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The *IHSJ* aims to provide an outlet for the circulation of news and reports, the exchange of information and the notification of future activities to those interested in the history of Italian Australian communities. We invite readers to contribute newsworthy articles and short notes. Guidelines for contributors can be found on the last page of this issue.

Letters and inquiries to:
THE EDITOR
ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL
CO.AS.IT.
189 FARADAY STREET
CARLTON VIC 3053
AUSTRALIA
EMAIL: ihs@coasit.com.au

FRONT COVER: Giovanni Cera [on mandolin] and brother, Rino [on guitar], lead a group of singing waiters at Mario's Restaurant, Melbourne, c. 1950s.

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italian cultural heritage centre and incontri: permanent exhibition




The Italian Historical Society
is proud to announce the development of
a new permanent state-of-the-art multimedia exhibition
and study centre devoted to Australia's Italians
at the premises of Co.As.It. in Carlton.

Thanks to generous funding provided by the State Government of Victoria through the Victorian Cultural Precincts Enhancement Fund and by CoAsIt, the Italian Cultural Heritage Centre and Permanent Exhibition will promote the Italian contribution to Australia's multiculturalism over the 150 years of Italian migration to Australia.

The purpose of the Centre and permanent exhibition is to foster an increased understanding of the ways in which the Italian-Australian experience and culture are interpreted and re-interpreted across the generations. It will also investigate the impact of Italian migration on Australian society and culture by exploring:

- the history of and reasons for Italian migration to Australia;
- unique and meaningful experiences of Italians in Australia;
- the significance of Carlton in the settlement of Italians;
- the interactions between Italians and other Australians;
- the place of Italian culture in contemporary Australia;
- the ways Italian Australians maintain their connection to Italy and to their heritage.

The Centre will be located in a purpose built space in the heart of Carlton, in the premises of Co.As.It. The ground floor of the building will be restructured to accommodate a dynamic and modern exhibition space comprising outstanding multimedia components and advanced digital and interactive technologies. The exhibition – developed with particular attention to the diverse audience groups formed by the multi-generational Italian community, by school students and by casual visitors – will encourage an immersive engagement with the historical content of the exhibition.

The Centre is due to open mid-2010. Further details will be published as they become available.

the italian anarchist press in australia between the wars

by david faber

Dr David Faber is the author of a PhD thesis on the life and times of the Italian Australian anarchist activist Francesco Giovanni Fantin [Adelaide 2008]. Born and bred in Tasmania, he has lived and worked in Adelaide since 1977, except for a sojourn in Milan 1985-8. His current research interests include Australian appeasement of Italian fascism and wartime xenophobia towards Italians.

One of the practices brought to Australia by antifascist émigrés in the first decade of the regime was that of publishing political newspapers. These publications had long precedents in Italy, since the days of the bifurcation of the original internationalism of Marx and Bakunin into socialist and populist anarchist streams.[1] In Australia and elsewhere, this tradition was largely carried on by anarchists in exile, in ways that reflected the proletarian character of a migration which included tradesmen rather than professionals, and activists with remarkable initiative rather than career intellectuals. Nevertheless, journalistic standards and the quality of production were respectable. The chronology of these publications in Australia has been recorded by Bettini and Cresciani, the latter having moreover sketched their general character and sustaining infrastructure.[2] It seems appropriate to recapitulate this information adding a few remarks on the merits and limitations of this antipodean literature. These publications were among the first fruits of the efforts of the *fuorusciti* [émigrés] to propagate resistance to fascism in the Italian diaspora in Australia and to contribute to the labour movement here. They also have a place in the history of the Italian language in this country.

The brief flourishing and decline of the Italian antifascist press in Australia was essentially a function of the degree of organisation the anarchists and their fellow travellers were able to sustain in none too favourable political and economic conditions. Between 1923 and 1929, when Italian immigration to Australia began to pick up pace, Stanley Melbourne Bruce was Nationalist Prime Minister and the temper of the country was conservative in the wake of the Great War, as it was fascist in Italy. Bruce sought to manage 'men, money and markets' within the framework of the British Empire in an export driven, low wage economy. He stigmatised opposition as animated by alien doctrines disseminated by foreign agitators.[3] Bruce, characterised by the Italian antifascists as a man who raped Mussolini and was 'the faithful servant of the British shipping magnates and industrialists', ultimately fell and lost his seat meddling in the labour market (like Prime Minister Howard after him).[4] Thereafter, the Depression ushered in a decade of external alarms culminating in another World War. The Italian antifascists in Australia struggled with these conditions as did the national and international labour movement; their analysis took specific notice of Australian circumstances, both historical and contemporary. Almost from its inception in June 1930 *L'Avanguardia Libertaria* published an earnest, detailed and long running feature series by H. Payne on Australian history.[5] Again, in September 1930, *L'Avanguardia Libertaria* noted that the Scullin government was called upon to answer for the errors of past administrations, adding that:

> "[i]f there is a criticism that can be made of the current government … it is that of a downright political subservience to England, an aspect which finds its

[1] See Bettini, L. (ed.) 1972, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, Crescita Politica Editrice, Firenze, Vol. I, Tomo I for metropolitan Italian periodicals and single issue newspapers, 1872-1971.

[2] See Bettini, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Tomo II, pp. 29-32 and Cresciani, G., 'Refractory Migrants. Fascist Surveillance on Italians in Australia 1922-43', *Italian Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 15, 2007, p. 15; and 'The Proletarian Migrants: Fascism and Italian Migrants in Australia', *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 51, no. 1, March 1979.

[3] See Radi, H., particularly pp. 397-400 and Chapter 9 generally in Crowley, F. (ed.) 1974, *A New History of Australia*, Heinemann, Melbourne.

[4] For Isidoro Bertazzon's fascinating, extended analysis of the industrial and political issues raised by the November 1928 Commonwealth elections, see the translation entitled *VICTORY?*, now in National Archives of Australia, A367 C18220, of the article originally published in Italian in *Il Risveglio*, October 1929. Bertazzon called for Bruce to be turned out of his seat 'by means … more effectual than a ballot' and predicted a solution to the political situation in the disappearance of government.

[5] These 'profiles' looked at the history of Australian settlement with specific reference to land and labour policy (noting the strictures of Marx on the Wakefield scheme), democracy in the age of gold and the Eureka incident, Federation, the Harvester judgement and Trade Unionism, and defended the White Australia policy on economic grounds. Aborigines were dismissed as a dying race. The series ran from 1 August 1930 to 5 June 1931 and for all its flaws represented a serious brief introduction for Italians to a contemporary historical understanding of the Australian experience.

> consecration in the almost daily repetition of the promise to scrupulously pay down war debt, a sad heritage which weighs on the population like a permanent menace. This is the darkest cloud obscuring the Australian horizon."[6]

Cresciani credits the agitation in defence of Sacco and Vanzetti (1921-27) with being the crucible out of which anarchist elements coalesced to give organisation and a voice to Italian antifascist sentiment in Australia. There is undoubtedly much truth in this. Certainly both the first and second anniversaries of the execution of the two Italian American anarchists were observed in August 1928 and 1929 by the publication of the single issue broadsheets *Il Calvario* and *In Memoria*. Moreover, the issue of their judicial murder continued to be revisited throughout the short life of the Italian antifascist press in Australia.[7] But equally, along with the escalation of tensions as the fascist regime in Italy was consolidated into a police state, the incitement of political and industrial strife in the antipodes by the Nationalist Party played its part in exciting the internationalism of Italian antifascists in Australia.

At any rate, the spark which caught the imagination of a generation of over two hundred and fifty Italophone labour activists in Australia was struck, as Cresciani has also emphasised, by a handful of activists from the Veneto, bound by ties of class and regional culture.

Even affinity based on the *comune* of origin was important. Five names recur as the most important, all from the Veneto alpine fringe, for long centuries a homeland of mass migration both temporary and permanent, leavened by the political exodus of heretics both religious and secular[8]. One is Isidoro Bertazzon from the province of Treviso, who was to find his vocation as a self taught journalist. Another was Valentino Ciotti from the province of Belluno, a long standing activist and editor. Three hailed from the Schio district of the province of Vicenza, one of the many rural crucibles of Veneto capitalism, the particular domain of the Rossi wool industrialists' dynasty. They were the anarchists Francesco Giuseppe Carmagnola and Francesco Giovanni Fantin, both from the village of San Vito di Leguzzano, and the communist Giovanni Terribile Antico from Piovene.

Fig. 1 *Canecutters working on a sugar cane plantation in Northern Queensland. The group includes Francesco Fantin, c1925*

These men and their peers not only spoke one another's language; they spoke one another's dialects. From time to time they looked over their shoulders at Veneto affairs.[9] Theirs was a fellowship of youth, of class, of culture, of philosophy, of like-mindedness and mutual support conceived in adversity to outbrave the world of penury and exile they were born into. Their saga remains one to conjure with for those who admire the fight of the underdog everywhere.

From all accounts Francesco Carmagnola was a leading light among the Italian anarchists in Australia. But he was only ever eminent among equals given his extrovert personality and ability to turn his hand by turns to organising, editing and writing something more than mere diatribe. In Sydney in late 1926, Carmagnola in conjunction with Antico established an active *Lega Antifascista* counting some three hundred members. The given name Terribile suggests that Antico was the son of leftist parents. Be that as it may, by 1927 he was secretary of the Italian section of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). His working relationship with Carmagnola must have been very interesting, given that the latter was a good follower of Bakunin in regarding the admirers of Marx as inherently authoritarian, and was accordingly known from time to time to refer to them acerbically as 'red fascists'.[10]

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[6] *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 1 September 1930

[7] See for example the denunciation of Judge Thayer from the dock, republished in *Il Risveglio*, no. 2, 1 August 1927 in the original Italian and in translation, now in NAA A432 1929/578 Part 4.

[8] For the survey of these themes in the contemporary era see Franzina, E. (ed.) 1983, *Un altro Veneto: saggi e studi di storia dell'emigrazione nei secoli XIX e XX*, Francisci editore, Abano Terme (Padova). More broadly for the modern era see also per index at 'emigrazione' Lanaro, S. (ed.) 1984, *Il Veneto*, Einaudi, Torino. For an analysis of the regional and other characteristics of the émigrés to Australia monitored by the DGPS [Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza], see the appendices to Cresciani, 'Refractory Migrants…', as above.. From my analysis of the 1932 'List of Co-nationals Most Known for their Communist Views', found in the files of leading antifascists such as Fantin and Baratto (cited by Cresciani on page 16), it is clear that some of the persons mentioned in the files did not have dossiers of their own. Thus the estimate of activists must somewhat exceed the number of dossiers cited by Cresciani, and the circle of sympathisers must have numbered a few hundred more.

[9] For one example see *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 15 August 1930 '**From the Veneto'** Padova. This year the Annual Fair was even more miserable than last year. At Vicenza almost all the shops in the Corso are closed. The grand caffè Garibaldi in Piazza dei Signori has also closed. The city bears the aspect of the worst months of the War.' In the very first issue of the paper on 14 June 1930 Bertazzon published news of fascist relocation of Vicentine peasants to Sardinia.

[10] Cresciani, 'The Proletarian Migrants…', as above p. 8. Nevertheless, Carmagnola's discrete pragmatic links with the CPA were long term and extensive in Sydney, Melbourne and North Queensland (as were Bertazzon's in the Victorian capital, as the CIB [Criminal Investigation Branch] was well aware: see CIB – Secretary, PM's Dept., 17 February

Nevertheless, they worked in tandem, and their association gave birth to the first Italian antifascist publication in Australia, *Il Risveglio* [The Awakening], which was published, despite its decidedly anarchist character, by the CPA as an antifascist initiative. The Rome Directorate General of Public Security [*Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza*] (DGPS) maintained political surveillance on the Italian community in Australia, especially after its reorganisation in 1927 under the Unified Text of Public Security Law [Testo Unico delle Leggi di Pubblica Sicurezza] (TULPS).[11] It noted that over the years Antico contributed copy to the antifascist press under the signature GA, which created headaches for his politically antagonistic brother Giuseppe and sister in law.[12]

Fig. 2 *Studio photograph of three friends, possibly members of the Matteotti Club, an anti-Fascist organisation. Included are Isidoro Bertazzon and Mr Tarandin. Bertazzon, with Francesco Carmagnola, were co-founders of the Matteotti Club, c1927.*

The foundation under anarchist leadership of the Matteotti Club in Melbourne in 1927 was likewise an expression of this astute political vision of antifascist unity. This was embodied in the very name of the club. Among other reminders of his sacrifice published at various times, portraits of Matteotti were recurrently advertised for sale in the Club press. On 20 June 1930, the fifth anniversary of his assassination was observed by Carmagnola with the publication of a special commemorative edition of *La Riscossa* [The Counterattack]. References to him were as ubiquitous in the Italian antifascist press in Australia as to Sacco and Vanzetti. In life, Giacomo Matteotti was a reformist socialist faction leader, the political secretary of the ironically named Partito Socialista Unitario, one of many expressions of socialist disunity. In death, after his assassination by Mussolini's henchmen acting at Il Duce's suggestion in 1924, his figure, implicitly antithetical to anarchism, became that of the quintessential antifascist martyr above any factional quibble. As such, Matteotti was the very emblem of resistance to the bloody fascist subversion of constitutional and parliamentary order. In naming the club after him, the Italian anarchists in Australia were not only denouncing fascist atrocities. They were also declaring a commitment to antifascist solidarity and a degree of political sophistication such as would move the communist Gramsci, himself the most illustrious political prisoner of fascism, to aim at the resurgence of democracy as opposed to a proletarian dictatorship.[13] This theme was specifically taken up in the club's single issue publication *Germinal* of July 1929 in the leading article 'Per un'azione antifascista', signed 'Lux'.

It is worth emphasising the role of F.G. Fantin in all this, not only because he has been unjustly regarded by Nursey-Bray as a lesser figure than Carmagnola, but also because he may be taken as emblematic of the dozens of rank and file supporters of the Italian anarchist press in Australia.[14] Fantin's name does not appear explicitly in the columns of the anarchist press as a contributor of copy. We do not know if he used a pseudonym. He does appear once as an industrial orator.[15] He figures primarily as a donor, fundraiser and distributor. Fantin arrived in Melbourne from Italy in late 1924, bringing up the rear of a group of industrial militants victimised after the failure of the 1921 textile strike in the Schio district of the province of Vicenza. Prominent among them was Fantin's mentor, the anarchist Gaetano Panizzon. The Panizzon connection involved the youthful Fantin in paramilitary activities including the supply, witting or unwitting, of the explosives used in the largest anarchist terrorist outrage in Italian history, the Diana Theatre massacre of March 1921.[16] Fantin had been detained by military service and a romantic affair, which ended in a brief, failed marriage, from initially joining family and comrades in Australia.[17]

1931, NAA A367 C1822R). Even-handedly, Carmagnola dismissed laborites as 'caffelatte socialists'. Bertazzon endorsed the view of Gaetano Panizzon that laborism and bolshevism were heresies of state power in *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 15 August 1930, describing Stalin as 'the dictator of dictators of all the Russias' on 1 December 1930.

[11] For a discussion of the 'politics of assassination' of late 1926, when multiple attempts were made on the life of Mussolini, see the article by Lussu in *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 1 November 1930 and the articles on the fascist Special Court [Tribunale Speciale per la Difesa dello Stato] in the issues of 15 November and 1 December. The implicit criticism of anarchism by Lussu was so discrete as to go unnoticed.

[12] Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma, MI DGPS CPC J-5 1939, Antico Giovanni Terribile. [The J-5 sub-series was reserved primarily for émigrés who had naturalised in their host countries.]

[13] Davidson, A. 1977, *Antonio Gramsci*, Merlin Press, London, p. 250.

[14] See his 'Anti-Fascism and Internment: the Case of Francesco Fantin', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, no. 17, 1989, p. 88.

[15] *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 1 April 1931.

[16] The connection of Panizzon with this atrocity emerges clearly from Mariani, G. 1953, *Memorie di un ex-terrorista*, Self published, Torino, pp. 35-36. Panizzon's involvement in the supply is certain; what is uncertain is whether he was aware of the terrorist purposes of the ringleaders, Mariani and Boldrini.

[17] This profile, based on my own primary research conducted in 1985-1988, is broadly confirmed by Venturini, V.G. 2007, *Never Give In*, SEARCH Foundation, Sydney, pp. 97-103.

The second number of *Il Risveglio* of August 1927 records in its subscription list the donation of a pound each by Fantin and Panizzon. Along with Carmagnola, Bertazzon and others, Fantin figures upholding the club banner in the famous group photo of the Matteotti Club taken in Melbourne on May Day 1928. By 1930, Fantin was known to the Townsville Consulate as an inveterate antifascist propagandist and 'a distributor of subversive flyers and newspapers of diverse origins.'[18] Australian intelligence sources described him at the end of the decade on the basis of local police and community knowledge as an avid reader of anarchist literature.[19] Among the few possessions confiscated upon his internment in 1942 was, for example, *Dio non esiste* [God Does Not Exist], a pamphlet by the French anarchist Sébastien Faure offering a dozen well argued proofs of the non existence of God.[20] (Anticlerical pieces were regularly published by the antifascist press.[21] This did not prevent the citation, with legitimate opportunism, of a christian populist like Tolstoy on 'the rationality of anarchism'.[22] In a rhetorical trope common to the Italian left, the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was compared to 'the crucifixion on Golgotha.'[23]) Also seized were copies of *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* [The Gathering of Dissenters] to which Fantin was a subscriber. This American publication was the successor to *La Cronaca Sovversiva* [Subversive Chronicle], edited by the violent Italian American anarchist Luigi Galleani, a proponent of 'direct action', and was, so Australian intelligence believed, the most diffused anarchist publication in Australia prior to World War II.[24]

During the war, in an effort to have Fantin released from internment, Carmagnola made representations to the Australian authorities vouching that Fantin was a 'correspondent' and 'distributor' of *La Riscossa.*[25] Perhaps Carmagnola was gilding the lily a little on Fantin's behalf. Nonetheless, he certainly stated that Fantin 'assisted him in the publication' of *La Riscossa* in the course of a deposition to the NSW Branch of the Security Service in which he identified Fantin and Valentino Ciotti as co-founders, with himself, of the Matteotti Club.[26] At any rate, *La Riscossa* does not feature a single by-line by Fantin. By contrast, Fantin's recurrent donations from the cane fields and Geelong to *L'Avanguardia Libertaria,* regularly reported in its subscription column, emphasise his enduring relationship with Bertazzon after the split between Bertazzon and Carmagnola destroyed the Matteotti Club in 1930, well before it was formally wound up in 1933.[27] Fantin maintained good relations with both sides in the dispute, leading Chiara Bertazzon in 1941 to marvel at his 'inseparability' from Carmagnola.[28] Indeed Fantin may have been a key individual in linking the diverse and even antagonistic anarchist networks in some form of tenuous communication after 1930. The DGPS files of Fantin and Carmagnola, who are known to have been friends and comrades since their youth, are linked through the elder brother of the former, Luigi Francesco Fantin, who had accompanied Carmagnola to Australia in 1922.[29]

Fantin's own file linked him with Cesare De Luca and Giovanni Epifanio, two more *schedati* [people monitored by the police] known to the DGPS. More importantly, it linked him, as does photographic evidence, with Costante Danesi of Innisfail, who, with his astute brother Luigi, was the force behind the Mourilyan Italian Progressive Club and the resistance to British Preference in the cane fields, which led on to the Weil's Disease strikes lead by Carmagnola with communist assistance.[30] Oral tradition has it that Fantin was an associate of Carmagnola in these endeavours also.[31] Another associate of Carmagnola, and thus of Fantin, was Ernesto Baratto, the hero of North Queensland's passionate involvement with the Spanish Civil

[18] See Consolato Townsville – Prefetto Vicenza, 14 May 1930, ACS Roma, MI DGPS CPC b1948 Fantin Francesco Giovanni.

[19] Edmonton Station Cairns District – CIB Brisbane, 15 December 1939, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084.

[20] CIB receipt, 23 April 1946, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084.

[21] See for example 'The Church: Its False Morality and Iniquitous Actions' in *Germinal*, July 1929. In *La Riscossa*, 1 October 1930, R. Pastega from Broken Hill lamented the pragmatic accommodation of comrades with the Church when it came to marriage. Many other articles could be cited.

[22] *Germinal*, July 1929.

[23] *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 1 September 1930.

[24] Security Service Brisbane, FANTIN BROS, 14 July 1942, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084. For Galleani and *La Cronaca Sovversiva* see Avrich, P. 1991, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, passim.

[25] F. Carmagnola – Commandant Camp14A, Loveday, 10 September 1942, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084.

[26] Security Service Canberra – Brisbane, 18 November 1942, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084.

[27] Cresciani, 'The Proletarian Migrants...' as above, p. 12.

[28] C. Bertazzon – F. Fantin, 12 November 1941, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084.

[29] ACS Roma, MI DGPS J-5 1939 b69: Carmignola, Francesco Giuseppe. Note that Carmagnola began spelling his name with an 'a' rather than an 'i' after his arrival in Australia, either because of a mistake which had occurred in official documents or because of the prestigious historical and literary associations with the name Carmagnola. The original Carmagnola, a tragic figure, was a condottiere in the service of Venice, celebrated among others by the 19th century poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni. For the dossier of Luigi Francesco Fantin, originally one with that of Francesco Giovanni Fantin due to the police confusing the brothers' identity, see ACS Roma, MI DGPS J-5 b119.

[30] These connections are confirmed by various documents in ACS Roma, MI DGPS CPC b1948, Fantin Francesco Giovanni. For references to the Danesi brothers see Douglass, W.A. 1985, *From Italy to Ingham*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia (Queensland), passim. For photographic evidence of their connection with Fantin see *Australia's Italians 1788-1988: A Bicentennial Exhibition*, Italian Historical Society, Carlton (Victoria), 1988, p. 80, where Fantin can be seen on the balcony of the Mourilyan Italian Progressive Club wearing a bow tie. For industrial action in the cane fields, see Menghetti D. 'The Weil's Disease Strike 1935' in Murphy, D. (ed.) 1983, *The Big Strikes*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia (Queensland).

[31] As reported to me by F. Cavadini on 19 February 1985.

War.[32] After Fantin's martyrdom, his comrades remembered him as, among other things, a fundraiser for the Republican cause.[33] Altogether Fantin does seem to have had a substantial, if modest, role in the production and dissemination of Italian anarchist literature in Australia, such that Australian intelligence rated him a leading promoter of anarchism in the Italian community in Australia.[34] All this refutes the Nursey-Bray thesis that he was an altogether negligible figure in comparison to Carmagnola. Fantin died as an anarchist martyr in November 1942, after having been interned due to confusion of identity with his 'anti-British' elder brother Luigi, who had transferred his allegiance to the regime. Francesco Fantin was assassinated in Loveday Internment Group Compound 14A with a blunt instrument wielded by a fellow internee acting for fascist conspirators who objected to his determined role in the struggle for the hearts and minds of internees, which was being waged as the war approached its climax for Italians.[35]

Fantin's role as a distributor of the anarchist press reminds us that apart from publishing and distributing its own productions, the Matteotti Club also acted as a clearing house for the import and dissemination of the anarchist press from the Italian antifascist diaspora overseas.[36] It is clear that the Italian anarchists in Australia drew much inspiration and material from the fraternal press abroad. As early as August 1927, *Il Risveglio* was recycling such standbys as a Max Nordau piece on 'Free Love', damning the 'good matches' of bourgeois matrimony as prostitution. This, like their anticlericalism, will have antagonised conservative opinion in the Italian community. There were limits to anarchist willingness to cultivate the middle ground. In March 1928, the Melbourne Customs and Excise Office forwarded to the Melbourne Investigation Branch of the Attorney General's Department a copy of *Il Monito* [The Admonition], an Italian anarchist weekly published in Paris, for advice as to whether it 'should be regarded as [a] prohibited import…'. The publication had been intercepted addressed to 'Bertazzon Isidoro, 131 Station Street, Carlton.' The Melbourne CIB replied late that month detailing the contents of the publication. Amongst miscellaneous news and administrative items were featured articles on the Matteotti affair, the Sacco and Vanzetti case, pacifism and feminism. The CIB appended a translation of the editorial 'Anarchist Problems', a long sermon against factional tensions amongst 'revolutionary anarchists, be they communists or individualists, organisers or anti-organisers…' in the name of 'the revolt of the oppressed against the authority of the State, of Capitalism, of Morality, of Religion…'. At first the Investigation Branch offered the surprisingly favourable opinion that 'none of the articles contain any direct reference to subversive propaganda and no reference to the Commonwealth appears.'[37] This benign view did not long remain the CIB line. By February 1932, with the return of the conservatives to power in Canberra under Lyons at the December 1931 elections, the Italian Consul General at Sydney applied to Attorney General Latham for the suppression of Carmagnola's *La Riscossa* and Bertazzon's *L'Avanguardia Libertaria.* They were denounced for stirring up the Italian community in Australia and being inimical to both governments 'and, in fact, all forms of recognised government.'[38] Even in February 1931, before the change of government, CIB Director Jones had advised the Prime Minister's Department that 'it is highly undesirable to permit foreigners to spread subversive propaganda amongst their own people, who aren't in a position to judge for themselves.'[39]

Fig. 3 *A meeting of the Italian Anarchist Movement in Venice, Italy. Included in the photograph is Isidoro Bertazzon, c1920.*

As we have seen, from the beginning the Italian antifascists concerned themselves not only with the situation in Italy,[40] but also with the situation of the Italian community in Australia.

[32] On the figure of Baratto and the participation of immigrant communities in North Queensland in the controversy over the war, see Menghetti D., 1981, *The Red North*, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville (Queensland), especially Chapter 4. For the Italian secret police dossier on Baratto see ACS Roma, MI DGPS CPC b313.

[33] See obverse of memorial card reproduced in Faber, D. *F.G. Fantin*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Adelaide 2007, p. 340, originally displayed in the exhibition *Francesco Fantin: Myth & Reality*, FILEF, Adelaide, May 1989. Note that this memento also compared the martyrdom of Fantin with that of Christ, a leftist motif noted above regarding Sacco and Vanzetti. The commemorative publication *Il Calvario* obviously started from the same motif.

[34] Security Service Brisbane FANTIN BROS, 14 July 1942, in NAA BP242/1 Q30084.

[35] For the Adelaide CIB report to this effect see State Records SA GRG. 5/46/1942/14757, now in *Nuovo Paese*, July 2000, p. 6.

[36] See Cresciani, 'Proletarian Migrants…', as above, pp. 9-10 on the range of publications imported by the Matteotti Club, and on the practice of republishing articles from the international anarchist press. Italian editions of classic works such as Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* featured in recurrent offerings of books often at very discounted prices, for example in *L'Avanguardia Libertaria.* In the issue of 15 August 1930, Gaetano Panizzon commended 'good Luigi', a reformist socialist in Italy who became an anarchist in Australia through reading great libertarian writers.

[37] CIB Melbourne – Collector Customs Melbourne 29 March 1928, in NAA MP707/1 V4764.

[38] Consul General Italy – Post Master General, 8 February 1932, in NAA A367 C1822R.

[39] CIB – Secretary Prime Minister's Dept., 17 February 1931, in NAA A367 C1822R.

[40] For example in the issue of *La Riscossa* of 1 October 1930.

Every effort was made to link the two realities. For example, on 15 August 1931, Bertazzon noted the success in Melbourne of the film *All Quiet on the Western Front* in connection with the banning of the book in Italy because its 'disenchanted pacifism … disturbed the warlike dreams of a fascism breathless to maintain in the Italian people an artificially bellicose spirit.' The ban was out of line with even backward nations and their dictatorships, and was a doleful effect of the 'Jesuitical' tutelage consecrated by the Lateran Pact.[41]

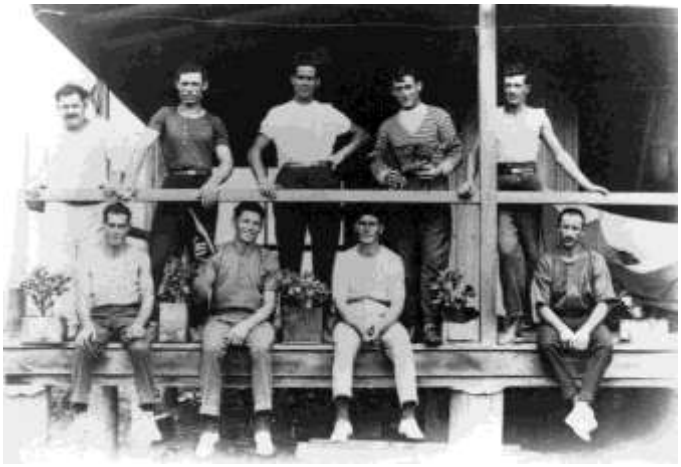


Fig. 4 *Canecutters relaxing on the verandah of their barracks after a day's work on a sugar cane plantation in Northern Queensland, c1927.*

Carmagnola was early engaged in the industrial and social situation of the most numerous Italian colony in the continent between the wars, that of North Queensland, cutting cane there soon after his arrival in Australia in May 1922[42] and discussing its circumstances in typically trenchant style. In the leading article of issue number 2 of August 1927 of *Il Risveglio*, Carmagnola addressed himself to the 'Workers of Queensland' in the name of an Italian antifascism striking antipodean roots, mindful that 'only those united in struggle with the exploited of the fatherland will be able to suppress the master class.' Carmagnola frankly discussed the ill feeling subsisting between Italian and Australian workers in the cane fields, attributing responsibility equally to both sides due to the 'stupid racial hatred … inculcated … through faulty education, purposely so as to divide [those who] … should be united against the common capitalist enemy…'. He lamented what he saw as the lack of class consciousness amongst many Italian immigrants, which made them hard to organise and loathe 'to unite with Australian workers in the struggle against capitalism.'[43] Driving home his point Carmagnola asked:

> "Why are we Italians looked upon so favourably by employers all over the world? Because we are ignorant and because we allow ourselves to be exploited more than others. To work then. Oh! Comrade workers of North Queensland! Let us destroy in ourselves that brutal egoism which renders us slaves to ourselves. Let us free ourselves of prejudices and superstitions and let us unite ourselves with the Australian workers in the struggle against the masters who oppress and exploit us. Let us remember the words of that great one [Marx] who said that the emancipation of the proletariat cannot but be the work of the workers themselves."

Carmagnola clearly set out to criticise not only the regime in Italy, but also what he saw as the social and political shortcomings of the Italian diaspora in Australia. He sought, moreover, to intervene in North Queensland personally. When in February 1932 Carmagnola was defended with characteristic perspicacity and energy by the communist lawyer Fred Paterson on a charge of having assaulted the Townsville Vice Consul, the CIB noted that Carmagnola had in his campaigning made able use of flyers to advertise his efforts against the regime in the north. A circular dated 5 December 1931 had announced boldly:

> "We have amongst us these several weeks comrade F. Carmagnola. Our comrade came to North Queensland to organise and to incite the anti-fascists to persevere in the struggle against the bloody regime which starves and enslaves the Italian workers."[44]

It is clear that the efforts of Carmagnola and comrades in North Queensland were not without effect. On 10 February of that year, A. Noselli reported that *La Riscossa* was ever more widely read by workers in North Queensland. Nonetheless, the paper's finances remained parlous in September.[45]

The single issue publications, each proudly bearing the legend 'published by I. Bertazzon for the Matteotti Committee, Victoria Street, Melbourne, Victoria', demonstrated the intention of the Club to publish commemorative series monthly under different mastheads, so as to circumvent the ban which had quashed *Il Risveglio* after its third issue. Between the two commemorative issues devoted primarily to the commemoration of the sacrifice of Sacco and Vanzetti, *L'Azione* [Action] was published in September 1928, commemorating the second anniversary of the attempted assassination of Mussolini by the Carraran anarchist Gino Lucetti. *L'Azione* outlined Lucetti's life and exalted 'the propaganda of the deed' of this avenger from the antifascist diaspora in France, implicitly encouraging emulation even from the antipodes.[46] The marble quarries of Carrara in Tuscany were one of the ancestral homelands of Italian

[41] *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 15 August 1930.

[42] Cresciani, 'Proletarian Migrants...' as above, p. 5.

[43] Bertazzon also criticised fascist efforts to entice Italian workers to conspire with local capitalists, to undercut union rates and to strike-break (in *L'Avanguardia Libertaria* of 1 October 1930). In *L'Avanguardia* of 1 April 1931 Francesco Fantin denounced consular interference in North Queensland labour disputes.

[44] See *La Riscossa*, 15 March 1932, in NAA A367 C1822R. The costs for Carmagnola's defence were £ 143 10s 6d, of which £ 80 19s 6d had been raised at publication, with £ 19 9s 11d being raised at an Ingham dinner dance.

[45] *La Riscossa*, 20 September 1931.

[46] Santarelli, E. 1967, *Storia del fascismo*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, Vol. II, p. 23.

anarchism. The profound radication of anarchism in such relatively insular mining and industrial communities as Carrara and Schio was mirrored in Australia in such working class citadels as Broken Hill, Wonthaggi, Queenstown and Geelong.[47] Partly because of this and 'the idea's' own unhistorical logic, it never occurred to the anarchists that there was an inherent limit to the appeal of a politics of duty which exalted the personal sacrifice of life and happiness in dramatic gestures sometimes encompassing violence and the perpetrators' own deaths. Perhaps however, the most significant item in *L'Azione* was the advertisement published at the foot of the internal pages 2 and 3, which referred to the fundraising intentions of the Club:

> "The evening of 6 October next, 8pm to midnight, the Club Matteotti will give a grand ball at the Oddfellows Hall, in Latrobe Street between Exhibition and Russell Street. There will be a choice orchestra directed by the well known musician P. Piccinini."

This demonstrated fiscal ambition and social adroitness well beyond that of the convivial improvised evenings when the Club had danced against fascism to the tune of a single accordion.[48] It was as well that the antifascists were inventive, as their press 'lived on voluntary contributions', hand to mouth as it were, as the masthead of *Germinal* declared in July 1929. This was usual with the anarchist press internationally.

Nonetheless, the vitality of Italian anarchist activism in Australia, far outstripping the native strain, was from first to last hamstrung by the static nature of anarchist ideology. Questions of right were confounded with issues of means and opportunity. On 15 December 1930, Bertazzon published in *L'Avanguardia Libertaria* 'The Problem of Action', an exhortation to armed struggle in general terms. 'The enchained people', it was alleged, 'demand nothing better than to follow the example of the promoters of revolt and the ponderous march towards liberty.' The article reiterated:

> **"Action** command our dead, massacred by fascism.
> **Action** request the trembling victims in the infamous penitentiaries of the peninsula.
> **Action** hope the masses without hesitation **at once**."

In the following issue of 10 January 1931, Bertazzon offered the sanguine materialist opinion that 'the opposition is convinced of the imminent end of the fascist regime given its present financial difficulties.' In fact, fascist chauvinism would have to embroil Italy in another world war before any such weaknesses of the regime could be brought to book, and then it would be the communists, not the anarchists, who would be to the fore leading the Resistance.

As the sermonizing of *Il Monito* underlined, anarchism is structurally given to factionalism. The prime expression of this in the Italian Australian antifascist panorama was the implosion of the initially successful Matteotti Club and the subsequent publication of *La Riscossa* by Carmagnola and *L'Avanguardia Libertaria* by Bertazzon in competition with one another in 1930. The terms of the disputation in their columns, above and beyond the reciprocal accusations of financial impropriety, are obscure, but in any case their general themes were so complementary that the CIB thought they were 'one in reality and the second name used to alternate its appearance'.[49] In any event, it was Bertazzon who published the most eloquent program for the Italian anarchist émigrés in Australia.

> "We are in Australia many thousands of Italians more or less violently torn from our affections and habitual work and thrown into the vortex of a new life to seek our bread. Many hundreds of us have carried here the fire of passion, vowing to recross the ocean at the first sign of resurgence, not because of the call of the fatherland, but because there … we know we may most profitably resume our struggle… But exile for us cannot only be a matter of hoping and waiting… We cannot be absent from the post our faith assigns…"[50]

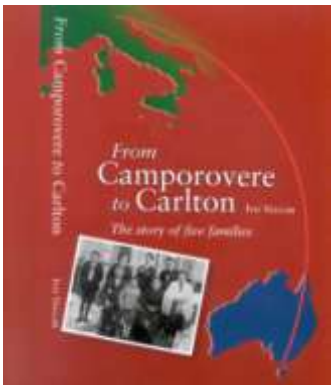
As dissension and the Depression crippled the anarchist press in Australia, antifascism began its evolution from a form of expatriate resistance, drawing on transplanted traditions and marginal internationalist sentiment in the host community to a more broadly based denunciation of a looming international menace. With a return internationally to the policy of the united front on the left, there was less scope for a specifically anarchist press and greater pressure to address world events in a more widely accessible idiom and in a more organised way. The communist movement was better equipped to do, as exemplified in the Australian chapter of the International Movement Against War And Fascism. Anarchist identity, as seen therein and in the careers of Carmagnola and Fantin, became subsumed in the antifascist front. For all its antifascist merit and felicitous heterodoxy, for all the vibrant individual initiative and independent thought it incarnated, the limits of the Italian anarchist press in Australia faithfully represented the limits of anarchism itself, ineffectual and factious, sectarian and minoritarian in its extremism. Even a century ago, anarchism was a transitional phenomenon bespeaking its pre-industrial populist origins, whose historic past was greater than its 'eternal future' within the radical democratic tradition.[51] Students of that tradition and of Italian culture in Australia will nonetheless continue to find this modest literature worthy of study. ★

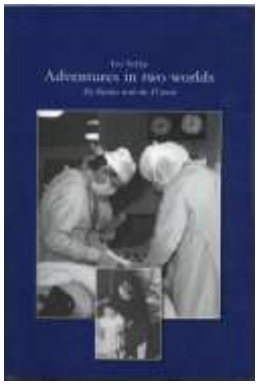
[47] See for example the subscription lists of *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*.
[48] Cresciani, G. 'Proletarian Migrants…' as above, p. 7.
[49] CIB – Secretary Attorney General's Dept., 13 June 1932, in NAA A367 C1822R
[50] *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, 14 June 1930 'To our comrades'.
[51] See Gramsci, A., 1977, *Quaderni del Carcere*, Einaudi, Torino, Notebook 14, Note 3 for the classic statement of this analysis of the derivation of Italian anarchism from Russian *narodniki* such as Bakunin.

interview with ivo vellar

ivo vellar talks to paolo baracchi (italian historical society) about his books *from camporovere to carlton. the story of five families* and *adventures in two worlds. my battles with the d word*

Professor Ivo Vellar MD MS FRCS FRACS was born in 1934 in Camporovere (Vicenza). He migrated to Australia with his family in 1938. After a distinguished career as a surgeon and a professor of surgery, he retired in 1999. Since then, he has published several books on the history of medicine and, in 2008, two books on the Italian migrant experience in Australia.





the books

What induced you to write *From Camporovere to Carlton*?
I've always been interested in history and in biography particularly. I enjoy reading about people. What was it that actually made a person do what that person did? That led on to an interest in my family. My motivation in writing its history was that if I didn't do it, it was going to get lost because no other members of the family were interested. So I did it. I did it late in the piece. Looking back on it, I realise I should have done it a whole lot earlier because I would have had more material.

What about the process of putting the book together?
I found the stories interesting, but I also like the work of researching and writing. I love writing. My training in the art was writing all the articles about surgery. So the nuts and bolts I knew; I had a fair idea of what it was all about. I didn't find writing difficult. The research is difficult because it's time consuming and I was never trained in how to do historical research: I had to find that out myself.

Ten months later you published your autobiography, *Adventures in Two Worlds*. What is the relationship between the two books?
What I didn't put in the book about family history, I have put into the autobiography. One difficulty of course is that, having more or less completed it, you start remembering things that you haven't put in and you just wonder what to do. Also, it is difficult when one has to deal with faults and problematical issues, like I have had in my life.

In your autobiography, you talk frankly about your feelings and also your weaknesses.
True enough, I didn't find that difficult: all I did was to tell it as it was. We're human. We are not robots and we are not perfect.

On what it is to be human, talking about the support you received during a serious illness, you say that you "discovered late in the piece the meaning of John Donne's aphorism 'No man is an island'".
Well, look, most of my life I've been a loner. People usually have found it difficult to adjust as migrants to a strange land and that applied to me. I was a bit precocious and very sensitive, and we were thrown into a war in which we were the enemy aliens and I reacted, some people would say abnormally – to racism, for example. Some people said that, yes, they knew about the racism, but it didn't bother them. Well, it bothered me. You see, I was never able to discuss these matters with anybody.

I found myself reading your autobiography as literature, as a life-story which provides certain insights on the human condition, rather than as history.
I feel more comfortable being judged by my peers as a surgeon rather than as a writer.

carlton

Both books contain lively memories of life in Carlton. When did you live there?
We lived in Carlton from the day that we arrived here, on the 26th of December 1938. Soon after we went to Tasmania; six months later we came back to Carlton. In 1952 we moved from Argyle Square to Lygon Street.[1] I think I mentioned the bed bugs in my book. Our home in Lygon Street was used as a boarding house and one family who was living there refused to move out. So my father said, Well, if you don't move out we are going to move in! As soon as we moved in, we began to take the place apart: we stripped off all the wall paper, and killed all the bed bugs. It was quite amazing because their daughter was a university student and I just couldn't believe it. We stayed there until the early 70s, when I bought a house near my sister

[1] Both in Carlton.

and her family in North Balwyn. I bought it for my parents, and I lived there with them. Ill health was starting to get them and I think they were happier to have a doctor in the same house.

Fig. 1 *18 Argyle Place North, Carlton, the Vellar family home prior to moving to 242 Lygon Street, Carlton in 1952. Photo taken in 2008. Image courtesy of Ivo Vellar.*

Was the expression "Little Italy" current at the time?
Yes. The reason behind that was the shops. There were a lot of Australian shops as well; there were also some Greek shops: cafés and the famous Greek fish and chips shops. There were also the "watering places": my uncle and his friends used to go to the Bowling Green Hotel. That was an Australian custom that they acquired: late in the afternoon, they would go there to talk and have an odd glass; and then they would leave.

Were the customers of the pubs mainly Anglo-Saxons?
No, they came from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds. The school in Carlton was St. George's, and they had a lot of Italians. The students were 99% Catholic: there were the Irish Catholics and there were the Italians, and they got along very well: there was no abuse, no problems.

It is said that Carlton had a "village character".
That is correct. The people we knew all came from the same village, more or less. They had the village attitude because they knew each other quite well when they were in Italy and they continued being close when they came here. But family ties were more important still. When we came here, we stayed with my mother's sister in Faraday Street.[2] Then we went to Hobart to stay with my father's brother. When we came back again, we stayed in Argyle Square and then in Lygon Street. The distance between the two homes was eighty metres perhaps: literally a stone's throw away. And then Carlton had the *bocce* court, Savaris', and the bars. They used to come down there on a weekend, all mainly from the Veneto: some from the mountains and others from the *pianura*. They knew each other at work.

What work did your father do?
My father worked as a concreter with his brother in law and with another man who was also from near Asiago, so they were both related and tied in geographically. My uncle was the businessman of the trio. They had a truck and they used to work doing footpaths, *terrazzo* and things like that. And when we went to Hobart, they worked on the Wrest Point Hotel.

What language did they speak?
They spoke Veneto dialect. But they also had enough English to keep the business going. My father was out here for the first time from 24 to 28-29; he picked up his English then. He wasn't fluent, but he could manage. My mother when she arrived didn't know a word of course, but she picked it up at work. She was more outgoing than my father. My father was a real Vellar, a *montanaro*. Now, we had shops like Valente in Lygon Street – he too was a Veneto – and he was literally a stone's throw away from where we lived. He had what they called a "continental" grocery: he used to have the *salsicce* hanging from the ceiling and all that sort of stuff. So my mother didn't have to go very far to do the shopping!

Fig. 2 *European internees possibly at Hay Internment Camp (NSW), c1940. The photo includes Girolamo [Momi] Pangrazio and Ettore Bortolotti. In the background are the tin huts the men were confined to.*

Did your family interact with non-Italians or with Italians from other regions?
The only interactions they had were at work. But outside of that, socially, no. It was always with relatives. My mother had cousins, sisters and brothers here. The only one who had wider social connections was an uncle of mine, Andrea.[3] He used to run the Italian Waiters Club, and a cousin, Zio Rosso,[4] and another brother of my mother's, Momi,[5] were doing counter lunches at hotels. They had quite a big thing going. Momi and Andrea had been in New Guinea, where they were arrested during the war, and Momi ended up in South Australia in the famous camp, Loveday. And then there was my uncle Giovanni Cera: he played at Australian functions and he had a lot of contacts with Australians. Their connections were a lot broader than my father's, because my father really was the type of person that went to play *bocce* with his Veneto mates on a weekend. During the week he worked with his brother in law

[2] In Carlton.

[3] Andrea Pangrazio.
[4] Domenico Pangrazio; he was called "Zio Rosso" because of the colour of his hair.
[5] Girolamo Pangrazio.

and other close friends from Asiago. So it was always boxed in, a closed society.

What is your connection to Carlton today?
It has changed completely and to me it's a foreign land. When I walk down Lygon Street I can't help comparing it with what it was like. In those days it really had a village atmosphere. Perhaps that was also because we are talking about the war and the immediate post-war period: Italians were not popular then and it was important to have somewhere where they could feel at home.

values

You were very close to your parents. Which values did they transmit to you?
Well, there's hard work, honesty – and the fact that they never had loans. They never went to a bank to get money: they always believed in paying their debts immediately. That was something that was passed on to me along with the rest of it. That was always regarded as a facet of the *montanaro* attitude. They did not want to get into debt, unlike some of their acquaintances who never hesitated in getting in debt by what they regarded as huge amounts of money. And they'd say, "Look what's going to happen to him!" What they meant was, they're going to get ill and then they're going to be in real trouble. The fact that they did not borrow from banks is one of the reasons that was always given as to why they never got on in business.

Was thrift an important value?
We were very careful with money: we didn't throw the money around, with the exception of my uncle Andrea of the Italian Waiters' Club. He was regarded as a sort of *bon vivant*: he was different to all the others.

Do you have the same attitude to money?
Yes. It was really a second nature to me. And that's one of the reasons why I never did what the Anglo-Saxons did: they used to go to parties and all that. I never did. Which means that most of my pastimes involved me, like writing and reading. I was a voracious reader. Before the war ended an Australian man who was partial to the Italians bought me a Meccano set; and that was absolutely fantastic because you could build anything with it, and I used to spend all my time building bridges and what have you. My pastimes involved me in the singular, and that was one of the reasons I used to find it difficult mixing with people, especially the Anglo-Saxons. Another reason was the baggage I carried from the war period and the post-war period. Italians were not popular and I was on guard all the time. And that stayed with me. I had very few friends amongst the Anglo-Saxons. As a matter of fact, I never went out to cultivate friendship with them.

Did you inherit your father's reserved personality?
Yes. But my mother was also like that. Very much a private person. We were not regarded as people that were outgoing, as show-offs and things like that. We did not admire that kind of personality at all.

Was education important for your parents?
Both my parents emphasised the importance of an education as a stepping stone to a career. As they never had the opportunity of advancing beyond a primary education, they made sure their children would, although I must admit that my mother considered that her daughter should marry rather than pursue further education.

Fig. 3 *Ivo Vellar and his mother Mariska, September 1997. Ivo had just been awarded the MD (Doctor of Medicine) by the University of Melbourne. Image courtesy of Ivo Vellar.*

Did you and your parents have different ideas about the role of women?
My sister was under the impression that males were given all the opportunities and females weren't. They were expected to get married, have children and run a household in support of the breadwinner, who happened to be a male. I tried very hard to convince her to continue her education, but she used to laugh at me. Because none of her friends went on to tertiary education, she decided that she was going to join the workforce too. I am sure that, had she decided to continue her studies, our parents would have not stood in her way. She would have easily coped because she was the most intelligent of the Vellar children. Our mother too, given the opportunity, would have obviously succeeded because she had a natural ability in the use of words and she wrote poetry. This was inherited by my sister and by her daughter, who did a Law Arts degree and is now a lawyer.

Can you tell us something about the emotions involved in growing up in an Italian family in Australia during the 1940s and 1950s?
We were very, very close as a family and I was able to appreciate very early on in life what my parents had to do, the life they had to lead and the sacrifices they made. I was very appreciative of that – more appreciative than a lot of other people. Another very important thing for me was that as an Italian – for I have always regarded myself as Italian – I really wanted to show the others what the Italians could do. I realised very early on in the piece that the Italians were looked down

upon by many as an inferior race. I went out of my way to prove that wrong.

becoming a surgeon

How did you decide to become a surgeon?
If someone says, "Look, did you have a burning desire to do medicine?", I've got to be honest and say no, because I had no idea what it was like. Unlike many of my colleagues, I had no relatives who were doctors, dentists or even scientists. When I was doing my secondary schooling at St Kevin's, I was interested in becoming an agricultural scientist. I was talked out of that by one of my teachers, who said: "Why not do medicine?"

Were you the first member of your family to go to University?
I was the first with my cousin Giancarlo who is a year younger than I am. He was in Italy and he did law. Giancarlo had a brother who was older than him, and he had entered the Seminary; after a couple of years, he left and began an Arts degree at Padua. The war came, he was put into the armed forces, got tubercolosis and died. He was the first of my relatives who actually went to a University.

Fig. 4 *Graduation photo, December 1957. Left to right: Fortunato Vellar (Ivo's father), Antonietta Cera, Ivo Vellar, Mariska Vellar (Ivo's mother), Francesca Vellar (Ivo's sister), Flores Pangrazio (Ivo's cousin). Image courtesy of Ivo Vellar.*

What was your parents' attitude to your education?
They were entirely supportive. When I finished and managed to get a degree, my brother, who is ten years younger than me, decided that he was going to do medicine too. He was also supported. We were supported to the extent that I was never forced to work outside, whereas some of my contemporaries were in paid part-time jobs. On one occasion, when I was ten, my mother wanted me to become a paper boy, and I refused. That year I came fifth in the whole of Victoria and I got equal first in Christian doctrine, believe it or not. I think that from that point onwards they thought: here is a future priest on the way! One day the Headmaster at St Joseph's asked me whether I was interested in becoming a priest, and I said, "When I decide I'll let you know." I wasn't interested. Now, it was almost typical of Italian families that if they had three sons, one would become a priest, one would become a lawyer and one would become a doctor. Well, no attempt was made to force me into anything.

Would your parents have been happy if you had decided to become a priest?
Put it this way: they wouldn't have been unhappy, not at all. Because the first cousin of my mother was an archbishop.[6] So, yes, it was not unexpected of me because of my academic performance, which had always been very high.

What role did religion play in your life?
None in my professional life. In my personal life it did. But it's interesting, because I've always maintained that a lot of it would be intuitive. I mean, no-one had to tell me that something was "Catholic teaching" for it to dictate my behaviour as a doctor. I could realise myself what was right and what was wrong.

Did you feel under pressure to achieve?
No. I had an academic bent for a long, long time: I liked studying, I liked reading and all that sort of thing. Rightly or wrongly, everyone expected me to perform and I kept performing, so more or less I was fated to go along that sort of line. They never, ever had to say to me: "Look you are not working hard enough." The way I performed, I gather, made them happy – made them happy, made me happy. The other thing that was important to me was that I did what I wanted to do, and I could claim that I did it myself. I didn't have to depend on other people. In those days we didn't have any problems about going to the University: it was the era of the Senior Government Scholarships, the so-called Commonwealth Scholarships. In my first year I performed very well and I came first in biology. I'd never done biology before, but I took to it like a duck to water. And then in my second and third year we did anatomy, which was a real disgrace. It was a do-it-yourself course, which didn't bother me.

Were there many sons of migrants among your fellow students?
In the Medical School at the time there were many Anglo-Saxon students, but then there were a few sons of migrants. I remember there was a Balt who was very clever, and he was in the same year as I was, and then there were a handful of Greeks. There were very, very few Italians at that stage. I think there might have been beside me another one.

What role did your Italian background play in your professional life?
I used to be called down to the casualty department quite often to interpret when I was a resident at St. Vincent's and I'd say, "Well what's the patient?" And they'd say, "Oh it's an Italian." So I'd go down and I'd find out he was Greek. I don't speak Greek. I have only a few words. And by using a few words and sign language I could get a history out of them. And I used to say, "Well, by the way, the person is Greek, not Italian, but you wouldn't know the difference, would you?" When they found out that a patient couldn't speak English, many of my colleagues wouldn't make much effort before saying, "Ah, I give up!"

[6] Andrea Pangrazio, Archbishop of Gorizia.

Were migrant patients treated differently?
I found that migrants were often treated badly. Unfortunately, some of the patients were malingerers and that produced the infamous expression "Mediterranean back". Now, I'd say, "Well, if you would like to call that Mediterranean back, I've seen many cases of Australian back! I also can tell you that some of those were genuine sufferers and they were treated appallingly by you."

racism

What was it like to be the son of an Italian migrant family during the war years?
Italy entered the war in 1940 and my father was then got hold of and was sent to Geelong.[7] My mother was working as a cleaner to make ends meet because there was no other income. At that stage there were two of us and my father was away from home and it was tough.

What was the atmosphere at school?
The school I went to, St. George's, was a working class school. I didn't get any problems there for the simple reason that there were quite a few Italians. The problems happened later on. But it wasn't at the secondary school only. During the war the Herald and the Sun always used to have cartoons; and they were mainly about Hitler and Mussolini – "Musso", as he was called. And my father used to cut them out every day. They made Mussolini look like a buffoon of course, saw-dust Caesar, and how he wanted *Mare Nostrum* (that's the Mediterranean), and they used to make him look like an ape with the jowl, fat and whatever. They were highly critical, but they weren't racist. I didn't mind that at all. But many Australians at the time had a real thing against the Italians, who were regarded as inferior in every possible way to the bronzed Aussies, not up to the mark of the heroes of Gallipoli and Anzac. They were people you had no time for: they were cowards, physically they were small, they carried knives, they weren't courageous, their war service was appalling, and on and on it went. I used to feel this very keenly because I had at secondary school no real Australian friends who had more of an international outlook, because we lived in Carlton, and Carlton was mainly home to the Italians – and then there were the Australians, who were mostly working class Australians, who were very insular and uneducated.

What happened in the post-war years?
The war played a large part in developing the negative attitudes. Then in the post-war period there was a lot of Italian migration and there was a lot of negative articles written about Italians in the newspapers, and this made things harder. And also one must admit that there were knifings. Of course these incidents were given deliberate prominence, but they never pointed out that they almost always commenced with provocation. The assailants were usually the Australians, not the Italians.

What was your attitude to racism?
When I was a ten year old, I don't remember any instances of racist abuse because all our dealings were with Italians. Later on, at school I was with Italians mainly, and this never happened. It was only in public that the possibility arose. When I was sixteen the first indication of my attitude towards racism happened at the bike racing track at Essendon. Later in my life one of my colleagues said that I was "dangerous if provoked". I had a high threshold, but once that was reached I reacted accordingly. And I did on that occasion, when the fellow behind me at the races began to use the D word against the Italian cyclists. For what? For what reason? There was no particular reason, just because they were Italians.

So what happened?
I stood up, turned around and I said: "If you say that again, I will disfigure your face."

In the book you say that you were more surprised than your father was.
My father didn't know what to do because he was a retiring type. And I used to think about what would have happened if we had a physical altercation: what would he have done? But what happened was that they left. And that's when I thought, "Well, this is what they are like!"

What changed for you after that episode?
Before that, I used to avoid getting into any kind of altercation. After that incident, I reacted. I never went out looking for trouble: I always reacted when an insult was being directed, not at me but at everyone who was an Italian. I was always apprehensive whenever I was out in public that one of them was going to make derogatory remarks, because then I would have to confront them.

It must have been difficult to live on edge.
Well, what were the alternatives? The alternative was to shrug it off, just pretend that I wasn't an Italian, because they never realised that I was an Italian: because we didn't look like stereotypical Italians, they found it difficult to work out who we were. That would have been an easy way out, but it wasn't an honest way out – and that was the thing that really concerned me after the age of sixteen. The incident at the Essendon bike track was not the only one. Similar events occurred when I was a fourth year medical student, when I was a final year student, after I had graduated and was a resident medical officer and when I had become a senior member of the surgical staff. These incidents came about when both medical and non-medical staff at the hospital took me for "one of them", a non-Italian, and used the D word to disparage the Italians. When I confronted them, they all became very apologetic. My reply was that I would treat them with the contempt they deserved.

What did other Italians think of your attitude?
I was criticised because it was claimed that I was too sensitive and that I reacted when other people would laugh off these things. People said that my attitude was not right, I should have

[7] To work extracting salt from sea water, as part of the war effort.

turned the other cheek. But unfortunately that never happened. I used to erupt. I was never able to say, "Well, let me give you a lesson about what the Italians are really like." On the other hand, when you are dealing with redneck louts, you probably don't get very far with giving lessons.

Australia has become a multicultural society: what problem does racism pose today?

What has happened is that the matrix of society has changed from a homogeneous society to a totally multicultural one. And as the previous society, which was entirely Anglo-Celtic, has become diluted more and more, the ability to relate to different persons has developed. And people travel more and come back home realising that the world is a much bigger place than Australia. But to say that racism has gone completely – I think no, it hasn't. What has happened is we haven't had a war for a while, and Australia has really never undergone a period in which people were fighting each other for jobs: by and large, there was work for everybody here. I am convinced that, given the right circumstances, some people will react in exactly the same way. And they have, because look at what happened up at Cronulla. And with every new ethnic group, certain behaviours of the established population surface again, particularly if you get the alcohol level rising a bit. And you see it against the Muslims now.

The mainstream attitude towards Italy and Italians has changed a lot since the years in which you were growing up. Many people would say that it is "cool" to be Italian.

Sure, there has been a change, but it's more superficial than it looks. At the end of the day, Italians are still popular for singing, spaghetti-eating, all this sort of stuff. The positive messages on Italy in the media concentrate on ephemeral things: fashion, food, sport. Someone says eating is culture. Open to definition. But then it stops there. They don't concentrate on the important things, on the achievements in the scientific and cultural field. And it is not enough just to mention what the migrants have achieved. The media should have gone all out to highlight the positive contribution of the migrants to Australia, in every possible way, and repeated that over and over again. But they never did that. The popular media never gave a big headline that the old attitude was wrong. This is why I think that racism has never really been addressed in the media. Sure, the overt racism is no longer there, especially against the Italians; but I maintain that it is there to be resurrected whenever. All you need to do is have a major international sporting competition and the popular press is at it again with the anachronistic jingoism. They love pointing out the fact that Australia athletically punches above its weight. But then again, what about intellectually? The facts about education in Australia are depressing: it's gone backwards.

identity

Was your Italian identity determinant in your interests and cultural development?

I was always interested in the visual arts and music; the Italian contribution is fundamental in both. That was very important for me. My father, when he was out here in the 1920s, went to

Fig. 5 *Ivo Vellar, 1967. In that year, Ivo was appointed the second assistant in the University Department of Surgery at St Vincent's Hospital, Fitzroy. Image courtesy of Ivo Vellar.*

see a touring Italian Opera company and heard Toti Dal Monte. There was only a handful of *paesani* then, and they used to go along to see them perform. He was not an educated man, but he had an interest in classical music. There were lots of things that made me proud of what the Italians had done in the arts. It was remarkable that many of my colleagues were utterly ignorant of this contribution, and yet they would regard themselves as racially superior to everyone else! That belief was based entirely on ignorance. And also I was very interested in Italian football.

Did you follow Italian football even before the television era?

Yes! Do you remember when the Torino got wiped out in that aeroplane crash?[8] I knew all about that. I used to read all the magazines I could. I used to read the latest arrival from Italy because there was always an endless stream of migrants that came from the same village: there were always cousins or friends coming down. I read everything I could get my hands on. And I used to see the Italian national team playing on newsreel. In the post-war years the Italians at one stage drew with England when they played in London. To me that was an important day: I was proud to be an Italian.

You have maintained a strong Italian identity throughout 70 years in Australia.

That's right. Some would say: You've never assimilated. Some people get all worked up about it. I would say: Why bother? Is it that important?

[8] 1949.

What was it like to uphold your Italian identity before multiculturalism?

I've been criticised because I have refused to let go of my cultural roots. Despite the pressure to assimilate, I've never lost my roots. That was the driving force in the interview I gave in the *Herald* when I did final year medicine.[9] That rocked some of my Australian friends and relatives. I think they were of the opinion that migrants should know their places, they shouldn't be outspoken. Some of them regarded themselves as cultured because they used to go to all the symphony concerts and that sort of stuff, but I think they found it difficult to actually appreciate the Italians: they never warmed to them. They really found it hard to see beyond the cliché of Italians as people who went around singing and eating spaghetti and knifing people. That is what I was up against then, and that experience has formed my life. Even now, some of my close friends and younger relatives find it difficult to understand me.

Can you tell us about the evolution of your Italian identity over time?

I left the *altopiano* when I was four; I went back in 1960 when I was 26. Italy had changed a great deal in the meantime. But it was interesting: when I went back, there was no change at all because I felt I was going home. It was an incredible attitude. I was speaking worse Italian than I do now, which is bad enough: I was speaking dialect with an accent that was really Anglo, and all my habits were not Italian, and yet it didn't strike me as foreign at all. It was quite amazing.

Italy has changed a lot since 1960: do you still feel at home there?

Yes, I do. I used to go back for a month at a time, and as an adult I could see the defects: you had corruption, and you had the trains that didn't run on time, and the toilets were dirty and so on. It was not perfect. So what?

Do you feel at home in Australia?

I feel at home in Australia, but only as a professional. My social contacts with Australians were never far reaching. Now, would that imply that in my view the majority of Italians are perfect and therefore they can't be criticised? Of course not. You have people with problems among the Italians too because that is the human condition. If you frame that question this way: "Do I feel perfectly at home in Australia, and relaxed?", the answer is no. Because I am not an Australian and I never will be an Australian.

The word "Australian" is used today as meaning both "Australian of Anglo-Celtic descent" and "citizen of multicultural Australia". Do you feel Australian in the latter sense?

Well, it's difficult because I do not regard myself in either camp. I am definitely not and Anglo-Celtic Australian, and I am much broader than the other camp. What am I? I am an internationalist. Or, I'm human. With all the contradictions, the faults, all the foibles of a human being. But would you say that racism is an integral part of being human? The answer is no, definitely not. That's acquired by upbringing, education, you name it – the lot. I don't think they've found the racist gene yet!

In your life you have crossed not only continents, but also social classes.

I was a product of the working class and my associations have been with the working class. I've met all sorts of people, but I just take them as I take them, not as they take themselves. I am not into tugging on the forelock, scraping the ground and all that, definitely not. I take people as human beings and I treat them the way I think they should be treated. It doesn't bother me what they think about what I do, what I am. All that doesn't bother me at all – except if they behave as racists. I am what I am. ★

[9] I.V. claimed he was a 'new Australian' and that he retained his Italian sentiments 19 years after migrating to Australia.

a brief history of an italian alpine community: villa di tirano

by diego zoia
translated & with notes
by alan poletti

The two lectures given by Dr Diego Zoia in Villa di Tirano on 28 November 1997 and 12 December 1997 were published by the Biblioteca Comunale, *Villa di Tirano, entitled 'An outline of the political, social and economic history of Villa di Tirano and its surroundings'. Dr Zoia has published widely on many aspects of the history of the Valtellina. Two of his most recent books are* La carga - contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna *(with Massimo Mandelli) on smuggling and* Vite e vino in Valtellina e Valchiavenna *on the wine industry.*

translator's introduction and apology

A surprising number of Australians and New Zealanders have, like myself, antecedents who came not just from a small alpine valley in Lombardy - the valley of the upper Adda (the Valtellina), but from a small region in that valley centred on the town of Tirano. Like many of us, I had only the haziest ideas concerning this 'homeland' and its history. Visits to Valtellina in 1998 and subsequently have allowed me to understand something of its present, but what of its history? In particular, what of the history of the community of Villa di Tirano where my grandfather was born? Fortunately, I did come across the key. As all tourists from the antipodes with antecedents from the valley must do, we visited the *Museo Etnografico* at Madonna di Tirano and there I came across the little book of Dr Zoia's two lectures. These lectures answered many of my questions, but they do have a wider appeal and for this reason, I have translated them. I have also added a map and several photographs to illustrate the environment that exists today.

Villa di Tirano lies a few kilometres to the south-west and downstream from the town and *comune* of Tirano. Both *comuni* lie near the confluence of the Poschiavino and Adda rivers a few kilometres south of the Swiss border. The part of the watershed of the Adda that lies in Sondrio Province is referred to as the Valtellina while most of the course of the Poschiavino is in Switzerland, with its headwaters south of the Bernina Pass.

Although the lectures focused on one small *comune*, much of the material applies equally to most of the other small *comuni* in Sondrio and even to many others it is the alpine arc that lies at Italy's northern border.

Dr Zoia could assume that his audience were familiar with many things, the significance of which is quite unclear to those who live on the other side of the earth. I have therefore added some notes. Italian words are generally written as: *contrada*, Latin or dialect words as: *'rasega'*. The word ***comune*** is often used. It is the smallest unit of local government in Italy. The Lombardy Region of Italy, with a population of around 9 million people, consists of eleven Provinces, of which Sondrio is one. Sondrio in its turn is comprised of 78 *comuni.* The population of Sondrio Province is about 100,000, while the population of Villa di Tirano, one of the *comuni,* is about 3000.

As well as footnotes, I have added some comments in square brackets: [*Italics*]. With a different audience in mind, I have translated the first lecture quite freely. My translation of the second lecture follows Dr Zoia's lecture much more closely.

Fig. 1 Map of Villa di Tirano. *The comune of Villa di Tirano lies between the comune of Bianzone to its west and Madonna di Tirano (part of the comune of Tirano) to its east. Switzerland lies on its northern border, while to the south it reaches almost to Aprica in the saddle of the pass of the same name. The main settlement, Villa di Tirano, is on the northern side of the Adda. Once it was entirely on the higher ground above the valley floor, but that is no longer the case. Stazzona, south of the Adda is the next largest settlement. Villa di Tirano lies at an altitude of 406 metres, while to its north, the peaks of the Retico Alps culminate in Pizzo Bernina (in Switzerland, 4050 metres) and to its south, the peaks of the Orobico Alps, with many peaks approaching or over 3000 metres. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

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outline of the history of villa di tirano

roman times

The first mention of Villa di Tirano dates from Roman times, although the zone was certainly inhabited and travelled over well before that, as is attested by the discovery of Bronze Age daggers found at Piattamala[1] and a *stele*[2] of the same period found in Tirano during excavations for the construction of the new commercial centre. In 1872, a funeral *stele* was discovered on the river flats near Stazzona[3] dating most probably from the 1st century AD with an epigraph dedicated by Medusa to a sister Cussa, daughter of Greco and to Pontico, son of Germano Camuni.

stazzona

The inscription confirms the hypothesis that the word Stazzona derives, as in many other cases, from the Roman word '*statio*' which indicates a stopping place along a road running between military posts.

Certainly Stazzona was positioned on a Roman road. The road most probably descended from Aprica, or at that time came from Piangembro, where inscriptions from Roman times have been found. This road led from Cividate Comuna (the ancient *'Civitas Camunorum'*) to Coira across the Bernina pass.

Although the name is no longer used, Cosseto, an area within Stazzona, is possibly named after the Cussa of the epigraph. In the same locality the remains of a tower are still present above the built up area. This certainly preceded the fortifications which existed in the area after 1000AD and probably dates from the Roman period.

place-names: a further orientation

- → In the vicinity of Villa di Tirano, the valley of the Adda river (the Valtellina) runs roughly north-east to south-west.
- → Aprica (1140 m) is the mountain pass over the Orobico Alps from the Val di Corteno (and thence from Val Camonica) to the Valtellina.
- → Piangembro is about 1km north of Aprica.
- → Cividate Comuna is a little to the north of Lago d'Iseo in Val Camonica.
- → Coira is Chur in Switzerland, in earlier times called *'Curia Rhetorum'*.

villa di tirano

A clue as to the origin of the name of Villa di Tirano comes from an epigraph near the church of San Giovanni in Borno (in Brescia) dedicated to a certain 'Tyro'. Perhaps from this name comes the name the *'locus et fundus'* of Tyrano, thence Tirano. A *'villa'* was, at that time, the site of the main residence of a Roman citizen giving its name to the place. The origin of the name is therefore derived from the residence of a wealthy Roman citizen. Villa di Tirano spreads along the slopes of the Retico Alps. The church of San Lorenzo[4] was probably built near the early centre.

the 'roman' bridge

This 'Roman' bridge sits forlornly[5] near the station: the Adda ran beneath it until the first decade of the 1800s and it would have been on the old Roman road, which ran from the village of Stazzona to Villa[6]. Although the present bridge is probably of

[1] Piattamala is a small settlement in the Poschiavo valley near Campocologno, just on the Swiss border.

[2] A block of stone with an inscription on it.

[3] Stazzona, on the south bank of the Adda is across the river from the main settlement of Villa di Tirano.

[4] San Lorenzo, an early Christian martyr was roasted alive on a metal grid. In paintings of him, he is generally depicted with this device.

[5] At the time of the lectures this was indeed so, however in 2001, it was 'restored'. We rather prefer it as it was. It is tempting to associate the time when the Adda changed its course to the other side of the valley to that of the great landslide from the slopes of Monte Masuccio in 1807. However, it is more likely that this course change took place at the time of a subsequent flood in 1817.

[6] Locally, the name is often shortened to this, but with over 400 towns in Italy with names beginning with Villa, it can be confusing. Correspondingly, a person (or people) from Villa di Tirano is a *villasco* (or *villaschi*) while for Tirano the corresponding terms are *tiranese* (or *tiranesi*).

medieval construction, it is possible that it replaced one from Roman times.

Fig. 2 *The medieval bridge at Villa di Tirano photographed in 1998 before its 'restoration' in 2001. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

medieval period

In the early medieval period, around the 8th century, the first structure dedicated to San Lorenzo formed the nucleus of the parish church. San Lorenzo was certainly in existence in the 9th century when Valtellina was assigned by the Carolingians to the French monastery of Saint Denis and, for the first time, the parish of Villa appears expressly mentioned in a document. The church of San Martino, between Villa and Bianzone, can also be attributed to the same period. San Martino was in fact a saint dear to the French and dedications to him of churches in Valtellina are generally before 1000AD. The church is indeed quite old and one finds mention of it in deeds of the 13th century. Ruins, amongst the oldest existing in the area, near the hill of San Fedele, about 1km north-east of Stazzona, are probably those of a small monastery that dates to well before 1000AD. It was, perhaps, a dependency of a monastery of the same name in Como.

The church of SS. Giacomo and Filippo on the hill overlooking Stazzona dates from the beginning of the 13th century or the last decades of the preceding one. This was the church within the encircling walls of the new castle *(castello nuovo*) built by the feudal lords of the bishop of Como, the *Capitanei di Stazzona*. Their oldest castle, of which there are almost no traces, was almost certainly built near Motta[7]. Another early castle was built by the bishop of Como in the locality of Lughina[8], probably where the tumbledown barracks of the Customs Officers (*Guardia di Finanza*) is today. It is mentioned in parchment documents over many centuries but has now faded from oral memory.

Fig. 3 *The* campanile *(dating to the 14th or 15th century) of the church of San Lorenzo, Villa di Tirano, with some of the terraced vineyards on the south facing slopes of the Retico Alps in the background. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

the settlements

Early settlements are documented in the first centuries after 1000AD but they certainly existed before then. They were situated near the Adda River but on the lowest slopes of the Orobico and Retico Alps, above the marshy valley bottom. As well as Stazzona itself, the first intensively inhabited places were on the Orobico slopes nearby. They would be intensively inhabited until at least the end of the 1600s, but even as late as the end of the 1800s. Although not permanently settled, there were also the alpine pastures on the Orobico slopes above Stazzona and those at Trivigno further to the east.

Fig. 4 *The valley of the Adda with part of Villa di Tirano and the Orobico Alps taken from near the contrada of Novaglia. The group have just descended from a visit to the ruined barracks of the Guardia di Finanza at Lughina. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

[7] Motta is a small settlement on the main road from Aprica, about 3 km before it meets the Adda.

[8] Lughina (altitude 1460 metres) is about 2km directly north of Villa di Tirano and right on the Swiss border.

On the Retico slopes, as well as the built-up area of San Lorenzo with its parish church, there was the *contrada*[9] Ragno (which means spider). Its name does not derive from the way in which it is laid out, as some imagine, but from the Latin place name '*in Araneo*' (the place of frogs), for it was low lying land near the Poschiavino River. The *contrada* of Val Pilasca was in existence from at least the beginning of the 1200s. From this, perhaps, comes *'valle delle Pile'*. The machines for separating barley grains from the chaff and for separating the husks from the chestnuts were usually set up together in the same mill. Sonvico and the present *contrada* of Derada are probably even older. Also present were Pioda and Campagna. [*In this paragraph, Zoia is moving down the Adda valley from the confluence of the Poschiavino River and following the old 'main road' which kept to the slopes above the valley floor. In Villa, as in all other Italian towns, the name of a street can change several times in a few hundred metres. The names of many of the streets in Villa remind us of the different contrade and their locality*.]

On the slopes above Villa di Tirano were the *contrade* of Novaglia (which was cultivated by the monks of San Remigio[10] and Santa Perpetua[11]), Santa Perpetua and the hamlet (*frazione*) of Canova, which is today abandoned. The alpine pastures on the slopes of the Retico Alps were Lughina and Frantelone. [*These now mostly lie across the border in Switzerland.*]

land ownership

Most of the land at that time was the property of religious institutions: the Bishop of Como (and his lords of the manor in the parish, *'i Capitanei'*); the parish church of San Lorenzo and the monasteries of San Remigio and Santa Perpetua. These latter were not entirely of a religious nature, having lodgings mainly for lay people [*making a pilgrimage to the church of Santa Perpetua*].

The properties of the Bishop were administered by officials (the chamberlains) chosen from among the most illustrious personages of the most influential families living in the area: the Boconge (and the Capitanei), the Beccaria, the Torelli and finally the Lambertenghi families who we will discuss below.

The Capitanei of Stazzona. were invested as almost feudal lords for the defence of the parish (the surname comes from their feudatory status - '*in capite plebis*' or *Capitanei*). It is still possible to observe the ruins of their main castle (*castello nuovo*) above Stazzona, although it was largely dismantled in 1527 by the new lords: the Grigioni. The *Capitanei* were owners of extensive properties in Bianzone as well as Villa and Tirano until the 1300s but with the decline of the temporal power of the Bishop of Como, they were superseded by the *comune* of the citizens of Como and after 1335, all of Valtellina (excluding, at least formally, the castle of Teglio) passed to the Duchy of Milan[12].

the lambertenghi

In the 1200s and 1300s, the first members of the Lambertenghi family arrived on horseback at Stazzona. For centuries they were to be the most important family of the region. Safely backed by their kinsman, Leone Lambertenghi, a noted horseman, who remained for many years through the 1200s and 1300s at the seat of the bishopric at Como, some members of the family relocated to Stazzona as administrators of the property and concerns of the church at Como. Definite news of them again appears at the beginning of the 1400s when they gradually increased their influence and their holdings.

The Lambertenghis belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Como. Their relocation into the city's surrounding countryside allowed the members of the family to become the '*domini loci*' (rulers of the place) of Villa di Tirano. At that time in the rural communities belonging to Como, there existed two fundamental social classes: the 'nobles *(nobili* or *cittadini*) and the farmers *(vicini* or *contadini)*. These had equal rights in the management of community affairs. When, as in the case of Villa di Tirano, there was only one noble family, the members of it were called the rulers of the place (*'domini loci'*). This was confirmed in 1495 in the deed which was accepted by Ascanio Sforza[13], at that time Ruler of Valtellina, in which the three original *comuni* of Villa, Stazzona and Coseto were merged into one *comune* consisting of five cantons.

The deed is of particular interest because of problems caused by the merging of ownership. To put an end to these and other controversies concerning the subject of taxes, the representatives of the three *comuni* and of the Lambertenghis asked that a single *comune*, to be known as Stazzona, be granted Thus was established the relationship on equal terms between the Lambertenghis and the farmers, even in such matters as the appointment of chaplains of churches in the merged *comune*.

Meanwhile, in the second half of the 1300s, there was an administrative reorganisation in the Valtellina, under which it was subdivided into 3 '*Terzieri'*: the capital of the upper third being Tirano. Inevitably, this increased its importance at the expense of Villa di Tirano, which was the centre of the parish. It also had the advantage of being less dispersed. The construction of the town walls in the last decades of the 1400s

[9] A *contrada* is a district (or quarter) of a town or city. The famous *Palio* of Sienna is a race between horses which represent the different *contrade* of that city

[10] Now in Switzerland, at an altitude of 1800 m, it has a commanding view over Lake Poschiavo. The church still exists.

[11] A pleasant 20 minute walk from *Contrada,* Ragno brings you to the delightful little church dating from the 11th century which once formed part of this monastery. From it is a wonderful view over the Basilica of Madonna di Tirano and Tirano itself.

[12] First to the Visconti family until 1447 and then to the Sforza family, of whom the most prominent was Ludovico il Moro (1452 - 1508), responsible for the fortification of Tirano in 1498.

[13] A Cardinal, the brother of Ludovico il Moro.

and the building of the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary[14] were to complete the work. Tirano became undeniably more important and its detachment from religion and from the foundation church [San Lorenzo] was little more than a formality which ratified the supremacy of Tirano.

grigioni, 1512-1797

From 1512, the Valtellina passed under the dominion of the Grigioni[15], who would preserve the remarkable autonomy that the community enjoyed. Villa with its five cantons was naturally included and around 1560 it was given its own statute (alas now lost). This was superseded in 1659 by a new one that regulated the life of the community in detail.

This defined the method of election to public office: all males between 25 and 60 years of age were eligible with a prohibition on re-election for 10 years. The most important official was the Dean ('*Decano*'), equivalent to a Mayor. He was elected by the Council through a mixed system (a drawing of lots by those who had obtained the most votes). The Council was, in turn, constituted of three representatives from each Canton. Various other officials, of which perhaps the most important was the Notary ('*Notaio*') or Actuary, assured the functioning of the communal institutions. The guardianship of the territory was very thorough, with rigid restrictions for all the harmful activities and a careful system of checks.

Economic activities from agriculture to commerce were also strictly regulated. In particular, the prices of products widely consumed (bread, wine, meat) were fixed annually by the Council. The same Council resolved the numerous infringements based on the verbal or declaratory evidence of the watchmen. Public works were completed by means of work, usually voluntary, contributed by those who would benefit (usually too, the landowners had to maintain the roads). All these regulations remained in force up to the end of the 1700s and, in some cases, until the 19th century.

wine industry

During the Grigione period (1512-1797) there was remarkable development in the wine industry throughout the *Tre Leghe* (the Grigione Canton). The development was particularly important on the slopes of the Retico Alps where the wine produced was of superior quality, whereas that cultivated on the slopes above Stazzona produced a wine more suitable for local consumption. That, perhaps, connected with other things, led to a shift from Stazzona to Villa, mostly in the 1500s, of the houses of the most important families, in particular the Lambertenghi.

[14] The Basilica of Madonna di Tirano on the western outskirts of Tirano. This was constructed where a certain Mario Omodei saw a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 29 September 1504. It has ever since been a place of pilgrimage.

[15] The Italian word for the inhabitants of the Graübunden Canton of Switzerland with its capital, Chur. Since the Grigioni were Protestant while the Valtellinesi were Catholic, Valtellina could have been said to be on the front line in the wars of religion, with a doleful result.

taxes

In this period, taxes were levied almost exclusively on the value of real estate and every year values were assessed. The word *'taglia'* (cut) has remained in the dialect to mean meeting the cost of community taxes. There were no significant social or economic developments in this period except for the collapse of the population as a result of the 1630 plague, which caused some of the alpine pastures to be abandoned. During the 1700s the population increased again.

Fig. 5 *Chiesa San Lorenzo, in Piazza Torelli, Villa di Tirano, Sondrio Province. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

churches

By the end of the 1700s, the ecclesiastical heritage was complete. [*Here, Dr Zoia listed 13 churches and gave possible construction dates. Four of these whose dates of construction range from the earliest times to the 18th century are:*]

1. **The Parish Church of San Lorenzo**: [*Villa di Tirano*] probably first begun in the 8th or 9th centuries. The bell tower is 14th or 15th century, the church was reconstructed in the 17th century (with successive rebuilding in the 1800s)
2. **Church of San Antonio of Padova**: [*Villa di Tirano*] 18th century
3. **Church of S. Abbondio**: [*Stazzona*] before the 1500s, rebuilt in the 1600s.
4. **Church of the Madonna of the Snow**: [*on the hill above Stazzona*] 18th century on top of an earlier smaller structure (at least 16th century)

cisalpine republic

In 1797, Valtellina became part of the Cisalpine Republic. The existing social and economic balance was disrupted. Population growth also played a role. Heavily increased taxes dragged many farming families into poverty. The traditional wine trade was also radically changed. The new borders reduced the trade with Switzerland and increased the demand for cheaper wine of an inferior quality to sell to the towns of Lombardy. This caused quality to decrease. Unsuitable areas were brought into cultivation and the agricultural classes were impoverished. Valtellina was becoming part of a centralised state, with compulsory conscription that took many of the fit young men from agricultural work.

rebellion

The social situation became notably worse and there were big protests and even open rebellion. The most significant episode was in 1809 when there was a revolt against the French that was centred on the zone between Sondrio and Tirano. This culminated in a battle on the plain below Villa di Tirano on 14 May between bands of disorganised and poorly armed rebels and the troops of general Polfranceschi, who were disciplined and armed with canon. After the battle, 17 rebels lay dead on the field, 10 of whom were from Villa. [*From an analysis of the church records, Dr Zoia concluded that most were mature people and that*] they certainly did not participate in the rising through youthful ardour or high spirits but were driven by desperate need.

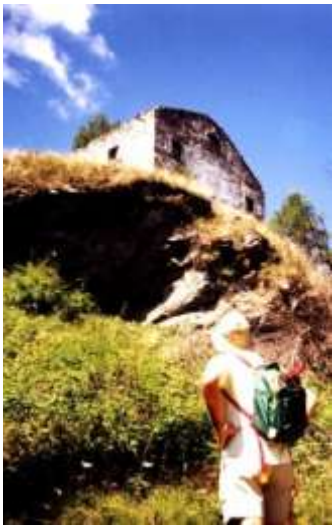

Fig. 6 *The ruined barracks of the Guardia di Finanza at Lughina. Note its commanding position, high above the path to the border. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

smugglers [*contrabbandieri*]

Driven by the same need, in this period there began the social phenomenon that has characterised the *tiranesi* and *villaschi*, particularly into our own times – that of smuggling. Already in 1806 the first death is verified:

> "Giovanni Resta, 42 years old, married, a peasant farmer and not a landowner, having left behind four young children ... I put in evidence that the aforesaid Resta was wounded yesterday towards the hour of 10 pm on the mountain of Novaglia situated in this *Comune* by a shot from a fire-arm fired by a customs officer in the course of his duty ... And that he came from abroad with some saddle bags of foreign salt..."

Even the bureaucratic prose of the State official in Villa cannot hide the sad story. In this case, as with the rebels, we are certainly not dealing with a wild young man in search of glory. The phenomenon then spread so much that two years afterwards there came down the footpath from Santa Perpetua (the '*sentèe di malvivent*' as it is still called today) more than 100 armed smugglers of salt. [*Salt was heavily taxed and was needed by both the contadini and their animals.*] It is easy to understand how it was that the people rose up in open rebellion the following year.

Fig. 7 *In some places above Villa di Tirano, the old paths can still be found. This one was climbing towards Novaglia and would have witnessed many* contrabbandieri *with their* carga al spallone *(a pack of up to 40 kg on their back). Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

But worse was still to come. Between 1815 and 1820, famine reduced all of Valtellina to the limits of despair. The new Austrian government took belated account of the population's tragic situation and sought to intervene by undertaking a number of public works. In the second decade of the 1800s a new road over the Stelvio pass (2758 m) was constructed, partly for strategic means, and stop banks were constructed along the Adda. Later, around 1850, the road for Aprica that passed through Motta was remade. Even later, in the second half of the century, the work of reconstructing the existing irrigation canals began.

terrible effect of grapevine diseases

In the 1840s a series of diseases struck. These would almost destroy viticulture in the Valtellina, the only source of income for many peasant farming families. These were powdery mildew (*l'oidio*), downy mildew (*la peronospora*) and later phylloxera. The 1800s were pretty brutal years for the poor.

the kingdom of italy

The situation did not even improve with the entry into the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1859 and into the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. For many, smuggling became the only way to survive. This continued even after 1880 when the disposition of the customs posts and the intervention of the customs officers (*guardia di finanza*) became ever more onerous with new deaths, new convictions and forced residence in a distant town. (*invii al confino*).

emigration

Emigration became the only safety valve with the odyssey of departures for America, for Australia and, in more fortunate

cases, to Switzerland and Germany. The situation improved slowly in the course of the first decades of the 1900s.

wednesday 12 december 1997

the economy and the society of the valtellinian in the past centuries

introduction

We have much evidence available on the social and economic aspects of our history. The economy and the society of Valtellina did not change for long periods of time and from 1200 until the end of the 1800s, there was a substantial stability in the way of life. Society was based on the small autonomous community and the economy remained tied mainly to agricultural activity. Crafts and commerce remained marginal.

Population decreased on occasions as the plague took its toll, first at the end of the 1500s and then in 1629/1630 when the population fell by a half, to be followed by a slow increase. By the first half of the 1800s, the resulting population's pressure on resources was to reduce the peasant farmers to a mere subsistence. This was exacerbated by the destruction of a good part of the vineyards by powdery mildew *(l'oidio)* and downy mildew *(la peronospera)* and thus to a drastic fall in the availability of work, as well as a huge reduction in earnings.

economic aspects

For centuries, the economy of Valtellina was based on agriculture. The only places giving employment to townspeople were Bormio, Tirano, Sondrio, Morbegno and especially Chiavenna where development of commercial activity was favoured by its position on the road from Milan to Chur and Austria.

agriculture

Climate – in order to understand agricultural practices in the past, it is necessary to clearly understand the climate of the valley. In 1200, the average temperatures were clearly higher than they are today and allowed the cultivation of grains at higher elevations. For example, at that time there was a flourmill at San Romerio at an altitude of 1800 metres. In 1600, there was a small glaciation that caused a cooling of our climate. This led to a reduction in the number of settlements and to changes in the types of crops which were grown.

Form of tenancy of the farm lands – in the past there was a different way of managing the real estate. In the community there was a clear division between communal property *('beni indivisi')* and private property *('beni divisi')*. The communal property was enjoyed by all of the community according to fixed rules, while private land was the property of an individual or a family.

Communal property. Communal property was essentially the woods and the pastures. These only passed into private ownership in 1843 when a sovereign resolution of the Austrian Emperor allowed its sale. Following that, there was the formation of a land registry in 1857. Before that there had been a Napoleonic version created in 1813-1817. The Austrian land registry was revised in the period from 1930 to 1940. This revision is still in use today.

Private property. Private property consisted of fields, vineyards, chestnut woods, gardens, orchards and, to a limited extent, woodland (though this was usually degraded). It could be cultivated directly by the proprietor or ceded to others. There were two forms of cession: '*l'affitto*' (renting) and *'il livello'* (renewable leasing) (with absolute right of renewal by the cultivator).

Renting, as it is today, was the concession to another of cultivable land in exchange for a payment of kind or of money. The rental period was of limited duration: one, three or nine years. In every case, it was always less than 29 years.

Leasing consisted instead of the cession of land to a nuclear family, but never to a single person, with the possibility of improving it and for a fixed rent. Land that could be leased might be owned by the community, well-off families or religious institutions. The duration of the contract was indeterminate (29 years with the right of renewal without limitation) and the contract could be reconfirmed from generation to generation. It could only be voluntarily annulled on the part of the cultivator. This sort of contract gave a great incentive to improve agricultural land. The rent remained the same, regardless of the productivity of the plot and if the cultivator relinquished the contract he was paid for the improvements. This encouraged the people of our valley to maximise the exploitation of the territory with the object of improving their own way of life and greatly encouraged the maximum increase of the terracing of the vineyards on our slopes. Since the 19th century, renewable leases have been disappearing. Many have been purchased and in other cases, the rent has been too difficult to collect.

utilisation of community property

The woods. People could enter the woods to harvest fodder and fallen branches, but more significantly, to cut firewood and to obtain building timber. Accordingly, one meets many different regulations in the Statutes, depending upon the particular community. In some cases, the amount of firewood and building timber due to every family was fixed, in other cases construction timber could be used only by the community, in still others timber necessary to replace a roof damaged by fire was granted free.

The wood was dragged to the valley down a suitable small valley or on various transports along the roads or mule tracks. In the Statutes there were very precise rules concerning access and use of the woods and special guards made sure that all obeyed them.

The pastures. There were many more alpine pastures in the previous centuries than there are today. Normally every community possessed different areas of pasture, some more productive than others. In order to provide equal treatment for all, the alpine pastures were rented in rotation to the different *contrade* or the different family or social groups. Normally, all cattle were taken to the alpine pastures in summer except for a house cow and the draught animals.

It was generally forbidden to pasture cattle that did not belong to the community. Thus, it was only possible to take to the alpine pastures those cattle that could be kept during the winter. The poorest families, in order to make sure that they had some cattle, would drive them to pasture in every place possible, even in winter, while in summer they harvested the wild hay (*'fieno selvatico'*). This consisted of herbs that grew above the height of 1800/2000 metres. Until the mid 1800s they had the right to free pasturage (*'il pensionatico'*) on the fields and in the forests after the last hay had been gathered in autumn and before work began in spring.

cultivation

The fields. The fields were usually on the lower mountain slopes or on the alluvial fans of tributary streams because the valley bottom was generally swampy. With regard to the slopes, the work was mostly done by hand with the use of a hoe and only sometimes with the use of draught animals, for instance, for ploughing.

Cereals were grown in the most remote times and in the beginning it was rye. In the first documents dating from around 1000AD, rye is the queen of cultivation in the Valtellina, accounting for at least 50% of cereal production. Its cultivation extended up to 1000 metres in altitude and often beyond. Other cultivated cereals were wheat, but it was a product for the rich; barley (used especially in the soup called '*dumega*'); millet (from the end of the 1700s and used for soups, polenta and bread) and Italian millet (which is no longer grown).

Buckwheat (*'grano saraceno – or furmentun*') came to be widely cultivated from the end of the 1600s. This was often substituted by *'ziberia'* which was more bitter, but higher yielding.[16]

[16] Buckwheat is not actually a cereal but is the common name for a number of species of annual herbs. *Grano Saraceno (fagopyrum esculentum)* produces a grayish flour usually mixed with other flour to make pasta. *Ziberia* is *fagopyrum tataricum*, from Siberia, cultivated primarily for animal fodder. *'Pizzocheri'*, a speciality of the Valtellina is made with buckwheat pasta and much butter and cheese. However, nowadays, almost all buckwheat is imported into the valley and it is hard to find any growing crops.

Fig. 8 *Early September - a small field of* grano saraceno *above Baruffini. The seed would have been sown in early July and the crop would be harvested in late October. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

Two products, potato and maize, arrived from the American continent relatively recently. Maize (*in Italian – 'grano turco', in Tiranese –* 'formenturco') was introduced towards the mid-1700s. Enough was grown to produce the yellow flour that was used to make *polenta*. The potato was cultivated from the beginning of the 1800s.

The meadows. The care of the meadows has not changed significantly, however the only fertiliser used in the past was dung. Each year, there were three to four mowings on the valley floor, two at medium altitude and a single cut on the alpine pastures. [*Remember that the animals did not graze the meadows as they did in the alpine pastures.*]

The vineyards. Great attention was paid to the cultivation of the vineyards as wine represented the true riches of the family, as well as their daily beverage. In fact, it was the only product that was commercialised and that could be produced in excess of need. The vineyards on the south facing slopes were terraced and the vines were grown in low rows (*'bassa'*) that produced the best wine. Other vineyards were established on the alluvial fans, nowadays used for apples. Here the vines were trained on higher supports (*'tirampoli'* – as they were called in the past) and between the rows, rye, and more recently potatoes, were grown. The wine was of medium quality. Finally, they had the *'opoli',* that is the flat land where the vines were trained over high pergolas and produced a wine of lower quality but in greater quantities.

The chestnut woods. The chestnut wood *(la 'selva')* was, for a long time, a very important source of food for the people. This was particularly so over winter. In Valtellina, the chestnut woods were always privately owned and were carefully

tended. In other areas as in Val Camonica, for example, they were, however, collectively owned. The trees could be grown at the edges of the fields near the homes or in woods. The woods were possibly irrigated and scythed. The chestnuts were harvested with much care, even to the extent that branches were placed to stop the precious fruit from rolling onto other lower land. As for the vineyards and fields, after a certain date it was possible for anyone to come and glean.

The vegetable plots. Only a small area of land was used to grow vegetables. Those that were cultivated were few in number. They were essentially vegetables that could be conserved for a long time, such as savoy cabbage, turnips, swedes and *'radici d'insalata'*. We do not know what green vegetables they had. Surprisingly, legumes were not particularly common. Among those that were grown was the fava bean [*the broad bean*], which has now disappeared, and only later, beans as we now know them (which come from America).

The fruit orchards. In the past, only the well to do families had orchards. The trees were planted near the home rather than at the edges of fields. The main fruit trees were walnuts and cherries, both prized for their wood. From the walnuts they obtained the only oil available in the area and which was used for lamps. They would have grown two types of cherry, one with a tall trunk and sweet fruit, grown mostly for its wood, and a lower growing variety that yielded a bitter fruit that was eaten. Other fruit grown were pears and figs. Apples, plums, peaches and apricots were uncommon. The hazelnut was present in the wild.

Animal husbandry. The presence of farm animals varied greatly but mostly their numbers corresponded only to the minimum needs of the family and were strongly related to the availability of forage. The products were only sold in the high mountain communities. Cows (smaller than the brown alpine breed of today) were mostly owned by the families who were already reasonably well off. They gave milk and meat, but were also used as draught animals.

Sheep and goats were widely raised. However, the grazing of the latter caused considerable damage to the woodland. They had hens and (less often) rabbits, while the better-off raised pigeons. There was normally a cat in the house to control the mice that were often a scourge of their grain reserves.

The most popular animal was the pig. Moreover, in many documents they are often referred to simply as *'animale'*. They were an important food resource, especially during winter. They were fed on the residual vegetable scraps of the household, but when possible, were driven to pasture: in summer, to the alpine pastures and in the colder periods, to the fields and forests. At such times, the animal had to be 'married': a ring had to be put in its nose to stop it rooting in the ground and thus ruining the pasture.

As for the community lands, the guardianship of private property was detailed in the Statutes, with provision for fines and many sanctions for those who disobeyed them.

crafts and trades

The industrial structure was largely tied to agriculture. We find:

Mills [*mulini*] for grinding the grain. Often these were combined with the *'pile'*, the mechanism used to husk the barley and the chestnuts. The mills that provided the motive force were placed on the banks of water courses, generally artificial canals.

Wine presses [*torchi*]. Because of their considerable cost, these were generally owned only by the well-off families and there was generally one in each *contrada*. The other farmers could use these for a fee, often levied in wine.

Fig. 9 *A wine press in the Museo Etnografico, Madonna di Tirano. Image courtesy of Alan Poletti.*

Bread ovens [*forni*]. Bread, prepared separately by each family was cooked in a communal oven of which there would be one in each *contrada*.

Stills for the production of grappa [*alambicchi*]. The use of acquavite (*grappa)* was considerable and the stills required significant quantities of wood. Because of this, in the period of domination by the Grigione, there was a prohibition on distillation to avoid excessive deforestation (together with other related limitations).

The most common trades were woodworking or blacksmithing. However, even in quite recent times there were few specialists. More often they were carried out by the farmer when he was not involved in his agricultural work.

With respect to the blacksmithing, remember that for centuries the Valtellina was an area of the alpine arc that was rich in the mineral. The main mines were in the valleys of the Orobico Alps (Val Belviso, Val Bondone, Val Venina) and near Bormio. The

iron mined in these regions was exported in significant quantities.

There were sawmills *('rasega')* for producing planks. These, perforce, were positioned in the valleys to obtain their motive force. Where this was not so, they used manual saws which operated vertically [*pit-saws*]. From the wood, they constructed barrels, yokes and various agricultural tools and utensils for the house, as well as furniture.

Using forges they made agricultural tools such as hoes and axes from the iron. They did not produce scythes in the region. These came from Austria, then from the Engadine and, more recently, from Bergamo. The larger forges had power hammers, while everything was done by hand in the smaller ones.

Other installations were:

- **Charcoal burners** used to produce charcoal and
- **Lime kilns** where limestone was burnt to produce lime that was used in construction. A lime kiln was located at 'Calcarola' – hence its name. This was close to the valley floor, a kilometre west of Motta.

commerce

The Valtellina was not a region with much trade. Important aspects were:

- Exportation of cattle and dairy products from the Bormio area to the lower valley, normally in exchange for wine;
- The movement of cattle across the valley from the Grigione canton to the Venetian region; and
- The export of wine beyond the Alps.

For a long time wine has been of strategic importance for our valley and the only true source of riches for our people, in particular, in the centuries of domination by the Grigioni, from 1512 to 1797. The Grigioni esteemed the excellent wine of the Valtellina and were great buyers. They set customs duties in such a way as to encourage the supply of their needs before satisfying external demand.

The wine was even exported to Austria where it was exchanged for salt, needed for food preservation, especially bacon. From 1400 until 1800, a good part of the salt used in the valley came from Hall (*'Ala'*) in Tyrol.

Within a single community or between neighbouring ones, there was a form of commerce based mostly on exchanges. The small exchanges within a community were free, while those that were external and just a little more substantial were subject to a tax.

An interesting exchange took place between the communities on the slopes of the Orobico Alps and those on the slopes of the Retico Alps. The people on the Orobico slopes owned many chestnut woods and head of cattle. They provided the poles for the vineyards (it is the tradition in Valtellina to use chestnut poles) and dairy products in exchange for wine that could only be produced on the sunny slopes of the Retico Alps.

There were very few shops in the country except for the *'osteria'*. Here there would be a wine and food shop. The Statutes fixed the products (and their prices) that could be sold. These were essentially wine, bread and cheese. As well as providing food, the *osteria* was obliged to take in stray animals, but could claim damages from the owner or, if these were not forthcoming, could kill the beast.

social aspects

Important structures of the society in earlier times were:

- the family;
- the religious observances (more so than today); and
- the life of the community.

The family. The head of the family *(capofamiglia)* was the father. Every person in the family, whatever their age, had to respect the authority of the father. Not only was his authority exercised within the house but it extended into the economic field so that an unmarried adult male could not sell or acquire land or even be paid. Instead, the father would receive the money.

The women were subject to strong limitations in public life and were subject to the authority of their father and then of their husband. They were not permitted to make any contracts except those for modest amounts. Their role was restricted entirely to within the walls of the house.

At the time of marriage, a small part of the family property was ceded to the husband for daily needs. The major part would be obtained as a successional right on the death of his parents. On the other hand, a dowry was due to the wife.

In all of the Valtellina, the dowry system provided for two payments: one by the wife's family and the other, about half of that, by the husband's family. This second payment in money was called *'antifatto'* and derives from the German *'morgen gabe',* which means morning gift. In the past, in German, Saxon or Longobard societies, having assured himself of his wife's virginity, the following morning the husband would offer her a nuptial gift. Among us, beginning about 1200, this changed and the payment of part of the dowry was expected of the husband's family instead. The dowry was closely tied to the survival of the family. At the dissolution of the marriage, in the past only through death, the property passed to the children and in part to the surviving spouse. If there were no children, the property was usually divided in such a way that the wife's family returned the value of the dowry and the husband's the value of the *antifatto*.

Religious life. The religion in the Valtellina has always been Christian Catholic. There were, however, some small groups of Protestants who lived in the valley in the 16th and 18th centuries.

Most people took part in religious functions. The Statutes even covered some religious aspects. Obligations were defined and punishments prescribed for defaulters. Of particular interest is the prescription that punished blasphemers. Numerous churches have been built in our community through voluntary work by all of the villagers. Almost everywhere in Valtellina, the community had the right to choose the parish priest, usually by an election on the part of the heads of family.

The civil community. In Valtellina this was organised following democratic principles where the wish of the majority prevailed without any people being particularly privileged. Usually, the community had a first level of management by a Council that consisted of representatives of the different hamlets *(frazioni)*. The representatives were normally elected for one year from the heads of family. The elections usually took place in winter when the heads of family were free from their agricultural work.

The Council nominated a deacon (*decano*) or consul [*console*] whose role was essentially that of a mayor today. The Council was expected to meet the cost of managing the collective patrimony. It nominated the officials and auctioned the different jobs of a public nature.

Administrative officials were the notary [*notaio*] or registrar [*cancelliere*] whose job was to receive deeds or acts, to write the minutes and letters and to maintain contact with the other local bodies. There was also the messenger [*cursore*] whose job was to send out notices of meetings and all the other things that today are entrusted to the town-hall usher.

Among the jobs that were auctioned was that of night watchman. Those who were appointed to such jobs were expected to pay a certain amount but had the right to a percentage of all fines that were collected. The various commercial activities were also auctioned. Among these were the *osteria* and butcher *('macello')*. It was up to the community to control these activities and to set the standards concerning the quality and quantity of goods to be sold, the price and the hygiene and sanitation standards.

In the past there were also higher levels of administration. Valtellina was divided into three *'Terzieri'* (upper, middle and lower). Tirano was the capital of the upper third. Furthermore, there was a Valley Council with its seat at Sondrio and with jurisdiction over the whole province. In the capitals of the *terzieri*, the Grigioni Magistrates administered civil and penal justice, applying the provisions of the Statutes of Valtellina.

Management of the territory. This was mostly of a direct form. Everyone who owned land with a road or canal frontage was expected to maintain it and the boundary fences. In the case of the maintenance of the main roads *(strade 'regali')* or the construction of new public works (bridges, stop banks, canals and roads), they resorted to the 'obligation of those who lived nearby' *('obbligo delle vicinanza')*. That is, work had to be done *gratis* by everyone in proportion to the value of their property. Such a system was also used whenever there was a community need, such as fire fighting.

Private buildings. Despite substantial differences between the houses of the gentry and those of the commoners, there were two fundamental parts of a dwelling: that for the people and that for the animals, even if at times these coincided. This was the case for the hens that scratched around happily in the kitchen or of the capons raised in the *'capunere'*. These were specially constructed cupboards (still in the kitchen!) with the bottoms open in such a way as to let the droppings escape. Often, too, the stables were the only warm place and here they spent the evenings. In every house there was a room *('da fuoco')* where there was a hearth for cooking food. This did not always have a chimney and often the smoke left by the door or holes in the walls. Furniture, at least for the poor was just that which was essential: a chain for the pot over the fire and benches, often without even a table. The utensils were just the minimum: the pot, the wooden bowls *('ciapei')* and some cutlery. The door of the room had a hole in the bottom *('punarola')* to let out the small animals. There was also a room where the family spent the night. In the houses of the more well-off this was the *'stua'*, that is a room which was heated and lined with wood.

The animals had their places. The cows, sheep and goats were shut in their stalls. The pig had its own small stall that could be in the main stall or separate. The hens found shelter in the hen house, often under the flights of stairs.

As well as a dwelling for the people and animals, the houses needed to offer all of the space needed for the agricultural work and for the storage of provisions. In the higher parts of the houses there were balconies *('lobie')* and under the roof, space to store the grain, while underground, there was the cellar *('involt')* for storing the barrels of wine (the barrels in Valtellina until 1500/1600 were of larch, then of chestnut wood). Near the stalls was the hayloft for the storage of forage for the winter.

A little apart from the house was the *'graa'*, that is a small house of two levels, for the smoking and conservation of the chestnuts. The lower level was used for a fire that produced the smoke, while the chestnuts were placed above it on a lattice. Here they were dried and smoked so that they kept well.

Public buildings. These were of two categories: the churches for religious functions and the *'osterie'* for community entertainments. Community halls *('palazzi comunali')* were quite rare. Public meetings were held in the churchyards that, until the beginning of the 1800s, were also the cemeteries, or alternatively in the church itself.

Fig. 10 *Houses in Via Dessedo. Although re-roofed and in the process of reconstruction, the basic fabric probably dates from the 19th century. Note particularly the balconies. Image courtesy of Alan*

Diet. From what we have said above about agriculture, we can deduce that the diet in the past was based on a modest assortment of food: bread (of rye, millet and rarely of wheat), polenta, soups, chestnuts, milk, cheese, a little green vegetables, meat (especially from pigs) and wine. For centuries, wine has been an important source of calories.

Education. Until 1700 there was no public education. The rich families hired lay or ecclesiastical teachers, while in different localities, bequests allowed the founding of private schools. The teachers were usually ecclesiastical people because the priests were among the few who could read and write and there were many of them. Remember that in the second half of the 1700s in the upper *terziere* (between Bianzone and Sondalo), there were around 130 priests.
[*Sondalo is about midway between Tirano and Bormio.*]

The first state schools were established by the Austrians (1815-1859). Children of different ages were taught in large classes of over 50. The pay of the teachers was modest, more so if they were women.

Health. The first notices concerning municipal doctors [*medici condotti*] are found only at the beginning of the 1800s. Tied up with the provision of medical services is the change of the *frazione* of San Rocco in 1860 from being part of the *comune* of Tirano to that of Villa di Tirano. The doctor at Tirano had refused to assist the residents of San Rocco because they were too poor.

translator's thanks

Marcia Stenson was heavily involved in the initial translation as we both puzzled over words that now seem quite obvious. As well as giving permission for the publication of this translation, Diego Zoia has also helped me hugely in my search for material about migration and migrants from Tirano in that town's archives.

an article and three books of interest

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an accordionist's story

by eric di losa

Fig. 1 *Eric Di Losa playing his accordion. Image courtesy of E. Di Losa.*

I discovered the magic of the piano accordion at around three or four years of age through visits with my mother, Maria Di Losa, and younger sister, Adelina, to the Sydney suburban home of my violinist uncle, Francesco Boffa. Francesco, or 'Uncle Frank' as we always called him, was my mother's brother and he had sponsored her arrival here in the early 1900s. She had been left alone as an innocent young girl in their former Southern Italian town of Viggiano in the province of Potenza, famous for its export of musicians to all corners of the globe, following the tragic passing of both parents. 'Uncle Frank', himself, had emigrated earlier from Viggiano with his wonderful wife Veronica. My mother became a great help to her while Uncle Frank was away busking in various NSW and Queensland country towns, such as Mount Isa, with his musician friends. Auntie Veronica became like a second mother to me and our families have remained united as one even though most members have since departed this life.

Uncle Frank also introduced my mother to her future husband and my father, Tom (Tommaso) Di Losa. He had arrived in Australia in 1902 from Canneto on the Sicilian Island of Lipari as a seven year old boy with my grandfather, Cristoforo Di Losa, a well educated man who had been a ship's captain before migrating to Sydney. My grandfather arrived with four of his eight children, including my father and, once he was established, he brought his wife and the four remaining children. My father quickly lost his Italian accent in the suburban Australian schoolyard.

After their marriage, my parents bought a little fruit shop with a dwelling in Crown Street, Surrey Hills, just a few minutes from City Central, and this family home also became home to an ever increasing number of 78 R.P.M. recordings of opera. Listening to these wonderful recordings with my parents was the beginning of my passion for classical music. My parents adored opera and christened me Enrico after Enrico Caruso and my younger sister, Adelina, after Adelina Patti. What a disappointment it must have been for them to find that neither of us had any singing talent!

Uncle Frank made his living from busking on the streets of late 1920s Sydney with several Italian musicians who were unable to get other musical work. They were all extremely gifted musicians and, among them, was the virtuoso accordionist, Peter Piccini (senior), who by the late 1930s was widely recognised within the Australian music industry as the 'Daddy of the Accordion' in Australia.[1] Being extremely talented buskers, they became a Sydney icon and on many occasions the crowds grew so large that they blocked the tram lines and the police had to move them on — but with happy grins on their faces.

Uncle Frank often had them over on Sunday nights while we were visiting to practise the latest popular tunes, which included everything from ragtime to opera. Crowds of passers-by gathered outside my uncle's home to listen to the music. So, it was at my uncle's home that I first discovered the wizardry of Peter Piccini's accordion playing and decided then and there that I would, one day, be an accordionist. Peter Piccini's son, also Peter, followed in his father's footsteps.[2]

My parents noticed my passion for music but, instead of an accordion, Dad bought me a small violin, and enrolled me for music lessons at the local Catholic convent at two shillings a time. I continued with the lessons for twelve months and the sister who taught me (whose name I no longer recall) must have thought I had some potential because she entered me

[1] 'Peter Piccini "Daddy of the Accordion"' in *Tempo* May/June 1938, p.8

[2] His outstanding international career as an accordion virtuoso and other musical achievements are outlined at <http://www.users.bigpond.com/piccini/>

into a contest for beginners at the Sydney Conservatorium and also booked me in for grade five and six musical examinations, which I passed. Not long after this, the Depression hit us hard and my parents could no longer afford the two shillings weekly. Worse still, the violin had to be sold to pay our bills and my dream of becoming a musician was put on hold.

By the time I turned fourteen, things were still very tough for us, and I had to help out by taking a full-time job in a grocery shop delivering orders on foot. One day, Uncle Frank called to see us carrying a case containing a 120 bass Risonante accordion that he had bought on time payment for use in his own little orchestra. He said: "Here Enrico, take this and learn it. All you have to do is pay off the ten pounds owing.". It was not a great accordion to learn on because the bellows lacked compression and the left-hand bass buttons were very stiff, but it was an accordion and I was over the moon.

I progressed slowly learning by ear and by sheer determination, but fingering eventually became a problem. I then sought help from Uncle Frank, but he was also self-taught and unable to read music, so he introduced me to wonderful gentleman and fantastic accordionist and teacher, Laurie (Lorenzo or Lawrence) Pensini. Like Peter Piccini, Laurie was held in very high esteem in the music industry and was, among many other things, a member of the ABC Gaucho Tango Band and leader of Pensini's Gypsy Accordion Orchestra that broadcast regularly from 2UE. His music shop partner, Lin (sometimes Lyn) Sharam, was also a gifted accordionist who performed regularly on the Tivoli vaudeville circuit with a Spanish guitarist as the Mexican Troubadours. Laurie gave me monthly lessons at four shillings a time, which I continued for about twelve months.

Laurie and Lin would close their music shop on Friday nights after 9pm and invite all the students for a social-musical evening to encourage them to demonstrate what they had learned in the teaching studios. One Friday night, another already famous professional accordionist turned up and played for us. This was Lou Campara who first became known as the featured accordionist of various popular 'Gypsy' and tango radio orchestras in Melbourne and was just then making a big name for himself on Sydney radio as one half of the highly successful Lal Kuring (cello) and Lou Campara Duo.

Hearing Lou Campara play that night was probably the musical highlight of my young life and it really inflamed my desire to be a better player and a lifelong promoter of the accordion. I practised for as long as I could each night, depending on how tired I was after many hours of heavy manual work that was also very hard on my hands.

This was the era that produced many of the early masters of accordion playing in Australia, including many of Italian heritage. Peter Piccini, Laurie Pensini and Lou Campara have been mentioned and other celebrated and brilliant players included the Toppano brothers, Lou and Enzo. Lou first came to national attention in the mid-1930s as the featured virtuoso accordionist of Harry Bloom's famous ABC National Tango Orchestra, and his younger brother Enzo rapidly gained an international reputation on the accordion after the war. Both became household names as Australian television personalities and television studio band leaders in the late 1950s. Other famous and virtuosic early or slightly later master accordionists were Herbie Marks, Gus Merzi, Frank Morelli, Ossie Mazzei, Charles Camilleri, Vic Toscano and, in Melbourne, Egidio Bortoli. An accordionist of great promise of this era who never had the chance to make it was my friend, Jimmy Preston, who was killed in a bombing raid over Germany.

The established and budding early masters were deservedly getting all the plum jobs of the time, but my own shock exposure to show business came during the war years when my cousin, Bob (Roberto) Boffa, who played rhythm guitar, entered both our names for Australia's Amateur Hour, a radio show sponsored by the soap manufacturer Lever Brothers. The show was hosted by Dick Fair and broadcast Australia-wide. We were accepted, but we became very scared on the night and made a nervous start playing Charles Magnante's arrangement of *Vieni Vieni*, which involved a lot of tricky stuff with heaps of bellow shakes — just like our knees were shaking at the time. Nevertheless, we came first and went on to the Grand Finals at the end of the year where we came second and were congratulated as the only instrumental act to make the finals.

The radio station management then formed a concert group of the best acts to perform at military hospitals and rehabilitation centres and our act was included. Our first big night was at the Concord Military Hospital and it was a moving sight to see below us an audience of young wounded Australians in bandages. We received a huge noisy welcome as we walked out from behind the curtains because the accordion was very popular in those days. Bob and I looked at each other with a frozen grimace of fear on our faces as we began our act. The concert organizer gestured frantically from the wings for us to 'smile' and we quickly glanced at each other and put on toothy smiles that brought the house down with applause. They must have thought that this was a part of the act. We stumbled off stage to loud whistles and cries of encore and so we had to go back and do another number — another fast flashy piece. I'm so glad that this was a long time ago because we nearly passed out with fear all over again.

After the war, I did a memorable stint at the Dungowan Restaurant in Martin Place where the tango or "rhumba" band was led by the brilliant fiddle player, Antonio Mossuto, who had changed his stage name to Tony Moss during the war.[3] The Dungowan had been the venue for American Officers during the War. The offer came about because its accordionist, the young Enzo Toppano, was overwhelmed with other engagements.
The many new migrants that arrived here after the war created a big demand for sporting and social club function bands that

[3] 'Tony Moss Quartette Plays Cuban Rhythm' in *Tempo* December 1946, p.1

could play Continental and Latin dance music. Toward the end of the 1950s, my former teacher Laurie Pensini offered me his place in the band at the Italo-Australian Club in George Street, Sydney. Being comparatively inexperienced, I was treated with derision by the hardened professionals in the band but, by good fortune, the leader of the band fell out with the management. This enabled me to form my own band and bring in my cousin, Bob, on guitar. Our Italo-Latin and other music must have made a good impression because the club management gave us an extra two nights a week and I remained there for nine years. Over that time I had the privilege of working with two particularly talented double bass players who fitted in perfectly with our style. They were Wally Wickham, who remained mates with me until his untimely death and, after him, Rod Cameron, who quickly adapted to the Continental and Italo-Latin and other popular music styles we had developed. After this, I joined Tony Mossuto's band at the APIA (Associazione Polisportiva Italo-Australiana) Club which was visited by everyone associated with soccer in Australia. Saturdays and Sundays drew huge crowds who danced to our cha cha chas and other popular dance music. By this stage of my life, however, it was getting harder to maintain a balance between family life, full-time day work, and being a club musician.

Furthermore, my own sons, Peter and Mathew, were already very promising brass players and much of my time was now spent running them to and from rehearsals, engagements and contests. Family had to come first and music next and I have no regrets about this.

Time marches on and catches up with all of us. Arthritis in the shoulders and fingers eventually caught up with me and accordion playing became impossible. I purchased a Yamaha digital keyboard to enable me to remain associated with music but how I miss those halcyon accordion-playing days of excitement and applause that I shared for so long with my cheeky cousin, Bob Boffa! Thankfully he lives nearby and we can still have a laugh about those good old times.

Also, some of the accordion masters of yesteryear are still with us and, in some cases, are still playing marvellously. Some years back I had the great pleasure of meeting up with some of the old and more recent masters at a reunion of 'Golden Oldies'. At this reunion were Lou and Enzo Toppano, Lou Campara, Gus Merzi, Vic Toscana, Frank Morelli and the relatively younger virtuosi Enzo Giribaldi, Michael Kluger and Ross Miao. Sadly, Lou Campara is no longer with us but it was wonderful to have caught up with my early mentor on that memorable and moving occasion.

The Italian Historical Society would like to acknowledge Dr John Whiteoak for editing this article. ★

migration to australia in the museum of carpineto romano

by italo campagna[1]

Carpineto Romano, a picturesque village set in breathtaking scenery in the middle of the Lepini mountains (province of Rome), is known as the hometown of Pope Leo XIII, the author the groundbreaking encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, who was born there in 1810. In the nineteenth century, Carpineto's inhabitants, like those of many Italian villages, were mostly farmers, shepherds and artisans. The early years of the twentieth century saw many Carpinetani migrate to Canada, the United States and Argentina. In the 1950s, there was a second migratory wave and many of Carpineto's 7,000 inhabitants left for Canada, Europe (mostly with seasonal work contracts) and Australia. Australia became a destination for Carpinetano migrants following its 'discovery' by a small number of *paesani*, who were held here as prisoners of war in the years during and immediately after World War II. Migration from Italy to Australia was encouraged by political agreements between the two countries, and during that period many groups of Carpinetani left as sponsored migrants, embarking from the port of Naples on board ships built in the 1920s and utilised to transport troops during the War. At the end of the 1950s, Carpineto had lost almost 2,000 of its inhabitants, approximatively 50% of whom went to Australia (especially Melbourne and Sydney).

This exodus remains largely unknown to this day and its memory is mainly preserved in the oral recollections of a dwindling number of migrants and in official statistics from the Comune and other Italian and foreign agencies. In recent years, there have been a few publications which document the story of Carpineto migration – Nazzareno Castrucci's studies on the migrant community in Canberra, *Emigrant Stories: Stories About European Migrants in Queanbeyan* (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan Italian Pensioners Club, 2003) and *Second Generation of Migrants to Australia* (forthcoming), as well as Ana Alejandra Germani, 'Cercando l'America', Franco Caporossi, 'Emigrazione. Angoscia di intere generazioni' and 'Autobiografie e saluti dall'Australia' in Franca Fedeli Bernardini (ed), *La Reggia dei Volsci. Museo della Città di Carpineto Romano a Palazzo Aldobrandini* (Rome: Bonsignori Editore, 2006), pp. 219-240, 241-250, 251-253 respectively.

[1] Director of the Museum. This article was translated and edited by Paolo Baracchi. The IHS would like to thank Lucia Macali for her assistance editing this article.

Fig. 1 *View of Carpineto Romano. Image courtesy of Carla Torreggiani.*

The *Comune* [Council] of Carpineto is sensitive to the need to preserve the memories and cultural heritage of Carpinetano communities abroad. To this effect, the *Comune* has tightened its links with the expatriate communities through public relations, civic and religious events, conferences and 'migration days', held especially in August as part of the rich programme of cultural and historical events around the feast of the Patron, Saint Augustine. The key event in the calendar is the *Pallio della carriera*, a picturesque horse race in historical costume. During this event, the seven historical *rioni* [districts] of Carpineto offer *ceri* [decorative liturgical candles] to the Patron. The eighth *rione* comprises the American and Australian diasporas, which take turns offering the *cero*, every year amid the warm applause of the spectators.

The recent opening of the local history museum 'La Reggia dei Volsci', housed in the palace of the Aldobrandini princes who were the dukes of Carpineto, marks an important event in the collection, study and preservation of Carpineto's migration history. The museum, which took ten years to set up, consists of nine sections which present a synopsis of the rich history, art and economy of Carpineto. The ninth section of the museum is devoted to the theme of migration: display cases house photographs, letters, passports, objects and tools which tell the story of Carpinetano migrants in Europe, America and Australia.

Australia is particularly well represented; on display are rocks and opal fragments dug up in the desert by the pioneer miner Tom Campagna, cane-cutting knives used in Queensland,

donated by the Colaluca family, gadgets of the Carpinetano social clubs in Australia (the Carpineto – Regione Lazio Club in Sydney and the Carpineto Romano Club in Melbourne), the first banknotes earned by our migrants, the modest photographic cameras that they took on their journeys, the cardboard suitcases filled with nostalgia and hope. One of the most poignant objects of this section is an enlargement of a photograph of two women with their children on board a ship in the port of Naples as they bid farewell to their families on the wharf. The women and children are going to Australia (Fremantle and Sydney), where they will be reunited with their husbands and fathers.

Fig. 2 *Luigia Pirri Gonnella in Nangwarry, South Australia. Image courtesy of the Museo della Città di Carpineto Romano.*

The story of the subsequent economic and social success of our migrants is also told, especially in the fields of construction (on display are two bricks from the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games), hospitality and sport. One of the highlights of the museum's migration collection is a uniform of the Australian national soccer team, donated by the Victorian-born Vince Grella, a well-known sportsman now living in Italy, whose mother originates from Carpineto.

A whole room has been set up in the Migration section with the specific purpose of creating a multi-sensory experience. The theme of the experience is a symbolic arrival in New York, represented by iconic landmarks such as Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, as well as characteristic alleyways, brick houses, dilapidated walls, fire escape stairs and artisans' shops. Passenger lists and poems about homesickness adorn the walls. The temperature in this room is artificially lowered so as to give visitors a sudden sense of psychological and physical discomfort, intended to increase the feeling of disorientation and displacement. Some migrants to Australia who visited the display commented on the efficacy and authenticity of the experience.

The Migration section of the museum also houses a library and archive organised by thematic files and special collections. Included in the special collections are letters, photographs, audio and video material covering life in Carpineto and in Australia and documenting the activities of the Australian clubs. The library, which is a branch of the Biblioteca Centralizzata Lepina [centralised library of the Lepini mountains], holds many publications on migration from Italy and from Lazio in particular.

The 'Reggia dei Volsci', which has been acknowledged as the first scientific migration museum in the Lazio region, functions also as a research centre. Staff are currently busy with the project of creating a database which will cover a century of Carpineto's migration history through the vital statistics of individuals, family trees and oral and written memoirs. The data relative to a few thousand individuals has already been collected, as well as some complete family histories which were assembled by collating data from the archives of the Comune and from various agencies abroad.

I would like to conclude with an excerpt from the memoir of a migrant to Australia: 'I had applied and I had obtained the required documents [...] so I was ready to leave. Every week a group of us would depart by ship from Naples. On our ship there were 11 of us from Carpineto. We were all young: nobody here worked in the fields or in the factories at Colleferro. We left our families and embarked. [...] After many days of hope, as soon as we arrived in Melbourne they put us on a train to Bonegilla, in the state of Victoria. There was nothing we could do: there was no work in Australia either, despite the agreements. Bonegilla was a kind of post-war concentration camp. We were allowed to leave the camp, but we had nothing: no money, no food, no lodging. Australia had asked Italy for workers, and it gave us unemployment, food and lodging. Three months later we were moved to another camp, Stewart in Queensland.'

Fig. 3 *Franco Macali's first house in Melbourne. Image courtesy of the Museo della Città di Carpineto Romano.*

This was yesterday: today the Carpinetano community in Melbourne is flourishing in many fields, from entrepreneurship to the professions and services. Its community spirit is also strong, as witnessed by the activities of the Carpineto Romano Social Club and the Comitato Santa Maria del Popolo.

Carpineto is proud of its recent past and it has not forgotten its migrant sons and daughters. A bronze monument to migrants by well known artist Alessandro Kokocinski has been recently unveiled at the base of Carpineto's civic tower. It shows a young woman, with her child in her arms; she has large wings and she is flying bravely towards a home far away, held down by her battered suitcase.

Interested readers may consult the websites of the Comune of Carpineto Romano www.carpinetoromano.it and of its local history museum, 'La Reggia dei Volsci' www.lareggiadeivolsci.it★

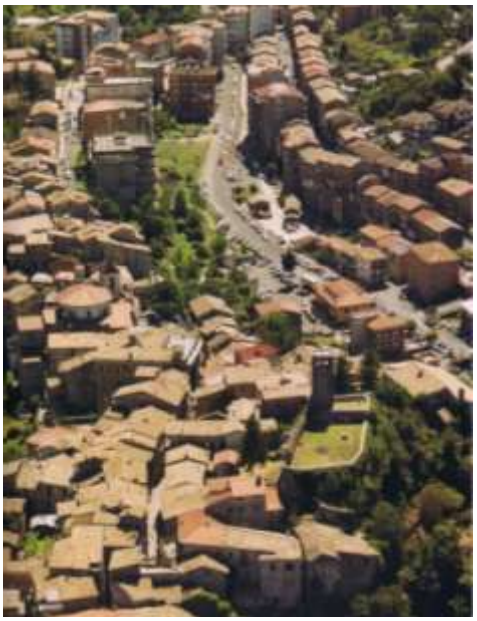


Fig. 4 *Aerial view of Carpineto Romano. Image courtesy of the Museo della Città di Carpineto Romano.*

the bridge

In 2001 a steering committee was formed with the objective of building a monument to honour the contributions migrants have made to Australia, and the opportunities this land has given them. After discussions with the National Capital Authority (NCA), they decided the monument should take the form of a spectacular pedestrian bridge spanning Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, linking the National Museum of Australia with the Parliamentary Triangle.

the griffin legacy

This new pedestrian bridge fulfils a key design element of Walter Burley Griffin's original plan for Canberra, as described in the NCA publication *The Griffin Legacy*.

the design

Immigration Bridge Australia will be a spectacular, dramatic, swooping, beautiful bridge, reminiscent of the great, wide spaces of this land.

The design is a unique collaboration between architect Bligh Voller Nield, engineer Arup Australia, composer Ross Edwards, poet Peter Skrzynecki, Campaign Director Andrew Baulch and the Board. The team is working closely together to ensure the bridge is a national monument and an international icon.

the history handrail

The bridge will stretch for 400m some 12m above the surface of Lake Burley Griffin. The sculpted stainless steel handrail will allow 200,000 names to be engraved permanently – the names of people that have settled in Australia since 1788.

Every Australian family is invited to contribute their name to the bridge – to be immortalised on the handrail in perpetuity. The names will be recorded together with the country of origin and year of arrival.

The cost of each name is $110 (inc GST). Money raised from this program will go towards the construction of the bridge – giving all who contribute a permanent physical memorial.

write your story

You can register your stories or those of your ancestors on the Immigration Bridge web page, where they will be recorded and then published in the "Migration Book". Many of these stories of migration will also feature on the surfaces of the Bridge itself. We hope that the building of the Immigration Bridge will be the catalyst for an unprecedented rise in interest in the history of Australian families.

The "Migration Book" will be a collection of all the stories that we can gather. It will be a huge book, magnificently bound and displayed under glass on the bridge – a page will turn each day of the year and we will notify families whose stories feature in advance to encourage family reunions on the Bridge.

To reserve a name on the History Handrail or to register your story
Visit www.immigrationbridge.com.au or call 1300 300 046

Source:- *'Barberina Elizabetta Rubbo [nee Pozza] [Italian – arrived Australia per MS REMO, c. 1940. Box 152]'. SP11/2 Italian/Rubbo Barberina Elizabetta, National Archives of Australia (NAA), Sydney.*

the project

At the outbreak of war in September 1939, the National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations were introduced as a means to control these aliens, and all non-British peoples residing in Australia. Nationals from Germany were immediately classified as enemy aliens. After the entry of Italy and Japan into the war, in 1940 and 1941, Italians and Japanese living in Australia were re-classified as enemy aliens and were then investigated under these Regulations. Whilst there has been considerable research undertaken on wartime internment of enemy aliens in Australia, there has been little focus on the thousands of enemy aliens who were *not* interned during the Second World War, especially women. War hysteria, discrimination, isolation, racism and Victimisation were all part of the wartime experience for German, Italian and Japanese women caught up in the net of the Aliens Control Regulations.

This study aims to provide an analysis on how the National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations affected the lives of Japanese women living in Australia during the Second World War.

If you are a woman living in Australia either of German, Italian or Japanese descent, or an Australian woman married to an 'enemy alien' during the Second World War (1939-1945), and are interested in participating in research to share your wartime experience, please contact Maria Glaros (PhD candidate, University of Western Sydney)

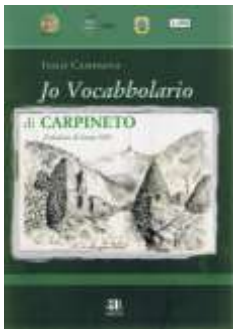
Phone 0423 844 690 or email m.glaros@uws.edu.au

publications received

The following publications have been recently purchased by, or donated to the Italian Historical Society. The Society makes every attempt to acquire all current publications in the field of Italian-Australian history. These publications are available for consultation at the Library of the Italian Historical Society.

carpineto

Fedeli Bernardini, Franca (ed.), *La Reggia dei Volsci*, Rome: Bonsignori Editore, 2006.
Published in conjunction with the opening of Carpineto Romano's new museum, "La Reggia dei Volsci," this catalogue, rich with archival photographs, tells the story of a tenacious community. Various contributions recount the history of costume, the community, its economy, its art and its emigration.



Campagna, Italo, *Jo vocabbolario di Carpineto. Il dialetto di Leone XIII*, Rome: Anicia, 2007.
This dictionary of Carpineto dialect, painstakingly researched by Italo Campagna, Director of the Reggia dei Volsci Museum in Carpineto, is a valuable linguistic and dialectic resource. Entries consider each word's linguistic, as well as its historical and social origins.

Cancellieri, Margherita (ed.), *Monti Leipini. Sistema museale territoriale e raccolte museali private*, Pontinia: Nuova Grafica 87, 2008.
This small but rich publication, complete with colour photographs, offers an exhaustive overview of the cultural services in the area spanning the Province of Rome and that of Latina. The volume illustrates the public and private museums and collections of an area which is particularly abounding in history and art. Included are museums specialising in archaeology, history, art history, anthropology and science.

istria

Fait, Francesco, *L'emigrazione giuliana in Australia (1954-1961)*, Udine: ERMI – Servizio Emigrazione, 1999.
The community from Friuli-Venezia Giulia represents the fourth largest migration group from Italy to Australia. This study by Francesco Fait cleverly takes into account statistical and economic data, as well as primary accounts, to provide a comprehensive report of the migrant experience.

Kandler, Pietro, *L'Istria 1846-1852*, Trieste: Edizioni "Italo Svevo", 1983.
This anthology offers readers a broad examination of the magazine, *L'Istria*. The anthology is based on and considers archaelogical references and administrative, ecclesiastical, social, historical, commercial and geographical records. Also included is a general index which annotates the seven years the magazine was published.

Fiume. *Rivista di Studi Adriatici*, Vol. 15, No. 1-6, January-June 2007.
Issue includes: 'I bombardamenti aerei anglo-americani su Fiume nel corso della seconda guerra mondiale' by Mihael Sobolesvki; 'E anche Arturo Toscanini disse: "eja, eja, eja, alalà!". Contributo fiumano alla storia del grande maestro nel cinquantesimo anniversario della sua morte' by Amleto Ballarini; 'La voce "foibe" in *Wikipedia*, l'enciclopedia in rete aperta a tutti' by Franco Laicini; 'Opere dell'artista dalmata Giuseppe Lallich esposte nel rifugio antiaereo dell'Eur a Roma' by Marco Rossi.

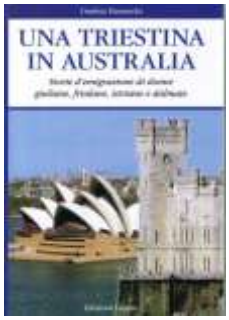
Fiume. *Rivista di Studi Adriatici*, Vol. 17, No. 1-6, January-June 2008.
Issue includes: 'Alla Mecca dell'irredentismo. Gli italiani della sponda nord-orientale a Ravenna (1908-1911)' by Paolo Cavassini; 'Aprile 1945: l'eccidio dei soldati della X-Mas a Neresine' by Federico Scopinich; 'Club Alpino Italiano – Sezione di Fiume, già Club Alpino Fiumano' by Franco Laicini; 'La filatelia di Fiume: nuovi strumenti di riferimento' by Tiberio F. Moro

Fiume. *Rivista di Studi Adriatici*. Vol. 18, No. 7-12, July-December 2008.
Issue includes: 'Centoventi anni di istruzione in lingua italiana a Fiume nell'edificio scolastico di via Ciotta' by Ingrid Sever; 'Per Fiume italiana: l'irredentismo fiumano nelle carte dell'Archivio Museo Storico di Fiume' by Emiliano Loria; 'Ercole Miani: per una biografia politica' by Fulvio Rocco; '1945-1946: duello a parole nella

stampa d'esuli e rimasti' by Amleto Ballarini; 'Don Giuseppe Gabana, il cappellano dei finanzieri che perdonò i suoi assassini' by Gerardo Severino.

Fiume. *Rivista di Studi Adriatici*. Vol. 19, No. 1-6, January-June 2009.
Issue includes: 'Leo Valiani. Anniversari tra storia e politica' by Andrea Ricciardi; 'Nascita ed evoluzione dell'apparato di sicurezza jugoslavo 1941-1948' by William Kinger; 'Il "caso Ongaro" e i comunisti italiani uccisi nella Russia di Stalin' by Amleto Ballarini; 'La moneta, i servizi postali, le tariffe tra l'occupazione interalleata e l'unione all'Italia (I)' by Oliviero Emoroso.

Issues also include interviews, biographical entries and book reviews.

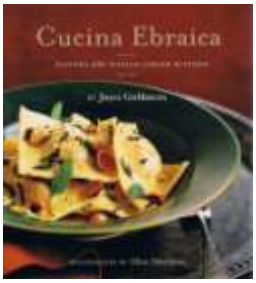


Demarchi, Ondina, *Una triestina in Australia. Storie d'emigrazione di donne giuliane, friulane, istriane e dalmate*, Trieste: Edizioni Luglio, 2006.
Author Ondina Demarchi has gathered the stories of many Giulian, Istrian and Friulian women who migrated to Australia out of need, curiosity, love or a desire for adventure. As a migrant herself, Demarchi tells these stories with a strong sense of "sisterhood" which can only be obtained through common and shared experiences. This powerful book recounts the migrant's destiny with kindness, tears and smiles.

Società di Studi Fiumani (ed.), *Dizionario del Dialetto Fiumano*, Roma: Tipolitografia Spoletini, 2007.
This is a re-print of the dictionary dedicated to the Fiumano dialect, originally compiled by one of the region's most prestigious Presidents, Salvatore Samani. This valuable work, originally published in 1978, was hugely successful. The dictionary is published by La Società di Studi Fiumani, which houses the Archivio Museo Storico di Fiume and a specialised library.

Benussi, B, *L'Istria sino ad Augusto*, Trieste: Stabil. Tip. Di Lod. Hermannstorfer Edit., 1883.
Published in 1883, this book presents a comprehensive history of Istria before the fourteenth century AD. The book is divided into the following chapters: Ancient Geography; Name; Boundaries; Ethnology; Istria before the Roman Conquest; the Roman Conquest; Culture; Historical Events in Istria during the Republic; Internal Conditions. There is also an appendix of geographical Istrian names in ancient writings.

cuisine



Goldstein, Joyce, *Cucina Ebraica. Flavors of the Italian Jewish Kitchen*, San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005.
Compiled by self-professed Italophile, Joyce Godstein, *Cucina Ebraica* offers a fascinating perspective on Italian food, tracing its long-forgotten Jewish influences and focusing new light on the intertwining of two time-honoured cooking traditions. It is an intriguing glimpse into culinary history as well as a compilation of superbly satisfying dishes that respect kosher laws. In sum, a gratifying addition to both Italian and Jewish cookery.

Harden, Michael, *Lygon St. Stories and recipes from Melbourne's melting pot,* Millers Point: Murdoch Books Australia, 2008.
This book tells the unique and remarkable tale of Lygon Street; the street which brought authentic home-style cooking to Australia. Witness to many "firsts", Lygon St experienced the introduction of the first espresso machine, the first pizza house and the first grocers to stock extra virgin olive oil and mozzarella cheese. The history is appropriately accompanied by a collection of recipes from its iconic restaurants and cafes and celebrates the rich and diverse story of this shopping strip over the past 150 years.

migration studies

Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma. *International journal of migration studies: Studi Emigrazione*. No. 171, July-August 2008.
Issue 171 includes: 'Popolazioni straniere e immigrate: definizioni, categorie e caratteristiche' by Bonifazi, Gallo, Strozza & Zindato; 'Gli anziani stranieri: dove' by Todisco, Abbatini, Heins & Martire; and 'Uno sguardo al futuro: le definizioni internazionali, un quadro di riferimento essenziale' by Ferruzza.

Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma. *International journal of migration studies: Studi Emigrazione*. No. 172, October-December 2008.
Issue 172 includes: 'Migrazioni marocchine, vecchi percorsi, nuove mete' by Peraldi & Rahmi; 'Turkey: An Inventory of Migration Movements' by Dilli; 'Gli immigrati ad alta qualificazione secondo il Censimento italiano del 2001: occupazione e sottoccupazione' by Brandi, Caruso, De Angelis & Mastroluca; and I luoghi contano: immigrati e città in Europa e Stati Uniti' by Lucciarini.

Fumberger, Hans, *Australian Pioneers from Grisons*, May 2009.
This comprehensive listing of Valposchiavo Pioneers in Australia has been compiled by Hans Fumberger, grandson of a Swiss pioneer in Australia. Inspired by Joseph Gentilli's 1989 publication, *Swiss Poschiavini in Australia*, Fumberger has undertaken thorough research on Valposchiavi in Australia and produced the said database with accompanying descriptions. The book is accompanied by a CD containing further information and applications.

biography & autobiography

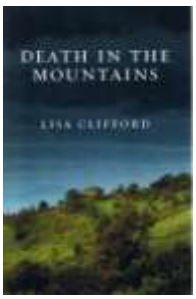
Easdown, Geoff, *Gualtiero Vaccari. A Man of Quality*, Melbourne: Wilkinson Publishing, 2006.
Geoff Easdown, senior journalist with Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper, presents a fascinating recount of a man who was inextricably linked to some of the key national and international issues of the 20th century. Arriving in Melbourne on 8 November 1912 with no command of English, Gualtiero Vaccari overcame conflicting cultural ideologies to serve both his countrymen and the Australian Government during World War II. In doing so, he showed the broader Australian population those aspects of the Italian community that could benefit all Australians.

Rocchiccioli, Roland, *And be home before dark. A childhood on the edge of nowhere*, Prahran: Hardie Grant Books, 2008.
Roland Rocchiccioli grew up near the Sons of Gwalia mine in the north-eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. In *And be home before dark*, he recounts his formative years in the tough goldfields town, bringing to life his father, Nello (Ginger), his indomitable mother, Beria, and her husband Steve, whose violence cast a shadow over Rocchiccioli's childhood years. With an astonishing eye for detail, Rocchiccioli paints an evocative portrait of a unique childhood in an Australia that no longer exists.

Cauli, Alberto, *Ernesto Campanelli. Vita e Imprese di un trasvolatore*, Sassari: Carlo Delfino editore, 2008.
Alberto Cauli tells the life story of Ernesto Campanelli, flight engineer of the Regia Aeronautica Italiana. Cauli takes great care in relating Campanelli's inspiring story, from his enlistment in the navy in the early 1900s. Cauli focuses much on Campanelli's epic 55,000 kilometre plane journey, together with Francesco De Pinedo, from India to Australia, Japan to the United States and finally to Argentina. Cauli has scavenged family archives, researched documents in the State Archives and read newspapers from which has emerged the story of a tenacious and highly professional individual.

Baseggio Peters, Teresa, *Red Platform Shoes in my suitcase. Plus Death in the Kitchen*.
This is a vivacious and entertaining narrative that tells the true story of a small, close-knit family as it makes its way through the twentieth century. The theme of migration looms large and the simple, great events of life, its comedies and tragedies, are tackled with an admirable grace. Baseggio Peters' often sparkling memoir of her mother, an ordinary lady, a loving mother and doting grandmother, is a work encasing some precious nuggest of wisdom.
This publication is linked to the recent Baseggio and Biasetto donation (See Donations Received on p. 43 for further details).

australians in Italy



Clifford, Lisa, *Death in the Mountains. The True Story of a Tuscan Murder*, Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2008.
When Australian author and journalist Lisa Clifford moved to Florence to be with her Italian husband, an unsolved murder in his family became part of her life. The more Lisa found out about it, the more intrigued she became. *Death in the Mountains* is a brilliant re-creation of the life and death of Artemio Bruni, and an evocation of the world of the Tuscan mountains in the early twentieth century. It is a murder mystery and a beautiful description of a lost Italy.

history

Derby, Mark (ed.), *Kiwi Compañeros. New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2009.

This is the first ever account of New Zealand's role in the civil war that tore Spain apart during 1936-1939. The book records the actions of the New Zealanders, including those who worked for the Spanish cause at home. *Kiwi Compañeros* includes contributions from some of New Zealand's leading writers and historians. It draws on recently released military documents and previously unpublished photographs to tell the all-but-forgotten story of those who chose to enter a crucial conflict on the far side of the world.

The book is linked to the recent Baratto donation. (See Donations Received on p. 44 for further details). Ernesto Baratto, who immigrated to Australia in the 1920s and became an Australian citizen in 1933, paid his own fare to Spain at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and joined the International Brigades. Some time after his return, Baratto settled in New Zealand, where he was interned as an enemy alien in 1940 (see pp. 217-220 of the book).

art

Cristino, Gaetano & D'Amaro, Sergio (eds.), *Nick Petruccelli. Opere 1968 - 2008*, Foggia: Claudio Grinzi Editore, 2009.

Born to a poor family in San Marco in Lamis, Nick Petruccelli initially worked as a bricklayer and then a carpenter to support his family. In 1958, Petruccelli migrated to Cologne, Germany and in 1961, joined his brother in Australia. During his five years in Australia, Petruccelli attended art school, focusing on painting and sculpture. Upon his return to Italy, he devoted himself to his artistic endeavours and began to show his works in collective and solo shows in Italy and abroad, including in Melbourne. Petruccelli's work experiments with various modern techniques. He makes innovative use of materials such as stone, clay, leather, wood and metals, often combining them with the more traditional medium of oil and watercolour painting. This superbly published catalogue of Petruccelli's works, complete with full colour photographs, presents a comprehensive overview of his artistic activities from 1968 to 2008. The catalogue includes written tributes to the artist, as well as critical essays, some in English and others in Italian. A listing of Petruccelli's solo exhibitions and a bibliography of significant publications are also included.

The Italian Historical Society Library is constantly acquiring new and relevant publications for its growing collection.
If you are aware of any recent publications you believe would be of interest to the collection,
please email details of the publication to
ihs@coasit.com.au

donations received

The Italian Historical Society wishes to express its appreciation and gratitude to those members of the community who have donated or otherwise made available materials to enrich the collections of the Society. These materials can be consulted at the Italian Historical Society.

The Rino Cera Collection

This visually rich collection of photographs documents the Cera family's migration journey from Camporovere in the Veneto to Australia. Comprising of around 50 photographs dating from 1900 to 1960, much of the collection, such as the photograph above, focuses on the remarkable musical talents of Rino Cera.

The Soccorso Santoro Collection

Dr Soccorso Santoro received his medical degree from the University of Genoa, Italy. Upon his arrival in Australia in 1930, he immediately began practising as a doctor from premises on Collins Street, Melbourne. This comprehensive collection, comprising of four large folders, contains diaries, photographs, documents, newspaper clippings, ephemera and correspondence. There is interesting correspondence surrounding the period of Santoro's internment during World War II as well as some fascinating documentation relevant to his role as official medic for the Italian Olympic team at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. The collection also records Dr Santoro's significant contribution to Italian cultural activity in Melbourne.

The Baseggio-Biasetto Collection

Umberto Baseggio migrated to Australia from the Veneto region in the 1920s. Genoveffa Biasetto, also from the Veneto, made her journey post-war in the late 1940s and was one of the first migrants to make the journey to Australia by plane. The collection includes original travel documentation, medical, state and ecclesiastical certificates, as well as some photographs.

This collection complements the recent Italian Historical Society Library acquisition, *Red Platform Shoes*, compiled by Teresa Baseggio-Peters. (See Publications Received, p. 41).

The Picone Collection

This extensive photographic collection documents the history of the Picone family from the villages of Salina and Leni on the Aeolian Islands (Sicily). Divided into two sections, the first part of the collection comprises historical family photographs from 1908 onwards. The second part records a recent return trip to Italy and includes many colour photographs of the original family home, long lost relatives, the parish and shots of the village as it is today.

The Ganza-Murada Collection

This interesting collection comprises of a number of attractive photographs, documents, correspondence and ephemera. A salient aspect of this collection is the many migrants' stories painstakingly collected by Joycelyn Bayne. Pre-war migrant, Pasquale Ganza, arrived in Sydney in May 1928 and was married to Alice Murada, a keen cyclist and athlete. The collection comprises documentation of Pasquale Ganza's internment as an enemy alien during World War II.

The Giavitto Collection

The Giavitto donation consists of various charming black and white photographs dating from 1955, the year of Aldo Giavitto's migration to Australia with his wife, Norma and daughter, Luisa, to the 1960s. The photographs depict family life and follow the building of the family's first Australian home.

The Baratto Collection

This donation further enriches the extensive collection of police and other files already held by the Italian Historical Society, which have featured in previous issues of the Journal. Ernesto Baratto migrated to Australia from Paese, Provincia di Treviso in the 1920s and became an Australian citizen in 1933. Baratto's fervent political beliefs intersected with chief events of the twentieth century. At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, he purchased his own fare to Spain and joined the International Brigades. The collection includes photographs and portraits, birth, military, diploma and naturalisation certificates.

This collection is also linked to the recently published book *Kiwi Compañeros. New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War* (edited by Mark Derby). The book has been recently donated to the Italian Historical Society Library. (See Publications Received, p. 42).

The Colombo-Crameri Collection

Consisting of family trees, birth, marriage and naturalisation certificates and photographs, this collection follows the migration journey of Carlo Colombo and Margherita Lanfranchi and the story of their descendants and relatives. From Monguzzo, Provincia di Como and San Carlo, Poschiavo (Switzerland) respectively, Carlo and Margherita married in 1879 in Bellagio and migrated to Australia in 1882. Carlo Colombo, a mattress maker in Italy, worked in Australia as a miner, living in Bendigo, Inglewood and finally settling in Eaglehawke. The collection exemplifies the early Italian presence in Australia and comprises Italian documents from the early years of the nineteenth century.

back issues

A limited number of copies of past issues of the IHSJ are available at the price of $20 each. Should you wish to purchase any copies, please contact the Italian Historical Society.

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The Pinzone businesses in Stawell and Ararat | **Joseph Pinzone**
Paolo Dattari, architect: a building | **Ruth Dwyer**
The scent of our island: Capoliveri, Isola d'Elba
Benvenuto Rossi: master of roses | **Laurie Burchell**
An Olympic event: Gualberto Gennai and the Italian national anthem

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Danilo Jovanovitch and the Italian experience in Yarram, Victoria | **Raffaele Lampugnani**
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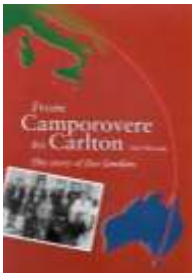

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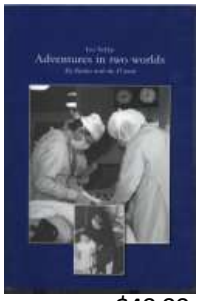

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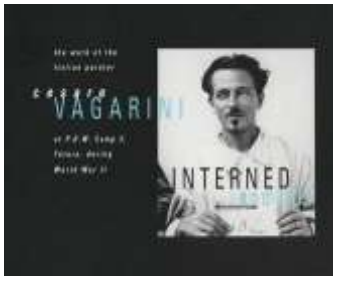

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

SCOPE

The *Italian Historical Society Journal (IHSJ)* is produced for a general readership. Preference will be given to articles that increase an understanding of the history of Italian immigrants and their descendants. The editors of the Journal accept unsolicited articles. However, we reserve the right to decline publication. We welcome articles from professional and amateur historians and writers. All items submitted are subject to editing. There is no payment for contributions. The *IHSJ* is published online and available for downloading via the website www.coasit.com.au/IHS/index

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The author is to supply evidence of copyright clearance for all images.
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Castles, S et al. (eds), *Australia's Italians: culture and community in a changing society*, North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992
Citing periodicals (author, 'title of article', *title of journal*, volume number, date/year of publication, page number/s)
Battaglini, AG, 'The Italians', *Italian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 9, no. 2, July-December 2001, pp. 5-9.

Contributors should retain copies of all material submitted.

italian historical society journal
call for papers
volume 18

The *Italian Historical Society Journal (IHSJ)* aims to provide an outlet for the circulation of research, reports and news, the exchange of information and the notification of future activities to those interested in the history of Italian Australian communities. The *IHSJ* is published biannually and is the only publication of its kind with a focus on the Italian migration story and the Italian contribution to Australian life. The Journal publishes articles by academic as well as community contributors.

Submissions are now open for the *IHSJ* Volume 18, n. 1. Submissions may take the form of memoirs, interviews, essays, research articles or reviews (books, films, exhibitions etc.). Submissions should not exceed 6,000 words.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, 30 April 2010.

Suggested topics include but are by no means limited to:

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- Italian migration history
- Migration patterns
- Family history
- The immigrant experience
- Italian participation in Australian life
- Generational changes and shifts
- Development of language and linguistics
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Articles are subject to editing; all editorial changes will be submitted to the authors prior to publication. The *IHSJ* reserves the right to refuse publication. The *IHSJ* is an English language journal, however the *IHSJ* may translate articles of interest.

Illustrative material is to be supplied in the form of medium resolution jpgs (300 dpi). All images should be clearly captioned. The author is to supply evidence of copyright clearance for all images.

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The *IHSJ* welcomes multiple submissions from individual authors.