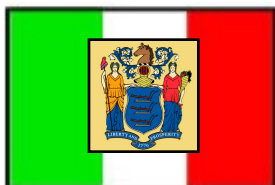




# La Notizia Italiana

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey



## In This Issue:



### Quake-Resistant Museum for Italy



### Leonardo Da Vinci's Family Tree

### Event Calendar

## ITALY PLANS QUAKE-RESISTANT MUSEUM TO PROTECT MICHELANGELO'S DAVID, HISTORIC WORKS



Michelangelo's David is housed at the Galleria Dell'Accademia in Florence, Italy. (Reuters)

Article courtesy of: [FoxNews.com](http://FoxNews.com)  
Published January 09, 2017 [FoxNews.com](http://FoxNews.com)

In the wake of growing concern about seismic activity in the Mediterranean region, scientific experts in Italy are looking to construct a new museum that could resist earthquakes.

According to [The Art Newspaper](http://The Art Newspaper), the debate over the relative stability Michelangelo's "David," which is currently located at the Galleria Dell'Accademia in Florence, surfaced once again following a series of devastating earthquakes that shook the center of the country last year killing nearly 300 people and destroying several cultural sites including the 14th-century Basilica of St Benedict in Norcia.

The David, Michelangelo's 17-foot marble masterpiece, weighs over five tons and experts have warned that the statue is at risk of becoming irreparably damaged even if it's moved slightly, either from construction or a natural disaster.

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(cont' from p. 1)



*Giotto's Campanile (bell tower) in the Piazza del Duomo, Florence, Italy.*

In 2014, geoscientists from Italy's National Research Council discovered that David has weak ankles—specifically, there are several fractures and cracks at the narrow base of the iconic statue that could cause it to snap and buckle under its own weight. At the time, the experts warned that if the statue is tilted just a few degrees, the “stress fractures” could move further up the David's leg.

Millions of tourists flock to Florence annually to take in the city's historic treasures and the David isn't the only piece of art history in jeopardy.

The Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, a 700-year-old organization charged with protecting the Duomo and its surrounding monuments, will carry out a comprehensive analysis of Giotto's Campanile—the freestanding bell tower in the Piazza del Duomo—as well as study the relative soundness and seismic stability of the cathedral's foundation and construction materials.

The study is slated to be completed by November of this year, at which point the committee will make recommendations for how best to protect the landmarks in Florence's city center.

To fund the expected projects, the Italian government submitted an official request to the European Union for money to support ongoing reconstruction efforts. Last month, the European Commission agreed to provide 30 million euros—the highest sum the organization can offer—to help Italy's historic restoration and preservation efforts.

## ***Historians Traced Leonardo da Vinci's Family Tree and Found 35 Living Relatives***



*Image credit:*

**WIKIMEDIA COMMONS//PUBLIC DOMAIN**

*Article by Kirstin Fawcett*

Think it's hard living up to your family name? Try finding out you're a distant relative of Leonardo da Vinci. According to The Guardian, Italian historians Alessandro Vezzosi and Agnese Sabato announced that they had used historic records to identify 35 living descendants of the Italian artist, along with a previously unknown family grave. Eventually, the two plan to trace Leonardo's DNA through his relatives.

Leonardo da Vinci was a prolific writer, inventor, artist, and intellectual. However, little was known about his extended family until now. He never married, and died in 1519 in Amboise, France, without leaving any known heirs. Adding to the mystery, Leonardo's body is thought to have likely been lost during Europe's religious wars in the 16th century, ending all possibility of tracking his direct descendants via genetics.

Vezzosi and Sabato began their research in 1973, using Leonardo's father, a Florentine legal notary named Ser Piero da Vinci, as a jumping-off point, Smithsonian reports. They pored through estate papers and other historic records, including documents left by Leonardo's grandfather, Antonio.

Complicating matters, there wasn't any information on Leonardo's mother. One record mentioned that her name was Caterina, the wife of Achattabriga di Piero del Vaccha da Vinci—making Leonardo an illegitimate child. Other historians think she may have been an Arab slave. This meant that Vezzosi and Sabato had to focus on Leonardo's paternal branch.

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"We checked documents and tombs as far as France and Spain in order to reconstruct the history of Leonardo's family," Vezzosi told Discovery News. "We even found [an] unknown tomb of Leonardo's family in Vinci."

Eventually, Vezzosi and Sabato located nearly three dozen presumed ancestors of Leonardo, all living in Florence and its neighboring villages. Among their ranks were an architect, a policeman, a pastry chef, an accountant, and a retired blacksmith.

One notable relation was Oscar-nominated director Franco Zeffirelli, who directed iconic film adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967). He had previously claimed relation to Leonardo in an awards speech in 2007, the BBC reports.

Another relative: Giovanni Calosi, who said that his family had once owned Leonardo's documents and letters. He claimed the correspondence was written in backwards handwriting and could only be read in a mirror. "We never gave any importance to those documents, which were lost and sold," Calosi told *The Guardian*. "What we thought was a legend passed down through generations turns out to be the truth."

[h/t *The Guardian*]

April 19, 2016 - 2:15pm



Director Franco Zeffirelli's father's family, the Corsis, are connected to Leonardo da Vinci. The researchers say they have identified 35 living people who are related to Leonardo da Vinci, using genealogical records.

Da Vinci was born in the Tuscan town of Vinci in 1452. He never married and left no direct descendants, so historians Alessandro Vezzosi and Agnese Sabato sought to find those who are descended from his siblings.

Leonardo's remains were lost in the turmoil of the 16th Century, so DNA research was not used in their work to construct a family tree, which began in 1973.

## Leonardo da Vinci



*Birthdate:* April 15, 1452

*Birthplace:* Vinci, Città Metropolitana di Firenze, Toscana, Italy

*Death:* May 2, 1519  
Amboise, Indre-et-Loire, Centre, France

*Place of Burial:*  
Château d'Amboise, France

### *Occupation:*

Italian polymath: painter, sculptor, architect, musician, scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist and writer, artist

### *Immediate Family:*

Son of Ser Piero da Vinci and Caterina Amadori

*Stepmother:* Albiera Amadai

*Stepmother:* Francesca Lanfredini

### *Half brother of:*

Antonio da Vinci  
Giulian da Vinci  
Maddalena da Vinci  
Lorenzo da Vinci  
Violante da Vinci  
Domenico da Vinci  
Margherita da Vinci  
Benedetto da Vinci  
Pandolfo da Vinci  
Guglielmo da Vinci  
Bartolomeo da Vinci  
Giovanni da Vinci

*Partner:* Gian Giacomo "Salai" Caprotti da Oreno

## Gian Giacomo "Salai" Caprotti da Oreno



*Birthdate:*

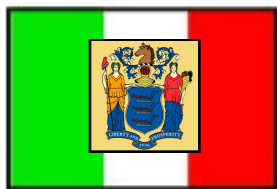
Estimated between 1422 and 1482

*Death:* 1523

*Cause of death:* Gunshot wound?

Gian Giacomo Caprotti da Oreno, nicknamed Salai or Il Salaino ("*The Little Unclean One*" i.e., *the Devil*), entered Leonardo's household in 1490. Leonardo treated him with great indulgence and he remained in Leonardo's household for the next thirty years. Vasari claims Leonardo "taught him a great deal about painting", but his work is generally considered to be of less artistic merit than others among Leonardo's pupils. Salai owned the Mona Lisa at the time of his death in 1525, and in his will it was assessed at 505 lire, an exceptionally high valuation for a small panel portrait.





## The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey began as a chapter of POINT - (Pursuing Our Italian Names Together). When POINT officially dissolved in December 2013, our members voted to continue on as an independent organization. We are now known as

*The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey.*

The group, originally organized in September 1996 as a POINT chapter, will continue to provide genealogical researchers an opportunity to meet socially, and learn and share information pertaining to Italian research and culture.

We cordially invite genealogical researchers to attend our quarterly meetings, now held at the Clifton Public Library, 292 Piaget Avenue. Membership is open to all. In addition to our regular meetings we take occasional field trips to genealogical research sites in the New Jersey/New York area.

### La Notizia Italiana

Volume 4, Number 1

**The Italian Genealogy Society  
of  
New Jersey**  
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Your letters and comments are welcomed.  
 We reserve the right to edit submitted materials.

*The Italian Genealogy Society of NJ does not accept responsibility for errors, omissions, or opinions expressed or implied by contributors.*

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## Calendar

### IGSNJ Future Meetings:

**May 6, 2017**

10AM, Clifton Public Library  
 Program: *TBA*

**August 5, 2017**

10AM, Clifton Public Library  
 Program: *TBA*

**November 4, 2017**

10AM, Clifton Public Library  
 Program: *TBA*

## Passaic County Historical Society & Lambert Castle Events:

### PCHS Genealogy Club:

#### February 11: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle  
 Free Admission  
 Program: *"It's Not a Tree, It's a Story"*  
 Presenter: Maureen Woldarczyk

#### March 11: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle  
 Free Admission  
 Program: *"A Land Title Workshop:  
 Who Owned This House?"*  
 Presenter: Joseph Grabas

#### April 8: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle  
 Free Admission  
 Program: *"Social History From Death Certificates"*  
 Presenter: Lisa Ilowitz

## Lambert Castle Events



### Annual Victorian Tea

**April 21 - 23**

Catered by Sally Lunn's Tea House  
 of Chester

Call for details, price & RSVP:  
 (973) 247-0085 xt 201

*For more information:*  
 973- 247-0085 ext 201  
[www.lambertcastle.org](http://www.lambertcastle.org)

