

ITALIANS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA: THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

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During the period under consideration, 1839-1939, the number of Italians residing in South Australia was quite small, especially before 1925, but their impact, as we shall see, was quite marked. In 1881, when for the first time specific nationalities were identified in the SA census, just 141 Italians were recorded as living in this State. By 1921 the number had grown to just 344, but following the large increase in Southern European migration to Australia in the 1920s and 1930s, by the time of World War II the number had become about 2,000.

Despite these comparatively small numbers, the Italians of this period made important, but not often recognised, contributions to South Australian life in a wide range of areas, which for the purpose of this paper I have categorised under the headings of: Music; Primary and Secondary Industries, and retailing; Religion; Public Office; Italian Language Teaching.

1. From the outset Italians offered their musical talent to the South Australian colony. Maurizio Lencioni, the Passionist priest from Lucca whose contribution as a clergyman I shall mention later on, was an excellent musician who, from the time he arrived in Adelaide in September 1846, taught music and singing, organised and conducted a church choir, and became known for his ability to write down the musical notation of any tune that was hummed.¹ Equally well-known was his contemporary, Alfred Mantegani, an Italian-speaking professional pianist and composer of Swiss extraction, who presided at the piano at performances in Adelaide theatres and concert halls in the early 1850s.² A far more gifted pianist and composer was, however, Cesare Cutolo, a Neapolitan who had studied in Italy under composer Mercadante, and who between November 1858 and December 1859 resided in South Australia, where he gave lessons in singing and pianoforte and performed

¹Osmund Thorpe, *First Catholic Mission to the Australian Aborigines*, Sydney, Pellegrini & Co., 1950, pp. 152, 156, 165.

²For his biography see my paper "A Home Away from Home: Alfred Mantegani in Australia" in Margaret Baker et al, *Riflessi e Riflessioni. Italian Reflections*, The Flinders University of South Australia, The Italian Discipline, 1992, pp. 157-187.

concerts in places as far afield as Reynella and Kapunda. When the Gawler Institute in 1859 offered a prize for the best musical composition for Caroline Carleton's verse *Song of Australia*, Cutolo submitted a composition bearing the motto 'Garibaldi', to which the judges awarded second place, considering it almost equal in quality to the work composed by the eventual winner, Carl Linger.³

The arrival in February 1861 of Signore and Signora Bianchi and their Grand Italian Opera Company marked the beginning of what has been called a 'golden phase' of operatic activity in South Australia.⁴ During their three-month season they introduced to Adelaide audiences a large Italian repertoire of works by Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi. Following them, from 1865 to 1880, American entrepreneur William Lyster brought no less than ten Royal Italian and English Opera Companies to Adelaide, sometimes joining in partnership with the Italian Opera Company of Cagli and Pompei, whose conductor, Alberto Zelman from Trieste, would later settle in Melbourne.⁵

In the early 1880s two Italian musicians, Faustino Ziliani and Raffaele Squarise, settled for a time in Adelaide where their talents, much admired by the Adelaide public, assisted the musical development of many students of music in this decade. Ziliani, born in Brescia and a graduate of the Milan Conservatorium, arrived in Adelaide in January 1883 as conductor for the visiting Cagli and Paoli Opera Company. Some sections of Adelaide society were quite aghast when during this Adelaide opera season an insufficient number of stringed instruments compelled Ziliani to resort to what a writer to the newspaper called the 'barbarous practice' of sitting 'in front of a piano and going through the acrobatic performance of trying to make up for a skeleton orchestra, weak in violins and a double bass, by strumming with one hand on the piano, and struggling with the baton in the other'.⁶ But his skills as vocalist, pianist and conductor were so sorely needed in South Australia that he was persuaded to stay. During the following six years he earned a living in Adelaide

³*The Adelaide Observer*, 5 & 12 Nov. 1859, pp. 1 and 6. See also *1000 Famous Australians*, Adelaide, Rigby, 1978, pp. 319-20. Amazingly, Cutolo does not rate even a mention in the recent encyclopedic *Entertaining Australia. An Illustrated History*, edited by Katharine Brisbane, Sydney, Currency Press, 1991.

⁴Robyn Holmes (ed.), *Through the Opera Glass. A Chronological Register of Opera Performed in South Australia 1836 to 1988*, Adelaide, Friends of the State Opera of SA Inc., 1991, pp. 31-34. See also Robyn Holmes, "Opera in South Australia" in Andrew D. McCredie (ed.), *From Colonel Light into the Footlights. The performing arts in South Australia from 1836 to the present*, Norwood SA, Pagel Books, 1988, p. 105.

⁵Holmes, *Through the Opera Glass*, pp. 35-57; Holmes in McCredie, p. 106. See also Andrea Faulkner, "The Italian Contribution to South Australian Music-Making" in McCredie, p. 358, Therese Radic, "Italian Opera in Nineteenth Century Melbourne", *Quaderni dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura*, 4, Melbourne, 1971, pp. 57-65, and Katharine Brisbane (ed.), *Entertaining Australia*, pp. 72-74.

⁶Letters to the editor, *South Australian Register*, 1 Feb. and 10 Feb. 1883, pp. 6 and 7.

as a teacher of music and singing until, in January 1889, failing health made him decide to return to Italy.⁷ Raffaele Squarise, from Vicenza, also settled in Adelaide in 1883. A graduate of the musical Academy of Turin, he was an accomplished violinist and conductor. He too on settling in Adelaide became a music teacher and taught violin to some of the most eminent families in Adelaide, including the daughter of the Governor.⁸ Like Ziliani, he also performed as a conductor, one of his concerts being held, for example, in August 1883 in the new Norwood Town Hall.⁹ Often Adelaide music lovers were able to enjoy Ziliani and Squarise appearing together in the one concert, Ziliani singing and Squarise playing the violin. When an earthquake devastated Casamìcciola on the island of Ischia in 1883, Squarise and Ziliani promptly organised a concert in aid of the victims, which was attended by the SA Governor, Adelaide dignitaries, and Italians living in Adelaide.¹⁰

Towards the end of the century (1898) Adelaide became the home of another skilled music teacher, Vincenzo De Giorgio, a Roman, who had studied piano and singing in Naples.¹¹ On his arrival he opened a 'Classical School of Pianoforte' and 'Classical School of Singing' in Hutt Street, gave concerts in the Adelaide Town Hall and promoted the study and appreciation of Italian operas until December 1903 when he returned to Italy.¹²

In the early part of this century one of the most important promoters of music and opera in Adelaide was Count Ercole Filippini, who first arrived in Adelaide in April 1917 with the Gonzales Italian Grand Opera Company and returned in October 1919 with the J.C. Williamson's Company. In 1923 Filippini was invited by two local businessmen to settle in Adelaide and establish a School of Opera Singing and to produce grand opera with Adelaide singers and musicians.¹³ He accepted the invitation and formed the South Australian Grand Opera Company, which produced opera seasons in 1924 and 1925 with Filippini's Australian-born wife as conductor and in 1926 toured to Western Australia and Tasmania as the Italo-Australian Grand Opera Co.¹⁴ Also in this decade (1924 and 1928) Adelaide was visited by the Dame Nellie Melba-Williamson Company, which included

⁷George E. Loyau, *Notable South Australians*, Adelaide, Carey, Page & Co., 1885, pp. 240-42; *The Adelaide Observer*, 5 Jan. 1889, p. 36.

⁸Loyau, pp. 135-36.

⁹*Register*, 27 Aug. 1883, p. 1.

¹⁰*Register*, 15 Sept. 1883, p. 6; Faulkner in McCredie, p. 359.

¹¹Faulkner in McCredie, p. 359.

¹²*Ibid.*; *Register*, 1 Oct. 1898, p. 2.

¹³Holmes, *Through the Opera Glass*, pp. 97-98; Brisbane (ed.), *Entertaining Australia*, pp. 179, 183.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, and Holmes in McCredie, pp. 116-120.

some of the most famous opera singers of the time, in particular Toti Dal Monte. Furthermore, in the 1920s and 1930s another two Italian musicians and teachers of music became well known in Adelaide: Angelo De Modena, who was a banjoist and wireless entertainer, and Vincenzo Lombardi, a popular violinist, who in February 1935 was appointed one of the two conductors who established the South Australian Junior Orchestra.¹⁵ All of these musicians - composers, singers, pianists and violinists so prominent and influential in these first hundred years of South Australia's history - stand out in stark contrast to that nineteenth-century hackneyed stereotype of the Italian migrant so often depicted and lampooned as the organ-grinder beggar with a performing monkey on his shoulder.¹⁶

2. In primary industries, too, Italians brought their expertise to South Australia in the Nineteenth Century. In the field of agriculture an important contribution was made by Paolo Villanis, who was born in Turin in 1848 and who arrived in Adelaide in late 1880. A civil engineer by profession, he offered his services as a vigneron to Thomas Hardy and other leading winemakers. As well, he was employed by the Adelaide City Council to superintend the olive plantations in various places around the city and in 1883 he presented

¹⁵*The Mail*, 2 Feb. 1935, p. 2.

¹⁶It is true that Italian street musicians, especially organists from Parma (Emilia) and violinists and harpists from Viggiano (Potenza), were a component of the world-wide emigration of Italians during the middle and late Nineteenth Century. It is also true that a minority became padroni who exploited and occasionally physically abused some of the child performers in their care, with the result that newspapers in Paris, London and New York, especially in the 1870s, gave a great deal of publicity to the 'problem' of these little-understood wandering minstrels. The presence of young Italian musicians also on the streets of Sydney prompted Sicilian journalist and militant socialist Francesco Sceusa to organise, in 1891, a deputation of Italian residents which urged the NSW Premier Sir Henry Parkes to take action to stop the exploitation of Italian children in their city. There is no evidence to suggest that Italian musicians were similarly performing or begging on the streets of Adelaide during this period. Of 933 Italian passengers who disembarked at Adelaide in the period 1891-1914, only 17 gave their profession as musician and of these only 5 (from two families) were younger than 18 years of age. Apart from the fact that it was a smaller city than either Melbourne or Sydney, Adelaide did not appeal to itinerant musicians probably because the South Australian colonists, many of whom were of middle class origins, would have disdained the presence on Adelaide's street corners of impoverished foreign minstrels and, as Andrew McCredie (*op cit*, p. 14) has pointed out, were less exposed to the more earthy folk music found in the colonies populated either by penal transportation or by the gold rushes. Because of the bad publicity that Italian street musicians had received in Australia as elsewhere, critics of Southern European migration, especially cartoonists, were wont to categorise and ridicule all Italian migrants as organ-grinders with trained monkeys. See, for example, the cartoons in *The Bulletin*, 12 July 1890, and 11 April, 20 June and 22 August 1891, reproduced now in Ferrando Galassi, *Sotto La Croce del Sud. Under the Southern Cross*, Townsville, James Cook University, 1991, pp. 67-74. For a study of Italian child musicians in nineteenth-century Paris, London, and New York see John E. Zucchi, *The Little Slaves of the Harp*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. For Francesco Sceusa see Gianfranco Cresciani, "Kookaburra e Kultur. Francesco Sceusa tra miti e realtà australiani" in Romano Ugolini (ed.), *Italia-Australia 1788-1988*, Rome, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1991, pp. 261-275.

a detailed report to the Council on the proper maintenance of the City's olive groves.¹⁷ Much respected in the colony, he became naturalised in 1884, but died suddenly in Adelaide in 1886 at the young age of 38. Towards the end of the century another viticultural expert, Luigi Ziliotto, came to Adelaide to advise the local winemakers and share his extensive knowledge of winemaking practices in Italy and France. His main criticism of the technique used by South Australian winemakers was that they fortified their wine with spirit and failed to include the stalks during fermentation.¹⁸

By the end of the century fishermen from Molfetta, experienced travellers ever attentive to news of good fishing grounds both in and beyond the Mediterranean, had heard of the teeming Australian waters and had begun to arrive at Port Adelaide and Port Pirie (as well as at Fremantle) where during the 1920s and 1930s through the process of chain migration close-knit communities would be established. Italians had engaged in fishing in SA from the time of the arrival in 1839 of the first Italian, Antonio Giannoni from Rimini, who worked at a whaling station at Encounter Bay in the 1840s.¹⁹ The earliest mariner and boat-owner was Salvatore Cilento (1831-1914), who was also the first Neapolitan to settle in South Australia, having arrived in January 1855. Cilento, like other mariners who came after him in the 1870s and 1880s, settled in the Port Adelaide area and became naturalised so that he could apply for a certificate of competency as master of a vessel. Another Neapolitan, Carlo Milazzo, became Fishing Inspector at Port Adelaide in the first decades of this century and was chosen to speak on behalf of the Italian community on the occasion of the arrival at Outer Harbor in 1925 of Marchese Di Pinedo, Chief of the Italian Air Staff, who was circumnavigating the globe in his seaplane.²⁰ The *molfettesi* at Port Adelaide, Port Wakefield, and Port Pirie also sought to be naturalised as quickly as possible, since this was a requirement of all applicants for a fishing licence. Most Molfettese fishermen struggled to earn a living, especially during the Depression. The Capurso brothers, Michele and Carlo, improved their lot by moving in the 1920s from Port Pirie to Grote Street, Adelaide, where they opened a fish shop and abbreviated their surname to Cappo. Today the well-known Cappo Brothers have become one of the largest suppliers of seafoods in Adelaide.

¹⁷*Register*, 24 July 1883, p. 6; 25 Sept. 1886, p. 32.

¹⁸*Adelaide Observer*, 21 Nov. 1891, p. 11.

¹⁹For a biography of Antonio Giannoni see my "From Crewman to Cabbie: A Profile of the First Italian Settler in South Australia", *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 19, 1991, pp. 8-25.

²⁰*Register*, 9 June 1925, p. 12.

During the 1920s and 1930s Italians, mainly from Southern Italy, began leasing and subsequently buying properties on the outskirts of Adelaide to be used as market gardens. The two main areas where this occurred were Lockleys to the west of the city and the Payneham, Hectorville, Paradise corridor to the north east. People who settled in these suburbs included Giuseppe Ciccarello, Giorgio and Giuseppe Trotta, Domenico De Ionno, Giovanni Amadio and Carmine Piro. By the late 1930s, extremist newspapers such as *The Truth* considered the presence of Italians in these areas 'a menace', and quoted Australian gardeners in the Torrens River districts as saying: 'They come here, take up a piece of land on lease, erect a galvanised-iron hut as a "house" and start to establish themselves in our midst. [...] Not only that, but they work in communities, whole families together, one helping the other. They don't care how they live. They know nothing of the Australian conception of home-life'.²¹ These 'alien immigrants', such 'undesirable types' as they were sometimes labelled in the difficult pre-war period, also worked the land in the Adelaide hills, in such places as Piccadilly (the Basso family), Gumeracha (Luigi Griguol), and Norton Summit (the Cirocco family). Further afield, families from the Veneto such as Gazzola, Cazzolato, Bellon and Guglielmin labored on farms in the Jervois area, near Tailem Bend, and would become part of the close-knit Italian community that developed in Murray Bridge after World War II.

Other Italians quit Adelaide temporarily to go mining. Some went to the Broken Hill mines, some worked in gold mines at Bonney Well in Central Australia, others worked in extremely difficult conditions in mica mines near Alice Springs. The Italian mica miners were singled out and criticised by the xenophobic *Smith's Weekly* in 1937 for having a monopoly in the region and the best leases. According to the paper, 'they are adopting the same methods on the fields as they do in other parts of Australia. [...] They keep aloof from the others, and live in characteristic Italian style. [...] They seem to resent the presence of other nationalities, and regard themselves as practically the owners of the field'.²² As the industrious Italian community increased in size and in influence in the 1920s and 1930s, such criticisms were heard even at government level. Ex-prime minister Billy Hughes, as early as 1928, urged the Federal government to keep out the undesirable 'dagoes', and South Australian Premier Butler, a decade later, condemned the immigration of Southern Europeans because 'they are extremely difficult to absorb into the social structure of the country, for their temperament and their method of living is [*sic*] so different from that of

²¹*The Truth*, 20 May 1939.

²²*Smith's Weekly*, 26 June 1937.

Australians'.²³ But more than one South Australian Italian, in response to such statements, defended the contribution that Italians were making to the development of Australia. Bruno Crotti, for example, in a letter to the *Advertiser* in 1937, pointed out that Italians 'do not usually mix with Australians because so many of the Australian community refuse to mix with them', and condemned the fact that 'a few prominent citizens should take such a prejudiced view of some hard working, peaceable, sturdy, and highly moral immigrants'.²⁴

As far as secondary industries are concerned, Italian involvement would not be conspicuous, except for isolated examples, until the period between the two world wars. Before that time, the earliest South Australian name that has been mentioned by historians is Joseph Bosisto, a pharmaceutical chemist who between 1848 and 1851 worked for Faulding's in Adelaide and subsequently in Victoria pioneered the distillation of eucalyptus oil, a product that would still bear his name even a hundred years later. But since there is considerable doubt whether Yorkshire-born Bosisto was really second-generation Italian or not (his descendants claim that he was and that his name was originally Bosisio, the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* claims that he was of French Huguenot extraction), no more space will be given to him here.²⁵ It was in the 1920s and 1930s that first-generation Italians began to play a distinctive part in manufacture in South Australia. In the building industry, Italians were in demand as specialists in concrete, mosaic, terrazzo and marble work. Firms were established by, for example, Alberto Del Fabbro, Victor Del Fabbro, Napoleone Floreani, and Pietro Cipriano. Important building programmes of the day, in which they were involved, included the Adelaide Railway Station, Parliament House extensions, and the Wattle Park Reservoir. Being well-known names in the Italian community, they fulfilled a key role both in sponsoring other Italians to come to South Australia and in providing employment for them when they arrived. Before the war as many as 120 people, most of whom were Italian, were being employed in Adelaide by just the two firms Albert Del Fabbro Co. and Victor Del Fabbro's Mosaic, Terrazzo & Granolithic Specialty Flooring Co. In another sector, Belsamino Brazzale employed up to 50 people, mainly Italian women, in his mica factory in Liverpool Street, Adelaide, where he processed the mica mined by the previously-mentioned Italians working in Central Australia. In the clothing industry Ugo Pozza in the 1930s conducted a flourishing tailoring

²³*Advertiser*, 19 Aug. 1937, p. 17.

²⁴*Advertiser*, 3 Sept. 1937, p. 34.

²⁵For Bosisto's biography see Alfred Stirling, *Joseph Bosisto*, Melbourne, The Hawthorn Press, 1970, and *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 3, pp. 197-9.

business, called Parisian Tailor, where over 20 workers were employed. In the food industry Felice Maggi began an ice cream business in Port Adelaide in 1916 and in the 1920s moved to South Terrace, on the site that is now Pulteney Grammar, where he manufactured ice cream and margarine using the brand names Blue Label Ice Cream Co. and Adelaide Margarine Co. In 1938 Francesco and Giuseppe Borgia created, in Ward Street, North Adelaide, the Borgia Bros. macaroni factory which, from 1939, became the Sovrana Macaroni Co. when Francesco Borgia took on as his partner Luigi Crotti, who after the war with his son Aldo Crotti would turn the company into Pasta San Remo. In the retail sector, shops run by Italians were found mainly in the west end of the city, which had become the heart of the Adelaide Italian community. Here the most well-known stores were Domenico Rossetto's grocery, Luigi Crotti's Home Service Store, the butcher shops of Emilio Mattiazzo and Giacinto Caon, and in Hindley Street the gunsmith's and bicycle manufacturing business of Giuseppe Bailetti, whose family store is still there today.

3. Of the Italian clergy there were just four members who resided in South Australia during the hundred years before World War II. They were: the Passionist priests Luigi Pesciaroli and the already-mentioned Maurizio Lencioni, who were the next Italians to arrive in Adelaide after Antonio Giannoni; Aristide Gandolfi in the late Nineteenth Century; and Giuseppe Minetti in the early part of this century. Pesciaroli and Lencioni landed in Adelaide in September 1846, following the failure of their mission on Stradbroke Island, off Brisbane. In 1848 Pesciaroli was sent as assistant priest to the church at Mount Barker but, isolated and unable to speak English, he remained only a year before returning to Italy.²⁶ Lencioni lived at the Bishop's residence in West Terrace, Adelaide, from where he exercised his ministry for nearly eighteen years until his death in Adelaide in 1864. In his obituary the *Adelaide Observer* described Lencioni as a priest who 'continually made new friends and never lost an old one. [...] An unostentatiously learned divine - a zealous priest in every sense of the word - a good man'.²⁷ His tomb and monument may be found today in the grounds of the St Paul's monastery at Glen Osmond.

Fr Aristide Gandolfi, born in Bologna in 1849, was sent to Adelaide from the ecclesiastical college in Genoa in 1881. After two years stationed at West Terrace, he was appointed first parish priest of Goodwood where a decision had been made to erect a church. Gandolfi contacted an architect friend of his in Italy, Giuseppe Gavazza, who

²⁶Osmund Thorpe, op. cit., pp. 157-60.

²⁷*Adelaide Observer*, 9 April 1864, p. 4.

provided a design, subsequently modified by Adelaide architects. His original plan was to build a church in classical Italian style complete with cupola, but the latter was subsequently replaced by a bell turret with a cross.²⁸ In November 1883 the foundation stone was laid of the future Church of the Holy Cross and it was opened, incomplete, in 1884. In 1900, after the departure of Gandolfi, the church was enlarged and finally completed. It is unfortunate that twenty-five years ago, in 1969, the original construction with its Italianate design was demolished and a new contemporary-style church was built to serve the parish's increased population, which, ironically, now included many Italians. Gandolfi remained at Goodwood for twelve years, from 1883 to 1895, when he was transferred to Salisbury. In January 1897 he returned to Italy to enter a monastery near Belluno.²⁹

Fr Giuseppe Minetti, from Rossiglione in Liguria, was also sent to Adelaide from the college in Genoa. He arrived in November 1913, was stationed first at West Terrace, then at Salisbury (1916-1918) and from 1918 to 1924 at Birdwood. In 1925 he was appointed to the new parish of Brighton but resigned after seven months because of ill-health and a nervous disorder, and was transferred to Glenelg where he stayed three years before returning to Italy in 1928. Although he had some contact with the Italian community in the 1920s, his Anglo-Irish superiors never really gave him the opportunity to exercise his ministry in areas where most Italians were beginning to settle, and this isolation may have contributed to his nervous breakdown. He continually clashed with Irish-born Adelaide Archbishop Spence who, when Minetti returned briefly to Adelaide in 1930 and asked to be taken back, refused to give him a place in the Archdiocese. In defence of his position Spence wrote of Minetti: 'He never got on well with the priests of the Archdiocese, in fact he used to pass them in the street without acknowledging their salute. The people never quite understood him as he was a foreigner in Australia and I don't think he understood the Australian people'.³⁰ With this mentality dominant, it was obvious that no more Italian pastors would be invited to settle in Adelaide before World War II.

4. Under the heading of Italians in public office, I shall not include, for the purposes of this paper, the activities of South Australia's Acting Vice-Consul Giuseppe Amerio who

²⁸*Adelaide Observer*, 8 Sept. 1883, p. 30; 17 Nov. 1883, p. 35.

²⁹Adelaide Catholic Archives, Box 35.

³⁰Adelaide Catholic Archives, Box 38, Spence's summary of the case, 1 April 1930, p. 3. For biographical information see also Australian Archives (SA) D596/0 1937/7957.

between 1925 and 1939 was a committed promoter in Adelaide of the Fascist cause, but will instead mention briefly the three people, all second-generation Italians, who stood for a seat in local or State government.³¹ The earliest, Peter Gannoni (or Giannoni - he was the son of South Australia's first Italian settler, Antonio Giannoni), was a member of the Kensington and Norwood Council for the greater part of his life, from 1891 to 1942, serving as Councillor, Alderman and, between 1920 and 1922, Mayor.³² During his term of office as Mayor he arranged for the construction of the Soldiers' Memorial on Osmond Terrace, opposite which, on the other side of The Parade, the South Australian Italian Historical Society plans, in collaboration with Kensington and Norwood Council and Mayor Vincenzina Ciccarello, to erect a bust of his father Antonio. The other second-generation Italian to be elected to local government was Giovanni Favilla, a draper and mercer, who represented the Elder Ward in Kadina between 1931 and 1937. His father, Raffaello Favilla from Lucca, arrived in South Australia in 1874 and shortly after in Kadina opened a drapery store and tailoring business, which by 1890 was employing ten people.³³ The Favilla store was a famous landmark on a prime corner site in Kadina until 1958 when the family sold the business and the building was subsequently demolished.³⁴

One second-generation Italian stood for a seat in State Parliament. This was Raphael Ambrose Cilento, who in 1938, at the age of 73, stood as an independent for the seat of Port Adelaide, but was unsuccessful. In his policy speech he expressed his support for awarding women workers the same wages as men for similar work, and suggested the application of a seven-day-notice rule before employers could dismiss staff.³⁵ Raphael was the son of the already-mentioned Salvatore Cilento from Naples and, in turn, was the father of two famous Australians, Sir Raphael West Cilento, Director-General of Queensland's Health and Medical Services, and Alan Watson West Cilento, General Manager of the Savings Bank of South Australia; furthermore, Raphael was the grandfather of actress Diane Cilento.

³¹For an evaluation of Amerio's activities in South Australia during the Fascist period see my article "Viva il Duce: The Influence of Fascism on Italians in South Australia in the 1920s and 1930s", *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 21, 1993 (in press).

³²"From Crewman to Cabbie", cit.

³³Keith Bailey, *Copper City Chronicle. A History of Kadina*, Kadina, H.K. Bailey, 1990, p. 182; W. Frederic Morrison, *The Aldine History of SA*, Sydney & Adelaide, The Aldine Publishing Company, 1890, Vol. II, p. 576.

³⁴Bailey, p. 182.

³⁵*Advertiser*, 3 March 1938, p. 23.

5. Italian language teaching, my last heading, also takes us back to the beginnings of Italian settlement in South Australia. The first teacher of Italian was Nicola Caporelli, a Roman, who arrived in Western Australia in 1846 with Bishop Salvado, the founder of the New Norcia mission, north of Perth. In Rome Caporelli had been asked by John Brady, the Irish-born bishop of Perth, to come to WA with the Spanish missionaries to set up a school in his diocese. As an added enticement Brady had managed to persuade the papal government to appoint Caporelli Consul-General in Australia for the Papal States, an extraordinary appointment considering that there were no trade links at the time between Australia and the Roman territories and there was not even a pontifical consulate in England, much less in the newly-established colony of Western Australia. Understandably, the WA governor Sir Andrew Clarke queried the appointment with the Colonial Secretary in London, who promptly declined to recognise Caporelli's commission.³⁶ Meanwhile, when not one pupil from among the 300 Catholics in the impoverished Swan River colony chose to enrol in the school that Caporelli was meant to run, he and Bishop Brady clashed over the payment of a stipend. These frustrations and the hardships of life in the colony were such that Caporelli decided to leave Perth after three years and head for Adelaide, where he arrived in December 1848.³⁷ That month while staying at a boarding house in Hindley Street he inserted an advertisement in the *South Australian Register*:

Signor Caporelli, teacher of French and Italian, having lately arrived in this province, begs to give notice that he is prepared to receive pupils at his lodgings, attend schools, or private families, for the purpose of giving instruction in the above languages.³⁸

As a teacher he must have met with some success among the cultured members of Adelaide's society because three months later he announced that some of his friends had induced him to 'open Evening Classes [in Italian and French] in Adelaide for the instruction of young gentlemen'.³⁹ In 1850 he applied for, and was granted, naturalisation, the first

³⁶For details and outcome of the proposal to appoint Caporelli Papal Consul-General in Australia while residing in Perth, see especially Elio Lodolini, "Il Consolato generale dello Stato Pontificio in Australia (Perth, 1845-1848)", in Romano Ugolini (ed.), *Italia-Australia 1788-1988*, cit., pp. 437-54. See also C. Gamba, "A Papal Consul-General in Western Australia, 1846", *The Australian Quarterly*, XXI, 4, Dec. 1949, pp. 101-5, and Joseph Gentili, *Italian Roots in Australian Soil. Italian Migration to Western Australia 1829-1946*, Mangaroo WA, Italo-Australian Welfare Centre, 1983, p. 3.

³⁷Interstate shipping lists show that he arrived on the "Water Lily" from the Swan River Colony on 7 Dec. 1848.

³⁸*Register*, 20 Dec. 1848, p. 2.

³⁹*Adelaide Times*, 5 March 1849, p. 1. He was by this time staying at the Clarendon Hotel, Hindley Street.

Italian in South Australia to be given British citizenship.⁴⁰ Two years later, like so many other residents of Adelaide, he joined the goldrush to Victoria but took ill and died there, aged 36, in 1853.⁴¹

Other Italians living in South Australia in the Nineteenth Century probably gave Italian lessons to members of a British society that admired Italian culture and, in particular, Italian opera, as we have seen. But no formal schooling in Italian was organised until the 1930s, when lessons were arranged for the children of Italians in the developing community. In 1932 Saturday Italian Schools were set up in Adelaide and Port Pirie by the local Fascist Branches, as part of a world-wide program that insisted that Italian language maintenance amongst migrant children was essential to the consolidation of the Fascist regime abroad. In Adelaide at St Francis Xavier's Hall, Wakefield Street, about 40 children attended Italian classes taught by Miss Adele Gatti, 20 attended the classes at Port Pirie taught by Mrs Caterina Pasculli, and from 1934 at a Saturday class at Glanville about 20 children were taught first by Miss Elena Rubeo (who in 1952 would be appointed Italian Consular Agent for SA) and subsequently by Luigi Amerio, the Vice-Consul's brother-in-law.

By 1935 Italian lessons were being offered by Miss Luisa Masullo to a small group of interested students at the Adelaide Conservatorium of Music. Two years later, in April 1937, Italian was offered for the first time as part of the Adelaide University WEA programme on a par with French and German and could similarly be taken by Adelaide University students.⁴² The Director of Adult Education was Ernest Gordon Biaggini, London-born but of Italian extraction, who, in his additional capacity as WEA English lecturer and Adelaide University tutor in English composition, instilled in thousands of students in his lifetime a deep love of English language and literature.⁴³ *The Advertiser* in 1978 dedicated an editorial to Biaggini, calling him 'one of those rare people who attach others to them with a mixture of admiration, gratitude and loyalty which never diminishes

⁴⁰On his Certificate of Naturalization, dated Adelaide, 17 June 1850, Caporelli states that he is 34 years of age and lists his profession as "Agent and Professor of Languages". His use of the word "agent" and the fact that six months later he wrote to the Secretary of State in Rome seeking employment (Lodolini, p. 453) suggest that he felt he could still be a useful representative of papal interests abroad.

⁴¹He departed for Melbourne on the "Seabird" on 2 April 1852. The following death notice was inserted in the *South Australian Register*, 14 June 1853: "On the 29th of May, after a short illness, at Forest Creek [Victoria], Nicholas Caporelli, aged 36, universally respected".

⁴²*Advertiser*, 8 April 1937, p.

⁴³For details see E.G. Biaggini, *You can't say that. An Autobiographical Essay*, Adelaide, Pitjantjara Publishers, 1970.

in their lifetime'.⁴⁴ He was not, however, the instructor of Italian. This place was filled from 1937 to 1940 by a Greek with Italian citizenship, Kyriakos Kyriakakis, who was born in Kastellorizo in the Dodecanese Islands and had degrees from Athens University and the University of Padua. In 1938 Biaggini reported that there were about 80 students of Italian enrolled in the two levels of classes, beginners and second year, conducted by K.K. Barris (as Kyriakakis preferred to be called), and that they were reading the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, which he had ordered for the Barr Smith Library. Biaggini also realised the importance of obtaining for the Library the new multi-volume Italian Encyclopedia Treccani. Following his representations to Adelaide Vice-Consul Amerio, the Italian Government through Melbourne Consul Arrighi donated a copy of the encyclopedia to the Barr Smith in a ceremony held in October 1938.⁴⁵ With the time apparently now ripe to consider the establishment of a Lectureship in the Adelaide University Arts Faculty, Amerio took up the issue with Arrighi and with Adelaide University but was told, as would also happen in the 1960s, that before a full-time post could be established, the Italian community would have to contribute some of the funds. In the meantime the very active Italian tutor, K.K. Barris, was writing his own Italian grammar book for his students, which he published in Adelaide in 1939, with the title *First Course in Italian*.⁴⁶

At the secondary level, the first Italian classes were established in February 1939 at Norwood by Fr Wilfred Ryan at St Ignatius College. In a letter to Vice-Consul Amerio thanking him for the complimentary copies of Russo's *Italian Grammar*, Fr Ryan reported that his class of nearly 20 was 'most enthusiastic' about studying Italian.⁴⁷ But this momentum at both secondary and tertiary level would not, for now, accelerate further. The advent of war would mean that Italian language teaching would have to wait for the arrival of people like Giorgio Masero in 1951 in order to re-establish itself in a new climate and with a much larger community.

To conclude: from the time that Antonio Giannoni disembarked in 1839 to work alongside the Surveyor-General Lieutenant Frome, from the time, in that same year, that cases of macaroni and vermicelli began being unloaded at Port Adelaide, from the time, in 1852, that Adelaide residents could purchase Alessandro Manzoni's famous novel *I*

⁴⁴*Advertiser*, 9 Dec. 1978, p. 5.

⁴⁵*Advertiser*, 1 Nov. 1938, p. 25.

⁴⁶K. Kyriakakis Barris, *First Course in Italian*, Adelaide, E.W. Preece Ltd., 1939. This was the second Italian grammar book to be written and published in Australia. The first was by F.C. Bentivoglio, *Italian Grammar and Vocabulary. Grammatica della lingua parlata*, Sydney, The Author, 1933.

⁴⁷Australian Archives (SA) AP501/2, Box 12, Ryan to Amerio, 1 March 1939.

promessi sposi at Platts' Bookstore in Currie Street, from the time that the first Italian musicians, agriculturists, fishermen, laborers, churchmen, storekeepers and teachers settled in South Australia, the cultural, economic and social life of the State has been noticeably influenced by their presence. In particular, the importance of the part played by the Italians who settled in SA in the 1920s and 1930s cannot be over-emphasised: it was they who developed the first sense of community in the State in a period of severe economic depression and of marked antagonism on the part of many Anglo-Australians towards the arrival in their country of 'aliens' (as non-British migrants were then called) and especially of Southern Europeans. The nucleus that these Italians formed, the environment that they created, as families, employers and employees, enabled the thousands of relatives, friends and *paesani* who followed them to South Australia in the 1950s and 1960s to develop a greater sense of belonging and to feel less the social and cultural marginalisation that had been experienced by many of their immediate predecessors.