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Joan Campbell, Doug Campbell, Julia Church, Laura Mecca, Elsa Paulin

Design: Valerie Tellini

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

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Subscriptions may be sent to:

ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY – CO.AS.IT  
1ST FLOOR, 189 FARADAY STREET, CARLTON, 3053  
TEL: (03) 9349 9000 FAX: (03) 9349 1063  
E-MAIL: IHS@COASIT.COM.AU

FRONT COVER:

Sante Cerone, Cosmo Serra and Luciano Salucci celebrate Christmas on a sugar cane plantation in Tully, Queensland in 1956. The sign on the table reads: *Eccoci a Natale* (Here we are at Christmas).

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Giuliano-Dalmati refugees en route from the German camp of Aurich to the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) camp in Bagnoli, Naples, August 4, 1950. From Bagnoli they migrated to Canada, Australia and the USA. Among them was Lazio Fantini who would later emigrate to Australia.

# a clash of civilisations? the slovene and italian minorities and the problem of trieste from borovnica to bonegilla

PAPER GIVEN AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MINORITIES AND CULTURAL ASSERTIONS – LITERARY AND SOCIAL DIASPORAS, UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, 8-10 OCTOBER 2004.

GIANFRANCO CRESCIANI IS AN HISTORIAN WHO SPECIALIZES IN ITALIAN MIGRATION HISTORY. AMONG HIS BEST KNOWN WORKS ARE *FASCISM, ANTI-FASCISM AND ITALIANS IN AUSTRALIA 1922-1945* (AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1980) AND *THE ITALIANS IN AUSTRALIA* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2003). THE FOCUS OF HIS RESEARCH AT PRESENT IS THE DISPLACEMENT OF ITALIANS FROM THE REGIONS OF VENEZIA - GIULIA, ISTRIA, FIUME AND DALMATIA.

*No army in history has managed an invasion without barbarism and torture emerging as an inevitable part of the process.*

(David Williamson, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 2004)

The eminent British historian Eric Hobsbawm, in his book *Interesting Times. A Twentieth Century Life*, in recounting his experiences as practitioner of this discipline, made the point that

*history needs distance, not only from the passions, emotions, ideologies and fears...but from the even more dangerous temptations of identity. History needs mobility and the ability to survey and explore a large territory, that is to say, the ability to move beyond one's roots...Anachronism and provincialism are two of the deadly sins of history, both equally due to a sheer ignorance of what things are like elsewhere...Identity is defined against someone else, it implies not identifying with the other. It leads to disaster.*<sup>1</sup>

Hobsbawm's observation is a paradigm of the way in which the history of the tragic events that took place in North Eastern Italy during the Twentieth Century has in the past been approached by most Italian and Slovene historians. It is a history of two minorities that could not even agree on the name of the region which for centuries they both had been inhabiting side-by-side: Venezia Giulia for the Italians, Primorska (Littoral) for the Slovene. The rationale behind this historiography, based on the principle of *reductio ad excludendum* (of wilfully ignoring the 'other'), was best

described by Sergio Romano, diplomat, historian and columnist for the *Corriere della Sera*, when he wrote in his book *I confini della storia* (The Boundaries of History):

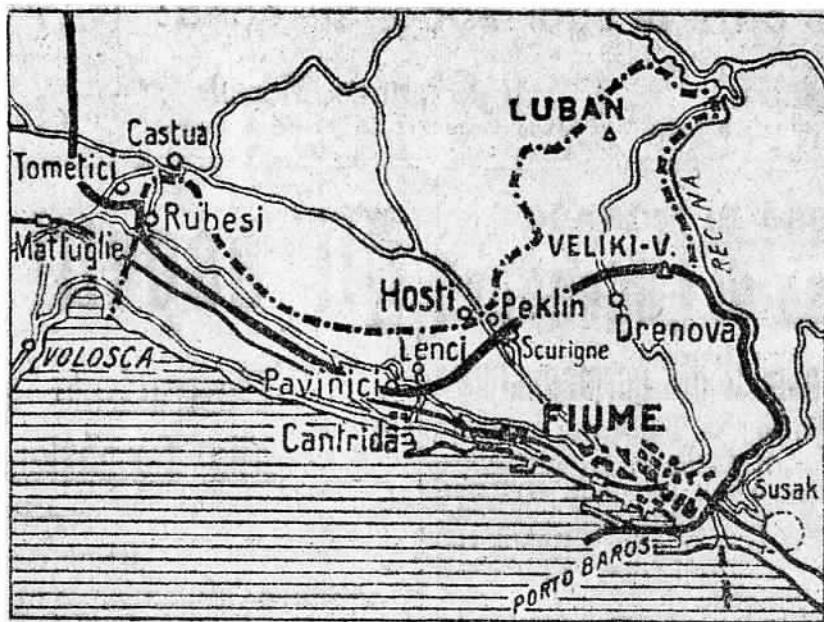
by  
**GIANFRANCO  
CRESCIANI**

*We have the same memories, we witnessed the same events...and most probably are drawing the same conclusions. Yet, what is changing is that interplay of light and shadow which, in the final analysis, is conditioning the personal view and the sensitivity of the historian.<sup>2</sup>*

For centuries, the North-Eastern frontier of Italy and the entire Dalmatian coastline facing the Adriatic Sea have been a point of contact, as well as conflict, between the Latin and the Slav inhabitants of the region. The Romans established several military outposts and settlements to defend their borders, and as a base for further conquests. In 33 B.C the Roman Emperor Augustus ordered the construction of fortified walls around Tergestum, today's Trieste, as a bulwark against the Illyrians; later, Aquileia became an important outpost of the Roman Empire, only to succumb in 452 A.D. to the advancing armies of Attila the Hun. The Venetians, during their five hundred years of maritime supremacy, in order to protect their sea routes to the Orient from pirates, established a network of fortified settlements along Istria and the Dalmatian coast, penetrating only a few miles into the interior, which remained predominantly populated by Slav people. Therefore, right through the history of this region, one can detect the mutual, endemic fear of invasion, occupation and cultural subjugation, coming from the Roman, Venetian or Fascist empires as far as the Slavs were concerned, or from the barbaric tribes, the pirates, the Turks or the Slavo-Communists as far as the Venetian or Italian-speaking population was concerned.

On the other hand, Austria-Hungary, with its relative tolerance of cultural and administrative autonomy for the mosaic of nationalities which constituted its empire, was an exception to this historical trend of fear and violence, even if Vienna increasingly played the policy of 'divide and rule' to maintain its control over the warring ethnic groups. After 1815 Vienna favoured the Slavs over resurgent Italian nationalism which threatened the established social and political balance in the Adriatic dominions of the Empire.

It was during the Twentieth Century, at



MAP LEGEND

--- The old border of the State of Fiume.  
— The new border between Italy and the kingdoms of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia ratified by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920.

the end of the First World War, with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the establishment of the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the advent of Fascism in Italy that the conflict re-surfaced and intensified. Liberal Italy emerged victorious from the war, and was granted by the Treaty of Versailles a new border, later confirmed by the Treaty of Rapallo on 12 November 1920. This thrust deeply into Slav lands, annexing more than a quarter of what was then considered by Slovenes their ethnic territory and included approximately 327,000 Slovenes, out of a total population of 1.5 million people. While the minority rights of the Italian community in Dalmatia were protected by the Treaty of Rapallo, those of the Slovene and Croatian minorities in the territories recently annexed by Italy were not: also, the new Italian administration applied a policy of restrictive measures aimed at suppressing Slav nationalism. They included the sacking of local government administrations, the internment and deportation of intellectuals, the dissolution of national councils and the sentencing by military tribunals.

The situation worsened dramatically for the Slav minorities after the coming to power of Fascism. On 13 July 1920 the Narodni Dom, the House of the People in Trieste housing Slovene organisations, was burned down by Fascist black shirts. In a concerted policy aimed to assimilate and de-nationalise the minorities, the Regime progressively shut down most Slovene or Croat institutions. Between 1918 and 1928, 488 primary schools were closed, as well as some 400 cultural, sporting, youth, social and professional organisations and libraries, three political parties,

31 newspapers and journals and 300 co-operatives and financial institutions.<sup>3</sup> The Regime imposed the exclusive use of the Italian language at school, outlawed political parties and prohibited the speaking of Slovene in public. It curtailed the employment of Slovenes in the public service, 'italianised' all names of roads and localities and in 1928 even forced Slovenes and Croats to 'italianise' their names and surnames. In the Province of Trieste alone, 3,000 surnames were 'modified' and 60,000 people had their surname, and often even their name amended to an Italian-sounding form.<sup>4</sup> In its effort to achieve a 'bonifica etnica' (ethnic reclaiming), Fascism favoured the emigration of Slovenes, especially if they were teachers or intellectuals. Slovene estimates claim that between the two World Wars 105,000 Slovenes and Croats left Italian Venezia Giulia, Istria and Dalmatia.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that a deep sense of resentment and hatred developed among Slovenes and Croats, who were compelled to maintain their cultural traditions in the privacy of their families or at secret meetings. Their hostility for whatever was Fascist or Italian found an unavoidable outlet in terrorism and sabotage. The first terrorist organization, TIGR (from the initials of Trieste, Istria, Gorizia, Rijeka), which aiming to combat Italian rule and defend Slovene identity, was established at the end of 1927, while the first armed assault on Slav supporters of the Italian Regime took place at Monte Camus, near Pisino in Istria, on 24 March 1929. Of the five attackers apprehended, four were sentenced to 30-year jail terms and one, Vladimir Gortan, to death. Gortan was executed on 17 October 1929. Between 1927 and 1932, the Fascist Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State sentenced 106 Slav people to jail terms totalling 1,124 years. On 6 September 1930, four Slovenes were executed at Basovizza, near Trieste, after been found guilty of bomb attacks. The *Corriere della Sera* reported on 4 April 1931 that, during the previous four months, Slav resistance had committed 15 murders and 30 armed attacks, burned 18 schools and factories and perpetrated 8 acts of terrorism and 4 of espionage.<sup>6</sup> Between 1939 and September 1943, of the 35 executions by firing squad carried out against anti-Fascists at Forte Bravetta, in Rome, 18 involved people born in the provinces of Trieste, Gorizia, Pola and Fiume. Two were Croats, the rest Slovenes ' harbouring hostile feelings against Italy' as testified by the Police at their trial.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the most emblematic instance of the Fascist policy of brutal repression of Slovene irredentism was what Slovene historiography later called the Second Trieste Trial. From 2-14 December 1941, the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State arraigned sixty Slovenes who were accused of espionage and sabotage. Four were found not guilty, nine were condemned to death and the others were sentenced to jail terms totalling 666 years. Five of the nine were executed the following day at Opicina, near Trieste, and the remaining four had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. The Public Prosecutor called for exemplary sentencing because, as he put it, 'more than punishing individual culpability, we must re-establish the primacy of civilisation and demonstrate the guilt of an entire people, incapable of submitting itself to a State and an elect Nation that rears civilisation... all Slovenes are guilty until they remain Slovene'.<sup>8</sup>

The vicious German air bombardment of Belgrade on Easter Sunday, 6 April 1941, and the invasion by the Italian Army of Slovenia and Croatia on 11 April, brought about the collapse of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. On 17 April the Yugoslav plenipotentiaries signed unconditional surrender to the German Army in Belgrade, and the former Kingdom was carved up among the victors. On 3 May 1941, in violation of international law that barred the annexation of conquered territories while fighting continued on, Italy seized 5,242 square kilometres of Slovenia and its 380,000 inhabitants, calling it the Province of Lubiana. Dalmatia, including the islands of Arbe and Veglia, for a total area of 5,381 square kilometres and a population of 380,000 people, of whom 280,000 were Croat, 90,000 Serb and 5,000 Italian, was also incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy.<sup>9</sup> For the following 29 months, the Italian Regime would have within its borders approximately 700,000 Slovenes, that is, almost half the entire Slovene nation.

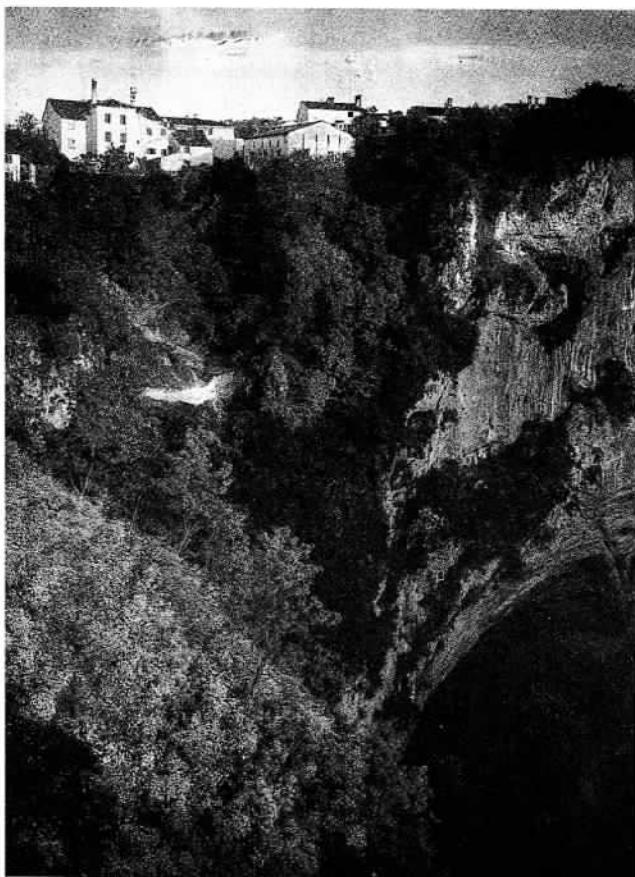
After 1941 the German and Italian aggression mobilised a large part of the Serb, Slovene and Croat people behind the emerging partisan movement, the leadership of which was soon monopolised by Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party by reason of its nationalist as well as socialist aims. This was also the case for Slovenes and Croats in Istria and Venezia Giulia, who saw in the partisans the defenders of their independence as well as the carriers of social revolution. Slovene and Croat resistance attracted brutal

counter-insurgency measures on the part of the Fascist regime. More than 65,000 Army, Black Shirts and *Carabinieri* were employed in the Province of Lubiana in an attempt to destroy the *Osvobodilna Fronta* (Liberation Front).

Mussolini, during a visit to Gorizia on 31 July 1942, outlined the policy of repression to be followed by military authorities. In a meeting with Marshal Ugo Cavallero and generals Ambrosio, Roatta and Robotti, he stated that 'I believe we must respond to partisan "terror" with a policy of fire-and-brimstone ("ferro e fuoco") ... This people will never love us. Do not worry about the economic suffering inflicted upon the population. They have asked for it. Now they must pay ... I would not oppose the mass transfer of the population. A few days earlier, on 26 June 1942, General Mario Robotti, commanding the XI Army Corps in Slovenia and Dalmatia, had declared that 'Italy's dominion and prestige must be restored at any price, even if the entire Slovene population disappear and Slovenia is destroyed'.<sup>10</sup>

It is in the light of these events which preceded the Italian armistice of 8 September 1943, the collapse of the Italian Army and of civil administration in Venezia Giulia, Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia and the occupation by the German Army of these provinces, that one must consider the tragic events which unfolded between 1943 and 1956, events which for decades left a deep scar in the social and political psyche of both Italians and Slovenes and Croats still living in these provinces. This scar has not only affected economic, political, social and cultural interchange, but also the dispassionate historical examination of what really happened and why. Only in 1994, almost fifty years after the cessation of hostilities, the Italian and the Slovene Governments appointed a Mixed Commission of historians, seven from each country, to study the past without political *strumentalizzazioni* (exploitation to one's benefit) or hidden agendas. After six years, the Mixed Commission produced a document, *Dossier Italia-Slovenia. 1880-1956*, which details the points of agreement and those of dissent, in the interpretation of the history of this period. The report, published by the newspapers *Il Piccolo* and *Primorski Dnevnik* of Trieste on 4 April 2001<sup>11</sup>, is an important document which will assist in exorcising the hatreds of the past and in creating necessary bridges towards a future of reconciliation.

Both sides often find hard to admit and



ABOVE The *foibe* of Pisino is the largest of over one hundred of natural cavities in the region of Istria. It is also one of the most ill-famed.

(Modiano Collection).

accept this embattled history. As remarked in April 2001 by Italian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Umberto Ranieri, 'Trieste anyhow has so far demonstrated itself still to be the "soft belly", unable to metabolise its most recent past'.<sup>12</sup> Also on the Slovene side the 40 days temporary occupation of Trieste in May-June 1945 and its failed annexation have created a 'black hole' in the historical memory of that nation. The disappointment for and the reluctance to speak of the 'vittoria mutilata' (mutilated victory), of the humiliating retreat from Trieste by the militarily victorious partisan army, repelled by international diplomacy, comes out starkly in the interviews of former Slovene partisans carried out in 1990 by historian Marta Verginella.<sup>13</sup> Her finding is endorsed by Triestine historian Giampaolo Valdevit, who makes the observation that 'the "vittoria mutilata", that is the 40 days, is the only undocumented episode in a historical account in which continuity is the norm. Incidentally, if we find this lack of memory [on the Slovene side, n.d.a.], on the Italian side we do not; on the contrary, it is something of which the Italian historical memory is full. (I refer... to the 40 days and most of all to the episode of the *infoibamenti*) (killings in the *foibe*)'.<sup>14</sup>

The *foibe*, natural cavities that stud the countryside around Trieste and Istria where, in 1943 and again in 1945, Tito's partisan

army threw, alive or after a summary execution, Italian and German prisoners-of-war and civilians, Italian as well as Slovene, who were considered compromised with Fascism or enemies of the new Yugoslav political order, is still a burning issue in the historical memory of Trieste and of the hundreds of thousands of Italians who had to flee from the areas occupied by Tito's forces.

Following the collapse of the Fascist Regime, the partisan movement took control of the whole of Istria and, between 9 September and 13 October 1943, a number of Italians were arrested, summarily tried and executed by *infoibamento*. Their number is difficult to estimate, but most studies agree that they total 500-700 people, of whom only 325 have been fully identified.<sup>15</sup> This campaign of terror and of settling old scores, political and in some cases personal, generated fear for their safety among most Italians living in the coastal towns of Istria.

The nightmare for the Italian community ended when the Wehrmacht, assisted by contingents of Italian Black Shirts, swept through Venezia Giulia and Istria and by 13 October recaptured these areas. The German High Command, following Hitler's order 'mercilessly to crush the Slovene Communist insurrection in Istria', employed considerable force: the 162th Turkmen division, the 71st infantry division, the 24th armoured division Waffen SS Karstjager, the 44th division Prinz Eugen and a brigade of SS. On 10 September Hitler also established the *Operationszone Adriatisches Kustenland*, the Zone of Operations of the Adriatic Littoral, effectively annexing to the Third Reich Venezia Giulia and Istria, and nominated as its Gauleiter the Carinthian Friedrich Reiner. The *rastrellamento* (rounding up) in Istria, allegedly supervised by the Triestine-born, SS Polizeiführer Odilo Globocnik, the butcher of 1.65 million Jews in Lublin, was particularly brutal, inflicting 13,000 casualties on the partisan army and the Slav civilian population.<sup>16</sup> Despite these terrible losses, the German sweep had the effect of galvanising Croat and Slovene resistance. Partisan officers sent by Tito to Istria to re-organise resistance activities following the mauling of his forces, were surprised to find among local Croat and Slovene men, women and even children, an unflinching determination to fight not only for their delivery from German and Italian oppression, but for the irredentist and nationalist aim to liberate what they considered to be their lands and for their

return to a Yugoslavia under a Communist regime.<sup>17</sup>

From 1943 to 1945 the partisan war in the provinces annexed by Italy assumed a particularly savage character. In a speech made by Marshal Tito at Okroglica, near Gorizia, on 6 September 1953, he listed what he called 'an incomplete, indeed a very incomplete balance sheet of crimes' perpetrated by the Italian Army against the people of Yugoslavia. In it, he claimed that 'the Italian Army ... caused material damage amounting to no less than 9,850,000,000 American dollars. The armies of Italy murdered 437,956 persons in Yugoslavia. They sent to forced labour 84,512 persons, and 109,437 to concentration camps, while 122,430 people were deported. The Italian Army destroyed 142,555 village dwelling houses'.<sup>18</sup> Distinguished Triestine historian and diplomat Diego De Castro, in his book *Memorie di un novanterne*, commented on Tito's claims as follows: 'naturally, these figures cannot be the real ones because it is impossible, in situations like this one, to be precise to the single unit. However, it can be stated that, on the whole, they reflect the real situation'.<sup>19</sup>

Recent studies by Italian historians have more accurately documented Italian repression in Slovenia. By 1 February 1943, 24,378 civilian Slovenes were interned in some 200 concentration camps in Italy, including approximately 18% of the entire population of Lubiana.<sup>20</sup> Other Slovene civilians were interned on the island of Arbe (Rab), where conditions were horrific. Data from the Historical-Military Archive in Belgrade account for 9,537 internees, 7,293 of whom were from the provinces of Lubiana and Fiume (Rijeka). Of these, 4,958 were men, 1,296 women and 1,039 children.<sup>21</sup> The names of 1,435 who died of hunger, cold, illness and deprivation are known. Italian historian Carlo Spartaco Capogreco claims that 'this number represents over 19% of Arbe's Slav internees, and is higher than the average mortality rate of the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald, which was 15%. However, Monsignor Jozef Srebnik, Bishop of Veglia (Krk), on 5 August 1943 reported to Pope Pius XII that 'witnesses, who took part in the burials, state unequivocally that the number of the dead totals at least 3,500'.<sup>22</sup> The mortality rate among the 24,378 Slovene civilians detained in the concentration camps in Italy was also very high, approaching 7,000, according to some historians.<sup>23</sup> Between 1 January and 31 May 1943, there were 805 deaths in the camps at Arbe, Visco, Gonars, Monigo,



Tito's partisans guard Trieste from the roofs.

Chiesanuova, Renicci and Fiume.<sup>24</sup>

The moment of victory for the partisans came in April 1945 with the routing of the German forces and their Fascist allies (units of Junio Valerio Borghese's Decima Mas were then operating in Venezia Giulia and Istria), the westwards race towards the Isonzo river, in an attempt to wrestle from the Anglo-Americans as much territory as possible, and the occupation of Trieste, Gorizia and Fiume on 30 April, 1 May and 2 May respectively. Zara had already been entered by Tito's forces on 31 October 1944.

For 40 days the partisans were in complete political, military and administrative control of Trieste, while the British and New Zealand forces, who also had occupied Trieste in the afternoon of 2 May, stood by without intervening to stop the wanton arrests of some 17,000 people and the executions carried out by OZNA (*Oddelek Zascite Naroda*, or Section for the Defence of the People), the Yugoslav secret police, which in the preceding two years had index-carded more than 10,000 real and suspected Italian and Slovene collaborators with Fascism.

During these 40 days the Yugoslav Army carried out what the *Dossier Italia-Slovenia. 1880-1956* has called 'an operation of State violence Italian anti-Fascists and people in uniform, symbols of the Italian State, as well as Slovene anti-Communists and often people innocent, except that they were Italian, were arrested, sometimes tortured and executed by *infoibamento*. Many others were deported to concentration camps deep inside Slovenia and Croatia, the most infamous being the one at Borovnica, near Lubiana where, from June to September 1945, according to Italian sources, about seven of the over 2000 internees perished daily. Incidentally, it is a tragic irony that the camp commandant

Departure of the ship *Castel Verde* from Trieste in 1954. Aboard are many Italian refugees from Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia bound for Australia.



In 1945-46, Ciro Raner, a former Sergeant in the Italian Army, indicted for murder and war crimes committed at Borovnica, since 1987 drew from the Italian National Institute for Social Security (INPS) a monthly pension of 569.750 Lire.<sup>25</sup> Other camps for civilian as well as military internees were situated at Aidussina, Bricko-Banovic, Crikvenica, Curzola, Grobničko, Idrija, Kočevje, Lubiana, Maresego, Markovici, Martisnizza, Mitrovica, Prestrane, Ragusa, Sisak (Zagabria), Teodo (Dalmatia), Tolmino and Vipacco.

To estimate the exact number of the victims of *infoibamento* is extremely difficult. Some estimates range from 12,000 to 16,500, but include people unaccounted for. The most reliable figures range between 4,000 and 5,000 people.<sup>26</sup> The *Dossier Italia-Slovenia. 1880-1956* makes brief mention of the 'hundreds of summary executions – the victims were in general thrown in the foibe – and of the deportation of a large number of the military and of civilians, some of whom died of deprivation or liquidated during transfer, in jail or in the concentration camps'.<sup>27</sup>

On 12 June the Yugoslav Ninth Korpus and units of the fourth Army had to pull back from Trieste, following strong diplomatic pressure from the British and American Governments and lack of support from the Soviet Union. On this decision, Tito later on bitterly wrote that 'today I can say ... that while we were fighting with ourselves whether to take the terrible decision to abandon Trieste or not, we did not receive

any moral help, any signal, from the Soviet Union. Night after night I sat near the telephone, waiting for at least a word, some advice. We heard nothing, because their interests were not affected directly'.<sup>28</sup>

After the withdrawal of the Ninth Korpus and of the Fourth Army from Trieste on 12 June 1945, the following day the Yugoslav Army pulled back also from Pola. On 12 June 1945, the Allies established the Allied Military Government (AMG), with headquarters at Udine. A new border was agreed on between Tito and the Allies at the Paris Peace Conference, with the creation of the Free Territory of Trieste on 3 July 1946, divided in two zones, the A Zone, administered by the American and British forces, and the B Zone, under Yugoslav control. Italy, by signing the Peace Treaty on 10 February 1947, relinquished all of Istria, most of Venezia Giulia, Fiume and all Dalmatian possessions, including the islands of Cherso and Lussino.

The loss of these territories prompted a mass exodus by ethnic Italians, who were innocent victims of a concerted strategy of terror on the part of the Yugoslav authorities. Milovan Djilas, who was a member of Tito's inner group, admitted to it in an interview given in 1991 to the magazine *Panorama*. In 1946 he and Edward Kardelj, then Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs, went to Istria to organise anti-Italian propaganda. 'Our task', he said, 'was to pressure all Italians to leave. And this is what was done'.<sup>29</sup>

The military and political events of 1944–45 led to the uprooting in Europe of some twelve million people,<sup>30</sup> and it is in this context that the exodus of between 200,000 and 350,000 people caused by the Yugoslav annexation of the former Italian territories must be seen. This flight had begun even before the end of the war. Zara, which suffered 54 aerial bombings and was almost entirely flattened by the Allies between 2 November 1943 and 31 October 1944, saw its Italian population reduced from 21,000 people to 3,000, following the occupation of the city by Tito's forces in November 1944 and their summary execution of 900 Italians.<sup>31</sup>

On the night of 2 and 3 May 1945, Fiume was occupied by vanguards of the Yugoslav Army. Here summary trials and executions also took place of more than 500 Fascists, collaborators, Italian military and public servants, as well as anti-Fascists and innocent people.<sup>32</sup> Fiume was the first centre where a mass exodus began almost immediately. By January 1946, more than 20,000 people had left the province of Fiume, and the Opera per l'Assistenza ai Profughi Giuliano-Dalmata (OP) in 1958 tallied 31,840 departures from the city, although their number could have escalated to 55,000 if one considers that many averted the census.<sup>33</sup> Pola was occupied by the Yugoslav Army on 1 May 1945, and soon after was put under the military administration of the AMG. However, by 1947, when the city was annexed by Yugoslavia under the terms of the Paris Peace Treaty, of the 34,000 Italian inhabitants, over 30,000 elected to leave their ancestral homes and take refuge in Italy.

In all, the Italian exodus between 1944 and 1947 is difficult to quantify precisely. The OP census listed 201,440 people, including the 38,937 Italians who left the territories of the B Zone transferred to Yugoslavia in October 1954 as a result of the signing of the Memorandum of London. However, the number of the *esuli* may have been 50% higher, as previously mentioned. The *Dossier Italia-Slovenia* refers to 200–300,000 people. Approximately 36,000 Italians remained under Yugoslav sovereignty.<sup>34</sup>

The return of Trieste and what was left of the A Zone to Italy on 26 October 1954 marked the conclusion of the territorial dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia and the end of the diaspora for people from Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia. Some 65,000 *esuli* found a new home in Trieste

and the remainder emigrated to overseas countries or settled in other Italian regions.<sup>35</sup> Between 1953 and 1956, a new mass migration took place, this time of *triestini*, at least 18,647 of whom, or 10% of the population left, mostly for Canada and Australia, displaced by the uncertain political future for the city, by the competition for employment and housing created by the *esuli* and by the sudden disappearance of the income which the presence of the Anglo-American forces represented for the Triestine economy.<sup>36</sup> Their suspicion that the London Memorandum included clauses that had ambiguously settled the future of the A Zone, and therefore their personal future, was not unfounded. Only the Treaty of Osimo, on 10 November 1975, resolved the contentious issue of sovereignty over these lands.

However, despite bombastic nationalist propaganda to the contrary, Italy's public protestations to unflinchingly defend Trieste and its surrounding territory as an integral part of the nation in reality were never rock-solid. In May 2004, former Italian President, Francesco Cossiga, revealed that, during the late 1970s, when he was Prime Minister, the Italian Government had approved a contingency plan, called *Piano Alabarda* (Halberd Plan), contemplating that, following the death of Marshal Tito (which took place in Ljubljana, on 4 May 1980), the Soviet Union would probably invade Yugoslavia and the former A Zone, taking back what the Western Powers had conceded at Yalta. In that event, Italy would not invoke a NATO nuclear intervention in defence of Trieste and, according to Cossiga, 'the plan predicated that, upon the entry in Yugoslavia by the Red Army, (Italian) military units would withdraw from Trieste and Venezia Giulia. Left behind, the Questore, Police and Carabinieri would maintain order and public safety until Soviet troops took over these functions'.<sup>37</sup> With the wisdom of hindsight, it was for the best that many *triestini* wisely chose the challenge of a new, fortunate life in the lucky country, via the camps at Bagnoli and Bonegilla, Australia, rather than risking a repeat of the horrifying past experiences at Borovnica.

As playwright David Williamson recently pointed out, with reference to the current war in Iraq, 'no Army in history has managed an invasion without barbarism and torture emerging as an inevitable part of the process'.<sup>38</sup> This was certainly the case for the Italian invasion of Slovenia and Croatia in 1941, and for the terrible partisan reprisals in 1943–45. Needless to say, war

criminals, on both sides, went unpunished at the end of the war. As with the previously mentioned Ciro Raner, all former members of the Ninth Korpus indicted of war crimes, among them, to name a few, Franc Pregelj, Josip Osgnac, Nerino Gobbo, Giorgio Sfiligoj and Mario Toffanin, escaped justice. They, too, like Ciro Raner, by reason of an unbelievable bureaucratic bungle, were recipients, until their death, of a social security pension from the Italian Government.<sup>39</sup>

Likewise, Italians indicted of war crimes did not undergo trial. The High Commissioner for the Province of Lubiana, Emilio Grazioli, on 24 August 1942 advocated 'the harshest line possible' against the Slovene population, including its mass deportation and replacement with Italian settlers to make, as he put it, Italy's ethnic border coincidental with its natural border. He was detained in 1945 for two murders committed near Ravenna, but not for his depredation in Slovenia. Released soon after, Grazioli disappeared into anonymity.<sup>40</sup> The General commanding the XI Army in Slovenia, Mario Robotti, who on 9 August 1942 reprimanded his officers because 'we are not killing enough', after the war died in his bed, ignored by criminal justice investigators.<sup>41</sup> The same could be said for General Mario Roatta, who was the author of the infamous Circular 3C, dated 1 March 1942, ordering the XI Army Corps to burn or destroy entire villages, execute all men found near military operations, take and execute hostages and prisoners and deport the entire population. In March 1945, Roatta went on trial in Rome for the murder of the Rosselli brothers, King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister, Louis Barthou – but not for crimes allegedly committed in 1942, while he was in charge of the Second Army of Occupation of Slovenia and Dalmatia, code-named SUPER-SLODA. On 4 March 1945, he escaped from jail and sought asylum in Franco's Spain. Sentenced to life imprisonment *in absentia*, soon after he was pardoned and returned to Rome, where he died in 1948.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of the conflict, the War Crimes Commission of the United Nations compiled a Central Register of War Criminals and Security Suspects, code-named CROWCASS. The Registry of War Criminals-Consolidated Wanted List, detailed the Name, Date of Birth, Rank, Occupation, Unit Place, Date of Crime and Reason Wanted of 1,200 Italians, accused of war crimes committed in Africa, the Balkans and Slovenia. In April 2000, a copy of the Register was

discovered at the Wiener Library in London by historian Caterina Abbati. None of the 1,200 individuals had ever been brought to trial, and the same criminal negligence was perpetuated even after CROWCASS was made accessible to anyone on the internet.<sup>43</sup> As was the case for many German war criminals, apart from those committed at the Nuremberg Trials, indicted Italians avoided retribution for their alleged crimes. Justice required the handing over of these people, but Cold War expediency before the collapse of the Soviet Union, on 8 December 1991, and a conspiracy of silence thereafter, militated against it.<sup>44</sup>

In 1946, the new republic had pledged to extradite suspected war criminals to countries where the crimes had been committed; there was a commission of enquiry, denunciations and arrest warrants. It was a charade. Extraditions would anger voters who still revered the military, and would thwart efforts to portray Italy as the victim of Fascism. Civil servants were told in blunt language to fake the quest for justice. On 19 January 1948, Prime Minister, Alcide De Gasperi, instructed them to 'Try to gain time, avoid answering request'. In 1989, eminent military historian Giorgio Rochat commented that 'there remains in Italian culture and public opinion the idea that basically we were colonialists with a human face'.<sup>45</sup> The same myth is predominant even today.

The events of 1943-1956 left an indelible mark on the historic memory of the people of Slovenia and of Venezia Giulia, Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the opening of the previously inaccessible Soviet archives, with the granting of access by Slovenia to the archives of the Ninth Korpus in Lubiana, and with the research carried out for six years, between 1994 and 2000, by the team of fourteen historians who comprised the Italo-Slovenian Mixed Commission that drafted the *Dossier Italia-Slovenia 1880-1956*, much light has been cast on the terrible history of this period.

However, more work must be done by historians, who have so far only partially consulted the Belgrade archives of AVNOJ, the Yugoslav Army, and of OZNA, the Yugoslav secret police, that presumably store valuable information. Despite the obvious gaps, some general conclusions can be drawn on the persecution of and the forced exodus by the Italian communities of Venezia Giulia, Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia. These communities have paid the horrible

price of martyrdom and of physical, emotional, cultural and economic uprooting for five main reasons.

In the first place, twenty years of Fascist oppression, of de-nationalisation, of annexation of territories that historically had been exclusively peopled by the Slavs, sowed among the latter the seeds of hatred and a yearning for revenge. Besides, Fascist propaganda, which incessantly peddled the foolish axiom that to be Italian was tantamount to be Fascist, had the perverse effect of providing Slovenes and Croats with the ideological motivation to carry out their policy of de-nationalising towns and territories for centuries inhabited by Venetian and Italian-speaking communities. These communities were the first to pay the price of military defeat and of mindless Fascist nationalism.

Secondly, they were the only ones to pay, literally in many cases, with their blood, for the Slav military and political backlash, and for the Communist quest to establish a new regime and a new social order. In this context, it is pertinent to speak, as the *Dossier Italia-Slovenia* does, not of a concerted effort of ethnic cleansing, but of 'repression by a revolutionary movement which was transforming itself into a regime, and so transforming into State violence the national and ideological animosity that was permeating partisan cadres'.<sup>46</sup> There is incontrovertible archival evidence that points out to a mix of factors which motivated Tito's partisans to act as they did. The foremost reason was to meet the grassroots, irredentist demand by the Slovene and Croat minorities to re-unite with the motherland. Also, the appeal of Communism, of Slav solidarity with the Soviet Union as the only bulwark against international Capitalism and Fascism, offered the ideological framework for the eradication or the liquidation of those Italians who were perceived as being bourgeois, oppressors and Fascist. This perception was, if not justifiable, certainly understandable, if one considers that 40% of people in Trieste were card carrying members of the Italian National Fascist Party. Besides, Marxist doctrine, as interpreted by the Yugoslav elite, maintained that the Italian coastal cities,

to operate in a functional dependence on the proletarian masses of the Slav countryside.

Therefore, the executions, deportations and the de-nationalising measures taken by Tito's partisans in Trieste, Fiume, Istria and

Dalmatia in 1943-1945 were motivated by revenge for past injustice and oppression, by the urge to payback the Fascist element, by a concerted effort to physically eliminate the Italian intellectual leadership, in order to curb the community's future effectiveness as a political and social force and by liquidating the Slav nationalist, *domobranci* (Slovenians who joined the German Army), and the anti-Communist opposition. They also pursued a strategy of expelling Italians from coastal areas and immediately filling the empty houses and villages with Slav people. Beside, confusion and anarchy characterised the rapid advance of Tito's forces, favouring, in many cases, wanton and unbridled criminal acts. For instance, recently unearthed Slovene documents on the 40 days of the partisan occupation of Trieste reveal that 'the situation went out of the hand of the political authorities and that the leadership soon realised the possibly harmful effects of the policy of terror, and tried to control it, but with little success. OZNA, impregnated by the mentality of the Soviet NKVD, proved itself a totally autonomous body, perhaps under the influence of Belgrade, but certainly not of the leadership of the Slovene Communist Party. In the final analysis, the events of 1945, as underlined by historian Raoul Pupo in an important study on the *foibe*, 'are part of the process of the coming to power in Yugoslavia of the partisan movement under Communist leadership, by revolutionary means and through a war of liberation that was also a civil war, carried out at such a level of intensity that it cannot be compared with the Italian situation, and with a legacy of armed clashes and mass killings that lasted until 1946'.<sup>47</sup>

In the third place, the Italian population of these regions paid the price of being the pawn in a complex and deadly game of brinkmanship between the Great Powers, which was at the origin of the Cold War. The permanent loss of territories conquered by Tito's army and the containment of Yugoslavia by the postulated but never fully realised creation of the buffer that was the Free Territory of Trieste was the price paid by an Italy defeated in the Second World War.

Fourthly, the loss of these regions and the grim fate of its Italian population were met with remarkable lack of interest by Italian public opinion, selfishly relieved by the fact that the Giuliano-Dalmati were the only ones to pay for Fascism's war. This attitude often attracted the accusation that Italy, in an exercise of collectively induced historical amnesia, which Luciano Violante,

RIGHT Virgilio Pigo (second from left) and fellow migrants at the port of Trieste awaiting embarkation on the ship *Toscana* bound for Australia. April 30, 1955.



President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, called 'the fruit of a consideration of convenience'<sup>48</sup> did everything possible to deny to itself the existence of this tragedy. While the rest of Italy overcame the trauma of war and went forward, the Giuliano-Dalmati could not escape from the consequences of terror, violence, persecution and uprooting.

Finally, the Giuliano-Dalmati paid the price of defeat by being forced to emigrate twice: the first time from their ancestral homes, to flee to Italy, and subsequently, for many of them, to abandon Italy itself, to escape from indifference (when it was not outright distrust) and need, and seek fortune in distant, foreign lands. In the wake of the Fascist delusion, they were again a victim of the ill-placed belief, as eminent Triestine historian Fabio Cusin bitterly remarked in 1946, that 'as they did not know ... the truth about Italian history and character, they held an unrealistic opinion which was identifying a caring and sentimental Italy in that old State, controlled by an execrable oligarchy and ruled by the most inept ruling elite ... They wanted to know only an Italy with the *bersaglieri* feathers and the unsheathed sword.'<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, the events of 1943-1956 are tragic and traumatic, and cannot, must not, be forgotten. To this effect, the initiative recently taken by the Trieste City Council and IRCI (Regional Institute of Istrian, Dalmatian and Fiume's Civilisation) to establish in Trieste a Museum of the Civilisation of Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia,

to remember the exodus and past events to the benefit of future generations, must be welcomed.<sup>50</sup> However, it is important *di non dimenticare ma superare* – not to forget but to look forward – but to come to terms with *un passato che non passa* – a past that refuses to go. If it is true, as stated by former Slovenian President Milan Kucan, that 'Trieste, until Fascism, was a centre of modernity and of contact, not a frontier. Fascism transformed it into a frontier, and since then the city has not liberated itself from this connotation'<sup>51</sup>, it is also true that today Trieste is again at the centre of Europe, following the collapse of the ideological barriers at the end of the Twentieth Century. The inclusion of Slovenia and of most Eastern European countries in the European Union is again making of Trieste and the entire region *un punto d'incontro, non di scontro* – a point of contact, not of conflict – between different civilisations and cultures, as indeed it was under the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

As Manlio Cecovini, a former Mayor of Trieste cogently stated when the *Dossier Italia-Slovenia 1880-1956* was published, 'the Slovenes are as civilised as we are, and have been living next to us for more than one thousand years. Hasn't the time come to understand, tolerate and respect each other? Do we want to put past history on trial? Do we seek redress for our grievances? We are not the first, nor the luckiest to lodge this claim. The war ended more than half a century ago. We must do something to earn peace'.<sup>52</sup> To earn it, one must know, and to know means to understand, to understand is to forgive, and to forgive is to live in peace, in the first place with oneself. A task this, which is still challenging the *sloveni* in Slovenia, Croats in Istria and Italian *giuliani, dalmati, istriani e fiumani* in Trieste as well as in the diaspora.

This consideration brings us back to Eric Hobsbawm, and to the sometime taxing role for an historian to expose unpalatable facts. Even if the tragic events affecting the Italian and Slovene minorities on the North Eastern border of Italy during the last Century are still fresh in the collective memory of both sides, they have been instrumental, in the words of historian Giampaolo Valdevit, in 'unveiling' the reality of the existence of the 'other' minority, its vision of events, its plea for redressing past injustice, and for both minorities to come to terms with a different, wider and more complex world.<sup>53</sup> The clock of history was not irretrievably stopped in 1945. To pretend it was, is to deny the present and, more significantly, to despair of the future. Rather,

it is a matter of establishing a social, political and historical meeting point between 'us' and 'them', even if this simplification is fraught with danger because, as Serb journalist Slavenka Drakulic commented with regard to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, 'once the concept of 'otherness' takes root, the unimaginable becomes possible'.<sup>54</sup>

Although these considerations can be objectionable to some, an historian can take comfort in and identify with Hobsbawm's plea 'not to disarm, even in unsatisfactory times. Social injustice still needs to be denounced and fought. The world will not get better on its own'.<sup>55</sup>

## NOTES

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Many Giuliano-Dalmati were incorrectly classified 'Jugoslavian' by the Australian authorities in official documents as in this Certificate of Registration. Eduardo Vorano arrived in Australia in 1951.

# the peter bevilacqua story

by TONY DE BOLFO IS A MELBOURNE SPORTSWRITER WITH MORE THAN 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE. HE IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF *IN SEARCH OF KINGS* (HARPER COLLINS). IN THIS SUCCESSFUL BOOK, TONY TRACES THE LIFE AND EXPERIENCES OF 108 ITALIAN MIGRANTS WHO COMPLETED THE 46-DAY JOURNEY FROM ITALY TO AUSTRALIA IN NOVEMBER 1927 ON BOARD THE SHIP *RE D'ITALIA*. TONY'S GRANDFATHER AND TWO BROTHERS WERE AMONG THE PASSENGERS.

TONY IS A LIFELONG SUPPORTER OF THE CARLTON FOOTBALL CLUB. HE HAS ALSO CO-AUTHORED THE BIOGRAPHY OF ONE OF THE CLUB'S ALL-TIME GREAT FOOTBALLERS, STEPHEN SILVAGNI.

The Carlton Football Club has long been linked with Melbourne's vibrant Italian community. The old Princes Park ground flanks what was once a tight-knit enclave of Italian migrants, who lugged their suitcases from the weather-beaten wharfs of Victoria Dock and Station Pier to the old boarding houses dotted in and around Lygon Street.

Among the migrants was Giacomo 'Jack' Silvagni, who disembarked from the *Regina d'Italia* after seven weeks at sea in September 1924. Jack eventually settled in Canning Street, but not before he'd spent his first night in the new country sleeping beneath a pile of newspapers by a Moreton Bay fig tree in Melbourne's Exhibition Gardens. Back then, no-one had heard of the "Silvagni" surname. Today it's as much a part of the Carlton vernacular as the club's re-worked lyrics of *Lily of Laguna*.

Jack's son Sergio is a first generation Australian of Italian origin, as are Serge's League contemporaries like Albert Mantello. So too is Robert DiPierdomenico, Tony Liberatore and more recently Peter Riccardi, Saverio and Anthony Rocca and the Carlton captain Anthony Koutoufides, whose mother Anna was born in the Northern Italian town of Arcade. In fact, of the 113 senior VFL/AFL footballers known to have been born overseas in the 107 years since the competition's formation, none is listed as having been born in Italy.

But there is one, Peter Bevilacqua.

Peter's story, told for the first time, surfaced after the Carlton Football Club Historical Committee's statistician Stephen Williamson issued the challenge

to locate his whereabouts in early July. The breakthrough came a few days later, following a chance conversation with friend and fellow researcher Lorenzo Iozzi. Lorenzo just happened to ask what was currently occupying my curiosity and when I told him it involved a Carlton footballer named Peter Bevilacqua, Lorenzo's jaw dropped. 'Peter Bevilacqua? My brother married his sister,' he told me. By day's end and with Lorenzo's assistance, I had secured a telephone number for one P. Bevilacqua. I made the call, Peter answered and after hearing my reasons for making contact, made the following revelation. 'I always thought I was the first and only Italian-born League footballer ... in fact I've suspected it for some time,' Peter said. 'I've often mentioned it as a trivia question. Who is the only Italian born VFL, VFA and senior soccer player?' People haven't got the foggiest.'

Pietro Paolo Bevilacqua was born at San Marco in Lamis, in the province of Foggia, on the south-eastern side of Italy flanking the Adriatic Sea. He was so named because his birthday fell on the feast day of St Peter and St Paul – June 29, 1933. Curiously, Peter's date of birth was registered with the local municipality two days later on July 1 and is the date which has appeared on all his official papers in the seven decades since.

Peter's father, Raffaele, was one of thirteen children born to Angela and Antonio Bevilacqua in San Marco in Lamis in July 1897, the year the Victorian Football League was formed. In September 1922, Raffaele exchanged marriage vows with Carolina Villani at the local San Marco registry. Carolina presented Raffaele with their first child, Antonio (Anthony), in July the following year, and another son, Giuseppe (Joe), in February 1925.

Raffaele was a farmer by profession, whose life changed inexorably early in 1926. According to memoirs penned years later by his son Joe, Raffaele 'encountered three goat herders who, if no-one was about, would encourage their goats to feed from whoever's property they were passing'. 'They were not aware Raffaele was in the house,' Joe wrote. 'As the goats grazed on the food, Raffaele emerged and was involved in an altercation with one of the herders, leaving the latter slightly wounded. A few days later news was relayed to him that it would be in his interests to migrate. All agreed it was the only way out.'

Raffaele bade farewell to his pregnant

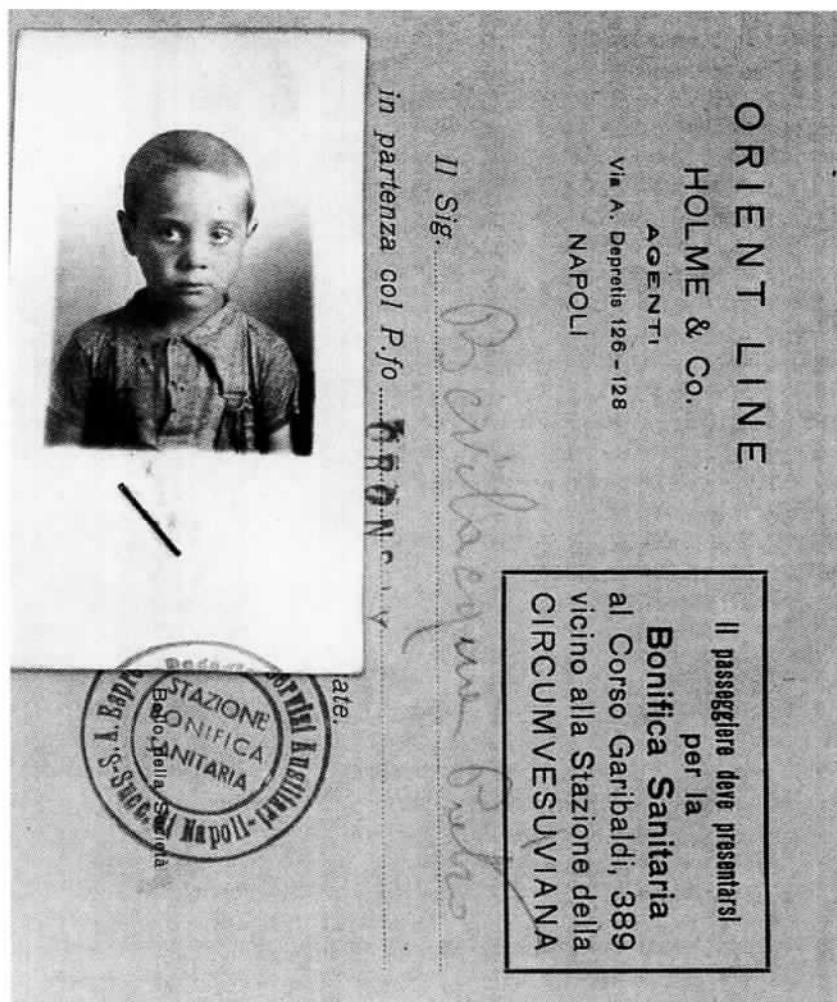
wife and two sons and trod the well-worn path to Foggia, boarding the passenger steamship *Palermo* at Naples in June 1926. He disembarked the vessel at Melbourne on August 4 that year, a little more than a month before his third son, Michele (Michael) was born.

Not long after his arrival, Raffaele obtained work in the various Gippsland locales of Maffra, Stratford, Sale, Lindenow and Bairnsdale where migrants from his old town - *Sammarchesi* as they were known - had earlier settled. Towards the end of 1928, Raffaele landed work on a property managed by an Australian of German descent. He worked the mixed farm - wheat, wool and an orchard - on his own, as attempts to send for his brother were in vain. Raffaele continued to work the property until January 1931, when word reached him of the death of his son, Joe, the previous December. He returned to Italy, reaching San Marco on the feast of San Giuseppe in March.

In January 1932, Carolina gave birth to another son, again named Giuseppe (Joe), after Carolina's father and their dead child. Eighteen months later, Pietro (Peter) was born. Not surprisingly, Peter's memories of San Marco in Lamis are few. 'I remember the dirt roads, running around outside of the house and the dirt floor in the house,' he said. 'I also remember my mother making my bed with a stick, where she used to wrap the blankets over a stick and flick them across the bed. And I remember running around with a split down the back of my pants, which was normal for we kids needing to use a toilet.'

These were hard times for the Bevilacquas, so much so that by 1935, Raffaele was confronted with yet another major decision. Mindful that the yield from his farm was struggling to meet the demands of his growing family, and aware of the growing talk of war, Raffaele again opted to turn to Australia as a future haven. In November of that year he bade farewell to Carolina and his four boys and boarded the steamship *Viminale*, disembarking at Port Melbourne in January 1936.

Upon his arrival, Raffaele took up temporary lodgings in North Melbourne's Italian enclave which surrounded the Queen Victoria Market, until he learned that work was available for a farmhand at Perricoota on the New South Wales side of the Murray River. Two years later, Raffaele managed to raise enough money to arrange for the passage to Australia of

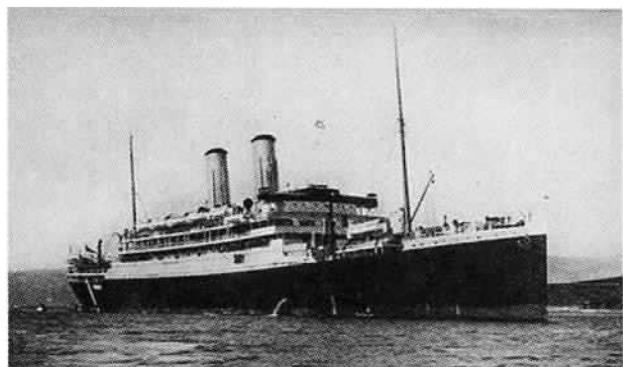


his wife and four sons. On Christmas Day, 1938, Carolina, Anthony, Michael, Joe and Peter bade farewell to San Marco in Lamis and boarded the P & O liner, *Oronsay*.

Peter again takes up the story; 'I remember leaving home with my mother and my brothers and boarding a minibus for the drive through the night to Naples,' he said. 'I remember a bit about the voyage. I befriended an English couple and by the time I got here I was speaking a reasonable amount of English. I also remember Christmas day with all the presents going out to the children, which was unexpected to say the least. The ship staff gave me a fire engine, which ended up over the side and they had to stop me jumping in after it.'

At Station Pier, Carolina and her four boys were greeted by Raffaele. Together the five family members loaded their belongings onto a family friend's Chevrolet truck and made the short trip to their temporary lodgings at 74 Docker Street, Richmond. About a week later, the Bevilacqua's boarded a train to Moama and took up residence in a rental home on the Murray. Michael, Joe and Peter were enrolled into

Peter Bevilacqua's official medical clearance form, issued prior to his departure from Naples to Melbourne aboard the SS *Oronsay* in 1938. This is the first photograph captured of Peter, aged five, as his family could not afford the luxury of a camera in the old homeland.  
Image courtesy Joseph Bevilacqua.



TOP The SS *Oronsay*, which ferried Peter Bevilacqua, his three brothers and his mother from Naples to Melbourne in December 1938.

BOTTOM The Bevilacqua family, circa 1940s Standing from left to right: Antonio and his wife Porzia (nee Cotoggio, the aunt of former Carlton footballer Vin), Carolina and Michele. Seated: Giuseppe, Raffaele and Peter. Maria sits on her father's knee.

*Image courtesy Joseph Bevilacqua.*

the local Moama school. How well Peter remembered his first day at school. 'We stood out with the Italian shorts and braces over the shoulders ... there were a few taunts and life as a whole wasn't easy. It was the start of the war,' he said.

In December 1939 the Bevilacquas relocated to Perricoota. Raffaele and Carolina shared a cottage, while the boys slept in shearers sheds nearby. As rent was a little cheaper than at Moama, Raffaele put part of his earnings to a .22 rifle, which he used for hunting rabbits. Joe and Peter improvised, rabbiting with their bare hands. The boys would chase rabbits into hollow logs and Peter would frighten them out with a stick, into the grasping hands of his older brother.

Peter and Joe furthered their schooling by cycling five kilometres to Benarca primary – a one-teacher school – but not long after World War II began in Europe and the family opted to return to Melbourne to better their conditions. In the end, they moved into a rented premises at 125 Barry Street Carlton, opposite University Square. It was October 1940. 'When we came to Melbourne we were the only Italians really there. In fact the only Italians I can recall in the area at the time were the Borsaris, who had a bike shop on the corner of Lygon and Grattan Streets,' Peter said.

'People have said 'You were more Italian than Australian', but back then I didn't know any different. I probably had more fights than feeds in Carlton because you had to look after yourself and I let any racist taunt get to me. I was probably nine at the time when a young bloke a few doors down who was three years older and a few stone heavier had a go at me. I went inside, but my mother took me to task, took me outside and made me put my fists up and say to the kid, 'You whack me and you get one back'. He never troubled me again, but I think he was more scared of Mum than me.'

The Bevilacquas settled into their new surrounds. Carolina found solace in the company of Italian migrant families a short walk away in North Melbourne; families named Sfirro, Battista, Cristoferi and Tenace, from whom the promising Geelong footballer Kane Tenace is descended. It was amid this happy environment in September 1941 that Carolina gave birth to her last child and first daughter, Angela.

Meanwhile Raffaele, having completed an initial working stint in a Victoria Street foundry, landed a job as a gardener at a Kew monastery through the assistance of father Ugo Modotti and later tended to the gardens of the Convent of the Good Shepherd in Abbotsford. Oldest son Anthony gained employment as a window frame maker in Bentleigh; Michael, then 14, went peapicking with a number of Sammarchesi to Yarra Valley locales such as Croydon, Wandin and Seville; and Peter and Joe were enrolled into St George's Catholic Primary School in Drummond Street. There they pursued all manner of sports, not the least of which was an unusual game known as Australian Rules football – a personal favourite of Peter's.

'When we came to Melbourne they put us in grade two, a month later in grade three and the next year in grade four. As a natural progression of that I got through to grade eight and was fortunate enough to win a scholarship,' Peter said. The scholarship enabled Peter to further his studies at Parade College in East Melbourne, but after just two weeks he relocated to St Joseph's North Melbourne. By then he had already developed a healthy appreciation for footy. 'I just loved the game. So too did my brother Joe. We'd previously played together at St George's and we would play together again at Yarragon when I was coaching in 1958/59,' Peter said.

Peter and Joe were indeed gifted sportsmen, but the former had no idea

as to the origins of his sporting genes. Whatever the case, Peter excelled in swimming, badminton, table tennis, football and of course, soccer. 'Soccer only came about because Juventus, then in division one, introduced an under 19 side in 1950, which was the year I and a few other Italians in and around Lygon Street and St George's Carlton joined. I also managed to play two senior matches for Juventus that year,' Peter said.

'In 1951, having played for Juventus, someone from the University Soccer Club invited me to training, and I ended up playing in a match at Fawkner Park. That same day, Uni Blues took on Melbourne High School Old Boys in a practice match at the Melbourne High School ground and after I finished playing soccer I went over to have a look. 'Duncan Anderson, a future Rhodes scholar, and probably the best full-forward in the VAFA, was playing for University that day. Someone had told him I played footy at St Kevin's so at half-time he approached me asking if I wanted to play in the second half. I accepted the invitation and kicked four goals.' Peter ultimately represented University in finals in that pivotal year of 1951 and then a premiership in '52. By then he'd matriculated from St Joseph's (through its St Kevin's Campus) and embarked on medical studies at Melbourne University.

In 1952, Peter completed his Military Service at Puckapunyal. On his return, he took up a teaching course after struggling with his medical studies. Then, towards the end of the year, he realises a childhood dream, accepting an invitation to train with the Carlton Football Club. 'I was always a Carlton supporter and memories of Carlton always come flooding back,' Peter said. 'As kids, me and a few mates used to go to watch Carlton play every week. In the outer there used to be a double gate on the boundary line at the north-east corner of the ground where a policeman used to sit on a horse. We'd open the gate for him to ride onto the ground at quarter time, three quarter time and at the end of the game. At three-quarter time we'd follow the horse out and hear Perc Bentley address the Carlton players because the cop knew that when the huddle broke up we'd race off and open the gate for him.'

'I was there for 'The Bloodbath' Grand Final of '45 between Carlton and South Melbourne at Princes Park. The crowd tore down 100 metres of fence to get in that day because the gates were locked. Back then, on the southern side of the ground,



there was a stand and it had rafters, so on Grand Final day me and a few mates literally hung from the rafters and had a bird's eye of view. I can still see the 'ray of sunshine' that took Ken Hands out and I remember seeing was one of my heroes Jimmy Mooring, the blond bombshell Ron Savage and Bert Deacon playing. Deacon was fabulous as was proven when he won the Brownlow Medal in 1947. 'When I joined Carlton, the club was first class compared with anywhere else ... back then it was a real community involving the spectators, the players and the parents.'

Peter's emergence as a Carlton footballer was recorded by *The Herald* in February 1953, which carried a photograph of the 20 year-old, sporting his Uni Blues guernsey, signing autographs for a couple of local Carlton kids. The caption read; 'Carlton recruit Peter Bevilacqua, a rover from the University Blues, caught the interest of these youngsters as they watch him write out his difficult name in their autograph books ...'.

Sporting the No.5 dark navy blue jumper, Peter turned out for the Carlton reserve grade team through season '53. He strung together a series of creditable performances and after nine rounds was on the verge of senior selection. 'I then played in a reserve grade match against Geelong and with 90 seconds to go, rolled an ankle,' Peter recalled. 'The next week I tried to disguise the injury by strapping it up and training through, but 'Mick' Price, the reserves coach, was awake to it and I wasn't considered for a call-up. In those days you were notified in writing if you were selected, but there was a note placed in my letterbox the following Friday morning saying I was unfit for selection. It took me a few more games in the reserves before I finally broke through to the seniors.'

Carlton's 1953 reserve grade premiership team, coached by 'Mick' Price. Peter Bevilacqua sits with his arms proudly folded across his guernsey in the front row, second from the right.  
Image courtesy Joseph Bevilacqua.

That came in the last week of August when the name 'Bevilacqua' was pencilled into Carlton's senior team sheet for the Round 18 match against North Melbourne at the old Arden Street ground. It was a momentous occasion for the boy from Foggia, named as 19th man for the final home and away fixture against the famous 'Shinboners'. So too for the Bevilacqua family, particularly Peter's siblings Giuseppe and Angela, who made their way to the old ground with plenty of time to spare.

While Joe had been a regular at Carlton fixtures, and was literally hanging from the rafters with Peter for "The Bloodbath", Angela had never before been to a game. Arriving at Arden Street early, Joe and Angela took their places next to the boundary fence on the eastern side of the ground. From that vantage point they saw their brother emerge from the bunker early in the third quarter – the first and last Italian-born senior League footballer known.

Peter lived the dream that day. He thought about those who had come before – men like Bob Chitty, Ern Henfry, Ken Baxter, Keith Warburton, Mooring, Savage, Hands and Deacon who all wore the Carlton guernsey with distinction. And he also wrestled with his butterflies. 'One of the difficulties in playing against North Melbourne was that the Shinboners, which included Ted Jarrard and Jock McCorkell (in their final senior appearances) and John Brady, were mostly ex-St Joseph's boys from the old school team with whom I occasionally played,' Peter said. 'As I ran out I remember Pat Kelly saying, 'Get over here you little squirt!'. It was a terrific experience and I think we actually won the game.'

Carlton did indeed take the points, 15.15 (105) to North's 14.10 (94), with Peter savouring barely 40 minutes of game time. It would prove his first and last hurrah at the elite level, as Carlton ended the 18-game home and away season fifth - three wins shy of a berth in the final four as it was then.

That September, Peter lined up for the Carlton reserve grade team, under coach Mick Price, which boasted the likes of Gerald "The Turk" Burke and Dean Jones' father Barney – aptly named too according to Peter 'because he'd rather have a fight than a kick'. Peter featured in Carlton's best players in all three matches of its successful finals series campaign. 'I got a trophy for best first year player and a

trophy for best performed player in the finals series,' he explained.

'In the Preliminary Final, Col Austen lined up on a half-back flank for Richmond and I was one of three rovers changing off him. Between the three of us we managed nine goals which was enough to get the team over the line,' Peter recalled. 'After the game, Laurie Kerr, one of the great players of his time, a real team leader and in his own way as tough as Bob Chitty, came up to me and said, 'Son, you've just got us into the Grand Final'. And we ended up beating North in the Grand Final too ... it was our 15th win from the last 16 matches of that year.'

Peter had every reason to believe 1954 would be THE year as far as his senior football was concerned. But the Victorian Education Department intervened and the 20 year-old, who had not long graduated as a teacher, was relocated to Traralgon where he met a fellow teacher and future wife Christine Underwood - herself the classic 'ten pound Pom' having migrated to Australia from South End in Essex in 1951. Of the relocation to Traralgon, Peter conceded: 'I had no say in it'. 'For the first half of '54, I caught the train up and back to play for Carlton and the club paid my fares, but after a while I was told that I couldn't play seniors unless I trained once a week,' Peter said. 'I couldn't fulfil that expectation and Carlton released me to Traralgon on the basis that if I ever returned to Melbourne I'd play for Carlton, which of course I was happy to do.'

Peter lined up for Traralgon for the last nine games of season '54, but made an immediate impact, finishing fourth in the competition's best and fairest award and helping Traralgon into the finals. The following year he was relocated to Moe where there was an influx of migrants precipitated by the expansion of the electricity generation industry. He took to the field for the Moe Football Club as assistant coach, representing the club in the finals series of 1955, the winning Grand Final of 1956 and the finals series of '57.

Peter and Christine had married in St John's East Melbourne in January 1957. Not long after, he took his bride to his new posting at a one-teacher school at Budgeree in the hills near Moe. There, in the residence provided, they began their new life and in November of that year, Christine gave birth to their first child, a daughter Robyn.

Peter furthered his football career by

coaching Yinnar in the mid-Gippsland League in 1957, then La Trobe Valley Football League outfit Yarragon in 1958 and 59. His prowess as a footballer was recognised in 1959 when he took out the Victor Trood Cup and Rodda Medal for the competition's best and fairest player.

In 1960, Peter successfully applied to join the newly-formed physical education sector of the Education Department, after returning to Melbourne University for his diploma in physical education. Peter and his family took up lodgings in a flat at Ascot Vale and, three years later, at a new house at Hadfield on land he had previously purchased. Peter also resumed his playing career with VFA club, Coburg.

By late 1961, in his capacity as Physical Education Advisor, Peter accepted the role at Essendon when the club's resident advisor left for the United States. For the next decade, Peter served under the tutelage of senior coaches John Coleman for six years, Jack Clarke (three) and John Birt (one), during which time Essendon competed in three Grand Finals (two of which involved his old team), for two premierships. 'John Coleman was a tremendous coach in that he had that uncanny ability to get the best out of a player. He got very emotional in matches and I had an excellent relationship with him,' Peter said.

Peter remembered Essendon ruckman Geoff Leek suffering an ankle injury on the Thursday night before the '62 Grand Final. 'From that moment on he had to run every four hours, including through the night, to prove his fitness. He was given an injection and managed to counter John Nicholls and Graham Donaldson, who were two great ruckmen for Carlton,' Peter said.

'Going into the Grand Final in '68, we lost Ken Fraser at full-forward and Greg Brown at full-back. We were on top in the first half, but Ron Barassi changed it all around, probably out of desperation, and it worked. The '62 and '68 Grand Finals were bitter sweet for me ... and today, whenever Carlton meets Essendon, I still tell people I can't lose.'

In late 1972, after completing a bachelor of arts degree and lecturing at the Coburg and Burwood Teachers Colleges, Peter was offered a teaching role at Marist Regional College just outside of Burnie, Tasmania. The offer was warmly received by Peter's wife Christine, whose family had settled in that area, and Peter was again on the move

– this time with his wife, daughter and three new additions – sons David (born 1962), Simon (1964) and Timothy (1966). The family settled in Somerset and in early 1973 Peter commenced duties with the college for what would be a five and a half-year tenure.

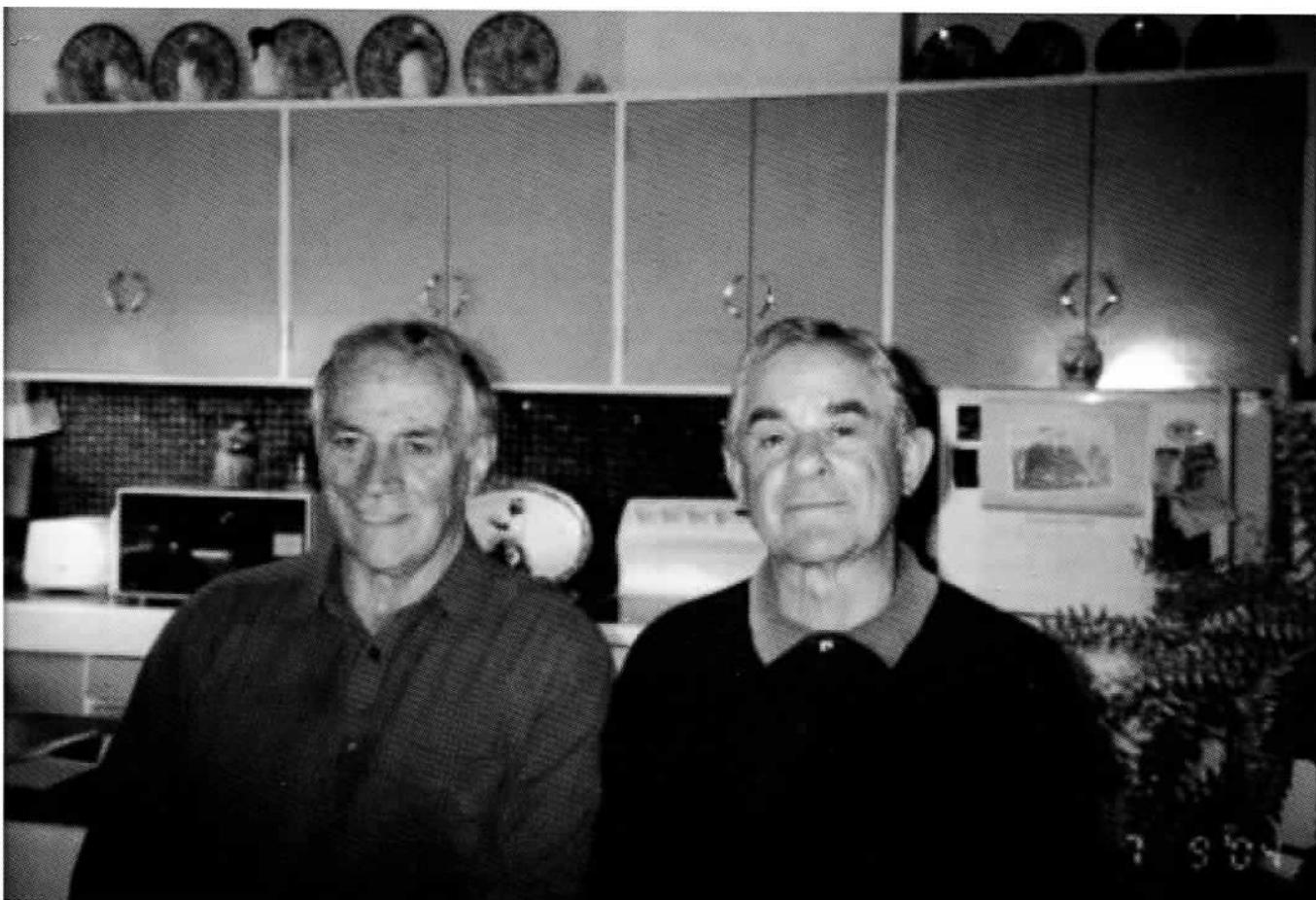
All the while, Peter maintained his involvement with football. In his first four years as coach, Marist Regional College won four consecutive Northern titles and two consecutive state titles in independent schools competitions. In 1977 Peter was appointed senior coach of North Western Football Union club, Wynyard, taking the team to ten and a half wins for the season (after just two wins the previous year) and imparting his wisdom on its players, including Colin Robertson, who would later win the 1983 Norm Smith Medal in Hawthorn's Grand Final triumph over Essendon. The following year he was named Director of Coaching in Tasmania for the Australian National League.

It irks Peter no end that as of 2004, no Tasmanian team is represented in the Australian Football League. 'It's most disturbing as I firmly believe a national team should be based out of Tasmania and would be capable of fielding a competitive team in the national competition,' Peter said. 'Melbourne can't field more than eight teams. They [the AFL] should relocate a team to Tasmania, introduce a semi-moratorium on the recruitment of Tasmanian players and foster that interstate jealousy. After all, there's something like 40 Tasmanian players currently involved in AFL competition.'

In 1981, the family again relocated to Burnie, after Peter accepted the role of Deputy Principal at Marist College. Six years later, he returned to Hobart, where he fulfilled duties as Secretary of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Employees Association.

The following year, Peter's daughter Robyn made the pilgrimage to San Marco in Lamis – 44 years after Peter bade farewell to the old home town.

Today, some 66 years after he grasped his mother's hand and strode down the well-worn gangway onto Station Pier, Peter Bevilacqua's few memories of San Marco in Lamis are revived by videotaped images he has in his keep from his older brothers. 'Unfortunately I've never been back,' he said. 'My wife and I put family before everything and there's virtually no-one left in the old town now.'



Former teammates and long-time neighbours, Peter Bevilacqua and John Chick, pictured recently in the latter's kitchen in Howrah, Tasmania.  
Image courtesy Peter Bevilacqua.

Peter's mother, Carolina, died in Melbourne in April 1987 and his father Raffaele passed away nearly three years later. Both are buried at the Melbourne General Cemetery in Carlton. Though Peter and his family have spent more than 30 years in Tasmania, his brothers Anthony, Michael and Joe, and sister Angela, together with their families, all remain in Melbourne.

Now in retirement, Peter Bevilacqua lives a full life (he still loves to swing a tennis racquet) and together with his wife Christine, panders to his four grandsons and watches them pursue their sporting activities including football, swimming and almost anything else. Peter and Christine live in the Hobart suburb of Howrah, two doors down the road from John Chick, the former Carlton vice-captain and an old teammate of Peter's from the days of '53.

It's more than half a century now since Peter completed his 40-minute cameo for Carlton ... and yet his place in football history is assured. But did he harbour any regrets with what might have been?

'I was sorry in a way, but I've helped make

a better life for my wife and my family,' Peter said. 'In the back of my mind I always believed I was good enough to make it, but I was never really able to show it ... in any event, football hasn't been good to me – it's been fantastic to me.'

# danilo jovanovitch and the italian experience in yarram, victoria

by  
**RAFFAELE  
LAMPUGNANI**

RAFFAELE LAMPUGNANI WAS BORN IN VERONA, ITALY, AND MIGRATED TO AUSTRALIA IN 1960. AFTER COMPLETING A BA AND MA DEGREE AT FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, HE TAUGHT ITALIAN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE AT FLINDERS AND LA TROBE UNIVERSITIES. HE IS CURRENTLY TEACHING AT MONASH UNIVERSITY. HIS RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE DANTE, CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN LITERATURE AND FILMS AND THE ITALIAN MIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA.

The Italian POW experience in Australia has in the past generally been analysed in positive terms by socio-historians who have considered their deployment as labourers on farms throughout Australia as a first step in the breaking down of ethnocentric attitudes and towards greater acceptance of non-British immigrants and of large-scale post war immigration policies. Claudio and Caroline Alcorso, for example, contrast the internment of citizen of Italian background (Enemy Aliens) with the POW experience and suggest that the latter proved to be positive as it had the 'unintended consequence of fostering attitudes of friendship and trust towards the Italians... setting the scene for large postwar intakes from Italy'.<sup>1</sup> A similar positive view is expressed in the documentary *Reluctant Enemies*<sup>2</sup> where broad acceptance, goodwill and developing friendship prevail. Alcorso makes the point that tolerance and respect was mutual, citing the egalitarian nature of Australian society, and the fairness of treatment of prisoners in Australia compared to other countries at war.<sup>3</sup>

More recent publications, however, have sought to redress the optimistic accounts that tend to portray events in fairly pleasant terms, both fictional<sup>4</sup> and historical. A recent study by critic Desmond O'Connor of the personal accounts of Luigi Bortolotti highlights 'the mental and physical stress and sense of hopelessness' many POWs felt in enforced confinement, re-evaluating 'what has been too easily labeled the "fair treatment" of Italian POWs in Australia'.<sup>5</sup> A most recent re-publication of Gianfranco Cresciani's *The Italians in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003) seeks to give a balanced account of the issue, noting on the one hand that POW conditions were good 'in stark contrast to ... [that of] enemy aliens' (108) whilst on the other hand noting that 'the psychological, mental and physical stress of long years

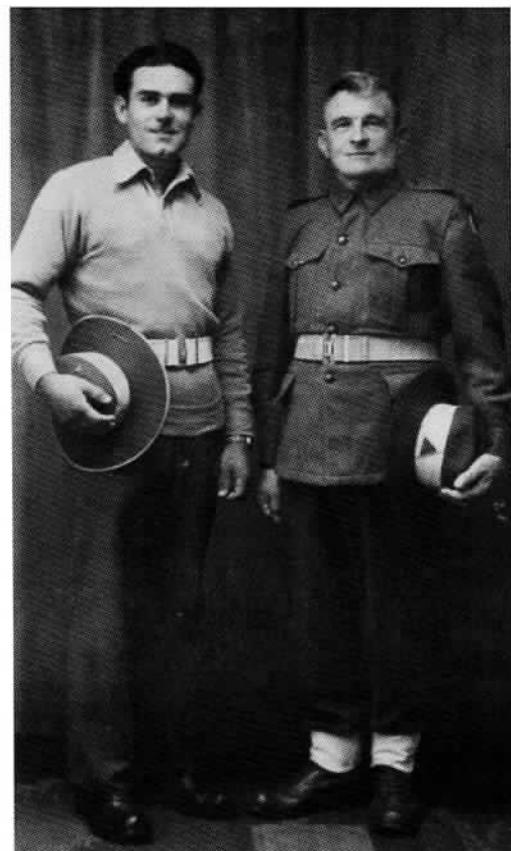
of confinement, isolation and meaningless life left an enduring mark on their character' (111).

In spite of the now prolific literature and personal testimonies<sup>6</sup> there are aspects of the Italian POW history that require further research, at least in the State of Victoria. It is significant, for instance, that the National Archives of Australia has published Fact Sheets on 'World War II Internee, Internee, Alien and POW Records' for Canberra, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth, but none are available online for Melbourne.<sup>7</sup> In particular, whilst the main concentration camps are well documented for Victoria (Murchison, Rushworth, Myrtleford and Tatura are the best known in country Victoria), less documentation is available on 'POW Army Control Centres' that were the administrative centres for the deployment of Italian farming soldiers throughout rural Australia.<sup>8</sup>

According to Desmond O'Connor, by 1945 there were 80 such control centres operating in six States and over 10,000 Italian POWs were employed on farms for the token wages of 15 pence a day (O'Connor: 2003). Peter Dunn explains that POW Control Centres were 'an Army establishment staffed by up to 12 personnel in country regions to administer "The employment of POWs without guards scheme" ... whereby Italian POWs were hired out to farmers at a rate of one Pound per week to help run the farms due to the chronic labour shortages due to the Australian workforce enlisting into the armed services'. He goes on to explain their geographical distribution, '... about 30 miles apart and established on the boundaries of the PMG Postal districts in order to assist in administration ...'<sup>9</sup>

As more and more relevant archival material becomes available to researchers (National Archives of Australia list boxes of archival material opened up for viewing in June 2003) a clearer picture will emerge. In the meantime, it is also important to document oral accounts of this unique experience that can evidence both the character and attitude of Italian prisoners and that of the host nation.

The following interview is one of few accounts from the perspective of an Australian Army officer charged with the administration of stores and the deployment on farms of Italian prisoners at the Yarram Army POW Control Centre, in Gippsland, Victoria.



TOP LEFT An Italian POW (centre) in Yarram.

RIGHT Danilo Jovanovitch with his uncle Percy (Spasoje)

BOTTOM LEFT Danilo in front of the Court House in Yarram.

It is rather difficult at first to imagine the informant, Danilo Jovanovitch, as a former overseer of prisoners: a cultured and affable man, surrounded by a good number of valuable violins, spartiti, works of art and bookshelves, he has the presence of an accomplished musician or writer. Danilo now lives in an elegant Victorian home in inland NSW and indeed does entertain his guests singing evergreen Italian arias and reciting from memory long and short poems which reveal a life-long concern for fairness, justice and ethical conduct. His life-view is perhaps enclosed in the description he offers of himself: 'I am a white Russian and a Red Australian'<sup>10</sup> knowing well that the positive connotation of his self-description will be understood.

Danilo remembers with fondness his years in Yarram and his Italian POW friends, and has recently returned to Yarram to relive those years through his memories.<sup>11</sup> From the following interview, there emerges a picture of camaraderie, solidarity and mutual respect, not only between prisoners and farmers, but also

among Army officers and townspeople. The supporting role of the International Red Cross<sup>12</sup>, and of the Catholic Church in the town are evident. It is a warm and at the same time informative account that shows that understanding, cooperation and tolerance can emerge even in war times where there is goodwill. With trust emerging between former enemies, the evil of wars can be perceived in correct perspective: as an evil that can cause untold suffering for all humankind.

The town of Yarram, where the Army Control Centre was located, sits on the floodplains on the Southern side of the Strezlecki Ranges, near the Tarra National Park, with its centuries old tree ferns and towering Mountain Ash trees in a rainforest setting. The peaceful primordial pristine surroundings could not offer a more striking contrast to the perceived horrors of war and the constant reminder of the wartime conditions at the Army barracks. Off duty, Danilo Jovanovitch sat by the crystal-clear waters of the Tarra River to ponder on the human capacity (with all our faults within) to inflict senseless cruelty on other humans in wars. "Tarra River" is a poem Danilo wrote at the time out of the experience with prisoners of war. It is a poem about life, about the

perception of the ravages and cruelty of war, the enduring beauty of nature 'untouched by shame or sin' and the silent omnipresence of God.

### INTERVIEW WITH DANILO JOVANOVITCH

Danilo Javanovitch was born in Cairns, north Queensland, in 1919, the eldest of five children born to George Javanovitch, who migrated to Australia from Montenegro in 1910. During the Second World War, Danilo served in the Australian Army for four years. He has been writing poetry since 1934, when he was 15 years old, winning many poetry and literary competitions.

Danilo, when were you stationed at the POW Control Centre in Yarram, Victoria?  
In 1944

How old were you then?

I was about 25. In Victoria, at the Prisoner of War Camp, the Captain had us all lined up and he looked at the names and he came to me and said: 'Now, when I want you to interpret ...' I said: 'I'm not the interpreter'. He said: 'you are the only one with a foreign name!'. There was a Jewish chap who had been in Italy for a few years ... I just forgot his name now too! But at any rate, we go down to Yarram ... He was a really good bloke, this Captain Brown, he had been in World War I and he received the DFC, he was a pilot ...

What is the DFC?

The *Distinguished Flying Cross*, from England, from the British. At any rate he said to me: 'Make sure that they (the Italian Prisoners of War) get their Red Cross stuff when it comes', because there were biscuits and all that, and you couldn't get it outside among the civilian population, and I said to him: 'Why? What is it?' at the other bloke. He said: 'Well this is why I got you now as a storeman: we'll see how you go!'. 'Well', I said, my father always told me when you are shaving look at the mirror at yourself; everything must be above board. (I used to call him Skipper!). So when we got there, I had all the clothing, I had to see if they had the clothing and the Red Cross stuff ... There used to be over a hundred in different areas and we used to go out in the car, the Captain and me, and eventually we never used to take the interpreter, because after six months, well ... the Italians and I, and him too, well, we could make ourselves understood. They taught me a few words too ... So, at any rate, we'd go around and see if there were clothes and when I went

there, there wasn't enough clothing! You had to have clothes to put in to receive clothes back! So, I said to the Captain: "Look, the thing I'm going to ask you... We've got shirts here, but I need so many shirts ... What about if I tear them in half, or rip them apart and count the pieces ..." and we did that and we got them back whole, the same as the uniforms. The uniforms were dyed red.

Oh and there was another thing: in the camp where they used to send a truck load of Italians out to work on the farms, a guard would go with them with a loaded rifle. So they would go all on the truck. And he used to... his rifle would be loaded, he would hand it to them, and they would pull him up in the back of the truck and then hand it back to him (laughs), and off they go! But they never allowed the Germans or the Japanese out to work on the farms there...

Why? Why did they feel so different about the Italians?

No! It was the attitude of the Italians! My uncle was in the Middle East and he told me there were parts in the Middle East ... where they wouldn't have had such an easy time if it hadn't been for the Italians. Most didn't want that war; most didn't want to fight in it. But you know that! That's what I also noticed. At the camp, all day long they would play "Amapola". Do you know that song? I don't know the Italian words, but it's a nice melody. It was a modern sort of an Italian song for those days. I remember one of the German officers ... he was an officer, educated in England ...

So, there were Germans in that district?

Oh yes, Germans, and Italians and Japanese of course, but ... I was given a revolver, and I had that in the holster. Whenever I went into the German camp or the Japanese camp I had to leave the revolver outside. But if I went where the Italians were, they didn't care: I carried it, because they weren't going to take it off me and I wasn't going to use it, so ... (laughs) and that's how it was! And then, as I say, I never saw an unhappy person in the Yarram area on all the farms, because ... the farmers were decent, and when they came to the town, they brought them with them and they had to bring them up to the Control Centre and then, well they would always ask for me. It started off ... the interpreter used to take them down, but once they heard "Jovanovitch" and "Danilo", they called me *montenegrino* because my father came from Montenegro. One of them, before I had a chance to tell him, said 'You know our queen came

from Montenegro?'. That's why they came in and wanted me to take them down to the Control Centre. Of course I could say 'Vado a mangiare...' and half a dozen other words. And I would have at least two or three with me as I took them down and we would sing "Torna a Surriento" or "Sul mare luccica", "Core ingrato" and (sings) "Veni sul mar ...", things like that... Now that Captain Brown was good. He asked me 'Do you reckon they're happy?' 'Well', I said, 'they are smiling and are happy to see us and all that, and the farmers seem happy with them, with what they were doing ...'

Were the farmers always happy or were they worried at first?

No, no.

They weren't concerned that they had ... enemy aliens in their homes?

I don't know... It just sort of... it wasn't there! You could see it! I think things might have been different with the Germans and the Japanese ... My grandmother was German, but ... I don't know. It's just that... there was no animosity... see? And even here, I understand there were POWs working on farms around here somewhere...

I just learned about the POW experience at the camp in Cowra, not too far from here.

Oh yes, of course. To tell you the truth, I was in that camp! And they shifted me out of that camp.

Is that how you ended up in the Yarram Control Centre?

I don't know how I ended up in a POW Control Centre. The Army moved me. But not long after they had the trouble there with the Japanese ... I'm glad that sort of trouble didn't happen in Yarram. No, the Italians had no animosity and the people there had no animosity: brother, brother and sister... I remember a POW there, who of course had to go back to Italy, then he came and brought his family back and he bought a dairy farm out at Yarram and raised his children there. So his children must still be there, unless they moved away ...

So, Danilo, what sort of work were the POWs doing?

Dairy farming and other types of farm work. They weren't all dairy farms, but other types of farming.

Cropping?

Cropping, yes.

Were there ever any troubles?

Never had any trouble!

Were you in charge?

Captain Brown was in charge and I was under him. There was a George Davis, he was an Englishman. He wasn't bad. He was the corporal. There was half a dozen more of us doing other things, but I was in charge of Stores.

I can't really tell you anything else about them. There was never trouble. They were happy, we were happy and the people who had them were happy ... It showed they didn't want war.

Were you surprised after the war to see so many Europeans coming... to see that Australia had opened up?

Not really! I thought it was a good thing ... No, I wasn't surprised. I had a brother in law that married my sister. He came from Montenegro too. And he used to go and meet the boats with the Slavs on ...

Because they used to come from everywhere didn't they?

They came from everywhere. I've been with him with the Slavs. Of course he had a little bit of money, being in business. He'd go on the boat and he'd have a few hundred pounds on him, and he'd meet some of the people whose relatives he knew and he would ask them if they had any money and he'd give them all a fiver. So I knew... I was sort of happy that they came from Europe, back then ... Talking about languages, Italian is one of the nicest and easiest... I like Italian, German, French and Russian, I can sing in these languages ...

It's very unusual to meet someone with your service background who can also write poetry.

How did you develop your interest in poetry?

Well, going to school ... I liked Henry Lawson. I liked Italian poetry which I read in translation. I've got books of poems in French, I was always interested. I've got books in Russian (laughs) I can't read them. I love books! My poetry expresses what I feel, what was there in life to live for. Even now, when I see on television ... children ... what is there in life to live for?

Why the struggle to survive?

*Every day the same old routine,  
just to keep oneself alive,  
Ruled by fear and superstition  
and traditions we are fed  
and we blindly fight each other,  
and each other's blood we shed.*

We all have our traditions and I have my own personal traditions. I'm an Australian: my music is Italian music, Neapolitan. And nobody is going to change me. I take

something from all countries. Poetry is musical and it has compacted meaning.

Danilo, while we are still on the topic of poetry, how did you get to write the poem about Tarra River in the region where you supervised Italian POWs?

Well, I was down there; the time I saw it it was more open near the town than it is today. I've seen it out too when I went with the car with the officer and I liked it. The countryside is peaceful. When I go to the bush like that, and I look up amongst the trees and I get goose pimples and I say a few things I want to say to the Almighty. And of course, please, why must people fight one another? Why?

You spoke about the Red Cross. Was the Red Cross involved with Italian POWs?

No, the Red Cross didn't do it, but we got supplies from the Red Cross.

I read in Cowra, at the Information Centre, that the YMCA was involved directly with POWs, was there anything like that in Yarram?

No, the only thing, there was a Catholic church; a priest, I forget his name now. The Italians used to go there. Some of them, they were brought in by the people who had them. I'm sure there are still people who remember or descendants who can piece together this aspect of Italian-Australian history in Yarram.

I may well follow up your suggestion, but for now thank you Danilo.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 'Italians in Australia During World War II' in Stephen Castles et al. *Australia's Italians: Culture and Community in a Changing Society* (St. Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1992) 33-4.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Chilcott, *Reluctant Enemies* (ABC-TV, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> See p. 31 (op..cit.). Alcorso's comparison with the POW experience in Japan is based on A. Fitzgeralds study *The Italian Farming Soldiers: 1941-1947* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981) 116.

<sup>4</sup> The image of farming soldiers on Australian farms was often fairly stereotypical in Australian fiction especially short stories, but amusing anecdotes, such as the exploits of Edgardo Simone nicknamed *Volpe* for his ingenious escape attempts, abound even in historical accounts. See Robert Pascoe *Buongiorno Australia: Our Italian Heritage* (Richmond Vic. Greenhouse Publications, 1987) 143-6.

<sup>5</sup> Desmond O'Connor 'From Tobruk to Clare: the Experience of the Italian Prisoner of War Luigi Bortolotti 1941-1946' *Fulgor* vol 1 issue 3, December 2003 <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/deptlang/fulgor> accessed 24 July 2004.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Marian Scarlett "Rolani Guido: a Prisoner of War in Gippsland" *Italian Historical Society Journal* vol 11 No 2 July/December 2003, p. 30.

See <http://www.naa.gov.au/fsheets/>

<sup>8</sup> A comprehensive historical study of the region that is the focus of the interview with Danilo Jovanovitch, the former Shire of Alberton, now Wellington Shire in Gippsland, does mention the presence of Italian POWs in one sentence adding that "the Land Army girls provided valuable assistance". No other information is given. See John Adams *From these Beginnings: History of the Shire of Alberton (Victoria)* (Yarram: Alberton Shire Council, 1990) 210.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://home.st.net.au/~dunn/pow/powcontrolcenter.htm>, site accessed on 26 July 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication 5 October 2003.

<sup>11</sup> *Yarram Standard News* Wednesday, March 26 2003, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> For the role played by the International Red Cross and its delegate George W. Morel, see Cresciani (op. cit.) page 108. A few digitised copies of correspondence from the Swiss Consul General inquiring about Italian POWs are available online at the National Archives of Australia site (cited).

## RIVER TARRA

*Ah! Languidly in happiness she winds her way along,  
Through hills of green and forests, where trees grow  
tall and strong;*

*A ray of beauty, rare and sweet, appealing to the eye,  
The river Tarra glides along and smiles up at the sky.  
Rare and charming are her banks arrayed in colors  
glowing,*

*Rhythmically, with pulsing heart, she keeps her  
steady flowing.*

*River Tarra, happy stream, caressing moss and  
flowers,*

*I've often strolled along your banks to while away the  
hours.*

*Oh, merry stream in joyfulness; on to your goal you  
wind,*

*With careless sloth, in happy mood you reach your  
journey's end.*

*Your rippling murmur, strong and clear, floats o'er  
the scented air,  
And Father Time will never change your grace so  
clean and rare.*

*You have your grace so pure and clean,  
untouched by shame or sin,*

*But we are only surface clean, with all our faults  
within;*

*You are the spirit of the bush, a throbbing pulsing  
beam,*

*A silver singing ray of life, Oh! happy happy stream.*

# battista giudice, 1840 – 1907

by GEOFF GIUDICE IS A FOURTH GENERATION DESCENDANT OF ONE OF THE EARLY MIGRANTS FROM LOMBARDY, BATTISTA GIUDICE. INTEREST IN HIS ITALIAN ANCESTRY LED GEOFF TO VISIT LOVERO, BATTISTA'S VILLAGE, IN 2000. AFTER HIS RETURN HE PUT TOGETHER THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF BATTISTA'S TRANSITION TO A NEW LIFE IN BENDIGO IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

THE LETTER FOLLOWING THE ACCOUNT WAS WRITTEN IN 1891 TO BATTISTA GIUDICE BY HIS NEPHEW, FATHER POLETTI. IT GIVES A GOOD INSIGHT INTO THE LIVES OF BATTISTA'S FAMILY MEMBERS.

My Italian great-grandfather, Battista Giudice, was born in Lovero, Lombardy, in 1840.

Lovero is located in a very beautiful valley, the Valtellina, which runs beside the Swiss border, three or four hours north-east of Milan. The valley is a very narrow one with steep hills rising sharply on either side. The farmhouses and livestock perched on the hills look as though they have been stuck on to the landscape, the rise is so steep. To get to Lovero one passes through Sondrio and towns such as Tirano, which has a tramcar connection to St Moritz a short distance away and a shrine to an apparition of the Madonna. Lovero is off the main road near the town of Grosio.

At the time of Battista's birth what is now Northern Italy was a fairly dangerous place. Because of its location the Valtellina was a favoured entry point for foreign armies invading the Italian Peninsula, which in the 1850's was a collection of separate states, one of which was Lombardia, Lombardy. One can imagine the effect of living under the constant threat of invasion and occupation.

Battista was one of thirteen children, all born in Lovero. His parents were farmers. When my sister visited the town she asked the town clerk to go through the records to find out what had happened to them. He went through the council and church records and produced quite a lot of information which showed how the family spread throughout Italy and to the new world – Australia and the USA. Everyone of them left the village and there are no direct descendants of Battista's parents there. There are very many members of a particular branch of the family, however, which is called Giudice Paciulata.

Lombardy was under Austrian control when Battista was born. In the 1850's the Austrian

garrison in Lombardy was a very important brake on the ambitions of all those who wished to see Italy free of Austrian influence and united. In July 1858 an agreement was reached between the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia, reigned by the House of Savoy and represented by Cavour, the Prime Minister, under the patronage of King Victor Emmanuel II and Napoleon III, Emperor of France, to 'free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic'. This involved, so far as the North of the peninsula was concerned, chasing the Austrians out of Lombardy and Venetia. In return for French help in doing this the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia would cede to France the border duchy of Savoy and the border city of Nice. Aware of the dangers which this treaty posed, the Austrians tried to pre-empt the situation by launching an invasion of the state of Piedmont in April 1859. The ensuing war between Austria and the Italian States, in particular the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia, assisted by their French allies, lasted 3 months.

The Austrians were defeated in battles at Magenta and Solferino. Solferino has been described as one of the bloodiest battles of 19th century Europe. It was as a result of his experience at Solferino that the Swiss Henri Dunant later established the humanitarian organisation the Red Cross. In any event Austria was severely punished for its unsuccessful attempt to take over Piedmont and under the Treaty of Villa Franca was forced to give up Lombardy. The French Emperor stopped short on his promise to free Italy. While Lombardy was turned over to the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia, Venetia, including Venice, was left in French hands. Without Austrian support the rulers of the important Northern duchies of Tuscany, Parma and Modena fled and the revolutionary governments, which replaced them, united with the House of Savoy. Over the next two years all of the disparate Italian States, with the exception of Rome and Venice, were politically united under the patriotic King Victor Emmanuel. The Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont's parliament was transformed into an Italian Parliament and on March 17, 1861 Victor Emmanuel II became the King of Italy.

To go back a little to 1859, the new rulers of Lombardy appear to have immediately conscripted 20-year-old males for a period of three years. Of course Battista was called up but he was granted an exemption on medical grounds because of a 'crippled left arm'. The official discharge document features the emblem of the House of Savoy which emblem would soon appear on the

national flag (to be omitted in 1946 when Italy became a republic). After discussion with Laura Mecca of the Italian Historical Society, it appears likely that the injured left arm was a fiction or, most likely, it was a brother or a cousin who was exempted. Bogus exemptions and migration under false identity were apparently common bearing in mind this was in the days before photography.

On 6 December 1861 Battista was granted a travel pass for a journey of 15 days to go to Poschiavo, a town not far away in Switzerland. This was a trip, which was in fact to take 3 months, and was one from which he never returned. His passport was stamped at Basel on 13 December 1861 and at Lorrain on the Rhine on 16 December. From there he went to Liverpool in the United Kingdom and took ship on the vessel *The Star of India*, arriving in Melbourne in March 1862 at the age of 21.

We do not know why he left, or why he chose Australia. The choice may have been affected by the fact that civil war had recently broken out in the USA. One could speculate that life in pre-unification Lombardy had fewer attractions than the goldfields of Victoria. Certainly Lombardy was a hot spot and of great strategic importance at the time of unification, being situated close to Austria. In any event to the goldfields he went. So far as we know he went straight to Bendigo. His sea chest was made of wood with reinforcing steel bands. At some point it was converted to a seat by the addition of a couple of strips of wood, which made the curved top flat, some padding and material. The chest is still in my possession.

In 1862 Bendigo was a very young town indeed, the Town Council having been formed only 6 years before in 1856. Coincidentally in that year, 1856, Rosa Lang was born in Bendigo. She was one of the very early natives of the town. On 4 November 1880 Battista and Rosa Lang were married. He was 40 and she was 25. He was described on the marriage certificate as a miner although we know that at some point he lost an arm in an accident of some kind and would not have been fit for hard physical work and that he had a successful retail business, which included sales of wine he made himself.

We know that he lost his arm sometime around 1890. I have speculated that it was his right arm. There are two pieces of evidence for this. One is that a family photograph taken well after 1890 clearly shows either a left arm or a very good



Battista's visa issued at Tirano on 6 December 1861 for travel to Poschiavo.

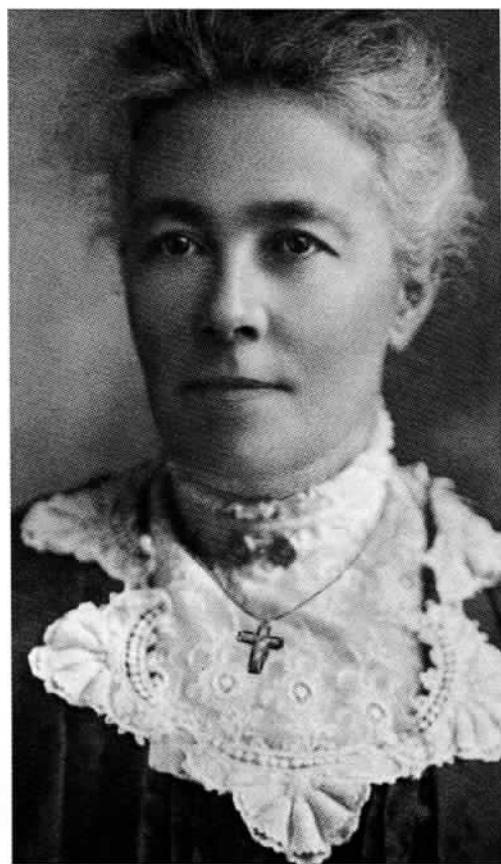
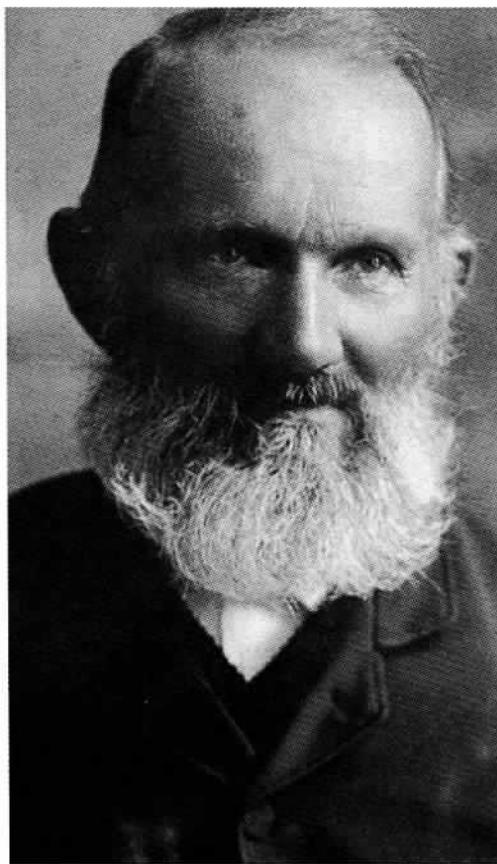
imitation. (This photograph, incidentally, also supports to some degree the view that the notation on the document exempting him from military service referring to an injury to his left arm was a fraud.) The second is that his signature on the papers he signed for his naturalization in 1895 is extremely shaky and looks very much like the signature of a right hander who was forced to write with his left.

In a letter, which one of his daughters Rosina wrote in 1951, she said this about her father Battista:

*My father at 21 came to Australia and settled in Bendigo and joined the gold diggers for a time – but he was not lucky. He was more successful at wine production in addition to a general store named Lovero Cash Store. How I remember those loads of luscious grapes arriving each season for the wine making.*

It appears that Battista was fairly successful and managed to provide well for his children. Writing again in 1951,

Portraits of Battista and his wife Rosa.



Rosina described, in a reminiscence, what the family home was like in Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo:

*When visiting Kangaroo Flat I pass on my way along High Street, the spot where my childhood home was. There are some very fine homes on the land, but in their place I see in my mind's eye, the once lovely garden – the flowers, the many fruit trees, peaches, pears, apples etc. The trellis of vines with hanging grapes, the summer house (where I used to enjoy reading), the buggy house covered with honeysuckle and the mulberry tree – I was never much of a climber – but that tree proved irresistible. Now, of that entire garden, one pear tree remains. It was a mass of white blossom the last time I saw it as with a tear and a thought 'Woodman spare that tree' I pass on.*

Battista and Rosa had 7 children, 4 daughters and 3 sons. Considering he was 40 when he married, Battista certainly made up for lost time in a big way.

One son and three daughters moved to California and married there, displaying the same interest in migration which had led their father to Bendigo from Lovero. The three sisters married three brothers.

The fourth and youngest daughter, Rosina, received a proposal of marriage while in California but declined on the basis she

had an expectation of a proposal from a Bendigo man. She returned to Australia but the proposal never came. Sadly she died a spinster in her late eighties. She used to proudly show me a bracelet which she had received from this fellow, whom she described as her 'beau'.

Among the family possessions is a letter written by Battista's nephew in 1890. It contains some interesting passages which give an insight into the family and to what it was like to live in Italy at that time. A translation by my friend Angela Rodd some years ago accompanies this history.

My wife and I visited Lovero a few years ago, in 1999. There are few modern buildings. The village is very old and distinctly un-tourist. No doubt because of the cold the buildings have been constructed with thick stonewalls and few windows. From the outside the village is not a particularly welcoming sight. The graveyard is absolutely full of Giudice. A name, which occurs almost as frequently, is Della Bosca. The retired men of the area were working on a voluntary project to restore the local church which has some fine frescoes and a rather interesting ossuary, an enormous collection of bones from hundreds of skeletons, heaped under a rough shelter at the rear of the church, as best we could understand, a repository



The family of Battista and Rosa Giudice, c1900.

for the bodies of victims of a plague. But we are not sure about that. We were told incidentally that the church is being restored for the village, not for tourists.

#### LETTER FROM FATHER EMILIO POLETTI Como, April 26th, 1891

Dearest Uncle Battista,

*I remember having written a rather sour and bitter letter some years ago, because your silence indicated that you had forgotten about your mother and your family, but your behaviour later on, and the ample declarations of dearest Uncle Cosimo, have assured us that you have not forgotten your relatives at all, that you nourish the most grateful memories and the most lively affection for them, therefore I feel obliged to retract that letter, and to ask you to excuse me if any of my expressions have ever offended you.*

*Indeed, we remember you affectionately, and especially my mother always has her Battista in her heart and on her lips: therefore you can imagine her sorrow, and that of all of us, when we heard the sad news of your poor amputated arm; and since distance makes things seem worse, we were weeping as if you were already dead, so that your last letter to Uncle Cosimo, which assured us that you were partly healed, was a great comfort to us. May the Lord be praised and thanked.*

*Poor Uncle! God knows how much you have suffered, but what I don't doubt is that you*

*have offered all your sufferings to the Lord, and, resigning yourself fully to his divine will, you have acquired precious merits for eternal life. Uncle Cosimo, who is a very good man but blasphemous every now and then, on hearing about your accident, exclaimed: 'Look what he earned by being so religious and by being a gentleman'. I, with due respect, scolded him for having talked like this, which more than being blasphemous is actually swearing. Is not God the master of doing what he wants with us, his miserable creatures, without having to give us reasons for this actions? On the other hand, who is there who has not committed sins during his life? Once, a single sin could have earned hell for us, but however it is the immense goodness of God which makes us suffer something in this world to gain us mercy in the next.*

*And also, ought the good always be rewarded in this world? And is it not perhaps better to go to paradise with only one arm, than to hell with two? Besides, God sometimes purposely allows the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer in this world just to test our faith: *guai a quelli che da si poco si lascian scandolezzare* (Shame on those who refuse to accept God's will). At every painful encounter, let us bow our heads and say 'God desires it, may His holy name be blessed'.*

*Now I will give you our news which is certain to please you. I am the director and a teacher at the Maggiore Seminary, and my duty is to instruct those clerics who are already trained, and are ready to celebrate Mass. You see, the duty of giving clever, good priests to the*

church is very important, and therefore greater than my poor powers; but with the help of God one presses on. For eight months between November and July I am at Como, and I am kept very busy; but then I have four months of holidays, and I spend these, to my great consolation, in the bosom of my family. I always enjoy the best of health. I have my 13 year old younger brother Attilio with me; I make him study priestly matters but I don't know if he will succeed because he is still young, and a bit cheeky. Father and mother are still at Villa, they enjoy good health, and between the doctor and me, we make sure they lack nothing. Besides, they deserve to be rewarded for the sacrifices they have made for us. Living with them is Clorinda, who is now 16 years old, but so grown up that she looks 20. I have put her in boarding school for 3 years, and I assure you that, more than being just a young girl, she is an angel.

Uncle Bartolo is always the most peaceful man in the world; he eats and drinks and ... lascia andare l'acqua in giù ed il fumo in su. (lets the water run down and the smoke go up).

Your uncle the priest is chaplain at Lovero, and they like him very much. Your brother Paolo is a doctor at Mazzo, he excels at it and earns 6,000 francs a year. But more importantly, he has remained a good Christian, and is in a position to give a good example. So far he has just 2 children who are growing up good, beautiful and charming. The Lord blesses his own. Aunt Giovannina is always being of use to Sondrio, and is so extraordinarily fat that she suffers from it. Aunt Menighina, what with her husband Giacomo, who is a man of no importance, and her children, for whom she cares little, causes much misery between them. Poor Aunt Ostina, who had the misfortune of marrying a brutal husband, spends her days in the greatest unhappiness and ruins her body and soul: she could not be more unfortunate than this. Aunt Caterina, whom I like especially, was fortunate to marry Clemente Meruzzi, who is rich, honest and devout: but, as everyone has a cross to bear, so has she. The poor thing has 2 stepchildren who give her some sorrow, and I fear that they will give her more trouble in future.

I cannot tell you anything about the 3 uncles at Lovero, as it is 6 months since I have seen them. Regarding the general news in these parts, I will tell you that things are going rather badly. We have an evil government which not only fleeces us with taxes, but what is worse, persecutes the Church and our holy religion in every way, and faith, especially in the city, is always put last. The Lord is weary, and continues to send punishments.

For some years the seasons haven't been good and the vines have a new disease whereby the leaves drop before their time and the grapes

are mouldy: then it seemed that a remedy had been found, but during the winter a very intense cold dried up a great number of vines, whereby the harvest this year was seriously affected: further to this there are taxes and a thousand other expenses which the majority don't know how to avoid. And what is worse, people are so blind that they no longer understand that it is the finger of God, and they persist even more in doing evil. Therefore I predict, I don't doubt that soon tremendous punishments will come which will purge the world of much wickedness

Regarding you, dearest uncle, I heard with great pleasure that you have maintained the love of our holy religion alive in your heart, and that you are bringing up your children devoutly. The world passes, and life escapes, and at the moment of death nothing will matter to us - whether we have been rich or poor, healthy or unhealthy, lucky or unlucky - except that we have been good Christians. You there do not have the convenience of attending church like us, but remember that God is everywhere, and make a Sanctuary of your home, and gather your family together every evening to recite the holy Rosary. Don't let a day pass without reciting this beautiful prayer, and also, always remember St. Joseph. Let Jesus, Joseph and Mary be beloved by you both in life and in death, and I assure you that if we do not see each other again on this earth, we will undoubtedly find each other in Paradise.

Send me two lines in reply, and address it to Villa. Give my warmest greetings to your wife, my most beloved aunt, who, they tell me, is such a good woman. Give a kiss to your dearest little children for me, and I promise you that I will always remember you all in the Holy Sacrament of Mass.

I send you an affectionate kiss and embrace, and declare myself always your dearest and most affectionate nephew,

Father D.(Don) Emilio Poletti

# in search of giovanni fattori's *mercato*

by  
**ANNA MARIA SABBIONE**

ANNA MARIA SABBIONE WAS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS A LECTURER IN ITALIAN AT THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY. SINCE LEAVING HER POSITION SHE HAS BEEN FOLLOWING HER VARIOUS INTERESTS WHICH INCLUDE ASPECTS OF ITALIAN HISTORY IN VICTORIA.

The painting, *Il Mercato dei cavalli in piazza Montanara, Roma*, by the Italian artist Giovanni Fattori, vanished after having been exhibited at the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880. 'Lost at sea' is the most common explanation given, but the ship that brought the painting to Melbourne did not sink. So, where is the *Mercato* now? A second painting by Fattori, the *Boscajole*, was also at the Exhibition of 1880, but it has not been listed as 'lost at sea'.

Fattori's painting *Mercato* is considered to be a very important landmark in the development of the artist's works. In the words of Norma Broude, the painting, despite some compositional discrepancies:

*heralds a distinct change in Fattori's work in the direction of the forceful style that would become dominant in his art of the 1880s.<sup>1</sup>*

So, within the framework of the history of paintings, the loss of the *Mercato* must be perceived as more than just a 'lost painting', its loss means that we cannot fully analyze, appreciate and criticize Fattori's transition towards the 'forceful style' he adopted in the 1880s.<sup>2</sup>

The *Macchia* and the *Macchiaioli*, a group of Italian artists who, as early as 1856, used to meet at the famous *Caffé Michelangiolo*, in Florence, have yet to achieve the international fame enjoyed by Impressionist artists. It is a strange situation because, historically speaking, the *Macchiaioli* anticipated Impressionists in many ways. So, what was the *Macchia* and who were the *Macchiaioli*? Albert Boime, in his beautiful book *The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento*, explains that:

*The word macchia was often used in the nineteenth century by Italian artists and critics to invoke, by extension, the concept of the fresh and spontaneous, broadly painted 'effect' of a picture. The word, however, was not necessarily synonymous with lack of finish or sketchiness in a painting ...<sup>3</sup>*

He then goes on to describe the *Macchiaioli* as artists

*... who conceived of their paintings in relatively broad areas of tone and colour, found*

*themselves branded as rebels against academic discipline: they were criticized for painting in formless 'patches' and for daring to display to the public pictures that seemed, at least to the conservative eyes, mere unfinished 'sketches' – even though these pictures had been the products of traditional and often painstaking modes of preparation carried on by the artists both out-of-doors and in their studios.<sup>4</sup>*

Fattori was one of these young artists. He too had depicted great historical themes, had studied, loved and respected the great masters of the past, but, eventually, he too embraced new fields and new techniques. Fattori said that he and his artist friends were attracted and fascinated by the shapes and changing colours in nature and in the local landscape, they were attracted by the humble aspects of every day life, by their immediate surroundings, and were breaking away from the older and more idealized visions and interpretation of life.

Livorno is the Tuscan city that admirers of the *macchiaioli* visit to see many of Giovanni Fattori's paintings, now held in the beautiful Villa Mimbelli appropriately known as *Museo Giovanni Fattori*. And it was in Livorno that Giovanni Fattori was born in 1825 and started his artistic studies, which he continued at the *Accademia* in Florence.

Fattori grew up during the most turbulent times of the *Risorgimento*, with all the political implications and ramifications affecting every aspect of Italian life, including the world of the arts and literature. As Fattori was to write in 1901, the war of 1848–1849 interrupted his artistic studies, then, with his typical modesty, he adds that the only thing he did towards the liberation of Italy was to be a 'postman' carrying '*inflammatory pamphlets*' across Tuscany with the nonchalance of the young and careless.<sup>5</sup> It was while delivering those '*inflammatory pamphlets*' across Tuscany that he developed new artistic interests, a new sensitivity towards nature, art, forms and colours, which eventually would lead him, and so many of his contemporaries, away from the dogmas and tradition of the *Accademia dell'arte*. Fattori explains that he and other artists were looking for newer, fresher, more vibrant inspirations and connection with nature. These artists were soon to declare:

*war to the Accademia and classic art ... it was called la macchia, that is to say the scrupulous study of nature as it is and as it presents itself, for which we were called macciaioli.<sup>6</sup> (sic)*

Fattori dedicated his long life to painting, to art, to the teaching of art and by the time he died, in 1908, his paintings had been exhibited at many Italian, European and international exhibitions including the International Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1880.

I have always been interested in the *macchiaioli*, and it was whilst reading about Giovanni Fattori that I came across a brief note which linked Italy to Australia in a rather unexpected way. The note, not more than a telegraphic footnote, stated that one of Fattori's paintings, *Il mercato di cavalli in piazza Montanara*, had been lost at sea, near Melbourne, where it had been sent for the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880. It was exciting to imagine that a painting by Fattori had actually adorned the walls of the Exhibition Building in the distant 1880 but, at the same time, it was depressing to think that the painting was forever lost, perhaps with other works of art. I went to the State Library of Victoria with the sole purpose of locating a small black dot on a map indicating the approximate spot of the shipwreck. It was a necessary ritual, a symbolic ceremony to be carried out on behalf of Giovanni Fattori and the *macchiaioli*. That visit to the Library, however, turned out to be the first of many visits which were to lead to some tantalizing and wonderful discoveries as well as some rather puzzling questions, yet to be answered.

The Victorian coastline has treacherous waters and this beautiful, rugged coastline is famous for the many ships that disappeared at the bottom of the sea, so, I was not at all surprised to read that Fattori's *Mercato* had been lost at sea, in Victorian waters.

The note under the reproduction of the only existing black and white photograph of this painting states that the painting was lost in the shipwreck of the Italian ship *Europa*. However, I quickly found out that books and other documents dealing with shipwrecks in Australian waters did not have any records of the Italian ship *Europa* disappearing at the bottom of the ocean in 1880, nor in 1879, should the ship have arrived months before the official opening of the International Exhibition, nor in 1881 or 1882, should the captain have been instructed by the *Regia Marina Italiana* (Royal Italian Navy) to extend his visit to this part of the world.

What I discovered, instead, was the actual report prepared for the *Regia*

*Marina Italiana* by the captain of the ship, Cesare Romano (1839-1911). With Cesare Romano's *Rapporto* in my hands I no longer had to look for a dot on a map, what I now needed to look at was the Marvellous Melbourne of 1880, with the hope of not only finding clues about a painting given as 'lost', but of finding out more about an Italian ship that had not disappeared in Victorian waters.

The 'lost' painting, the *Mercato dei cavalli in piazza Montanara, Roma*, is also known as *Mercato dei cavalli in piazza Trinità a Roma*, in English it appears either as *Horse Market in piazza Montanara, Rome* or as *Horse Market in piazza Trinita, Rome*, or, as in the 1876 Philadelphia Catalogue, simply as *A Horse Market*.<sup>7</sup>

According to art experts the *Mercato* was painted in 1872, or early 1873, soon after Fattori's return from his first visit to Rome and the Roman country side, *la campagna romana*. It was a rather large painting, '*un quadrone*', the art historian Raffaele Monti tells us.<sup>8</sup>

It was Monti's note under the black and white photograph of the *Mercato* that had sent me to the State Library, in English it reads:

*The painting, of which there is only an old photo, was lost in 1880 following the shipwreck of the ship Europa which had loaded the painting in Melbourne, where Fattori had sent it in order to take part in an important exhibition.*<sup>9</sup>

According to Monti the ship sank after it had left Melbourne, following the closure of '*an important exhibition*', and we can assume that Monti is referring to the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880 which, however, closed in 1881. What is important, at this point, is not whether the ship sank in 1880 or in 1881, but whether the ship did actually sink taking Fattori's painting to the bottom of the sea. A search of Australian shipping records showed that the *Europa* had safely left Melbourne on the 28 of August 1881 and sailed towards Sydney, on its way back to Italy. The dates of arrival and departure to and from Australian ports were provided by the Australian shipping records, but, once the *Europa* had left Australian waters, it was still possible to assume that the *Europa* had shipwrecked before reaching Italy.

Captain Cesare Romano's regular reports to the *Regia Marina Militare* were published in the Italian Navy's journal, the *Rivista militare*, and in 1882 most of those reports



The Royal Exhibition Building in 1880.  
Courtesy State Library of Victoria.

sent from Australia were re-published, in book version, as *Viaggio del R. trasporto 'Europa'*, *Rapporto a S. E. il Ministero della Marina*.<sup>10</sup> It was this *Rapporto* that I first found when I was looking for a dot on the map marking the spot of the shipwrecked *Europa*, and it was the date on the first page of this volume that had jolted my curiosity and set me out on search of Fattori's *Mercato*. On the first page we read 'Rangoon, 17 novembre 1880'.

Clearly the Captain, having left Australian waters, had successfully reached Rangoon from where he wrote his new report for the *Ministero*, on the 17th of November 1881. The date and place in the *Rapporto* were confirming the data collated from Australian shipping records but, unfortunately, they did not eliminate the possibility of the *Europa* sinking after having left Rangoon.<sup>11</sup>

Cesare Romano's *Rapporto* from Rangoon could only prove that the *Europa* had left Australian waters, but it did not explain why the ship was reported as having disappeared in Victorian waters. How and when did such a dramatic piece of news ever come about?

Melbourne newspapers of 1880 provided interesting clues and facts regarding the Italian ship reaching Victorian waters. *The Age* of 6th September 1880, under the heading 'Shipping', reports that on the previous day, the Italian ship had reached Melbourne:

*Europa, Italian w.s. (war ship) – 806, Cavalier Romano, from Venice 12th June, via Brindisi, Port Said, Suez, Galle, Singapore, Surabaya, and King George's Sound 28 ult. Passengers Mssrs. Ricioli, Lotario, Levi and 100 workmen.*<sup>12</sup>

A second article, longer and more detailed, comes under the heading 'Arrival of the Italian Man-of-war *Europa* with Exhibits from Italy'.<sup>13</sup> A most interesting piece of information, in this second article, is in the actual heading: not only it states that the Italian ship had reached Melbourne but it also declares that it was carrying 'Exhibits from Italy', and this eliminated any doubts about Fattori's painting being the only one at the Melbourne Exhibition, a factor which was confirmed by the long list of exhibits published in the Official Records.<sup>14</sup> It is, however, a third article published in *The Age* on that same day, that throws some light on the history of the *Europa* in Terra Australis. Under the dramatic heading 'Disastrous Wreck off Cape Otway' *The Age* reports the shipwreck of the American ship *Eric the Red* which was bringing American exhibits to Melbourne. The article discusses the fact that there had been initial confusion surrounding the name and the nationality of the ship. 'At first it was thought to be the Italian Steamer *Europa*' states the newspaper, but then, upon receipt of a second telegram 'it became apparent that it must be the *Eric the Red* ...'<sup>15</sup>

It was not the Italian ship, then, but the American *Eric the Red* that succumbed to very treacherous waters and wild dangerous weather off Cape Otway during the night of the 3rd of September 1880. The *Europa* encountered the very same mountainous waves and horrid weather that had attacked and destroyed the *Eric*, but, despite it all, the Italian ship did succeed in reaching its Melbourne destination, admittedly with very battered sails and a sleep-deprived and exhausted crew, as we

learn from another of the captain's reports to Italy, his *Relazione* to the *Regia Marina Militare*.<sup>16</sup>

This particular *Relazione*, very carefully crafted, was published in the *Rivista Marittima* in December 1880 but, regrettably, it was not included in the book version of the captain's final *Rapporto* published in 1882. The *Relazione* repeats and discusses, in greater details, the article which had appeared in *The Age*, and it also provides a dramatic and vivid depiction of the Victorian coast-line as seen through the eyes of our Captain on his first trip to Australia. Cesare Romano reports to his superiors, that, on the 5th of September, as he was guided up into the Western Channel, he learned that his ship had already made the local headlines, and all for the wrong reasons. The *Relazione* is headed '*Melbourne, 8 settembre 1880*', that is to say, only two days after the article published in *The Age*. Undoubtedly this suggests the urgency felt by the Captain to dispel any lingering doubts about the safety of the Italian ship as well as the need to confirm, with a longer report, what, most probably, had already been telegraphed to the *Regia Marina Italiana*.

There are no doubts, then, that the initial incorrect report of the shipwreck of the *Europa*, although quickly rectified, originated in Melbourne: the third article published in *The Age* and the Captain's *Relazione* testify to that. What needs to be ascertained, if at all possible, is how and why the story of the shipwreck of the *Europa*, continued to be used to explain the disappearance of the *Mercato*. How and when did Fattori learn of the shipwreck? Was he told? Did he read about it? Was he aware of the second telegram?

There are many questions, some questions can be answered, but others, unfortunately, cannot be answered and will continue to be part of the mysterious puzzle surrounding Fattori.

Communicating with Italy should not have been a real problem. It is Cesare Romano, again, who provides some clues. Returning to the Captain's *Relazione* of September 1880, we are told that a Signor Sarfatti had been waiting in Melbourne for the arrival of the Italian ship and its cargo of exhibits. The Captain explains that this Signor Sarfatti was at the pier waiting for him, and to inform him that every step had already been taken:

... in order to quickly unload the goods as he had been advised of my forthcoming arrival by my dispatch from Albany, even if, a few days

later, he had received the news of our shipwreck which had been quickly rectified.<sup>17</sup>

It is interesting to notice how the Captain, even in such a short extract, manages, once again, to weave in the story of the initial incorrect report of the sinking of his ship, and yet, he does not feel the need to say much about Signor Sarfatti. In fact, we cannot fail to notice that the Captain, whenever writing to the *Regia Marina Italiana*, has always shown great attention to the details he provides, but in the passage dealing with this Signor Sarfatti, the Captain only provides the name of the gentleman. This can only suggest that Signor Sarfatti must have been very well known to Cesare Romano's superiors. We find Signor Sarfatti waiting for the ship *Europa* at Melbourne, he is boarding the *Europa* to welcome Cesare Romano, he is with Cesare Romano at the custom offices and, eventually, we find his name on the list of the Commissioners representing Italy at the International Exhibition.<sup>18</sup>

The Italian gentleman waiting for Cesare Romano was Gustavo Sarfatti, the son of Cavaliere Giacomo Sarfatti, of Venice. Sarfatti senior and his friend and business partner, Cavaliere Olivieri, according to the foreword published in their 1880 *Catalogo*, appear to have been the driving forces behind the exhibits sent to Melbourne and, if the foreword is to be completely trusted, they also played an extremely important role in obtaining the assistance of the Italian Government and of the *Regia Marina Italiana* in supplying a ship to carry the exhibits to Melbourne.<sup>19</sup> It was a rather difficult project to bring to completion, and Cavalier Sarfatti described waiting for the Italian government to give their final blessing and unconditional assistance to the exhibitors as a 'Via Crucis'.<sup>20</sup> The final and, gratefully, affirmative answer from the Italian Government arrived in February 1880.<sup>21</sup>

The foreword in the *Olivieri & Sarfatti Catalogue* is, in fact, the speech delivered by Sarfatti senior sometime prior to the departure of the *Europa* from Venice, on the 12th of June 1880. We also learn, from Sarfatti senior's speech, that the Captain, Cesare Romano, was present at that very special event in Venice, that young Gustavo Sarfatti and his new bride were to leave Venice and come to Melbourne with the clear mandate of looking after the Italian exhibits and, eventually, they were to launch from Melbourne a commercial venture of import-export.<sup>22</sup>

It becomes increasingly clear from this speech that our Captain, in writing to his

superior, did not have to explain who the Venetian gentleman was, the name 'Sarfatti' was, indeed, very well known to the *Regia Marina Italiana*. It is obvious that Sarfatti junior had a fundamental role to play at the Melbourne International Exhibition, as a representative for Italy, and as a businessman, and, most certainly, he would have been one of the people to be in direct and regular contact with Italy, in particular, with his father in Venice. Gustavo Sarfatti would not have been the only person interested in keeping Italy informed of what was happening in Melbourne. There was the Italian Consul, Cavaliere Alessandro de Goyzueta, Marchese di Caverna, who, according to Sarfatti's speech was to be a member of the Italian Commission set up for the duration of the Melbourne Exhibition.<sup>23</sup> In fact, a number of people could have been communicating with Italy, for a variety of reasons. It could have been any of the agents and representatives from Italy or any of the local agents and representatives, or any member of the Italian Commission, which included the secretary of the Italian Court, Ferdinando Gagliardi, famous for his articles to the *Gazzetta d'Italia*.<sup>24</sup>

With all those people who could have and would have been in touch with Italy we can be sure of the fact that Fattori knew about the first telegram, but was he told, was he aware, did he know about the second telegram? The general impression one gets from some annotations and documents written by Fattori himself, is that Fattori was only aware of the first telegram declaring that the Italian ship *Europa* had fatally disappeared in Victorian waters. We can assume that he did not know about the second telegram, and, for whatever reason, he did not investigate whether the ship did in fact sink.

#### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Fattori's *Mercato* is still reported as 'lost at sea' even if Melbourne newspapers, English and Italian catalogues, reports from the 1880s and, eventually the Offices of the Italian Navy, proved and confirmed that the Italian ship *Europa* did reach Melbourne and it returned to Venice. References to the shipwreck are found in most English and Italian publications on Fattori. It is interesting and, at the same time, rather frustrating, to see how the same piece of information keeps on bouncing about, in some cases with small variations, which add a sense of suspense to the mysterious disappearance of a painting.

What becomes intriguing is the fact that references to the shipwreck of the *Europa*, or, in some cases, of an unnamed ship, returning

to Italy after the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, with Fattori's *Mercato*, lead back to Anna Franchi's 1910 publication on Fattori, and to Giovanni Malesci catalogue. But even more intriguing is the fact that, eventually, those sources point to Giovanni Fattori himself. There is an interlocking of theories and supposition but, unfortunately, none can assist in locating the lost canvas.

Anna Franchi's biography, *Giovanni Fattori*, was published in Florence in 1910, two years after the death of the painter, and it is in this publication that we find references to the shipwreck. Anna Franchi (1866-1954), a writer and a journalist, was a close friend and a great admirer of Fattori, and spent much time with him and with his young disciple Giovanni Malesci. She had written about the school of the *macchia* and the *macchiaioli* and was constantly in touch with the world of the arts.

It is very difficult to imagine that Anna Franchi, with her background as a writer, journalist, art critic and connoisseur of the *macchia* movement, would write about a shipwreck unless she had very good and very solid grounds on which to base her statement, and it would be impossible to even to suggest that she invented such a dramatic end to one of Fattori's works. Bearing in mind the close relationship and mutual respect that existed between Fattori and Anna Franchi, it is understandable that, after her 1910 publication, subsequent art critics and art historians accepted the fact that the *Mercato* had been lost at sea. It was really a matter of 'Giovanni Fattori said so', and it would have been difficult to prove otherwise, particularly during the early part of the 1900. It was accepted, it persisted through the decades, and it has been posted on Fattori's web page where, for the year 1880, we can read that the famous *Mercato* was lost at sea on its return trip to Italy after the Melbourne International Exhibition.

These constant references leading back to Anna Franchi's publication prompt the question 'Where did Anna Franchi get her information from?'

#### Fattori's Annotations and Letters. Malesci's Catalogue

Some publications on the *Macchiaioli*, and on Fattori in particular, bring to light letters written by Fattori to friends and colleagues. Among these we find rather interesting notes written on the margin of documents that Fattori had left to Anna Franchi, papers held by Ugo Ojetti, and the Catalogue collated by Giovanni Malesci, Fattori's executor.

The art historian Dario Durbé's 1994 publication, *Contributo a Fattori*, examines

various primary sources which, most probably, contributed to the long standing theory that Fattori's *Mercato* was lost at sea.<sup>25</sup> Durbé refers to these documents not only in an attempt to pinpoint the date of the execution of the *Mercato*, but also to bring some order in the still confusing and confused history of the painting. Durbé, in retracing the history of the painting, establishes that the *Mercato* had been painted towards the end of 1872, that it was exhibited in Florence in 1874 at the *Società d'Incoraggiamento delle Belle arti*, and that the *Società* had bought the painting in 1875. Fattori, however, was allowed by the *Società* to send the painting to the International Exhibition held in London in 1875, to the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876, and to the International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1880. But at one point Durbé asks: '*was the painting actually sent to Melbourne?*'<sup>26</sup> A legitimate question, considering that there are contradictions or inconsistencies in Fattori's annotation, but we now know, from various documents and catalogues that the painting was sent to the International Exhibition of Melbourne and that it did reach Melbourne. Durbé's *Contributo* further highlights those contradictory annotations and remarks written by Fattori on the margin of documents given to Anna Franchi and on some other documents held by Ugo Ojetti (1871-1946). On the margin of the bill of sale to the *Società*, the bill of sale for the *Mercato* held by Anna Franchi, Fattori had added, in his own handwriting, that the painting:

... had been sent to the International Exhibition of Melbourne (America [sic]) on the ship Europa. It received a certificate and a bronze medal. On its return trip the ship ran aground and the painting was lost (historical).<sup>27</sup>

Here we cannot fail to notice that Fattori does not provide any dates, and that after the word "Melbourne" he adds the word "America" in brackets. Had he forgotten the date and was the word 'America' a slip of the pen or was he thinking of Philadelphia? And when he mentions the prizes, was he thinking of the prizes received for the painting at different exhibitions, or was he referring to prizes received at Melbourne?

If Fattori was thinking of the Melbourne International Exhibition, then, he was completely mistaken because the *Mercato* was not awarded any prizes at all, not even a memorable mention.<sup>28</sup> However, Fattori, here, does provide us with the correct name of the ship, the *Europa*, and this confirms the fact that he must have known

something about this ship, but not the complete story.

Despite those rather odd messages and those incorrect reports, this hand-written annotation would appear to be fundamental in locating the origin of the theory that the painting was lost at sea. Fattori clearly states that:

*On its return trip the ship ran aground and the painting was lost.*

So, was it Fattori himself who, not knowing that there had been a second telegram, did, unwittingly, start the rumour of his *Mercato* being lost at sea? If Fattori, on the margin of the document, wrote that the ship sank, how could Anna Franchi have had any doubts about the fate of the *Mercato*? How could anyone doubt the artist's written word? The fate of the *Mercato* had been decided: it had disappeared somewhere along the Victorian coast line. And yet, one cannot help wondering whether, in fact, this is the only possible answer, whether, perhaps there were other factors that contributed to the myth of the shipwreck of the *Europa*.

In this particular annotation there is one more perplexing element: what did Fattori mean when he wrote the word 'storico', the last word in brackets? Did he mean that the lost painting represented a Historical Theme? From the black and white photograph it can be said, with absolute certainty, that the *Mercato* was not dealing with any historical themes, the painting is definitely a Horse Market. Understanding what Fattori actually meant does not and cannot assist in locating the lost painting, but that particular word does show, once again, that Fattori is not helping in dispelling the mystery surrounding his lost *Mercato*.

Another document analysed by Durbé comes from the Ugo Ojetti's archives. It is a hand written statement by Fattori, a chronological list of works prepared and signed by the painter. For the year "1872" Fattori writes:

*Mercato dei cavalli a Roma in piazza Montanara. Awarded in Vienna in 1873 bronze medal and London 1875; Santiago of Chile honourable mention; Philadelphia in 1876. On returning from Philadelphia it sank with the ship cargo.*<sup>29</sup>

There we have two documents, two entries by Fattori, written at different times of his life, and in both cases the painter declares that the *Mercato* was lost at sea, but in the document from Ojetti's archives Fattori declares that the *Mercato* was lost at sea

on its return trip from the Philadelphia International Exhibition in 1876 '*Returning from Philadelphia it sank with the ship cargo*'.

The date of the Philadelphia Exhibition is correct, 1876, but, if the painting had disappeared with the ship, for which Fattori, here, does not provide a name, the *Mercato* could not have been sent to nor could it have been seen at the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880.

The fact that in Anna Franchi's document Fattori had mentioned Melbourne but had not given any dates for the Melbourne Exhibition, whereas in the Ojetto's document he provides the correct dates for two exhibitions but fails to name the ship, can easily lead us to conclude that Fattori, when it came to names of places and dates, was rather careless, or confused or, that perhaps, he was not particularly interested in providing such details.

Whatever may have been the reason, this Ojetto's document, in a rather odd way, turns out to be very important in tracing the history of the *Mercato* as it is presented in some secondary sources on Fattori and the *Macchiaioli*. The Ojetto document, in fact, could be the primary source used by some art historians and biographers who say that the *Mercato* was lost at sea on its way back from Philadelphia. Such is the case presented by Maria Teresa Fiorio, who, in 1975 writes that Fattori:

*... took part in the most important international exhibitions: his paintings at the Vienna Exhibition gave rise to great enthusiasm, as it was in Philadelphia for the Mercato dei cavalli, which, however, on its return was lost in the shipwreck.<sup>30</sup>*

Another primary source of information is the brief autobiography compiled by Fattori for Anna Franchi, in 1901, at a time when the writer was collating material for her *Arte e artisti toscani dal 1850 ad oggi*, published in Florence in 1902. In this autobiographical résumé Fattori mentions a bronze medal received at the Philadelphia International Exhibition, but does not provide either the name of the painting or the year of the Exhibition.<sup>31</sup> In this autobiographical document Fattori looks back on his long life, he describes his own and his friends' desire to break away from what they had considered to be restrictive traditions of the old school, he recalls the penury of the days as a student and as painter, but, typically, he mentions only few of his many works, stressing the fact that he only worked for the love of art '*per amore*

*dell'arte*'.<sup>32</sup> He is passionate about his work as a painter and as an art teacher; he is proud in acknowledging that some of his ex-pupils have become well-known artists; and he fervently declares that he 'always refused to turn art into a business'.<sup>33</sup> But, Fattori, in this résumé, as presented by Dario Durbé, fails once again to mention the lost *Mercato* and the Melbourne International Exhibition.

It is very tempting, at this stage, to suggest that Fattori, in the latter part of his life, no longer considered it important or particularly relevant to recall or even remember a painting that, for whatever reason, known or unknown to him, was no longer around. However, in 1907, just one year prior to his death, Fattori shows very clear recollections of the *Mercato* when, in a letter to Carlo Raffaelli, he remembers his first trip to Rome, it was such an inspirational trip that it lead to the painting of the *Mercato*. He writes:

*Mercato dei cavalli a Roma. The first time I went to Rome and I returned stimulated. Awarded a bronze medal in Vienna and a certificate in Philadelphia.<sup>34</sup>*

We have only a few words to analyse an almost telegraphic message, but those are not the words of a forgetful person: the painter has clearly communicated to Raffaelli the extent of the enchantment that had overcome him when he first visited Rome and the famous *campagna romana*. It is obvious that for Fattori remembering how he felt at that particular time was much more important and relevant than providing a complete list of prizes or giving some information on the whereabouts of the painting. Again, we cannot fail to notice that Fattori mentions only Vienna and Philadelphia, and that nothing is said about the Melbourne International Exhibition.

Here Fattori concentrated on the feelings that lead to the creation of a painting, not on the history or the whereabouts of that painting.

From those primary sources it could be concluded that Fattori was not too sure about the geographical position of Melbourne, that he was rather careless in remembering all the prizes he had received, and he can be forgiven for all of that.

After all, he did say that he '*worked for the love of art*', and perhaps it could even be suggested that he, truly, did not know what had happened to his *Mercato*. But despite it all, after reading his letter to Raffaelli,

we cannot say that Fattori had completely forgotten his *Mercato*.

Unfortunately, we can valiantly try to make sense of all these speculations, but, in the final analysis, none of this theorizing can actually provide clues to the present whereabouts of the painting, or to what may have happened to the painting. From all of this we may reach a better understanding of Fattori himself, as a person and as an artist, as a teacher, but we are left with no painting: once that the Melbourne Exhibition was dismantled we lose track of the *Mercato*.

Not even the publication, in 1961, of a catalogue of Fattori's oil paintings, so lovingly prepared by Giovanni Malesci, can assist in locating the *Mercato*.<sup>35</sup> Malesci (1884–1969) was one of Fattori's pupils and, despite the age difference, was very close to the painter, and looked after him until his death on the 30 of August 1908. It was only after Fattori's death that Malesci discovered that he had been nominated his sole heir.<sup>36</sup> In Malesci's *Catalogazione*, card No. 646 gives details of the *Mercato*, but, as expected, these details echo Fattori's annotation on Anna Franchi's documents. Malesci declares that the *Mercato* was lost at sea:

... the painting was lost at sea with the sinking of the ship *Europa*, on its return trip from the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880.<sup>37</sup>

This card provides the two names under which this particular painting was exhibited and provides a list of the various international exhibitions to which the painting had been sent: Vienna, in 1873, where it received a bronze medal; Florence, in 1874; Philadelphia in 1876, where it received a gold medal and a certificate; Paris, 1878; and finally, in 1880, to Melbourne, where, Malesci incorrectly declares, the painting was given a prize. The Melbourne reference, again, echoes the annotation written on the bill of sale held by Anna Franchi, in other words, it echoes Fattori's statement.

Here we are confronted, yet again, by what appear to be incorrect, and incomplete facts, and, yet again, we can trace these facts back to Fattori himself. But was Fattori really responsible for all of this? Perhaps communication between the representatives in Melbourne and Fattori in Italy did not function as well as it should have, and Fattori never knew that it was the American ship that sank in Victorian waters. Perhaps he simply did not know about that famous second telegram, immersed, as he was, in his work, in tackling the demands of his new position as a honorary professor

at the *Istituto di belle arti* in Florence, and in dealing with his private life which, in 1880, was going through a rather difficult time. So, he repeated the news delivered in that first telegram, and the story of a shipwreck that did not take place, that did not happen, became an integral part of the history of the *Macchiaioli*.

And finally, any lingering doubts about the safety of the *Europa* could be completely dismissed when correspondence from the Offices of the Italian Navy, the *Marina Militare Italiana*, confirmed that the Italian ship *Europa* had reached its original port of departure, Venice, in January 1882.

Knowing, with absolute certainty, that the *Europa* had safely reached Venice was great, but, obviously, it was not completely satisfactory. Still looking for clues about the painting, surfing the net, and double-checking sites on Fattori and the *Macchiaioli*, took me to New Zealand, to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, and to a most fascinating story surrounding five *Macchiaioli* paintings. These five paintings had been purchased by the Gallery in 1994 and lent to the Pananti Gallery, in Florence, for the Exhibition '*The Macchiaioli: New Contribution*', in 1997–1998.<sup>38</sup>

What was supposed to be a loan of paintings by the Dunedin Gallery to Florence, turned into a bureaucratic nightmare once the *Macchiaioli* from New Zealand hit Italian soil. What followed is a most enthralling, poignant and, at times, disquieting story filled with art icons of the 19th century and war tragedies of the 20th century, and embracing two hemispheres and, of course, a lot of travelling for those *Macchiaioli* paintings. One of the five *Macchiaioli* was Fattori's *Cavalryman with two horses (Cavallegero con due cavalli)*.

The complex history of the five *Macchiaioli* paintings from Dunedin is uniquely relevant to the history of the *Mercato* for the intrinsic reason that it eliminates any doubts surrounding the possible sale of the *Mercato* to a public institution in Australia or in New Zealand. The article, *Saga of the Macchiaioli*, dated 1/10/1999, and posted on the web concludes that:

*There are no other 'Macchiaioli' paintings in public ownership in Australia or New Zealand.*<sup>39</sup>

It is such a short sentence and yet, dare I say, it is a very comforting sentence. It brings some consolation and relief as it implies that, if the *Mercato* is anywhere in Australia or in New Zealand, it has to be privately owned, unless, of course, it has been sold after October 1999, and there would be a bill of sale. It is not and it

cannot be a total consolation because it does not say anything specific about the *Mercato*. So, whatever happened to Fattori's *Mercato* once the Melbourne International Exhibition was completely dismantled by the end of July 1881? The *Europa* left Melbourne on the 28th of July 1881 and reached Venice on the 30th of January 1882.

Was the *Mercato* on board the *Europa*? Was the *Mercato* sold in Melbourne and is it now privately owned? Was it sold to any of the many visiting ships in the harbour? Is it sitting somewhere completely forgotten? Even if Italy is filled with works of art, and breathes and produces works of art, the loss of one single painting can only be seen as a painful event.

Searching for a painting but not finding it, could be seen as having been a rather useless and time-consuming exercise, but the fact that it was possible to prove that the *Europa* did not sink and, consequently, to be able to declare that the *Mercato* cannot be at the bottom of the ocean, cannot be seen as a complete failure, nor as a waste of time. It was definitely a unique experience filled with tantalizing as well as frustrating moments. What had started as a symbolic tribute in praise of Giovanni Fattori had became a venture that opened up a tangled maze of factors linking Italy and Australia at a time when Melbourne was at its apex and Italy was working on its new political identity. Even if we do not know where the *Mercato* is now, even if we do not know all the circumstances that prompted Giovanni

Fattori to write that the painting was lost at sea, and until there is substantially more evidence regarding the history of the *Mercato*, we can be very grateful that Captain Cesare Romano, and his crew, succeeded in bringing to safety the *Europa* with its vast cargo of Italian exhibits.

Hopefully one day someone will locate the missing *Mercato*, or will discover more about it, and will contribute to the history of the *Macchiaioli*. In the meantime, as it always happens, we can add a completely new and stimulating twist to the history of Fattori and his presence at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880.

The Olivieri & Sarfatti Catalogue of 1880 and other catalogues, including the *Official Record of the Melbourne International Exhibition, 1880-1881*, clearly list a second painting by Fattori as having been sent to Melbourne and having been exhibited at the Melbourne Exhibition.<sup>40</sup> In the Olivieri & Sarfatti Catalogue the second painting is listed on page 61 as *Boscajole coste italiani* (sic), in English catalogues it appears as *Costumes of Italian Forest Labourers*, but only the *Mercato* has been reported as being 'lost at sea'. Strange, very strange.

And, with this *Boscajole* we now have new, shifting terrain to investigate, not forgetting, of course, the need to tease out that very large number of works of art and other exhibits that were sent to the Melbourne International Exhibition in the now distant 1880.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Norma Broude, *The Macchiaioli: Italian Painters of the 19th Century*. Yale University Press, 1987. p.223-226.

<sup>2</sup> References to the Italian Court - The *Argus*, with few exceptions, was highly critical of all the Italian exhibits in the Picture Gallery. In the *Argus*, 11 October 1880, Fattori's painting was described as '*muddy in colour, confused in drawing, and deficient in distance and atmosphere*'. And the revised edition of Robert P. Whitworth's *Massina's Popular Guide to the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-1881*, briefly deals with Fattori's painting. 'No. 70, by Fattori, of Florence, a picture (resembling some of Rosa Bonheur's in the bold drawing of the horses) representing the Horse market in Rome.' Printed and published by A.H. Massina & Co. (Date of publication not provided by Publisher), p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Boime, *The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento*. University of Chicago Press, 1993, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> *Autobiografia di Giovanni Fattori in Storia della pittura italiana dell'800*, Bramante Editrice, 1975, vol.3, pp.64-65. Italian : 'fattorino di corrispondenza', 'stampati incendiari'

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Italian: '.. guerra all'Accademia e all'arte classica ... si chiamò la macchia vale a dire lo studio scrupoloso della natura com'è e come si presenta, per cui fummo battezzati con il titolo di macciaioli' (sic)

<sup>7</sup> *International Exhibition, 1876 – Official Catalogue*. United States Centennial Commission, Philadelphia, Part 2, p.113.

<sup>8</sup> R. Monti, *Fattori*, Art Dossier, No. 101, p. 23. Giunti Industrie Grafiche, Prato, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.25. 'Il dipinto, del quale non resta che una vecchia foto, andò perduto nel 1880 in seguito al naufragio del piroscafo Europa che aveva caricato l'opera a Melbourne dove Fattori l'aveva inviato per partecipare a un'importante mostra.'

<sup>10</sup> C. Romano, *Rapporto*, Forani & C., Tipografia del Senato, Roma, 1882.

- 11 *Australasian Shipping News, 1880-1881* indicates that the Italian ship left Brisbane for Venice, via Torres Strait in September 17, 1881.
- 12 *The Age*, 6th September, 1880.
- 13 Ibid
- 14 *Melbourne International Exhibition, 1880-1881, Official Record, & Catalogue of Exhibits*, Mason, Firth & McCutcheon, Melbourne, 1882. Fine Arts Exhibits: pp. 511-514; General Exhibits: pp.565-571.
- 15 *The Age*, 6th September, 1880.
- 16 C. Romano, *Relazione - Viaggio del R. Trasporto'Europa'*, in *Rivista Marittima*, dicembre 1880, vol. 3, pp. 578-579.
- 17 Ibid, p. 580 'Venne anche a bordo il signor Sarfatti, dal quale fui informato come tutto fosse in corso di preparazione per il sollecito sbarco di materiali essendo stato avvisato del mio prossimo arrivo dal mio dispaccio da Albany, e sebbene avesse avuto qualche giorno dopo la notizia della nostra perdita, subito smentita.'
- 18 *Melbourne International Exhibition, Official Record*, ibid, p.xxviii
- 19 Olivieri & Sarfatti, *Esposizione universale del 1880 in Melbourne, (Australia). Sezione Italiana. Catalogo generale*, Venezia, 1880.
- 20 Ibid, p. iv
- 21 From *Notable Events, 1880*, published by *The Age*, we learn that the blessing from the Italian Government came in early February 1880. According to the Melbourne Exhibition *Conditions & Regulations* (item 3) intentions of participating had to be lodged not later than the 1st of June 1879.
- 22 Olivieri & Sarfatti, ibid, pp. xi-x
- 23 Ibid, p. v
- 24 F. Gagliardi. His articles were eventually collated and published in a book appropriately titled *L'australia. Lettere alla Gazzetta d'Italia*, Tipografia Editrice della Gazzetta d'Italia, Firenze, 1880.
- 25 D. Durbé, *Contributo a Fattori*, Edizione Pananti, Firenze, 1994, pp.1 123-124.
- 26 Ibid: 'A Melbourne il quadro fu effettivamente mandato?' p. 124.
- 27 Ibid: '... fu spedito all'esposizione internazionale di Melbourne (America [sic]), sul vapore Europa. Si guadagnò il diploma d'onore e la medaglia di bronzo. Nel tornare, il vapore arenò e il quadro si perse (storico).' pp. 123-124.
- 28 It was Enrico Siemiradski, of Rome, who was awarded the first prize for his *Pirate's Cavern*. See *Melbourne International Exhibition, Official Record*. Ibid, p.261.
- 29 D. Durbé, op.cit. '... Premiato a Vienna 1873 con medaglia di bronzo e Londra 1875; a Santiago del Chili [sic] diploma d'onore; a Filadelfia nel 1876. Di ritorno da Filadelfia sprofondò nel mare con il carico del bastimento.' pp. 123-124.
- 30 Maria Teresa Fiorio, '... partecipò alle mostre internazionali di maggior prestigio: i suoi quadri all'esposizione di Vienna suscitarono vero entusiasmo, e così fu a Filadelfia per il Mercato dei cavalli, che però al ritorno andò perduto nel naufragio della nave.' in *Storia della pittura italiana dell'Ottocento*, Bramante Editrice, 1975, vol. 3, p. 255.
- 31 *Autobiografia di Giovanni Fattori* in *Storia della pittura italiana dell'Ottocento*, Bramante Editrice 1975, vol. 3, pp.64-66.
- 32 Ibid., p. 65.
- 33 Ibid, p. 66.
- 34 Vitali, *Lettere dei Macchiaioli*. 'Mercato dei cavalli a Roma. La prima volta che andai a Roma e ne ritornai impressionato. Premiato con medaglia di bronzo a Vienna e con diploma a Filadelfia.' 1953, p.98. In D. Durbé, op.cit., pp.121-122.
- 35 G. Malesci, *Catalogazione illustrata della pittura a olio di Giovanni Fattori*, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara, 1961.
- 36 L. Galletti & Anna Allegranza Malesci, ibid, Vol. 1, pp.8-9.
- 37 G. Malesci, op.cit. '... opera perduta nel naufragio del vapore Europa, nel viaggio di ritorno dall'Esposizione Internazionale di Melbourne del 1880.'
- 38 Archived features – *The Saga of the Macchiaioli Paintings*. See also John Timmins: *The Macchiaioli affair:Lost and Found in Italy*. Paper presented at the Australian Registrars Committee Conference, Melbourne, 9 October 2001.
- 39 Archived features – *The Saga of the Macchiaioli Paintings*.
- 40 *Melbourne International Exhibition*. op.cit., p. 511.

# italian historical society news

## EXHIBITIONS

Two important exhibitions, one in Melbourne and the other in New Zealand, will be of interest to our readers.

### STATION PIER: GATEWAY TO A NEW LIFE

Immigration Museum

400 Flinders Street, Melbourne 3000

By the time the last migrant ship, *Australis*, docked in 1977, more than a million newcomers had arrived at Station Pier to embark on life in a new land. This exhibition demonstrates how sea migration dramatically transformed Victoria and Australia. It includes two replica ships, memorabilia, diaries and mementos from the journey. The beautifully compiled and informative catalogue is a 'must have' souvenir for those who arrived as migrants at Station Pier. The Italian Historical Society has contributed to the display with a number of photographs from its collection. A range of special programs and events accompany this moving exhibition.

*On display from 4 October 2004 to 11 September 2005. For further details contact the Immigration Museum on 03 9927 2700.*



### QUI TUTTO BENE: THE ITALIANS IN NEW ZEALAND

Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand  
Cable Street  
Wellington, New Zealand

Presented by Te Papa and the New Zealand Italian Community, the exhibition captures the adventure, hardship, and success that is the story of the Italian community in New Zealand, from the first settlements in the 1870s to the present time. The skills and the flair that Italians brought to their new home is explored in the stories of Italian fishing, mining and market gardening communities, which became a distinctive part of the New Zealand landscape.

*On display from 13 November 2004 to March 2007. For further information contact the Museum of New Zealand on 04 381 7000 E-mail mail@tepapa.govt.nz*

### STAFF CHANGES AT THE IHS

Lorenzo Iozzi, Curator and Collection Manager of the Italian Historical Society, left the Society in September. During his five years at the Society Lorenzo was instrumental in implementing and completing the conservation and computer cataloguing of the Photographic Collection.

We wish him the best of luck in his new position with the Italian Australian Institute (IAI) based at La Trobe University, Bundoora.



An encounter with the life and style of a vibrant community

13 November 2004 – March 2007

Lorenzo has been replaced by Julia Church who has a background in writing, research and exhibition curating. Julia is also the author of *Per l'Australia*, our pictorial history of the Italian community in Australia. The book, to be released in June 2005, features over 250 photographs, as well as documents and objects from the Society's collection. Julia's skills, enthusiasm and passion for the history of the Italian community will be of great value to the Society. Welcome, Julia!

# from our archives: bohemia in melbourne: the romance of Fasoli's

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE ARGUS, 6 AUGUST 1932, IS DRAWN FROM THE EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS OF THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY. THE AUTHOR, J. ALEX ALLAN, DESCRIBES THE POPULARITY OF THE EARLY ITALIAN RESTAURANT FASOLI'S WITH MEMBERS OF MELBOURNE'S BOHEMIAN SOCIETY AT THE BEGINNING OF 1900.

Walk westward down Lonsdale Street from Spring Street, keeping to the north side. Passing across Exhibition Street you will see, beside the heading which hides the site of the old Zion Baptist Church, a square, old-fashioned building, now belonging to what is known as "The Ritz". That was Fasoli's, in its heyday of the late 'nineties and the early 1900's the temple of Bohemia Melbourne.

The worn stone doorstep tells its own tale. In 1861 France Forceau, a Neufchatel, named it the 'Pension Suisse' in memory of his native land. The building was then "107-9 Lonsdale Street east", and after Forceau it was held in turn by Gascard (1864-7), Celestin Frey (1868-1882), Brocco (1883-4), Monigatti (1885) Imhoff (1886-8), Pescia (1889-93), Piezze (1894-6), and Franzone (1897). But it was not until the coming of Vincent Fasoli in 1897 that the restaurant came fully into its own.

Vincent Fasoli was born at Como, Italy, in 1837. Between 1859 and 1870 he followed the banner of Garibaldi, not without distinction. Coming to Victoria in the late '70s, he joined the Swiss-Italian colony at "Jim Crow Diggings" – known to a later generation as Daylesford – where a little later he met Bridget White, aged 18 years, fresh from County Clare. Within a year they were married. In 1893, after he had tried his hand at various businesses with success, Fasoli bought the Carrier's Arms Hotel at Daylesford. Four years later, on the advice of Father Frey, formerly of the Pension Suisse, he sold out to one Hutchinson and took over the restaurant in Lonsdale Street from Franzone.

The old Swiss Inn at once acquired a new lease of life. The Pension, with its well-remembered Swiss standard painted on the eastern wall, had always been a rendezvous for the better class of Swiss and Italians in Melbourne; but now there

Ogathered in it, as well the artistic, political and social fraternities of the city, from aides-de-camp to poets. It became "the thing" to dine at Fasoli's. Passing under the lamp and old Forceau's dim blazonry of Swiss arms above the doorway, you might traverse the short passage, with the host's quarters to left and right, and enter the large dining-room with its one long table. If you were wise you booked your set in advance, either in the small dining-room to the left as one passed the kitchen, or in the larger hall, with its window looking out on the yard where the vine grew along the wall and the domino players laughed under the willow.

The atmosphere was unique – a blend of the cosmopolitan, friendly, erudite, and devil-may-care; its effect, bizarre yet grateful, was indescribable. The stiff Anglo-Saxon conventions simply did not exist; repressions were swept away, and the only ground on which one met one's fellow-diners was that on which stand men and brothers. Across the table flew scraps of small talk, learned discussion, and greeting in all the tongues of Europe. The meal cost a shilling – 1/3 with coffee – and the guest retained his original knife and fork throughout the courses. One generally opened with a taste of Fasoli's home-made "salame" – a species of highly spiced sausage. The followed salads to one's taste, soup, or spaghetti with ground cheese, meat, and white or red wine from the many long-necked decanters.

## An Interesting Company

Come back with me over the gap of 30 years. The room, with its plain-bricked walls, and the light of the setting sun striking through the tobacco smoke that wreathes the cartoons by Vasco Loureiro around the chamber, is like that of a medieval inn. Do you see that brisk little gentleman with the pointed beard? That is "the little doctor". With him are two learned senators, and another parliamentarian. There sits a leading journalist, exchanging banter with Marshall Hall, whose head and shoulders have just emerged from the wine-cellars, where, with the host's concurrence, he lately descended to fetch more claret. That sharp-faced artist's name is Lindsay. He had not yet come to fame. Beside him sits Canon Carlisle, deep in an earnest literary discussion. Bertram Mackennal, Randolph Bedford, "Bob" Croll and solicitor David Wright (of the old straw

hat) make up a group at that far corner. And, bless me! There is old Toni – Toni Bonetti! The lively, dark-faced man is Chefalo, who recently "looped-the-loop", for the first time in Melbourne. Between the puffs of his cigarette he waves a hand to to Melburne's mermaid, Annette Kellerman, whose hair is still damp from the afternoon's display at the Aquarium. Alek Sass argues an artistic point with three journalists – Brodzky, Samson and Peters, while Louis Esson, glass in hand, listens interestedly. The orating Frenchman, with the fluent tongue – and hands – is Monsieur Lambert, soon to forsake his hairdressing establishment in Melbourne for his beloved Paris. Signor Zelman and that able entrepreneur, R. S. Smythe, discuss music with a Royal Comic Opera Company's tenor, their audience including Luigi Schiavi – whose wife, a harpist, played as the first female member of an orchestra in Melbourne – and Louis the lion-tamer from the visiting circus, who is only mildly interested. A Queen Street solicitor talks sport (he will remember) with a hearty gentleman of Jewish blood and Continental nomenclature; together they turn and rally "Il Padrone" about his "salame", telling him it is "made of donkey". Clement Wragge listens and smiles. Mazzalini, bon vivant and product of a crack Italian cavalry regiment, beans behind his beloved cigar.

#### With Zelman at the Piano

The light are on now. Some have drifted to the yard, whence came clink of glasses and click of dominos. Smoke eddies to the ceiling and the stars. Zelman's master-hands are running up and down the piano, and the chatter falls silent while Beethoven and Verdi weave their spells. Then the company rocks into the swing of 'Funiculi Funicula'. Afterwards there may be a song in lighter vein, but this medley of music-lovers knows not "jazz". The Sunday evening concert – that typically Continental institution beloved also by the old Turn Verein – was a regular event at Fasoli's. There will be some who recall the night when old M. Soumprou, who died two years ago at the age of 101 years, took up the cudgels for la belle France, and excitedly stopped the orchestra's rendering of the "Marseillaise" with an assertion that one passage was being played wrongly.

In 1905 Vincent Fasoli, then aged nearly 70 years, gave over the Pension to the management of his daughter, Katherine Maggia, wife of Nerino Maggia (a civil engineer who worked for the Roumanian Government, and later laid out the Bendigo and Ballarat tramway systems), and went to

live in Campbell Street, Coburg. In 1907 Mrs Maggia sold out to Camusso, and took the present Hotel Fasoli in King Street. This fine old building, erected in 1859, and now reconstructed throughout to preserve and perpetuate the old Bohemian atmosphere, had been until 1860 a private hotel under various proprietors, and then a licensed house known successively as the Welsh Harp (1861-6), the West End Gin Palace (1867), the All Nations (1868-77), the Rose of Denmark (1877-80), and the West Melbourne Hotel (1880-1907). There to-day one may see on the wall sketches of Lionel Lindsay, Hal Gye, and Hall Waugh. Percy Lindsay drops in when in Melbourne, and for the old-time habitues, as well as for the "younger set" of Bohemia, the charm which is peculiarly Fasoli's still holds its allure.

In 1921 the venerable Vincent Fasoli, ailing and soon to die after an operation for gangrene, sold his house in Coburg and went to live with his daughter at King Street. There, in 1925, at the age of 88 years, he died. A year later his aged wife followed him. On Mrs. Maggia's death in 1929 her sister, Mrs. Mazzalini (Virginia Fasoli) assumed the management, which she still directs.

What "made" Fasoli's? One does not know. There have been, and are, other Continental resorts in Melbourne; but the fascination of Fasoli's still exists – Bohemia in excelsis!

# family history

The following enquiries were received:

## Ludovico PORENA

Michele Watson ([michelewatson@pinelodge237.fasnet.co.uk](mailto:michelewatson@pinelodge237.fasnet.co.uk)) is seeking information on his great grandfather Ludovico Porena. Born in Italy in 1852, Ludovico and daughter Beatrice migrated to Sydney in 1881, where he took up an official post with the Italian Consulate. Beatrice's mother, Maria Poggi, died in Rome, in childbirth. Ludovico spent 10 years in Sydney before going to Melbourne, where he set up an import business. At some point he returned to Sydney, where he died in 1926.

## Irene PLOZZO DE CAMPO

Greg Lawes ([ggreglawes@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ggreglawes@optusnet.com.au)) is researching his grandmother's history. She was born in Walhalla, during the 1880s gold rush. He believes his grandmother was born with the name Plozzo and was later adopted by the De Campo family.

## CO.AS.IT. ITALIAN HERITAGE, SYDNEY

Three plaques, honouring the contribution made by Italian migrants in Sydney, were unveiled by Co.As.It Italian Heritage and the Leichhardt Council on Sunday 14 November. Visitors to the foreshore walkway at Iron Cove will be able to appreciate the plaques which pay tribute to the A.P.I.A. Club and the Iron Cove Fishing Fleet. The third plaque, installed at St Fiacres Church in Catherine Street, Leichhardt, bears witness to the important role this church has played in Sydney's Italian migrant community.

## AN EVENING WITH SONIA D'AMBRA

On Thursday 17 November, Association of Aeolians Worldwide Vice-President, Sonia D'Ambra was welcomed to Melbourne at an event jointly organized by the Association and the Italian Historical Society. Sydney-born Sonia has been living in Lipari for the last 15 years. She told the 150-strong audience about the Association's worldwide sponsorship drive to enlist Aeolians, particularly those of the younger generation. Since the organisation's establishment last year, Sonia has dealt with countless family history enquiries from descendants. Anyone interested in doing a family search, can access the emigration database at the Association's bilingual webpage [www.eolianinelmondo.it](http://www.eolianinelmondo.it)

Association President and *Il Globo* Director, Nino Randazzo announced a series of events planned for an Aeolian Week in Melbourne and Sydney in 2005. Laura Mecca, Manager of the Italian Historical

Society, and well-known *In Search of Kings* author Tony De Bolfo, discussed the importance of preserving family heritage and how to make use of the services and valuable documents, such as shipping lists and naturalisation records, held in Australian public archives. Dr Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, Director of the Italian Australian Records Project (IARP), based at Victoria University (<http://w2.vu.edu.au/iarp>) and Dom Arrivolo, Chairman of Co.As.It Italian Family History Group, Sydney ([www.coasit.org.au](http://www.coasit.org.au)), talked about the material in their collections which refers to Aeolian migration to Australia. Coasit Italian Family History Group recently acquired 45 microfilm reels of the official registers of births, deaths and marriages celebrated on the Aeolian Islands from 1559.



Sonia D'Ambra presenting her talk at the Italian Historical Society.

# publications received

## BOOKS IN ENGLISH

### EMANUEL DANERO [NEICH]: ITALY TO AUSTRALIA

LINA MOFFITT, SELF-PUBLISHED, SYDNEY, 2004.

\$60.00. INCLUDES CD.

Twice married and officially the father of twenty-five children, Emanuele Sebastiano Neich (Danero) became one of Sydney's most celebrated publicans and land owners. Born in Genoa and arriving in Australia in 1826, Emanuele and his descendants come to life in this thoroughly researched study by his great-great granddaughter Lina Moffitt. Emanuele became licensee of several hotels including the *Black Dog Inn* in Sydney's Rocks and the *Bath Arms* in Burwood, which the family operated from 1836 until 1919. The entrepreneur was the father-in-law of Burwood's first Mayor, Richard Wynne (Wynne Art Prize) and great-grandfather of Australian cricketing icon, Sir Donald Bradman. Howzat!

### NINETY SEVEN NINETY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FAMILY OF RAFFAELE AND CAROLINA BEVILACQUA 1897-1990

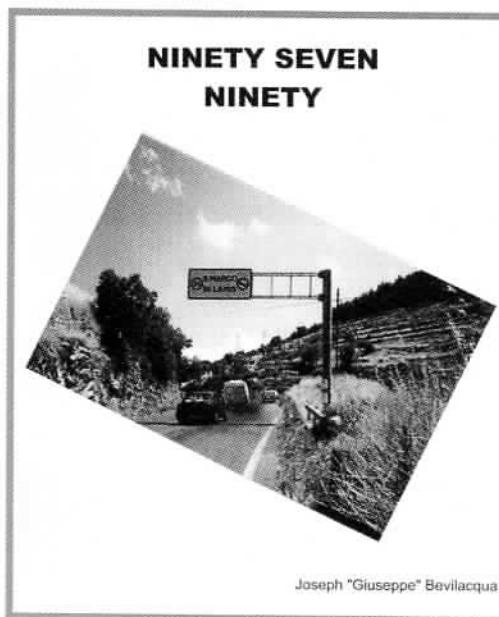
JOSEPH BEVILACQUA, SELF PUBLISHED, MELBOURNE, 2001. KINDLY DONATED BY THE AUTHOR.

After run-ins with local authorities and a shoot-out that resulted in the wounding of an intruder, officials suggested it would be wiser for Raffaele Bevilacqua to "migrate for a few years". Raffaele left San Marco in Lamis for Australia in 1926 and was followed thirteen years later by his wife Carolina and their four sons. The family lived in country Victoria and New South Wales before settling in Carlton, where they made a contribution to the life of their community. One of their sons, Pietro [Peter] Bevilacqua, was the first Italian-born Australian Rules footballer. See article on page 2 of this issue of the Society's Journal.

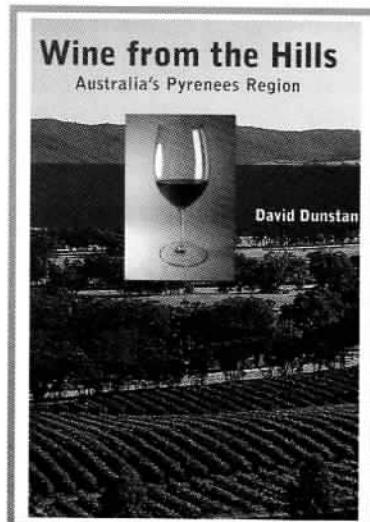
### WINE FROM THE HILLS: AUSTRALIA'S PYRANNEES REGION

DAVID DUNSTAN, AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING, KEW, 2001. PRICE: \$29.00.

Italians have played a key role in the Australian wine industry since the 1800s. David Dunstan presents the history of the vigneroni of the Pyrenees region in central and central-western Victoria, and their spectacularly beautiful award-winning vineyards. In the book the contributions of Italian winemakers such as Luigi Bazzani, Fred Ursini, Charles Pellegrino, and the Oro brothers is acknowledged.



Joseph "Giuseppe" Bevilacqua

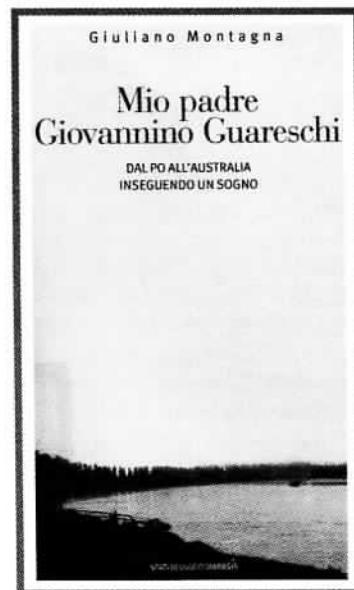


## BOOKS IN ITALIAN

### MIO PADRE GIOVANNINO GUARESCHI: DAL PO ALL'AUSTRALIA INSEGUENDO UN SOGNO

GIULIANO MONTAGNA, DIABASIS, REGGIO EMILIA, 2004.  
KINDLY DONATED BY THE AUTHOR.

Throughout his life Giuliano Montagna struggled to gain the acceptance and acknowledgement of his father, the author Giovannino Guareschi. Giuliano left Palma for Adelaide in 1962, where he found work for the Italian language newspaper *La Fiamma*, for which he later became director. The book also charts the development of Australian society into a multicultural community.



## THESES IN ENGLISH

### MAKING ARCHIVES, MAKING HISTORIES: THE SANTOSPIRITO COLLECTION PROJECT

CATE JEANNE ELKNER, 2003,  
DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY,  
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

Cate Elkner has been a long-time collaborator with the Society. The personal papers of Italian-Australian welfare worker Lena Santospirito were donated to the Society by her daughter Maria Triaca (nee Santospirito). Lena was President of the Archbishop's Committee for Italian Relief in the immediate post-WW2 period. The author charts the assistance Lena gave to hundreds of Italian migrants and her role as an intermediary between Italians in Australia and the Commonwealth government. The welfare activities of the Catholic Church in Australia are examined in the broader context of ideological tensions between left and right within the Italian-Australian community, as well as the Australian Catholic Action movement. We would like to congratulate Cate on receiving her Doctorate.

### ETHNIC IDENTITY IN ITALO-AUSTRALIAN FAMILY HISTORY: A CASE STUDY OF GIOVANNI PULLE, HIS LEGACIES AND THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF ETHNICITY OVER 125 YEARS

CATHERINE MARGUERITA-MARIA DEWHIRST, 2004,  
DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY, CENTRE FOR SOCIAL  
CHANGE RESEARCH, SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND  
HUMAN SERVICES, QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY.

The importance of family as a means of maintaining cultural identity is central to this thesis, which follows the life of Giovanni Pulè (1854-1920) who emigrated to Australia in 1876 from Modena, Emilia-Romagna.

### A STUDY OF A GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF POST WW2 ITALIAN WOMEN'S IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCES AND THEIR REAL AND PERCEIVED ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

DIANA MERCURI, 2003,  
HONOURS DEGREE IN ITALIAN, DEPARTMENT  
OF LANGUAGES, MONASH UNIVERSITY.

One of the very few accounts which present Italian women migrants as protagonists and decision makers in their own right, and not simply as an adjunct to their male counterparts. The author dispels the myth that the Italian migrant woman was subordinate to the male and demonstrates that her role was significantly more than that of homemaker and child rearer.



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