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Italian immigration to Australia

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Abstract

The present article aims at retracing the steps of the Italian community in Australia, and particularly in the state of Victoria, in order to understand how its identity was shaped over time. While Italian arrivals started at the very beginning of Australia's colonisation, the community experienced a staggering growth after the Second World War. In spite of Italians being associated with culture and perceived as educated in the nineteenth century, Italian immigrants were often welcomed to Australia with mistrust and accused of not conforming enough to local customs in the post-world war period. Various episodes of racial hatred were registered, especially in the 1930s, as a pressure valve for the Australian community which was stressed by economic difficulties. At the time, racism towards southern Europeans was also demonstrated by the spread of the derogatory slang term *wog* to refer to immigrants from Italian and Greek backgrounds. The origin of the term is particularly interesting, as well as the three-phase process that shaped the identity of the Italian community in Australia.

Keywords: Italian community, racial hatred, immigrants, slang term, Australia

The arrival of Italians to Australia

While the discovery of the Australian continent was already pre-announced by Cicero and St Augustine (Barber 2013), who referred to the existence of an unknown land located South in their writings, the first attempt to represent the continent on a map dates back to the XIII century, when Cecco D'Ascoli[1] depicted a southern land counterweighting the northern hemisphere and maintaining Earth's balance. (Randazzo et al. 1987) The map is currently conserved in the National Library of Turin.

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[1] Born in 1257, Francesco degli Stabili, known as Cecco D'ascoli, taught mathematics, medicine and astrology at the University of Bologna from 1322 to 1325 (D'Ascoli 1916). He had a friendship with Dante Alighieri, with whom he entertained literary disputes (Nascita 1792). His beliefs and the content of his works (the best known of which was *L'Acerba*) were of a medieval nature. D'Ascoli caught the attention of inquisitor Lamberto da Cingoli in 1324 (most likely following a report by an envious colleague, Tommaso del Garbo), his works were confiscated and he was subjected to corporal punishments for heretic statements. He was also forbidden from teaching and there is no record of him till 1327, when the accusation of heresy was definitively confirmed and he was burnt at the stake along with all his works. According to Rosario (1916), this is the reason why the original works of Cecco D'ascoli were never found.

It was another Italian, Marco Polo, who wrote about an unknown land in the Milione, after sailing along the Southern Asian coast, which later led to the exploration of the continent. The explorations of Marco Polo continued to be fundamental for cartographers, who referred to his discoveries until the XVI century. Also Johannes Schöner, one of the best known German maker of globes recognised: "Behind the Sinae and the Ceres [legendary cities of Central Asia] … many countries were discovered by one Marco Polo… and the sea coasts of these countries have now recently again been explored by Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci in navigating the Indian Ocean". (Mitchell 2014) Starting from the creation of Schöner's globes in the first half of the XVI century, most geographers continued to depict a *Terra Australis* as a unified continental mass. Petrus Plancius, for example, was still portraying Australia according to the common erroneous conception in 1594, see Fig. 1.1 (Ferro et al. 1988, Dekker 2007). In spite of Francis Drake's journey – from 1577 to 1580 – proving that the *Terra Australis* was not a contiguous landmass, only a few exceptions to conventional ideas were noticeable. Gastaldi, for instance, represented a *Terra del Fuego Incognita* in his *Universali* as a mass of unknown lands. (Ferro et al. 1988)[2].

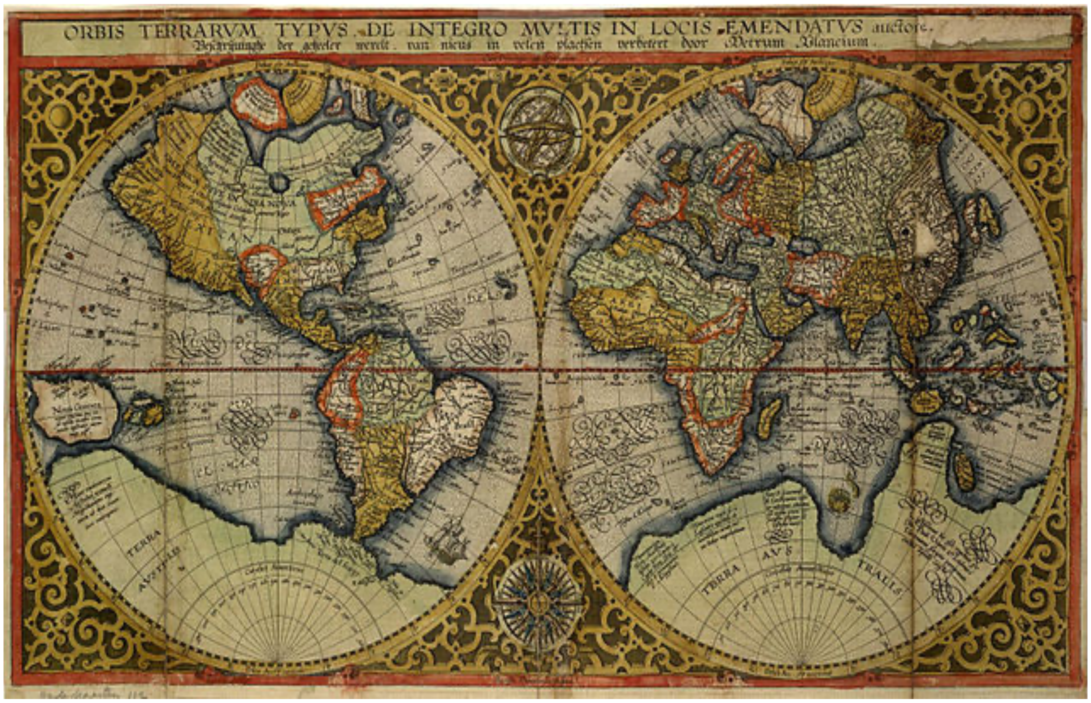
ORBIS TERRARVM TYPVS DE INTEGRO MVLTIS IN LOCIS EMENDATVS auctore.
Beschrijvinghe der geheeler werelt. van nieus in velen plaetsen verbetert door Petrum Plancium.
TERRA AVSTRALIS
TERRA AVSTRALIS

Figure 1.1: Plancius 1594.

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[2] For in-depth analysis of Gastaldi's work, see Grande 1905.

It was only in the XVIII century that scientific expeditions provided valuable information that allowed cartographers to depict the *Terra Australis* as composed as countless islands and a continent. The latter was going to attract the main powers' attention. James Cook's voyage later proved that Australia was not located where it had been placed conventionally, as well as being smaller than geographers thought. (*Ibid.*)

There have been some attempts to strengthen the ties between Italian identity and Australian origins, based on the claims of the Australian journalist Ron Saw, according to whom his ancestor Mario Sega arrived to Australia on a Dutch ship in 1616. The captivating anecdote can most likely be considered as a legend, due to the lack of exhaustive and reliable documentation, but it appeared in *Il Corriere dei Sette Giorni* in 1975, as reported by Randazzo:

> «The ship's captain Dirk Hartog, accompanied by a group of sailors, nailed a pewter plate onto a post, showing his name, the name of his ship [Eendracht] and the date of landing. There followed a small celebration during which Mario Sega slipped away to walk along the sea-shore in search of shells. Lo and behold, he encountered an Aboriginal girl and Mario did not return to his ship. Nine months later, a little boy, with blue eyes and coffee-coloured skin was born. He was named Widgee Mooltha Sega, and because of his colouring his mother's tribe considered him to be a divinity. Later in 1656, he met Wilhelmina – a Dutch shipwreck victim. The couple went to live on a small island a few miles from the present location of Fremantle.
> The family grew and one branch of the family moved inland. Later when Stirling, one of the first English colonisers of the western part of the continent, arrived in 1829, he was looking for land along the banks of the Swan River with a view to establishing settlement. For one shilling and a bag of onions the Sega family sold to Stirling the island of Rottnest, the North-West Cape, and King's Park, as they are now known. This was not a good commercial transaction for the Segas, but they learned their lesson, and gradually reconstructed their lives. With the arrival of the first English colonists the name of Sega was not popular and the family felt that they should change it to Saw». (Randazzo et al. 1987, pp. 16-17)

We now know that, as early as the start of the seventeenth century, Dutch ships sighted and drew maps of parts of Australia, which at the time the Dutch called *Terre de Diemens, Eendrachtsland* or *Hollandia Nova*. From the sixteenth century onwards, the Spanish, the Dutch and the Portuguese had been drawn to exploring the seas around the *Terra Incognita* (The Western Australian Museum 2024), with Australia being visited «by the Portuguese of Dom Jorge de Menezes [in 1527]: they [gave] the name of Abrolhos to the group of reefs and islets situated off the West coast» (Benker 2018). Thus Captain Cook’s arrival in 1770 was not the first attempt at exploring the *Terra Australis*, nor was he the first European to land on the continent. It is well documented that a Dutch ship called *Eendracht* landed on the coast of Western Australia in 1616, when Dirk Hartog entered «Shark Bay and [became] the first European to set foot on Western Australian soil when he [landed] on what is now known as Dirk Hartog Island at the entrance to Shark Bay. He [left] behind an inscribed pewter plate and continued north along the coast of what [became] known as 'Eendrachtsland'» (Western Australia Museum 2007). Italian sailors had been already part of the crew of the Magellan expedition in 1520 and while it is difficult to find many records of Mario Sega's adventure, it is not unlikely that an Italian could have been on a Dutch ship approaching the Australian continent. Yet the Sega-Saw story remains a fascinating attempt to identify the first Italian settler in Australia.

The first Italian immigrants were later principally religious people. Among these were Raimondo Vaccari, Maurizio Lencioni and Luigi Pesciaroli (Ferro et al. 1988) and political refugees, such as Carandini - whose career is discussed further on. Years before the beginning of British settlement, Italian priests attempted to serve as missionaries in Australia and sent information about the Fifth Continent to Rome. Among these was Father Vittorio Riccio (1621-1685), a member of the Dominican order working in Manila, who sent a map of Australia to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in the 1670s, including a description of Australian inhabitants and his wish to proselytise the population (Pascoe 2001). The map was drawn in Manila according to what Father Riccio had learnt from Dutch sailors. At the same time, he requested permission from Rome to create a Catholic mission in Australia. Riccio, however, died before the permission was granted and the Italian mission was never created (Italian Historical Society 2018)[3].

The presence of Italians in Australia was later recorded with the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770. According to some evidence, Giacomo Mario Matra (a sailor of Corsican origins born in New York) and Antonio Ponto (a Venetian sailor) were on the *Endeavour*. It needs to be noted that the Italian origins of Antonio Matra were arguably exaggerated by many scholars in order to strengthen Italian connections to Australia. Matra was involved in rather curious episodes. He had come to the conclusion that British subjects were about to leave the Americas in order to colonise the Australian continent, according to his testimony in front of the Parliamentary Commission for Transport. If that had been true, Matra would have been the first one to formulate the proposal to create a new colony, which led to him being defined as "the father of Australia" in a paper published by the Royal Australian Historical Society (Gobbo 1985). A small number of Italian convicts later arrived on the First Fleet in 1788, and early Italian arrivals continued throughout the early days of colonisation. Yet the first truly reliable record of Italian presence on Australian land is the one attesting the arrival of the Tuscan Marquis Alessandro Malaspina, who conducted a scientific exploration for the Spanish. The Marquis was accompanied by a Milan painter named Brambilla and Alessandro Belmont in 1793. (Randazzo et al. 1987, Pascoe 2001)

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[3] The Dominican Father Vittorio Riccio had the most fascinating life. Before serving as an ambassador to Manila for Zheng Chenggong in the 1660s, Riccio spent seven years in Xiamen learning the local dialect. He played a key role in the 1662 Manila Chinese uprising, initially defending the Chinese community before advocating their expulsion. He was accused of treason upon his arrival in Manila and banished for life to a convent outside the city. Riccio's main achievements were his missionary work in the Philippines and his role as a mediator between Chenggong and the Spanish authorities (Busquets 2020; Gonzalez 1955; Tremml-Werner 2015). While serving in Manila he came in contact with Dutch explorers' accounts of the *Terra Australis*.

Even though Italians were not as numerous as German and Chinese immigrants during colonial times, they undoubtedly exercised a considerable influence on Australian culture and way of life. According to Pascoe, this influence began to grow in the years preceding the First World War, after

> «the first significant numbers of Italians came to Australia during the gold-rush in the 1850s. [In particular] from the area of Ticino, 2000 Swiss-Italian men were induced to the goldfield during a time of agricultural depression. [...] Many of them stayed and helped build the Italian community of Daylesford. [...] Many other Italians, perhaps as many as a thousand, went to the goldfield – Raffaello Carboni, of course, being the most famous. Carboni (1817-75), who was on the Ballarat goldfields from 1852 to 1855, was a witness and chronicler of the military attack on the Eureka Stockade in 1854». (Pascoe 2001, p.487)[4]

The city of Daylesford, approximately 110 km from Melbourne, currently counts 2,565 inhabitants and is still one of the best known tourist destinations in rural Victoria. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011)

The Italian-born recorded in Victoria were 947 in 1881, and later increased, reaching the number of 1525 by 1901. The figure was destined to rise, since the Italian community was soon joined by approximately 3000 more people (Pascoe 2001). According to the above mentioned Census, there were 947 Italians in the colony in 1881, about a third of whom were living on the Goldfields in Victoria and two thirds in the cities. (Ferres 1881) However, arrivals were relatively scarce during the years between1876-1885, with approximately a hundred Italians migrating to Australia each year. Until the early XIX century, it was primarily members of the Italian elite to migrate to Australia. An exception to the trend was the attempt to systematically colonise New Ireland by a group of Italian farmers in 1880. After failing, the Italian community founded the village of New Italy in Papua New Guinea, which was inhabited by Italians until 1955. (Ferro et al. 1988)

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[4] The role of Raffaello Carboni in the Eureka Stockade is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Italians in Victoria

The number of immigrants in Victoria grew after 1851, when gold was discovered in the colony, and Italians often played a significant role in Australian historical events.

According to anecdotes reported by Randazzo and Cigler, for instance, Thomas Chapman (an English shepherd) found two gold nuggets and took them to the Italian jeweller Carlo Brentani's shop. Brentani bought the larger one "for five shirts, a pair of trousers, an overcoat and $10 in cash", (Randazzo et al. 1987, p. 55) and tried in vain to obtain more precise information about the place where Chapman found the gold. The alarmed shepherd subsequently left Australia after fleeing to Sydney. The discovery of gold in Victoria was officially announced some time after these events took place and Victoria became a destination for gold prospectors coming from all over the world – in particular Italy, France, Dalmatia, Switzerland, Spain and England.

At the beginning of the 1850s, the number of Italians working in the goldfields was estimated to be greater than 1000. In spite of the presence of 548 names on the Consulate registers, this was the actual estimate formulated by the Consul-General at the time. In addition, from 1852 to 1855, a large number of Swiss-Italians (around 2000) left Ticino to join the Jim Crow mining location. The settlement was close to Bendigo, in the country of Victoria. The Swiss-Italians went through a tortuous journey and experienced different level of success:

«They suffered a great deal on their way out; the shipboard conditions were so abysmal that some did not survive the journey. Upon arrival, they left for the diggings. Some were successful; many of them who did not succeed left Australia to make their fortunes on the Californian goldfields. Some found a home-away-from-home with the Italian community at Daylesford, and later resettled elsewhere». (Randazzo et al. 1987, p. 58)

Mining areas such as Italian Gully, Gonzaga, Garibaldi Gully and Garibaldi Creek were opened by Italians and were an example of how active Italians were in the goldfields.

Interestingly, it was an Italian, Raffaello Carboni, who played an important role in the Eureka Stockade rebellion of 1854 and later documented it in the book The Eureka Stockade in 1855. Raffaello Carboni was one of the most famous Italians of the time in Australia, while remaining unknown in his homeland (Gobbo 1985). The importance of Carboni's role grew after working conditions for miners got worse in the area. For instance, the price for a gold digger licence was 30 shillings per month, regardless of him finding any gold or not. Punishment for not carrying a licence were quite severe and gold was increasingly hard to find. Complaints tended to be ignored by the authorities at the time. As Randazzo and Cigler reported:

«Between the end of November and the beginning of December, 1854, anger reached boiling point and Carboni's fiery harangues contributed to this. The barricades went up on the hills of the Eureka, and under the "Southern Cross" - the revolutionary banner with its five stars on a blue ground – the miners, led by the Irishman Peter Lalor and armed with carabines, pistols, swords, pikes and knives, swore "victory or death against the tyrants". […] Raffaello Carboni was placed in command of the "foreign battalion" of the miners because of his knowledge of languages. He yelled, cursed, urged his men on». (Randazzo et al. 1987, p. 61)

During the second half of the XIX century, an intensified interest in Australia arose in Italy from the development of an entrepreneurial spirit in Italy, and in particular in Genoa. The Genoese bourgeoisie launched scientific and commercial expeditions from their famous port. Particularly noticeable were the contributions by Nino Bixio and Giacomo Doria, the former trying to establish sea trade with the colony and to augment Italian presence in Australia For this purpose, Bixio founded a *Società di Emigrazione* in 1853, but the project failed prematurely because of an outbreak of a cholera on Bixio's ship. The society was soon dissolved, but its creation raise some awareness towards a continent that could offer extraordinary opportunities to resourceful migrants (Ferro et al. 1988, Carazzi 1972, Ferrari 1987). Indeed, Doria, along with Odoardo Beccari, embarked on a scientific expedition to Borneo in 1865, which only the latter could complete. The samples of local fauna and flora collected by Beccari were later organised by Doria to serve as a foundation for the *Natural History Museum of Genoa* – inaugurated in 1867. (Ferro et al. 1988)

Italian immigrants constantly followed political developments occurring in their mother land, in particular Giuseppe Garibaldi's feats. In January 1861, after Garibaldi's forced retirement in Sardinia and before the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, a committee formed by Italo-Australians started a campaign in order to offer him a "sword of honour". This was a success and the sum of 358$ was raised, which was considerable for the time. The highest offers reached between nine and ten dollars, and a jeweller even donated a diamond to decorate the sword, to represent Italy's path towards independence and freedom. Garibaldi's original reply to the gesture is currently displayed at the State Library of Melbourne. In his note, he wrote:

«Gentlemen, in your offer to me of a sword during this time of a shameful truce I see a comparison with those heroic times when a noble group of knights would arm their champion to fight for the oppressed. I thank you for the magnificent gift! Thank you for the message it bears! I and my companions yearn to continue to lead our people until their hearts become full of that great love that is owed to one's country, a love that overcome all others. But shall we be able to achieve this in the face of the fear that dominates our rulers? Our rulers who inject their own fear into so many others who, truth to tell, have little need of such assistance. Gentlemen, I must confess to you that at times I am overcome by a great sadness when I think of what I have always regarded with deep serenity. I hope I may still enjoy some years of vigour and life to fulfil my patriotic duty. But the delay in paying my debt to suffering Italy caused by incompetence and cowardice wounds me deeply. Ever yours, with greatest affection, Giuseppe Garibaldi». (Randazzo et al. 1987, p. 70)

This is an example of how tight the relationship between Italy and the Italian community in Australia, and in particular the one in Melbourne, has always been. Melbourne continued to be the city with the largest Italian community and hosting the most active Italian Consulate in Australia. After the proclamation of Italian independence, two consuls were appointed in Sydney and Melbourne, replacing the representatives of the former Kingdom of Sardinia. These were chosen by virtue of their involvement in the strengthening of business connections between Italy and Australia. (*Ibid.*)

Giuseppe Biagi, the Italian Consul in Melbourne, was more effective than his Sydney counterpart, as he successfully represented Italian interests in Australia for years while the Italian Consulate in New South Wales was substituted with a consular agency due to inactivity. According to Professor Giglioli, Sydney's welcome to the Italian ship Magenta was generally less warm than Melbourne's one. In the first report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 1869, Melbourne's Consul noted that there were more Italians living in Australia than it was generally believed, and these were mainly living in Victoria.

When Italian migration to Australia increased, in the 1880s, consul Biagi and his successor, Luigi Marinucci, had already monitored and fostered an Italian presence in Victoria. This culminated in the possibility for Australians to admire 900 machines coming from Italy at Melbourne's first International Exhibition in 1880, which was allowed by the work of the commercial representative in Melbourne – Gustavo Scarfatti – and his team. The 1880 International Exhibition in Melbourne represented an extraordinary opportunity for the city:

«Visitors to Melbourne in the 1880s were amazed. Here in the Southern Hemisphere was a city larger than most European capitals. In just a decade the population had doubled, racing to half-a-million. Citizens strutted the streets, bursting with pride as their city boomed. While Sydney was seen as slow and steady, Melbourne was fast and reckless. Ornate office buildings up to 12 storeys high rivalled those of New York, London and Chicago. Money was poured into lavishly decorated banks, hotels and coffee palaces. Towers, spires, domes and turrets reached to the skies». (Museums Victoria 2023)

After abandoning the gold fields, many Italians started to be active business men, as shown by the example of the Lucini & Co., founded in Hepburn Springs (rural Victoria) in the 1860s, which manufactured pasta using local mineral water.

Furthermore, the field of science in Victoria could count on Ettore Cecchi (1853-1946), Carlo Catani (1852-1918) and Pietro Baracchi (1851-1926), who were respectively two engineers and an astronomer working in Victoria. In particular, Baracchi was responsible for the largest reflecting telescope at the time and Cecchi supervised the first irrigation plans in the state of Victoria. Catani's contribution to Melbourne architecture is still noticeable, as he planned the Alexandra Gardens in St. Kilda, where the Catani gardens and the Catani towers are also to be found. The three successful men of science were friends and arrived all on the same ship in 1876. From the 1860s to the 1880s, Italian culture was also celebrated by the spread of Italian opera in Australia. In this regard, the contribution of Count Carandini was of particular significance. Exiled because of his hostility towards the Austrian Empire (which was then ruling North-Eastern Italy), Carandini arrived in 1842 and worked as an opera singer. After marrying Maria Burgess, the couple started a successful career together, which led them to perform in the most important theatres in Melbourne and Sydney. Italians were also influential in the arts, as in the 1870s, for instance, the top instructor of the New South Wales school for sculptors was the appreciated Simonetti. The success of these characters shaped the image of Italians in the minds of Australians, who thought of them as a rather artistic community. (Gobbo 1985; Randazzo et al. 1987; Ferro et al. 1988)

Yet intellectuals and professionals lived apart from the majority of Italian immigrants, who were generally illiterate. By 1914, almost 10000 Italians were living and working in Australia, and their presence had spread outside the main cities as well. Italian communities were shaped by a strong sense of belonging and loyalty, as immigrants bonded over political groups and professional connections. (Randazzo et al. 1987; Pascoe 2001) The presence of Italian "agricultural colonies" before the First World War was documented by Dewhirst 2016, who highlights how this was the result of "Italy's foreign policies after 1901[, which] opened commercial opportunities across its diaspora networks, [including] subsidising agricultural 'colonies' in Australia". (Dewhirst 2016, p. 23)

The presence of Italian workers was opposed by Australian trade unions, as they were suspected to be used by employers as a means of strike-breaking. Not only was hostility towards Italian immigrants common among local miners, but it was also shared by many members of Anglo-Australian society:

«Despite the obvious proof in their midst that there were many Italians of intelligence and talent, many Anglo-Australians were suspicious of these immigrants. The humbler immigrants were socially alienated by this kind of treatment, and in the period before 1914 we can already detect the beginnings of a separate Italian-

Australian ambience – a minority culture focused on several towns and suburbs throughout the continent. This became more evident after the First World War, however, as the lives of professional and labouring immigrants became more closely linked». (Pascoe 2001, p. 489)

This way of perceiving Italian culture was destined to change during the 1970s, but the process was slow and Italians endured discrimination for decades before it happened.

Italian migration to Australia from 1920 to 1945

After the unification of Italy, emigration became a widespread phenomenon in Italy, as farmers who had lost their lands, unemployed workers and people seeking their fortune started to leave the country. Those years were in addition characterised by the propagation of scientific initiatives, which directed scholars' interest towards Australia. Italian arrivals continued rising throughout the late 19th century and reached their apex in 1913:

«Between 1876 and 1900 up to 300 000 emigrants were leaving Italy every year. During the period 1901-12 the figure rose to 500 000, followed by a peak of 872 598 in 1913. In that year one every 40 inhabitants emigrated». (Cresciani 2001, p. 500)

In the above mentioned period, though, the majority of Italian emigrants were still preferring destinations such as the United States or European countries to Australia. Only after the First World War Italian immigration to Australia started to rise, as the United States implemented stricter migration policies and various campaigns promoted emigration to the fifth continent (Cresciani, 2001, 2003). This was enforced by a 1924 regulation of the US Parliament, which considerably reduced the immigration quota to the country. At the time, Italian immigration to Australia was discouraged by both governments, as a sum of 40£ was necessary in order to be admitted into Australia and the custom was to have the patriarch of the family leave in search of fortune (Gobbo 1985). However, Australia did not appear as far as it once did, given the increase in information available about its economics and migration policies. (Ferro et al. 1988)

In 1928 Australian authorities started to feel increasingly uncomfortable with the high numbers of non-British immigrants. In order to defend the Anglo-Australian cultural roots of the country, the government negotiated an agreement with the Italian Consulate, by virtue of which Italian migrants could only arrive in numbers lower than 2% of English-speaking immigrants. This policy achieved the desired results, as the number of Italian arrivals dropped and by the beginning of the Second World

War, the Italian community only counted 40 000 members. Most Italian immigrants at the time came from poor regions and provinces – such as Messina, Vicenza and Bari – and generally managed to earn wages or to be self-employed. Many of them decided to permanently move to Australia and had their wives join them. While housing conditions of those working in the cities or in farms were mainly satisfactory, itinerant single workers faced many hardships. They encountered problems such as sicknesses in the mines, alcoholism (especially in remote villages) or loneliness. (Cresciani 2001)

During those years – in particular from 1883 to 1940 – Italian settlers were legally entitled to the same rights as the British by virtue of the 1883 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United Kingdom and Italy, most commonly known as the Anglo-Italian treaty. The act conferred Italians and British subjects equal civil rights and allowed Italians to acquire lands, businesses and properties (Dewhirst 2014). However, the treaty was often violated:

«In practice, the terms of the Treaty for reciprocal rights to travel, residency and property-ownership were frequently violated in Australia as a result of the fractured nature of the political and legal framework, influenced by Queensland colonial legacy». (*Ibid.*, p. 81)

Chain migration and the emerging Italian quarters were then enhanced through the *Atto di chiamata*, a sponsorship form that allowed Italians residing in Australia to ask family and friends still in Italy to join them. The sponsors had to provide medical assistance, employment and accommodation for their sponsored relatives/friends (Cresciani 2001). The system was also registered in a letter dated 5 March 1892, from the Charters Towers Police Magistrate to the Under Colonial Secretary (Brisbane) stating Italian workers obtained food and shelter from G. Cabassi. This was also known as act of call, which was originally an informal network of residents developed to protect Italian-born Queenslanders and later became a relief fund to prevent Italians from starving (Queensland Government). The requests for naturalisation submitted by Italian residents rose dramatically by the beginning of the Second World War, as the political situation in Europe became increasingly ominous.

Italian migration to Australia after WW2

As Italy was afflicted by social, economical and ideological conflict after the Second World War, gaps between the rich and the poor grew, as the one between Southern and Northern Italy. Southern regions were indeed much poorer and land of out-migration. The gravity of the situation, combined with foreign allegations that the country would not recover from the crisis, led the Italian political class to promote migration as a solution to unemployment and economic distress (Bosworth 2001; Mammone et al. 2015). In particular, the measure was championed by the government led by De Gasperi, who saw emigration as a necessity and encouraged Italians to start leaving the country in search of fortune. (Bevilacqua et al. 2001)

At first, emigration was encouraged towards European countries such as Germany or France, but further regions, such the United States or Argentina, were soon after considered. In particular, a bilateral agreement was signed with Argentina in 1947 (Bosworth 2001). However, the United States had begun introducing measures to restrict migrant quotas in the 1920s and definitively enforced them with the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1952, which forced Italy to consider opening negotiations with other countries (USA 1952). Australia thus started to be depicted as a desirable destination by Italian media.

Australian immigration policies, nevertheless, were still obstructing non-white migration, which represented a problem for De Gasperi's position, as Australia's public opinion did not perceive Italians as white, especially Southern Italians. What convinced the Australian government to start negotiating the possibility to welcome Northern Italian migrants was the need for population growth and manual labour in the late 1940s. Australia and Italy thus restored diplomatic relations, which had been broken off in 1940 (Bosworth 2001). In 1951 Australia and Italy ratified an agreement establishing an assisted immigration scheme that was to welcome 20,000 Italians a year for a period of five years (DIBP 2017). The subjects of the agreement were initially young males, but family reunions were later contemplated. As a result, during the 1950s, 170,000 Italians migrated to Australia, the majority of whom resided in Melbourne and Sydney (IHS 2015). Between 1945 and 1966, most non-British migrants originated from eight main countries – Italy, Greece, Germany, Yugoslavia, Spain and the Netherlands. Contrarily to government expectations, the largest numbers of immigrants came from Italy and Greece, and were privately sponsored – which means they did not benefit from the assisted migration agreement. (Pennay 2011)

While Italy was enthusiastic about the agreement, Australians remained skeptical and feared the presence of communists and people connected to the Mafia among the migrants (Bosworth 2001). Unfortunately, Australia's economical growth came to a halt in 1952, causing protests among the migrants, who were disappointed for not being able to work as much as they had anticipated. Tension rose exponentially in the migrant camps – especially at Bonegilla's camp – and protests occurred in Sydney. These centres had been created as a support for the mass migration program launched by the Australian Government in the post-war period, they accommodated refugees first and migrants later. Among these facilities, Bonegilla reception centre was the main one, hosting more than 50% of the total “displaced” people intake before 1953 and great numbers of assisted migrants after the ratification of the relevant agreements. Bonegilla "accommodated altogether about 309 000 post-war refugees and migrants, that is, about one in eight of the 2.5 million that came from Europe to Australia between 1947 and 1971". (Pennay et al. 2010, p. 2) Upon arrival at Bonegilla reception centre, migrants were immediately pushed to learn English, as this was the core of assimilation. They were also deterred by speak their language in public and to gesticulate, to avoid being regarded with suspicion by the locals. "No English, No Job was the centre mantra". Migrants were encouraged to abandon their languages in favour of English, which caused many newcomers to experience feelings of distress and feelings of "linguistic dispossession" (Pennay et al. 2010, p. 21). Language courses were organised at the camp to provide migrants with basic English skills. Soon after arriving to Australia, migrant attended a job interview, underwent medical exams and were provided the necessary documents to lawfully stay in the country and access social services. Since assisted migrants were not allowed to look for jobs independently, during the crisis of 1952, they demanded work or repatriation. At Bonegilla, in particular, 2,000 Italians decided to stop their protests only when certain that their issues would be considered by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Immigration. The situation was so tense that the army was ready to intervene if necessary, waiting for orders four miles from the camp – this was not deemed necessary by authorities though (Sunday Herald 1952, IHS 2015). The Sunday Herald article referred there were "troops and armoured car crews" ready to intervene. Tension at the camp was also reported by local newspapers (The Age 1952). Concerns about inadequate housing and food conditions at Bonegilla were also raised (The Age 1949). As a result of social tension, the agreement was suspended in 1952 and reinstated in 1954, in conjunction with Australian economic recovery.

"From 1947 to 1954, the Italian-born population in Australia more than trebled, to 119,897". (IHS 2015, p. 2) Italian neighbourhoods consequently took shape and the Italian community grew in numbers, preserving its culture, its ideological positions. In the postwar period, internal divisions and ideological contrasts inside of the Italian community were palpable. Several newspapers reflected Italians' ideological views, such as *La Fiamma,* right-wing oriented, or *Il Risveglio,* owned by the left-wing movement *Italia Libera* (Bosworth 2001). In fact, rather than a unified Italian community, the presence of different "Italian communities" was observable in Australia, depending on their region of origin (*ibid*). According to statistics, for example, Italian migrants were more likely to marry Australians rather than Italians from different regions. This is perhaps one of the reasons why members of the Italo-Australian community in Melbourne appear to self-identify more with their particular region rather than Italy as a whole. This could have led, over time, to the co-existence of a dual concept of Italian identity, one reflecting the culture of migrant regional communities and the other highlighting Italian literature, art and history.

Italian migration to Australia started to slow down in the 1960s, given Italy's economic upturn and by the 1980s it was a marginal phenomenon (IHS 2015). However,

> «In Australia, Italian immigration had, despite its relatively brief flourishing, left a visible legacy. About 120 000 Italians in 1954 expanded to 228 in 1961 and reached a peak of 290 000 in 1971. [...] Italians remain an important element in Australia and help to ensure that any serious history will talk about the 'Australias' and reject fatuous or menacing ideas of national homogeneity and unity expressed in the phrase 'One Australia'». (Bosworth 2001, p. 509)

Discrimination towards Italians in Australia (Victoria)

With the creation of the Australian Federation in 1901, accompanied by the White Australia Policy and restrictions on migration, multiculturalism gave way to xenophobia and intolerance towards foreigners and their languages. Through the White Australia Policy, the governments aimed to obstruct immigration from non-European countries in order to maintain a strong British identity in Australia. Among other things, the act introduced a Dictation Test as a pre-requisite to enter the country, which required applicants to write "50 words in any European language […] dictated by an immigration officer. […] A person who failed the test was […] deported" (Commonwealth of Australia 1901). The declared objective of the act was to decrease immigration from Asia, but it ultimately affected all migrants, including Italians. The act was effective for over seventy years and was only removed in 1973. (Clyne 1991, Mascitelli et al. 2012)

Italian immigrants were often welcomed to their new lives in Australia with mistrust and accused of not conforming enough to Australian customs. This initial lack of integration was partially based upon unresolved issues that accompanied immigrants from their homeland to the fifth continent.

In the period between the 19th and the 20th century, discrimination towards Italian migrants was intensified by their habits and behaviours – for instance, they were particularly timid towards richer or more cultured people. (Cresciani 2001) Italians behaved in the same way they would have if they were still in Italy, where interactions tended (and still tend) to be more formal than Australia. Migrants also came from situations of poverty and social segregation, and all of these elements represented barriers to their full integration into Australian society. This clashed with the Australian collective imagination, which depicted Italians as knowledgeable ambassadors of an ancient culture. (Alcorso 1992)

Italians were also accused of refusing to learn English, which was justified by the high rates of illiteracy among them. The fact that 43% of Italian immigrants did not master the English language in 1933 was not surprising, considering that Italian illiteracy rates were around 20% and reached almost 50% in Calabria, which was the origin of many Italians still residing in Melbourne (figures from Cresciani 2001). Since most migrants came from rural and economically disadvantaged areas, it was unlikely for peasants to assume education as a priority. Australians mistook the inability to learn a foreign language for laziness or unwillingness to adapt.

In the 1920s and 1930s many Italian families acquired bankrupt farms from Australians and managed to turn them into lucrative businesses. Italians were able to quickly establish themselves in the mining and farming sectors thanks to their work ethic and cooperative working habits. All this aroused hostility and suspicions, as the willingness to work for longer hours in their own business or in other people's businesses was perceived as unfair competition or exploitation of labour (Alcorso 1992; Cresciani 2003; Cresciani 2001). These doubts were not completely unfounded, as Italian contract migrant workers were known to accept lower wages or longer hours than Australians (Alcorso 1992). Italians were perceived as competitors in those areas where they settled in largest numbers. For example, in 1930, 30% of Italian migrants were employed in Queensland's cane-cutting sector, and 40% of the Granite Belt farmers were Italian. This led to social tension when the Colonial Sugar Company tried to use the Italian work force during a long strike called by cane-cutters. Kalgoorlie (Western Australia) was also home to a high number of Italians, who worked as miners and received relatively good salaries. (Alcorso 1992; Randazzo et al. 1987)

Examples of successful businesses established in the 1930s by Italian communities were encountered in the tobacco industry in Myrtleford (rural Victoria), in the Gippsland (Victoria) diary sector and in Werribee farming industry (Melbourne greater area). The latter was particularly significant, as 200 Italians were able to purchase lands from Australian farmers and managed to be more successful in irrigating the fruit and vegetable plantations. This obviously fomented hostility towards immigrants, especially in a scenario in which veterans coming back from the war often remained unemployed. The group of Italians in the Werribee demonstrated exceptional resilience and willpower, as they lived in poverty and struggled in the beginning. Italian immigrants experienced discrimination on every level. Italian students attending Werribee schools were known to be dismissed ten minutes earlier than Australians, in order to shelter them from bullying. Unfortunately, when the community established itself, the outburst of the Second World War destroyed any progress towards social acceptance made by Italians. Italians were then seen as enemies and all of the Italian men living and working in Werribee were interned. This was intensified by – quite surreal – accusations reported on the Werribee Shire Banner, according to which Italian immigrants were planning a sabotage to Melbourne sewage system. Ironically, they had to be released ten days later, because of the consequent shortage of vegetable and fruit affecting Melbourne markets (Gobbo 1985). However, other interned migrants were not as lucky.

At the time, Italians were so stigmatised that Greek greengrocers affixed signs specifying that they were not Italian in front of their shops, in order to protect their businesses. However, the Italian families left without head of the households were often helped by the Australian community through the Church, for example through the Archbishop's Committee for Italian Relief founded by Mannix[5] in the early 1940s. (*Ibid.*)

During the years of the economic depression jobs were harder to find and, as a consequence, social tension reached its peak. Numerous episodes of racial intolerance became noticeable. Kalgoorlie was sadly the scene of conflict between British and Southern European workers in 1916, 1919 and 1934. As observed by Markus, the violent outburst was the result of a discriminatory campaign against foreign workers. This spirit also permeated the agreement between the employer organisation and the unions signed in Queensland in 1930, which limited the foreign quota employed in the cane-cutting sector to 25%. This had serious repercussions on the Italian community, as the foreign work force was mainly Italian. (Cresciani 2001; Markus 1994)

In 1916 violence was directed against the Greek community of Kalgoorlie, as "some [...] residents, led by returned soldiers, damaged and looted more than twenty Greek-run businesses", after "inflammatory reports in the Kalgoorlie press blamed the King of Greece for the deaths of British and French soldiers at the hands of Greek troops" (Markus 1994, p. 152). The incidents of 1919 and 1934, however, involved Italian immigrants residing in the mining town. In 1919, soldiers returned to Australia to face the economic depression and poor chances of employment. After an Australian was killed in a fight with an Italian in a local cafe, the crowd unleashed its frustration destroying Italian-owned properties. In addition, "the protesters demanded that all non-British workers be ejected from the goldfields in order to ensure that sufficient jobs would await those returning from military service". (Markus 1994, p. 163)

In 1934, a "frenzied mob" again destroyed property owned by immigrants after another Australian died in a brawl. Racial hatred was once again the pressure valve for a community stressed by social tension and economic difficulties. When Fascism came to power, Italians had to face further preconceptions, as it was generally assumed that all Italians were Fascists (Cresciani 2001). This was terribly unfair on those who did not identify with Fascist rhetoric. Although many Italians sympathised with Fascist principles, this was not true for all of them. By the 1930s, then

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[5] Born in Ireland, Daniel Patrick Mannix served as Archbishop of Melbourne for 46 years and was also lecturer of philosophy and moral theology at Maynooth. He was one of the most influential clergy men in Australia and is still remembered as very sensitive to socio-economic issues (Griffin 1986).

«[Italians] were resented not only because they were competing for the few jobs available, they did not conform to the so-called Australian way of life, they looked 'different' and had different customs, but also because they were considered a potential threat to the security of Australia [...]
Within the Australian community there was the mistaken assumption that being Italian automatically meant being a Fascist». (Cresciani 2001)

During the 1920s, Fascist ideology was regarded by most Italo-Australians as a valid means to safeguard Italy's interests. The support towards the regime was demonstrated by the number of Fascist club and associations that were created by Italo-Australians at the time. There were certainly opposing views in the Italian community, which however represented a minority. Anti-Fascists were determined to voice their opinions and created an Anti-Fascist League in Sydney, as well as publishing various newspapers. Among the best known: *Il Risveglio*, *La Riscossa* and *L'Avanguardia Libertaria*, which were all suppressed after a few years (*ibid*).

The meaning and origins of the derogatory term WOG

In the post-war period, the derogatory term wog started to be used to refer to Southern-Europeans and Middle-Eastern migrants, but mainly to immigrants from Italian and Greek backgrounds. One of the most valued Australian dictionaries registers the following definitions and usage of the term as follows:

wog /wɒg/ (say wog)

Colloquial, derogatory, racist
– noun:

1. a person of Mediterranean or Middle Eastern extraction, or of similar complexion and appearance.

2. Chiefly British (especially in World War II), a person native to North Africa or the Middle East.

3. (loosely) any foreigner.

– adjective

4. foreign in nature or origin: wog languages.

[? shortened form of GOLLIWOG]

–woggy, adjective

Usage: This word is generally derogatory but may sometimes be used within the community of those with Mediterranean or Middle Eastern background without being offensive.

wog palace

/wɒg ˈpæləs/ (say wog 'paluhs)

Colloquial, derogatory, racist – noun:

a large home, built or renovated in a neo-Mediterranean style, with stucco, pillars, decorative balconies, etc.

wog chariot

/wɒg ˈtʃæriət/ (say wog 'chareeuht)

Colloquial, derogatory, racist – noun:

any vehicle, usually one which is modified and hotted up, typically favoured by people of Mediterranean or Middle Eastern origin. (Butler 2015)

The origin of the term is still uncertain and the many hypotheses about the meaning of wog are reflected by the multiplicity of interpretations shared within the Australian community. A remarkable synthesis of all these theories has been formulated by Moore on behalf of the National Dictionary Centre. (Moore 2010) Moore notices how many still connect the origin of the word to acronyms such as Westernised Oriental Gentleman, Wily Oriental Gentleman, Working on Government Service, in spite of the Oxford English Dictionary clearly stating: ‘Origin uncertain: often said to be an acronym, but none of the many suggested etymologies is satisfactorily supported by the evidence’ (Oxford English Dictionary, in Moore 2010, p. 1). This appears to be quite a convincing argument. If the origin of the term were to be retraced in an acronym, there would be evidence of Australian government acts or newspapers, which should be quoting the complete definition. Furthermore, if the term derived from an acronym, the origin would not be uncertain, as it would be easily found and thus attributable to one abbreviated definition, not many. The 1986 edition of the dictionary defined wog as a derogatory term used for foreigners of Arabic descent. (Moore 2010)

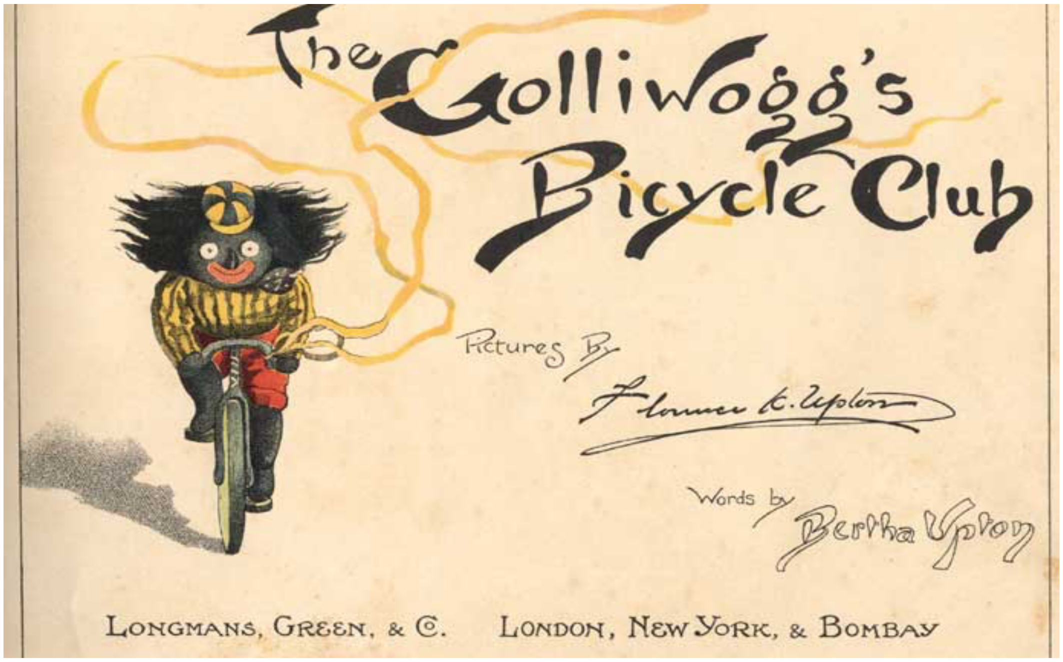

Figure 1.3: Cover of The Golliwogg's bicycle club (Upton 1903)

According to Moore, the British term wog was most probably the shortening of Golliwogg, a character from the book Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwogg, a children's book written by Florence K. Upton and published in 1895, followed by a series of books which the author wrote by 1909 (*ibid*). Upton migrated from Britain to the United States, where she came in contact with racial prejudice towards African Americans, which inspired the character in the books. For these reasons, More concludes that “wog” was then employed as a derogatory term for a non-white person in the United States and the United Kingdom (see Figures 1.2 and 1.3).

Was it then possible for the meaning to travel to Australia, where it assumed a different connotation? In order to do so, the word should have adapted to the new demographic composition, where the discriminated group was composed of Southern-Europeans rather than African-Americans. It appears rather unlikely for a term to adapt and transform so quickly in such different conditions.

Another explanation, though, could be more believable and suited to explain Australian usage of the term. Moore (2010) observes that by the 1950s, wog was used to describe any form of bug. This meaning derived from the abbreviation of pollywog (larval amphibian), quoting various passages from newspapers in 1920s and 1940s, "at about the time when wog start[ed] to refer to a wide range of insects and crawly creatures, [with an] emphasis on things that are found in water". (Moore 2010, p. 2) Wog was then also used to refer to illnesses and germs. Hence, it is safe to assume that this is the origin of the Australian term wog, as the Anglo-Australian population was likely to insult undesired immigrants by associating them with slimy creatures reaching Australia by sea.

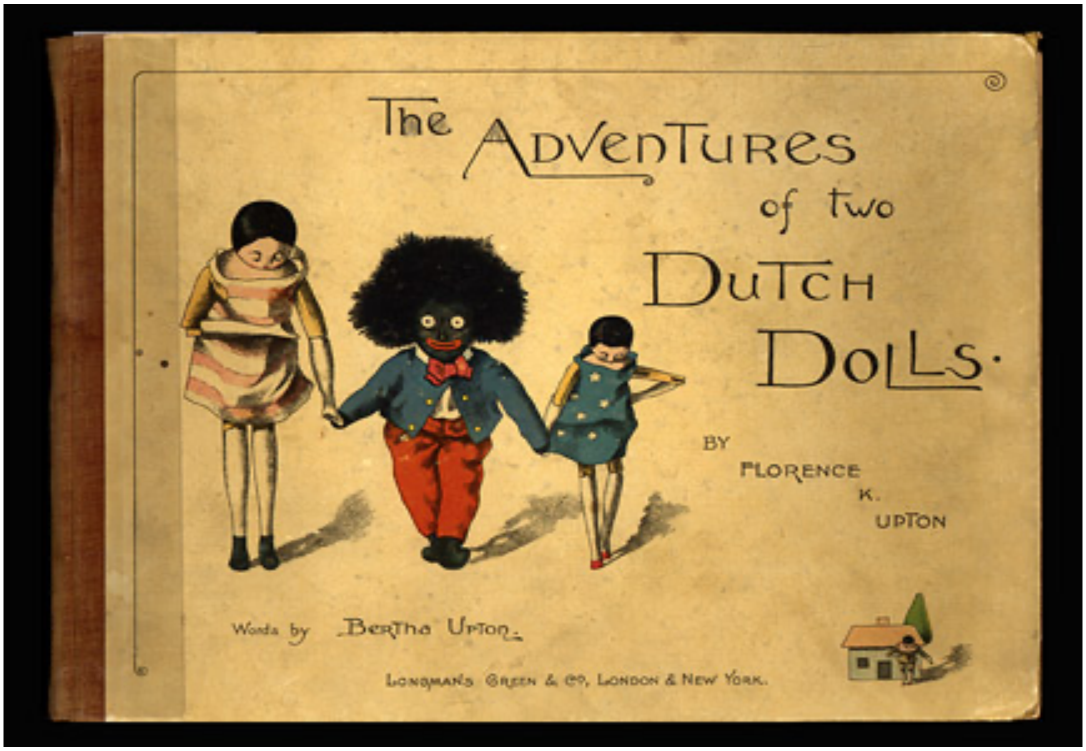
The Adventures of two Dutch Dolls.
By Florence K. Upton
Words by Bertha Upton.
Longmans Green & Co, London & New York.

Figure 1.2: Cover of The Golliwogg's bicycle club (Upton 1985)

Moore (2010) also affirms that, contrarily to what happens in Britain, the word in Australia does not represent a taboo and quotes two comedies that sanctioned the use of the term, namely *Wogs out of Work* (1988–90) and *Acropolis Now* (1989–92). His following warning to use the word carefully sounds rather weak, considering the pain that it could still inflict when directed to those first migrants who experienced true discrimination. Admittedly, the degree of integration of Italians and

Greeks in Australian society contributed to decreasing the stigma around the word, yet when used by Anglo-Australians it still assumes all the original negativity. The Greek and Italian second generations seem to have dispelled the taboo by using the word with a sense of comradeship among each other, almost as a bonding element between related communities which experienced the same hardships.

As documented by Alcorso, a certain degree of racism has always been ingrained in Australian society, as the country was founded on expropriation of Aboriginal land (Alcorso 1992). Interactions observed in Australia between young people proved, for example, that Australians are still deeply biased about Aboriginal Australians, as it is common to hear colloquial phrases such as “Look at me today! I look like an Aboriginal”, accompanied by non-verbal indicators that imply that the speaker is not dressed suitably. This feeling towards Aborigines was then most likely extended to immigrants, who were perceived as competitors for jobs, and used by the unions to incite workers to defend their rights. In conjunction with the phenomenon of mass migration, racial stereotypes about Italians established deep roots. These followed the rivalries present in Italian society at the time, in particular the negative connotations of Southern Italians in the minds of Northern Italians. This discord was present in the Italian community in Australia as well and transferred to the representation of Italians in Australian media, where “white Italians” were clearly distinguished from “black Italians”. (Alcorso 1992, p. 26) The latter belonged to the least desirable category of Italian immigrants, as they were lazier and louder than their Northern and efficient counterparts.

During the Second World War, Italians were depicted as the “internal enemy” by the media, which created a divided atmosphere in which Australians felt they had to defend themselves from the the aliens (Alcorso et al. 1992). The case of Bonutto, a farmer who spoke up for immigrants’ rights at the time, appeared quite significative to understand the perception of immigrants during the war, as his protest against migrant discrimination was rejected and ridiculed. Bonutto’s attempt to express his opinion as a British subject (he had been living in Australia for many years) was labelled as the opinion of an “impudent interned”. The farmer indeed maintained that immigration had also had positive outcomes, because immigrant work force was necessary in businesses and farms. Australians with an Italian background were not considered equal to Australians – regardless of them being successful farmers – as Italian origins were a reason to doubt their loyalty. (Alcorso et al. 1992)

Another problem affecting the Italian community at the time and particularly the condition of Italian women was internments. Although women were not interned along with the men, they were left alone to provide for their families. Some endured financial difficulties, while others managed to be effective in managing their households. The stereotype of all Italians being Fascists was then strengthened by events such as the response of Fascist women to Mussolini’s call for gold in order to found the African campaign in 1935 (*ibid*).

The racist rhetoric officially came to an end in the late 1970s, by virtue of new points of view spreading across the Western world. The Decolonisation period, along with the Civil Rights movement in the United States, led the international community to sternly judge Australian practices towards Aborigines and immigrants. Racial discrimination in Australia was commonly assimilated to the Apartheid in South Africa. The change that was revolutionising the international scenario contributed to officially end racist practices in Australia. (Vasta et al. 1992)

The history of the Italian community in Melbourne

In spite of the interest towards the Italo-Australian community being quite recent, Italian immigration to Australia, and in particular in Victoria, is not a recent phenomenon, as letters from immigrants to their families in Italy have been documented since at least the 1840s. The role played by Italians in significant events in Australian history has already been discussed[6], there were however many more Italians working in Australia and shaping the country's identity every day, these were architects, musicians, painters, sculptors, engineers, agriculturalists. Interestingly, the first trophy for the Melbourne Cup was manufactured by an Italian jeweller. (Jupp 2001)

Throughout the 19th century Victoria received thousands of Italian immigrants and numbers continued to increase, resulting in the Italian community being very well-established by the 1930s. Its growth was slow and steady until the 1950s and 1960s, when mass migration started and the presence of Italians suddenly rose. The Italian community then became Australia's second largest immigrant community (after the British one). By 1971, Italians constituted 3.5% of the Victorian population. The figure decreased soon after, since the 1970s were marked by the introduction of stricter immigration policies (Bertelli 2001). In the 1970s, Australian policies started to privilege skilled migration, consequently granting access merely to professionals and businessmen, with the exception of elderly traveling to the continent for family reunification. The group of Italian-born residing in Victoria is now ageing and decreasing in number, yet the presence of a second generation has grown stronger and stronger. In 1996, for instance, more than 128 000 Victorians were registered to have one or both Italian-born parents. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996; Bertelli 1980)

After the Second World War, Italian a true mass migration to Australia started and Italians were attracted to the state of Victoria in particular for many reasons. While the flow of Italians settlers in the 19th century was mainly drawn to the

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[6] See Bretani's contribution to the start of the Gold Rush and Raffaello Carboni's political influence during the Eureka Stockade.

Victorian gold fields, in the 20th century Italians migrated to benefit from the many professional opportunities provided by Australia's growing economy. Specifically, the mining sector needed abundant work-force and the manufacturing industries were in need of low-priced labour in order to work continuously, as well as to contribute to building new structures in Melbourne and its surroundings. (Bertelli 1980)

The phenomenon of chain migration attracted more Italians to Victoria, as they favoured areas where fellow citizens had established themselves. Melbourne consequently became home to settlers from Sicily, Veneto and Calabria, with particular subgroups choosing a variety of suburbs (such as Brunswick, Coburg or Carlton). This caused fragmentation and difficulties identifying with the broader Italian community and people continued to rely more on the specific regional groups they belonged to. (Bertelli 2001; 1980)

Although the Italian community of the 20th century lacked prominent leadership figures such as Raffaello Carboni, it was still active and contributed to Victoria and Melbourne's multicultural identity:

«Even in the periods of economic recession that have been experienced since the mid-1970s, the employment rates of Italo-Australians have constantly remained higher than the national average. Italian small-businessmen and entrepreneurs play a significant role in the Melbourne economy as shopkeepers, market-gardeners, furniture-makers and retailers. Lygon Street in Carlton would not be the same without its Italian shops and, above all, restaurants, and it is only since the mid-1970s that Sydney Road, from Brunswick to Coburg, and Smith Street in Collingwoood have started to lose their Italian flavour». (Bertelli 2001, p. 518)

Conclusion - The birth of the Italo-Australian community and identity as a three phase process

Around the 1960s a well defined Italo-Australian community emerged, which combined a variety of Italian identities. From that time, Italo-Australians were properly defined as a community, which had its own language and rituals, as well as occupying a precise geographical space inside Australian cities. A community shaped by migration waves and settlement patterns. As Pascoe claimed, Italian immigration to Australia was unique, compared to any other flow, as it was a large-scale phenomenon, it happened over multiple phases and involved every Australian territory.

Through the three main phases of Italian settlements theorised by Pascoe, the Italian community started to assume its present form and to acquire the features of a real community. According to Bosworth 2001 and Pascoe 1992, these three phases were:

1. The arrival of the pioneers (1850 - early 1900);
2. The farmers' phase (from 1910);
3. The builders' settlement, after the Second World War.

Throughout the second half of the 19th century many Italians came to the Fifth Continent to work in the gold fields and later acquired lands and small businesses. These settlers used to move often and in groups of two or three. They generally worked on big construction sites, such as the construction of the Cairns Railway or stone extraction for the Great Ocean Road, as well as in mines. The arrival of pioneers drew scientists', geographers' and anthropologists' attention to the fifth continent, as well as revealing new territories for settlement. In those years, an Australian variety of Italian already existed, but Italo-Australian rituals started to emerge only with the settlement of farmers from the 1910s. (Ferro et al. 1988; Pascoe 1992; Bosworth 2001)

These Italian migrants could benefit from their predecessors' experience and the flux assumed the features of the so-called chain migration, intended as "a process whereby immigrants, having settled in a particular place, encourage kin or close friends to migrate to join them, often supporting them in the process. A number of studies show that processes of chain migration play an important role in explaining migrant settlement and concentration in particular rural areas, [as this produces] kinship and social networks underlying immigrant communities in many rural areas and contributing to their economic success" (Missingham et al. 2006). Unlike pioneers, farmers migrated with wives and children, and this allowed rituals and celebrations to emerge, which happened mainly in rural settlements (Pascoe 1992; Bosworth 2001). The farmers, who lived in small communities, celebrated the values of family, work and land and were proud of their strong group identity. This second group of immigrants reproduced Italian local celebrations as they remembered them, rather than as they exactly were, strengthening a new Italo-Australian identity based on what Pascoe defined as "ritualisation of experience". (Pascoe 1992, p.179)

It was the beginning of Italo-Australian self-identification with an idea of Italy that only existed in settlers' memories and dreams. In Melbourne it is still possible to witness this idea of Italy being represented in festivals and events, which contrasts with the image of Italy in the minds of new immigrants, perhaps more critical and disenchanted.

In conclusion, the most Italian arrivals occurred during the builders' phase. The Italian community then started to be indissolubly tied to a precise space in Australian cities. The neighbourhoods inhabited by Italian immigrants began to assume typical features, which served as a means to strengthen inner-community belonging. The buildings in Lygon street, in Melbourne, are for example inspired to Italian urban architecture. (*Ibid.*)

The third phase of Italian settlement in Australian was characterised by a more self-confident attitude towards Italian identity, with a shift from rural to urban environments. While still acknowledging the old values of the farmers, Italians started to participate in city life and the cities became the ideal scene for Italian events. The Carlton Italian Festa, in Melbourne, still represents an exemplar celebration of the old values of Italian immigrants, in which Italians proudly share elements of their culture with other Australians.

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