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The *Italian Historical Society Journal* aims to provide, to those interested in the history of Australian-Italian communities, an outlet for the circulation of news and reports, the exchange of information and the notification of future activities. We invite readers to contribute newsworthy articles and short notes. Guidelines for contributors are available on application.

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Readers of the *IHS Journal* will notice that recent issues of the journal have undergone a change in design and, to some degree, in content. It will also be apparent that the publication of this latest issue has been late due in large part to these changes, which we are implementing so that we continue to produce as high a standard as possible while working within the available means. We would appreciate any feedback regarding this publication. Suggestions and comments can be forwarded to the editor.

FRONT COVER:

A still from the film *Love's Brother* showing Amelia Warner in the role of Rosetta who is about to embark on a long voyage. (See article by Jan Sardi, the director of the film, on page 33).

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from 'terrone' to 'wog': 'post' colonial perspectives on italian immigration into australia

GERARDO PAPALIA WAS BORN IN AUSTRALIA OF ITALIAN PARENTS WHO MIGRATED IN THE 1950S. IN 1994 HE WON AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA WHERE HE IS PRESENTLY TEACHING ENGLISH. IN 1996 HE WORKED FOR THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INDEXING AND TRANSLATING DOCUMENTS FROM THE ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC ARCHIVE COLLECTION. IN 2003 HE RECEIVED HIS PHD FROM LA TROBE UNIVERSITY. THE TITLE OF HIS RESEARCH WAS RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND AUSTRALIA DURING THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT 1935-1936. CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE POST-COLONIAL THEORY AS APPLIED TO ITALIAN HISTORY AND EMIGRATION, ITALO-AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE AND WORKS BOTH FICTION AND NON-FICTION WRITTEN IN ENGLISH ON ITALY. GERARDO MAY BE CONTACTED BY E-MAIL ON G.PAPALIA@TIN.IT

by
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The Italian presence in Australia has been seen in a wide variety of ways, but rarely from the point of view of post-colonial discourse. As Italian unification in 1861 represents the starting point for Italian mass emigration, the best way to approach the issue is to begin by reconstructing traditional views of Italian history and culture.

Italian unification has generally been hailed as a positive step towards nationhood by a country which had hitherto been simply described as a 'geographical expression'. The standard narrative traces Garibaldi's steps from the embarkation of the 'One Thousand' at Quarto in Liguria and his landing in Marsala, Sicily to 'liberate' the South. His campaign is as celebrated as the man himself, described as the 'Hero of Two Worlds'. Indeed, he is one of the few Italian political and military figures in modern history that the English speaking world can relate to, not least because of his penchant for things British, like the red shirts his men famously sported. The existing Bourbon regime he so deftly helped to bring down had been described by none other than British P.M. Gladstone himself, as 'the negation of God erected into a system of government.'¹

In fact, unification really meant the military occupation of the rest of Italy by the Kingdom of Savoy (Piedmont). Until his departure for Marsala, Garibaldi had basically served his 'revolutionary' career at the service of the British government in South America. Moreover,

his 'liberation' of the South had been with its substantial political, military and financial support. British interests played a leading role in Italian unification seen as a counterweight to French designs in the Mediterranean. The denigration of the Bourbon regime in the dominant media of the time provided the necessary ethical support for Garibaldi's mission and constituted the founding justification of 'Italian' unification.²

In reality, despite the difficult conditions of its poor, the Bourbon regime was neither irredeemably corrupt nor impenetrable to progress. Under its policies, a modest start towards industrialisation had already occurred, and few know that it was the first Italian state to construct a railway line (Naples-Portici). It expressed a florid intellectual and political life in spite of setbacks resulting from Bourbon repression after the 1848 revolution. Its economy was stable and productive and its finances sound.³

The hopes raised by Garibaldi's campaign among the southern peasantry for land ownership were quickly destroyed. In constitutional, legal, administrative and military terms Italy had not really been 'unified', but rather had been 'occupied' by an all centralising Piedmontese state. Not surprisingly, the overriding priorities of the new Italian government were principally to industrialise the northern Italian economy. Accordingly, the new regime quickly stipulated agreements with the large southern landowners (latifondisti), thereby frustrating peasant aspirations. This, together with increases in taxation, not to mention the forced de-industrialisation of the southern economy, led to a general armed insurrection which went under the name 'Brigantaggio.' To quell it, martial law was declared and the Piedmontese army sent to the South ended up numbering 120,000. It resorted to notorious 'counterinsurgency' tactics similar to those of the United States in Vietnam. The death toll, almost exclusively among civilians, was to reach almost 270,000. While the military's losses were much lower - about 23,000 - this was still more than all casualties sustained by the Piedmontese army in the wars for the unification of Italy. The definitive repression of brigandry was to confirm the large landowners as the ruling class of the south in alliance with northern industrial interests.⁴

The industrialisation of the North could not occur without 'squeezing' the only productive sector of the economy, agriculture. In southern Italy this was the principal source of income and export earnings. Taxation was increased particularly on

¹ Gladstone, W.E., *Letter to the Earl of Aberdeen on the State of Naples*, 1851.

² See: McLean, David, 'Garibaldi in Uruguay: a reputation reconsidered' *English Historical Review*, April 1998. Also: Various Authors, *La Storia proibita: Quando i Piemontesi invasero il Sud*, Controcorrente, Naples, 2001. *British strategic interests*, pp. 129-152.

³ Petruszewicz, M., 'Before the Southern Question: Native ideas on Backwardness and Remedies in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, 1815-1849' in Schneider, J. (ed) *Italy's Southern Question. Orientalism in One Country*, Berg, 1998, New York. pp. 27-49. Alianello, C., *La conquista del Sud. Il Risorgimento nell'Italia meridionale*, Rusconi Editore Milan, 1972., p.109.

⁴ *La Storia Proibita*, pp. 153-166; Villari, R., *Storia Contemporanea*, Vol. 3, Laterza, Bari 1982. pp.241-242, Procacci, G., *Storia degli Italiani*, Vol. 2 Laterza Bari 1998.pp.391-2.

domestic consumption (for example the infamous Mill Tax was introduced in 1869), and after a period of trade liberalisation, heavy protectionism was adopted (1878). Before unification, the southern Italian economy had been the most viable in Italy in export terms: it had the biggest merchant marine fleet in the Mediterranean after the British with its agricultural products being sold throughout Europe and as far afield as Russia and the United States. Reaction to Italian protectionism by importing countries meant that southern Italian products were no longer welcome. Under these pressures and unfavourable world markets, the southern economy collapsed and the whole agricultural economy of Italy was placed under severe strain.⁵

The political 'benefits' of unification were also meagre: Italy's new 'citizens' obtained only limited suffrage. Suffrage was regulated by erstwhile Piedmontese laws; it was 'extended' from 400,000 in 1861 to 2 million in 1882 out of a total population of about 22 million and excluded non-landowners and the illiterate, a higher proportion of whom lived in the South.⁶

As with the mirage of universal suffrage, for the newly annexed South, promises of free public education also brought mixed blessings. Although substantial resources were expended in this area, the national educational system imposed Tuscan Italian as the only accepted medium of communication. Just as Italy had not been unified democratically, so public education could not but reinforce the class-based nature of the newly forged 'national' society. Tuscan Italian was spoken only by a very small cultural elite. Even the architect of Italian unification, Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, prime minister at the service of the king of Savoy, preferred to speak French rather than Italian. Moreover, public education was established first in the North and only later in the South. Illiteracy ranged from 75% to 90%.⁷ These factors conspired principally to push collective action beyond the realms of actuality, leaving open only individualistic options for self improvement.

The post-unification system had thus left many rural Italians with little scope for progress. Economic advancement had been rendered impossible by government policies. Political participation was blocked by the very limited suffrage and military law. Public and intellectual discourse and the education system further marginalised the poor. As with education, huge investment in public transport networks also brought social upheaval and hardship, for emigration began to take on the form of a mass exodus in the 1880s, particularly from rural areas

and the South. Initially emigration was opposed by governments to keep rural labour costs low in favour of southern landowners. However, the situation rapidly became explosive. Policy was forced to change, emigration began to be seen as a positive solution to social problems arising particularly in the South. Crime would be reduced and emigrants would send back much needed foreign cash to help their families left at home. This money helped to redress the trade imbalance due to protectionism, buoyed the internal market and ended up in banks which financed industrialisation.⁸

Up to 27 million Italians eventually emigrated after Unification, although about half of this number returned. The regions most affected were: Piedmont, Veneto, Marche, Abruzzo-Molise, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily (ranging between 1.6% and 3.3 % of the total population per annum!). However, emigration from the North tended to be seasonal towards nearby European countries (consistently around 80% of the total) whereas in the South it was predominantly transoceanic (over 90% of the total went to the Americas) and was much more permanent in character.⁹

For the purposes of our analysis, the significant aspects of this 'unification' process were the cultural repercussions. As mentioned above, the 'backwardness' of rural areas and particularly the South had been emphasised as a way of justifying occupation. Following 'unification' intellectuals seeking to 'comprehend' the reasons for the apparent inability of the South to follow in the wake of the North led to the formulation of the concept of 'la questione meridionale' where the situation of the southern provinces was described as being intrinsically backward and significantly as 'immutable' or static, that is, incapable of self-improvement (in other words southern Italians had been 'essentialised', i.e.: attributed enduring and immutable characteristics).¹⁰

Given that 'positivism' was the ascendant scientific ideology at the time it is not surprising that scientists sought 'objective' criteria to explain why 'la questione meridionale' did not appear to be amenable to self-improvement. A leading exponent of Italian positivist science was Cesare Lombroso, a northern Italian criminal anthropologist who looked for and found physical characteristics among southern Italians which he believed explained their laziness and proclivity to crime (based on his measurements of the skulls of slain brigands). Lombroso's school of criminal anthropology would subsequently have a lasting influence

⁵ Petrusiewicz, M., 'The Demise of latifondismo', in: *The New History of the Italian South*, Lumley R., and Morris, J., (eds) University of Exeter Press, 1997. Procacci, p.390. *Storia Proibita*: pp.51-59.

⁶ Villari pp. 242-243, 295-6.

⁷ Villari, p. 294.

⁸ Villari, p. 294, *Storia Proibita*: pp.167-172.

⁹ For the statistics: Sori, E., *L'Emigrazione Italiana dall'Unità alla seconda guerra mondiale*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1979, p.20; Audenino, P., *L'Emigrazione Italiana*, Fenice 2000, Milan 1994, pp.18-29; Gabaccia, D., *Italy's Many Diasporas*, University Washington Press, 2000, p.4, which gives the figure of Italian emigrants as 25 million.

¹⁰ Moe, N., 'The Emergence of the Southern Question in Villari, Franchetti, and Sonnino', in Schneider J., (ed) *Italy's 'Southern Question*, Berg, Oxford, New York, 1998, pp. 51-76.

both within Italy and abroad in its construction of 'la questione meridionale'.¹¹

In reality, as we have seen, the so-called irredeemable 'backwardness' of the South and rural areas in Italy was an artefact of unification, a colonial process recognised by prescient minds even as it occurred. It was a cultural mythology or 'discourse' that served the dominating classes. Much of the Sardinian Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci's work on subalternity defined as the cultural submission of the oppressed to dominating narratives regarding their own reality and lives, was based on his analysis of unification and its nefarious impact on the lower classes in southern Italy.¹²

An instrument characterising subalternity was, as we have seen, 'essentialisation'. However, many of those imposed upon in this manner did not always accept these imposed discourses. The reaction to the collective existential crisis (also in the physical sense of the word) of Italy's South and rural areas was the fundamental trigger for emigration. Emigration continued to be an option even when the hardship it caused both materially and culturally emerged in all its attendant contradictions. Emigration beckoned as the only real solution and continued to attract the most energetic and enterprising elements. Indeed, it is common opinion amongst Italian emigrants that they represent the best of their breed. A famous song of emigration, almost the 'national' anthem of Calabria, is Calabria Mia, in which the refrain states: 'Tutti u megghiu figghi s'indiru': or: 'All the best of your children have departed'.

If we are to look at emigration from the point of view of its protagonists, it was considered an investment or to use current economic terminology, a 'business plan'. In fact, it was not the poorest that emigrated, but those that could spare enough accumulated capital to make an investment considered a certain source of future economic well being. Individual participation was generally one small piece of a much greater flow. In the immediate this has been termed 'chain migration' or to use another expression: 'word of mouth investment'.

However, the subalternity to which Italian emigrants had been subjected in their homeland could not end with their departure. To begin with, all emigrants start and often finish their lives in a 'subordinate' position. Moreover, the Italian government also advised foreign elites as to how they should receive

and classify Italian immigrants, transmitting the notion that southern Italians were predisposed to delinquency and depravity. In particular, this 'coloured United States' perceptions of Italian immigration where the vast majority of southern Italian migrants went. On witnessing the arrival of prevalently southern Italian immigrants, public opinion there was roused to the point where immigration was drastically restricted in 1924. For years immigration officials in the USA kept separate statistics for southern and northern Italians.¹³

In turn, US opinion influenced Australian perceptions both popular and academic. The most significant works on Italian immigration published by Australian 'experts' of the time all reproduce this dichotomy of undesirable southern Italians as opposed to northern ones. Here, racial characteristics such as (desirable and progressive) bloneness were mistakenly attributed exclusively to northern Italians and (undesirable and backward) darkness equally wrongly to southern Italians.¹⁴

Almost since Federation in 1901, the newly founded Australian Commonwealth had 'protected' its almost exclusively Anglo-Celtic society behind walls of the 'White Australia' policy. This policy was intended to bar immigration from any nation not considered 'European', with a preference for the British and Northern Europeans. Before the Second World War, Italian immigrants had numbered about 33,000. This was a small number when compared to emigration to the USA, but already culturally significant because it quickly became the largest non-English speaking group such that their presence aroused opposition in Australian society, ever fearful of 'foreign invasion'.

The racial status of Italians, some of whom were seen as not being really white, nor quite black, was cast into doubt. Pseudo-scientific ideas of Italy as being divided into a 'Nordic' or 'Alpine' north and 'African' south were current in Australian scientific opinion until well beyond the end of the Second World War. One should remember that the cultural construct of 'whiteness' at the time was a defining aspect of 'Australianness'. Inevitably this ideology informed the application of the White Australia policy. Moreover, it continued to condition its application throughout the 1950s and 1960s to the extent that Italians deemed as being of a 'dubious' racial colouring were not permitted to enter Australia. By the time those procedures

¹¹ Gibson M., 'Biology or Environment? Race and Southern "Deviancy" in the writings of Italian Criminologists, 1880-1920' in: Schneider J., *ibid.* pp. 99-115.

¹² As the Italian writer and political journalist Giuseppe Prezzolini once pointed out: 'L'Italia si divide in due parti; una europea, che arriva all'incirca a Roma e una africana o balcanica che va da Roma in giù. L'Italia africana o balcanica è la colonia dell'Italia europea'. (Prezzolini, G., *Codice della vita italiana* Vascello Editore Firenze 1993, p. 21. Gramsci, A., *La Questione Meridionale*, Riuniti Editore Rome, 1969, Franco De Felice and Valentino Parlato (eds). *Storia Proibita: op cit* pp. 159-160. Villari, on Pasquale Villari, p. 246.

¹³ On the United States see: Gambino, R., *Blood of My Blood*, Picas series 2003 (1974) Toronto, pp. 84-5. Stella G., *L'Orda*, Rizzoli, (2002), in partic. Appendix 1.

¹⁴ Regarding US influence on Australia: Ferry T.A., *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into and Report on the Social and Economic Effect of Increase in Number of Aliens in North Queensland*, Government Printer Brisbane, Brisbane, 1925; Lyng J., *Non-Britishers in Australia*, Macmillan & Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1935 (1927); Pyke N.O.P., 'An Outline History of Italian Immigration into Australia', *Australian Quarterly*, XX 13 (Sept. 1948), pp. 99-109

were abandoned, the bulk of Italian immigration to Australia was over. These ideas continued to have currency in mainstream public and political opinion until recent times, if not to this very day!¹⁵

The vast majority of Italian immigration into Australia mostly took place after the Second World War. Total numbers were eventually to reach 250,000. This meant that this immigration wave had been conditioned by another set of particular historical circumstances. Italy had entered the war against Great Britain and France in June 1940 on the side of Nazi Germany. In many ways this choice derived from the Fascist regime's pursuit, albeit in an extreme form, of the Italian state's traditional policy of southward expansion into the Mediterranean which had previously led Mussolini's government to definitively pacify Libyan resistance (with horrendous loss of life, akin to what had occurred some years earlier in southern Italy), not to mention the conquest of Ethiopia in 1935-6 (once again with enormous loss of life among the civilian population), using the previously conquered Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somalia as springboards.

When the Italian Government signed the Armistice with the Allies on September 8, 1943, Italian unity collapsed not only in its institutions, administration and army but particularly in legitimacy. Indeed, the whole edifice behind its geopolitical thrust had disappeared now it had in effect become a vassal state. Unification had truly been undone and with it the 'Piedmontese' structure of the state. The country was occupied in the North by the German army and administered there by what remained of the Fascist party as a vassal regime called the Republic of Salò. In the South the 'legitimate' government, which was still under the Savoy monarchy, continued an administration of sorts under Allied control. In the confusion, families were divided. Disbanded soldiers, left without orders, tried to return home in perilous circumstances. In some areas, particularly in the North, where Italian partisans operated, conflict took on a fratricidal aspect. Almost every Italian emigrant who arrived in Australia after the war can relate the disorientation that he or she felt on that day.

Eventually, by siding with the Allies and by strenuous resistance against the occupying German forces by the partisans, Italian polity gradually and partially reacquired some sort of legitimacy which has consolidated into the mythology of 'Liberazione' from Fascism. On the strength of this narrative, the modern Italian republic was forged and founded. Indeed, the Day of Liberation is still celebrated in Italy as a public holiday on April 25. Symbolically, it coincides with Australia's celebration of its war dead, many of whom fell against the same enemy.

However, the poor huddled masses of defeat found it hard to believe in this 'Liberation' and saw only ruins. One should consider that in the immediate post war years there was widespread disaffection with the new government. Collective protests, particularly in the South, again centred on the objective of occupying land held by absentee aristocrats. As had happened after Unification, many of these protests were brutally repressed by police with many deaths occurring (for example at Melissa in Calabria in 1949). Subalternity had not disappeared, and economic conditions were dire, once again particularly in rural areas and in the South.

So once again, emigration beckoned as the only solution. Those that departed for Australia brought with their meagre material a baggage rich with family histories of previous transmigrations, mainly to the United States. In addition, they had burning memories of September 8, and the humiliation that had ensued. In effect, they had no homeland, excepting their village, friends and family. They could not identify with the re-nascent Italian state. The 1940s and 1950s when the majority left Italy, were the years of separatism, led in Sicily by the notorious bandit Salvatore Giuliano, and of the annexation of the erstwhile eastern Italian provinces by Yugoslavia. The very reality of emigration spelt admission of defeat.

Not surprisingly, the Australians who witnessed the arrival of the first wave of Italian immigrants subscribed to this narrative of submission: the Italians were the defeated, the humiliated. If they had come to Australia, it was because of their defeat and hence the only way forward was for them to assimilate into the local culture, which had demonstrated its utter superiority. Add this to the peasant background of many migrants, their illiteracy in Tuscan Italian and long memories of oppression by the powerful. In his autobiography *Under Another Sky: The life and sentiments of an Italian emigrant*, Carmelo Caruso, from Sicily, recounts his experiences in Queensland where many Italians found gruelling employment in the sugar-cane fields. He relates how assignment of virgin land there followed a precise pecking order of victory: the best lots went to the Australian born, then successively to the British, the Maltese, the Greeks, the Germans and only last to the Italians.¹⁶

Opinions of how to 'classify' Italians scientifically did not remain enclosed within ivory towered academia. They strongly permeated public debate and perceptions in Australia, as witnessed in the best seller *They're A Weird Mob* which sold over half a million copies and was even made into a film starring northern Italian actor Walter Chiari in 1966. Published as an ostensibly autobiographical novel, *They're a Weird Mob* ushered in the era of post-war Australian cultural assertiveness. The narrator

¹⁵ Pugliese, J., 'Race as a Category Crisis: Whiteness and the Topical Assignment of Race' in *Social Semiotics*, vol. 12, No. 2, 2002, pp. 154-166.

¹⁶ Caruso, C., *Under Another Sky: The life and sentiments of an Italian emigrant*, Congedo Editore, 1999.

RIGHT Carmelo Caruso



and author, posing as a blonde northern Italian migrant, called himself Nino Culotta. In this work, southern Italians are depicted caricaturishly primitive and violent, needful of salvation by the baptism of beer and fisticuffs, abandoning their knives and wine. Both works end with an appeal to the 'New Australians' as they were then called, to assimilate until their own culture was totally extinguished. The real author's name, however, was John O'Grady. His work served to further confound public awareness regarding the reality of immigration and reinforced public views of the subalternity of (particularly southern European) migrants.¹⁷

The weight of this conventional wisdom has conditioned perceptions to this day. Indeed, such is the hegemony of this narrative that many southern Italians themselves and their descendants have (albeit with misgiving) adopted it as their own 'identity.' Current 'multicultural' debates and the 'celebration of derision' as witnessed in the self attribution by immigrants and their offspring of the term 'wog' and the use of 'wogness' are direct descendants of this process (see for example the interesting polemics and reflections in: www.wog.com.au). In so far as 'wogness' is accepted uncritically or taken for granted as the defining narrative of one's identity, we witness 'de-centering' or the adoption of other widely held prejudices as a definition of self.

To give one an idea of the impact of this ideological order on the minds of migrants, I can cite the example of a relative of mine, now in his eighties, who emigrated into Australia in the early 1950s. My cousin lived through the war as a soldier, was captured by the Germans after September 8, 1943, and was forced to work on the Atlantic Wall. During this time he defied

German mistreatment to the point of risking his life for the sake of maintaining faith to his principles. Following the war he spent time as a POW in Great Britain. On arrival in Australia he worked for the local council on road-works for over 30 years despite being a shoemaker by trade. He took out Australian citizenship very early into his residence in Australia. Now a pensioner, his hobby is playing lawn bowls. One day, he recounted (itself significant for being considered a story worth telling) how one of his Anglo-Australian competitors made a mistake and assigned him fewer points than he had effectively scored. When I asked him whether he protested, he simply replied: 'What's the use? Remember, it's their country.'

ITALIAN CULTURE IN AUSTRALIA

It is important to try to comprehend the state of mind of the immigrant on touching Australian shores. He or she had spent at least a month at sea, a passage costing many the worth of their entire inheritance and more. All literature written by immigrants recounts this leap from the known to the unknown as a constant leitmotif. In the mythology of the Mediterranean, change was represented by the god Janus, the two faced doorkeeper. To pass under his gaze was a moment of truth when one had abandoned one's previous life and identity but had not yet acquired a new one. Any passage was considered a moment of vulnerability when the slightest unexpected influence could bring about unpredictable or even fatal consequences. Loss of one's identity was not the least of these risks. Not coincidentally, after the arrival of Christianity, the Church placed saints at the gates of cities which Janus once guarded to ward off evil.

According to some models of the diasporic experience (as for example those of critic Homi Bhabha), the newly arrived immigrant inhabits a frontier land where his/her past and future mingle, where habitual modes of thought are no longer valid but where the future is as yet unclear. Disorientation is inevitable. Long held beliefs and ideals are challenged by this new reality and accommodation, with all the pain that this can cause, is inevitable. In terms of Italy's recent history, on an individual level, immigration was like a new but more traumatic unification!

According to these theories, identity ceases to be binary, that is, 'US' as against 'THEM' but change becomes inevitable both for the guests as for the hosts. The host culture has to confront presences that do not belong to its cultural history or expectations. Alternatively, these 'unhomely' presences may constitute unwelcome reminders of long repressed memories or identities. Hence the initial push towards assimilation by the host society, as if to overcome this challenge to consolidated or not-so-consolidated identities.

The immigrant can react to assimilationist practices in a variety of ways as diverse as

¹⁷ O'Grady, J. (alias Nino Culotta), *They're A Weird Mob*, Ure Press, Sydney, 1957.

there are individuals. However, for convenience, I have grouped them into two extremes: either rejection of the new reality and therefore entrenchment behind what one constructs as the essential features of one's own identity, or alternatively acceptance of change and rejection of one's own heritage as inferior, outdated, shameful, in other words 'accommodation'. Of course, both these narratives coexist, for one cannot completely exclude outside influences, just as one cannot totally abandon one's origins. Mixed in with this process are tactics like mimicry and ambivalence, noted in countries with a history of colonialism, as a means of coping with overwhelming hegemonic force both economic and cultural. Hence many migrants have worn two faces: one for the 'Anglo-Australian' external reality and the other for their immediate family and friends. These processes can be perpetuated in their offspring with even more marked characteristics.

In general, hostility, discrimination or rejection of dialogue by the host society leads to greater degrees of entrenchment. In these cases, for the reasons outlined above, the Italian immigrant would not emphasise his or her national origins, but rather those of family, village, province and at the most, region. The language spoken would be the so-called 'dialect' rather than Tuscan Italian. Social events would remain within the circle of those familiar with this language. This is made possible by the fact that immigration is a mass phenomenon, not an individualistic option, and this was particularly so in the Australian metropolis.

The immigrant may not be aware that in Italy the values and traditions (and even the dialect) he/she is preserving have been subjected to the ebbs and flows of history, hegemonic processes in economy and culture. They may have disappeared or become unrecognisable. Even when faced by evidence that things have changed in his home country the immigrant may still react by reaffirming that his/her mode of being is the 'real' way of being Italian to avoid disorientation or identity crisis. Thus he or she may oppose and reject other ways of interpreting his or her identity. This process is universal and has been termed 'ethnic drift' by sociologists.

However, one should realise what the technological parameters of this phenomenon were for Italian immigrants of the time. Telephone calls were either impossible or inordinately expensive. The flow of information in the media was a trickle compared to today. The same applied to travel back to Italy. Communication was also made difficult because the villages and towns most migrants departed from were in themselves subject to diaspora with the consequent breakdown of kinship structures and solidarity networks. To give one a measure of this existential condition, the writer mentioned above, Caruso, discovered that his father had taken ill and died only when a letter he sent home came back to him carrying the following laconic words written by the laboured hand of an anonymous

postal worker: 'Addressee Deceased'. Moreover, return could be socially impossible: it would often only be accepted if in material triumph. Few ever returned from Australia in triumph.

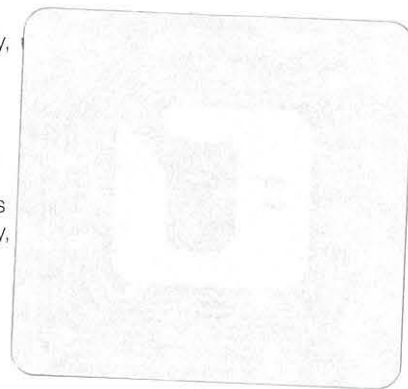
The crossing and recrossing of boundaries which some critics have emphasised in the establishment of a diasporic identity, were not possible because of material circumstances in the case of Italian immigration to Australia which was substantially unidirectional, materially, culturally and psychologically. The only variation to this rule was in the extent to which the immigrants themselves created their own little homeland within domestic walls. However, this homeland was fabricated with crystallised memories and inhabited with behaviour patterns deriving from what they had left. Not surprisingly, these models are remarkably tenacious.

However, this it not to argue that no change (crystallisation) or only entrenchment ensued. The other option was acceptance or accommodation. Particularly the very young, single male immigrants, often with uncertain (or repressed) memories of their origin would assimilate rapidly and jettison any claim to the 'old' country. Marriage among this group often occurred either with women of non Italian origin or like minded women of an Italian background.

The generations born in Australia would perpetuate this trend towards accommodation as their hold on their forebears' past would be even more tenuous. They would either uncritically reflect their parents' crystallised views or adopt local Anglo-Australian perspectives on their own culture in a form of decentring.

However, among a vocal minority resistance also emerged. Sometimes this took the form of deliberate celebration of diversity as contrasting identity practices were highlighted to underscore difference. A number of Australian born Italo-Australians would consciously reinvest in modes of behaviour belonging to their forebears. For example, some would deliberately cultivate vegetables in their front gardens to make a statement about their own non-assimilated identities. On the surface this appeared to be a simple imitation of their parents' behaviour, but in essence, it was a radical reaffirmation of difference, a rejection of assimilationist pressures. This process goes under the name of 're-inscription'. But it can take many forms and is almost universal among the Italo-Australian cultures.

Indeed, in almost all cases, whether in terms of accommodation or entrenchment, some type of 're-inscription' did occur. For the first generation of immigrants, objects and habits belonging to their past life could assume the iconic value of an identity practice. Perhaps the very same objects or habits would no longer have currency in Italy. For their offspring, relics of past life in Italy, mythologies, or concrete objects such as tools or old photographs could acquire meanings which they had never had for their



parents. This process is evidenced particularly in the performing arts such as theatre. In one example, a film made by an Italo-Australian theatrical company, Broccoli Productions, reinterpreted the story of the famous Calabrian bandit Musolino as if it had taken place in today's Australian bush. Musolino's story has many points in common with Ned Kelly's. In the case of actual objects, an old photograph of a woman together with her friends sitting in the town square will simply mean memories for the person portrayed, but for her children it can signify an alternative (possible or yearned for) mode of living one's social life and leisure very different from the anonymous metropolitan streetscape immigration has accustomed them to. Re-inscription here represents a conciliation of their parents' past/present with the actual reality the Australian born generation was experiencing. It can also be construed as a form of coping or resistance against the other 'essentialising' narratives imposed on their own identities by the hegemonic host culture. From another perspective, re-inscription can also represent a form of accommodation between two unreconciled discourses, the one hegemonic, the other subaltern.

The issue of accommodation deserves further reflection. Even in the case of the most extreme entrenchment, accommodation is inevitable, if only in terms of the life led outside the home, particularly the workplace. Only in particular instances (within larger cities) were Italo-Australians able to recreate a 'functioning' totalising milieu of Italianness in Australia. This would particularly be the case of non-working and non-studying immigrants. However, this did not exempt them from the trend towards crystallisation and isolation from their country of departure due to technological limitations. Here, entrenchment can be construed as a negative form of accommodation by creating a homeland which, being deprived of contact with Italy and with 'chronological' evolution, could only be a simulacrum.

But this was a rarity; much more often accommodation would occur along lines of exchange or in dialogue with sectors of the host society. In the case of Italians in Australia, an important factor was the Catholic Church, well entrenched in society as a different narrative of 'Australianness' as opposed to British views. Traditionally the Catholic Church had often been oppositional not establishmentarian, and needless to say Irish influence was traditionally strong. The socialising aspects of religion brought Italians into a wider community which softened the impact of marginalisation, despite the different traditions which characterised it.

Similarly, but to a much lesser extent, political parties would welcome Italians, particularly those of the extreme left, like the Communist Party. With some notable exceptions (the cane fields of north Queensland) their impact was

limited by the politically conservative or cynical ('qualunquismo') opinions of many Italian immigrants. It should be remembered that emigration remains an individualistic choice if not an individualistic phenomenon. However, a politically very conservative and pro-Catholic movement did arise under the guidance of the son of Sicilian immigrants, Roberto Santamaria. In the 1950s it was instrumental in splitting the Labour Movement and political Labor Party, thus prolonging the Liberal (conservative government) of Australia ultimately until 1972. In both these cases we witness evolution on the part of the host society to accommodate the new arrivals.¹⁸

Other less evident factors encouraging accommodation also operated: the fact that many Italians hailed from a partially pre-capitalist mode of production and were producers rather than consumers meant that common ground could be found with other immigrants from a like background. Other affinities could be similarity of language, as with Spanish speakers, or of common cultural matrix, as with other peoples of the Mediterranean area. Hence, exchange and the adoption of different ways of doing things. This has been particularly important in gardening and food preparation, for which the Italians in Australia are justly renowned. Just as this knowledge has been transmitted to others, so have Italo-Australian families appropriated other practices (for example, Greek dips frequently feature on Italo-Australian tables). Sometimes the Australian born would encourage such change. In other cases, the cultural diversity already present among the Italian immigration, as for example with the Calabrian community, would find or discover natural affinities with others, particularly the Greek diaspora. All of these factors could lead to exchange along pathways which did not follow hegemonic unidirectionalism or forced assimilation on the basis of a preconceived model.

We are dealing here with consensual exchange, dialogue and comprehension made possible by the diasporic reality of Australia. Nevertheless, I believe we can affirm it to have formed part of the accommodation dynamic. I could term this 'horizontal multiculturalism' as opposed to the 'multiculturalism' later preached by the Australian elite in the 1970s which celebrated 'cultural diversity' only in so far as it was amenable to fruition by the hegemonic elite which attributed to itself the faculty to pick and choose among those aspects of the diasporic inheritance which best suited its purposes and tastes.

Accommodation also occurred with the hegemonic reality, but along pathways implying negotiation and not blanket adoption. A case in point is re-inscription of local practices to accommodate them with the cultural reality of the immigrant. For example, many Australian

¹⁸ On the Italians in the cane fields and the Communist Party of Australia see: Papalia, G., *Peasant Rebels in the Canefields*, CIRC, Carlton 1985.

front gardens are decorated with elves and gnomes made of painted cement. The Italians adopted stone lions, if they were from Veneto, or eagles if they were from Abruzzo. Instead of placing these artefacts in the garden, they festoon the front fence, another typically Australian feature to reaffirm identity, or according to some, to warn off cultural assimilators. Similarly, the name of the village of origin is displayed in ceramic or wrought iron across the front wall of houses, just as British immigrants were wont to do. Likewise, whereas the backyard is an Australian recreational institution where sports are played, many Italians (like other immigrants) transformed it into a vegetable garden. Traditionally, Italians in Italy would never have a backyard or frontyard garden for that matter, rather, they would have a vegetable garden located in the countryside adjacent to urban areas. In backyard gardens Italians would sow plants never seen in Australia often after their seeds had been smuggled in under the noses of vigilant customs officers. But next to them plants and vegetables never seen in Italy were also sown, particularly decorative ones.

These changes could affect members of the local Anglo-Australian community as well. Backyard exchange is part of community or suburban life in Australia and the Italians brought skills and abilities with them that were much appreciated by neighbours, even in such simple matters as growing vegetables, producing tomato sauce or pressing wine. Likewise, the backyard BBQ was readily incorporated into the Italian Australian life as opposed to the country BBQ ('grigliata') common in Italy. Such activity represents a form of accommodation to the new reality and the creation of a culture which is hybrid because it reflects the unprecedented needs and desires of those who created it. In so doing it has allowed the immigrants and indeed their offspring to find a sense of belonging, thus establishing an authentic culture neither 'Italian' nor Anglo – Australian. It has also enriched the cultural awareness of the host society.

A significant aspect of this is language: to accommodate the new reality around them, immigrants adapted English words to Italian, particularly to describe objects or grasp concepts which did not exist in their experience of Italy. Nearly always, the Italian dialect spoken was the starting linguistic parameter for transformation. Hence, 'fenza' for fence, 'tramba' for tram, 'beccaiarda' for backyard. Alternatively words were adopted from the Italian because they sounded similar to the English: 'carro' for car, or 'fattoria' for factory. This constitutes a fundamental form of appropriation and belonging. Many of these words have even travelled back to Italy with the returning diaspora of recent years, such that the term 'fenza' is today commonly used in Calabria to describe a 'fence' and is used as an alternative in the local dialect to the Tuscan Italian 'recinto'. The recent 'discovery' of an Italo-Australian literature is only one further case in point. The

writing of literature is less accessible to the many because of linguistic barriers deriving from the subaltern origin of the immigrants. The lives of immigrants have often been very hard in practical terms and contained little or no leisure. Only as migrants have retired has there been a flourishing of Italo-Australian literature. Then there is cultural elitist prejudice to contend with, particularly among 'native' critics who will ghettoise this production by labelling it as 'ethnic' as if 'mainstream' were

TOP Vincenzo Palermo tending the vegetable patch in the backyard of his home at 9 Tuppell Place East Keilor, 1977.
MIDDLE Giovanni (John) Cicero, son of Rosario and Giuseppa Cicero in the backyard of the family home in Bowen Street Richmond, 1965.
BOTTOM Biagio Cucé in the backyard of his home in Ascot Street, Ascot Vale. Note the vegetables and vines covering the yard, as well as the large zucchini fruit held by Mr. Cucé, c1985.



something other than 'ethnic'. Similar discourses can also be found among the few Italian critics who are aware of the Italian literature of the diaspora. These will emphasise 'universality' and 'competence' at the expense of agency and authenticity. Therefore, recognition of one's work as literature remains a difficult task for the immigrant author, because it can upset ruling constitutive shibboleths of the cultural establishment both in the host country and the country of origin. Similar comment can be passed for the pictorial arts.¹⁹

Many of the 'cultural' themes of the Italian diaspora in Australia reflect the enormous effort made to comprehend the new reality, both in terms of its natural and metropolitan wildernesses whose prominent characteristics can appear to be both superficiality and alienation. A good example of how this theme is elaborated comes from a well known Australian writer of Italian origin, Pino Bosi, and is taken from his collection of stories grouped under the title *Australia Cane*. In one episode, a freshly arrived immigrant named Giovanni knocks on a door to ask for directions to his brother's house only to have it slammed in his face by a little old lady who also pulls her dog into the safety of the house. Exasperated he bursts out: 'Australia Cane ... Tengono dentro le bestie e lasciano fuori i cristiani!' Apart from the general readily accessible meaning that an Italian immigrant was lower in dignity than a dog (there is also a pun on the word 'cane' meaning dog in Italian), the incisiveness of this remark depends on signifiers deriving from a specifically Italian cultural context: 'Cristiani' translated from standard Italian literally means «Christians» (believers in or followers of Christ). However, in a number of Italian dialects (both northern and southern) it means 'people' as opposed to 'animals'. In other words: 'These Australians keep people out and animals in!' ²⁰

What would have been the 'normally' fearful reactions of an elderly person in another context are interpreted here as an assault on one's dignity as a person. This interpretation emerges because the purpose of the story is to reveal more about the overall dynamic in which immigration occurred than illustrating the behaviour of the participants. Italians were seen in derogatory terms by so called 'mainstream' Australian society, and this contempt was inevitably and perceptibly imposed on them. Hence, the tale is emblematic of the desire to contrast what is perceived as

a universally attributed status of subalternity through the elaboration of a divergent narrative. Nevertheless, its success ultimately depends on the ability to transmit these signifiers to the 'ignorant' or unaware reader. Otherwise, its true meaning remains confined within the ambit of the Italian culture of immigration. The extent to which these signifiers travel beyond this social context to impinge upon the awareness of the wider community also indicates the degree to which true 'multicultural' consciousness has emerged in Australia.

Later Pino Bosi's collection, the derogatory 'essentialising' attitude of a university educated English speaking Italian immigrant is held up for ridicule. This immigrant relates to an anti-immigrant, Anglo-Australian, ex-mayor that peasant Italians are accustomed to living together with animals. Inadvertently, in his desire to distance himself from his less 'civilised' compatriots, the 'educated' Italian ends up deriding the common Australian habit of keeping pets within the home. The author's likely intention is to deliberately underscore the double irony of this situation. At the same time there is a play on the social and political hierarchy that produced the cultural subalternity among peasant Italians motivating their emigration in the first place. In a certain sense the circle is closed when Giovanni responds to the provocation by claiming his equal if not superior status by highlighting the value of his achievements and abilities:

"You prefer empty words but this soil needs a spade's point and homes need bricks. You want people like him?"

"Watch your words", Antonio Cocozza tried to interject. "You to your hoe and I to my profession. "Denigrating your countrymen to make a good impression, is that your profession?"

"I have a university degree" retorted Antonio Cocozza trying harder to blend into the circle of onlookers surrounding them as he pulled out a visiting card. But Giovanni was resolute:

"I'm a graduate too, you know. I have a degree in sugar cane and I have already placed a deposit on the shop for when I graduate in fruitology like my mate Gerolamo". ²¹

Much of the irony is not evident in the English translation (for example the play on 'canna' or sugar cane echoing the expression 'povero in canna' an equivalent to 'dirt poor'), and many a reader will stop at the humour and not look any further. Yet, Giovanni's spurious attribution of academic terminology to practical activities is a

¹⁹ For example the belittling criticism of being 'ethnic' has also been levelled at one of Australia's leading writers on the immigrant experience, Pino Bosi. See Rando, G., 'Pino Bosi and the Piccolo Mondo of the Italo-Australian Community' in *Altretalia* n.18 luglio-dicembre 1998, pp. 4-12. Other examples of Italo-Australian writers include: novelists Antonio Casella of Perth and Venero Armano from Brisbane (Sicilian origin), Rosa Cappiello from Sydney (Campanian origin), and the first generation poet, Luigi Strano from Mount Wilson (Calabrian origin). On Calabrian authors see: Rando, G., 'Dai monti della Calabria ai grattacieli dell'Australia. Scrittori e poeti calabroaustraliani' in *La Questione meridionale*, Cosenza, Anno 1, no. 2, 2003.

²⁰ Rando *ibid*, on Bosi, P., *Australia Cane* (1971) p. 5.

²¹ Original in Italian: 'Voi volete le belle chiacchiere ma la terra vuole la punta della zappa e le case vogliono mattoni. Gente come lui volete?'

'Badate a parlar bene' cercò d'interrompere Antonio Cocozza. 'Voi zappate e io faccio la mia professione. "Sparlate dei connazionali per farvi bello, è questa la vostra professione?"

'Io sono dottore' ribatté Antonio Cocozza confondendosi sempre più nel circolo di curiosi che andavano pressandoli, e cavò da un taschino un biglietto da visita. Ma Giovanni continuò ad incalzare:

'Anch'io sono dottore, lo sapete? Io sono dottore in canna e ho già messo la caparra per il negozio, per quando diventerò dottore in fruttologia, come compare Gerolamo...' (Bosi, *ibid*. 1971, p. 157)

form of 're-inscription' of 'Italian' concepts with new ones, better suited to the Australian context. Indeed, it reflects the noted Australian prejudice in favour of the physical as opposed to the mental virtues. Immigrant Giovanni has learnt how to assimilate better than his supposedly more intellectually aware countryman, who may have not realised he was indirectly snubbing his Australian interlocutor. Giovanni is able to speak directly in the language of the colonising Anglo-Australian ethos as a pioneer nation and thereby participate in the narrative of 'development' as opposed to an essentialised 'wilderness'. In contrast, the intellectual Italian reflects the typical superiority complex of the Italian educated classes, a characteristic of the colonial legacy we dealt with in the first part of this essay.

It is worthwhile noting, however, that the attitude of this so-called 'intellectual' Italian immigrant is a parody of what in Italy is seen as true intelligence. There are many proverbs in Italian which distinguish between intelligence and education, warning that the two are not necessarily synonymous. True intellectual aptitude has always been a quality prized by Italians. Nevertheless, education is also seen as a vital ingredient for success in life. Accordingly, Italian immigrants strongly encouraged their offspring to study to 'get ahead' in their new country.

This last observation represents a useful antidote to the celebration of derision informing the 'wogness' debate. While it is true many Italian immigrants became fruiterers to the point that it has become an Australian cultural stereotype, this is more a reflection of their ability to adapt and assimilate in Australia's culture than any inherent 'essential' quality as Italians. Likewise, care should be taken when one affirms one's identity in terms of the dominating narratives of the host society such as the 'colonisation' of the 'wilderness'. The extent to which immigrants uncritically adopt this and other 'local' perspectives reflects their degree of 'de-centredness', and herein lie the limits of the cultural work of many immigrant Australians on the diasporic experience.

To conclude, the 'postcolonial' story of Italian immigration into this country cannot be divorced from the profoundly unjust manner in which the Italian elite forced millions to find their only path towards salvation through emigration. The legacy of the subordinate position occupied by the vast majority of Italian emigrants, however, was harder to overcome than material poverty. Economic, political and cultural subordination led to the creation of a condition of subalternity which deprived the poor of the capacity or 'agency' to express their own history and identities on their own terms. Rather, they were forced to adopt or tolerate a negative self image, an identity imposed on them by the intellectual classes at the service of the elite. They were forced into a static representation without any recognition of their desire or ability to change were it not for outside intervention ('essentialisation'). This image further justified their subordinate status and motivated their exploitation.

Likewise, on arriving in Australia, the host society imposed upon immigrants a similar subordinate status. This time their cultural subalternity was 'coloured' by constructs of desirable whiteness and denigrated blackness. Australia was meant to be a 'white' country well into the 1960s. Immigrants not conforming to the standard were forced to adopt coping strategies to maintain psychological viability in the midst of assimilationist models which instructed them to abandon their own sense of self and identity. Once again the new arrivals were 'essentialised.' Hence, immigrants were faced with the option between entrenchment or accommodation, or more often a mix of the two, ranging from mimicry and ambivalence to wholesale abandonment of any attempt at self definition when the prejudice of the surrounding society became too strong to resist. Reactions and resistance, however, did arise. Some would embrace the 'wog' label decentring their own elaboration of self by attempting to convert a negative image into a statement/celebration of identity. Others, particularly the generations born in Australia, would purposely reproduce practices and behaviour patterns taken from their immigrant forebears as a way of reaffirming difference and rejecting assimilation. This was part of the 're-inscription' process: new meanings were given to old things and modes of being to deepen accommodation with the new reality not in the direction of submission to the greater Anglo-Australian narrative but rather as a form of negotiation or exchange.

This form of 'horizontal' multiculturalism could occur among immigrant groups or between these and the host society when both parties were willing to question accepted ways and modes of conceiving each other's identities. This is opposed to 'vertical' multiculturalism, where the elite decides which practices and habits are to have currency and acceptance or be 'chic' and which others do not. Channels for this process of accommodation ranged from 'over the fence' backyard exchange or proximity, to cultural affinity, to the Catholic Church and political movements both of the Left and Right. Examples abound in popular architecture as well as in practices such as gardening or cooking.

Other cultural activities placed under the label of 'arts' reflect the same tensions and conflicts among competing narratives. At times certain works may purport to reaffirm difference and dignity unaware that they are falling back into the same ideological 'decentred' trap.

The way forward lies in the willingness to 'unpack' discourses that essentialise 'the other'. In other words, realising how much of what appears to be 'conventional wisdom' with regard to concepts of 'the other' is in reality a product of the faculty held by some in society to put 'the other' in his/her place. 'The other' thus loses the freedom to define his or her identity or worth and is stripped of recognition both in terms of what he/she was and is but also in terms of what he/she could become. True openness means having the ability to change one's own views of self and being open to challenges on those grounds by 'the other'.

introduction and background context to the italian diplomatic archives held at the italian historical society, melbourne

by LOUIS GREEN, FORMERLY READER IN HISTORY
AT MONASH UNIVERSITY, IS A SPECIALIST IN
ITALIAN LATE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE
HISTORY, HAVING PUBLISHED SEVERAL WORKS
ON THAT SUBJECT, INCLUDING *CHRONICLE
INTO HISTORY, CASTRUCCIO CASTRACANI AND
LUCCA UNDER MANY MASTERS*. IN 1995, HE
WAS COMMISSIONED TO PRODUCE A REGISTER
OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE ITALIAN
CONSULATES IN AUSTRALIA FROM THEIR
ESTABLISHMENT UNTIL THE CAPITAL OF A UNITED
ITALY WAS MOVED TO ROME IN 1870. THIS WORK
WAS PART OF A LARGER PROJECT UNDERTAKEN
BY THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO COPY
ON MICROFILM AND CATALOGUE ALL THE
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE ITALIAN
CONSULATES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN ITALY FOR THE YEARS
1855 TO 1947, APPROXIMATELY 9,000 LETTERS
AND DOCUMENTS IN ALL, THE ORIGINALS OF
WHICH ARE HOUSED IN ROME. CORRESPONDENCE
COVERING THE LATER PERIOD WAS CATALOGUED
BY GERARDO PAPALIA IN COLLABORATION WITH
LOUIS GREEN. THE ARTICLE PRINTED HERE WAS
INTENDED TO BE THE INTRODUCTION TO THE
REGISTER COVERING THE EARLY PERIOD. SINCE
THIS IS NOW TO APPEAR NOT IN BOOK FORM
BUT AS A RESOURCE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE
ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, TO BE ACCESSED
BY COMPUTER, THIS INTRODUCTION IS BEING
ISSUED SEPARATELY AS A COMPANION TO THAT
DATA BASE WHICH WILL ENABLE RESEARCHERS
TO ACCESS THE COLLECTION AND READ BOTH
THE REGISTER AND COPIES OF THE ORIGINAL
CORRESPONDENCE ON COMPUTER.

When Camillo Cavour, Chief Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sardinia, decided to establish a consular post for his state in the Australian colonies, he acted as anyone might do today who wants to find someone suitable to act as his agent in a foreign country - he consulted his banker. Charles Joachrim Hambro was a member of a Jewish family which had first become prominent in the financial world because of its loans to the Danish crown and then by reason of the success of the branch of the bank it set up in London. In 1851, when the Kingdom of Sardinia needed to borrow large sums of money to repay debts incurred in the recent war against Austria and to meet the cost of the indemnities demanded of it at the conclusion of those hostilities, Hambro was one of those to whom Cavour had recourse to fulfill these obligations; and thereafter a close relationship developed between the Piedmontese aristocrat and the cosmopolitan Jew who served him partly as banker and partly as financial advisor and confidant. In 1855, when the issue of choosing a representative for the Sardinian monarchy in Australia arose, it

was natural that he should ask the advice in this matter of Hambro whom he trusted and who had the contacts in Britain to be able to report on the reliability and other qualities of leading citizens and businessmen in its colonies. The man Hambro proposed as eminently fitted to be an honorary consul-general in Sydney was Stuart Alexander Donaldson, a merchant, pastoralist politician and head of a firm which had a branch in London with which his bank had had dealings.

The history of Sardinian and effectively therefore of Italian consular representation in Australia thus began with the appointment of a Scotsman recommended by a Jew who had no knowledge of Italian and, so far as one can tell, little familiarity with conditions in Italy. To Cavour, however, such disabilities do not appear to have been important: he himself preferred to write in French which was, in any case, the language used in Sardinian diplomatic correspondence; and the number of Sardinian subjects in New South Wales was not thought to be large enough to require the presence in Sydney of a consul capable of communicating with them in their own vernacular. Donaldson was asked in the commission which conferred his office on him, to nominate honorary vice-consuls in Melbourne, New Zealand and Hobart and to choose a chancellor to assist him in discharging his responsibilities. The person he proposed for this latter post was P.A. Dutruc, Reader in French at the recently established University of Sydney, who was selected, one suspects, because of his command of the language employed by the Sardinian Foreign Ministry. His installation in this position was, however, to have more significance than first intended because, in April 1856, Donaldson became Premier of New South Wales, and, consequently resigning his office of consul-general, appointed Dutruc to act as his successor. But the latter, being doubtless fully engaged in carrying out his academic duties, gave little attention to consular business, writing few dispatches and eventually, in 1859, handing over his post to a local businessman, James Edwin Graham, who, having been born of English parents near Dieppe, appears to have had some knowledge of French.

However chequered the initiation of Sardinian consular representation in Sydney was, by reason of these shifts and changes of personnel, it was less disastrous than the first efforts made to set up a vice-consulate. The secretary-general of the Sardinian Foreign Ministry, had written to Donaldson stating that Fabrizio Fabiani, 'a young man of ample means and estimable in every respect', had expressed the wish to be made vice-consul in Melbourne since this would give him the standing he needed to establish himself in that city. Donaldson had accepted this recommendation and Fabiani had duly sailed for Australia on the *Goffredo Mameli* commanded by Nino Bixio, arriving early in 1856 in Sydney where he received his letters patent as vice-consul. Soon after he reached Melbourne, however, on 27th March, it

became clear to members of the Piedmontese community there that he had left Italy with no money at all, had not paid his passage on the *Goffredo Mameli* and expected to derive some profit from his office by, in effect, selling the post of his chancellor and acting successor after his departure to whomever offered him most for it. Rescued from the dingy lodging house in which he had taken a room after disembarking, he was set up in more affluent quarters by his fellow nationals, only for it soon to be discovered he could not pay his rent. Eventually, he extricated himself from this predicament by appointing a local businessman, Richard Adolph Passmore, as his chancellor in return for an agreement by the latter to pay his debts and by obtaining from Bixio a loan enabling him to return to Europe as a steerage passenger on the *Kent* under an assumed name in return for an undertaking that he or his family would meet the cost of his fare to and from Melbourne when he was back in Italy. On the eve of his departure, he wrote to the Sardinian Foreign Ministry claiming he had urgent business to attend to at home and nominating Passmore as his chancellor and acting vice-consul in his absence.

After this unpromising beginning to its attempts to secure consular representation in the two largest Australian colonies, the government of the Kingdom of Sardinia seems temporarily to have lost interest in them. But, late in 1858, Cavour once again had recourse to Hambro in an effort to find a suitable successor to the delinquent Fabiani whose choice of Passmore as his replacement the Sardinian Foreign Ministry was not prepared to recognize. It would appear that what prompted this initiative were the representations of Bartolommeo Dardanelli, a Piedmontese businessman who had an office in Flinders Lane, Melbourne, and who had been asking for some time, to have himself appointed Sardinian vice-consul there, having in particular, leapt to the defence of the gallantry of the Sardinian contingent sent to the Crimean War when this had been called into question in the Victorian parliament and press in 1855. Hambro, however, claimed that his inquiries had revealed that Dardanelli was a man of no financial substance and suggested instead that the position of Sardinian representative in Melbourne should go to James Graham who, though unrelated to his namesake James Edwin Graham, then about to become in effect acting consul in Sydney, was, like the latter, a former associate of Donaldson, James Graham, in fact, had originally come to Victoria when it was still the Port Phillip district as Donaldson's agent there, but had later set up his own firm of Graham Brothers. In 1859, when the choice of a new Sardinian consul in Melbourne was being considered, he was on a visit to Britain and hence accessible to Hambro through the London branch of Donaldson's business which he used as his postal address and presumably also for the commercial dealings he was engaged in.

Despite his absence from Melbourne, his choice as the Sardinian representative there

duly approved, the greater importance of that city being at the same time recognized by the elevation of the diplomatic post in it to the rank of an honorary consulate. Until his return to Victoria on 21st September 1860, the business of this was conducted by his subordinates in Graham Brothers. On assuming control of it at the beginning of October of that year, he took delivery from Dardanelli who had in turn been given them by Passmore of the seals, books and documents which had originally been brought from Sydney by Fabiani for the then vice-consulate. Shortly afterwards, the position of the Sydney agency of the Kingdom of Sardinia was regularized, on James Graham's recommendation, by the official appointment of James Edwin Graham as consul there with effect from 20th January 1861. This endorsed his tenure of a post in which he had acted since 1859 and also confirmed its effective downgrading since Donaldson's resignation, from a consulate-general to a consulate. Henceforth, the original arrangement by which the vice-consulates in the Australasian colonies were to be dependencies of the office of the Sardinian representative in Sydney was replaced by one which divided responsibility between a Sydney consulate which had jurisdiction over New South Wales and Queensland, and Melbourne, with responsibility for Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and later New Zealand.

In accordance with this demarcation, consular delegates or agents were appointed, in the course of 1861 and 1862, who were under the supervision of these two major consular posts, namely George Alfred Bartleet in Adelaide and Charles McArthur in Launceston, who were subject to Melbourne, and John Rayden Bingle in Newcastle and George Harris in Brisbane, who were subject to Sydney. At the same time, of course, as from 20th March 1861 when Victor Emmanuel II adopted the title of King of Italy, all these consulates and such consular agencies as had been authorized by that date ceased to be Sardinian and became Italian.

Of the two consulates representing the newly proclaimed nation of Italy, that in Melbourne was initially to run more smoothly than that in Sydney. James Graham was a person of considerable stature in his community who made an effort to pursue the many inquiries made of him concerning members of the growing number of Italian citizens who had been attracted to Victoria by its gold rushes even though he did not know their language. James Edwin Graham, by contrast, seems during the tenure of his office, to have been distracted by his plans to establish himself elsewhere, first in the newly founded colony of Queensland and then in New Zealand in which he was to settle permanently in 1863. During his absences from Sydney, he entrusted the care of his office to a person who was regarded with some distrust both in that city and by the Italian Foreign Ministry and its subordinates. This was Giovanni Carlo Asselin who, at Graham's insistence, was made vice-consul in August 1861. Asselin had been born in Naples and, according to his own testimony,

had been obliged to leave there because of his participation in revolutionary activity in Rome in 1848. He had gone initially to New Caledonia where he became involved with a French woman who was to claim to be his wife (although he denied this to have been the case), by whom he had two children and whom he abandoned when he left for Sydney. In the latter city, he appears to have led a financially precarious existence, being declared a bankrupt on 8th June 1861, working as a poulterer in New Town, and then teaching French and Drawing in a school, though dressing very shabbily. Despite his perceived unsuitability for any kind of consular office, he was nevertheless a man of considerable energy and ability and James Edwin Graham clearly found him indispensable because his own lack of knowledge of Italian left him with the need to have someone to assist him with a command of that language. Asselin, for his part, obviously leapt at the opportunity of acquiring some vestige of social status by throwing himself with enthusiasm into the work of the consulate, writing an extensive report on commercial activity in New South Wales and attending to the welfare of Italian citizens on that colony.

It is difficult to determine from the records whether he was a misguided idealist who was a victim of his own generosity, or a person of shadier associations, but one thing that is striking about the Italians whom he claims to have helped in his vice-consular capacity, is that they were frequently men who, for some reason or other, had fallen foul of the law. One of these received a pardon, as a result of Asselin's intervention, after being condemned to ten years imprisonment, another after being convicted and given a three year sentence for fraud. (The latter, on his release, had given his benefactor a promissory note for the sum of £20 advanced to him, redeemable by what eventually turned out to be a non-existent payee!) A third, whom Asselin reported he was trying to have acquitted on the grounds of insanity, was charged with raping his landlady's six year old daughter.

Asselin's position in Sydney and the reputation of the Italian consulate there by reason of his association with it was made more problematical by reason of the attitude to him of the French consul, Louis Sentis, who had in 1854, under instructions from Napoleon III, undertaken also to represent in the Australian colonies the government of the south of Italy, then known as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. As an official of the French state, Sentis would doubtless have been aware of the plight of Asselin's alleged wife in New Caledonia, who was later to be repatriated to France; while his role as custodian of the interests of the Neapolitan monarchy in Australia can hardly have made him look with favour on someone who had left its territories as a political exile. What rendered Sentis' hostility particularly injurious at this point in time to the consulate in New South Wales of the new Italian nation was that, once Napoleon III recognized its legitimacy, it was necessary for the consular archives of the former Kingdom of the Two

Sicilies to be handed over to the office now representing a united Italy in that colony. Sentis, however, was not prepared to do this to Asselin in Graham's absence and instead wrote, on 8th September 1861, directly to Bettino Ricasoli, then the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to acquaint him with the situation in Sydney and asking him for his instructions in the light of it. Eventually, on 20th March 1862, the consular records held by Sentis were delivered to Graham who had by then returned. The matter was thus resolved but not before the whole issue of the appropriateness of the personnel of the Italian consulate in Sydney had become one involving the new national government in Turin as well as its representatives in Australia.

The documents given by Sentis to Graham reveal that the former's seven year tenure of the post of consul of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in New South Wales had been characterized by a minimal level of activity. Its archive contained a handful of letters and circulars from Canafa, the Neapolitan Minister of Foreign Affairs, a letter to the captain in charge of the port of Sydney and no fewer than six letters relating to the confidence man who was to defraud Asselin of £20 with his bogus promissory note, doubtless reporting that person's arrest and trial. From these records however, it is also possible to discover the identity of the consular agents appointed by Sentis in other Australian cities, namely William Lemprière in Melbourne, Jules Lalouette in Adelaide and William Boys in Hobart. According to Asselin, there had also been in the period before the unification of Italy a representative in Sydney of the Grand-duchy of Tuscany, who had, however, left Australia and about whom, or the location of his papers, nothing was known.

On the eve of his departure from Sydney, James Edwin Graham, in September 1863, nominated a lawyer, William Deane, as his acting successor, prompted to this choice, perhaps, by the difficulties associated with making Asselin a consul, but also by the latter's claim that he too, was planning to leave New South Wales. Deane's appointment was not to meet with approval by the Italian authorities who were, however, prepared to leave him temporarily in charge of their Sydney office until the whole question of who should be entrusted with it could be further examined. It seems at this point that the Foreign Ministry came finally to recognize the desirability of having somewhere in Australia a consulate staffed with career diplomats. In view of the distribution of Italian subjects in the country which was strongly biased towards Victoria, the logical place to establish such a post was Melbourne and on 27th February 1864, a letter was accordingly written to James Graham, the honorary consul in that city, to inform him that he would be replaced by Giuseppe Biagi as soon as the latter could make the journey to Australia together with Carlo Cussu, his vice-consul designate. Biagi and Cossu did not in fact arrive in Victoria until 13th July 1865. From the following day they

proceeded with energy to put the administration of the consulate on a more professional basis.

These two career officials seem to have taken some time to settle into their new residence, thus delaying Biagi's visit to Sydney to enable him to report on the situation there. But on Christmas Day he was finally able to offer the Foreign Ministry his advice on what was to be done concerning the provision of satisfactory representation in New South Wales for the Italian government. He recommended against confirming, as consul, William Deane whom he considered not to have the requisite standing in his community for such an office. Biagi likewise dismissed the claims of Ottavio Levy Montefiore who had been suggested as a possible successor to Graham, because of his youth, relatively modest means and lack of a firm association with his much wealthier, merchant banker brother, Jacob Levy Montefiore, who was Belgian consul in Sydney and whom Sentis had described as a suitable person also to be the Italian consul there. The man Biagi proposed, in place of these two aspirants to the Sydney post, was George King, a businessman and friend of Jacob Montefiore who may have been responsible for nominating him as an appropriate candidate for it. King who had been born in Riga, of an English father and probably a Baltic-German mother, spoke fluent French and German, and knew some Spanish, though no Italian, a disadvantage which Biagi, however, did not regard as critical because he considered, though almost certainly without justification, that the number of Italians in New South Wales was too small for it to matter.

Whatever the drawbacks of appointing yet another Englishman as honorary consul in Sydney who was not familiar with the language of those whose interests he was meant to protect, there is no doubt that, in this case, it did serve to stabilize what had been previously a highly volatile situation in this office. Asselin, of course, still nominally remained attached to it, but to King's relief was soon to leave of his own accord. During the period when James Edwin Graham and William Deane had been in charge of the Sydney mission, Asselin had taken advantage of his position as vice-consul to enter into negotiations with the government of Queensland which at that time was keen to encourage immigration and welcomed suggestions that Italians might participate in this, particularly if they were 'agricultural labourers and shepherds' or 'vine-dressers, gardeners and especially men accustomed to the cultivation of cotton'. (This was, of course, during the American Civil War when it was hoped Australia might provide this last commodity, then in short supply due to those hostilities). These approaches to the authorities in Brisbane had, according to King's later report on them, borne fruit by 1866 to the extent that Asselin was promised a large grant of land in return for instituting an ambitious scheme by which 300-600 Italians would be brought out to Queensland to work in a sugar and silk industry there. This plan was, once again according to King, associated with another by which Asselin,

together with a partner, Charles Bundy, an Englishman familiar with South America, was to import large quantities of plants from that continent to grow in northern Australia, where they would be cultivated by migrants sent from Europe in disused Italian frigates! It was in the pursuit of this latter project that Asselin eventually sailed from Sydney in May 1866 in a ship called the *Garibaldi*, bound for Cobija, on the coast of what is now Chile, but was then Bolivia. The records at present available to us do not indicate what happened when he got there, or whether it was his intention to proceed with this extraordinary enterprise which appears, in the end, to have come to nothing, or merely to exploit it as King seems to intimate, to escape from his creditors in New South Wales.

From the point of view of the Italian consulate in Sydney, the significant fact was that he had left the colony, enabling King in October 1866, to nominate as his successor as vice-consul, Narciso Foldi, a Milanese of solid connections in Italy who practiced in Australia the sober profession of book-keeper.

By the end of 1866, the consular posts representing the Kingdom of Italy in both Melbourne and Sydney can be said to have been in capable hands, having, at least since the beginning of the previous year been entrusted to reliable men who brought some stability to their operations. At the beginning of 1867, the Melbourne office was raised to the rank of a consulate-general, thus giving it a pre-eminence in Australia, though its jurisdiction still did not extend over the area covered by the Sydney one.

This development was a direct result of the establishment of consular agencies in New Zealand at Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin, all of which were placed under the control of the newly created Melbourne consulate-general. The idea that there should be some Italian diplomatic representation in New Zealand had initially been suggested by a letter from Charles De Witt, the Belgian consul in Auckland who had written to communicate to the Italian Foreign Ministry and to Napoleon III his plan for reconciling the Pope to the surrender of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy through the provision of a pension to him. He appears to have conceived this ingenious scheme in the hope that he might be rewarded for it by being made Italian consul in Auckland. But Biagi, when he visited New Zealand, recommended against his appointment since he lived some distance from that city in Waikaki, leaving the administration of his Belgian consulate to Ernest Ludwig Buchholz who, Biagi urged should instead be entrusted with the Italian consular agency in that part of the country. The recent gold rushes to the South Island of New Zealand which had drawn away from Victoria many Italian miners previously resident there also justified, in Biagi's view, the creation of consular agencies in Christchurch and Dunedin which he believed should be entrusted to Frederick Thompson and Edward Cargill respectively, both of these being men

LEFT Title page to a folio of dis-
patches between the Italian consulate in
Melbourne and the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Rome, for the year 1869.

RIGHT Internal letter within the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs, Italy, regarding travel
expenses for Cavaliere Zunini, who was
consul for Italy in Australia at the time.
Dated 23 August 1906.

BELOW Dispatch to Minister of Foreign
Affairs, Florence, from Giuseppe Biagi
(Melbourne Consulate): a timetable and
fare schedule for new steamer services
from Sydney to Southampton, via
Wellington, Panama, Colon, St. Thomas.
Document includes freight charges for
the new route. Dated 28 May 1866

*Consolato in
Melbourne
1869*

R. MINISTERO
AFFARI ESTERI
Roma, add. 27. AGOSTO 1906

Spese di viaggio del vice
consolo cav. Zunini

Commissariato generale
dell'immigrazione
Rome
23/8. 906

Il fatto che dopo quanto è stato
per far ben comprendere al vice
consolo cav. Zunini quale fosse
la sua posizione rispetto al
viaggio di cui egli si trattava
bisogna e rispetto alla missione
affidata al Commissariato
dell'immigrazione, e che l'Ufficio
abbia creduto d'acquistare
per quel vice consolo il biglietto
di andata e ritorno dall'Australia
sia posizione del cav. Zunini
nell'atto in cui egli torna in
Australia e precisamente quale
le non avrebbe potuto essere
altamente dell'ufficiale consolare
che si trova al suo posto dopo
aver fruito del consolo. Ora
è risaputo che le spese tutto
del viaggio di ritorno sono
in tal caso a carico dell'uffi-
ciale consolare, e qualsiasi
movimento di senso con-
trario non sarebbe certo
multe sanzionato dalla
Corte dei Conti, stante la ma-
niera della legge.

Uno dei punti poi su cui
è dovuto risolvere di più
col Zunini riguardava l'im-
puta da parte del ministro
di accettare la condizione
che il medesimo funzionario
non potesse nel senso di essere

Corso Mensuale di Diroscafi fra Southampton e la Nuova Zelanda - via di Panama -

Itinerario del primo viaggio

Servizio della Panama New Zealand and Australia Company	Partenza da Sydney - il 15 giugno 1866 - arrivo a Wellington il 22 - (giorni 8)	
	" Wellington 24 " - Panama 24 Luglio (" 28)	
Servizio della Royal Mail Steam Packet Company	" Colon 23 Luglio - S. Thomas 28 " (" 6)	
	" S. Thomas 29 " - Southampton 14 Agosto (" 16)	
		(giorni 58) (di navigazione)

Prezzi di trasporto per passeggeri

Dai seguenti luoghi		a Southampton compreso il transito a traverso l'istmo			a Panama		
		1 ^a Classe Cabinè		2 ^a Classe	1 ^a Classe Cabinè		2 ^a Classe
		Superiori	Inferiori		Superiori	Inferiori	
Nuova Zelanda	Wellington	100	90	60	55	50	30
	Napier						
	Nelson						
	Pictou	102	92	62	57	52	32
	Canterbury						
	Taranaki	103	93	63	58	53	33
	Auckland						
	Otago	104	94	64	59	54	34
	Bluff						
Sydney Melbourne		105	95	65	60	55	35

Poi biglietti di
andata e ritorno
i suddetti
con ritorno
di 25 %

969

79.00014



MINISTERO
di
AGRICOLTURA, INDUSTRIA E COMMERCIO

SEGRETERIATO GENERALE

DIVISIONE II.
INDUSTRIA, COMMERCIO E CREDITO

Sezione 2.^a

del Registro d'Entrata 63964
del Protocollo 19159
della Postazione XVII - 2-106

Risposta a lettera
del 8 corrente
Dir. 2.^a Sec. 1.^a N. 928

Oggetto
Esposizione internazionale
di Melbourne

Roma, addì 11 settembre 1887

911

Stampa: MINISTERO DEL REGNO D'ITALIA, 11 SETTEMBRE 1887

Sono lieto che le idee di
V.E. circa l'ingerenza ufficiale dell'Italia
all'Esposizione Internazionale
di Melbourne corrispondano in gran
parte a quelle espresse nella mia nota
del 2 corrente; epperò mi affretto a far
le conoscere il mio pieno assentimento,
porgendole in pari tempo la preghiera
di voler far analoga comunicazione
al Governo inglese.

Il Ministro
[Signature]

A S.E. Il Presidente
del Consiglio dei Ministri,
Ministro degli Affari Esteri

Roma

Indicare nella risposta i numeri e la data
della presente.

Roma - Tip. Minerva

1805

LEFT Italian government internal letter from the Ministry for Agriculture, Industry and Commerce to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with reference to Italy's involvement in the forthcoming International Exhibition, Melbourne (1888).
Dated 11 September 1887.

BELOW Dispatch to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turin, from James Graham (Melbourne Consulate), dated 25 August 1883: Graham asks whether funds might be available to him to be dispensed as charity to destitute Italians in Victoria. He is a governor of the hospital and of the benevolent asylum into which he can therefore arrange to have sick and aged Italians admitted but he is also asked for help by others who do not qualify as inmates of these institutions.

Distressed Subjects
of Italy

Would take the liberty of asking Your
Excellency if there is any fund at Your Excellency's
disposal, from which you could furnish me with
a certain amount to dispense in Charity among poor
Italians - I am continually asked for Charity by
Subjects of The King, and it would come hard on
me, to pay much, and bear it out of my own means.
I am a Life Governor of the Hospital, and of the Benevolent
Asylum, into which Institutions I gain admittance
for sick and aged Italians, but in very many instances
I am asked for Charity by those who are not fit objects
to be admitted into these establishments - As these
Institutions are kept up chiefly by private Charity, if
there is any fund that Your Excellency could give a
small donation from, to each, it would be a graceful
acknowledgment of the many kindnesses & comforts
bestowed on Italian Subjects within their walls. -

Acknowledgment
by M. Martelli

658

Have the honor also to enclose M. Martelli's
Acknowledgment of the receipt of official Document No
5033 of the Tribune of Turin. -

Have the honor to remain
Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant

* Brother of Sir Charles Alexander Darnley formerly
H.M. Consul at Sydney, New South Wales

[Signature] Consul

RIGHT Dispatch to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Florence, from Giuseppe Biagi (Melbourne Consulate) dated 27 December 1866: a printed leaflet (manifesto) in Italian and English, (in the original) enclosed with the dispatch asking for contributions to the subscription for soldiers wounded in the Italian war of independence.

MANIFESTO

ITALY has at length arrived at the supreme juncture which promises to complete her National Independence. The greater part of her sons have taken up arms with her Gallant Sovereign, in order to secure the ardently desired recovery of Venice. To swell the army, numbers of Volunteers have flocked to the standard of the intrepid General Garibaldi.

All other feelings, all other interests have been surrendered by her generous children to the Nation, each being resolute to shed his blood, and to sacrifice his life, in her cause. Already, indeed, much blood has been spilt and many lives have been lost, and many families, deprived of their mainstay, have been reduced to misery.

Those Italians who are far removed from their native land, cannot but feel, in this hour of her trial, an earnest desire to manifest their attachment to the common cause, and their sympathy for their suffering brethren at home.

An Italian Committee has been therefore formed in Melbourne, to collect in the Colony of Victoria, contributions for the relief of the wounded in the war of National Independence, and of their distressed families.

The Committee meets at the office of His Majesty's Consul for Italy (36, William-street), and is composed of the following gentlemen:

BIAGI CAVALIER GIUSEPPE, Consul,
President.
CAMPI ANGELO.
CUTOLO MAESTRO CESARE.
DARDANELLI BARTOLOMMEO.
DINON MASSIMILIANO.
KING ACHILLE.
MARTELLI DOTTOR ALESSANDRO.
COSSU AVV. CARLO, Vice Consul, *Hon.*
Secretary.

The sums collected by the Committee, whether

who were highly regarded in their communities and had some knowledge of Italian.

The confirmation of these appointments completed the establishment of a network of consular posts in Australia which was to remain unaltered, at least in the period before the transfer of the Italian Foreign Ministry to Rome. Despite the heavy dependence of honorary incumbents to fill consular posts, it provided fairly extensive coverage of the British colonial dependencies in this region, more perhaps than the number of Italian subjects living there might have warranted. If one examines the work performed by the Italian consulates in the years from 1855 to 1869, one is left with the impression that there was little or no direct trade and few shipping movements between Italy and Australasia at this time. There was a need for consular representation because of the problems encountered by individual Italians who had come out particularly to Victoria and later

to New Zealand as a result of the gold rushes. Dealing with these was, however, rendered more difficult, at least before 1864, by the inability to find suitable men for consular posts who could also speak the language of the Italian residents in these colonies, as well as by the way of life of the Italian residents of most of these. Reading the early consular records, one has the feeling that there must have been a 'black hole' in Australia into which Italians who had come there (and whose families later inquired after them) had disappeared without trace when their families later inquired after them. In fact, the reason why they were so hard to locate was that those who had been drawn to the gold fields frequently did not communicate with their relatives, perhaps because the fortunes that they had expected to make had not eventuated and they lacked the money to do so, or because they had no easy access to post offices. They also often moved around from place to place, ending up in many cases in remote and isolated settlements. Furthermore, when they died or were killed in mining accidents, the officials responsible for recording their decease more often than not mis-transcribed their names because of an inability to understand their fellow-nationals who provided information on their identity.

In addition to having to search for Italians who had migrated to the Australian colonies and who had not written to their families for years, the consuls of this period had also to confront the problem of subjects of their state they represented who had failed to find employment and were consequently destitute, as well as those who had fallen ill. The need to repatriate persons in these circumstances caused particular difficulties because of the financial stringencies imposed by the Italian government, which limited expenditure by its consulates in Australia. This resulted in a refusal by its Foreign Ministry even to re-imburse honorary consuls the money they had spent carrying out their duties, most notoriously in the case of James Graham who, on his replacement by Giuseppe Biagi, had asked for a refund of 23,500 francs to cover his expenses during the five years he had had his office. His application was rejected on the grounds that it contravened consular regulations which required individual requests for re-imbursements to be forwarded at the time when the liabilities they were expected to meet were incurred. His successor, Biagi, was left with the embarrassing task of explaining this to him. Fortunately, he accepted the situation graciously and, at Biagi's insistence, eventually received the token reward of the grant to him of a knighthood of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus by way of compensation for his inability to recover what he had spent, as well as in recognition and appreciation of his past services as consul.

Given the reluctance of the Italian government to meet all of the administrative expenses of honorary consuls, it is not surprising that it was, in general, unwilling to finance the repatriation of its subjects. Arranging payment

for this, therefore, usually entailed protracted negotiations, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Italy approaching the Ministry for the Interior which in turn contacted the Prefect in the province from which the proposed beneficiary of the repatriation had come to ask him to make inquiries as to whether that man's family could contribute to the cost of sending him home. In the meantime, of course, the destitute or sick Italian and sometimes also his family had to be supported in Melbourne or elsewhere in Australia. This was done either by depending on his fellow-nationals, the generosity of the consul himself or, at the time when James Graham held that position, on his chairmanship of the boards controlling hospitals or other charitable institutions in which impoverished persons could be accommodated. This being so, it is little wonder that Biagi, in March 1869, wrote to the Italian Foreign Ministry urging it to ask the local authorities in the province of Sondrio to discourage the migration to Australia of those who were not young, vigorous and equipped with skills which might be in demand in that country. He made these remarks in describing the plight of a forty-six year old straw hat maker from that region who had been induced to come to Victoria together with his wife, by reports circulating in his village that it was easy to make one's fortune there, but who had been unemployed since his arrival because of a lack of openings in the colony for someone practicing his highly specialized craft and who therefore needed to be repatriated.

As well as being asked by the relatives of Italian citizens who had come to Australia, to provide information on the latter's whereabouts, consular offices had also sometimes to relay enquiries from such migrants concerning their families, the members of which had not written to them for some time. Particular interest, in some of these cases, centred on the possibility that parents, grandparents, uncles or aunts might have died and left legacies. Inheritances generally created problems for potential heirs living a long distance from their original homes: authorizations were required to enable others act for them in the distribution of assets bequeathed in wills. These could be difficult to obtain from men who moved around frequently and had no fixed addresses.

The Italian community in the Australian colonies, and particularly that in Victoria, tended to be a very dispersed one. This made it difficult to estimate its size with any accuracy. Giuseppe Biagi, when he was appointed consul in Melbourne, was given instructions to draw up a register of Italian subjects in the area under his jurisdiction, but he found that only a proportion of them was willing to go to the trouble to be recorded in this way. He therefore made up two lists, that of those who had registered and that of those who had not, but could nevertheless be identified as being resident in Victoria. In March 1860, he claimed the number of names on both of these was 651. This total, however, excluded Italians who had become British subjects and those who could not be located because their

presence in the colony could not be ascertained from such of their fellow nationals as were in contact with the consulate. Earlier, in March 1866, the census in South Australia had revealed that 35 Italians lived there, of whom only five were female. Biagi considered there were very few in Tasmania. In fact, the only one mentioned in the available sources was Ferdinando Riva, a watchmaker who had lived in Charles Street, Launceston, but who had taken out 'papers of denization' in 1853 and died in 1860. He appears to have had some children by his Irish wife; but it is doubtful whether they would have regarded themselves as Italian, even though their father's relatives seem still to have done so because of unfounded rumours that he had become fabulously wealthy.

There are no indications as to the precise sizes of the Italian communities in New South Wales and Queensland though it was generally understood that they were small and certainly inferior in numbers to that in Victoria. From the consular records, however, it is possible to identify a few members of them, some of whom, such as the musician, Cesare Cutolo and Marquis Girolamo Carandini, were later to go to Melbourne. Others seem to have left Sydney for the New Zealand gold fields or to move north to Queensland. There were some Italians, too, in mining settlements in New South Wales, or in other parts of the country, one of whom made good by marrying an heiress who owned a large sheep station. Of those who were resident in Sydney, there was a doctor and some sailors who had come there in the hope of finding work on ships but who had either fallen ill or encountered some other misfortune, requiring them to be repatriated. As has already been mentioned, there were also Italians who were arrested for various crimes and who were either imprisoned or deported. One who had been in Queensland, at the time when it was still the Moreton Bay district, appears to have been murdered.

Because of the need for consular officials to intervene when the subjects of the State they represented were in distress or got into some kind of trouble, the records they kept necessarily give a far more pessimistic impression of the condition of Italians in the Australian colonies than an objective analysis might reveal. On the whole, those who prospered were less likely to have recourse to their consulates than those who needed help. Even so, one can accept as reasonably reliable the testimony of a perceptive observer such as Giuseppe Biagi who, in 1868, described the Italian community in Victoria as being largely made up of miners, agricultural laborers, tenant farmers, hotel keepers or small businessmen. He noted that few of them had become important merchants in Melbourne. One can add to this that those who attempted to do so do not appear to have fared particularly well. Italo Raguzzi, a representative in Victoria of the firm of De Amicis of Genoa, was late in 1867 brought to such a point by his 'melancholic fixation with his business' that he went mad and was admitted to the Melbourne lunatic asylum

where he was joined at the end of the following year by Bartholomeo Dardaneth who had for many years been engaged in mercantile activity in the city and had once aspired to be made the honorary vice-consul for Italy.

One firm which does seem to have flourished was the marble warehouse set up by Luigi Veroli of Volterra and Alessandro Martelli of Turin. The second of these partners, however, was to sell out his share in this business, and, as a result, to experience rather more chequered financial fortunes. Martelli was certainly one of the more interesting of the Italians in Victoria in the 1860s. An engineer and architect by profession, he had been an officer in the Army of the Kingdom of Sardinia in the war against Austria in 1848 and then a member of the Sub-Alpine Parliament. Catastrophic property speculations in Turin had, however, brought him to the verge of ruin and he was compelled to flee from Piedmont to avert a bankruptcy that would have had a disastrous effect on his wife and children, the latter of whom were, in fact, able to contract very distinguished marriages in the wake of his departure only because he had gone. (His daughter as a consequence of this sacrifice was eventually to become a baroness). Having thus left his family for his family's good, he came to Victoria where, after his successful joint venture with Veroli he was drawn, by his adventurous but rash commercial instincts, to set himself up on land near Lilydale to attempt to grow hemp, mulberry trees and other crops, prompted doubtless by the short book he had recently written on the cultivation of silk worms and the paper he had read to the local Agricultural Society on the mulberry tree. This project appears to have overstrained his resources and he was later to abandon it to go to Fiji, where he lived, presumably as a planter, on the island of Koko, and where he acted from 1877 till his death in 1898 as Italian consul in Levuka. One gathers from the records of that post that, having his residence some 40 miles by water from that town, he did not carry out very effectively his duties as his country's representative there but was left in that position, partly because of the influence and high social standing of his relatives in Italy and partly because of the unimportance of it within the Italian consular service.

It was to be a continual lament of Biagi and the other Italian consuls and consular-agents in the Australian colonies that, despite the presence on the markets there of products of Italian origin, these were all brought in through Britain. It was to be some time before participation by Italian firms in exhibitions and fairs in Australia could stimulate more direct trade between that country and Italy. Up to 1869, one of the reasons for its effective absence was the rarity with which Italian vessels called at Australian ports. In 1865, Biagi claimed that only three had done so since 1856, namely the *Goffredo Mameli*, *Lidia* and *Amalia*. In fact, the records of the consulate in Sydney disclose that, in 1862 two others, the *Petronilla* and *Aquila*, had put into that city in the course of trade with China. Later,

in 1867, there was also to be the visit of the Italian naval corvette, *Magenta*, and the previous year the merchant vessel, *Rosina*. Even so, communications by sea and particularly direct ones, between Australia and Italy, were clearly tenuous, a circumstance which would have largely explained the need for exports from the latter country to reach the former through trans-shipment by way of Britain.

If mercantile activity did not, in general, bring much prosperity to Italians in the Australian colonies, one calling which rather surprisingly did prove lucrative to them was that of musician. Mention has already been made of Cesare Cutolo, who taught singing in Sydney and later, until his death at the beginning of 1867, in Melbourne. Marquis Girolamo Carandini who had come out to Van Diemen's Land as early as 1842 as a political exile, had managed to support himself and his large family by virtue of his musical talents and even more, those of his wife, Marie, a Tasmanian of English origin who was to become the leading soprano of her generation on the Australian stage, and their daughters. On a humbler level, the girls and their parents from Viggiano were able to make a good living as travelling musicians touring the gold fields and other areas in provincial Victoria. When the Italian government legislated to provide for the repatriation of its young female subjects involved in itinerant occupations (doubtless in an effort to protect their virtue), Biagi was obliged to point out to it that its proposed law might be difficult to administer because of the unwillingness of these girls to give up their income and way of life.

A more transient contribution to the musical culture of Melbourne was made by Eugenio Nocchi who taught singing there and, under the name of Eugenio Bianchi, lived in a hotel together with one of his pupils who passed for his wife, even though he had previously married another woman whom he had left in Italy. This latter lady pursued him with her inquiries as to his whereabouts, but he proved elusive. Leaving Melbourne early in 1862, he went on to Sydney and thence embarked on a vessel bound for California. At first, it was thought he had been shipwrecked, but then it transpired he had in fact reached San Francisco where he and his supposed wife had sung with great success in an opera.

One of the surprising insights gleaned from a perusal of these early consular archives is the importance of cultural exchanges in the relations between Italy and the Australian colonies (and most particularly Victoria) in the 1860s. Aside from the significance of the influence of Italians on the teaching and performance of music and especially singing, there was the interchange of books, seeds, natural history specimens, plaster casts of sculptures and various other objects and even animals, between the two countries. A great deal of the credit for this can be attributed to Giuseppe Biagi, the first career diplomat to be an Italian consul in Melbourne who would appear to have been a highly cultivated man with a lively

interest in science, literature and scholarship. Presumably a bachelor, he lived, thanks doubtless to the good graces of his predecessor James Graham (who was president of that society in 1865) in the Melbourne Club where he would have been very well placed to make and maintain contact with the most distinguished citizens in the colony. He enjoyed, of course, not only this advantage, but two other important ones. In the first instance, the Risorgimento had at that period aroused, in Australia as in England, tremendous enthusiasm and sympathy for Italy and all things Italian. In the second place, there was at this time, in Victoria a remarkable body of men determined to use some of the great wealth it derived from the gold discoveries in the provision of cultural amenities appropriate to a civilized community. Given that there were persons of prominence and influence in their society, an opportunity was opened up for a collaboration between a new, confident, prosperous and expanding colony, eager to draw on the intellectual and artistic patrimony of the old world, and the recently united Italian state, inspired also by the pride generated by its recovered national independence, but conscious also of the need to gain recognition and endorsement as a significant European power. Biagi was to stress in his dispatches the enormous benefits, accruing in terms of the enhanced reputation of Italy in Australia, of the cultural exchanges he was arranging and of the provision, by the Italian authorities, of the books, objects and seeds sought by the governments and institutions of its colonies.

The goodwill left, especially in Victoria, towards Italy was demonstrated by the generous response of its citizens to various appeals associated with the achievement of that country's independence and unification. In 1861, there was a subscription to raise money for a sword of honour to be presented as a testimonial to Garibaldi. Later, in 1866, there was another, to which both Italian and English migrants to the colony contributed to create a fund for the benefit of the soldiers wounded in the military expeditions which had been undertaken during the Risorgimento. Besides these appeals in favour of causes closely linked with the attainment of national unity by Italy were others to celebrate its cultural achievements or to honour particular political figures, for instance that in 1867 for a monument to Raphael in Urbino or that in 1865 for the erection of a statue of Pellegrino Rossi in Carrara.

It was in the climate engendered by popular interest in Italy because of recent events that Biagi was able to promote co-operation in cultural matters between his state and the community in which he found himself. But he was helped considerably in this by the initiative of those in it who, having already established the principle of exchange, or received or made donations in their dealings with France or Prussia, were eager also to include Italy in such collaborations. Even before Biagi's arrival, W.M. Archer, Registrar-General and government statistician in Victoria, had approached James

Graham to give him his published summaries of colonial statistics to send to Italy, while the local Acclimatization Society had asked him to make contact with similar bodies in that country in the hope that seeds might be exchanged with them. In accordance with this latter proposal, Ferdinand von Mueller, the government botanist and director of the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne had, in 1864, sent to his counterpart in Palermo a packet of such seeds, the first of many he was to dispatch there.

On taking over the administration of his consulate from Graham, Biagi thus found that the process of the exchange of plans of official government publications had already begun, and he consequently set about vigorously encouraging and extending it. In doing so, he established close relationships with some leading figures in the colony. Foremost among these was Sir Redmond Barry, judge and Chairman of the Trustees of the recently founded Public Library to which, at Biagi's prompting, the Italian government was to donate numerous books. W.H. Archer became another close associate, involved not only in providing and receiving from Italy various statistical bulletins but also in suggesting that Victorian schools might benefit from the use, in the teaching of design and drawing, from what he called 'models', by which one presumes he meant plaster casts, which might be available from Italian academies.

The most energetic and generous, however, of Biagi's collaborations, significantly in the provision of examples of Australian fauna and flora, in the form of seeds, live plants, skins, skeletons and even animals and birds, was to be Ferdinand von Mueller who was also to ask for reciprocal offerings by Italian institutions, particularly of seeds for his botanic gardens. This remarkable man was nevertheless not alone, among the scientists of the Australian colonies, in promoting such exchanges. Another was Frederick McCoy, a professor at the University of Melbourne who insisted on keeping the Victorian Museum of Natural History ensconced in his department in opposition to the efforts of those who wanted it moved to the fine building in the centre of the city which housed the Public Library. About to become notorious for his opposition to Darwin's theory of natural selection and often at odds with his students, he was for all that a remarkable collector and an expert on Australian turtles and crustaceans of which he sent numerous specimens to Italy, together with fossilized plants and bird, mammal skeletons and skins. A comparable figure, in Sydney, was Gerard Krefft, curator of the Australian Museum there, an authority on snakes, responsible for a standard work on the subject. In Adelaide, there was yet another scientist participating in exchanges with Italy, in his case also of seeds, namely Richard Schomburgk, director of the Botanic Gardens there.

The exotic character of Australian plants and animals and their relative unfamiliarity at this time in Europe created an opportunity for a

fruitful relationship between those naturalists and the directors of museums, such as those in Florence, Milan and Turin, or of botanical gardens, especially those of Florence, Venice, Genoa, Turin, Modena, Padua, Pisa, Siena, Cagliari, Naples and Palermo. It also enabled Ferdinand von Mueller to pay a singular compliment to the King of Italy by sending, at his own expense, kangaroos, emus and black swans for his menagerie. In return for these consignments of distinctively Australian forms of fauna and flora, requests were made, not only for seeds, but also for stuffed animals, models of machinery and other such museum exhibits. When Sir Redmond Barry and his fellow trustees of the Public Library decided to add an art gallery to the institution for which they had responsibility, the Italian consulate in Melbourne, undertook to act as an intermediary in obtaining from the Ministry of Public Instruction in Florence information on the availability of Murano glass and Umbrian maiolica which the trustees wished to acquire for their new collection. The plaster casts which had been dispatched from Italy, at Archer's suggestion, for the teaching of art in Victorian schools, were also to figure as exhibits in the Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne in 1867 and may also have later been shown in the gallery recently attached to the Public Library.

Other influential men who were involved in the exchange of books and other publications between Australia and Italy were the Victorian Minister and Secretary for Mines, G.F. Sullivan and Brough Smyth, who provided statistics on mining and mineral deposits in the colony, and the parliamentary librarian, James Smith. William Foster Stawell, the Attorney-General, in his capacity as President of the Deaf and Dumb Institute, was to ask for a treatise from its Milanese counterpart on new methods which had been developed in Italy for the treatment and training of deaf mutes. Inquiries were also transmitted from the local board of works, through the Italian consulate in Melbourne, concerning a new pneumatic system for clearing sewers which, it was said, had been tried out in Milan; but information on this turned out to be unavailable. Exchanges of records of astronomical and meteorological observations were also proposed by G.B. Neumayer, the founder of the observatory in Melbourne and head of the meteorological station there, and similar data was to be received from Holmes in Christchurch, in New Zealand.

The dispatch from Australia of so many boxes of seeds, scientific specimens, plants, animals, books and other publications and the reciprocal consignments from Italy of volumes intended for the Victorian Public Library and for other recipients, of various periodicals and bulletins, as well as plaster-casts, glass, pottery, created considerable problems, given the somewhat erratic communications between the two countries at that time. Biagi was to relay to his Ministry of Foreign Affairs, first in Turin and then in Florence, continual complaints about the postal services on which he relied. He drew its attention to the anomaly that charges

levied by the post offices were higher for mail and parcels sent from Australia, than for postal articles originating in Europe. He also frequently lamented delays in the arrival of the cases dispatched to him, which sometimes found their way to the wrong destinations, were loaded on steamers which broke down, or were simply left waiting for long periods at points of transit. In the matter of postal charges, he was slowly able to make some headway, thanks to prolonged negotiations, the intervention of the colonial governments themselves which arranged conferences to improve mail services to Europe, and the success in ironing out inconsistencies in the distribution of costs of carrying letters and parcels between the Italian, British and various Australian post offices. When it came to sending boxes back to Italy, he was increasingly to resort, however, to the practice of asking those he knew to be travelling back there to take these with them in their luggage.

But this device which was presumably adopted to save money could become fraught with problems of its own, as became evident in 1869, when Girolamo Carandini, the Cremonese marquis who had come out originally as a political-exile, was pardoned by the new Italian national government, he decided to return home to reclaim his inheritance, embarking on the *Great Britain*, bound for Liverpool, on 7th October 1868. Biagi decided to take advantage of his departure by entrusting to him a trunk containing, together with seeds and other articles, a particularly valuable biological specimen, the pelt and skeleton of a thylacine or Tasmanian tiger (in other words of an animal later to become extinct), obtained by Ferdinand von Mueller and intended for the Museum of Physics and Natural History in Florence. Carandini duly took delivery of this and carried it with him on a journey that took him, first to England and then to Paris which he reached in December and where he took up lodgings in the Hotel de Mayence in the Rue d'Amsterdam. While staying there, however, he fell sick, was nursed and looked after by the hotelier, Étasse. But having as a result of his illness to remain in that establishment longer than he had expected, Carandini ran out of money. Once he had sufficiently recovered to move, he resolved the problem this created by leaving without paying his bill, abandoning in his room his passport, luggage and the trunk with which Biagi had entrusted him. Still unwell, he returned to Modena where he was to die in January 1870, of gastric fever and inflammation of the lungs. In the meantime, Étasse wrote to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hoping to trade the cases addressed to it and Carandini's passport and trunks for the money owing to him. Its officials were not, however, prepared to meet what they considered to be the obligations of an ordinary citizen and limited themselves to complaining to Biagi at the irregularity of confiding boxes intended for them to private hands and asking him whether he could possibly arrange to have replaced the contents of the lost trunk, evidently unaware of the singular rarity of what had been packed into it. They also made solicitous

inquiries as to the welfare and means of support of Carandini's family which had stayed in Australia. This was a question to which Biagi could give a reassuring reply since the marquis's wife and eldest daughter were then engaged in a successful opera season and his young children, looked after by their aunt, attended the best schools in Melbourne.

It was thus through this strange twist of circumstances that the Florentine Museum of Physics and Natural History was deprived of what otherwise might have become one of its prize exhibits. This mischance only highlights, however, the remarkable achievements of the Italian consulate and later consulate-general in Melbourne in encouraging the establishment of close links between the government it represented and many of the leading citizens and institutions of Victoria, as well as the development of a process of scientific and cultural exchanges which were to enhance both the reputation of Italy in Australia and the knowledge of the natural history of the latter continent among learned circles in Europe. When it comes to considering how successful the outposts of the Italian consular services in the Australian colonies were in safeguarding the interests of the migrants under their protection, one is left with a rather more mixed impression.

From the time that Biagi and Cossu took over the Melbourne office charged with this duty, they appear to have discharged it reasonably well, at least as their fellow-nationals in Victoria were concerned. Elsewhere, there continued to be the problem that honorary consuls and consular agents could seldom speak Italian. The attempts of Biagi and his successor to rectify this situation proved disheartening. When it was discovered that there was resident in Christchurch, for instance, an Englishman, Frederick Thompson, who had for thirteen years been British consul in Livorno, Biagi was delighted to propose the appointment of a representative of his state there who was fluent in its language. But this attribute of the consular agent-elect in that city was combined with a singular stubbornness and sense of his own dignity. Having been British consul in Livorno, Thompson flatly refused to accept what he regarded as the inferior title of consular agent. It was useless for Biagi to point out that, according to the regulations of the Italian government, consuls and vice-consuls could hold office only in major posts and that no indignity attached in these circumstances, to the position of consular agent. Thompson remained obdurate and, by way of protest at the rejection of his request to be accorded the rank to which he felt he was entitled, refused to carry out his duties until his wishes were granted. When he committed the cardinal bureaucratic sin of failing to submit a required financial report, Biagi was reluctantly obliged to relieve him of his

post, replacing him with Reginald Cobb, a more accommodating incumbent of that position who, however, knew no Italian.

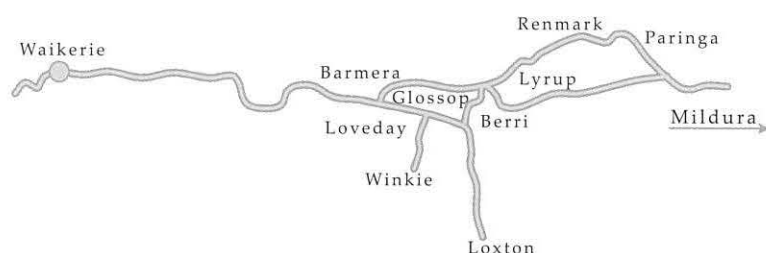
One of Biagi's successors, Luigi Marinacci, was to have similar difficulties in attempting to substitute George Harris who resigned as consular agent in Brisbane in 1876, with a William Finucane who had been born of British parents in the Ionian Islands and therefore spoke Italian. Since Finucane worked for the Department of Public Works, his appointment was dependent on the approval of the Queensland government which declined to give it, on the grounds that its employees should not owe allegiance to a foreign power. Thus, another man, Barron Barnett had to be chosen to fill this office in Brisbane. Fortunately, the latter did eventually make the effort to learn the language of those he represented. Such dedication, however, was unusual; only Frederick Wright, Italian consular agent in Adelaide between 1886 and 1900, had a comparable facility in Italian among the honorary appointees of British origin who held such positions in the late nineteenth century. This being so, one can wonder at the ineffectiveness in attending to the needs of the communities ostensibly under their care. When Pasquale Corte, then Italian consul-general in Melbourne, visited Newcastle in 1898, he found a small group of subjects of his state there, a handful of greengrocers, sailors, miners and the owner of a small hotel. None of them, however, knew the location of the office of their consular agent, Alexander Brown, who had succeeded J.R. Bingle in 1885. This situation was probably typical of that in Australian cities other than Sydney and Melbourne.

The early history of Italian consular representation was distinguished by the forging of links between the new nation which had emerged from the Risorgimento and the Australian colonies, particularly in the field of cultural relations. These served to generate a mutual respect between the two countries. More migrants from Italy had come to Victoria than to any other part of Australia and the interest of those who had done so were reasonably well served, at least from 1864 onwards, by the career consular officials stationed there. But elsewhere considerable difficulty was experienced in finding men of the necessary ability and social status to hold positions of consular rank who also knew Italian. The nature of the migrant community was such that few of its members had as yet the standing and reliability to discharge such offices and this probably meant that the welfare of their fellow-nationals was frequently neglected because of the absence among those representing them in the colonies in which they lived, of persons who were easily accessible and with whom they could readily communicate.

building blocks of settlement: italians in the riverland, south australia

by
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The Riverland region is situated approximately 200 km. north-east of Adelaide and consists of a strip of land on either side of the River Murray from the South Australian-Victorian border westwards to the town of Morgan. Covering more than 20,000 sq. km., it encompasses the seven local government areas of Barmera, Berri, Loxton, Morgan, Paringa, Renmark and Waikerie.¹ The region was first identified as an area of primary production in 1887 when two Canadian brothers, George and William Chaffey, were granted a licence to occupy 101,700 hectares of land at Renmark in order to establish an irrigated horticultural scheme. By 1900 a prosperous settlement had developed in the area for the production of vines and fruit, and during the 1890s Depression other 'village settlements' were established down river by the South Australian Government to provide work for the city-based unemployed.² During the years between the foundation of the villages and World War 1 there was intense settlement, especially around Waikerie, Loxton, Berri and Barmera, as the area was opened up and increased in value.³

After World War 1, the SA Government made available new irrigation blocks at Renmark and other localities in the Riverland area to assist the resettlement of more than a thousand returned soldiers. A similar scheme operated in New South Wales, where returned servicemen were offered blocks in Leeton and Griffith, in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.⁴ The period after World War 2 saw further settlement of

returned soldiers on fruit blocks in the Riverland and new irrigation areas were developed to cater for this growth. In the 1950s and 1960s large numbers of migrants, especially Greeks and Italians, settled in the area, often buying the blocks of retiring first world war soldier-settlers.⁵ Today the Riverland is among South Australia's strongest regional economies. The wine industry is leading the way in this economic boom, with the Riverland now contributing half of SA's wine grape production, equating to more than one quarter of Australia's total production. Concurrently, citrus exports have increased markedly, as has the export of fresh stone fruit and vegetables.⁶ According to the 2001 census, 252 persons in the Riverland were born in Italy and 1,025 claimed to have Italian ancestry, amounting to 2.5 percent of the population. Renmark has the highest Italy-born population (79), followed by Loxton-Waikerie (70), Berri (32) and Barmera (29). The largest concentration of people with Italian ancestry is in Renmark (266).

The South Australian census of 1891 shows that four Italy-born persons – probably the one family, since they consisted of two adults, one male and one female, and two children – were present in the county of 'Hamley', which included newly-established Renmark. Subsequent censuses do not record their presence, so they might have been itinerants who at the time were journeying along the Murray from Mildura. It is only in the census of 1933 that the presence of Italians is recorded as a clearly identifiable settlement group in the area. The fact that there was an increase from no Italians in the Riverland at the time of the 1921 census to a total of 69 in 1933 (Waikerie 38, Berri 20, Loxton 9, Renmark 2) not only mirrors the large increase in the number of Italian settlers in SA in the late 1920s (from just 344 in 1921 to 1,489 in 1933) but is also an indication of the harsh reality of the Depression, which compelled 55% of SA's Italians to look for work in rural areas of the State.⁷ The newly-arrived Italians wandered South Australia taking on horticultural work, mining, fishing and wood-cutting. In the Riverland they found employment as grape pickers, farmhands on fruit blocks, labourers with the SA Waterworks Department and as road construction workers for Waikerie contractors Tiller and Jacobs.⁸ When work was scarce they went to Queensland to cut cane or laboured on the land in the Adelaide Hills where, for example, the future SA Premier Thomas Playford was known to employ Italians in his cherry orchard. Those who wished to settle on a block in the Riverland were sometimes told that

1 Office of Local Government, Dept. of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australian Regional Developments*, 18. *The Riverland Experience*, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, p. 1.

2 Wilfred Prest (ed.), *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2001, p. 299.

3 R.M. Gibbs, *A History of South Australia. From Colonial Days to the Present*, Peacock Publications, Blackwood SA, 1984, p. 148-9.

4 Tito Cecilia, *Un giardino nel deserto*, Centro Studi Emigrazione, Rome, 1993, p. 25; Rina Huber, *From pasta to pavlova. A comparative study of Italian settlers in Sydney and Griffith*, University of Queensland Press, 1977, p. 56.

5 Office of Local Government, Dept. of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australian Regional Developments*, 18. *The Riverland Experience*, p. 1. For a study of Italians and Greeks in Renmark see Graeme Hugo, 'Post-war settlement of Southern Europeans in Australian rural areas: the case of Renmark, South Australia', *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, October 1975, p. 169-81.

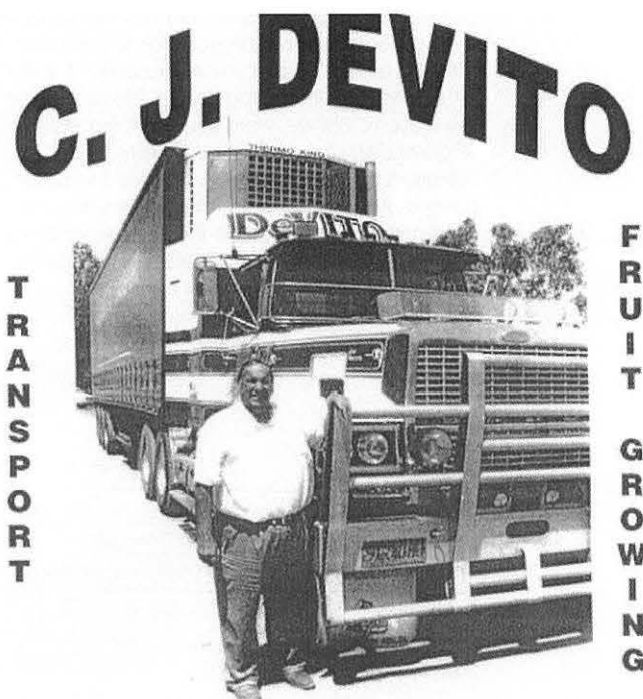
they were not wanted: Giuseppe Nussio and Giulio Brazzalotto, two Trevisani who obtained approval in 1930 to lease a Riverland property from a soldier settler, encountered the prejudices of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League and of some Labor parliamentarians who in State parliament denounced the transfer of the land to Southern Europeans who were not 'of pure white blood'.⁹

Two Italians who left Waikerie in the 1930s before eventually returning to settle there were Joe De Vito and Nicola Ricciuto. In 1937 they went to Melbourne where they entered into a partnership selling fruit and vegetables from a shop in Richmond. The business was successful but the outbreak of a polio epidemic forced them to close their shop and return to Adelaide.¹⁰ Before the outbreak of the war Joe De Vito returned to Waikerie where he and his wife

Iolanda established a fruit growing and packing business. Despite the close proximity of Loveday internment camp just outside of Barmera, the Italians in the area were not interned during the war, although they were continually monitored. Mrs De Vito remembers her fear when the military came to their house, confiscated their radio and gun, and required them to report to the police station every week. As part of the war effort they sold their pumpkins and oranges to the army.¹¹

In the 1950s the new wave of post-war Italians often travelled to the Riverland for temporary work, stopping only for the vintage or for the fruit picking season in a calendar of profitable year-round seasonal work that took them as far

TOP LEFT Nicola and Carmelina Ricciuto, Waikerie, 1986. Photo Courtesy The River News.
BOTTOM LEFT Ricciuto Road, Ramco, Waikerie, 2003.
RIGHT Waikerie Centenary, February 1994. Photo Courtesy Rita De Vito.



Providing Waikerie with a fast and efficient Transport Service to Adelaide and all Mainland States.

The DeVito name has been connected with Waikerie for many years and Cosy and family are pleased to be associated with Waikerie's Centenary Celebrations



C. J. DEVITO

Growing with Waikerie



6 The Riverland Development Corporation, *Strategic Directions for the Riverland of SA*, Berri, 2002.

7 Graeme Hugo, 'Patterns and Processes of Italian Settlement in South Australia' in Desmond O'Connor and Antonio Comin, *Proceedings of the First Conference on the Impact of Italians in South Australia, Italian Congress & Italian Discipline*, The Flinders University of South Australia, 1993, p. 42.

8 Jean M. Nunn, *History of Waikerie. Gateway to the Riverland*, The Waikerie Historical Society, Waikerie 1994, p. 261.

9 Desmond O'Connor, *No need to be afraid. Italian settlers in South Australia between 1839 and the second world war*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town SA, 1996, p. 97. Sadly, and surprisingly, even in the 1970s negative opinions were still being expressed in relation to the presence of Southern Europeans in the Riverland: 'The increasing number of Southern Europeans of peasant stock in the area could lead to a lowering of standards: they and their families are prepared to accept lower standards, and they are making little contribution to local community activities' (George Randall Woolmer, *The Barmera Story. A History of Barmera and District*, Barmera SA, Barmera Golden Jubilee Committee, 1973, p. 82).

10 The River News, 3 September 1986, p. 5.

11 Interview with Rita and Iolanda De Vito, Waikerie, 11 Nov. 2003, conducted by Sara King.

TOP The *Hellenic Prince*.

BOTTOM The first Riverland settlers from Rossarno (Reggio Calabria), with certificates commemorating 50 years of settlement, February 2002. Left to right back: Pasquale Catalano, Domenico Arruzzolo, Bruno Romeo, Domenico Michele Albanese, Carmelo Albanese, Salvatore Zangari. In front: Sam, son of Domenico Salvatore Albanese, Photo Courtesy Albanese family.

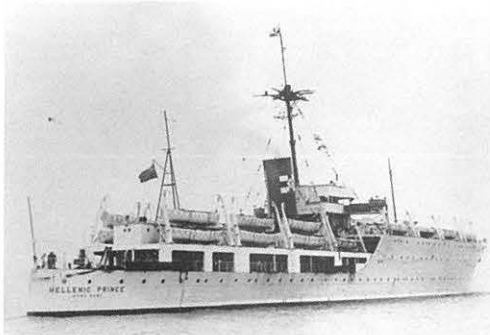
away as the cane fields of northern Queensland or to Victoria for asparagus cutting and tobacco growing. In South Australia groups of Italians made up teams of pea-pickers and earned good money harvesting crops in Port Pirie, Port Germein, Noarlunga, Myponga and Goolwa. Those who were attracted back to the Riverland used the capital earned from seasonal work to buy their own properties, often relatively cheaply, from ex-soldiers, as had happened in Gippsland where a number of Veneti bought farms at low cost from soldiers who had been given land under the Closer Settlement Scheme.¹²

Chain migration in the post-war years has seen the settlement of several village groups. In Renmark there is a long chain of families and other paesani from the town of Rossarno in the province of Reggio Calabria whose first links with the Riverland can be traced back to February 1952 when eight Italians from Rossarno, a short time after their arrival together in Melbourne on the *Hellenic Prince*, were sent from *Bonegilla Migrant Camp* to pick fruit in Renmark.¹³ Although they subsequently travelled to other parts of Australia to work, this first impression of Renmark remained with them, as a place not unlike their home town in Calabria on account of the climate and the kind of agricultural work

available, citrus cultivation, with which they were already very familiar. Eventually some of these eight returned to Renmark with enough money to purchase a fruit block. One ended up sponsoring his whole family, his parents and twelve brothers and sisters, and later others from Rossarno followed. Today they are a close-knit family community, such that the second generation members too have very often chosen a marriage partner from among the group.

What is noteworthy in this migration pattern is that for many Italians who arrived as assisted migrants in early 1952 the Riverland and Mildura were the first horticultural and farming communities that they experienced in Australia, and it was a purely fortuitous encounter, which depended on the availability of seasonal work at a time when Australia was beginning to enter a recession. The Commonwealth Employment Service officers in Bonegilla knew full well that fruit picking was a temporary stop-gap measure that aimed to reduce the numbers that were building up in the migrant camp and to give the impression that employment opportunities were available.¹⁴ The hundreds of Italians who arrived on the *Hellenic Prince* on 24 January 1952 found that, as assisted migrants, they had no choice but to accept the seasonal work on offer in the Riverland and elsewhere. From this one ship alone a total of 387 Italians were placed in the 'River Districts' of South Australia.¹⁵ The resulting large numbers of Italians on the land at that time prompted Melbourne consul Luca Dainelli to go to the Riverland and Mildura to see the situation for himself. In his report to Rome in March 1952 he listed the districts where Italians were then engaged in seasonal work, and their numbers: Waikerie 19; Barmera 188; Berri 189; Renmark 189; Mildura 450.¹⁶ Keen to show Rome that the new Assisted Migration Agreement was a success, Dainelli spoke in glowing terms of the working conditions, the mutual respect shown by employers and employees, and the 'very satisfactory' rate of pay of between nine and thirteen pounds per week awarded the pickers. In his report to Rome a day later he was more forthright in expressing his concern for the employment prospects of the Italians at the end of the harvest and for their inevitable 'despondency and demoralisation' when future individual work placements might not be forthcoming.¹⁷

The Italians, however, were willing to travel and take on any job that was offered. Bruno Romeo, from Reggio Calabria, was another of



¹² Anna Davine, 'Pioneer Veneti in Gippsland and their role in the development of an Italian farming community', *Italian Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2, July-December 2002, pp. 20 and 25. Closer Settlement was a policy of settling land closely, so that in a normal season a holding was just large enough to support a family comfortably. See Wilfred Prest (ed.), *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*, p. 111.

¹³ The eight were: Carmelo Albanese, Domenico Michele Albanese, Domenico Salvatore Albanese, Domenico Arruzzolo, Salvatore Brilli, Pasquale Catalano, Pasquale Ferraro and Pasquale La Rosa.

¹⁴ For the history of Bonegilla see Glenda Sluga, *Bonegilla: A place of no hope*, History Dept., The University of Melbourne, 1988.

¹⁵ Information obtained from database compiled by Desmond O'Connor of 38,000 Italians in South Australia 1946-1971, National Archives of Australia Adelaide Office, Aliens Registration Cards, D488 Boxes 1-3.

¹⁶ Memorandum from Luca Dainelli, Italian Consulate, Melbourne, to Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, 3 March 1952 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale, Busta 473).

¹⁷ Ibid., Dainelli to MAE, Melbourne, 4 March 1952.

those who arrived on the *Hellenic Prince* and was sent first to Bonegilla and then to Barmera in February 1952. At the end of the vintage he went to Queensland to cut cane, then returned to the Riverland to pick grapes again, after which he spent six months in Victoria hunting rabbits, building fences and doing odd jobs on farms. He too believed that the Riverland climate reminded him of Calabria, whereas Queensland, he thought, was too hot and Victoria too wet.¹⁸ For six years he worked on a fruit block in Winkie, between Barmera and Berri, until, in 1959, he had saved enough money to buy his first block at Lyrup, east of Berri, where he grew stone fruits and grapes. Other Italians later settled in Lyrup and gradually created another very close community, this time of migrants from the towns of Cervaro and Cassino in the province of Frosinone (Lazio): the Minchella, Recchia, Di Cerbo, Curtis, Franchitto and Valente families. These and other Italians from Cervaro had been the most successful itinerant pea-pickers of the 1950s and their wanderings throughout South Australia as a micro community in those years have resulted in the establishment of a broad network of relatives and paesani who eventually chose to settle down, some in Lyrup and some in towns as far apart as Murray Bridge, Myponga and McLaren Vale.

Arguably the most well-known Italian names in Waikerie are the Della Zoppa, De Vito and Ricciuto families. Giovanni Della Zoppa arrived in Port Adelaide in 1927 from Cercino in the province of Sondrio (Lombardy) and was joined by his brother Domenico a year later. After doing some wood cutting in the Adelaide hills, they moved to Waikerie where they found labouring work on the roads and then on local blocks. In 1934 Giovanni was joined by his wife Domenica Bigioli and their two sons Arno (9) and Nilo (7). Their first home was a Nissen hut with bags, painted white with lime, on the floor and ceiling. In 1939 the two brothers and their families moved to Queensland to the cane fields but when war broke out, fearful of being interned, Giovanni returned with his family to Waikerie where he obtained orchard work. After the war Giovanni, Domenico, Arno and other relatives reunited and bought land close to one another in Waikerie and grew citrus and stone fruit. Today the Della Zoppa families own thousands of acres in the district and have diversified into dairying, sheep farming and vegetables growing.

Giosuè (Joe) De Vito also landed in Adelaide in 1927. Born in Tufo (province of Avellino, Campania) he arrived as an unaccompanied sixteen-year-old and met up with his father Cosmo (born 1886) who had arrived in Australia several years before and was at the time working for a Mr Stokes in Waikerie. After a short time as a farm labourer on the outskirts of Adelaide Joe too moved to Waikerie where he managed to

find employment on the fruit block of a local land owner, George Fulwood.¹⁹ In November 1931, during the Depression, Cosmo De Vito decided to return to Italy, but his son Joe stayed on in Waikerie. Five years later Joe paid a brief visit home to marry Iolanda Lepore from nearby Prata di Principato Ultra (Avellino). The fruit growing and packing business that Joe began to

TOP Bruno and Antonio Romeo drying apricots, Lyrup, 1960. Photo courtesy Romeo family.
MIDDLE Waikerie Italian Community Club hall, Ramco, 2003.
BOTTOM John and Arno Della Zoppa, Waikerie, 2003.



¹⁸ Interview with Bruno Romeo conducted by Sara King, Lyrup, 11 July 2003.

¹⁹ 'Joe De Vito 1.1.11 - 29.5.79', *The River News*, 14 June 1979, p. 8.

RIGHT Picking grapes at Waikerie, 1957. Rosa Gaeta and baby daughter Geralda, Antonio Fardone, Pietro Scalzi and Antonio Camerlengo. Photo courtesy Anna Camerlengo.



develop in Waikerie in the late 1930s expanded in the post-war years to include a major transport service. While bringing up six children Joe and Iolanda became active in the local community, raising funds for various charities, the local Catholic Church and the Waikerie Italian Club.²⁰ Following Joe's death in 1979 the family's large business interests have been managed by sons Cosmo and Tony.

Equally well-known in Waikerie is the Ricciuto family. The earliest settler Nicola Ricciuto, like Giovanni Della Zoppa and Joe De Vito, also arrived in Adelaide in 1927 and like Joe De Vito he originated from Campania. Nicola, from Fragneto Monforte (province of Benevento), was 19 when he landed in South Australia and began picking peas at Noarlunga south of Adelaide.²¹ He took on other labouring jobs clearing scrub and picking fruit in the Adelaide hills and subsequently met Joe De Vito who convinced him to go to Waikerie to pick grapes during the vintage. Later, when Nicola heard that there was good money to be made cutting cane in Queensland, he travelled to the cane fields where on piece work he was able to earn as much as three pounds a day. After returning to Adelaide he left for a brief visit to Italy where he married Iolanda De Vito's sister, Carmelina Lepore. Joining up with Joe and Iolanda De Vito, in 1937 Nicola and Carmelina embarked on their short-lived business venture as greengrocers in Richmond, Victoria. Once more Nicola turned to seasonal work in South Australia to earn a living and now to support his wife and young family. It was only in 1948 that he was able to afford his first block of land, at Ramco, a small settlement just outside of Waikerie. It was a rundown block that nobody wanted but through hard work Nicola made it a successful enterprise, which enabled him in subsequent years to purchase more land and to earn the respect of the local community as a successful horticulturist.²² In

the 1980s Nicola handed over the running of the business to his son Murray, who is the father of Adelaide Crows footballer and 2003 Brownlow Medal winner Mark Ricciuto. When Nicola died, aged 93, in 2001, Mark gave one of the eulogies, which might well serve as a testimonial to many Italian migrant grandparents:

Looking back at it now, Nonno taught us the most important parts of life. He taught us about respect He taught us to have a high work ethic ... Strength is something Nonno prided himself on. ... Nonno taught us to be generous ... He taught us to have a good sense of humour. ... Nonno was a unique man. He was a man who at the age of 19 had the courage to leave his homeland. A man who was prepared to work day and night to provide for his family. A man who was always looking to give not to take. Nonno has been the perfect role model for us all.²³

Most of the first-generation Italians who settled in the Riverland came from an agricultural background in Italy. They either had had small mixed farms that were owned and run by the family or they had been share-farmers or farm labourers. Not having English language skills meant that they had little choice in the kind of employment available to them in Australia. Many chose the land as opposed to factory work because of a strong desire to be away from the city. As difficult as rural life could become, there was always an ingrained love of the land and of outdoor work. City living for these settlers was never seen as a satisfactory or satisfying alternative. At the same time, many can recall the immediate hardship that they experienced when they arrived in Australia. In Italy they may not have had any money but they did have a roof over their heads and the support of their extended family nearby. By contrast, in the initial phase of their settlement in Australia often the kind of work that they followed meant that they had to live where they could, in the pickers' quarters, in sheds without floors, without any

²⁰ 'Iolanda celebrates 60 years in Australia', *The River News*, 11 April 1996, p. 8.

²¹ 'September 1 marks historic occasion for Nick Ricciuto', *The River News*, 3 September 1986, p. 5.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Text of eulogy kindly supplied to Sara King by Carolyn Ricciuto.

electricity, heating or cooling. For some this was a grave step backwards from what they had known in Italy. Here in Australia they did have money in their pockets, but in the words of many they lived like animals – one family lived in the back of a truck, another moved into a rat-infested house, one woman was called a 'princess' because her husband had bought them a caravan in which to live. Often the work was demeaning and they were seen as peasant workers, dirty and ragged in their work clothes, even if they came from famiglie benestanti (well-to-do families) in their homeland. Their resolve – or 'instinct' as one informant said – to succeed and go home with some money, or at least to send money home to help the family, was what kept them going.

Many did not consider that they might live the rest of their lives in Australia. The move to Australia was seen as something that would help solve a short-term problem and as soon as they were able to return home they would. But things turned out quite differently. Some cite their greed, or the dogged determination to make as much money as possible, as something that kept them here: what was originally the attractiveness of earning some money became a desire to save enough money to buy perhaps a motorbike and then a car or more land ... so they would stay another year to reach that goal before returning home. In the meantime they would marry (loneliness was a very real by-product of the long working hours and geographic isolation), then inevitably children would come along and 40 years later they were still here. Over time some have been able to continue to buy land, expand their holdings and then eventually employ workers themselves. Such families now own very large holdings and enjoy economic security and, in addition, recognition and influence in the broader farming community.

Where previously the Italians in the Riverland were engaged in a wide variety of agricultural pursuits, from vegetable growing to wheat and sheep farming to viticulture and the production of citrus and stone fruit, in the last decade many have turned their blocks mainly into vineyards, because of the lucrative contracts that have been offered by the large wineries. Recently, however, prices have dropped, to the extent that those who have not increased their property size have found it difficult to compete. Some have been upset to see a lifetime's hard work amount to very little, and this is especially the case when the second generation has not been involved. The parents themselves in some instances

have encouraged their children to acquire a good education and find work away from the land where day to day life is less difficult and more financially secure. By contrast, those Italians who have handed on their property to the second and third generation have seen their holdings grow and have benefited from the expertise of the educated younger family members. Especially now that many new regulations have been introduced and the knowledge of new technologies is inevitably part of today's rural life, the second generation's language skills and schooling have helped to keep the family business in step with new developments. One informant in Waikerie said that without the help of their son they may not have continued on the land because today there are so many new things to learn.

Finally, what can be said of the 'Italian community' in the Riverland? It is, in fact, difficult to talk of an 'Italian community' because of the distance between individual towns, the lack of time to spend on socialising when work is a seven day a week commitment, and because of the diverse regional backgrounds of the Italians in the area. There are close-knit village and regional groups but attempts to form all-inclusive Italian Associations have not been particularly successful. In 1980 the Waikerie Italian Community Club was established in the nearby Ramco Institute building. The Club brought together local Italians who wished to play bocce and have a venue for dances and dinners. In 2001 it closed its doors due to lack of support. An Italian Club was also established for a time in Glossop but it too eventually closed when community enthusiasm for the initiative waned.

Ironically, if part of an Italian Club's function is to help maintain the language and culture of its members and strengthen their attachment to Italy, this function is now being performed in the Riverland by RAI International, whose satellite radio and television transmissions reach and are enjoyed by many of the ageing first generation Italians. Furthermore, given the present-day improved economic circumstances, some of the retired and semi-retired Riverland Italians now pay visits to their home town and, as tourists, to other parts of Italy that they had not seen before. It is also not uncommon for them to be visited here by friends and relatives from Italy. All of these avenues help them to be informed of happenings in their birthplace, especially events of particular interest to them that affect rural Italy, such as the severe drought that occurred in Italy in 2003.

Rolani Guido: a prisoner of war in gippsland

by
MARIAN SCARLETT

MARIAN SCARLETT GREW UP ON A DAIRY FARM IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND. SHE COMPLETED HER SECONDARY EDUCATION AT METHODIST LADIES' COLLEGE BEFORE GRADUATING AS A BACHELOR OF MUSIC FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE. SHE HAS TAUGHT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF VISITS TO ITALY WHERE SHE HAS MET UP WITH ROLANI GUIDO WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ARTICLE. IN RECENT YEARS MARIAN HAS DEVOTED MUCH TIME TO RAISING FUNDS FOR CO-OPERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SMALL CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION THAT BUILDS PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN A REMOTE AREA OF BANGLADESH.

Rolani Guido arrived at our place as an Italian prisoner of war in March 1943. He lived and worked on our farm until the end of 1946. I was not quite three when he arrived and my sister was six months old. It was to mark the beginning of a beautiful and very special friendship which ended only with his death in Venice last year. Still, the memories and feelings of affection forged over more than half a century linger on.

We lived on a dairy farm in South Gippsland and Guido was billeted at our place to help my father with farm duties. For us it was wonderful, for it meant my mother no longer needed to go to the dairy night and morning to help with the milking of the cows and during the day my father had help with the endless and varied tasks of life on the land. For Guido, however, it must have initially been quite another matter.

He was born in Venice in June 1916 into a comfortably established family. His childhood was a happy one. In 1937 he was conscripted into

the army and posted to Libya, an Italian colony, for military service. Early in the war he was taken prisoner by the English and deported to prisoner of war camps in various parts of North Africa including Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Eritrea. These were uncertain, frightening times - hunger, few comforts and the fear of being killed were ever present challenges. Eventually, he was sent on the *Queen Mary* to Australia where, shortly after landing, he was dispatched to our farm as a labourer.

For a young man of 27, from Venice, to find he was placed on a farm and expected to work with cows, pigs and horses must have indeed been a daunting and fearful prospect. He was alone, amongst strangers and he didn't speak English. Fortunately, my parents were caring, sympathetic and imaginative people and before long a sense of trust, mutual respect and genuine friendship had been formed.

My mother, who was a very good, traditional cook but with no knowledge of Italian food attempted, with sometimes hilarious results, to prepare meals she thought Guido would be more accustomed to. Her first efforts, however, must have been huge disappointments for him, for not only was this before the advent of hundreds of cooking books, but ingredients such as olive oil, garlic and Parmesan cheese were, quite simply, unknown in Kongwak in 1943. Her first interpretation of pasta al pomodoro consisted of spaghetti, Heinze tomato sauce and grated Kraft cheese! Her desserts and pastries, however, were renowned and years later when I would laugh with him about her failures with the pasta, he, too would laugh but then loyally always say 'she was a very good cook, your mother'.

More successful were the times singing around the piano, for my mother had a beautiful voice and so, too, did Guido and often at the end of the day or at weekends they would sing duets together from opera and operetta. And Christmas time was always memorable as our extended family - uncles, aunts and cousins - would gather around the piano to sing the familiar carols, we in English and Guido in Italian. The last time I visited Venice, at my request Guido sang again to me 'Adeste Fideles' ... Such memories it brought back for both of us!

Frequently, on Sundays, my mother would drive Guido, dressed in his maroon POW uniform, to Korumburra - about 13 kilometres away - to attend mass at the Roman Catholic Church. These occasions, I can imagine, were important for him as they were probably the only times he had a chance to talk with other Italians (there were a few other POWs in the town but no public transport linking the two places). Then, in the afternoon, my parents would attend the local Protestant Church while Guido looked after Anita and me.

Occasionally, and not surprisingly, Guido would some days seem a little depressed and then my father would suggest a change to the normal routine - instead of going to the paddocks





OPPOSITE PAGE Guido in Libya
(wearing white)
LEFT Guido with my parents, my
sister Anita and me, 1944-45.
RIGHT Guido with Anita and
Me, 1945.

fencing and cutting bracken with my father he would spend the day around the house – mending, making things and playing with my sister and me. We adored him and specially loved these days and my parents said his spirits were always revived after such a break from the usual chores. One Christmas he made us a small table and two little chairs - possessions we treasured and used long after we'd really outgrown them. Years later, my sister's children were to use them too and hear afresh the story of the man who made them.

Finally, the war ended and word came that Guido was to report to camp and wait there for the ship that would take him back to Venice. It was with very mixed emotions that we all said our goodbyes - after three and a half years Guido was like part of our family and he was uncertain of the work situation in Venice after the war. Tragically, both his parents died while he was waiting for the boat to take him home and then, shortly afterwards, my father unexpectedly also died, so our lives were suddenly and irreparably changed. It was an unsettling time for us all.

Initially we exchanged many letters and I well remember our delight in those he sent us - always with some drawings 'for Anita and Marian' - and our childish attempts to send some drawings back to him. For a number of years, too, my mother used to send over food parcels - tins of delicacies she thought they would not be able to get after the war - all carefully packed into a cardboard box and then sewn up with calico.

Gradually, and understandably, the correspondence lessened; perhaps the last letter we received from Guido was one in 1957

in which he told us that he was getting married 'to a very beautiful girl called Emma'. We sent back our congratulations and good wishes and then, regrettably, the correspondence ceased. But the address, Castello, Venezia had always sounded so musical and romantic to me that I never forgot it and so, twenty years later when I was visiting Europe for the first time I was able to locate the area and find the apartment where he and Emma and their daughter Orietta lived - in the same area in which he had grown up.

And what a welcome I received - from Emma as well as from Guido! And how many questions we asked and answered and how we laughed and reminisced about remembered and half-remembered events. And in his desire to make me feel at home he was at first appalled when Emma offered me tea with lemon - 'in Kongwak you always drank tea with milk' he said, and the next day when we came to lunch he had Emma searching in all the shops of Venice for white, sandwich bread which was the only type he would have been offered all those years ago in Kongwak.

The following year I spent a few memorable days with them all in their apartment. It was a delightful reversal of roles - I was the one who couldn't speak the language and they were the ones who so generously entertained me. Guido took me to the Venice Biennale, we walked through the little calli, stopped at bars for aperitifs, for coffees and pastries and always returned home to the delicious meals Emma prepared.

Being in Venice brought home to me just how lonely and how utterly alien his days in Kongwak must have initially seemed - there were no bars in which to meet friends, no piazzas, no opera house

RIGHT Emma, Marian and Guido
outside their apartment in Venice,
1993. Photographs Courtesy Marian
Scarlett.



or art galleries, in fact, nowhere to go except for our house and the wide open paddocks. It says a lot about him that he adapted to the simplicity of our lifestyle with such grace and good humour.

More recently, my husband and I have twice visited Venice and on each occasion we have shared meals in restaurants and at their apartment - joyous, delightful and very special occasions. It was obvious that Guido and Emma were very happy together and I was heartened

to know that after all the uncertainties of the war years he had found contentment and happiness back in his beloved Venice.

Sadly, last year I received a letter from Emma to say that Guido had died at the age of 86. In that letter she wrote that he always talked of us as though we were another part of his family; certainly he was a very special and much loved member of ours.

growing up italian and making movies

by
JAN SARDI

SCREENWRITER JAN SARDI WAS NOMINATED FOR AN ACADEMY AWARD FOR HIS SCREENPLAY OF THE OSCAR® WINNING FILM *SHINE*. HE HAS WRITTEN MANY OTHER AWARD WINNING FILMS AND TELEVISION DRAMAS. THE WORLD PREMIERE SEASON OF HIS LATEST WORK *LOVE'S BROTHER*, WHICH SARDI WROTE AND DIRECTED, WILL BE RELEASED IN CINEMAS NATIONALLY IN APRIL 2004. IT STARS GIOVANNI RIBISI AND ADAM GARCIA.

April 26, 2001 was a very special day for me. I had arrived at Capoliveri on the island of Elba the day before with my wife Jani and my daughters Aleisha and Cassie. In so many ways it was a journey which had begun in the 1920s, when my grandfathers (maternal and paternal) had each decided that the future for their respective families lay in Australia.

Arriving at the Comune di Capoliveri I was greeted by a brass band and a large party of local government representatives headed by *il Sindaco* Ruggero Barbetti. We shook hands and then much to the mayor's surprise, I informed him that we were in fact related. My nonna Norma was a Barbetti before she married Luigi Donnini in the church of Santa Maria Assunta at Capoliveri in 1911.

Waiting in the public gallery of the council chambers were more distant relatives of mine, cousins (second, third and fourth), some of whom I had known in Australia over the years including Bruna and Aldo Giusti. Others were just names I'd heard of, or faces I'd seen in faded photos when I was growing up in Carlton in the 1950s and 1960s. And there were quite a few faces I didn't recognise. One in particular caught my attention, a stocky man in his sixties or seventies, seated in the front row, his gaze fixed intently on me, eyes that were clearly trying to reach me. Or were they?

The ceremony to make me an honorary citizen - Cittadino onorario di Capoliveri - lasted an hour. There were many speeches, prayers and a brilliant rendition of 'Advance Australia Fair' by the local brass band followed by the Italian National Anthem. It really was one of the very special days in my life, made even more special by having my wife and children there with me. Afterwards, there were many photos to be taken and stories to be told as people gathered around. That's when I saw him, standing patiently to one side, the old man who had not taken his eyes off me during the ceremony.

I went up and spoke to him in Italian. I thanked him for coming and asked his name. He took my hand and shook it firmly, and held it. He said he was Peppino Sardi, a first cousin to my grandfather, Manlio. He was born after Manlio had left Elba to come to Australia in 1927. As a young man he had known Pietro Sardi, my great-grandfather and had heard a lot about Manlio. Nonno Manlio was the only one of a family of three brothers and two sisters to have migrated. I was the first member of that side of the family he had ever met. He said it was an honour but



ABOVE movie poster of
Love's Brother

as I tried to explain to him, the honour was all mine.

As we stood together to have our photo taken, I thought about the events that had brought me here. Not just to the Island of Elba, but to this point in my life. I had been a teacher briefly before making the break to become a screenwriter. I had written numerous feature films and many hours of television drama over the last twenty years. My first film *Moving Out* was about Italians living in Australia. So too is my latest, the romantic comedy *Love's Brother*, a film project I had written and nurtured for several years by that stage and one I would eventually direct in 2003. I can see now that like my trip to Elba, *Love's Brother* is part of the same journey, one that started long before I was born.

It was pure coincidence that both my grandfathers Manlio Sardi and Luigi Donnini migrated to Australia in the same year in 1927. They would have known each other no doubt, as paesani do in a small village like Capoliveri. Manlio would have bought bread from Luigi who ran the local bakery in the back of his small store near the piazza. The Donninis were bakers, a tradition Nonno Luigi would continue in Australia.

My mother Diva was seven months old when Luigi packed up the family of eight – five children, his wife Norma and mother-in-law Serafina – and made the long trek to Australia. By the time they arrived, Manlio had been here for over eight months. Unlike Luigi, he left his wife Isabella behind in Capoliveri. She was expecting their first child. These were difficult times in Italy and the journey Manlio made was a familiar one, a lonely one; the age-old quest of so many – to find a better life in a new country. But any hopes he had of establishing himself quickly in Australia and then sending for Isabella and their new son were dashed by the Great Depression.

Life in Australia was much harder than anyone could have imagined, especially in the sugar-cane plantations of far northern Queensland. It would be over nine years before Manlio and Isabella saw one another again, a reunion which took place at the Tully railway station. It was the wet season and the line to Innisfail had been cut off by floodwaters. And so it was here, on the small platform, that my father Gualberto, aged eight, met his father for the first time. The year was 1936.

TOP LEFT Luigi Donnini's Grocer Shop & Bakery, Lygon Street, Carlton. c1933.

TOP RIGHT Isabella Sardi and her son Gualberto Sardi in their hometown, Capoliveri [Livorno], in Italy. Manlio Sardi left his pregnant wife Isabella in Capoliveri in 1926 to migrate to Australia and he worked on the sugar-cane plantations of Queensland. It would be eight years before she saw him again, a reunion which took place on a small railway platform in the far north of Queensland. Gualberto Sardi was only seven in 1935 when he met his father for the first time. This photograph is inscribed by Isabella for Manlio and reads: 'Anche lontano ricordati sempre di noi, Gualberto e Isabella [Even far away, always remember us, Gualberto and Isabella]'. c1931

BOTTOM Luigi Donnini & family. 1930

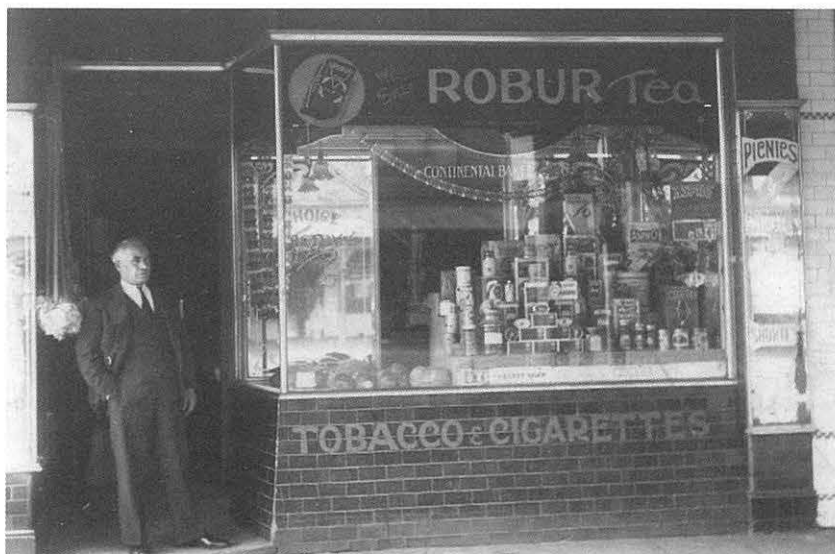
By this time my maternal grandfather Luigi had well and truly established himself in business in Lygon Street, Carlton. The photo of him standing outside his grocer shop at 290 Lygon Street was taken in the early thirties. Out the back was a continental bakery, of course. In later years, the business - and family - would occupy the building at 324 Lygon Street, at the corner of University Street.

Life for Italians living in the south of the continent was very different to that of those living in the harsh north. When the Australian Government started interning Italians as enemy aliens in far northern Queensland, Manlio decided it was time to leave life on the cane fields behind. It was 1940 when Manlio, Isabella and Gualberto arrived in Melbourne. But work for Manlio was scarce and so Gualberto, aged 13, supplemented the family income working as a drink waiter at Mario's restaurant in Exhibition Street.

Mario's, established by Mario Viganò who made his way to Australia via Canada after the First World War, was one of a number of fine Italian

restaurants in Melbourne that were without a doubt the beginnings of the fabulous and diverse food culture that defines Melbourne to this day as the restaurant capital of Australia. Just around the corner in Bourke Street was Café Florentino and The Italian Society and in nearby Lonsdale Street was Ernesto Molina's Café d'Italia. The one thing all these restaurants had in common, apart from their fine Italian cuisine was that they all purchased their bread from Luigi Donnini's Continental Bakery.

Mario's was the biggest and most famous of all the Italian restaurants, mainly due to its terrific floorshows as well as the many famous people it played host to over the years - Ava Gardner, Frank Sinatra, Gregory Peck, Vivien Leigh, Laurence Olivier, Claudio Villa and U.S. Private Leonski (the 'brown out murderer') were a few of the many well known mames to patronise the restaurant. My father Gualberto, or Albert as he



came to be known, would eventually become maître d' of Mario's after the war. It was in the post war years that many young men who arrived from Italy in search of work were told to look up 'Sardi' at Mario's. As a consequence, dad trained hundreds of waiters and cooks over the years, many of whom went on to open their own restaurants, not just in Melbourne but all over the country. It's a fact that anyone and everyone in the restaurant game knew him one way or another. Even to this day I still bump into restaurant owners and elderly former waiters who started with dad in their first job after migrating from Italy.

I was born in 1953 and together with my brother Peter spent a lot of time growing up in the dining rooms and kitchens of Mario's, and being treated to the Sunday night floorshows. Albert had married my mother Diva in 1948 and, by the time I was born, the family home was at 1038 Drummond Street, North Carlton. Nonno Manlio and nonna Isabella lived with us, while Luigi and Norma had settled in North Balwyn since 1946, in a glorious old weatherboard house on a massive block of land just down the road from the local cinema. Although the house has been replaced by a block of flats, the cinema is still there – a much improved complex – and now the home of Palace Films, the Australian company owned and operated by the Zeccola family.

Like a lot of sons from Italian families living in and around Carlton, I went to Saint Joseph's College in North Fitzroy. Ten years after I left there as a student, I returned in 1979 as a teacher of Drama and English. Although I didn't know it at the time, it was the first step in the different course my life would take on a path that would eventually lead to the Academy Awards, my trip to Elba and most recently to me writing and directing *Love's Brother*.

The great thing about teaching at 'Saint Joe's' was the near one hundred percent migrant population – Italians, Lebanese, Greeks, Turks – such a diverse and peculiar melting pot of characters, cultures, conflicts and relationships. As challenging as it was to teach them, it was equally entertaining.

By this stage, many Italians with their newfound, hard-earned prosperity were making the move out of the inner city to suburbs such as Doncaster. That phenomenon, plus the characters and situations I encountered in my first teaching assignment struck me as a fascinating idea for a film. And so I wrote *Moving Out*, a film made in 1982, about two weeks in the life of a young Australian Italian boy caught between two cultures. Playing the part of the rebellious young Gino was fourteen year old Vince Colosimo in his first acting role. Vince was a student of mine at Saint Joe's, as were nearly all of the kids in *Moving Out*.

By 1984, with more writing credits to my name, I quit teaching and started writing full-time. Forever in search of good material, I decided that a story about the Italian experience in the cane fields loosely based on my family history might one day make a terrific and moving film: as kids, my brother Peter and I grew up with endless stories of life in the cane fields. Manlio and Isabella had sadly both died by this stage as had Luigi and Norma. This only served to impress upon me the urgency to hear and record the story from the memories of those still living. There were many paesani and friends in Melbourne I knew but there were even more still living up North, and so that's where I headed. It was while I was researching my cane fields story that someone told me of an incident involving two brothers, how one had sent his brother's photo to help him find a wife in Italy.

TOP LEFT Peppino & Jan Sardi.
BOTTOM LEFT Manlio, Isabella,
Peter, Jan, Diva & Albert Sardi,
North Carlton. 1956.

MIDDLE Manlio, Isabella and
Gualberto. Innisfail, Queensland. 1938
RIGHT Il Sindaco Barbetti and Jan
Sardi. Elba - April 26, 2001.



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE
scenes from the movie *Love's
Brother* directed by Jan Sardi.

I later discovered that these kinds of ruses were common during the 1950s, a time in Australia when young Italian men outnumbered Italian women by five to one. It struck me as a wonderful idea for a different kind of film, a romantic comedy perhaps. And so, as is often the case, over many years I jotted down character notes and story ideas, waiting for that magical moment when it would take off in my imagination. In the meantime, I worked on other ideas and screenplays, including the film *Shine*.

One of those ideas was to make a film about the origins of what is perhaps best described today as the 'espresso culture' or the 'café society', and how it started in Melbourne back in the 1950s with the arrival of the first espresso machines. I grew up in the middle of it after all. In my mind it would be a celebration of 'La Dolce Vita', of what it means to be Italian, the colour and passion and age-old traditions that make the Italian way of life so rich and captivating. But I knew it was just an idea, a backdrop if you will. What it needed was a story. Which is when the tale of the Italian brothers came rushing back to me. It was the hook I needed. I had my story.

LOVE'S BROTHER: LA STORIA

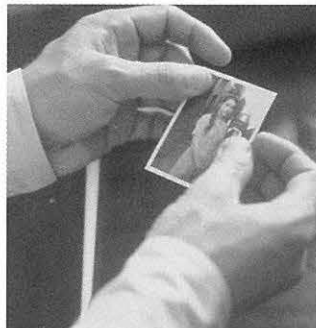
Love's Brother is a story about that strange and wonderful thing called Fate, the name we give

to those unexpected events in Life which mock the finest of intentions and often leave the best laid plans in tatters. It is a heart-warming tale about simple folk, striving to find their place in a baffling world, with nothing but hope in their heart and a dream to guide them.

Set in rural Australia and Italy in the 1950s, this bitter-sweet comedy revolves around the story of two brothers and the bride who - as Fate would have it - arrives from Italy betrothed to one yet falls madly in love with the other.

The Donnini brothers could not be more dissimilar: Gino is handsome, brash and impulsive; Angelo, the older by a year, is staid, shy and conservative. While Gino looks to the future, all too willing to relinquish his ancestry, Angelo looks to the past, unable to let go of it. For Gino, marriage is an unmentionable word, the furthest thing from his mind, whereas for Angelo it's all he can think about. But if they have one thing in common however, it's their fierce loyalty to one another.

Suffering in silence after another attempt to obtain a bride has failed, the luckless Angelo decides to try one more time. But in a fit of heartache, instead of sending a photo of himself, he sends one of his more handsome brother Gino, hoping to improve his chances in marriage.



When the beguiling, Mona-Lisa like Rosetta arrives in Australia from her small village in southern Italy, what she finds is that the Angelo who greets her at the docks is not the same Angelo as in the photograph. The Angelo whose image she has grown to love with the help of her wonderfully vivid imagination.

While Rosetta's sense of adventure in coming to a new country is dampened, her spirit and imagination are not, trusting always that the destiny which brought her here has already decided that Gino will be her husband.

And one mustn't meddle with Destiny.

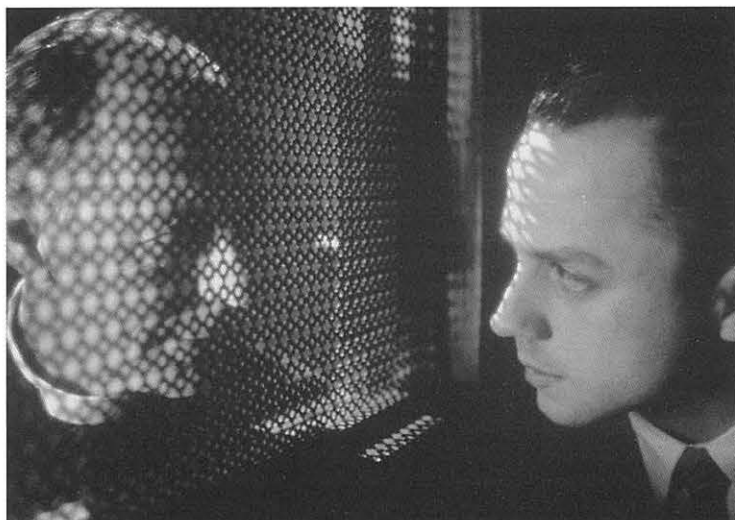
This poignant story of brotherly love unfolds against the backdrop of Il Café Latino, touching the lives of everyone there. With its ever-changing frescoes of the Mediterranean, the sun, the moon and the stars, Il Café Latino is like a jewel in a foreign sea, a sanctuary for the local Italians, a home away from home. Of the colourful array of characters that come and go, many are lost in the past, clinging to memories of a world that only exists in their minds.

But it is Rosetta, Angelo and Gino who drive the story as they struggle to try to resolve this awkward 'imbroglio' without hurting one

another's feelings. Remarkably in the end, all it takes is the power of love and a little bit of magic to make them realise that destiny always has its way.

Love's Brother is a heart-warming tale in the vein of films like *Moonstruck*, *Cinema Paradiso* and *Il Postino* - a simple story, beautifully told, with endearing characters and a hint of magic. Above all, it's about the essential goodness of the human heart and its capacity to elevate and enrich that great mystery called Life.

Two days after the citizenship ceremony on Elba in 2001, I was getting ready to leave and decided to walk the narrow streets of Capoliveri one last time. As I did, I tried to imagine my parents and grandparents doing the same in another century. In many ways it seemed like such a long time ago and in other ways, it didn't. Nothing had really changed I guess, which is the great thing about Italy. It was in the piazza that I saw old Peppino again. I told him I was leaving but that I hoped to return one day soon. He smiled and looked at me with eyes that reminded me a little of my grandfather, and said 'you must'.



from our archives: the origin of the Italian language

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT IS DRAWN FROM THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S COLLECTION OF NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS. THE ARTICLE WE HAVE CHOSEN DESCRIBES A LECTURE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE DELIVERED IN MELBOURNE BY FERNANDO GAGLIARDI AT THE ATHENAEUM THEATRE, MELBOURNE IN 1881. FERNANDO GAGLIARDI IS MOSTLY REMEMBERED FOR TWO ACHIEVEMENTS: HE PIONEERED SILK GROWING IN VICTORIA AND WAS LIBRARIAN OF THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE LECTURE WAS PRESENTED IN ITALIAN.

ARGUS NEWSPAPER 11 NOVEMBER 1881, P.10

A lecture on the origin of the Italian language was delivered in Italian yesterday afternoon, in the hall of the Athenaeum, by Dr. Ferdinand Gagliardi, to an invited audience, composed of his compatriots, and of other persons interested in the study or the literature of what Lord Byron calls erroneously, it would seem, "that soft bastard Latin." Dr. Brownlow, the vice chancellor of the University, occupied the chair, and the Consuls General for Italy and the United States were present on the platform. The number of persons present was only moderate, but they followed the lecturer notwithstanding his rapid delivery, with marked attention. The discourse was an exceedingly erudite one, and denoted the breadth and thoroughness of the learned lecturer's grasp of his subject.

Of the various theories which prevail most widely respecting the origin of the Italian language, there are two which demand more particular attention. One, which was espoused by Muratori, Zeno, Fontanini and other distinguished writers, assumes that the language was formed by the corruption of the Latin admired words borrowed from the idioms of the barbarians by whom the country was overrun after the downfall of the Roman empire. The other asserts that the Italian language is as old as the Latin, and that both were simultaneously used in Rome; the former by the common people and in ordinary conversation, and the latter by the literate classes, in writing and in public speaking; each language having its roots in the Japygian or aboriginal language of the peninsula, the Etruscan and the Italic. This theory was peremptorily rejected by the late Sir G.C. Lewis, who espoused the ideas of M. Raynard, which Dr. Gagliardi just as peremptorily discards.

Before Rome had emerged from the narrow boundaries of Latium, the lecturer says, there were four languages principally spoken in Italy—the Greek, the Etruscan, the Celtic, and the Latin; all of them belonging to the IndoGermanic group of tongues. Of these four, the last was the language of the populace nor was it until about the Augustan age, when its structure had been refined and perfected, that it ceased to be so; but the elder form—the real Italian—existed side by side with it, and continued to be the vernacular tongues. Nay, the Etruscan, Umbrian, and Oscan dialects of it were in use long after the era of Augustus, nor did Italian at any time cease to be spoken by the masses. Of this, the

lecturer adduced many interesting proofs. Again, he remarked, if the language had been a corruption of the Latin it would resemble it in its grammatical structure, whereas it has no cases and no neuter gender. It has articles, which the Latin has not; it has no distinction of active and passive verbs; the tenses differ, and so do the adverbs; there are no interrogative particles corresponding with the Latin *nun, an, and ne*; the two negatives, instead of making an affirmative, strengthen the negation; and the construction of the two languages is altogether diverse.

As to the alleged influences of the barbaric invasions upon the Latin language which is assumed to have been spoken by the common people, the lecturer asked, by what new phonetic law or by what new miracle of nature, could these tongues which abounded and usually ended in consonants, so transform the organs of the conquered people, and their methods of accentuation, as to cause them to adopt a language abounding [with] constantly terminating vowels? Moreover, the very portions of Italy which were the centres of barbaric power, namely, Lombardy and Rome, were not and are not those in which the Italian language is now spoken most correctly and with the greatest purity; whereas it is so in Tuscany, and it was so in Sicily and Venice, where the barbaric influence was the weakest. Hence, argued the lecturer, Italian is the natural development of purely local elements. Out of them arose the rustic Latin, and out of them also sprang the noble language of Cicero and Tacitus, of Virgil and Horace; so that the Italian is not the offspring of a Latin mother, but both derived their parentage from a common stock, and grew together side by side; the one surviving the wreck of the empire, and the other disappearing, as a spoken language, with the disappearance of the governing and literate classes, among whom it had been in use. Nevertheless, Italian is not to be considered as the survival of a provincial dialect spoken by a minority of the people of the Peninsula, but as the creation of the various languages current in Italy even before the foundation of Rome; all of them belonging to the same family, each closely resembling the other, and the whole of them cooperating with the rustic Latin in the formation of the classic Latin, and when this ceased to be cultivated, these primitive languages reappeared in the literature of the country, as they had been always maintained in conversation, and as they are still conserved in their fundamental elements by the various dialects which were spoken in the days of Dante, and continue to be so to this day, in different parts of Italy, while they assume their noblest garb in Tuscany, the centre of ancient Etruria, the most powerful and cultivated people of their epoch, as they were also the most numerous during the domination of the Mistress of the World.

The lecture was an exceedingly able one, and its philological illustrations were such as to interest alike the classical scholar and the student of Italian, denoting, as they did, a magistral knowledge as well of the Latin language and literature as of that tongue which Leigh Hunt has pronounced to be the most beautiful of all those that are now spoken in Europe. A vote of thanks to the lecturer was moved by Mr. James Smith, and carried by acclamation.

italian historical society news

NEW IHS PUBLICATION

The Italian Historical Society is pleased to announce that work is under way on a full-colour coffee table book celebrating the Italian experience in Australia. The book, which will feature images, oral histories, documents and objects selected from the IHS Collection, will be launched in 2005 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Society. The bi-lingual publication, produced in collaboration with Melbourne University Publishing (MUP), will be the culmination of a quarter century of collecting historical material.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of the Italian community and the many donors who have lodged material with the Society. We are grateful that people continue to come forward with photographs and ephemera, helping us to create a more complete picture of the history of Italian immigration in Australia.

We would like to thank the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, and the Victorian Multicultural Commission for their financial support.

ITALIAN FAMILY HISTORY GROUP IN SYDNEY

The Italian Family History Group operating from CoAsIt's Sydney office over the past two and a half years, has embarked on a number of projects of interest to genealogists and historians, the most important of which has been obtaining copies of official Italian registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

To date 11 rolls of micro film reels have been acquired and placed in the CoAsIt resource library at Casa d'Italia, in Norton St. Leichhardt where Italian descendants and others can carry out research in tracing their family ancestors.

The reels so far acquired relate to the Civil records of the Aeolian Islands. Each reel contains photographs of as many as 5000 pages of records dating back to the 1830's. Funds collected will enable the organisation to acquire the full set of 50 reels of the Aeolian Islands which have been copied some time ago by the Family History Centres of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints (Mormons). These reels will only be made available after strict compliance to copyright restrictions.

Mr Dominic Arrivolo, the Chairman of the group visited the Italian Historical Society in Melbourne in July, and demonstrated the films and indicated that this unique service was now available in Sydney to all Italian genealogists in Australia. A new special micro reading machine has also been purchased and installed in the library.

The Italian Family History Group's success in this initial project was in large part due to support offered which included a grant from the State Government of NSW, donations from the two Aeolian Associations as well as a number of individuals in Sydney. It is anticipated that this project would continue as demand increases by the acquiring of reels pertinent to other regions of Italy.

Monthly evening meetings are held at Casa d'Italia on the fourth Wednesday, with a Guest speaker being invited to talk on genealogical and related matters.

Reports of the group's activities are posted on the Sydney CoAsIt website page www.coasit.org.au for those unable to come to meetings.

Readers of the Italian Historical Society Journal who have internet connection can receive monthly reports directly, by providing their email address to the chairman on dominic1926@yahoo.com.

COMMUNITY HERITAGE GRANT AWARDED TO IHS

The Italian Historical Society has received \$8000 to preserve heritage items with the assistance of the 2003 Community Heritage Grants, an Australia wide program to preserve documentary heritage items.

The grants were announced by Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp at a ceremony held at the National Library of Australia.

Grants of up to \$8 000 are awarded annually to community organisations such as museums, libraries, archives and historical and genealogical societies to preserve locally owned, but nationally significant, documentary heritage materials including letters, diaries, maps, photographs, film/video and oral history recordings.

The Society will use the award to digitise the Santospirito Collection (part of its collection), made up of the personal papers of welfare worker, Lena Santospirito, who was at the forefront of welfare provision for Italian migrants during the post-war period.

Senator Kemp said, "The Community Heritage Grants program is a major national initiative because it represents a commitment by Australians to recording and conserving their local heritage. 2003 marks the 10th anniversary of the program. In that time 295 projects have received more than \$1 million in funding."

This year fifty community organisations were awarded a total of \$219 000 to preserve diverse collections that make up Australia's wealth of documentary heritage.

The program is jointly funded and supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the National Library of Australia, the National Archives of Australia, the Australian Film Commission and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

Jan Fullerton, Director-General National Library of Australia said, "The Community Heritage Grant program is one of the most comprehensive annual initiatives that the Library is involved in.

"Together with our partners we are able to work at the community level where some of the most vitally interesting material is located and where the most active work occurs, which is often undertaken by volunteers."

BELOW Senator Rod Kemp (left) awarding a National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant to the curator of the Italian Historical Society, Lorenzo Iozzi.



recent acquisitions

THE WORK OF THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS HAS CONCENTRATED IN THE AREAS OF PRESERVATION, CATALOGUING AND COLLECTING. SEVERAL IMPORTANT PROJECTS WERE BROUGHT TO FRUITION THIS YEAR, MOST NOTABLY THE REALISATION OF ELECTRONIC RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS FOR THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE IHS COLLECTION: WE NOW HAVE COMPREHENSIVE ELECTRONIC DATABASES FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION, THE SANTOSPIRITO COLLECTION, THE IHS LIBRARY AND THE DIPLOMATIC ARCHIVES.

The Photographic Collection database is perhaps the most significant as it is the culmination of four years work by staff members and volunteers. This collection consists of approximately 7000 photographs and 7000

negatives spanning over one hundred years of history. Donors lodge original photographs with the IHS, which it in turn copies, preserves and catalogues. The originals are then returned to the owners or deposited at the State Library of Victoria for long term preservation. With over six thousand photographs fully catalogued, preserved, scanned and integrated into an electronic database we now have not only an important resource on the history of Italian immigration but one which is easily accessible to staff and researchers. It is gratifying to be at a point where we no longer have to process a huge back-log of photographs but rather are able to catalogue and preserve items as they are lodged by donors.

As a consequence of this work, the long term preservation of the IHS Collection, a mission which

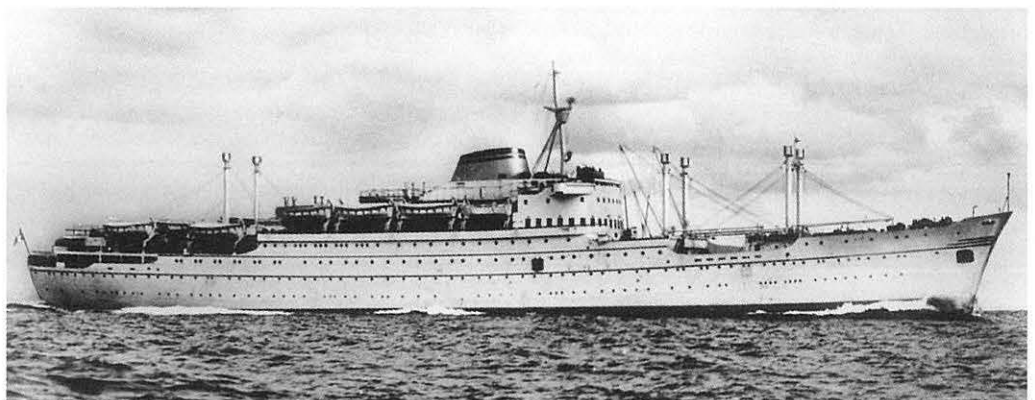
TOP LEFT Antonio Giordano in his capacity as supervisor at the Ford Motor Company of Australia, Broadmeadows Plant, c1975. Antonio migrated to Australia from San Marco in Lamis, Puglia, in 1957. His first jobs were fruit picking in Shepparton and as a builder's labourer in Melbourne. In 1960 he began work with Ford. It was to be his life long job until retirement forty years later during which he was appointed to the position of supervisor of his division. His two sons also followed in his footsteps and were employed at the same plant.



TOP RIGHT Workmates Giuseppe Siracusa (left) and Michael Wall at State Electricity Commission (SEC), Newport Power Station, 1985. Giuseppe emigrated from Sicily in 1956.



MIDDLE Postcard photograph of the ship *Australia* of the Lloyd Triestino Line. Postcards such as this were issued by the shipping company and made available to passengers during the voyage. This particular one is post-marked Port Said, Egypt [the first port of call after leaving Italy] and was sent by Giuseppe Siracusa, one of the migrant passengers travelling from Italy to Australia. It is addressed and inscribed to his wife, Maria, who remained in Sicily and would join him in Australia the following year. The inscription on the back of the postcard reads: 'Tanti saluti e baci, a te mia cara Mariuccia, dal tuo affezionatissimo Giuseppe Siracusa. Port Said, 30 Gennaio, 1956'.



BOTTOM Friends and relatives of emigrants on the dock at Messina bidding farewell to their loved ones. Photograph taken from the ship *Australia* by one of the passengers on board. Among the emigrants on the ship - bound for Australia - was Giuseppe Siracusa, who bought a copy of this photograph from the photographer. Dated 28 January, 1956.



is undertaken in collaboration with the State Library of Victoria, could be addressed since the State Library rely on our catalogue entries before they can incorporate IHS items into their own collection or system. The process of forwarding original material has thus commenced and IHS photographs and their corresponding catalogue entries have been incorporated into the State Library of Victoria Picture Collection internet database. We would encourage Society members to visit this website www.slv.vic.gov.au as an indication of how the historical images preserved at the Italian Historical Society are incorporated into mainstream history and made available to the public.

Donations may be small in quantity, such as the personal family photograph; or large, such as the archives of an individual or an organisation. The recent donation of the personal archives

of Giorgio Mangiamiele, photographer and filmmaker is worth noting because, until recently, the work of this important artist was represented in the IHS by only a few images; but the 'picture' changed dramatically when the Mangiamiele family donated many boxes of the filmmaker's archives to the HIS. It consists of a large quantity of documentary and visual material pertaining to the film industry.

The Italian Historical Society receives approximately five hundred photographs per year from donors as well as other historical material such as oral histories, documents and publications. The photographs reproduced here represent a small selection from the many recently donated to the Society. They are intended to highlight the diversity of images incorporated into the IHS Photographic Collection.

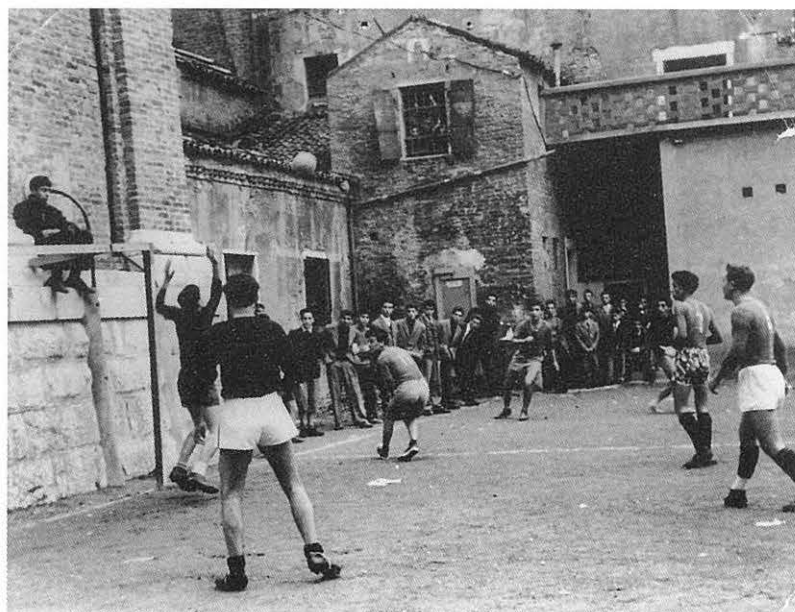


TOP Cinema Papers, film magazine, Australia, 1992 featuring an article on the work of Giorgio Mangiamiele.

BOTTOM LEFT A soccer match being played in the courtyard of the patronato (church) of San Francesco della Vigna in the suburb of Castello in Venice, 1953. Included is Giorgio Penzo (goalkeeper, first on left), who would later emigrate to Australia. On his arrival in January 1956 he went to Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre where he stayed only seven days before 'escaping' to find work in Melbourne.

He worked at various jobs including fish merchant, factory hand and butcher. Most significantly though, Giorgio had a prominent career with Juventus Soccer Club, both as player and ultimately, as club president.

BOTTOM RIGHT Carmelina Di Guglielmo (left) and Laura Lattuada performing in *Emma Celebrazione* directed by Rosalba Clemente at State Theatre, South Australia, 1999. Carmela, the donor of this and other photographs relating to her acting career, has recently appeared in *The Bridge* (which toured country towns along the Murray River), *Paradise* and *Mum's the Word*.



publications received

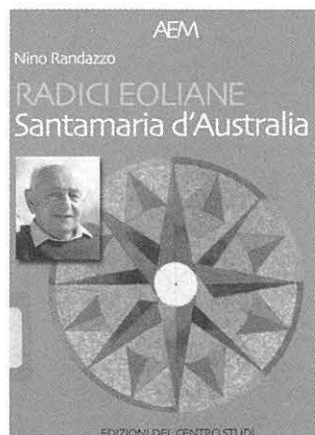
THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS HAVE BEEN RECENTLY PURCHASED BY OR DONATED TO THE SOCIETY. THEY MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE RECENT RELEASES BUT EVERY ATTEMPT IS MADE TO ACQUIRE ALL CURRENT PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF ITALIAN-AUSTRALIAN HISTORY.

BOOKS IN ITALIAN

RADICI EOLIANE: SANTAMARIA D'AUSTRALIA

NINO RANDAZZO, EDIZIONI DEL CENTRO STUDI, LIPARI, 2003. KINDLY DONATED BY THE AUTHOR.

Many books have been written about Bob Santamaria. This publication is written by a native of the Aeolian Islands – the birthplace of Santamaria's parents – and is a mix of biography and a personal narrative. In the preface to the book Dr. Volpicelli, the current Italian Ambassador to Australia, states that 'Radici Eoliane is a book not only about Australian history, but the careful reconstruction of a man's personal life, an Italian, that is so much part of the Australian political life of the last sixty years'.



CELEBRAZIONE! 75 YEARS OF EATING AND DRINKING WITH THE DE BORTOLI FAMILY

MICHAEL HARDEN, HARDIE GRANT BOOKS, SOUTH YARRA, 2003. \$60.00

A beautifully presented coffee-table publication which traces the history of the De Bortoli family and its contribution to Australia's wine-making industry. The story unfolds through powerful photographs from the family album which are interspersed with mouth watering recipes by chefs such as Lorenza De' Medici, Antonio Carluccio, Stefano Manfredi and Guy Grossi, to name a few.

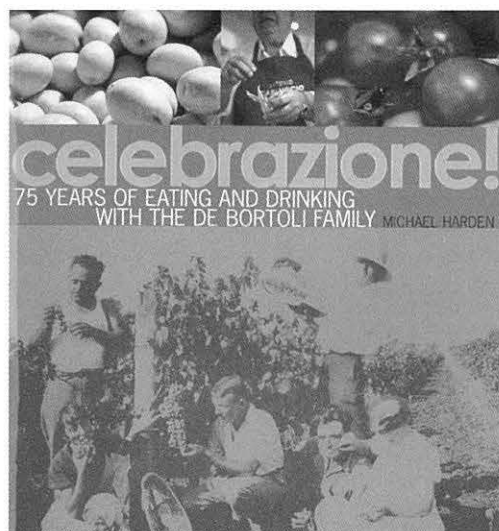
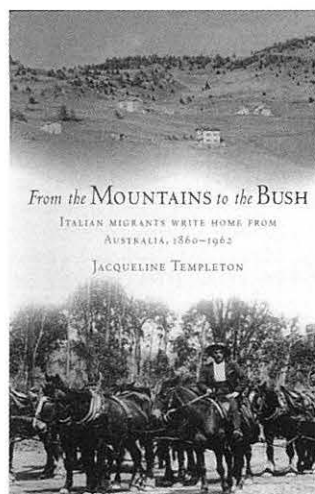
Vittorio De Bortoli left war-ravaged Italy in the 1920s looking for a better life in Australia and settled in the Griffith district in New South Wales. He comes from generations of farmers and the farming skills handed down to him and in turn applied to the sun-drenched land of Griffith were to hold him in good stead. In 1928 he bought his first small farm and with his wife Giuseppina began growing grapes which for a number of years he sold to local wine producers. It was his son Deen who gave the company a tremendous boost with the production of world-class wines such as Noble One. It is quite sad that Deen passed away a few days after he launched this wonderful book. However, the De Bortoli success story will continue in the hands of a number of capable descendants.

BOOKS IN ENGLISH

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE BUSH: ITALIAN MIGRANTS WRITE HOME FROM AUSTRALIA, 1860-1962,

JACQUELINE TEMPLETON, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA PRESS, CRAWLEY, 2003. SPECIAL PRICE \$44.00 [SEE ENCLOSED ORDER FORM].

The province of Sondrio was, in the late 19th century, the largest single source of Australia's Italian immigration. Nearly two thirds of Australia's Italian immigrants were from the Sondrio province, with Valtellina contributing nearly one half of the total of Italian immigrants. This interesting fact is how the late scholar and author, Jacqueline Templeton, introduces us to the exciting world she recreates in this new study. It is an exploration into the bonds of family and the choice of Australia as a destination. One hundred years of migration from Valtellina to Australia is sympathetically captured in this extraordinary book and warmly covered using over 120 letters written between 1860 and 1960 in correspondence between migrants in Australia and their families in Valtellina. The Letters are translated into English and reproduced in full for readers to ponder.



EAGLEHAWK & DISTRICT PIONEER REGISTER: VOLUME 4 - N-Q

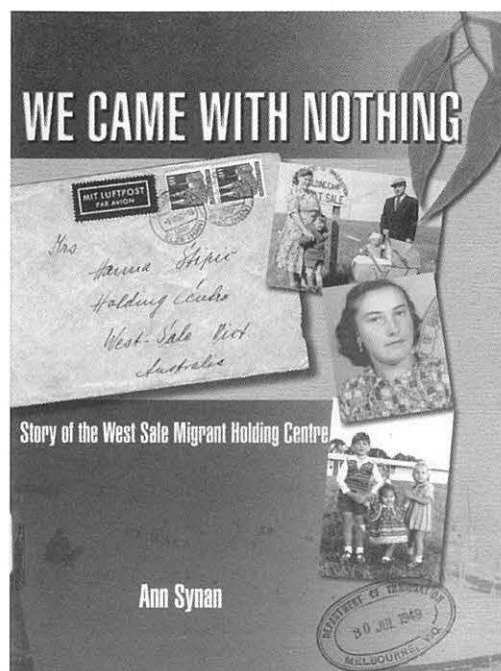
COMPILED BY ANNETTE O'DONOHUE & BEV HANSON, MAIDEN GULLY, VIC., 2003. \$55.00 + P&P

This is the 4th register in the series, and continues the laborious work begun by the two authors a decade ago. It covers the names of all the gold-seekers and their families who were attracted to the area due to the discovery of gold over 150 years ago. The register covers the entire Eaglehawk borough, which is known today as the larger Bendigo area. It meticulously records the names and details of the early miners such as their date of birth, parents' names, marriage details, birth of children, name of ship and death notices.

WE CAME WITH NOTHING: STORY OF THE WEST SALE MIGRANT HOLDING CENTRE

ANN SYNAN, LOOKUPS RESEARCH, SALE, 2002. \$35.00

A captivating collection of oral histories from migrants who temporarily lived at the West Sale Migrant Holding Centre, after arriving in Australia as displaced persons from war-torn Europe after World War Two. The book is predominantly a story of the women and children who resided at the Centre while their men folk worked in local industries in the Gippsland area. The book has won Information Victoria's 2003 Community History Award



AN ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

MALCOLM WEBSTER, SELF-PUBLISHED, MELBOURNE 1995. KINDLY DONATED BY THE AUTHOR.

Readers of the *IHS Journal* will recall that in our January-July 2003 issue we published a summarised personal account of the experiences of Malcolm Webster, an Australian Imperial Forces (A.I.F) soldier, who spent several years in northern Italy as a prisoner of war. In 1943 he escaped from an Italian work camp and spent the latter part of the War serving as a member of the Italian Resistance Movement, combating the Nazi/Fascists. This is Webster's complete war-time biography which was initially intended for his immediate family but has acquired a wider appeal. It is an extraordinary story which honours the Australian POWs who lost their life in Italy.

BENDIGO INDEPENDENT 1862-1865: INQUESTS: BOOK 1

COMPILED BY ANNETTE O'DONOHUE, MAIDEN GULLY, VIC., 2003. \$40.00

This is an exhaustive compilation of inquest records and other documents as published in the *Bendigo Independent* newspaper between the years 1862 and 1865. The extracts include excerpts of births, deaths, marriages, inquests, murder, suicide, obituaries, funerals and serious accidents. The entries have been transcribed in the same format they were originally typed 150 years earlier. It is an invaluable source for family historians tracing their ancestors who were in the Bendigo area at that time.

UNDER ANOTHER SKY: THE LIFE AND SENTIMENTS OF AN ITALIAN EMIGRANT

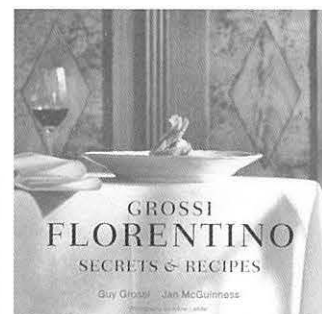
CARMELO CARUSO, CONGEDO, GALATINA, 1999. KINDLY DONATED BY THE AUTHOR.

Carmelo Caruso's autobiography, published in Italian in 1998, is translated here by Prof. Gaetano Rando and Janine Dickinson. Caruso's life since his arrival in Australia in 1950 from Licodia Eubea, Sicily, is full of rich experiences and gives a very interesting insight into the post-war Italian community in Brisbane. Caruso worked as a correspondent for *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* newspapers for over 25 years. His contribution to the welfare of his community is remarkable.

GROSSI FLORENTINO: SECRETS AND RECIPES

GUY GROSSI & JAN MCGUINNESS, PENGUIN, CAMBERWELL, 2003. \$60.00

In another wonderfully presented book, the authors portray the history of the site where Café Florentino stands in Bourke Street, Melbourne. Café Florentino is one of the great landmarks of this city. Its story is beautifully told from its early beginnings as Melbourne's first licensed wine bar to the latest phase of its history: the purchase of the restaurant in 1999 by Guy Grossi and its subsequent name change to Grossi Florentino. This publication not only offers interesting reading but some exquisite recipes which have helped to make the restaurant famous. It is also a tribute to the distinguished career as a chef of Pietro Grossi, Guy's father, from whom Guy inherited all his skills. An interesting adjunct to the book are the anecdotes of some of the restaurant's famous patrons!



IHS Journal guidelines for contributors

1. The journal of the Italian Historical Society is produced for a general readership. Preference will be given to articles which increase an understanding of the history of Italian immigrants and their descendants.

2. The IHS Journal is published twice yearly. The deadline dates for articles for each issue are:

// June issue: 30 April

// December issue: 30 October

3. The IHS Journal accepts unsolicited articles but may decline publication for various reasons. Articles are equally welcome from both professional and amateur historians and writers.

4. The IHS Journal does not pay for contributions.

5. All materials submitted may be subject to editing.

6. Articles should be normally submitted on a white A4 paper, typed with double spacing. Contributors are also encouraged to submit work on IBM compatible format. In general articles should not exceed 5000 words.

7. Articles should be accompanied by appropriate and clearly captioned illustrative material wherever possible. This may include good quality illustration, maps, diagrams, or other materials such as advertisements, programs, etc.

8. All material submitted for publication must be accompanied by permission to publish and must meet copyright requirements. This includes both textual and illustrative materials. Unless otherwise stated, the author/s of the material provided will be credited with copyright.

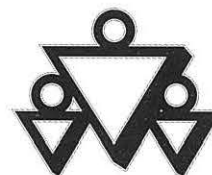
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