read aloud.

GENTLY — ONLY THE ONES YOU TRULY NEED

The Numbers

uno

1

due

2

tre

3

quattro

4

cinque

5

sei

6

sette

7 — you knew it!

otto

8

nove

9

dieci

10

The honest tens:

venti

20

trenta

30

quaranta

40

cinquanta

50 — QU, twice!

cento

100 — the queen; no “one” in front

sete thirst · sette seven — you have been counting for three weeks without noticing.

ITALIAN BY LARA

THE BEAUTIFUL SECRET — “E” DOES ALL THE WORK

How Prices Are Spoken

quattro e cinquanta

“four and fifty” — €4.50. That is the whole system.

You do not need to build big numbers. You need to **catch two small ones** — a number, an *e*, a number.

13 — lucky

Italians smile at American superstition — here, thirteen brings luck

17 — unlucky

XVII shuffled is VIXI — Latin for “I have lived”... my life is over. Some hotels have no room 17.

Cento di questi giorni!

“a hundred of these days!” — the birthday toast, now yours

THE SHOPPING TOOLKIT — THE MARKET LAYER ONLY

Six Lines to Shop Like a Florentine

Quanto costa? · Quant'è?

how much does it cost? · how much is it altogether?

Basta così, grazie!

that's all, thanks — your answer to *Altro?*

È bellissimo!

it's beautiful! — for the wine, the leather bag, the ceramic bowl

Vorrei un chilo di pomodori, per favore.

a kilo of tomatoes — or *mezzo chilo*, half a kilo

Rosso o bianco?

red or white? — two tiny words choose your glass at the cantina

Lo prendo!

I'll take it! — the words of decision; they feel SO good to say

NOT VOCABULARY — PHILOSOPHY

Cosa mi consiglia?

What do you recommend?

The person behind the counter is not a cashier — they are a **proud expert**. Ask this, and the cheesemonger cuts you the best pecorino; the winemaker reaches for the bottle he actually loves.

the relationship comes before the transaction — our deepest rule, in its market clothes. An invitation to a two-minute friendship.

MICS OFF, VOICES ON — READ WITH ME

Ripetiamo insieme · i suoni

I say it — you repeat out loud at home. Nobody can hear you. Everybody is doing it.

1 · GLI, SILKY

*tagliatelle · aglio · bottiglia ·
famiglia*

soft as silk — like “million”

2 · GN

gnocchi · signore · signora · lasagna

like the “ny” in canyon

3 · THE NUMBERS

*uno → dieci · venti · cinquanta ·
cento*

every vowel pure, exactly as the pact demands

MICS OFF, VOICES ON — READ WITH ME

Ripetiamo insieme · le frasi

The prices, the toolkit, and the toast — out loud, at home.

4 · PRICES, CALL AND ECHO

*due e cinquanta · quattro e
cinquanta · sette e venti*

catch two small numbers — the “e” does the
work

5 · THE TOOLKIT, LINE BY LINE

Quanto costa?

Vorrei un chilo di pomodori, per favore.

Basta così, grazie! · Cosa mi consiglia?

È bellissimo! · Lo prendo!

6 · THE TOAST, WITH FEELING

Cin cin! · Cento di questi giorni!

save it — someone will have a birthday

ON STAGE — ONE GOLDEN TUSCAN DAY, IN FOUR ACTS

Adesso in scena!

I play the Tuscans. Your PDF has every scene with your lines highlighted — nothing to invent, nobody on the spot.

I · al mercato · II · in cantina · III · la pelletteria · IV · il regalo

ACT I *Al mercato — a kilo of history*

☐ your lines

FRUTTIVENDOLO *Buongiorno, signora! Desidera?* — what would you like?

YOU *Buongiorno! Vorrei un chilo di pomodori, per favore.*

FRUTTIVENDOLO *Certo! Altro?* — of course! Anything else?

YOU *Basta così, grazie. Quanto costa?*

FRUTTIVENDOLO *Due e cinquanta.* — two fifty.

YOU *Ecco a lei. Grazie mille!*

FRUTTIVENDOLO *Grazie a lei! Buona giornata!*

Variants: un chilo di mele · mezzo chilo di pomodori — new price each round: tre e venti, quattro e cinquanta.

ACT II *In cantina — the tasting*

VINAIA *Benvenuti in cantina! Rosso o bianco?* — red or white?

YOU *Rosso, per favore!*

VINAIA *Ecco a lei — il Chianti, il vino del Gallo Nero!* — the wine of the Black Rooster!

YOU *Grazie! ... Buonissimo!*

VINAIA *Cin cin!*

YOU *Cin cin! È bellissimo!*

VINAIA *Una bottiglia?* — a bottle, to take home?

YOU *Sì! Una bottiglia di Chianti, per favore. La prendo!*

Variant: bianco + vin santo con cantucci — “I cantucci nel vin santo, come un vero toscano!”

ACT III *La pelletteria — Florentine leather*

COMMESSA

Buongiorno! Prego, signore!

YOU

Buongiorno! È bellissimo!

COMMESSA

Grazie! È pelle di Firenze. — it's Florentine leather.

YOU

Quanto costa?

COMMESSA

Cinquanta. — fifty.

YOU

Perfetto! Lo prendo! Pago con la carta.

COMMESSA

Grazie mille, signore! Arrivederci!

Second volunteer: signora + a different price — venti, trenta, cento. The joy is in “Lo prendo!”

ACT IV · THE GRAND FINALE *Il regalo — a gift for someone you love*

COMMESSA

Buongiorno! Desidera?

YOU

Buongiorno! Vorrei un regalo per mia moglie.

COMMESSA

Che bello! Ecco — è bellissimo, e è di Firenze.

YOU

Cosa mi consiglia?

COMMESSA

Questo! È bellissimo — perfetto per un regalo. — this one! Perfect for a gift.

YOU

Quanto costa?

COMMESSA

Trenta.

YOU

Lo prendo! Grazie mille!

COMMESSA

Grazie a lei, signore! È un regalo bellissimo. — it's a beautiful gift.

Each volunteer chooses who it is for: mia moglie · mio marito · mia figlia · la mia famiglia.

THE HIDDEN TRAP, REVEALED

Glass up. Eyes up.

In the cantina I toasted looking at my glass — the one mistake of the Italian toast. When glasses clink, **the eyes must meet** — every clink, every person — or the toast does not count.

Cin cin!

superstition says the wrong toast brings years of a very particular bad luck — look it up yourselves...

mai con l'acqua

never toast with water — save the cin cin for the wine

Cento di questi giorni!

and if it is someone's birthday at the tasting — you own the perfect toast

Arrivederci!

Screenshot this slide — my website and email.

Dr Teresa Lara Pugliese

Questions? Write to me — I answer everyone personally.

NEXT · VENICE — A REPUBLIC ON THE WATER
· AND THE WORD I HAVE BEEN SAVING

MY WEBSITE

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