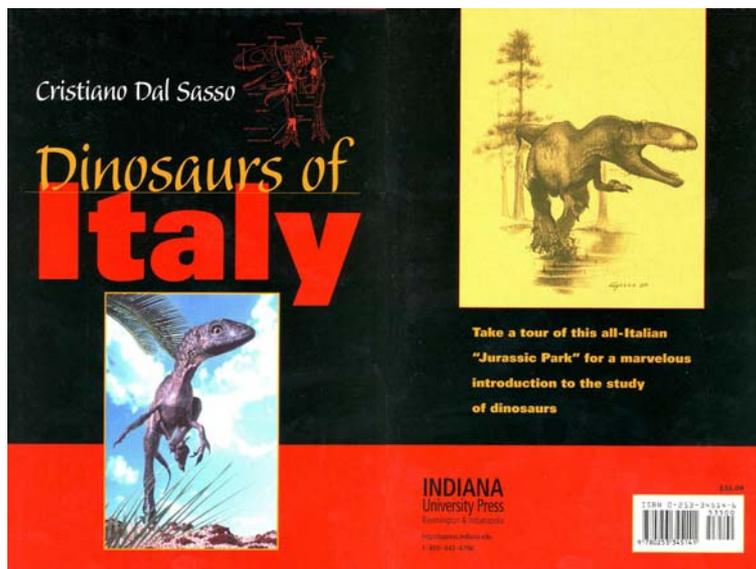


**Dal Sasso, C. & G. Brillante. 2005. Dinosauers of Italy. – Bloomington, Indiana University Press**

Book review by A.S. Schulp



Just over a decade ago, Italy barely even made it to the map of dinosaur discoveries. The overview in the first edition of ‘The dinosauria’ (Weishampel, 1990) lists a single theropod tracksite as the only evidence of dinosaurs in Italy. The map in the second edition of ‘The dinosauria’ (Weishampel *et al.*, 2004) shows that this situation has changed dramatically in just a few years’ time.

The story behind this dramatic change is covered in ‘Dinosaurs of Italy’, the English translation of Cristiano Dal Sasso and Giuseppe Brillante’s 2001 book ‘Dinosauri italiani’. Dal Sasso, head of the Laboratory of Palaeontology of the Museo Civico Di Storia Naturale in Milan, provides a detailed and comprehensive account on the history and discovery of the first Italian dinosaur fossils.

The book, of course, deals in great detail with the discovery, preparation and research on the spectacular theropod dinosaur *Scipionyx*. The interesting bureaucratic history surrounding the discovery and research is also covered. Although *Scipionyx* certainly is one of the most spectacular dinosaur discoveries of the last decade worldwide, it is certainly not the only new discovery in Italy. The discovery and research of various dinosaur tracksites is described, as well as the challenging excavation job of the ‘Trieste hadrosaur’.

‘Dinosaurs of Italy’ not only deals with dinosaurs. Tradition somehow dictates that popular scientific books on ‘dinosaurs’ should also include some pterosaurs and marine reptiles. Dinosaurs of Italy is no exception. Ichthyosaurs from Besano and Triassic flying reptiles each have a chapter devoted to them. Towards the end of the book, the end of the age of dinosaurs is touched upon at the famous K/T–boundary site at Gubbio.

Once you have read a couple of similar books, one aspect of the genre inevitably becomes a bit boring. There is, of course, an obvious need for an explanation of general geological backgrounds. There is, certainly, much to be said in favour of a general introduction into palaeontology. But reading the story of the coining of the name ‘dinosaur’ by Owen over and over again becomes slightly tedious. Although formulated in a lively fashion, one cannot help but to skip these parts. The true value in the book really lies in the Italian part of the story, covering the people and the stories behind the discoveries.

Dal Sasso, C. & G. Brillante. 2005. Dinosauers of Italy. – Bloomington, Indiana University Press. 232 pp. ISBN 0–253–34514–6. Price \$35.00 (hardcover).

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