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Preface

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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PREFACE

As I take over the editorship of *Italian Canadiana*, it gives me great pleasure to start my mandate with a special issue on *italianità* guest-edited by Paul Baxa, whose work I have admired for years and have had the pleasure (and honour) to publish in other venues. His decision to bring together a number of contributions on the topic of *italianità* helps us to focus a little more carefully, and perhaps also a little more generously, on the word and its meaning(s).

What do we mean by *italianità* and how do we live it? How is it reflected in the way we see ourselves, the language we speak, the things we do, the places we frequent? These are fundamental questions that mark and define our existence as expatriate Italians, whether or not we were born in Italy or hold an Italian passport.

And what “Italy” are we talking about? Is it the post-1947 political entity whose borders were drawn up at a conference table in Paris or some earlier version of that entity, such as the post-1915 Italy with its *vittoria mutilata* (mutilated victory), or the post-1861 *Italian unita* (though still without Rome for a few years).

And what do we do with all those “Italians” who, for centuries have lived in areas that were part of another country, such as the Italians in Switzerland, or those that still remain in the various countries along the eastern shores of the Adriatic?

The articles in this special issue do not seek to provide a definitive answer, but to point instead to the variety of ways in which *italianità* is lived, experienced, presented, claimed, and used.

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