



Francesca Bertini

Also Known As:

Elena Seracini Vitiello, Elena Taddei Vitiello

Lived:

January 5, 1892 - October 13, 1985

Worked as:

director, film actress, producer, screenwriter, theatre actress

Worked In:

Italy

by Monica Dall'Asta

Francesca Bertini was an extremely careful guardian of her image and legacy throughout her whole life. A major star of the international silent screen, she has recounted her hugely successful career in different autobiographic writings and interventions. An invaluable source of information for the history of Italian cinema, these documents are notoriously reticent—and sometimes unreliable—about certain personal details of her life. For example, she never revealed to have been first registered in 1892 at an orphanage in Florence as Elena Taddei, the daughter of Adelina di Venanzio Fratiglioni, a single mother and possibly a stage actress (Jandelli 2006, 31-2). While many sources indicate her first surname to be Seracini, the only concrete information we have about her acquired identity is that she became Elena Vitiello in 1910, when her mother married Arturo Vitiello, a Neapolitan propman or furniture dealer. Bertini was introduced to the sprightly Neapolitan theatrical milieu at an early age. She got her first, supporting role on stage when she was just seventeen, in the widely acclaimed 1909 production of “Assunta Spina”—an intense southern melodrama by reputed author Salvatore Di Giacomo. One of the most representative texts of the new Neapolitan popular theater, “Assunta Spina” was later transposed on screen by Bertini in 1915. The final result is still regarded as one of the masterpieces of Italian silent cinema and an emblematic example of Verist cinema. By 1915, Bertini had already been cast in more than 50 films, including many one and two-reel historical reconstructions and a few features. The following years saw her continuing to grow in popularity, with her films gaining huge acclaim wherever they were presented, from Europe to Latin America and from Russia to the United States.

The *diva's* first autobiography was published in several installments during the summer of 1938 in a popular film magazine. Later revised and extended, this text served as a base for a book

published in 1969, *Il resto non conta*. In addition, Bertini gave many interviews in her later years. The most extraordinary interview was filmed by Gianfranco Mingozzi in 1981—partially during a private screening of *Assunta Spina* at the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome—and was later included in *L'ultima diva* (1982), a TV documentary in three episodes, which also had a shorter theatrical edition now available on DVD.

Bertini's different autobiographical interventions are consistent in reclaiming a creative as well as managerial role in the production of all her major star vehicles. Especially in the long interview recorded by Mingozzi, she credits herself not just for obtaining the rights to adapt "Assunta Spina" from Di Giacomo, but, more importantly, she argues for directorial recognition for that film. This claim was later confirmed in a 1981 interview with her co-star, and the official director of the film, Gustavo Serena (Martinelli 1992, 1:56). As with most of Bertini's subsequent films, *Assunta Spina* was produced by Caesar, a company owned by Giuseppe Barattolo, a man who was to play a major role in the future of Italian silent cinema.

The huge success achieved by her early features—for example *Histoire d'un Pierrot* (1914), in which she performed *en travesti* in the title role, *Sangue bleu* (1914), *Nelly la gigolette* (1915), and *La signora delle camelie* (1915)—gave Bertini substantial negotiating power that she used to obtain higher salaries and the freedom to choose the scripts of her films (Ghione 1930, 45). In 1917, three films were released whose stories were attributed to a Frank Bert, who—as the reviewers were ready to point out—was just a male stand-in for Bertini herself (Dall'Asta 2006). None of these films are extant today, so it is impossible to judge whether the negative reviews they received were grounded. However, based upon the surviving documentation, their plots do not stick out as particularly original. Rather, they repeat conventional narrative formulas, chosen to provide the *diva* with multiple occasions to show off her glamorous persona and her luxurious *toilettes*, which were intended to arouse the admiration of her numerous female spectators. At the same time, the plots reveal how strenuously Bertini was working to consolidate her image as an international film star. The narrative of *La perla del cinema* (1916), in particular, repeated the meta-cinematographic plot of one of [Asta Nielsen's](#) major vehicles, *Die Filmprimadonna* (1913), chosen as the ultimate model for an exemplary sad ending. Italian cinema, and especially the *diva* film, was then known by audiences around the world for its preference for tragic endings, a feature that often required the female protagonist to die spectacularly in the last scene. Bertini was a virtuoso of the death scene and there is no doubt her films had largely contributed to this stereotype.

Like the plot of Nielsen's film, *La perla del cinema* had Bertini perform in the role of a double of herself, a star at the height of her popularity. However, the two characters were presented in very different ways. While Nielsen was introduced as an established film actress, already influential enough to easily convince the producer to hire her new lover as her male lead, Bertini appeared in the role of an *ingénue*. She was a simple shepherdess who entered the film industry by chance after accidentally meeting—and falling in love with—a male star. In each film, Nielsen and Bertini's characters follow parallel paths as they grow more successful and ultimately became the target of their respective partners' increasing jealousy. In the end, depressed and exhausted by

men's harassment, they both commit suicide. Unlike Nielsen, however, Bertini had her character perform suicide just in front of the film camera, as the final scene of an autobiographic melodrama inspired by the character's tragic life.

The cold critical reactions and, supposedly, poor audience response may have influenced Bertini to drop her screenwriting ambitions forever. But they certainly did not damage her popularity. Nor did they stop her from striving to empower her position within the film industry. Around 1918, Bertini was probably the most powerful woman in Italian cinema. She was certainly the highest paid, and her authoritative temperament and exorbitant privileges were so well known that they could even become an object of irony on screen. For example, in *Mariute* (1918), another meta-cinematographic film that contains sequences shot at the Caesar studios, Bertini performed the role of herself: a whimsical star who sleeps all morning and is regularly late to the set, causing all the other actors to complain.

Bertini's charismatic, authoritative temperament on the film set has been most suggestively described by Verist writer Roberto Bracco, who wrote the scripts of two of her titles from 1914 and 1917, *Don Pietro Caruso* and *La piccola fonte*, respectively. In recalling the shooting of a particularly dramatic scene, he remembered her not just as "surprisingly beautiful," but also as exceptionally "fit to rule, to dominate, to master madly!...She did not pay any attention to me, so busy she was acting crazy as her fantasy suggested her to do. The cameraman turned the crank with absorbed devotion. The director observed in a corner, silently, in rapture" (Bracco 1929, 9). While imbued with the romantic stereotype of the hysterical, crazy woman, this picture is also indicative of Bertini's determination to be in total control of her film image, with her appointed director reduced to a marginal, even irrelevant, position. As a matter of fact, Bracco also called her both a "superdiva" and a "cinematografaia"—the latter a brilliant neologism translatable as "female filmmaker."

Repeatedly, in her autobiographic writings, Bertini claimed a directorial status with arguments that demonstrate both her knowledge of later cinema and her acquaintance with the discourse of film history. In the interview with Mingozzi, she goes as far as to state that "film history has to be rewritten," for, as the true author of *Assunta Spina*, she should be regarded as a forerunner of Neorealism, and therefore a pioneer of Italian cinema's most representative style. She claims to be responsible for the whole "idea of shooting down in the streets, going to the Tribunal, finding the extras in the streets." Therefore, she concludes: "To not be immodest, I should say I was truly the director—or, more precisely, I was responsible for the film's script, adaptation, setting and direction," and elsewhere in the interview she even mentions editing.

In his 1930 memoirs, her old collaborator Emilio Ghione, an actor and director who had worked with her on several features at Celio in 1912-13, blamed the outrageous salaries of Bertini and other major *divas* for precipitating the crisis of Italian cinema, which reached its peak in the aftermath of World War I (Ghione 45). While the reasons for the industrial disaster that national film production underwent in that period are certainly more complex, Bertini's subsequent work is representative of the inability of Italian cinema to innovate its products. When, in 1919,

Barattolo launched the unfortunate project of a trust among the major film companies (Unione Cinematografica Italiana), Bertini entered the deal with a new company created in her name. Unfortunately, the new company's first production resulted in some of the worst critical responses of her entire career. Inspired by Eugene Sue's serial novel of the same name, *I sette peccati capitali* was an anthology series specifically designed for Bertini's performative versatility and emotional expressiveness. Her performance was unanimously criticized for being excessively stereotyped, but this did not prevent the films from being distributed abroad, particularly in Germany and Czechoslovakia (where the complete series was found and restored in 2003).

Bertini kept making films at the rate of four or five every year, assisted by her faithful director Roberto Roberti (a pseudonym for Vincenzo Leone, the father of Sergio Leone). In 1920, she was offered a contract by Fox to go to Hollywood, but she declined. Her marriage to Alfred Paul Cartier, the heir of an important Swiss family and a soccer player, and the birth of her son Jean in 1921 did not interrupt her career, but during the 1920s she appeared increasingly less on screen. Her feeble voice and outdated acting style did not facilitate her transition to sound. After the advent of sound cinema Bertini starred in only a couple more films. The first of these, *La femme d'une nuit/La donna di una notte* (1931), was shot in both French and Italian simultaneously. Bertini came back in 1935 with *Odette*, a remake of one of her old hits by Victorien Sardou, and in 1943 with *Dora o le spie*, an obscure Italian-Spanish co-production. In 1976, Bernardo Bertolucci paid homage to the memory of the *diva* film by giving Bertini a cameo as a nun in *1900/Novecento* (1976).

See also: [Asta Nielsen](#)

Bibliography

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Filmography

A. Archival Filmography: Extant Film Titles:

1. Francesca Bertini as Herself

The Last Diva/L'ultima diva: Francesca Bertini. Dir.: Gianfranco Mingozzi, sc.: Gianfranco Mingozzi, Irene Bignardi (Antea Coop.–Rai TV Italy 1982), sd., col., 35mm, 180 min. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

2. Francesca Bertini as Actress and Director

Assunta Spina. Co-dir.: Francesca Bertini [uncredited] and Gustavo Serena, st.: Salvatore Di Giacomo (Caesar Film Italy 1915) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Carlo Benetti, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,545 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#), [Cineteca del Friuli \[ITG\]](#), [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#), [Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique \[BEB\]](#), [BFI National Archive \[GBB\]](#), [Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka \[BGS\]](#), [Cinematca de Cuba \[CUH\]](#), [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Museum of Modern Art \[USM\]](#),

[Cinemateca Romana \[ROB\]](#), [Lobster Films \[FRL\]](#), [Filmoteca UNAM \[MXU\]](#), [Academy Film Archive \[USF\]](#).

3. Francesca Bertini as Actress and Producer

Mariute. Dir.: Edoardo Benciveng, st.: Robert Des Flers, ph.: Giuseppe Filippa; ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1918) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Livio Pavanelli, Camillo De Riso, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 259 ft. of 2,438 ft. [original]. Archive: [Museo Nazionale del Cinema \[ITT\]](#), [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#), [Danske Filminstitut \[DKK\]](#).

I sette peccati capitali/Seven Deadly Sins. Ph.: Luigi Filippa, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1918).

- *La gola/Gluttony*. Dir.: Camillo De Riso, sc./st.: Pio Vanzi, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Livio Pavanelli, Camillo De Riso, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,069 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#).
- *L'orgoglio/La superbia [Pride]*. Dir.: Eduardo Bencivenga, sc.: Ezio Berti, st.: Eugène Sue, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Guido Trento, Nella Montagna, Cia Fornaroli, Renato Trento, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,816 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#).
- *Anger/L'ira*. Dir.: Alfredo De Antoni, sc.: Giuseppe Paolo Pacchierotti, st.: Eugène Sue, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Guido Trento, Cia Fornaroli, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,059 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#).
- *L'Avarizia [Greed]*. Dir.: Gustavo Serena, sc.: Giuseppe Paolo Pacchierotti, st.: Jean Coty, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Franco Gennaro, Alfredo Bracci, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,872 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#), [Cinémathèque Française \[FRC\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).
- *L'invidia [Envy]*. Dir.: Eduardo Bencivenga, sc.: Giuseppe Paolo Pacchierotti, st.: George Ruby, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Livio Pavanelli, Guido Trento, Camillo De Riso, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,921 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#).
- *L'accidia [Acedia]*. Dir.: Eduardo Bencivenga, st.: George Ruby, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Livio Pavanelli, Guido Trento, Camillo De Riso, Alberto Albertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,190 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Jugoslovenska Kinoteka \[YUB\]](#).

- *La lussuria* [Lust]. Dir.: Eduardo Bencivenga, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, st.: Eugène Sue, cas.: Francesca Bertini, Livio Pavanelli, Guido Trento, Alberto Albertini, Vittorio Bianchi, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,626 ft. Archive: [Národní Filmov Archiv \[CZP\]](#), [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#).

His Friend's Wife/Spiritismo. Dir.: Camillo De Riso, st.: Victorien Sardou, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Giuseppe Filippa, Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1919) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Amleto Novelli, Romano Calò, Ugo Piperno, si, b&w, 35mm, 6,063 ft. Archive: [Filmoteca UNAM \[MXU\]](#).

The Octopus/La Piovra. Dir.: Eduardo Bencivenga, st.: V. Brusiloff, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Giuseppe Filippa, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1919) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Amleto Novelli, Livio Pavanelli, Giovanni Schettini, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,535 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#), [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#), [Lobster Films \[FRL\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Countess Sara/La contessa Sara. Dir.: Roberto Roberti, st.: Georges Ohnet, sc.: Ezio Berti, Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Alberto Carta, Otello Martelli, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1919) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Ugo Piperno, Sandro Salvini, Emma Farnesi, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,056 ft. Archive: [Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique \[BEB\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [Cineteca del Friuli \[ITG\]](#), [Archivo Nacional de la Imagen y de la Palabra - SODRE \[UYS\]](#).

Anima Allegra [Cheerful Soul]. Dir.: Roberto Roberti, st.: Serafín Álvarez Quintero (Caesar Film Italy 1919) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Luigi Cigoli, Gemma De Sanctis, si, b&w, 35mm. Archive: [Istituto Valenciano de Cinematografia \[ESV\]](#).

The Poison Mood/La Serpe. Dir.: Roberto Roberti, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Alberto Carta (Caesar Film Italy 1920) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Sandro Salvini, Emma Farnesi, Vittorio Bianchi, si, b&w, 35mm. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

The Sphinx/La sfinge. Dir.: Roberto Roberti, st.: Octave Feuillet, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1920) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Mario Parpagnoli, Elena Lunda, Augusto Poggioli, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,541 ft. Archive: [Filmoteca UNAM \[MXU\]](#).

Maddalena Ferat. Dir.: Febo Mari, st.: Émile Zola, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1920) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Mario Parpagnoli, Giorgio Bonaiti, Bianca Renieri, si, b&w, 35mm, 6,099 ft. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

Marion, artista di caffè-concerto [Marion, vaudeville artist]. Dir.: Roberto Roberti, st.: Annie Vivanti, sc.: Vittorio Bianchi, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1920) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Mario Parpagnoli, Giorgio Bonaiti, Mary Fleuron, si, b&w, 35mm, 6,624 ft. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#), [Gosfilmofond of Russia \[RUR\]](#).

The Knot/Il nodo. Dir./st./sc.: Gaston Ravel, ph.: Otello Martelli, ard.: Aldredo Manzi (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1921) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Carlo Gualandri, Giorgio Bonaiti, Elena Lunda, Rosetta D'Aprile, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,243 ft. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

Consuelita. Dir.: Roberto Roberti, cam.: Otello Martelli (Bertini/Caesar Film Italy 1921) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Guido Graziosi, si, b&w, 35mm. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#). [Note: IMDb lists 1925 for this title, perhaps reflecting the year of release and not production].

4. Francesca Bertini as Actress

Salome/Salomè. Dir.: Ugo Falena, st.: Oscar Wilde (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1910) cas.: Vittoria Lepanto, Laura Odette, Ciro Galvani, Achille Vitti, Francesca Bertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 935 ft. Archive: [Deutsches Filminstitut \[DEW\]](#), [Cineteca del Friuli \[ITG\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Francesca da Rimini [Francesca from Rimini]. Dir.: Ugo Falena, st.: Dante Alighieri (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1910) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Francesco Gennaro, Giulio Grassi, si, b&w, 35mm, 16mm, 902 ft. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#), [Library of Congress \[USW\]](#), [UCLA Film and Television Archive \[USL\]](#), [Academy Film Archive \[USF\]](#).

King Lear/Re Lear. Dir.: Gerolamo Lo Savio, st.: William Shakespeare (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1910) cas.: Ermete Novelli, Francesca Bertini, Giannina Chiantoni, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,066 ft. Archive: [BFI National Archive \[GBB\]](#).

The Merchant of Venice/Il mercante di Venezia. Dir.: Gerolamo Lo Savio, st.: William Shakespeare (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1910) cas.: Ermete Novelli, Francesca Bertini, Olga Giannini-Novelli, si, b&w, 35mm, 886 ft. Archive: [BFI National Archive \[GBB\]](#).

Cola di Rienzo. St.: Dante Alighieri (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1911) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Dillo Lombardi, Giovanni Pezzinga, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,312 ft. Archive: [BFI National Archive \[GBB\]](#).

Tristan and Isolde/Tristano e Isotta. Dir.: Ugo Falena (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1911) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Giovanni Pezzinga, Bianca Lorenzoni, Serafino Mastracchio, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,034 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Countess of Challant/La contessa di Challant e Don Pedro di Cordova. Dir.: Gerolamo Lo Savio (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1911) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,903 ft. Archive: [Cinémathèque Française \[FRC\]](#).

Marco Visconti. Dir.: Ugo Falena, st.: Tommaso Grossi (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1911) cas.: Dillo Lombardi, Francesca Bertini, Gemma De Sanctis, si, b&w, 35mm, 971 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#).

The Plot of Fieschi/La congiura di Fieschi. St.: Friedrich Schiller (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1911) cas.: Francesca Bertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,230 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#).

Romeo and Juliet/Romeo e Giulietta. Dir.: Ugo Falena, st.: William Shakespeare, sc.: Augusto Genina (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1912) cas.: Gustavo Serena, Francesca Bertini, Ferruccio Garavaglia, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,379 ft. Archive: [Library of Congress \[USW\]](#), [Museo Nazionale del Cinema \[ITT\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#), [Gosfilmofond of Russia \[RUR\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#).

Florentine Drama/Un dramma a Firenze/Idillio tragico sotto Cosimo III de' Medici. Dir.: Ugo Falena (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1912) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Giovanni Pezzinga, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,755 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Beatrice d'Este. St./sc.: Augusto Genina (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1912) cas.: Francesca Bertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,083 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#). [**Note:** Possibly same as *Beatrice cenci* (1910), held at [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#)].

Red Falcon/Il falco rosso. (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1912) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,133 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#).

The Carbonari/I carbonari. (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1912) cas.: Vittoria Lepanto, Giovanni Pezzinga, Francesca Bertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,297 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#).

A Tragedy at the Court of Milan/Una tragedia alla corte di Milano. Dir.: Ugo Falena (Film d'Arte Italiana Italy 1912) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Giovanni Pezzinga, Clelia Zucchini, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,149 ft. Archive: [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#), [Lobster Films \[FRL\]](#).

Il fascino della violenza [The seduction of violence]. (Cines Italy 1912) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Cesare Moltini, Giovanni Corte, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,516 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Panne d'auto [The broken car]. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni (Celio Italy 1912) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Emilio Ghione, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,050 ft. Archive: [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Supreme Sacrifice/Per la sua gioia. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni (Celio Italy 1913) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Baldassarre Negroni, si, b&w. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#).

La bufera [The storm]/Amore senza stima. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni (Celio Italy 1913) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Emilio Ghione, Noemi de Ferrari, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,986 ft. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

Venemous Tongues/Il veleno delle parole. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni (Celio Italy 1913) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Augusto Mastripietri, Carlo Simoneschi, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,106 ft. Archive: [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#), [Deutsche Kinemathek \[DEK\]](#).

The Artist's Model/Idolo infranto. Dir.: Emilio Ghione (Celio Italy 1913) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Angelo Gallina, si, b&w, 35mm, 2,493 ft. Archive: [Filmoteca UNAM \[MXU\]](#).

La suocera [The mother-in-law]. (Cines Italy 1913) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Ida Carloni-Talli, si, b&w, 35mm, 1,148 ft. Archive: [Filmoteca Española \[ESM\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [Museo Nazionale del Cinema \[ITT\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

The Land of Promise/La terra promessa. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni (Celio Italy 1913) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Emilio Ghione, si, b&w, 35mm, 3,081 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

The Woman Who Dared/L'amazzone mascherata. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni (Celio Italy 1914) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alberto Collo, Emilio Ghione, Leda Gys, Teresa Martini, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,269 ft. Archive: [Museo Nazionale del Cinema \[ITT\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Pierrot the Prodigal/Histoire d'un Pierrot. Dir.: Baldassarre Negroni, st.: Fernand Beissier, sc.: Tommaso Salvani, ph.: Giorgino Ricci (Italica Ars Italy 1914) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Leda Gys, Emilio Ghione, Elvira Radaelli, Amedeo Ciaffi, si, b&w, 35mm, 3,937 ft. Archive: [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#), [UC Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive \[USB\]](#), [Library of Congress \[USW\]](#)

Blue Blood/Sangue bleu. Dir.: Nino Oxilia, st.: Alberto Fassini, sc.: Guglielmo Zorzi, ph.: Giorgino Ricci (Celio Italy 1914) cas.: Francesca Bertini, André Habay, Fulvia Perini, Anna Cipriani, si, b&w, 35mm, 4,291 ft. Archive: [Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique \[BEB\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [Museo Nazionale del Cinema \[ITT\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Diana the Seductress/Diana l'affascinatrice. Dir.: Gustavo Serena, st.: Renzo Chiosso, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Caesar Film Italy 1915) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Carlo Benetti, Alfredo De Antoni, si, b&w, 35mm, 4 reels. Archive: [Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique \[BEB\]](#).

La signora dalle camelie [The Lady of the camellias]. Dir.: Gustavo Serena, st.: Alexandre Dumas fils, sc.: Renzo Chiosso, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Caesar Film Italy 1915) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Olga Benetti, si, b&w, 35mm, 5,906 ft. Archive: [Filmoteca Española \[ESM\]](#), [Istituto Valenciense de Cinematografia \[ESV\]](#), [Cinémathèque de Toulouse \[FRT\]](#), [Museo Nazionale del Cinema \[ITT\]](#).

Odetta. Dir.: Giuseppe De Liguoro, st.: Victorien Sardou, sc.: Giuseppe De Liguoro, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Caesar Film Italy 1916) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Alfredo De Antoni, Carlo Benetti, Olga Benetti, si, b&w, 35mm, 3,609 ft. Archive: [Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv \[DEB\]](#), [Cinémathèque Française \[FRC\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca Italiana \[ITC\]](#), [Filmoteca UNAM \[MXU\]](#), [Cinematca Romana \[ROB\]](#).

Fedora. Dir.: Giuseppe De Liguoro, Gustavo Serena (Caesar Film Italy 1916) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Carlo Benetti, si, b&w, 35mm. Archive: [George Eastman Museum \[USR\]](#).

The Clemenceau Affaire/Il processo Clémenceau. Dir.: Alfredo De Antoni, st.: Alexandre Dumas, sc.: Alfredo De Antoni, Giuseppe Paolo Pacchierotti, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Caesar Film Italy 1917) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Alfredo De Antoni, Lido Manetti, Nella Montagna, Vittorio De Sica, si, b&w, 35mm, 3540 ft. (part 1) and 4,442 ft. (part 2). Archive: [Istituto Valenciano de Cinematografia \[ESV\]](#), [Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna \[ITB\]](#), [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#).

Tosca. Dir.: Alfredo De Antoni, st.: Victorien Sardou, sc.: Giuseppe Paolo Pacchiarotti, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Caesar Film Italy 1918) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Alfredo De Antoni, Olga Benetti, Luigi Cigoli, Vittorio Bianchi, si, b&w, 35mm, 6,906 ft. Archive: [Cineteca del Friuli \[ITG\]](#).

Frou-frou. Dir.: Alfredo De Antoni, st.: Henri Meihac, Ludovic Halevy, sc.: Giuseppe Paolo Pacchierotti, ph.: Alberto Carta, ard.: Alfredo Manzi (Caesar Film Italy 1918) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Guido Trento, Cia Fornaroli, si, b&w, 35mm, 6,818 ft. Archive: [Filmoteca UNAM \[MXU\]](#).

Tu m'appartient! [You belong to me]. Dir.: Maurice Gleize, sc.: Alfred Machard (C.I.C.-Société Cinématographique des Romanciers Français Italy-France 1929) cas.: Camille Bert, Suzy Vernon, Victor Vina, René Alexandre, Francesca Bertini, si, b&w, 35mm, 7,671 ft. Archive: [Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée \[FRB\]](#).

Mein Leben für das Deine [My love for yours]/*Odette*. Dir.: Jacques Houssin and Giorgio Zambon, st.: Victorien Sardou, sc.: Benno Vigny Giorgio Zambon (Caesar Film Italy 1935) cas.: Francesca Bertini, Samson Fainsilber, Jacques Maury, Claude May, sd, b&w, 35mm, 7,520 ft. Archive: [EYE Filmmuseum \[NLA\]](#), [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

Dora, la espia/Dora o le spie [Dora and the spies]. Dir.: Raffaello Matarazzo, st.: Victorien Sardou, sc.: Raffaello Matarazzo (Scalera Film-Sociedad Anónima de Films Españoles Italy-Spain 1942) cas.: Maruchi Fresno, Adriano Rimoldi, Francesca Bertini, sd., b&w, 35mm. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

1900/Novecento. Dir.: Bernardo Bertolucci, sc.: Franco Arcalli, Giuseppe Bertolucci, Bernardo Bertolucci (Produzioni Europee Associate [PEA], Les Productions Artistes Associés, Artemis Film Italy France Germany 1976) cas.: Robert De Niro, Gérard Depardieu, Dominique Sanda, Francesca Bertini, sd., col., 35mm, 29,528 ft. Archive: [Cineteca Nazionale \[ITN\]](#).

B. Filmography: Non-Extant Film Titles:

1. Francesca Bertini as Actress and Screenwriter

La perla del cinema [The pearl of cinema], 1916; *Nella fornace* [In the furnace], 1916; *My Little Baby*, 1916.

2. Francesca Bertini as Actress and Producer

Lisa Fleuron, 1920; *The Shadow/L'ombra*, 1920; *Princess Giorgio/La principessa Giorgio*, 1920; *L'ultimo sogno* [The last dream], 1921; *La ferita/La blessure* [The wound], 1920; *La donna nuda* [The naked woman], 1922; *La giovinezza del diavolo* [Devil's youth], 1922; *Fatale bellezza* [Deadly beauty], 1922; *Fior di Levante* [Eastern flower], 1925.

3. Francesca Bertini as Actress

La dea del mare [The sea goddess], 1909; *The Troubador/Il trovatore*, 1910; *Folchetto of Narbonne/Folchetto di Narbona*, 1910; *Hernani/Ernani*, 1911; *Ruy Blas*, 1912; *Primavera e autunno* [Spring and Autumn], 1912; *Un amore di Pietro de' Medici* [A love of Pietro de' Medici], 1912; *The Wandering Minstrel/Suonatori e ambulanti*, 1912; *Marion*, 1912; *Rameses, King of Egypt/La rosa di Tebe*, 1912; *All on a Summer's Day/Le due scommesse*, 1912; *Tragic Flirtation/Tragico amore*, 1912; *Tears and smiles/Lacrime e sorrisi*, 1912; *L'avvoltoio* [The vulture], 1912; *Ninì Verbena*, 1913; *Per il blasone* [For the blazon], 1913; *Il diavolo e l'acqua santa* [The devil and the holy water], 1913; *The Price of Silence/La cricca dorata*, 1913; *L'ultimo atout* [The last atout], 1913; *His Symphony/La gloria*, 1913; *Tramonto* [Sunset], 1913; *Vigilia di Natale* [Christmas' eve] 1913; *L'arma dei vigliacchi* [The weapon of the cowards], 1913; *La donna altrui* [The woman of the other], 1913; *Il filo di perle* [The pearl necklace], 1913; *The Song of the Soul/La canzone di Werner*, 1914; *Onestà che uccide* [Deadly honesty], 1914; *La principessa straniera* [The foreign princess], 1914; *Nelly la gigolette o la danzatrice della tavern nera/Nelly the gigolette, or the dancer of the black tavern*, 1914; *Don Pietro Caruso*, 1914; *Ivonne la bella danzatrice* [Ivonne, the beautiful dancer], 1915; *Il capestro degli Asburgo* [The noose of the Hasburgs], 1915; *La colpa altrui* [The other's guilt], 1916; *Eroismo d'amore* [A lover's heroism], 1916; *Lagrymae rerum/Nel gorgo della vita* [In the whirl of life], 1916; *Andreina*, 1917; *La piccola fonte* [The little fountain], 1917; *Malìa* [The spell], 1917; *La fin de Montecarlo* [The end of Montecarlo], 1927; *La possession* [The possession], 1929; *La femme d'une nuit/La donna di una notte* [One night, one woman], 1930-31; *Odette*, 1935; *A sud niente di nuovo* [Nothing new in the South], 1957; *Una ragazza di Praga* [A girl from Prague], 1967.

C. DVD Sources:

Assunta Spina. DVD. (Cineteca di Bologna Italy 2015)

Sangue Bleu. DVD. (Cineteca di Bologna Italy 2014)

The Last Diva/L'ultima diva: Francesca Bertini. DVD. (Kino Video US 2003).

D. Streamed Media:

Reconstruction of *The Little Fountain* from text (Roberto Bracco) and illustrations (Giove Toppi) from the original 1918 brochure:

The only extant fragment of *Mariute* (1918), restored by the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin:

The tinted and toned copy of *L'amazzone mascherata* (1914) restored by the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin:

Excerpt from *Assunta Spina* (1915):

1961 interview with Francesca Bertini on Italian television (in Italian):

1969 interview with Francesca Bertini on Italian television program *Ieri e oggi*, Part 1 (in Italian):

1969 interview with Francesca Bertini on Italian television program *Ieri e oggi*, Part 2 (in Italian):

Credit Report

In compiling this filmography, the author has put the English title first, followed by the original in Italian. When the films do not seem to have had an English or American edition, she has given the original Italian title first, followed by its literal translation in brackets.

The present filmography is based on the list compiled by Vittorio Martinelli and published in the book edited by Gianfranco Mingozzi, which amends several mistakes in previous listings. As indicated by Martinelli, “a few titles never mentioned before were included after finding the actress’s name in a review, or recognizing her during a screening. Titles often attributed to Bertini like *Marito distratto e moglie manesco* and *Primavera di lacrime*, produced by Partenope, have been excluded because the leading actress is a certain Iole Bertini. *Il pappagallo di zia Berta* has likewise been excluded because the title is unknown in period sources. The screening of *Cesare Borgia* has not confirmed the presence of Bertini among the interpreters” (qtd. in Mingozzi 2003, 128). *La perla del cinema*, *Nella fornace*, and *My Little Baby* have been listed in the screenwriting section of the filmography based on the identification of Frank Bert as Bertini already made by reviewers in period articles. All the films produced by Caesar/Bertini have been listed in the section devoted to the activity of Bertini as producer.

This filmography was also supplemented by searching in FIAF Treasures database, which differs from Martinelli's list in a few instances. For the purposes of providing as much information as possible, this filmography lists everything from these two sources and does not mark the discrepancies between the two, but more research is necessary to verify the most up-to-date archival holdings for each title.

The FIAF Treasures database lists *La ragazza di Almalfi* (1921) (held at ITC) as part of Bertini's filmography. This may be the same film as *Voglio a tte'* (produced by Bertini Film and also held in ITC), according to the entries in the database. FIAF Treasures also connects Bertini to *Cesar's Wraak*, a 1912 Pathé Frères/Film d'Arte Italiana coproduction now held at NLA, and *Nelly la Domatrice* (1912), held at ITT and NLA.

Citation

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