

Diego Mantoan

Lionello Perera

An Italian Banker and Patron in New York

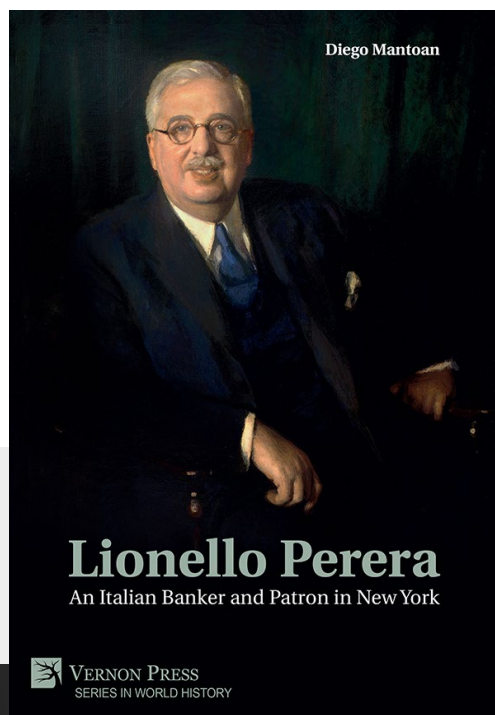
SERIES IN WORLD HISTORY

Summary

The book presents the long-lost biography of Lionello Perera, principal banker, patron, and philanthropist of the Italian American community in New York at the inception of the twentieth century. Born and raised in Venice, Lionello Perera took over his uncle's financial activity in Wall Street and developed the family business into a stronghold of the Italian American community. His remarkable career led him to become the Vice President of Bank of America in 1928 as an associate of California born Amadeo P. Giannini, while he also was instrumental to the political success of New York mayor Fiorello La Guardia. Recognised as a true founding father of the Italian American community of the East Coast, he supported welfare societies and public hospitals to foster the integration of Italian immigrants. A close friend of star conductor Arturo Toscanini, Lionello Perera and his wife Carolyn Allen Perera turned into influential music patrons for Italian and Jewish musicians. Their unique Art Deco house in the Upper East Side became an epicentre of the New York music world, showcasing the banker's refined art collection that matched the taste of J. Pierpont Morgan and Samuel H. Kress.

The book relies on unprecedented archival material rendering justice to the relevance Lionello Perera holds as a contributor to the political, social, and cultural integration of Italians in the USA. It offers an innovative perspective that considers the tight interrelation of Italian Americans of the East Coast with ongoing events in their country of origin. Lionello Perera's life highlights the silent contribution of Italian Americans to change the US banking system and help the

integration of Italian immigrants in their new country. Hence, the main audience are students and scholars interested in the history of immigration, banking history, Italian American culture as well as music studies and art history.



About the author

Diego Mantoan is a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Palermo, Italy, with a wide background in social and economic history. He is among the founding members of the Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy. He acts as Advisory Editor at Vernon Press and Associate Editor of 'magazén | International Journal for Digital and Public Humanities'. His book 'The Road to Parnassus: Artist Strategies in Contemporary Art' for Vernon Press (2015) was long-listed for the Berger Prize 2016, which is awarded yearly in London by The British Art Journal. His second monograph, 'Autoritär, elitär und unzugänglich' (Neofleis 2018), investigates the art system and power relations within economy and society. He recently edited 'Paolozzi & Wittgenstein: The Artist and The Philosopher' for Palgrave (2019). Mantoan was a visiting fellow at New York University Tandon collaborating with the Department of Technology, Culture and Society, as well as visiting lecturer at Sotheby's Institute of Art and Warwick University. Over the years he delivered speeches on topics spanning from art history to social history at renowned institutions such as Bibliotheca Hertziana, UCL London, New York University, Universität Bern, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Sotheby's Institute of Art, Galerie Belvedere Vienna, Université Grenoble Alpes, Universität St. Gallen, and MAAT Lisboa. He was Assistant Director and Jury Secretary at the Venice Biennale, later developing art archives for Douglas Gordon (Berlin), Sigmar Polke Estate (Cologne), Julia Stoschek Collection (Düsseldorf), and Museo Mario Rimoldi (Cortina). As a public historian he collaborates with cultural institutes of international renown such as Rai Radio3, Goethe Institut, Fondazione Teatro La Fenice, and Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

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