

Chapter 1. Sicily to Australia. A Retrospective Overview

1.1 Elements of geography

Sicilia, the island of Sicily, is a Region¹ of modern Italy and includes, along with the mainland island, three minor archipelagos, the Aeolian Islands (7 islands), the Egadi Islands (3), the Pelagie Islands (3), and the islands of Pantelleria and Ustica. The largest island of the Mediterranean (27,500 square metres), it is Italy's fourth most densely populated Region (preceded by the Regions of (in decreasing order): Lombardy, Campania and Lazio). Situated at the centre of the Mediterranean, it is the southernmost Region of Italy and lies about 100 miles northeast of Tunisia (North Africa) and is separated from mainland Italy (Calabrian Region) by the Messina Straits, 10 miles wide. Mostly mountainous in its interior, it hosts three major ranges: the Madonie (northwest), the Peloritani (northeast) and the high plateau of the Monti Iblei, in the southeast. Mount Etna, the highest active volcano in Europe (3340 metres high), stands alone, dominating a vast portion of the northeast territory. Relatively poor in waterways, reservoirs have been created to provide the necessary water supplies. Its vegetation was originally Mediterranean scrub, but through the centuries of different peoples have imported plants and crops from all over the world (including the now widespread Australian eucalyptus) and these have dramatically changed the island's aspect over time. In the interior of Sicily, since Ancient Roman times, both the lives of its people and the landscape have been heavily characterized by the extensive cultivation of wheat.

The Region of Sicily has its capital in Palermo and is administratively divided into nine Provinces, each with its own capital city: Palermo, Catania, Messina, Caltanissetta, Agrigento, Enna, Ragusa, Siracusa, Trapani.

¹ Italy is administratively divided into Regions, which I have capitalized, in this thesis, to distinguish from the common use of the word region, generally referring to a generic portion of land, not necessarily bound by officially recognized borders. Table 1.1. illustrates the administrative Regions of Italy, distinguishing them in different colours. Table 1.2. illustrates the Provinces of Italy, subregional administrative territories which are governed by a provincial capital, from which they take their name. I have capitalized the word Provinces, again, as it refers to state recognized land subdivision.



1.1. The Regions of Italy. Sicily is the most populated Region after Lombardia (Capital, Milan), Campania (Capital, Naples), and Lazio (Capital, Rome) (Source Finley, M I and Mack Smith, D and Duggan, C J H (1986), *A History of Sicily*, London: Chatto & Windus).



1.2. The nine Provinces of Sicily – Source: Wikipedia online Encyclopedia



1.3. The Aeolian Islands – Source: Wikipedia online Encyclopedia

1.2. Sicilian history and society. Overview and analysis

1.2.1. Pre-Unitarian Sicily:

By Pre-Unitarian, I refer to the period in history that ranges from the Greek colonies (7th C BC) to the union of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies with Italy (1860). As post-Unitarian, I include the years from 1860 to 1945, the date of the end of the Second World War and year of the birth of the modern Repubblica Italiana (Italian Republic).

The island of Sicily has been one of cradles of western civilization, due to its strategic position at the centre of the Mediterranean, its mild climate and the fertility of its land. The island has been a land of clashes and disputes between different peoples since the times when ancient Greeks and Phoenicians ruled the Mediterranean (9th – 6th C BC)². In becoming the core of Magna Graecia, a major outpost of colonies of the Greek city-states (6th – 3rd C BC), Sicily experienced in its early days what was to become, over its long and complex history, a routine pattern: peoples from afar overcoming the previous settlers, bringing their civilization and blending it with that of their predecessors. At that time, the predecessors were the Siculi, Sicani and Elymi, the indigenous inhabitants of the island of Indo-European origin. Sicily subsequently became a province of the vast Roman Empire, in which it was included from the start (since the 3rd C BC). The island recovered predominance in medieval times. Whilst it played a relatively minor role under Byzantine rule (5th – 8th C), it rapidly became one of the major bastions of the Arab Empire (8th – 9th C). The Norman and German rule that followed is still regarded today as the culminating moment of Sicily's history in terms of splendour, wealth and munificence (10th -13th C). After these dominations the island was a land of conquest first for the French Angevins (for a brief period in the 13th C), successively passing to Aragonese rule (14th C) in a relatively smooth and non-violent process. Later the Kingdom of Aragon was annexed to Spain (16th C) and remained under Spanish rule for the following 300 years. The island's transition to the house of Bourbon (19th C) as part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was little more than nominal, the latter being an epigone of the collapsed Spanish Empire. Economically, between the 14th and the 19th C, the island underwent a slow but

² Data exposed in paragraphs 1.2.1. and 1.2.2. is from Gregory (1968). In Appendix (a). I include a detailed *chronology table* of Sicily's history before its annexation to Italy, expanding on the information provided in 1.2.2.

relentless decline (Finley, Mack Smith, Duggan, 1986). Relegated to the role of Province of the vast Aragonese and then the Spanish Empire, it was corruptly administered by governors who sought personal wealth and power rather than improving the wellbeing of its people. The living conditions of the peasants, fishermen and manual labourers scarcely improved until the mass migrations to the New Worlds, which started from the 19th C. Mass migration to the Americas and Australia occurred in different waves (Saija, 2005; Hampel, 1987).

1.2.2. Post-Unitarian Sicily:

The exodus of people to the Americas and to Australia amounted to hundreds of thousands³ in the first decades after Sicily was politically annexed to Italy (Saija, 2005). To understand the social and political background of those migrants, I include a table (1.4) highlighting the principal historical factors. This is followed by a brief analysis of the social conditions in which the lower classes (peasants, fishermen and craftsmen) lived in the examined period. Insights into particular parts of this more recent history follow, with the purpose of analysing the relations between history and social conditions.

Historical highlights from Italian union to Second World War	
1860	Sicily is annexed to the Italian Kingdom.
1878	Death of Victor Emanuel 2 nd and succession of Umberto 1 st .
1882	Electoral reform is approved (January); Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary (May).
1889-1893	1892 - Foundation of Italian Socialist Party.
1898	Riots in Milan.

³ Data is from ITENETS (Internet Training and Employment Networks) website:
<http://www.itenets.org/virtualLibrary/taxonomy2.asp?NazioneID=&id=51&parentID=7&resCount=5> .

1900	King Umberto I st is assassinated, Victor Emanuel 3 rd succeeds.
1901	Zanardelli and Giolitti form Government.
1904	General strike.
1911	Giolitti returns to power; Introduction of Bill for Universal Male Suffrage (April); Italy declares war on Turkey and invades Libya (September).
1912	Peace with Turkey ends Libyan War.
1915	Treaty of London between Italy and Entente (April); Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary (23 May); Italy enters the First World War on the side of the Entente (24 May).
1918	The end of the First World War; the Italian armies are victorious at Vittorio Veneto.
1919	Foundation of the Fasci di Combattimento (an early paramilitary Fascist organization) in Milan.
1922	The March on Rome: the Fascists take power.
1935	Italian troops invade Ethiopia and the League of Nations declares sanctions against Italy.
1936	Italy concludes conquest of Ethiopia: declaration of the Italian Empire (May); the Rome-Berlin Axis is inaugurated (October).

1938	Proclamation of the anti-Semitic racial laws.
1940	Italy declares war on France and Great Britain (June); beginning of Italian campaigns in Greece (October).
1943	Workers go on strike in much of northern Italy (March); the Allies land in Sicily (10 July); the Fascist Grand Council withdraws its support for Mussolini, who is arrested; the Fascist Party is dissolved (27 July); declaration of the armistice between Italy and the Allies, most of Italy is immediately occupied by the Germans; Allied forces land in Salerno (8 September); Mussolini is rescued by German parachute troops (12 September); foundation of the Fascist puppet regime at Salò, and the Italian Social Republic (22 September).
1946	Referendum on the monarchy: Italians vote 12 million to 10 million in favour of abolition.

1.4. Historical highlights from Italian union to Second World War – Source: Baranski, West (2001)

The enlightened, egalitarian and bourgeois ideals that came out of the French Revolution never took root south of Rome. The 19th C industrial revolution never brought mechanization of labour other than in northern Italy (and there only in some areas). Sicily's economic and social conditions remained virtually medieval and agrarian until the Second World War. Following its union with Italy (1860), the island experienced a series of political turnovers: first the Kingdom of Italy (1860-1922), then the Fascist Regime (1922-1945), then the Republic (from 1945 onwards), without experiencing significant change within the social and economic texture which had characterized Sicily over the past centuries.

1.2.3. Insights into different periods:

Bill Keith Hampel, in his PhD thesis *The Formation of Consciousness* (1987), describes in a powerful way the consequences that foreign domination had on Sicily until 1861:

Sicily's subordinate role with respect to the centres of industry, trade and culture of Europe had a profound effect on the type and level of its economy, its social structure, the pattern of settlement, and its political and administrative system. Ultimately it set the parameters within which cultural formation had to occur (pp. 141-142). Land was concentrated in a few hands and commercial growth compromised by dependence upon the export of a small range of primary products, the profits from which went mainly to wealthy landowners. As a result, regional development was neglected. Prior to unification in 1860, political and legal structures were weak, security of persons and property was problematic and subject to silent dispensations of justice by bandits. Investment in education was minimal and in the early 19th C, there were many fewer corporate financial institutions than in the north (pp. 84-85).

The Risorgimento⁴ in 1861 did not bring the long expected changes; indeed Sicily's economic, social and cultural gap with the North was exacerbated. Relegated even more to the role of retrograde region, its differing assets compared to the north have always been envisaged as problems, not as resources. The new government never made a committed effort to change the status to offset an industrialization process and enable the south to secure a position of equality and competition with the north. It is common belief⁵ that the industrial north was interested to keep the South in depressed conditions in order to have a huge, exploitable reservoir of cheap labour. Moreover, the retrograde and depressed conditions of the southerners have always been powerful levers used by politicians to gain votes nationwide. In summary, it was more

⁴ Il Risorgimento, literally meaning 'the arising', is the period in the first decades of the 1800s when the wars of independence from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire were fought, leading to political unification, in 1860.

⁵ See various relevant articles on Italian history website: <http://www.cronologia.it/storia/tabello/aa1861.htm> (in Italian). In particular: Il Sud dopo l'Unità d'Italia – una storia che non fu – by Stefania Maffei, on the economic policy of the new Italian Kingdom; 1876 La sinistra storica – on politics and the Meridione (Southern Italy).

convenient for government and industrialists to leave southern Italy and Sicily as it was at the moment of the union than to try and change anything. This state of affairs, productive of poverty, ignorance, resignation and abandon, was the ideal condition for the mafia to grow stronger than ever. The mafia was now the only power that *de facto* ruled the territory.

Finley, Mack Smith and Duggan, in their volume *A history of Sicily* (1986) provide a succinct summary of the economic and social conditions in Sicily in the first decades after the unification with Italy, when Crispi and Giolitti were Prime Ministers.

Though Crispi remained a radical reformer he had to an extent lost touch with the realities of Sicilian life, even though his friends warned him in the 1880s that social war was building up. Local authorities were continuing to place the main burden of taxation on people who were already too near to starvation...(p. 194) There were also a few outright revolutionaries who advocated socialization of the land and the mines... (p. 195)

The Fasci Siciliani dei lavoratori⁶ (workers' unions) was born. In 1893 there was even a regional socialist congress in Sicily.

Village authorities responded with great repressiveness, and this led to an escalation of violence. Crispi was urgently brought back as Prime Minister, with a policy of martial law. Thirty thousand soldiers were sent to Sicily to quell the revolt.... (p. 195)

The connections between the mafia and politics became evident in the case of the assassination of Emanuele Notarbartolo, a public servant who had denounced corruption and malpractice among the political class. He was brutally stabbed to death and the assassins never found.

⁶ Translatable as Sicilian workers' unions, these were an embryonic, first experiment of what will become the proper Trade Unions later. Fasci, meaning in Italian sheaf, is a term which was taken later by the Fascist party, who claimed its origin in these early-socialist workers' unions.

The enquiry was hushed up:

Mafia help and 'the Sicilian vote' were far too important to politicians of many different colours. While the period of Giolitti brought prosperity to the rest of Italy, Sicily was slow off the mark. In the years 1907-10, a detailed socio-economic investigation of the island was made on behalf of the parliament by Professor Lorenzoni. His report described what was still a feudal world. The old aristocracy still owned most of the large estates, and all too often they still maintained as their interest to retard economic development. Yet this traditional resistance to change was becoming more and more anachronistic, and low production latifondismo⁷ was far too expensive an impediment for fast-growing population of three and a half million. Giolitti's conquest of Lybia in 1911-12 devoured the scanty resources which might have been applied to solving the problems that Lorenzoni and others (i.e. Franchetti and Sonnino) had begun to define. His colonial war was enthusiastically supported by many Sicilians, but in the event, the Lybian deserts proved to be an expensive mirage. Hard on the heels of the Lybian venture came the First World War. Sicily's markets were now largely cut off until 1919, and this was a grave blow to an economy which depended on exports. (Mack Smith, pp. 194, 195, 197)

Continuing into the next period of significant political change in Italy, Fascism, the same authors provide a poignant description:

The history of Sicily under fascism is surprisingly empty. ...Much more money was allocated to public works than before, though a good deal of it was inefficiently and corruptly spent and the local oligarchies had to submit to more central surveillance over local taxation and expenditure. But the fascist party was never in any sense efficient, and the interests of the big landowners once again prevailed. As a result, the pace of change was slower than almost anywhere else in Italy. Mussolini's success as a politician was chiefly based on his skill as a propagandist. Fine phrases were cheaper and not infrequently

⁷ *Latifondismo* is the property and management of very large land estates by a single, but very powerful, landowner. The term originates from the latin word *latifundus*, and this system of land-administration in Sicily dates from Roman times.

more effective than practical achievements. Such empty posturing condemned the island to neglect. [...] In 1940, more than a generation after his original researches, Professor Lorenzoni reported little change in most areas where large estates continued to exist. Agriculture was still in great part nomadic; and short-leases were common. Most country roads could not be used even by a rough cart. The latifondi were still called 'fiefs' and seemed a feudal world remote from the twentieth C. (pp. 207 and 211)

As we read again in Bill Keith Hampel's thesis, after the Second World War, little seems to have changed in the social and economic assets which have always characterized Sicily:

By the end of 1945, Sicily's economy and society were in a parlous condition. Two and a half million people were homeless; agricultural production was less than $\frac{3}{4}$ that of the 1938 figure; calorie intake was reduced to $\frac{1}{3}$ that of needs; inflation ran at 60% to 70%; finally there was much loss of manpower, destruction of shipping and industrial capacity. The loss of industrial capacity, for example has been variously estimated to be 30% (C.A.B., 2/8/48:4) or 90% (Schacter, 1965:140). However, Italy also lost its colonies and thus its power, mineral resources, and markets. Overall, the effects were most severe for Sicily and the South which had been the main theatre for the war. In addition, the reduction of Italy's merchant shipping to $\frac{1}{10}$ the 1938 level, would have weighed heavily on the island Region of Sicily (C.A.B., 1948:4). A further impediment to social reform in Sicily was the above mentioned decision of the Allied forces to fall back on known members of the mafia as the only apparent leaders for the restoration of order at the end of the war. Most of the post-war emigrants to Australia would have experienced at least the latter part of the Fascist regime and some evidently embraced emigration as the means to escape from the economic, political and social oppression which the Sicilian contadini had experienced for at least 100 years. (pp. 86, 87)

1.2.4. Social problems and emigration:

The signs of the internal migration (from the country to the major cities) and external migration (from Sicilian country and urban locations to the Americas/Australia) are

evident in today's Sicily. The vast fields of the once 'Granary of Rome' dwell in a state of abandon, country towns are traditionally left by youths in search of work often returning only as pensioners. The major cities of Sicily, after the Second World War, expanded in an anarchic and desperate attempt to absorb a mass of population whose needs were repeatedly dissatisfied⁸. These internal and external population shifts have been virtually uninterrupted in the period of the last two centuries. Economic and political reasons⁹ have contributed and often been the origin of these migrations, I will here mention but a few.

The economy after the union with Italy was further depressed by a damaging land reform decree known as *la riforma agraria*¹⁰, the land reform. This reform took place in 1950 as an initiative of the newly-elected Sicilian Parliament governing the Autonomous Region of Sicily¹¹. Trying to put an end to *latifondismo* with the intention of developing a modern economy in the new-born State of Italy, this measure expropriated the land from traditional landlords. It dissolved large estates into small properties which were then sold. However, instead of facilitating progress, this reform was the beginning of a long period of agony for agriculture. Extensive cultivation of wheat was the major resource Sicily's economy had relied upon throughout centuries. Different uses of the land proved to be unfruitful.

Efforts to set up an industrialization process and private initiatives through State assistance funds were made through a government economic scheme, called *La Cassa del Mezzogiorno*, roughly translatable as 'The Southern Italy fund'. Operating in the post war years (1950-1984) this scheme proved to be a total fiasco. Monies were mismanaged and appropriated by morally and legally questionable politicians (in

⁸ Sicily's current unemployment rate is (and has been traditionally) one of the highest in Italy, followed closely by rates registered in the southern-Italian regions of Calabria and Campania (www.istat.it).

⁹ For a deeper understanding and documentation on internal and external migration within and from Sicily throughout time, I referred to the following websites (in Italian): www.alef-fvg.it/emigrazione; www.cestim.it/07emigrazione.htm, www.cser.it, www.istat.it, www.filef.info/emigrazione, <http://www.scalabrini.org/fcms>.

¹⁰ For a full analysis (in Italian) of La Riforma Agraria and of La Cassa del Mezzogiorno, please refer to the websites <http://sicilyweb.com/storia/statuto.htm> for the first and <http://www.ideazione.com/fondazione/Mezzogiorno/dossier2.htm> for both.

¹¹ La Regione Siciliana. The status of autonomous region was granted to Sicily after World War II (1947) with the intention to help the island to overcome its centuries-old disadvantages.

close connection with the mafia). Since the 1950s, the number of men murdered by order of the bosses increased relentlessly. Government officials, members of the clergy and private citizens were killed indiscriminately, for these men dared to denounce and oppose the C-old connections between the mafia, landlords and politics. The bosses were well protected and managed untouchable criminal empires, the implicit complicity of members of the corrupt establishment being the fundamental prerequisite. The killings of trade union leaders Placido Rizzotto (1948) and Salvatore Carnevale (1955), political left wing activist Giuseppe Impastato (1978), journalist Mario Francese (1979), the President of the Sicilian Region Piersanti Mattarella, Carabinieri General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa (1982), businessman Libero Grassi (1991), anti-mafia judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino (1992) and Father Don Pino Puglisi (1993) are only a few examples of how, in the same society that produced the mafia, heroic men have always fought in the name of a more equitable society. Many demagogic statements have been made by politicians who rode the wave of the emotional reactions which followed murders of judges Falcone and Borsellino in 1992. The commonly spread and deep-rooted idea that patron/client formulae work better than proceeding by right-of-law patterns is one of the reasons why the mafia has still today such a strong grip in Sicily¹².

For all these reasons, Sicilians since the union with Italy have decided to emigrate to start a new life in the Americas and Australia. They escaped from a land that appeared to them dwelling in corruption and violence.

1.3. Emigration to Australia. Overview and analysis

1.3.1. Causes and characteristics:

The exhibition *I percorsi dell'emigrazione siciliana nel mondo*, The routes of Sicilian emigration in the world, was held in Palermo from 11 to 28 February 2005 at the former locomotive parking hangar of Sant'Erasmo. The attendance of this exhibition in its two first days, during which various presentations by experts were delivered, has been a significative starting point for my PhD, given the wealth of information I was exposed to there. The background research to exhibition was undertaken and

¹² In the Bibliography section I have included a series of internet resources of Associations and Study Centres on mafia and its connection with politics. Please refer to Bibliography.

coordinated by Professor Marcello Saija, director of the Museum of Emigration of the Aeolian Islands and director of the Department of English, Anglo-American and International Studies at the University of Messina. A good general overview of the Sicilian emigration phenomenon is contained in the pamphlet he wrote as guide to the exhibition. He presents with subtlety the types of emigration from different areas of Sicily to particular overseas destinations. A translated extract of the pamphlet regarding the causes for emigration is provided in the Appendix (c). The most important point Saija makes is that emigration did not occur only because of an exceptional social or economical conjunction which compelled people to leave for far overseas destinations. Poverty and distress had been an endemic condition for centuries in Sicily. The new decisive factor was the booming industry of what another speaker in the above-mentioned conference, Professor Salvatore Lupo, called 'commerce of human beings'. By this term he means the shipping of thousands of people in disadvantaged economic condition to overseas destinations just as if they were a new, very lucrative kind of merchandise. This new 'commerce' was thanks to the beginning of the phenomenon known as 'chain-migration', the irresistible call of a parent or *paesano*¹³ who had made his fortune overseas. Chain-migration was implemented by the deliberate creation of what is nowadays called a 'culture of emigration': shipping companies had set up emigration bureaus in the remotest parts of the island from which agents persuaded people to emigrate overseas in search of a better life. A highly idealized version of the country of destination was presented to the close-to-starving population of the countryside as well as to the urban lower-classes. Depending on the level of need and poverty, the population from some areas left before others. Once the first emigrants left, the mechanism of chain migration had started: they would call more and more people overseas. In the first two decades of the Twentieth C the exodus from the island became more and more generalized and its numbers rose exponentially. The prevalent destinations before the Second World War were the Americas. After the war it became Australia for two precise reasons: the USA changed its emigration policy introducing more restrictive laws; Australia needed more workers to develop its economy, especially in agriculture. In 1951 minister Arthur Calwell promoted the Assisted Migration Agreement, with which the price of the sea passage to Australia for all European migrants was brought down to

¹³ Person from the same city, town or district.

10 pounds. This agreement was to endure until 1971, making Australia an open-air laboratory of social engineering. A historical and current statistic and numeric overview of Italian migration in the world and Sicilian migration to Australia is provided in the last paragraph of this Chapter.

1.3.2. Correlations:

This section includes some key dates and facts in relation to emigration to Australia, and in particular to New South Wales.

I have divided this section following two criteria. Under the first heading, Push factors, I show some historical causes which impelled Sicilians to leave Italy for Australia. Under the second heading, Pull factors, I show some of the opportunities which the emigrants sought in Australia. Whichever the perspective or reason the Sicilians left, the travelling conditions were equal for all and very tough at the time. All of the Italian emigrants that have crossed the world to come to Australia from the 19th C to post Second World War migration have done so by boat. The major ports in Italy, which shipped millions¹⁴ of emigrants to Australia and to the Americas, were (from north to south): Trieste, Genova, Portoferraio (Livorno), Napoli, Messina and Palermo (Saija, 2005). The journey took from 1 to 3 months; the route was generally through Gibraltar and Cape of Good Hope, reaching the Australian coast in Fremantle, followed by Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Only in the 1960s, with the opening of the Suez Canal, were distances shortened.

1.3.3. Push factors:

1860 – The year of annexation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to the Italian Kingdom. In the years following this unification, social discontent was widespread throughout southern Italy, including Sicily. New taxation was enforced, and the much-hated *macinato* tax (tax on wheat) was reintroduced, burdening the peasant population unbearably. Adding to this came the compulsory obligation for all young males, as subjects to the new Italian King, to serve in the army for seven years. This was incompatible with the customs enrooted within southern Italian agricultural and peasant society, where constant work on the land permitted the bare subsistence

¹⁴ It has been estimated that Italian migrants in the world, from 1861 to date, total approximately 28 million, one third of whom have repatriated (Source: www.rapportoitalianinelmondo.it).

of the family, the core of the Sicilian society. These obligations caused mass banditry (*brigantaggio*) on one side and mass migration on the other. Union with Italy was proving not to be a smooth and welcome process. The hopes for social revolution that Garibaldi had raised were once again bitterly unattended (Mack Smith, 1986).

1866 – Revolt erupted in Palermo. Famine, heavy taxation, underemployment and compulsory conscription caused revolt. This was bloodily repressed, thus lowering the Sicilians' expectation of any change from the new kingdom, which was perceived as just another foreign occupation. Disillusionment, together with social resentment, caused increased emigration rates (Mack Smith, 1986).

1889/1893 – The Fasci Siciliani dei Lavoratori (Sicilian Trade Unions) movement was established and repressed by the Crispi government. Some attempts to improve the living conditions were made. A few outright revolutionaries advocated the socialization of the land and of the mines. In 1893 a regional Socialist Party Congress was held in Sicily. The authorities reacted with brutal repression to the claims of the workers, leading to major violence. The result of these efforts to change the feudalistic management of the land was the siding of the new state with the interests of the landlords. Thirty thousand soldiers were sent to Sicily to quell the revolt. In the following years, also due to the pressure of emigration agents and the rise of emigration business, the number of people that left Italy and Sicily for Australia and the USA reached historic peaks (Mack Smith, 1986).

1900 – Umberto I, the King of Italy, is assassinated. This coincided with a moment of terrible insecurity in the whole country, at the mercy of uncontrollable forces and bearing explosive social problems, i.e. the rapidly growing birth rate matched by rising taxes and unemployment rates (Baranski, West, 2001).

1908 – The earthquake in Messina was one of the most deadly in history, tolling 90,000. Many of the survivors preferred to emigrate to Australia rather than wait for reconstruction and help from the young and distant Italian Government.

1911-12 – Italy's Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti undertakes the conquest of Libya and Tripolitania, formerly part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Many young Italians

escaped conscription to the expansionist colonial wars in Africa by choosing to emigrate (Saija, 2005; Mack Smith, 1986).

1915-18 – The First World War struck. Many of the Italian-born emigrants in Australia were forced to repatriate to serve in the Italian army. As soon as the war was over, however, emigration regained force stronger than before, enhanced by the economic crisis (lira devaluation) and by the Australian Gold Rush. Many were also employed in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and in the cane cutting industries in Queensland (Randazzo, Cigler, 1987).

1922-1944 – The Fascist Regime. In Hampel's words:

Mussolini's initial successful campaign against the mafia, who had emerged in the late 19th C from the ranks of exploitative rural entrepreneurs, freed the landowners of the pressure from the gabellotti¹⁵ so that they raised rents for the peasants and worsened their plight. In turn the contadini experienced fascist hostility and the suppression of co-operative and trade union movements. Increasingly, Mussolini relied upon the mafia for support, he reinforced the Church control of landholdings, education and charity through the Lateran pact of 1929 and with the abolition of political parties. The contadini lost of the means of improving their situation (1987: 86).

Emigration to foreign countries was discouraged by Mussolini, who considered it humiliating for Italians to go and enrich other countries with their skills and work. Nevertheless, many Italians managed to emigrate to Australia, often with no possibility of going back to their homeland. In Australia, fascist and antifascist clubs were born.

¹⁵ Intermediate figures between the landlords and the peasants, they employed the workforce and, in fact, managed the land (fiefs). In the end they became quite powerful in the face of the Landlords themselves. Some historians see in the *gabellotto* and their intimidating form of power, the prototype of what would shortly become known as the mafia, the Honourable Society, in its most agrarian and archaic form.

1945 – Second World War struck. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, emigration to Australia reached historic peaks, also due to a deliberate policy by the Australian and Italian governments, which sealed a labour exchange agreement. Many of the emigrants who left their country in these years never returned to their homeland, escaping poverty (See Saija, 2005 and statistics published in websites cited in note 9 of this chapter).

1968 – A disastrous earthquake in central-west Sicily occurred, in the Belice area. The epicentre was in the town of Gibellina (Province of Trapani). Following this event, was an important wave of emigration to Australia. People preferred to migrate to what seemed to them the new ‘land of opportunity’ rather than to continue struggling in an even more precarious economic and living situation they were used to. The towns of Gibellina, Poggioreale, S.Ninfa, S.Margherita Belice, Salaparuta, Montevago, Salemi and Partanna were nearly totally deserted. The survivors either left for Australia or had to face the terrible fate to live in prefabricated container buildings and/or shacks for more than 20 years.

1.3.4. Pull factors:

1890/1920 – Migration to the cane fields of Queensland. Teams of Italians were employed to work as cane-cutters in the expanding industry of sugar cane fields, in Queensland, in particular in the Innisfail district (Randazzo, Cigler, 1987).

1851/1855 – Gold Rush in Victoria period. The Gold rush was a strong pole of attraction for Italians, from north and south alike. For a complete outline of the Italian presence in Victoria, Charles D’Arpano’s work (1994) constitutes a seminal reference.

1901 – The Alien Immigration Restriction Act is implemented. The act contributed to increasing the population of Italian migrants living in Australia, from 5678 in 1901 to 6719 in 1907 (Randazzo, Cigler, 1987: 88).

1880/1920 – Marquis De Rays expedition and foundation of New Italy. Italian pioneers from northern Italy (Udine, Pordeneone, Treviso and Vicenza) founded the oldest Italian farming community in Australia in the Richmond-Tweed region, in Woodburn. This was to become New Italy. The settlers were granted land from the New South Wales Government after having survived the failed experiment of colonisation of New Ireland by Charles de Bruel (Marquis De Rays). The community prospered and then survived in some form until the 1920, when many of the remaining inhabitants moved to Lismore. Italians in New Italy built houses in traditional Friulan and Venetian style and prospered in isolation from mainstream Australia (Stewart-Crisanti, 2006; Pesman, Kevin, 2006).

1920/1957 – Influx to the steel industry in Newcastle and the Hunter region. Groups of Abruzzesi (from Lettopalena) settled in the area, working in the steel and concrete industries (Broken Hill Propriety). Focal points of concentration were Islington, then the Newcastle suburbs of Hamilton and Mayfield (Pesman, Kevin, 2006).

1920/1930s – Influx to the Illawarra fishing industry in the south coast of New South Wales. Groups of Italian fishermen settled in the municipalities of Kiama, Wollongong, Ulladulla and Bateman's Bay. They were mostly from the Aeolian Islands of Salina and Lipari, off the north-east coasts of Sicily, and from the Calabrian fishing village of Bagnara (Stewart-Crisanti, 2006).

1920/1954 – Influx to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s an Italian community was formed around Griffith and Leeton by immigrants from Treviso (in the Veneto Region) and from Calabria in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (Stewart-Crisanti, 2006). During the early 1940s Australia supplied food to the Allied forces in the Pacific. Vegetable growing, which had always been a minor industry in the MIA, developed extraordinarily in this period. Soon after the war Anglo-Australian farmers abandoned this industry and it became an exclusively Italian occupation. Between 1947 and 1950, about 2000 new Italian immigrants arrived. By 1952 Italians owned about a third of horticultural farms in the Riverina. Today Italians, who make up 60% of the area's population, own most of the horticultural farms and a number of large sheep, wheat and rice farms.

Late 1800s/1960s – Sydney fruit and vegetable orchards and shops were established by Italians. Many Italians in the inner suburbs of Sydney earned a living selling fruit and vegetables. Balmain, Glebe, Annandale, Leichhardt, Kings Cross and Darlinghurst were the main city centres involved in the retailing end of the agricultural industry. The areas of North Ryde and Marsfield (the site where Macquarie University now stands) accommodated, from the 1920s to the 1960s, 109 farms, 59 of which belonged to Italians (Pesman, Kevin, 2006).

1920/1960 – Sydney western and northern suburbs horticulture is established. In the suburbs of Cabramatta, Liverpool, Canley Vale and Sutherland, Italian immigrants established market gardens and vineyards. There were 800 living in these areas by 1940. Calabrians settled in Fairfield and Eastwood. In the 1920s Friulans and Calabrians settled also in Mona Vale to cultivate tomatoes. These areas expanded after the war and accommodated those who worked in manufacturing as well. By the late 1960s this was the most common occupation among Italian immigrants in Liverpool (Pesman, Kevin, 2006).

Early 1900s/1970 – Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme and Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme is implemented. In the early 1900s Italians were employed by government in the construction of the irrigation canals for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Project. They were the first Italians to settle the area which subsequently accommodated a large Italian population. Studies (Pesman, Kevin, 2006) suggest that also in the pre-war period Italians relied to some degree on mines as a source of employment. Miners were mainly Lombards, Veneti and Sicilians and settled in Broken Hill, the Illawarra region and Cobar. Over a 25-year period, 16 large dams and 90 miles of tunnel were constructed in the development of a hydroelectric system. Italians worked as tunnel diggers, in the construction of retaining walls and other types of labour.

1950s – Mechanical engineering companies and Pioneer Concrete employs Italians. Transfield, Multicon Engineering Pty Ltd and Electrical Power Transmissions, are three Illawarra companies that have been highly successful both in Australia and overseas. These companies, begun by two Italians, Franco Belgiorno-Nettis and Carlo Salteri, employed a large number of Italians, and during the 1950s they opened

recruiting centres in Italy from which they would select workers and send them straight to positions of employment in Australia. It was also in the post-war period that Pioneer Concrete was set up by Tristan Antico in 1950. Antico and his business partner established what was to become Australia's biggest concrete company. As with the Illawarra engineering companies, Pioneer Concrete moved beyond the migrant world in time but maintained some contact with the Italian community.

1947/71 – Assisted Migration Agreement is implemented. In 1974, Australian Minister Arthur Calwell announced the Assisted Migration Agreement between the Italian and Australian governments. The cost of passage was brought down to 10 pounds. Thousands of Italians, mainly from southern Italy, the islands and the north east leave for Australia. These were to be the so-called first-generation immigrants, whose descendants today constitute the core of the Italian Community in Australia (Saija, 2005).

1.3.5. Statistics and distribution:

This section provides statistics to allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon and entity of Italian migration in the world and Sicilian migration to Australia.

a. Italian emigration historically:

Tables B.1., B.2. and B.3. (Appendix), from the above-mentioned Palermo conference on emigration, display in an exhaustive way data regarding the very early days of Italian mass migration overseas. As we can see in tables B.1. to B.3. , in the first two decades of the 20th C the figures of emigration are very high. The highest number of Italian citizens left from Italian or foreign ports for overseas (transoceanic) destinations in 1913. The port from which the highest number of Italians left was Naples in 1906. The figures of the departures from the ports of Palermo and Messina are respectively in third and fourth position following Naples and Genova.

Referring to table B.3. in the Appendix we have the possibility of surveying 49 years of emigration. Starting from 1876, just a few years after Sicily's annexation to the Kingdom of Italy, we can see all transoceanic departures until 1925. Combining the records viewed in all 3 tables (B.1. to B.3. in the Appendix) is interesting to note that:

1. Emigration from Sicily to Europe has always been strong. We shall see in successive tables that, while after the 1970s America and Australia emigration numbers drastically declined, Europe emigration numbers are still high nowadays (See Tables 1.6., 1.11., 1.13.).

2. Sicilian emigration to Africa, in the first decades following the Italian union, is relevant. The Kingdom of Italy had in fact ventured into the conquest of many African territories: Eritrea, Somalia (1844-1890), Ethiopia (1896) and later Libya (1912-13). Mussolini furthered this line of conquest of what he called 'The Fourth Shore'¹⁶ on the basis of what was conquered in this period. This allowed the creation of a quite large generation of Southern Italians who migrated to northern Africa in search of fortune and a new life, nowadays deliberately (and unjustly) forgotten for "politically incorrect" (Fascist).

3. Emigration to Oceania, as I anticipated in this chapter, was not relevant at all compared to the movement towards Europe and the Americas. This data confirms (as mentioned earlier in this chapter): emigration to Australia did not occur in significant numbers until the post Second World War years, when special agreements were made between the countries and when North America's legislation on emigration became far more restrictive.

b. First and second generation Italians in the world today¹⁷:

In the year 2000 Caritas (Italian Catholic Church Welfare Association) carried out research reporting data collected from the AIRE (Registry of Italian Citizens Residing Abroad) and the Consular Registries. The results were presented in the First National Conference on Italian Citizens in the World held in Rome 11-15 December 2000. These show that the number of Italian citizens in the world reaches nearly 4 million people: 3.930.499. The figure represents all those who left Italy between 1980 and 1996. Emigration occurred at an average of 40 to 50 thousand people per year. Percentages of emigration from the regions are: southern Italy 30%, the islands 24%,

¹⁶ In Italian, *La Quarta Sponda*, the first three 'shores' being the Italian peninsula, Sardinia and the Adriatic coast (at the time, reclaimed by Italy from the Ottoman Turkish Empire).

¹⁷ The data presented in this paragraph is taken from the website of the Associazione Lavoratori Emigrati del Friuli Venezia Giulia (ALEF) (Friuli Venezia Giulia Emigrant Workers Association). Website: <http://www.alef-fvg.it/emigrazione/approfondimenti/daticaritas2000.htm>.

central Italy 16% and northern Italy 30%. Another interesting reported figure is the people of Italian origin in the world (second-generation emigrants). The Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs reports 58.5 million people in 1995. Of these: 38.8 million live in Latin America, 16.1 million in North America, 2 million in Europe, 0.5 million in Oceania. The Ministry reported in the year 2000 that the total number of second-generation Italians living in the world had risen to a total between 60 and 70 million people.

c. Italians in the world classified by country of destination and region of provenance:

The tables following (1.5., 1.6.) are a result of the studies and subsequent census done by Caritas. They therefore report data collected in the same time-span as in the b. paragraph (preceding the present). Both tables are interesting if we look at data relevant to Sicily. In the first table (1.5.), observing the Islands section (includes Sicily and Sardegna), it is interesting to note that Europe emigration figures are the highest (24.5%), similarly to the above exposed historical emigration tendencies. Oceania, quite significantly, holds the second position. In the second table (1.6.) it is interesting to note that the highest emigration figures overall are regarding the Sicilian region, with 213.186 emigrants, the majority of whom reside in (in decreasing order) Germany, Belgium, France, and the U.S.A. The largest regional group of Italians in Australia, on the other hand, appear to be the Calabrians.

Area	Italiani residenti	% per area	% Nord	% Centro	% Sud	% Isole
Continent	Number of Italian Citizens	% per continent	% North	% North	% South	% Islands
Europa	2.207.638	56,2	32,3	7,0	36,3	24,5
America	1.507.517	38,3	30,0	10,5	44,9	14,6
Oceania	121.082	3,1	22,1	6,6	50,0	21,3
Africa	68.071	1,7	63,0	12,9	14,1	10,0
Asia	26.191	0,7	67,8	16,6	11,0	4,5
Totale	3.930.499	100.0	29,0	11,1	39,0	20,9

1.5. Presence of Italian emigrants throughout the continents expressed in percentage and specifying the different regions of origin.

I principali Paesi di accoglienza degli Italiani nel mondo (Ottobre 2000)						
Main countries of destination of the Italians in the world (October 2000)						
Paesi	Italiani residenti	% Nord	% Centro	% Sud	% Isole	Prima regione
Countries	Italian residents	% North	% Central	% South	% Islands	First region
Germania - Germany	688.120	15,3	5,1	43,2	36,4	Sicilia 215.382
Argentina	570.055	31,7	14,2	42,2	11,9	Calabria 90.069
Svizzera - Switzerland	587.790	39,1	6,7	40,4	13,8	Lombardia 88.169
Francia - France	377.777	34,5	13,9	30,3	21,3	Sicilia 59.689
Brasile - Brazil	306.721	52,7	16,1	27,2	4,0	Veneto 76.987
Belgio Belgium	286.797	23,6	9,1	30,5	36,8	Sicilia 91.488
Stati Uniti - U.S.	214.677	15,4	11,7	46,8	26,0	Sicilia 55.172
Gran Bretagna - U.K.	152.512	28,8	15,1	40,8	15,3	Campania 36.908
Venezuela	130.113	21,3	8,7	52,1	17,9	Campania 27.884
Canada	131.793	17,1	13,4	59,0	10,5	Calabria 23.723
Australia	119.381	19,9	8,3	50,3	21,1	Calabria

						28.651
Uruguay	57.150	52,6	11,2	32,1	3,5	Lombardia 8.401
Sud Africa - South Africa	38.537	60,1	16,6	17,9	5,4	Friuli V.G. 5.434
Cile - Chile	36.410	69,5	18,3	8,4	3,8	Lombardia 3.641
Spagna - Spain	40.004	55,6	17,1	19,0	8,3	Lombardia 7.440
Olanda - Holland	31.199	36,3	10,1	18,6	35,0	Sardegna 6.883
Perù	23.321	59,2	28,0	7,9	4,9	Liguria 5.387
Lussemburgo - Luxembourg	22.552	26,8	25,4	42,0	5,8	Puglia 5.525
Tutti i paesi All Countries	3.930.499	29,0	11,1	39,0	20,9	Sicilia 213.186

1.6. Presence of Italian emigrants in the world expressed in percentages, specifying region of origin, country of destination and the most numerous regional group for each country.

d. Italian and Sicilian emigration to Australia:

This section presents data retrieved from the Australian Government's Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and from Francesco Cavallaro's web-article *Italians in Australia: migration and profile*¹⁸.

Examining table 1.7. , from the DIMIA website, it is interesting as we can compare historic figures of Italian emigration to modern emigration tendencies in Australia.

Tables 1.8. and 1.9. are also from the DIMIA website, from the Pdf document "The Italian-born community; Community information summary"¹⁹.

¹⁸ www.alef-fvg.it/emigrazione/approfondimenti/cavallaro.pdf .

Financial year 2002-3 DIMIA Census Registered total number of emigrant settlers arrived in Australia by country of provenance (First six countries listed in decreasing magnitude order plus Italy data)	
Country	Number of emigrants
United Kingdom	12,508
New Zealand	12,368
China (excluding SARS hit Provinces and Taiwan)	6,664
India	5,783
South Africa	4,603
Philippines	3,190
Italy	139

1.7. Emigrant settlers in Australia by country of provenance. Source: DIMIA website.

Italian-born population residing in Australia		
Unofficial estimates of Italian-born population residing in Australia from colonization to the First World War (whose majority then repatriated). (Cavallaro,2003)	Between 100,000 and 125,000	
Italian-born population residing in Australia. 1921 Census (Cavallaro, 2003)	8,135	Increase > 300%
Italian-born population residing in Australia. 1933 Census (Cavallaro, 2003)	27,000	
Italian-born population residing in Australia. 1947 Census (DIMIA)	33,632	Increase > 800%
Italian-born population residing in Australia. 1971 Census (DIMIA)	289,476	
Italian-born population residing in Australia. 1996 Census (DIMIA)	238,216 (1.5% of total Australian population)	8% Decrease

¹⁹ www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/_pdf/italy.pdf.

Italian-born population residing in Australia. 2001 Census (DIMIA)	218,750	
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1.8. Italian-born population residing in Australia. Based on Cavallaro (2003), DIMIA.

Italian-born population distribution by State or Territory.		
Highest rates:	Number of people	Percentage in relation to Total Italian-born population in Australia
Victoria	90,810	41.5%
New South Wales	60,640	27.7%
South Australia	25,040	11.4%
Western Australia	23,090	10.6%
Lowest rates:		
Queensland	15,200	6.9%
Australian Capital Territory	2,360	1.1%
Tasmania	1,110	0.5%

1.9. Italian-born population by State or Territory. Source: DIMIA website.

e. Percentage of Italian-born Australians in NSW:

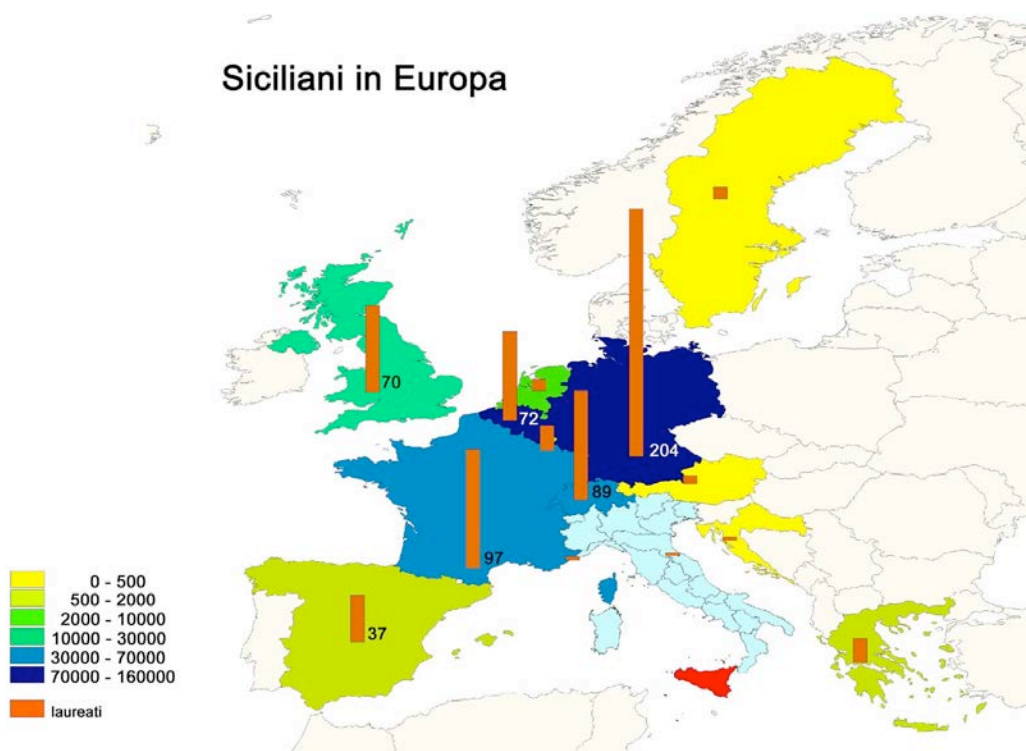
Table 1.10 reports data collected from Pesman and Kevin (1998), who show that the major centres of Italian settlement in New South Wales are Sydney, Griffith, Newcastle, Wollongong, Queanbeyan and Lismore.

Italian-born Australians living in NSW	
Region	Numbers of people
Sydney	53,421
Illawarra region	4,995
Murrumbidgee region	2,287
Hunter region	1,815
Richmond-Tweed region	714

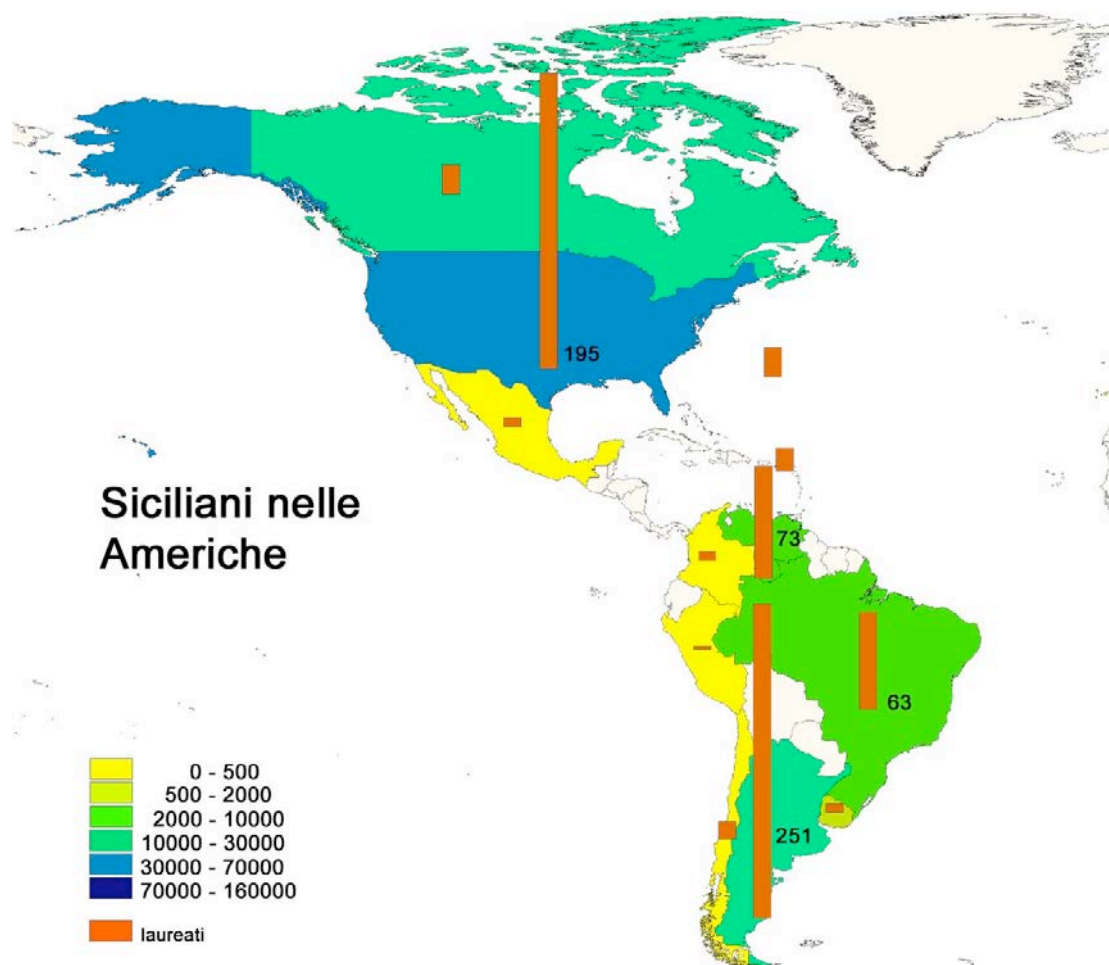
1.10. Source: Pesman, R and Kevin, C (1998) *A History of the Italian settlement in New South Wales*, New South Wales Heritage Office. Website: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/docs/italianhistory.pdf.

f. Sicilians in the world:

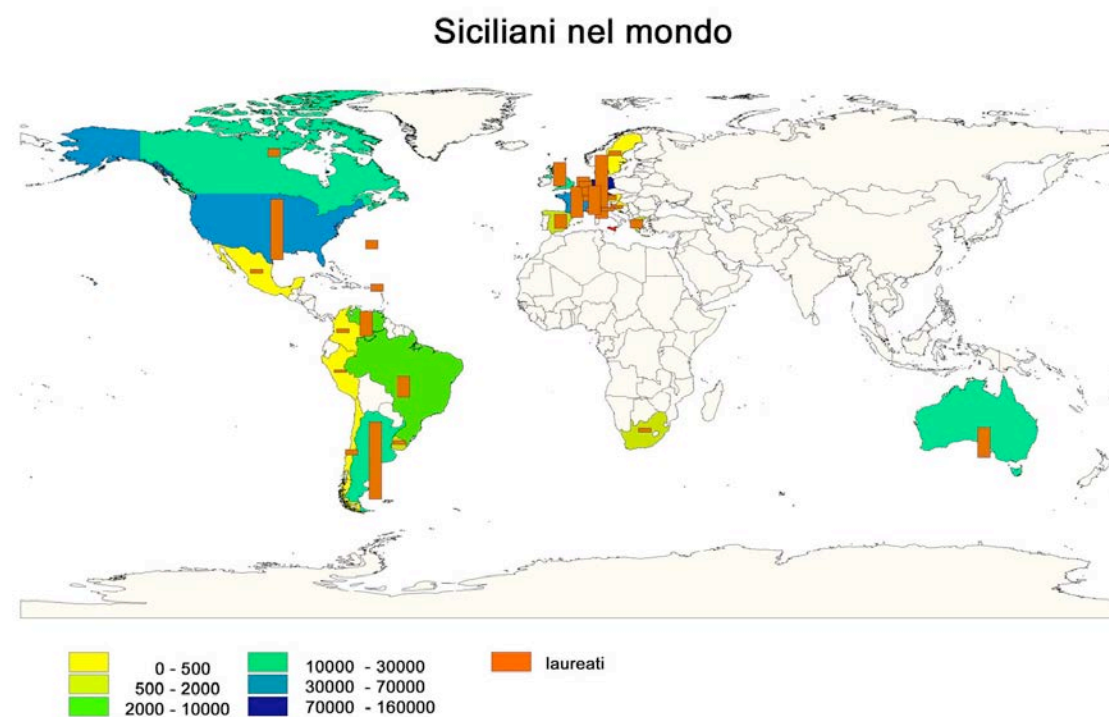
Tables 1.11, 1.12, 1.13 display the Sicilian emigrant presence in Europe, the Americas and in the world. The data refers to the 2002 Census published on the websites www.itenets.org (International Training and Employment Networks) and www.cser.it (Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma).



1.11. Sicilian emigrant presence in Europe. Percentage of University degree holders are indicated in orange.



1.12. Sicilian emigrant presence in the Americas. University degree holders indicated in orange.



1.13. Sicilian emigrant presence in the world. University degree holders in orange.

g. Aeolian Islanders in Australia:

Having considered the more recent statistics on Sicilian emigrants in the world, table 1.14 shows the movements of the Aeolian emigrants to Australia and New Zealand historically. The table displays data acquired from the panels Prof. Saija prepared to illustrate the exhibition: *Un museo per ricordare I percorsi dell'emigrazione siciliana nel mondo*. The Aeolian emigrants in Australia constitute the first regional group among Italian emigrants overall, thus being a determinant cultural group.

Aeolian Islands emigrants to Australia – Historical table		
Dates	Number of emigrants	Destination
Between 1860/1890	Approx 1000	Main: Fremantle, Western Australia Later: Sydney, Melbourne Some: South Australia, Queensland
Years following the Second World War	Aeolians constitute 1/5 entire Italian emigrant population in Oceania	Australia / New Zealand
1890-1940	2000 (650 from Lipari, 850 from Salina, 500 from Stromboli, Alicudi, Filicudi, Vulcano and Panarea)	Australia
1951	7000	Australia
1880/1945	Aeolian emigrants constitute: - Largest regional group to have been naturalized Australian. - 4.2% of the entire emigrant population to Australia from Southern Europe	
Throughout 1950s	30.000, including children of immigrants	Australia
Throughout 1960s	Emigration continues	Australia

Throughout 1970s	Emigration rates decrease progressively	Australia
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1.14. Aeolians Islands emigrants to Australia. Source: Saija, M (2005), Un museo per ricordare, I percorsi dell'emigrazione siciliana nel mondo, text on panels of the exhibition.

Chapter 2. Research Methodology, Sicilian Studies and Institutions

2.1 Introduction of terms, definitions and objectives of study

Section 2.1 has several purposes. The first is to present the theoretical background and methodology which I adopt in my study. The second is to give an introduction to Sicilian folk music and to the ethnomusicological study of it. Indeed, the two aspects are closely connected. Defining the object of study already shows, in the terminology used, a certain ideological, historical and social background. As an example, I will analyse and question the terms traditional music and folk music, widely used to describe the material I am researching and studying.

Defining what traditional music is can be a real challenge. Very broadly, traditional is an adjective which simply indicates that a practice or an item has been handed down through generations. This music has therefore been subject to personal variants, while nevertheless maintaining a certain number of characteristics. It is 'traditional' when it balances on the thin line between continuity and changeability. The term folk music, on the other hand, is even more problematic. It implies the quality of the music being played by a particular social class, the folk. By defining music as folk we equally define ourselves as members of a bourgeois, post-industrial and post-colonial society. I therefore use the term folk music as a conventional definition throughout this thesis, encompassing quite different variants. I am concerned with a whole range of musical genres and musicians which, in my view, are acknowledged as traditional or influenced by tradition to different extents. I am embracing a very wide-ranging definition of traditional music, including under this heading a broad compass of sounds forged by people of Sicilian background and culture. These sounds can be street cries as well as lullabies, religious chants, drum rhythms, or songs in Sicilian or Italian of old or new composition. In this regard, a song composed in modern times following and continuing the stylistic patterns and carrying the spiritual values of the old tradition is of as much interest to my study as indisputably older material. New genres, born out of the encounter of the Sicilian/Italian people with the Australian community and beyond are also considered. Practices apparently peripheral to music, such as traditional Sicilian puppetry, are also included because, particularly in Sicily, all traditional public entertainment forms (music, theatre and storytelling) have been very close-knit.

Regarding my use of the term folk music, I need to qualify that I am referring to music no longer played exclusively by the rural and urban working classes, but music also played, circulated and utilized among the bourgeoisie, both in Sicily and in Australia. Very rarely is so-called traditional music still practised by the social class that produced it. The principal reason for this is that, both in Sicily and even more in Australia, the economic and social conditions of the population in general have improved. The classic working class, maintaining those characteristics identified by Marxist sociology, is minimal. Secondly, when we do come across those rare examples of people still maintaining the characteristics of the working classes which Marxist ethnology generally refers to, these people have generally lost the object of our interest as ethnomusicologists: the knowledge of music. Because of the dramatic changes in the society which surrounds the surviving representatives of the pre-industrial economy (ex-peasants, fishermen, shepherds, artisans), the musical forms they once used to practise have fallen into disuse. For example, the chants are no longer necessary to support long hours of strenuous work in the fields, as mechanization has taken over. The same applies to tuna fishing: once undertaken as a team work coordinated by chants and involving a very complex yet archaic method (*la mattanza*), it is nowadays undertaken with different and simpler methods, where coordination and chants are not developed or necessary. As these workers are not conscious of the cultural value of their chants, and the function of the chants arriving gradually to extinction, the songs, prayers and invocations connected to the manual work on the land are simply forgotten because they are perceived as no longer useful or relevant in today's world. I had personal experience of this in interviewing musician-artisans in Palermo and in interviewing peasant musicians in Lipari. Only ethnomusicologists can raise the awareness in them that these songs, chants and rhythms, connected to a lifestyle and working style of long ago are of some value.

We could then argue that traditional and folk music in Sicily and in Australia, as in many other parts of the western world, have undergone a process of gentrification, becoming the patrimony of the gentrified working class, which has been revaluating what before was 'invisible' to them (i.e. their culture). The modern-day working classes of southern Italy have increasingly little in common with the people who produced what is nowadays cherished as the folk music patrimony of the Sicilian people (as observed and recorded 50 to 100 years ago in a very specific phase of

social change within Italian society). The urban and rural working classes of today in Italy are highly unlikely to know the tunes known to ethnomusicologists as folk music. Performance has disappeared from this social sphere. A study of the musical tastes and culture of modern-day urban and rural working class society in Sicily would be more the object of study of a popular urban musicologist. For example, the tarantella has nearly completely disappeared in folk festivals and is seldom heard in the streets unless played by folk revival musicians, while new genres, such as Neapolitan *neomelodico* (which, however is a development of traditional music), are omnipresent. Ethnomusicology in Italy rarely addressed analysing new genres issued from tradition, such as Neapolitan *neomelodico*, as they are seen as a somewhat degraded form, not worthy of attention. I have had personal experience of this having lived near and researched many years one of Palermo's centuries-old fishing and port quarters: the *Borgo Vecchio* (the Old Suburb, as it was originally outside the walled city).

As I have chosen to work within the perspective of ethnomusicology, I will define the core of Italian folk music as the collection of music ethnologists recorded as such during a specific period of time: from the second half of the 19th C (when the first folklorists started transcribing the music peasants and rural people practised, before becoming urbanized) until the 1970s (when the process of urbanization, gentrification and industrialization of the rural classes had stabilized). Since the 1970s, there has been progressively less actual folk music in Italy. What remains of the music of the rural classes has been revalidated and popularised by bourgeois ethnomusicologists, many of whom were enthusiastically rediscovering the ethnicity within their own background. This enthusiasm and interest can be regarded as a reaction to cultural globalization and homogenization, a process that starts after the adoption of common and global economic standards. Therefore, the academia of the post-industrial society expresses its intellectual interest towards its near past through vehicles such as ethnomusicology¹, a discipline which targets a particular class of people in a particular period of the western world's history, the period between the mid-19th C and the 1970s (in the Italian case). Three generations have passed since the process of industrialization in Italy peaked and stabilized, at the beginning of the 1970s. Most of

¹ Which, we should remember, is a discipline that formally began in America and that was imported to Italy.

the former folk, both rural and urban, who had been the object of study of the folklorists and of the ethnomusicologists, don't exist anymore. Society has undergone dramatic changes. Folk revival music and events, celebrating an Italian identity threatened with loss of its pre-industrial past, have become the main object of modern-day ethnomusicology. Both ethnomusicology studies and the folk *revival* music are carried out, in substantial part, by the descendants of the rural and urban folk, once the object of study. The situation is something of a paradox and a tautology: ethnomusicology studies music which has been encouraged and produced through ideologies that have influenced several generations of gentrified working-class people who are now in search of a rediscovered identity.

While this sounds complicated, it is an apposite description of the object of my study: music which has been categorized as folk by a generation of scholars, together with music which has been regenerated and kept alive thanks to the awareness created by ethnomusicology and folklore studies. This leads me to include in my study the whole range of music produced by people of very diverse social and cultural extraction in current (arguably) post-modern society, but whose only prerequisite is to have knowledge of and an ideological tie to 'their' folk music. The term folk music, as we can see, has the function of a prescriptive entity rather than having had simply the role of a descriptive term. In other words; folk music exists, because the term has been created historically and exists within people's minds, culture and ultimately within academia (and not because it existed prior to the term's creation). There has been extensive discussion of the nature of concepts of 'tradition' and folk over the last two decades. Three studies that have offered particular insights for the design and methodology of this thesis are:

- Anthony Giddens, who in a lecture² published in 1999, discusses the characteristics of tradition on the basis of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's fundamental text *The invention of tradition*³.

² Please refer to: www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Publications/3ReithLecturesTradition.pdf.

³ Hobsbawm, Eric; Ranger, Terence (eds) (1992) *The invention of tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ian McKay, who in *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (1994) analyses and witnesses the creation of the concept of “folk” in Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Phil Hayward, who in *Bounty Chords* (2006), cites the 2002 UNESCO definition of ‘cultural heritage’ in order to undertake an analysis of the dynamics which occur between tradition and change in music in the South Pacific.

Giddens identifies the following aspects of tradition:

- Tradition involves a different claim on truth from other behaviours, such as might be sought in science or other rational forms of understanding the world. Tradition’s truth is ritual and it is intrinsically bound up with its practice.
- Tradition is largely collective. Tradition involves some form of ritual and ritualized behaviour. Ritual has to be collective for tradition to exist.
- Tradition endures because it articulates aspects of personal identity and how we locate the emotions, to the extent of conveying a sense of self. There is an emotional element in it which determines an emotional engagement with the ritual of a traditional ceremony.
- Traditions always have guardians (adepts). These guardians are different from experts. In a modern society, traditional guardians have become less central and experts have become more common.

McKay is illuminating on many aspects of folk culture. One of his most important statements concerns the purpose of the invention of and of the quest for folk:

This book is about the “path of destiny”, that led Creighton and countless other cultural figures to develop “the Folk” as the key to understanding Nova Scotian culture and history. It is about the ways in which urban cultural producers, pursuing their own interests and expressing their own view of things, constructed the Folk of the countryside as the romantic antithesis to everything they disliked about modern urban and industrial life. (p. 4)

Both the invention and the quest for folk are seen and framed within a particular historical context: the urban, modern middle class, looking for an antithesis in the form of purity, simplicity and innocence to oppose to their sense of alienation. He

expands his discussion, providing information on the major theorists of the early concepts of folk and Volk. Commenting on Herder's ideas expressed in *Volkslieder* (1778-79) he writes:

Treating some people (normally peasants) as "Folk" (and hence the privileged bearers of "national essence") only worked if there were some who were not "Folk". These found themselves caught at the wrong end of a polarity. The reactionary implications of this dichotomous social categorization are apparent. That which is unchanging, the true, solid, and possibly even providential core of a structure and society, resides within the Folk. Change was equated with degeneration and deviance – an entropic vision that is the unifying thread of the Folk concept to present day. (p.13)

Further expanding on the ideology that inspired the folklorists of the early period, he stresses how their quest for folk was ideologically biased and unrealistic:

Even where there could be no solid evidence, those who believed in Folk culture demanded assurances that they were dealing with originals, untouched by the influence of print, orally transmitted from a distant time. Attention was focused obsessively on an idealized past of the Folk. Indeed, it was because they preserved the traces of this "natural" past that the wild folk were worthy of attention. (p. 14)

Finally, he shows how the contemporary intellectual movements of Marxism and of so-called *antimodernism* were opposed in their view of the nature and role of the proletariat and peasants, but shared their common origin in the fact that they were both equally abstract bourgeois theorizations of what the folk should do and represent.

In the young Marx's proletariat was "essentially" revolutionary and his sense of history teleological and universal, Herder's Folk was "essentially" traditional and embodied the opposite, anti-Enlightenment principles of particularism and tradition. (p. 14)

What might be called the Myth of the Enlightenment in the young Marx was countered by the antimodernist Myth of a Golden Age. This told the story of a

lost age of social cohesiveness (followed by civilization's remorseless decay and degeneration). Both approaches were tendentially elitist, insofar as living workers or peasants were ascribed an abstract "historic mission" of which they might themselves have little knowledge. (p. 15)

Ultimately, McKay illustrates how the reality of Nova Scotia was profoundly different to how the folklorists tried to depict it as. A pure and true *folk* maintaining all the characteristics of purity and innocence that the folklorists themselves imposed in their search most probably didn't ever exist.

Geographical mobility (moving from place to place in search of waged work or better access to fish stocks, occupational pluralism, and (from the mid-nineteenth century on) widespread outmigration to cope with diminishing opportunities in the region made many villages in rural Nova Scotia resemble transit stations more than villages in rural tranquility. If one disqualified from the "Folk" those who had worked as employees in coal mines, or on fishing schooners, or in the lumber camps; if one insisted upon life within a world of oral culture; if one required isolation from the world of oral culture; if one required isolation from the world of modern ideas, from newspapers, radios, books; if one needed relatively self-contained "small communities" with their own standards, cultures and traditions; if one required distance from the "cash nexus" of merchants, banks department stores, "acquisitive individualism" – if all of these were required for the Folk, very few, if any, Nova Scotians would have qualified by the 1920s. (p. 28)

McKay shows us the influence that tourism and cultural and political agendas had in the creation of the concept of folk, on the collection and recording of *traditional* artifacts and songs.

The cultural producers who reimagined Nova Scotia in the 1920s and 1930s were undertaking a politics of cultural selection. Sometimes cultural producers invented outright new forms and "traditions" to suit the tourist market and their own ideological projects. More frequently, however, selection rather than invention holds the key to Nova Scotia's cultural transformation. Tradition,

Raymond Willams reminded us more than two decades ago, involves an active and continuous process of selection and reselection, and to come to terms with tradition means coming to terms not with an “object” but with the valuations, selections, and omissions of other people. (p. 39)

McKay is clearly critical of the political and class bias involved in folklore study movements such as *Innocence* as well as folklore studies contributing to the spectacularization of folk for tourism industry purposes.

Innocence in particular, and tourism in general, is ethically troubling because it exemplifies the transformation of living people (and their customs and beliefs) into articles of exchange. In a general ethical sense, this transformation is disturbing because it treats persons as objects rather than as ends in themselves. In a more down-to-earth sense, it raises questions of exploitation, since the economic benefits of cultural commercialization are shared unequally and rarely accrue to those whose culture is appropriated by others. The construction of the rural “Other” in the interest of the tourist gaze is antithetical to seeing both rural and urban citizens as equals in a common project of citizenship. Both critiques can be combined, in fact, in an argument that full and free citizenship in a society of equals requires an open dialogue with the past, and such an open dialogue becomes increasingly unlikely if canons of significance, criteria of identity, and the very concept of community all come to be structured according to commercial criteria. (p. 41)

Providing a contemporary perspective on essentially similar issues, Hayward cites the 2002 UNESCO definition of cultural heritage (found at <http://portal.unesco.org>) and states:

While heritage and tradition are often invoked as something fixed and essential, they are – conversely – fluid and contentious, subject to various changes and interpretations, disputes and affirmations. Always in flux, heritage and tradition show different faces to those looking from different positions. One of the most significant aspects of the YCH (UNESCO’s 2002 Year of Cultural Heritage) statements is that their sense of “cultural heritage” is one that acknowledges a

whole range of contemporary, vernacular and/or popular practices (rather than just ancient relics, officially recognized “folk” practices or well-established “high” cultural forms). (p.2)

The three authors discussed above provide significant points of orientation. Giddens provides a sound definition of the essence of tradition. McKay offers an illuminating critique and contextualization of the category of the folk, which also serves to reveal the problematic notion – and practice – of folk music as a somewhat artificial and purposely created category. Hayward, on the other hand, brings to our attention that the object of research of ethnomusicology should rather be the relationship between music and heritage. This is a concept which has significant advantages over the old theories, criticized by McKay (Helen Creighton’s “Antimodernism”).

2.2. Review of methodologies

2.2.1. My key references:

In addition to the above, I have adopted the methodology for my field research and analysis from Elsa Guggino (1974, in *Discography*), Sergio Bonanzinga (1992), Antonello Ricci (1996) and Bernard Lortat-Jacob (1996). These authors have been important in my study in different measures and for different reasons. Sergio Bonanzinga’s theoretical system has been seminal in forming my approach in ethnomusicology studies, while Guggino, Ricci and Lortat-Jacob have been inspirational in their field research methodology. I shall briefly mention the concepts and authors which form the backbone of Bonanzinga’s theory, which is illustrated more in detail in the subsequent paragraph. I shall then provide details on Ricci and Lortat-Jacob’s works, explaining why and in what way they have been influential.

The core of Bonanzinga’s methodology is an approach based on the analysis of the semiological, linguistic and symbolic value of music and, of the interrelation between music and communication. In his *Forme sonore e spazio simbolico* (1992) he cites Jean Jacques Nattiez to differentiate music and non/music (Nattiez, 1989:33) (p. 11), as well as in regards to music as language (Nattiez, 1990:186-231) (p. 7). Remaining within the semiological perspective, but citing more specifically authors dedicated to anthropology and music studies, he mentions Bruno Nettl (Nettl, 1958) and John

Blacking (p. 7). The latter is mentioned again (p. 12), with regard to defining the concept of music. On the same subject, he cites Murray Shafer (Shafer, 1985:280-281) (p. 14). Examining music from a symbolic perspective, he cites Alan Merriam (Merriam, 1983:50) as well as Roman Jakobson (Jakobson, 1966), the first analysing music within a cultural context, the second with regard to linguistic functions. He proposes an analysis of music through Jakobson's linguistic functions, reviewed and simplified by Francesco Giannattasio (Giannattasio, 1987:171). Finally he refers to a model of music analysis invented and proposed by Dell Hymes (Hymes, 1974), the S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. model⁴. The purpose of the application of this model to "musical events" (Bonanzinga, 1992:31) is to define, through a thorough analysis, the complex dynamics involved in music as communication. The various methodologies of musical analysis that Bonanzinga cited and advocated have been put together by him in a new, complete system of classification and analysis, which he explains in his essay and which I report below.

I would like to complete and clarify the overview of Bonanzinga's references by specifying the origin of some of the concepts that he integrates in his system. Andrée Shaffener's (1978) sound classification and analysis is utilized as a basis and as the most accurate and complete model available to date. The classification of typology of sounds is carried out, based on Merriam's theory of the anthropological functions of sounds and on Jakobson's analysis of the linguistic functions. Within this typology we find references to concepts formulated by different scholars: the concept of technical rhythm, first introduced by André Leroi-Gourhan (1977, vol. 2, 361-363), the concept of signal sound, first introduced by Murray Shafer (1985, 22), the concepts of indicative and prescriptive sounds, first introduced by Charles Morris (1977, 323-24), and sounds of transition and with the function of epiphany – both concepts first introduced by Arnold Van Gennep (1981).

Elsa Guggino (born 1935), was the first Sicilian-born ethnomusicologist to conduct modern academic research in Sicily with the aid of field recordings. In 1974 she

⁴ Acronym of an analysis template applied to analyse speech, which can be applied also in the case of music : Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, Genre.

produced the noted LP *Work Songs*⁵, a collection of unique recordings that is still a milestone for ethnomusicology in Sicily. This LP presents the results and analysis of musical traditions recorded by Guggino on tape between 1969 and 1974 under the auspices of the Department of Folklore Studies (Istituto di Storia delle Tradizioni Popolari) of the University of Palermo and by the Folkstudio Palermo. Here is an extract from the introduction to the recordings:

Under the heading of “work songs” there have been included the following: a) actual work songs whose purpose is to cadence the rhythm of work (threshing songs, songs of the salt workers, songs of the tuna fishers, and b) songs that accompany certain work situations but are not specifically connected to the work at hand (some peasant songs, cart-driver songs). All these songs are part of the traditional oral culture, a culture which today is undergoing a process of rapid but incoherent transformation, a circumstance which accounts for the remarkable decline which can be determined if a numerical comparison is made with even the recent past. An even faster process of disintegration looms over the “work songs”, for many of the old trades for which these songs were used have now disappeared. This is the case, to a considerable extent, of the salt worker songs of Trapani, since the old salt mounds are now a barren expanse of land and in substitution of which new salt production techniques have been adopted even in the few that are still in operation. The songs we have recorded are fragments of the memory of an old salt worker and will vanish with him. The same fate is reserved for the threshing songs, since the traditional Sicilian method of threshing wheat by means of mules has all but disappeared. The ever-declining number of tuna-fishing rings in Sicily underscores the fact that the songs we have recently recorded during the “mattanza” (tuna-killing-round) at Favignana is one of the last testimonies of a time-span which is very important in the context of Sicilian culture. More conspicuous, however, is the survival of other songs which are not so specifically related to work and can therefore be transmitted and revived, albeit with changes, from one milieu to another. This is the case of some peasant songs which are still popular in various versions among cart-drivers and housewives.

⁵ Guggino, Elsa (ed) (1974), *Work songs, Folk music and songs of Sicily*, LP, Milano: Vedette Albatros Records.

(The English text is a translation by Alikí Andris-Michalaros of Guggino's introduction in Italian, featured in the original booklet attached to the LP *Work Songs* [1974])

This extract shows us not only the contents of her recordings, but also reports on the conditions of musical folklore perceived by the author at the time of the recordings. These recordings were the basis for successive works⁶. Guggino published other important works based on field-research regarding folk music, mainly regarding the repertoire of the Orbi (literally meaning 'the blind'⁷), the storytellers who sang sacred songs in dialect following the yearly religious calendar festivities and on the repertoire and singing style of Sicilian cart drivers⁸. I cite her as influential in the formation of my methodology as for the subjects of her study since she was the first academic researcher to set out and record the peasants and fishermen in their context; she recorded work songs while the work (mainly in the field) was performed, she had a participating spirit in recording, familiarizing with the interviewees and eventually even learning and performing many of the songs she heard. Her musical research went far beyond the field of strict musical study: it involved much anthropological and sociological insight. All of her works are examples of a holistic study of music and inserted it in its social and cultural setting, analysing its values in their context.

⁶ Elsa Guggino published other field recordings:

Guggino, Elsa (edited by) (1970, re-edition 1980), *Sicilia, vol II, Canti popolari siciliani*, Milano: Vedette Albatros Records.

Guggino, Elsa and Pennino, Gaetano (edited by) (1987), *Tindara Amalfi and Annunziata D'Onofrio, Canti d'amore e di sdegno, romanze e stornelli della provincia di Messina*, Milano: Vedette Albatros Records.

⁷ 'The blind' were given such appellative because often they really were blind. Actual blindness wasn't an essential prerogative to be a street musician of this sort. In Sicily, up until the 19th C, 'Orbi' were actually a guild protected by the Jesuit order since the 17th C. Their function was to diffuse and foster devotion to the Catholic faith in dialect in a normally illiterate population.

⁸ These publications are:

Guggino, Elsa (1978, re-edited 1991), *I carrettieri* (the cart drivers), Archivio delle tradizioni popolari siciliane 3 (second edition is the same series, number 25), Palermo: Folkstudio.

Guggino, Elsa (1980), *I canti degli orbi, 1, I cantastorie ciechi a Palermo*, Archivio delle tradizioni popolari siciliane 4, Palermo: Folkstudio.

Guggino, Elsa (1981), *I canti degli orbi, 2, I quaderni di Zu Rusulinu*, Archivio delle tradizioni popolari siciliane 6, Palermo: Folkstudio.

Guggino, Elsa (1988), *I canti degli orbi, 3, I quaderni di Zu Rusulinu con trascrizioni musicali*, Archivio delle tradizioni popolari siciliane 20-21, Palermo: Folkstudio.

Antonello Ricci, a pupil of Diego Carpitella, is one of Italy's most prominent contemporary ethnomusicologists. His work *Ascoltare il mondo, Antropologia dei suoni in un paese del Sud d'Italia* ('Listening to the world, an anthropological study of sounds in a southern Italian town'), published in 1996, has been important for my research as it considers not only music performances, but sounds that are culturally significant in the community. In Ricci's case, the community was that of Mesoraca, a town in the Province of Crotone, in the Region of Calabria. Dealing with a relatively isolated and self-sufficient community, Ricci has had the chance to study how sounds are perceived, interpreted and 'read' within that culture. Subjects of his study have been:

- Sounds and music performed during Holy Week (Easter)
- Rural fairs and market sounds
- Sounds of the seasonal sheep migration

These were studied in the first part of his book, entitled 'acoustic geography' ('*geografia acustica*').

- Sounds and music of the Festivity of the Dead (in English, All Saints or All Hallow's Eve)
- Christmas music and sounds
- New Year's eve music and sounds
- Carnival music and sounds
- Easter music and sounds
- Spoken and sung rosaries

These were studied in the second part of his book, entitled 'sound and time' ('*il tempo dei suoni*').

Bernard Lortat-Jacob is Ethnomusicology Professor at the University of Nanterre, near Paris. He is research director at the CNRS (Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique), member of the Board of the SFE (Société Française d'Ethnomusicologie). His work on Sardinian folk music, *Canti di Passione* (Songs of Passion⁹) focuses on the musical and ritual calendar of the city of Castelsardo, in the north of this island Region. The major focus of his work is on the songs performed during Holy Week, and most importantly, on the performers of these songs. He has a

⁹ Lortat-Jacob, Bernard (1996) *Canti di Passione, Castelsardo Sardegna*, Lucca, LIM (Libreria Musicale Italiana).

strongly sociological approach, underlining how community relationships, equilibria and power games are negotiated through the performance of this particular repertoire. A secular repertoire of songs connected to the Holy Week period is also examined, within the same viewpoint. His work informs my address to aspects of Christian festivals.

2.2.2. Expanding on Bonanzinga's approach:

In his major essay *Forme sonore e spazio simbolico* (1992) (translatable as Sound forms and symbolic space), Sergio Bonanzinga states that the object of ethnomusicological studies is “the whole complex range of sounds, and in some cases *non-sounds* (for example in the incidence of death) which are culturally significant to a particular human group and in a particular situation” (p. 11). Quoting Jean-Jacques Nattiez (Nattiez, 1989:33), he stresses that “the definition of music is a semiological problem” (ibid). In simple words: music is a cultural variable. Each human group, whether categorized by social class, ethnicity, geographical location or location in time, draws its own boundaries between what is music and what is not. This brings us to consider as objects of study not only the sounds produced by people consciously entertaining others, but different elements of the whole “soundscape¹⁰” which accompanied the life of the working classes¹¹.

Bonanzinga distinguishes three different categories, or genres of “sound forms”:

Technical Rhythms – sounds used to coordinate the senses and body movements in a work context. A further distinction specifies which, among these technical rhythms, are used for percussion, which for traction, which for induction and which for measuring.

Signal Sounds – sounds used to send messages in various social and productive contexts (such as whistles, clapping, et cetera). A further distinction can be made between sounds whose purpose is that of indication, prescription (involving a cause and effect reaction), marking, and sounds which are emblems.

¹⁰ To use Shafer's definition (Shafer, 1977).

¹¹ A term which translates the Italian “*classi subalterne*”, as defined by anthropologist and left wing activist Ernesto De Martino.

Expressive Sounds – sounds in which multifunctional, aesthetic, emotional and symbolic elements coexist.

Detailing and exemplifying these categories within the Sicilian context, examples of *technical rhythms* include those which were used to beat hammers on hot iron by ironsmiths (*mastri firrara*), referred to by the latter as *'a musica da 'ncunia* (the music of the anvil) and songs that were performed by teams of harvesters. These are assimilated to rhythms as they were meant to coordinate different phases of the work of the team, invoking protection of the Saints and of the Madonna. Examples of technical rhythms for induction are the songs which accompanied the pace of yoked animals (generally draught oxen) in threshing operations. These varied from those resembling lullabies, in performance style and tone, to others which were cried out loudly, in order to spur the animal.

Examples of *signal sounds* include the bell tolls codex by means of which, in Sicily, death is announced. The number of tolls and the dimensions of the bell struck (hence the pitch) varied depending on the age, sex and other variables¹². As another example, *vusciuli* and *cianciani* (buckles and bells) were attached respectively to the wheel axis and to the horse's back saddle in the traditional Sicilian carts. These tingling and ringing sounds were the signal of the passage of the cart, and could be heard, in agrarian Sicily, at a fair distance. Adding to this function of signal, the *vusciuli* and *cianciani* provided the sound background for the carter's songs, which can be regarded as one of the most refined examples of traditional monodic singing in Sicily. Similarly, the shepherds' whistles and cries which coordinate, through sound, the movements of a herd of sheep, goats, cattle or dogs are a quite complex code of signals, assimilable to language. Bonanzinga characterizes *expressive sounds* in the following manner:

In the range of the expressive sounds are included all sounds which aren't contemplated in the other two categories. We are considering therefore a vast range of sounds which can be categorized on the basis of their function. The

¹² Examples are: man = 9 tolls from big bell + 2 from small bell; woman = 7 tolls from big bell + 2 from small; boy = 2 series of rapid tolls from small bell + *gloria* [rapid succession of bell tolls], priest = 33 tolls from big bell + 2 from small.

function of the sound can be the one of ‘contract’, i.e. the dialectic between communication and non-communication at cosmic and human level; it can be of “transition”, i.e. the dialectic of breaking and restoring equilibrium at human and cosmic level, with the purpose of status modification; it can be of “epiphany” (in the literal sense of the term – manifestation of God); it can be of “mimesis”, i.e. re-enactment of a particular historical or mythic event, and finally it can be that of “poiesis”, i.e. specific activation of the creative and aesthetic component of expressiveness¹³. The ever-present feature of symbolism among the phenomena which we can classify as “contract”, “transition”, “epiphany” and “mimesis” leads us to include them in the ceremonial sphere. We are in fact considering sound events which characterize ritual moments.

(Bonanzinga, p. 36 of cited text, author’s translation)

The examples Bonanzinga gives are relevant to the single functions of expressive sounds, above described. Examples of transition sounds are the orgiastic sounds, which occur either on occasions which mark the regeneration of the cosmic order (such as New Year, Carnival and Easter) or those sounds which have the function of reconstituting social order, such as the practise of *charivari*. *Charivari* is the practise of reintegration of *chaos* into *cosmos* through sound. Practised in the Middle Ages, it applies in many circumstances (i.e. resolving personal or public issues) and in many cultures (European and extra-European)¹⁴. As examples of sounds with an epiphany function, he cites bells and chimes which traditionally signal the presence of the supernatural. In the Sicilian context, for instance, the ringing of a particular bell in Isnello (a town in the Province of Palermo), which was rung by hand while in procession, was immediately perceived by the inhabitants as the presence of the souls of Purgatory (in Sicilian, *armuzzi santi*). As an example of sounds with a mimetic function he cites the Campaniata di Sant’Agata in the town of Monforte San Giorgio,

¹³ The notion of contract between different functions is often found in semiology studies.

The notion of transition is drawn from Van Gennep’s theory on transition rites (Bonanzinga, 1993). Bonanzinga refers to Van Gennep’s theories exposed in *Les Rites de Passage* (Transition rites), originally published in French in 1909. The Italian edition he reports is: Van Gennep, Arnold (1981), *I riti di passaggio*, con Introduzione di F. Remotti, Torino, Boringheri.

¹⁴ For a detailed list of studies on *Charivari*, see Bonanzinga, 1993, Bibliography section. In Sicily, *charivari* is present in the form of the Corteo dell’orso (Procession of the bear), a carnival ritual and performance held in the town of Saponara (Province of Messina).

in the Province of Messina¹⁵ (the bell ringing on the occasion of the Saint Agata festivity – Sant' Agata is the Patron Saint of the town of Monforte San Giorgio).

Here is a brief description of the musical event and an explanation of its mimesis function, from the booklet of Bonanzinga's published CD containing live recordings of the event, *I suoni delle feste* (1996) (The sounds of Festivities):

On the 17th of January and on the 5th of February in Monforte San Giorgio the celebration of Sant' Agata takes place in a very particular way. At dawn and at dusk the Campaniata is performed with a drum and two bells. This performance is a re-evocation through sound, of the times when the town of Monforte was liberated from the Saracen domination by Count Roger. The bells, symbol of Christianity, are struck by the bell-ringer, whilst sitting on a sturdy beam, with the aid of ropes attached to the clappers; the drum, symbolizing in sound the Islamic world, is played in the traditional way. Through rhythmic patterns, sound effects and sudden changes, the 'pace of the camel' (ridden by Roger, in the folk tale) is enacted, as are in succession, the arrival of the army, the battle and the final thanksgiving dance (a tarantella). The cloister hence becomes a theatre where rhythms and sounds mingle, representing mythical history through ritual sounds. (Author's translation)

2.3. Sicilian studies

2.3.1. Contextualizing Sicilian folk music:

Musical styles and practices in Italy range from those only nominally separate from Austrian folk music (in the north), to others sharing similarities with Arabic ornamented singing (in the south). Ethnomusicology and folklore studies (Sorce Keller, 1998) have noted that culturally Italy is divided into two areas of influence: Northern Italy and Southern Italy, with areas between which retain elements of both in Central Italy. Sardinia, on the other hand, stands culturally alone. Northern Italian folklore and music (i.e. from the Alps to Rome) retain similarities with those other

¹⁵ For a full analysis and audio recording of the Campaniata di Sant'Agata see CD with attached booklet, S.Bonanzinga (1996), *I suoni delle feste*, published by Nota Records (Udine) and by Folkstudio (Palermo), track 10.

European music cultures (i.e. France, German-speaking countries, the British Isles), with which it has been in closest contact historically and geographically. In certain cases Southern Italy's folklore and culture has more elements in common with Greece, North Africa and the Middle East than with some regions of Northern Italy.

In the case of Sicily, this state of affairs is emphasized by its insularity. It retains elements that it shares with other Mediterranean cultures, notably Greece, North-Africa, Turkey and Spain. Given the complexity of its history, its folklore is extremely multifaceted. The Norman and Arabic influence in the Middle Ages, and the often violent eradications and transplants of different peoples into and out of Sicily, have created a composite panorama in which each area of the island has developed its own peculiar characteristics. For example, if we consider the colonies of Albanians that fled the Turkish Empire (the town of Piana degli Albanesi, near Palermo, is a prominent example), we find that since they first settled in the 15th C, they have retained their own language up until today.

Other examples of this cultural insularity within the island are the Lombards, transplanted to Sicily in the 13th C by Frederick 2nd with the aim of re-Christianising the centre of the island after having mass-deported the vast Arabic population which lived there at the time. Even today the descendants of these Lombard settlers speak a different language from mainstream Italian or even other Sicilian dialects: Gallo-Italic. These are just two examples that show how history has led to extreme variety within Sicilian folk culture itself.

Geographic factors also played a major role in the conservation or loss of ancient customs, accessibility being the key factor. Naturally, the culture of the people living in coastal settlements changed much faster than that of people from the inland settlements. Urban folk culture differs significantly from country culture. In the countryside itself, major differences in heritage exist between people living in the plains (i.e. the peasants) and the people living in the mountainous regions (i.e. the shepherds).

2.3.2. Ethnomusicology studies in Sicily:

When, in 1954, American and Italian ethnomusicologists Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella undertook the first modern field research (including the recording of folksongs and music on tape) in Sicily, its musical folklore was in Lomax's own words "one of the richest of western Europe"¹⁶. In 2004 Sergio Bonanzinga wrote on the persistence of musical traditions in today's Sicily:

The persistence in this fertile southern land until the late 1950s of a socio-economic structure firmly entrenched in the pre-industrial age, allowed its musical practises to remain in use, tied simply to circumstances of everyday life (dalla culla alla bara/ from the cradle to the grave) and calendar feasts. Though today, on the one hand, there is a progressive decline in musical phenomena connected to traditional trades (peasants, carters, sulphur-and-salt miners, fishermen, etc.), there is on the other hand a noticeably perennial quality associated with any songs and music tied to ritual contexts (Christmas, Carnival, Easter, feasts of Patron Saints ¹⁷).

Early studies on Sicilian ethnic music began in the 1800s. In the Appendix (f.) I have provided a summary bibliography on these early folklorists on Sicilian music (19th C). Of course, mechanical systems of recording weren't available at the time and observation and documentation was done by means of handwritten notes. Folklorists of the time recorded the melodies and rhythms in the most accurate way possible by transcribing them in musical notation and describing the circumstances of the performances. Without the aid of modern technology, we are unable to know exactly what these songs, melodies and rhythms actually sounded like. The factors which concur in a musical performance are far too many to be exhaustively comprehended through such simple methods of collection. On the other hand, transcriptions of the texts of songs of the times have proven to be an extremely valid and long-lasting piece of research. Until the early 1950s ethnomusicology didn't enter the mainstream academic world, so the major part of the material in our possession regarding Sicily

¹⁶ Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella's Italian folk music research campaign resulted in a series of LPs collecting field recordings from all over Italy. These recordings have recently been reissued on CD in the series *Italian Treasury*, available from Rounder Records.

¹⁷ Quotation from the booklet of the CD containing field recordings, undertaken from 1984 to 2004: Bonanzinga, Sergio (2004), *Italy – Sicily – Musiques populaires*, Paris, Ocora.

preceding this date was produced by amateurs of bourgeois professional extraction, following research criteria which were absolutely personal¹⁸, i.e. not subject to the modern academic criteria of research. The cultural and political background of such amateur folklorists inclined them to maintain a somewhat patronizing attitude towards folklore, aspects of which (including music) were described in an idealised and romantic way, certainly having little knowledge of the often harsh life and tribulation Sicilian peasants must have experienced. A fundamental change of perspective occurred in the 1950s. Carpitella and Lomax's 'musical expedition' pioneered a new local approach to folklore.

After the war in Italy, the Communist Party and socialist ideas were stronger than ever, and approaches to studying Italian folklore changed dramatically. In contrast to earlier romanticized and patronizing views on folklore, the new left-wing currents of study regarded the customs and folklore of the agrarian peasants and of the urban working-class through their own lens and identified a real 'culture' in its own right. The chief ideological mentor of this movement was the communist writer, sociologist and political activist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), author of *I Quaderni dal Carcere* (The Prison Notebooks), his most famous work, in which are featured his 'Osservazioni sul Folklore'¹⁹ (Notes on folklore). Ernesto De Martino (1908-1965), a contemporary and direct disciple and follower of Gramsci's ideology can be regarded as one of Italy's first modern ethnomusicologists. De Martino started a school of studies focused on folklore, music and magic (witchcraft) in Southern Italy and was the first ethnomusicologist to have documented the phenomenon of *tarantism*²⁰ at a time when it still had all of its supernatural connotations. In the 1950s he produced, along with Diego Carpitella (1922-1990), the first field recordings in Southern Italy.

¹⁹ *I Quaderni dal carcere*, which includes 'Osservazioni sul folklore' were published in 1950, although written 20 years before this date, while the author was jailed by the Fascists. For reference: Gramsci, Antonio (1950), *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Literature and life of the nation), Torino, Einaudi.

²⁰ See: De Martino, Ernesto (1961), *La terra del rimorso* ('The land of regret'), Milano, Il Saggiatore. Tarantism is a phenomenon of musical exorcism, clearly drawing its origin in pagan cults. It is based on the belief of the existence of a mythic spider, the *tarantola*, whose bite caused various physical and mental disorders, curable only through music and dance, the tarantella. For further detail into De Martino's life and works refer to the website of the Ernesto De Martino Foundation: www.ernestodemartino.it. For an exhaustive bibliography in *tarantism*, and all successive studies on this phenomenon, refer to the website: www.besaeditrice.it.

Carpitella and De Martino's works provide the basis of modern Italian ethnomusicology²¹.

Anthropologist Antonino Buttitta (born 1933), current Director of the Department of Archaeology, Anthropology and Geography Heritage Studies at the University of Palermo, has had a lifetime academic career in studies in Sicilian anthropology, and has exercised significant influence on generations of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists from Palermo University and Sicily from the mid-1960s onwards. Embracing the theories of left-wing oriented anthropology detailed above, Buttitta – although not a specific folk music scholar – exerted vast influence in the field, through supervising young researchers and by creating the Anthropology Department and the Folkstudio Palermo and maintaining their activity throughout subsequent decades²². These institutions have been the cradles and archives of all studies in Sicilian folklore. Buttitta was PhD Supervisor to Sergio Bonanzinga, and therefore helped the formation of his *modus operandi*, which is largely based on the semiotic approach to musical folklore.

Elsa Guggino was mentor to Girolamo Garofalo (born 1960), PhD in Ethnomusicology and prolific author of essays and field recordings, who developed and expanded the fields she researched. Of particular interest are his recent works on the traditional music of the Albanian communities residing in Sicily. Moving one generation back, any overview of ethnomusicology studies in Sicily would not be complete without mentioning the amateur, yet extremely accurate and pioneering work of, Antonino Uccello (1922-1979).

A school teacher by profession, Uccello was an indefatigable collector of Sicilian material cultural artefacts as well as immaterial culture (all that could be written and transcribed), including traditional songs and music. Bonanzinga²³ writes about

²¹ De Martino and Carpitella's recordings (book with 2 CDs) have been recently and finally made available to purchase: De Martino, Ernesto; Carpitella, Diego (eds) (2005), *Canti tradizionali del Salento (traditional songs from the Salento)*, Roma: Squilibri.

²² In the Bibliography I include Buttitta's works I am familiar with.

²³ Abstract from the volume on Antonino Uccello with 2 attached CDs: Pennino, Gaetano (ed) (2004) *Antonino Uccello etnomusicologo, documenti sonori degli Archivi di etnomusicologia e dell' Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Introduzione: Giorgio Adamo, Con un saggio d*

Antonino Uccello's role in the documentation of folk music in Sicily and gives us a picture of ethnomusicology studies in post-war Italy. After describing the beginning of ethnomusicology studies in the post-Second World War era, with the foundation of CNSMP (*Centro Nazionale Studi di Musica Popolare* [National Centre for Folk Music Studies]²⁴), he continues:

In the sixties, the most intensive and constant collaboration is implemented by a Sicilian teacher, Antonino Uccello, who records hundreds of tracks in all the provinces of Sicily between 1960 and 1969. The preponderance of Uccello's work in all the 20-year research promoted by CNSMP in Sicily (1948-1969) stands out: a good 920 tracks were recorded by him out of about 1400 (see Nataletti 1970, RAI documentations and studies 1977: 403-497). The experiences of Antonino Uccello (Canicattini Bagni 1922 – Palazzolo Acreide 1979) can be considered a symbol of the ethical and political tension that many intellectuals and artists manifested in the post-war period towards folklore, especially regarding agricultural and animal-farming communities.

The heir to Uccello's dream and work is Gaetano Pennino, an ethnomusicologist taught by Elsa Guggino. He is the current Director of the Casa Museo Antonino Uccello in the town of Palazzolo Acreide²⁵ — a 'living-museum'²⁶ which Uccello created during his lifetime in an old house he bought in the centre of the town. He is also creator of a second open-air living 'town museum'²⁷ based on the principles which inspired Uccello's work, *I luoghi del lavoro contadino* ('the sights of peasant work') in Buscemi (Province of Ragusa). Finally, Pennino is also the curator of the annotated re-editions in book and CD format, of Antonino Uccello's published LPs

Sergio Bonanzinga, Palermo: Regione Siciliana, Assessorato dei Beni Culturali e Ambientali e della Pubblica Istruzione.

²⁴ Since 1989 named Archivi di Etnomusicologia (Ethnomusicology Archives).

²⁵ Province of Siracusa.

²⁶ Meaning that traditional arts and crafts are regularly practised there.

²⁷ Several locations in the town of Buscemi are part of this living museum project.

(1974 and 1976) and of his never before released field recordings²⁸ (which were originally recorded between 1960 and 1970, and existed only in single original copy on tape in storage at the *Archivi di Etnomusicologia* of the *Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia* in Rome).

With the exception of Antonino Uccello, who recorded music as early as the early 1960s, Antonino Buttitta and Elsa Guggino can be regarded as the founders of Sicilian-based ethnomusicology studies, having assisted and influenced the next generation of important researchers, such as Bonanzinga, Pennino, and Garofalo. These three scholars have been models, references and study companions for those who have operated with them and learned from them. Some of the most significant are: Rosario Perricone, who has contributed to many of Bonanzinga's works (1995, 1996); Rosario Acquaviva, who has collaborated both with Gaetano Pennino and Sergio Bonanzinga, contributing with the former to his ethnomusicology fieldwork in Buscemi (2004) and with the latter on the running of the Museo A. Uccello and the Town-Museum of Buscemi. Pino Biondo (2002), who has widely based his recent, valuable studies on the folk music patrimony of inland Sicily on Bonanzinga's 1995 recording criteria and analyses.

2.3.3. Ethnomusicology studies of the music of migrants:

An interesting reference in the perspective of studying Italian migration as a diaspora in the world is provided by Caroline Brettell, author of *Anthropology and Migration* (2003). In this, she discusses a series of themes which are relevant to my research including: *return migration*, *transmigrants* and *transnationalism*, the relationship between emigration, the Church and the religious festa. She also discusses whether ethnic communities are inevitable and compares diverse emigrants' settlement patterns. Together with Hampel (1987), Brettell (2003) offers a set of perspectives on migrant cultures.

²⁸ In the Bibliography section I included Uccello's works republished by Pennino. In the Internet resources section I included the websites of the Casa Museo Antonino Uccello of Palazzolo Acreide and of the open air 'living museum' I luoghi del lavoro contadino.

Publications on the music of ethnic minorities are a limited (but expanding) field, recent examples being Hemetek, Lechleitner, Naroditskaya and Czekanowska (2004), Pettan, Reyes, Komavec (2001) and Del Giudice (1993).

The study of Sicilian traditional music within the immigrant community in Australia is a previously unexplored field. To orient my analysis of this, I provide below a list and commentary description of studies that have been conducted on the music of Italian migrants elsewhere in the world.

- Traditional music of Italian emigrants in North and South America:

The prime examples of these are the field-recordings and studies by Anna Lomax Chairetakis (Alan Lomax's niece) and Luisa Del Giudice on Italian communities in the USA. Anna Lomax carried out her research in the 1970s and 1980s, producing a series of field recordings released as two LPs in 1979 and another 3 LPs released in 1986. She recorded music played in Italian communities whose members had come from all over Italy, from north to south; and her seminal work constitutes a reference for future studies²⁹.

Luisa Del Giudice, an ex-UCLA scholar, founder and current director of the Italian Oral History Institute based in Los Angeles, outlines the purpose of her Institute, as follows:

Oral history research captures the fleeting spoken and visual memories of ordinary and not-so-ordinary people. Through direct field recordings, photography and videotaping we create a lasting record of local culture, history, and cultural processes which might otherwise go undocumented and therefore be forgotten. The Italian Oral History Institute is a non-profit community-based research and public education organization. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, and make accessible materials relating to the culture and history of Italians in California³⁰.

²⁹ A detailed listing of Anna Lomax's recordings is available in the Discography section.

³⁰ Quotation from the Institute's website: <http://www.iohi.org/NEW/index.html> .

The Institute has produced an ethnomusicology publication in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture of Los Angeles based on her field recordings, *Italian Traditional Song* (1995)³¹.

Other more episodic studies and recordings of Italian traditional music in America have been made by Italian, American and Italian-American scholars such as Carla Bianco's recordings from the communities of New York and Chicago, and Conte and Schlesinger's recordings³². A singular project is the one carried out by Italian ethnomusicologists Mario Sarica and Giuliana Fugazzotto, who studied the recordings of Italian traditional music released on major and minor records labels in America on 78rpm between 1917 and 1929. Mario Sarica is a well-established ethnomusicology researcher and Director of the Museo Cultura e Musica Popolare dei Peloritani³³ (Museum of Folklore and Folk Music of the Peloritani Mountains) in Villaggio Gesso, Province of Messina. Other research of significance has been undertaken by the Associazione Soraimar³⁴, which published on CD a vast collection of recordings (a 5 CD box set) of songs from the Venetian³⁵ communities of South Brazil. These are all in Venetian dialect.

- Italians in Australia:

A pool of scholars interested in Italian heritage in Australia has created the IARP – Italian Australian Records Project (<http://w2.vu.edu.au/iarp>). The group, led by Professor Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, is made up of 19 Australian academics and three Italian academics. Among the Australian members, Dr. Ellie Vasta and Professor Gaetano Rando are of Aeolian (hence Sicilian) background. While touching on social and historical matters, statistics and records, the group has not yet produced any specific studies on the musical traditions of Italians. The first academic to show some interest in teaching and raising interest in Italian folk music in Australia is Professor

³¹ For full details see Discography.

³² These are LP releases. For full details of the recordings, please refer to Discography.

³³ Website: <http://www.solnet.it/strumusipopol/index.htm> .

³⁴ For further details on these communities and the recoding of their music, refer to the website of the Associazione Soraimar: <http://www.soraimar.it/index.html#> .

³⁵ Venetian means from the Veneto region in North East Italy, not strictly from Venice.

Antonio Comin, from Flinders University, Adelaide. Dr Linda Barwick, a former student of his and now Senior Research Fellow at the Music Department of Sydney University and at the Sydney Conservatorium, has observed³⁶:

... that conscious effort in the shape of study and performance of traditional songs has been promoted by a number of people, most notably Professor Tony Comin of the Italian discipline at Flinders University who teaches courses in Italian popular culture as part of the undergraduate and honours programmes. Partly as a result of the interest generated by these courses, traditional songs have been included in Italian language courses at both primary and secondary level, and the high school music curriculum now includes a section on Italian traditional music. Theses in ethnomusicology at the University of Adelaide have been written by me and Diana Busolin, and the collection of oral traditional material has formed part of some projects by students at Flinders. (Barwick, 1987, p.49)

Barwick continues in describing the long-lasting effect that Prof. Comin's work had on the Adelaide community:

In Adelaide there have been a number of performing groups, usually made up of students or ex-students of Comin's popular song courses, that have had the aim of presenting Italian traditional song in original style: Compagnia Folk, Due Voci, La Lega and Terra Mia are included in this list, all of whom have had some links with the Italian Folk Ensemble, which was initially formed to present theatrical works in Italian, many of which incorporated traditional songs and music. There has been so much demand for separate performance of songs that the Ensemble has tended to perform more music than theatre. (Barwick, 1987, p.50)

³⁶ Dr. Linda Barwick is also current Director of PARADISEC, Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Resources in Endangered Cultures. The following abstract on Professor Comin and the researches into Italian folk music in South Australia is from: Barwick, Linda (1987) *Italian traditional music in Adelaide*, A yearly journal of folklore studies, Centre for Australian Studies, Perth, W.A., Curtin University of Technology.

Linda Barwick herself was a member of the Italian Folk Ensemble (IFE) from 1977 to 1984 and can be viewed as a direct research descendant of Comin. She undertook a series of field recordings in Italy and in Australia, mainly on Tuscan music connected to the festivity of Maggio (May)³⁷. Her writings on Italian music include a paper analysing a performance by the IFE *Ballata grande per Francesco Fantin*³⁸ (whose text was originally written by Sicilian storyteller Ciccù Busacca, from Riposto) and various entries on Italian folk music performed in Australia, notably in the *Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music, Australia & Oceania* volume (Barwick, 1998). Another scholar who has dedicated time and attention to Italian music in Australia has been Dr Aline Scott-Maxwell. As well as having provided an exhaustive overview in her entry “Italian Music” in the *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (Barwick, 1997), she has undertaken important research on popular singer Peter Ciani³⁹. Ciani is an Italian-Australian of mixed Sicilian/Calabrian descent. Although not a folk musician in the traditional sense of the term (i.e. performing following a traditional style) Ciani and his songs are a significant example of original musical forms created by the Sicilian and Calabrian communities in Sydney. Scott-Maxwell’s article raises some fundamental identity questions among Italian–Australians, which are pertinent when studying music of an ethnic, or in this case even regional, connotation (many of Ciani’s early songs were sung in dialect). In my thesis I shall explore these questions of identity in various ways as they relate to Sicilian traditional music.

2.4. Methodology summary

My research was undertaken on the premises of the following framework:

In fieldwork:

³⁷ For a complete list of her works and all details of her recordings, papers and essays, refer to her personal website: <http://www.zip.com.au/~lbarwick/publications.html>.

³⁸ Translation: ‘Great Ballad for Francesco Fantin’, for details of her article, see Bibliography. Francesco Fantin was an anti-fascist (anarchist) Italian emigrant from Queensland who was interned in the concentration camp of Loveday (South Australia) in 1942. He was killed in the Internment Camp by Fascists. The *ballad* is obviously depicting Francesco Fantin as an idealist hero and a martyr (Busacca is very leftwing-oriented, like most Sicilian storytellers). Professor Comin himself wrote an analysis and description of the version of Busacca’s *Ballata* performed by the IFE. For details on Comin’s analysis, see Bibliography.

³⁹ Scott-Maxwell, Aline (2002) *Negotiating difference – Peter Ciani’s Italian-Australian musical journey*, in *Perfect Beat* 6/1.

- Research musical heritage rather than of ‘folk music’ (referring to the UNESCO definition cited by Hayward rather than to traditional definitions of folk music, as I mainly subscribe to McKay’s criticisms of traditional folklore studies).
- Research of sounds in connection with space (inspired by Lortat Jacob’s and Antonello Ricci’s quest for the sounds present in the community’s key spaces, I will trace a musical geography of the community).
- Researching sounds in connection with time (following the example of Guggino, Bonanzinga, Lortat-Jacob and Ricci, I will focus on the connection of music and sounds with the calendar and with the various stages of the life of man).

In analysis:

- Evaluation of the existence of a phenomenon of Sicilian diaspora, on the basis of the resources I have cited in this chapter.
- Evaluation of the impact of the Australian context on Sicilian identity and music.

In addition to the established methodologies outlined in this Chapter, I also have developed what might be called – ‘reflexive’ ethnology – a term that indicates the inclusion of the interviewees’ point of view in the study of their own culture. The interviewee is informed of the aims and scope of my study, he/she is addressed in regard to terms and questions which are of my concern (i.e. the existence or the importance of folk music in their town or region), thus enabling me to record their understanding of terms such as folk, traditional, heritage, and so on. I found conducting my study in this way more interesting and stimulating, as it enabled me to analyse not only what academia labels as tradition, but also what the interviewees value as such and/or as valuable. I will ascertain how often the two points of view differ.

2.5. Preliminaries to field research

The next chapter in this thesis has the purpose of presenting, analysing and drawing conclusions from the field research I undertook in Sicily in 2005. My research was undertaken with the aim of verifying the status of musical folklore in Sicily in the locations where the majority of emigrants who left for Australia originated. The first task of my research was therefore to study these locations. The two sources used to obtain this data were internet research and attending the international conference on

Sicilian Emigration in the World in Palermo (both detailed below). After having gathered what I judged to be a sufficient amount of preliminary information on these locations, I undertook field research throughout Sicily in 2005.

2.5.1. Internet research:

The first result I found by searching the Internet in October 2004 regarding Italian emigrants in Australia was the previously mentioned article by Stewart-Crisanti *The Hidden Heritage of Italian Settlement in NSW*⁴⁰, which provides an overview of the phenomenon of Italian migration in general. The result of the studies which followed the finding of this article, and opened doors to many other resources, is presented in Chapter 1. Web-searching more, in particular on the Sicilian presence in Australia, I discovered the Sicilian Australian online newsletter *Il Ficodindia* (The prickly pear)⁴¹. This newsletter, edited by the Comitato Associazioni Siciliane (CAS) (Sicilian Associations Committee), is the printed ‘voice’ of the Sicilian community in Sydney which gathers in the form of associations of immigrants. As I would learn later⁴², associations of immigrants have played an essential role in trying to maintain the language, customs and memories of the Sicilian communities around the world whether in Australia, in the USA, in Canada, in South America or in Northern Europe.

The CAS, whose voice is *Il Ficodindia*, is made up of eight Sicilian regional associations and one association led by a Sicilian, but open to all Australians of Italian descent (Italian Family History Group). These are:

- Associazione Culturale A.G.I.R.A. (acronym of: Australian Generations of Italians Reconnecting with Agira. Agira is a town in the Province of Enna).

⁴⁰ To which I refer for the first time in Chapter 1, para. 1.3.3. of this thesis.
http://www.teachingheritage.nsw.edu.au/c_building/wc2_italmigration.html.

⁴¹ <http://www.ilficodindiasydney.com/index.htm>. This plant is a symbol of Sicily, where it grows extensively unlike in any other part of Europe. Its scientific name, *Opuntia Ficus Indica*, attributed by Latin author and botanist Plinius the elder, suggests it originates from the Greek city of Opunte. Botanists instead classify this plant as native to Mexico, from where it was imported to Sicily through the Spanish domination (which ruled both territories). In popular imagination this plant is believed to have been introduced by the Moors, ‘I Turchi’.

⁴² By later, I refer to four months later (February) when I attended the international conference, where much attention was given to documenting the importance of these immigrant associations, in particular in the USA. More exactly called Società di Mutuo Soccorso (‘mutual aid societies’), these associations constitute a world within themselves and are a fascinating subject of research in their own right. I will provide further details on these associations in presenting the material gathered from the conference.

- Associazione Culturale Eoliana (Aeolian Cultural Association, whose members are from the Aeolian Islands, in the Province of Messina).
- Associazione Isole Eolie (Aeolian Islands Association).
- Associazione Palazzolo Acreide (Association of emigrants from Palazzolo Acreide, a town in the Province of Siracusa. It is also the town where Antonino Uccello created his Casa Museo).
- Associazione Palermitani (Association of emigrants from Palermo).
- Associazione San Sebastiano (Saint Sebastian Association) whose members are from the Town of Cerami (Province of Enna).
- Sicilian Association of Queensland (the only Sicilian Association part of CAS not based in NSW).
- Tre Santi Association (Three Saints Association. The Saints in question are Sant'Alfio, San Filadelfio and San Cirino, whose cult is very fervent in the Province of Catania. Immigrants from this area formed the association).
- Italian Family History Group Association (independent from any region).

I had the first contact with Sam Mugavero, the Director of *Il Ficodindia*, on the 16 May 2005. On this date I wrote an e-mail in which I explained the nature and aims of my research. Mr Mugavero's response was enthusiastic. Contact with these Associations has been absolutely fundamental to introducing myself into the Sicilian Australian community. It would be through Mrs Sylvia Granturco, the secretary of the CAS, that I would gather, once in Australia, the majority of information on the traditional musicians in Sydney (this part of my research will be presented in the next Chapter). While in Sicily, my discovery of *Il Ficodindia* newsletter was essential in individuating from which parts and towns of Sicily people left for Australia over the years. I deepened my understanding of most of the information I first gathered through *Il Ficodindia* by attending the exhibition and conference on Sicilian Emigration in the World (discussed in Chapter One).

2.5.2. Conference⁴³:

On 11 and 12 of February 2005 I attended the International Conference The Routes of Sicilian Emigration in the World organized by the Sicilian Region (by Francesco Scoma, Employment, Welfare and Emigration Council Chairman) and by ANFE (Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Emigrate, National Association of Emigrant Families). This conference was followed by the opening of an exhibition which was on display until 28 February. The exhibition and conference were held in the Ex Deposito di Locomotive di Sant' Erasmo, a refurbished engine shed in the Palermitan east coast suburb of Saint Erasmus. Professor Marcello Saija, Director of the Department of International and European Studies at the University of Messina⁴⁴ and Director of the Aeolian Museum of Emigration⁴⁵ was the curator and director of the exhibition.

The exhibition was set up as follows. A series of panels on display were ordered in sequences and divided into corridors in different sections of the vast room, classifying emigrants on the basis of their place of origin. Video tape and CD installations added multimedia resources to the exhibition. The music section was set up by Professor Mario Sarica and displayed the traditional Sicilian instruments used by emigrants (principally to the Americas). Accompanying panels provided information about the record industry owned by Sicilian emigrants in America and on the recordings of Sicilian traditional music by these and other major record companies in the first half of the 20th C. The panels displayed a reduced version of the detailed study published in the booklet attached to the CD *I Miricani*⁴⁶.

Although the whole exhibition was coordinated by Professor Saija, it was a combined effort of team work and team research by nine Sicilian emigration study groups from

⁴³ The bulk of the data I learnt from this conference and exhibition has been exposed, analysed and commented in Chapter 1. Therefore, I here provide uniquely some notes on circumstances and some details which I haven't already reported.

⁴⁴ <http://multipolweb.unime.it/istinternaz.html> .

⁴⁵ www.museoeolianoemigrazione.it .

⁴⁶ See Discography section in Bibliography. *I Miricani* in Sicilian dialect means Americans, referring to the fellow countrymen who have emigrated there. The term is derived from the misspelled name of the Country 'La Merica', instead of l'America (proper Italian).

nine emigration museums existing throughout Sicily. These nine emigration museums are:

- Museo dell'Emigrazione Etnea of Giarre – Province of Catania
- Museo Ionico dell'Emigrazione of Santa Teresa Riva – Province of Messina
- Casa dell'Emigrante of Canicattini Bagni – Province of Ragusa
- Museo di Storia dell'Emigrazione Trapanese of Trapani
- Museo Erbitense dell'Emigrazione of Nicosia – Province of Enna
- Museo dell'Emigrazione dall'Area del Vallone of Acquaviva Platani – Province of Caltanissetta)
- Museo dell'Emigrazione Iblea of Ragusa
- Museo Cultura e musica dei Peloritani of Messina
- The Aeolian Museum of Migration, based in Salina

Marcello Saija stresses that there are different types of emigration originating from different areas of Sicily, relating to different social and economic conditions. Five areas are illustrated and described, differing on the bases of territory conformation, economy, country or countries of destination, causes of emigration. These are:

- The Hyblaean High Plateau, in the south-east (Provinces of Ragusa and Siracusa)
- The citrus-growing areas of the Ionian Coast (Province of Catania)
- The wine-growing area of Mount Etna (Province of Catania)
- The so-called Sicily of the *latifondo* (the inland wheat-growing areas including the Provinces of Palermo, Agrigento, Trapani, Caltanissetta and Enna)
- The Aeolian Islands (Province of Messina)

The reasons and the times of emigration to Australia from these different areas have been detailed in Chapter One. For a detailed account in Italian of the emigration history from these five areas in the considered period, I prompt the reader to refer to Marcello Saija's (2005) booklet which accompanied the exhibition.

Chapter 3. Field Research in Sicily

3.1. Introduction

This chapter complements and extends the discussion of traditional/folkloric music practices in Sicily through field research in the region between January and May 2005, and in May 2006, and in June 2007.

These activities of research have been:

- A visit to the Presepe Vivente di Custonaci (Living Nativity Scene in Custonaci) in the Province of Trapani, during the Christmas period.
- Attendance of the conference and exhibition *Un Museo per Ricordare, I Percorsi dell' Emigrazione Siciliana nel Mondo*, in Palermo.
- A visit to Agira and Enna on the day of Venerdì Santo (Good Friday).
- Attending the international conference *Partnership Ethnographic Museums* in Siracusa and visiting the towns of Buscemi, Palazzolo Acreide and Noto.
- A visit to the Aeolian Islands, in particular the islands of Lipari and Salina.

The aim of these fieldtrips and preliminary research has been to directly experience the state of musical and other folkloric practices, to deepen my knowledge on the studies which have been carried out on the above, with particular reference to the locations relevant for Australian migration.

The results have been my familiarization with the localities relevant for emigration studies, a deeper knowledge of the heritage present there and my introduction to a number of scholars who have undertaken studies which serve as background for my research.

While the following paragraphs in this chapter are principally aimed at reporting my field research experiences in reference to my thesis focus (emigration and music), in some of these paragraphs, 3.2.1. , 3.2.2. , 3.2.3, I have included expanded insights to provide background information, assuming not every reader of this thesis would be well-versed in Sicilian folklore (and in particular its musical traditions).

In 3.2.1. I have included sections on bagpipe music, accordion and tambourine duos in Sicilian folk music and on folkloristic groups in Sicily; in 3.2.3. I have included a section on the traditions of the Holy Week in Sicily, Jewish heritage in Agira and the

tradition of the *Sepolcri* in Enna; in 3.2.4. I have included sections on museums and folklore and folk music studies in the Provinces of Siracusa and Ragusa.

3.2. The research

3.2.1. 9 January 2005 – Presepe Vivente di Custonaci visit:

The first of my field investigation was done on 9 January 2005, at the end of the Christmas festivities. I visited and documented photographically the Presepe Vivente (Living Nativity Scene) of Custonaci¹. Custonaci is a small town on the Northwest coast of Sicily, in the Province of Trapani. Within the municipality of Custonaci is a cave called Grotta Mangiapane, surrounded by several small rudimentary constructions and which bears traces of human settlement originating from Paleolithic times. It was still inhabited in the late 1950s, and contains small rustic shelters used by people and animals alike. Every year, the Associazione Presepe Vivente di Custonaci (Living Nativity Scene of Custonaci Association) re-enacts the birth of Jesus in this cave. Nowadays representing Roman-era Palestine, the re-enactment brings to life what was once a settlement of shepherds and peasants who lived in and around the cave. I judged visiting this nativity scene to be of great cultural interest; and significant for my study because the participants in it practised a whole range of activities that were common in everyday life up to some decades ago, now only resumed for this particular occasion. The participants in the scene were separated from the public by dividing ropes. They were of different ages and of both sexes, the younger having learnt their craft from the elder. The activities were practised by people dressed in Sicilian peasant or shepherd clothing (except for Joseph and Mary, who wore clothing of Middle Eastern inspiration) and were of great diversity: furniture and basket-making out of local plants and leaves, ricotta cheese making in the traditional way, the blacksmith's craft (which includes horse shoeing), knitting, toy-making in paper and wood, honey production, threshing with animal-aided systems (mule), oil-making with a traditional oil mill, and last but not least, music making.

¹ Website: <http://www.mcsystem.it/presepe/>.



3.1. Zampogna and ciaramella players at the Presepe Vivente di Custonaci (photo Garigliano, 2005).



3.2. Accordion and tambourine players at the Grotta Magiapane (photo Garigliano, 2005).

A duo of piano-accordion (*fisarmonica* in Italian) and tambourine (*tamburello* in Italian) players and a trio of two bagpipe (*ciaramedda*, in Sicilian) players and a shawm (*piffero* in Italian, *bifara* in Sicilian) player all took part. The duo and trio circulated and played throughout the whole representation, but never too close to each

other in order not to disturb one another. The celebration of Christmas with bagpipes and shawm music is typical of all Southern Italy, from Rome southwards, while the presence of accordion and tambourine music is ubiquitous in all festive occasions throughout Sicily.

The bagpipe and its music, once used in many more festivities of the Catholic calendar throughout the year, is one of the most ancient instruments to be found in Southern Italy. It was largely replaced in the 19th C by the accordion, an invention which came from Germany and spread across all of Europe and remained in the folk music heritage of many countries. The bagpipe's survival in today's Sicily is due in large part to the private practice of the art of making, caring for and playing this instrument by members of what remains of the shepherds' community. The remoteness of the areas inhabited by shepherds in Sicily explains the survival of this instrument and its music, which is in constant danger of extinction. The bagpipes found in Sicily are called in dialect *ciaramedda*, diminutive of the Latin word *calamus*, which is a latinization of the Greek word *kalamos*, reed (device through which the bagpipe produces its sound). The Greek origin of the instrument is a highly credible hypothesis, not only considering the common historical background of the two regions (Sicily was part of Magna Graecia), but also by observing the evident similarity of the instrument with the bagpipe nowadays played in the Greek islands, the *tsabouna*².

The bagpipes found in Sicily are of two types. The first, the *ciaramedda a paru*, is the most common. As well as being played throughout much of Sicily it is also used in towns, villages and hamlets in the mountains of Southern Calabria, the Aspromonte range. This bagpipe's air reservoir is made of a whole goatskin turned inside out and cured in quicklime. In place of the head of the animal is a cylindrical piece of wood in which are inserted five wooden pipes: two chanter of the same length (which makes the instrument similar to the *Tsabouna*) and three drones of different length. The

² <http://www.greekfolkmusicanddance.com/instruments.html> , <http://www.oddmusic.com/gallery/om32275.html> ; As we can read on the Oddmusic website, the Greek *Tsabouna* is sometimes spelled *Tsampouna* or *Tsambouna*, which makes a very interesting connection with the mainstream Italian word used for a bagpipe: *zampogna*. The Italian word *zampogna* is retained a corruption of the Greek word *symphonia*, from *symphonos* concordant in sound, from *syn-* + *phone* voice, sound (<http://supervoca.com/editorial/webster.cgi?word=symphony>).

chanters are played simultaneously and in counterpoint, while the drones cover a range of sounds from bass to treble. The second type of bagpipe found in Sicily is nowadays extremely rare, its use being unique to Monreale, a medieval Arab-Norman town overlooking the *Conca D'Oro* (the Golden Shell), the plain where Palermo lies. This pipe is much bigger than the *ciaramedda a paru*, its bass drone pipe is 1.50 m long and it is tuned in minor key (it is the only case of bagpipe in Europe tuned in a minor key). This type of pipe has been classified within the Italian typology of the *zampogna a chiave*, 'key bagpipe', and shares similarities with other Italian bagpipes used in Calabria (*zampogna a' moderna*, 'modern zampogna') and in Basilicata (where it is named many different ways in local dialects). The *ciaramedda* in use in Monreale has also two chanters, but of uneven lengths. The length of one of the two chanters is such that the furthestmost hole cannot be reached by fingers. The adding of a clarinet's key has proved to be a successful solution in reaching it (thus the name of the instrument 'key bagpipe'). As for the *ciaramedda a paru*, one chanter plays the leading melody, the other serves as counterpoint bass line. For a detailed technical description of all the Italian *zampogne* and the areas where they are still in use, please refer to Guizzi/Leydi (1985).

The music played on bagpipes at Christmas time in Sicily is known as *nuvena*, which literally means 'prayer of nine days'. This is because, according to the Catholic calendar, Christ's birth was celebrated over a period of nine days. The last nine days before Christ's birth were a time of exceptional devotion, in which special prayers were recited and special music played. *Nuvene* in Sicilian or *novene* in Italian, aren't exclusive to Sicily, but are recited throughout Italy, and are a form of devotion used on many occasions other than Christmas (i.e. devotion to the Madonna or to a particular saint). The *nuvene* melodies are a musical form of these prayers. They are recognizable for their slow-paced rhythm, reminiscent of lullabies. In Sicily, *zampognari* (or *ciaramiddari* in Sicilian), the bagpipe players, were often referred to also as *nuvenari* or *ninnariddari* ('nuvene players' or 'lullaby players'). This reveals clearly their connection with Christmas devotion, where they have the function of delivering a gentle, yet powerful and beautiful, musical homage to 'u *Bambineddu*, the 'Small Child' Jesus, similar to a lullaby. This Christmas repertoire for the bagpipe is only a small part of an important collection of music for this instrument. Different tunes and styles catered for almost all religious calendar occasions, as well as for

celebratory events in people's lives. Many of these repertoires are still played. For example, another form of music played on the Sicilian bagpipe is the *ballettu*, literally 'ballet', also referred to as 'tarantella' (the 6/8 dance par excellence in Southern Italy). This is often incorporated into the end of the slow, meditative novena, speeding it up to a lively dance rhythm. The *ballitti*, 'ballets' (6/8 dances) played on the *ciaramedda* were also played as separate, individual tunes for dancing, often accompanied by the Sicilian tambourine (*tambureddu*) or by the *cerchietto* (a percussion instrument like a tambourine but without the skin)³.

On the basis of earlier ethnomusicological research (Bonanzinga 1996; Sarica 2003) confirmed by my field trip to Custonaci, we can observe how, resisting obliteration through modernization, Sicilian bagpipe music is still played at particular traditional calendar festivities. The areas where the *ciaramedda a paru* is traditionally played in Sicily are mainly the mountainous regions: the three ranges which run west to east on the north coast of the island (Madonie range, Nebrodi Range, Peloritani range), the central mountains of Sicily (Monti Erei, Monti Sicani), Mount Etna and the area around Licata (in the Province of Agrigento). There are nowadays very few pipers left, so they no longer play exclusively in their traditional hometowns. Being much in demand, especially throughout the Christmas festivities, they travel all over Sicily. The technical level of the music varies. The youths within traditional shepherd communities generally are not interested in learning the bagpipe at all. The pastoral world is nowadays regarded as retrograde and to be renounced at all costs often by its own members (who obviously are not aware of what they are losing culturally). A certain revival of bagpipe music has been encouraged by institutions (i.e. every year an Italian and International Bagpipe Festival sponsored by the Sicilian Region is held in Erice, in the Province of Trapani) and fostered by the academic sector (i.e.

³ *Ballitti* were commonly performed within the shepherd communities throughout Sicily. When several *ballitti* or tarantella-style tunes are played consecutively as a medley, they are referred to as *passate*. The tunes are often very similar to each other, the musical structure of each one differing from the next only by microvariations. The word *passata* in Italian means 'passing by' or 'going/passing over'. This is because each melody played "passed over the last one played" (i.e. followed its same basic musical structure), changing it with microvariations. It is a cyclical system. The skill of microvariation of the tune mastered by the piper and the tambourine player (who varies the beat with his expertise in the use of accents and of embellishments) enabled the pair of musicians to play this kind of music from a zero-to-infinite span of time, according to the needs of the circumstance. Prof. Bonanzinga (Bonanzinga, 1996) documented that in Licata (town in the Province of Agrigento), *passate* played on *ciaramedda* and *cerchietto* were played with the performance of a particular form of dance for two men, the *tarantella a scherma* (fencing tarantella). This dance mimes a duel with knives. There are many other examples and documents on the Sicilian *ciaramedda* and its music.

University of Palermo and Messina) or by conservatory-trained musicians who have taken interest in this instrument⁴. This has enabled the old players to be cherished as living treasures and their skills and music to be studied and transcribed by ethnomusicologists⁵ and by interested conservatory-trained musicians alike, who sometimes even learn to play the instrument. Overall, we could state that in today's Sicily the figure of the bagpipe player is changing to survive the new times.

Music for accordion and tambourine in Sicily substantially replaced what once was music for bagpipes, particularly in the case of the tarantella. Unlike the bagpipes (*ciaramedda*), which have a very limited scale and hence a restricted repertoire (made up of such archaic tunes as the *passate*), the musical possibilities of the accordion are wide-ranging. This was one of the main reasons why in the mid 1800s, when it was invented and popularized in Central Europe (Austria and Germany), the accordion spread throughout virtually all European countries and successively throughout the world.

With regard to the accordion, tradition has the chance of enduring, thanks to a fine compromise between what has been passed on and personal interpretation and innovation. The accordion introduced into Sicily and in Southern Italy in general, which was predominantly a button accordion (*organettu* in Sicilian), was able to play the music which was once for the bagpipe, plus a whole new range of tunes that were fashionable and popular at the time. These included waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, *scottish* dances (in Sicilian *scotis*), as well as music from the 'New World' brought back by emigrants from the Americas (the tango in particular, was soon adopted). Unlike the bagpipe, the accordion was a semi-industrial instrument produced in a factory or by an artisan, very rarely by the person who played it. This was another reason for its popularity: anyone could play the accordion if they could afford to pay for one. Once owned, the accordion was a durable instrument which didn't need any

⁴A prime example of this is Giancarlo Parisi, a Messina-born and conservatory-taught wind instruments player who learnt the bagpipe in the field from the shepherds and who has successfully set up his own band of traditionally inspired music, producing several CDs. Bringing the level of bagpipe playing to virtuosity, he has made this instrument known to audiences Europe-wide. Another important figure in the Sicilian bagpipe revival is Orazio Corsaro, author of *La zampogna nel messinese* (see Bibliography).

⁵ i.e. Bonanzinga and Sarica.

special care and could be carried everywhere. The Sicilian bagpipe, on the other hand, needs to be tuned nearly every time it is played. It has to be tuned with a discerning ear by regulating the diameter of the chanter holes with beeswax. It needs intensive and diligent care by its player, who is often its creator. The bagpipe in Sicily was an instrument whose owner usually knew the animal it was made of. Clearly, in the fast-changing world of the European industrial revolution, such archaic situations became increasingly rare.

The tunes played on the accordion (a piano accordion) in Custonaci were mainly tarantellas and the ‘Sicilianized’ polkas, mazurkas and waltzes described in the previous paragraph. These tunes have become ‘standards’ (to use a jazz terminology) which can be played on any occasion where traditional accordion and tambourine music seems appropriate. The musicians who played accordion and tambourine were quite young, the accordion player being in his 20s, the tambourine player in his teens. These musicians’ employment chances are far greater than the bagpipes and shawm players. Young people are keener to learn traditional music on accordion and tambourine because all the folk groups now existing in Sicily require musicians competent in these instruments. Young people in today’s Sicily are interested in joining folk groups because it is a chance for them to get involved musically with people their age, get to know people from different countries⁶ and last but not least, earn some occasional extra money. As folk groups will be a recurrent theme throughout my thesis I would like to briefly explain here what Sicilian folk groups are and what role they have and have had in the preservation of traditional music.

Folk groups are semi-professional music and dance ensembles formed with the purpose of representing regional or local identities. The first appearance of folk groups is traceable to the first decades of the 20th C. Under the impetus of sudden modernization, industrialization and increased exposure to the outside world, ordinary citizens of local communities perceived that the traditions of their hometowns were destined to die if a deliberate effort to conserve them weren’t made. The knowledge once common to nearly every member of the community (the original folk-lore) became more and more fragmented. The members of the small peasant communities

⁶ Often successful folk groups tour Europe and the world presenting their performances.

needed to emigrate to the cities or even overseas to earn a living. It was then, and for these reasons, that to prevent total loss, a certain group of people formed a folk group. A folk group is composed of an ensemble of musicians playing traditional music on traditional instruments, wearing traditional costumes. These musicians often accompany a group of dancers in costume which performs choreographic and spectacular dances. Their repertoire, the instruments played and the costumes worn, are based on a constructed, but largely accurate reconstruction of what was collected and transcribed in the studies of scholars who were not actually part of 'the folk' (which was largely illiterate until the 1960s).

These considerations bring us to ponder upon the peculiar characteristics of these folk groups. They are made up of people of bourgeois extraction who have learnt these tunes and dances from the notes of a scholar's research. Generally, not having had any intimate familiarity either with these tunes, or with the dances and costumes, the participants in folk groups perform following the directions of an artistic director who, in turn, has learnt everything he (or she) knows from an ethnomusicology treatise. The mechanism of tradition in itself, which is supposed to be the main feature of these performances, is totally absent. We could therefore argue that strictly speaking these groups are not traditional, but purely an entertainment group. Folk groups are perceived by what remains of the traditional rural folk class as representing a picture of Sicily which is essentially unrelated to them. This perception is justifiable given the extreme fragmentation and diversity of traditions throughout Sicily, in which a melody from the west of Sicily may sound totally unfamiliar to an East or Central Sicilian. All this said, nevertheless, folk groups have had an important historical role in keeping alive the awareness that there are some musical traditions which belong to Sicily, and merit being saved, transcribed and cherished for future generations. Thanks to the activity of folk groups this idea has become commonly accepted in a major part of the community. The enthusiasm which has surrounded this spectacularly presented (yet recreated and decontextualized) traditional music has been one of the key factors in preserving aspects of what traditional music actually sounded like. It is also due to the preservation and practice activity carried out by these groups that we are today able to reconstruct aspects of the original sounds. Folk groups put on stage only a small part of what were, and are, Sicilian musical traditions (and often in a caricatured and imprecise way). Fortunately some forms of musical

traditions have also survived in their original social context without any external support. Examples are the vendors of fruit and vegetables, fish, or herbs who still roam the streets of the working class quarters of Palermo. Former cart drivers on the other hand, despite their profession becoming obsolete (many have taken up truck driving), have continued to practice their repertoire of traditional songs *alla carrittera* (in the style of the cart drivers) in private contests. These musical traditions have survived to the present day because the social group in which their music is functional is still intact.

Folkloristic groups are a phenomenon which is for the greater part unexplored academically in Italy. The existence of folk groups in Sicily is documented the first decades of the last C, notably, one of the first Sicilian folk groups is the Canterini Peloritani (Calamia, Panarello, 1995), founded in 1935 by their still current artistic director and choreographer, Lillo Alessandro. The first spectacularized representation of Sicilian costumes goes back to the mid 1800s, when the first Sicilian urban folklorists, together with foreign folklorists, began to describe and sketch what ‘the folk’ i.e. the non-bourgeois, urban population, looked like. In Palermo, the Museo Pitré, named after its creator (pioneering Sicilian folklorist Giuseppe Pitré [1841-1916]), was one of Europe’s earliest ethnographic museums (founded in 1909), displaying costumes of what ‘the typical Sicilian’ looked like. Also, in the Esposizione Nazionale (National Exhibition) in Palermo, a Mostra Etnografica Siciliana (Sicilian Ethnographic Exhibition) was set up, in which various ‘Sicilian costumes’ were present (see illustrated catalogue, Di Cristina/Li Vigni, 1988). The folkloristic image of Sicily crafted for stage performance also drew from the picturesque diaries and romantic sketches and ideas of the mittel-European and British travellers on the Grand Tour of Europe.

The Grand Tour was a practice for which young members of the European Aristocracy (and later, the well-to-do bourgeoisie), from times as early as the 16th C, travelled in several parts of Europe (including Sicily) to complete their education. After the first descriptions of such travellers and successively after the appearance of home-grown folklorists, an expectation rose to see the diverse humanity, not yet contaminated by modernity and industrial life, which still dwelt in this exotic island on the fringes of Europe (such it had been perceived, from the 16th C onwards).

Responding exactly to descriptions of partial and limited understanding of the travellers or 19th C folklorist, Sicilian folkloristic groups were created to entertain and satisfy the tastes of those following the footsteps of the Grand Tour, which as the 20th C progressed, became more and more bourgeois. A whole repertoire of folkloristic songs was created based on the exotic observations travellers made about Sicily and its folk, always depicting the island and its inhabitants as cast in a sort of out-of-time state of innocence (Cecil Sharp, Johann Gottfried Herder), purity, abundance and primordial happiness.

The experience of witnessing the Presepe Vivente di Custonaci was significant for my research, as a field investigation of how much of the old, pre-consumer society skills (traditional music included) have survived and been passed on to younger generations. The presence in itself of the piper and the accordion players in the event were already a signal that the music has not been forgotten and is now cherished. The presence of musicians in the Presepi in general is not certain nowadays. There are some presepi viventi where musicians are not present at all. The Custonaci Presepe is regarded as one of the most enduring in Sicily⁷ and fortunately the role of the musicians has been kept alive and is considered essential.

Considering these facts in relation to emigration, it seemed a distinct possibility that a number of traditional accordion and bagpipe players might exist in Australia, having ascertained that aspects of this musical heritage persist in the homeland. As Prof. Saija indicates in his study, and as I have ascertained through research, emigration from the Province of Trapani area started, as for the rest of Sicily, in the post-Second World War Years and lasted until the late 1970s. The terrible earthquake of 1968 had a major impact in the population shift. The existence today in Sydney of the Association Sant'Antonio da Padova, Protettore di Poggioreale⁸ (Saint Anthony of Padova, Protector of Poggioreale), one of the largest among the Sicilian emigrant

⁷ Historical re-enactments portraying scenes of the birth and death of Christ can be traced back as far as the Middle Ages, and have been performed in Sicily in a similar way to what we see today starting from the period known in Europe as the Counter Reformation (1500). In this period the Catholic faith was reinforced against Protestantism often in spectacular ways.

⁸ The epicentre of the devastating earthquake was in Poggioreale, a large town in the Province of Trapani.

associations, is living proof of this. The fieldtrip to Custonaci proved fruitful in verifying many of the aspects I had only had the chance to study in books. I had the opportunity to document, even if only visually, the current state of traditional culture in this area of Sicily. Personally speaking, it was a pleasant surprise to find that many traditions endure, in this fast changing world.

3.2.2. 11 to 28 February 2005 – Un Museo per Ricordare exhibition and conference:



3.3. Mural in Malfa (Salina) depicting the emigration of Aeolian Islanders to Sydney, Australia (notice the Sydney Opera House “sails” in the turquoise sea) (photo Garigliano, 2007).

On 11 and 12 February 2005 I attended the first two opening days of the conference and exhibition entitled *Un Museo per Ricordare, I Percorsi dell’ Emigrazione Siciliana nel Mondo*⁹, (A Museum for Remembrance: The Routes of Sicilian Emigration in the World) held in Palermo, at the former locomotive parking hangar of Sant’Erasmo. At the international conference I learnt that the Aeolian Islands were a major centre of emigration from Sicily to Australia. The exhibition’s purpose was to present to the wider public the Museo Eoliano dell’Emigrazione (Aeolian Museum of Emigration), at the time in the process of being established in Palazzo Marchetti, in the town of Malfa, on the Aeolian island of Salina as well as creating a regional network of Sicilian museums of migration. Professor Marcello Saija, from Messina University, has been the initiator of this movement for the rediscovery and

⁹ Which I mentioned in Chapter 1, par. 1.3.1.

documentation of the history of Sicilian migration, with special attention to migration to the USA, due to his extensive collaboration with the Sicilian and Aeolian Associations of America and with Stony Brook University of New York. In the course of my thesis, Prof. Saija also organized another conference and exhibition on Sicilian migration to the USA entitled *Sicilian Crossing and Derived Communities* on 3 November 2007 at the Ellis Island Emigration Museum.

In Chapter 1 (1.3.1.), I have already exposed in a concise way some statistical data on emigration from the Aeolian Islands to Australia, I here will expand on this topic, discussing the data which I have gathered from the panels of the exhibition.

Between 1860 and 1890 around a thousand Aeolians moved to Australia. The emigrants' cities of destination are Fremantle, in Western Australia, and later Sydney and Melbourne. Some also headed for South Australia and Queensland. In the first decades of the 1900s, a less episodic emigration starts towards Australia. In the years following the end of the Second World War the appeal of Australia attracted many, starting a chain-style migration. By the 1950s a fifth of the entire Italian emigrant population in Oceania (including New Zealand) was comprised by Aeolians. The first official statistical data on Aeolian emigration to Australia appear starting from 1890. Between 1890 and 1940 around 2000 people migrated from the archipelago to the new continent. Among these, 650 were from Lipari, 850 from Salina, 500 from Stromboli, Alicudi, Filicudi and Panarea. Following up to 1951, whilst the Aeolian local population decreases relentlessly, the Aeolian emigrants in Australia reach 7000. Recent estimates tell us that the Aeolian emigrants represent 4.2% of the entire migratory wave from Southern Europe and the largest regional group, among the Italian emigrant population to be naturalized Australian between 1880 and 1945. Following other estimates, in the same period, they are numerically the second regional group within the Italian emigrant community. The important migration wave which occurred in the 1950s brought the Aeolian community up to 30'000 people between first and second generation. From 1964 onwards we lose specific data on the Aeolians because the official Australian statistics record very general data on immigration, without mentioning in detail the local areas of provenance of the immigrants. Data from the Lipari City Council recording this period tell us that the high rates of emigrants' departures continue until the end of the 1960s. Starting from

the 1970s the rates decrease, showing an average of 50 departures a year. The majority migrate to Sydney and Melbourne, where the most common commercial activity taken up is one of fruit and vegetable shops. Some also went to work on the cane fields or became street vendors (often selling flowers). Other communities from the archipelago, the fishermen, settled in Fremantle, Wollongong and most of all Ulladulla. There, in 1919, Lipari-born Giuseppe Puglisi started the fishing industry. Acting differently from other ethnic migrant groups, which tended to move towards more centralized locations, leaving the remote areas to the new immigrants, the Aeolians rarely moved from their original settlement areas in Australia.



3.4. Palazzo Marchetti, in Malfa (Salina), future premises of the Museo Eoliano dell'Emigrazione (Aeolian Museum of Emigration) (photo Garigliano, 2007).

Professor Marcello Saija introduced me to Sonia D'Ambra, the curator of the section on the Aeolian Islands. Mrs D'Ambra is second generation Australian, and commutes regularly between the island of Lipari and Sydney as Vice-Secretary of the Aeolians in the World Association. The panels of the exhibition in Palermo regarding the Aeolians in Sydney and Melbourne were set up with the support of CO.AS.IT.¹⁰ (Comitato di Assistenza alle Famiglie Italiane), the largest Italian welfare organization in Australia. CO.AS.IT. is the living memory of the Italian-Australian community, and its Heritage Office (both in Melbourne and Sydney) holds in its archives the largest collection of materials documenting the Italian presence in

¹⁰ www.coasit.org.au .

Australia. Mrs D'Ambra had very generously offered me to be her guest in Lipari to enable me to undertake further research on Aeolian islanders. I planned to ascertain on a field trip to the islands what remains and what survives of traditional music there today and started researching well before my departure, to be well prepared for what to expect and what to search for.



3.5. From the panels of the exhibition: Turbonave Oceania in the port of Messina, bound for Australia. Photo most probably taken in 1920s. (photo Garigliano, 2005).

The exhibition did not neglect investigating Sicilian and Italian migrants' music and musicians. This section was curated by Professor Mario Sarica, ethnomusicologist from the University of Messina. A copy of a CD containing a remastered 78rpm recording of Attilio Zarino was presented at the exhibition. Zarino had been a house decorator who had become First Tenor of the Metropolitan Theatre of New York, in the first decades of the 1900s. He was dubbed "Il Vittoriese" as he was originally from Vittoria, in the Province of Catania. The remastering of the recording was done by Attilio's nephew, Gianvincenzo Zarino and featured recordings are of Opera arias, (mainly in Italian). A CD by Gruppo di Ricerca Argento¹¹, from Nizza di Sicilia, in the Province of Ragusa, named *Al di là del mare, L'avventura dell'emigrazione* ('Over the sea, The adventure of emigration') was also presented, and the exhibition hosted a

¹¹ www.gruppoargento.com.

concert by a duo named I Tusci¹² (Viola Buzi and Elisa Tonelli, both on voice and guitar) by the title of *Italia bella mostrati gentile, Canti popolari di lavoro, d'amore e di emigrazione* – Beautiful Italy be kind to us, Folk work songs, love songs and emigration songs. The program presented in the concert was my first introduction to a repertoire which I would rediscover months later, in Australia. It presented some songs that had been written from the mid 1800s to the 1970s, all of which described different aspects of Italian emigration. Some of the songs performed by the duo, which have direct references to migration, were: 'Mamma mia dammi cento lire' ('Mother give me one hundred liras'), 'Il tragico naufragio della nave Sirio' ('The tragic shipwreck of the Sirio'), 'Sento il Fiscio del vapore' ('I hear the whistle of the steam ship').

¹² www.itusci.it .



3.6. From the musical section of the exhibition: Sicilian-American record label trademarks. Note Nofrio Record, the last on the bottom right side (photo Garigliano, 2005).

The musical section also displayed information on the musical production which the Sicilian Americans started in America. From the first years of the 1900s to the 1950s, major American labels, such as Columbia, given the important influx of Sicilian immigrants at the time, started to publish recording of Sicilian folk musicians. Moreover, Sicilian-Americans themselves started to be established in the music business themselves, both as performers and producers. Several small Sicilian-American labels were active in the first decades of the 1900s in the USA and produced records in these years, such as Nofrio Records¹³. A fairly comprehensive survey and examination of this repertoire has been undertaken by Italian

¹³ Which takes its name from Palermitan folk character Nofrio and his companion Virticchiu, protagonists of comic adventures. The label also released some 78s where “comic talk” by Nofrio and Virticchiu was made available on vinyl.

ethnomusicologists Sarica and Fugazzotto, who also remastered some of the original 78s and released a CD with liner notes (1999). As I would gain conscience of, throughout my study, these recordings were to constitute the backbone of Italian (and in particular Sicilian) musical identity for future generations, both in America, Australia and even in Italy. Italian recording of folk music would not start until 1946, when another American, Alan Lomax, together with Diego Carpitella, would launch their Italian folk music documentation and recording campaign. These recordings are the first document of Sicilian folklore and the material which much research and re-interpretation will draw upon, even in Italy.



3.7. From the musical section of the exhibition: musical instruments of Sicilian-American migrants (photo Garigliano, 2005).

The Italians who migrated to America between the last decades on the 19th C and the first of the 20th C were not accustomed to recorded music or even to radio; they directly played their musical instruments to entertain themselves. They brought to America thousands of songs in their memory and in their hands, in the form of instruments. Musical instruments brought to America by Sicilian emigrants were displayed at the exhibition, together with the gramophones that some of them bought in America. In America, hybrid musical instruments were also born in the first two decades of the 1900s, such as the ‘banjolin’ (see table 3.8. first instrument, top left) a mixture of a banjo and a mandolin.



3.8. From the musical section of the exhibition: more musical instruments of Siclian-American migrants and a gramophone (photo Garigliano, 2005).

3.2.3. 25 March 2005 – Agira and Enna:

On 25 March 2005, Good Friday, I visited the town of Agira, in the Province of Enna, as well as the city of Enna. My visit to both localities had been motivated by my discovery, through consultation of the e-zine *Il Ficodindia*¹⁴ (mentioned in Chapter 2), that both towns had been centres from which significant numbers of migrants had left for Australia. Agira has an interesting history: the town's origin is indigenous (the Sicani were the first settlers) and during Roman times it flourished, producing the great historian Diodorus Siculus. Recent rediscovery of exceptional value has been the finding of the only Aaron Ha Kodesh¹⁵ (tabernacle) in Sicily in the church of the Colleggiata del San Salvatore, in what used to be the Arab quarter of Agira. The Patron Saint of the town is San Filippo (Saint Philip) the Syrian.

I arrived in Agira in the early afternoon, leaving my car in one of the very few squares viable to traffic in this citadel, which maintains its medieval layout of narrow, steep

¹⁴ www.ilficodindiasydney.com is the e-zine (also published hardcopy) of the Comitato Associazioni Siciliane del NSW (New South Wales Committee of Sicilian Associations), also incorporating the A.G. I. R. A. (Australian Generations of Italians Reconnecting with Agira) Association of Sydney.

¹⁵ In Hebrew, *Aaron Ha Kodesh* means the 'holy arch', the tabernacle in which the sacred scrolls of the Torah are kept.

and cobblestone streets. At the impressive summit of the town is an imposing castle of Arab origin where I decided to head. On my way I found everything was closed except for the churches. These were beautifully ornamented with flowers and candles for *I Sepolcri* (the sepulchres) a festivity which in the Catholic tradition contemplates the miracle of Christ's resurrection through the cult of his tomb¹⁶. I was very fortunate to encounter a group of three women reciting the rosary in call and response, in front of one of the specially decorated altars, in the cathedral of Santa Maria Maggiore, a small church dating from the 12th C, built by the Normans on the very top of the town (site of the original Greek Acropolis).

The most famous religious edifice in town which I had the chance to visit was the Reale Abbazia di San Filippo da Agira (Royal Abbey of Saint Philip of Agira), the Patron Saint of the town. The monastery was supposedly founded in the year 104 by the Saint himself, a powerful mystic and thaumaturgist from Syria, whose body is still preserved underneath the Abbey, in a crypt, where the original burial stone is still visible. The Royal Abbey's aspect today is the result of centuries of structural changes and restorations. The feast of the Saint is held each year on 12 May. San Filippo is also venerated in many other cities throughout Sicily, and in a most interesting way in Calatabiano (Province of Catania)¹⁷. Across the world San Filippo is celebrated in those cities and countries where the Agirini (Agira citizens) emigrated to: Caracas,

¹⁶ The festivity itself is actually on Easter Thursday, and what I saw was simply the continuation of it. During the Sepolcri many of the altars in churches throughout Sicily are dressed: a devout faithful is expected to visit at least three churches consecutively (tradition imposes that the number of churches visited must be uneven). The altars, dressed with beautiful and scented fresh flowers and with candles, this day are ornamented by particular ritual offerings brought by devout women: the *lavureddi* (literally meaning 'little works'). These are vases and plates containing sprouts of cereal plants (wheat or barley usually) which have grown in the dark, in cotton, generally under the owner's bed. The sprouts are of an unusual white colour and are generally tied with a red ribbon as decoration. This tradition is clearly pre-Christian. James Frazer first wrote about this cult in his most famous essay *The Golden Bow*, retracing its origins to the Greek cult of the God Adonis, thinly overlayed with Christianity. Adonis, the God who inseminates Persephone (in Greek Mythology, the Goddess Earth), represents the rebirth and the prosperity of the earth. In the Greek religion, Adonis, the God of vegetation and fertility, was permitted to live in the 'superior world' only six months a year. His 'death' was mourned much like Christ's at Christian Easter, and his resurrection was announced and welcomed by decorating his altar/tomb with the so-called "gardens of Adonis": sprouts and shoots grown in the dark (as dark was 'the inferior' world from which Adonis reappeared). There are strong resemblances between the figures of Adonis and Baal in the Phoenician religion, Osiris in the ancient Egyptian religion, and Tammuz in the ancient Babylonian religion. The very word Adonis signifies Lord in ancient Phoenician, as it does in ancient Hebrew, Adonai (Yahweh).

¹⁷ A most impressive description of the procession of the Saint in Calatabiano is reported in Bonanzinga, 1999, where the author outlines the similarities between the procession and possession rituals.

New York and Sydney. My journey to Agira culminated at the top of the town in the Arab-Norman ruins of the castle. Much as many Sicilian towns after the Second World War, Agira, heir of such a rich multicultural and multi-millennial history, suffered all the evils that war, bad economic policies and the Mafia, imposed on the Sicilian population over the last century. Australia, and in particular Sydney, became a favourite destination for those citizens of Agira looking for a better place to live a dignified life.



3.9. Good Friday in Enna, child and adult members of one of 15 Confraternities marching in the procession of Cristo Morto (Dead Christ) in the main street (photo Garigliano, 2005).

Not far from Agira is Enna, the Province's capital, which I visited with the intention of witnessing the famous procession of Venerdì Santo (Good Friday), one of the most venerable in Sicily. Additional motivation for my visit had also been the discovery of the existence of Sydney-based emigrants' associations whose members were from the Province of Enna (for example, the Associazione San Sebastiano, comprised of citizens from the town of Cerami). A visit to Enna during such an important event allowed me to observe at first hand traditional customs of the area. On Good Friday in Enna, 15 Confraternite (Holy Brotherhoods) march, dressed in their traditional hooded robes, through the streets of the town, carrying in procession the statues of Cristo Morto (Dead Jesus) and of the Madonna Addolorata (Grieving Madonna)

dressed in a black mantle in sign of grief. These two statues do not proceed together, but take different roads through both narrow and wide streets of the town, each accompanied by the sounds of a *Banda* (Brass Band) playing funeral marches. The meeting of the two statues, *La Paci* (peace), the highlight of this ritualistic and auspicious event, happens the day after, on Easter Saturday, *Pasqua di Resurrezione* (Easter Resurrection). The statues are carried on the shoulders of the faithful Brothers for nearly five hours on Good Friday and another two hours on Easter Sunday. Along with the statues, the *Spina Santa* (Holy Thorn), a symbol of the passion of Christ (derived presumably from Christ's crown of thorns), is also taken in procession with great solemnity. The rituals enacted on Good Friday in Enna are extremely complex, rich in symbolic significance and descend from centuries of history. I followed only part of the processions, over about three and a half hours. At first I followed the statue of *Cristo Morto*, which was taken in procession either with the band playing or in total silence down the main street. The statue is eventually taken to the cemetery, on the other side of the town. I entered the cathedral, where the statue of the *Addolorata* and the *Spina Santa* had been brought and before which all 15 of the Holy Brotherhoods marched in procession, entering and exiting the church, presenting both their Holy Relics and the banners of the Holy Brotherhoods.

My observations regarding this experience include the following. There is an extraordinary sense of austerity which reigns during the carrying of these much revered holy statues. Time and space are reshaped and reborn during this event, which involves the whole community. The members of the Holy Brotherhoods alone can be counted in hundreds, whereas the participants in the procession and visitors add up to thousands. The procession imposes ritual spaces and ritual sounds on the town. The sounds of the *Banda* alternate with total silence, only broken by the sound of steps on the cobblestones. The most interesting and striking aspect was the number of people who actively took part in this ritual. The oldest Holy Brotherhood in Enna, The *Santissimo Salvatore*, was founded in the year 1261. Since then there has been an unbroken transmission of this form of devotion from father to child up to the present day. The presence of many child Holy Brothers, wearing the ritual robes, was indicative of this continuity. Witnessing the procession, with its complex rituals and its great popular participation, enabled me to experience first hand the influence and the power of the Catholic Church has over the people of Enna. Religion seems to be

the strength and the core of the Sicilian identity, in particular of those originating from the far interior of the island. This importance of catholic rituals in the identity of inland Sicilians seems to have endured despite the impressive migration from these regions to foreign destinations over the last 150 years. Nonetheless, even if the population may not physically live in Sicily anymore, but in Northern Italy, America, Australia, Germany, England, France, or Belgium, the cultural identity of the Sicilians, and of the Ennesi in particular, remains deeply entrenched in the Catholic faith's rituals.

The main impression and conclusion I drew from this experience, and which I resolved to keep in mind whilst researching the musical traditions of the Sicilians in Australia, was that the music and sounds connected with the Catholic faith and its rituals were likely to be the most preserved and cherished.

3.2.4. 15 to 17 April 2005 – Siracusa, Buscemi, Palazzolo Acreide, Noto:

On 15 and 16 April I attended a conference entitled Partnership Ethnographic Museums organized by Dr. Gaetano Pennino, Director of the Casa Museo Antonino Uccello and of the open-air 'living' museum I luoghi del lavoro contadino of Buscemi, of whom I have written in paragraph 2.1 of this Chapter.



3.10. A view of Buscemi (photo Garigliano, 2005).

The conference was held in the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum of Siracusa. The aim of the conference was to bring together the directors of various ethnographic museums around Europe to establish relationships of shared material and moral support. The program included two days of presentations and talks by the speakers followed by visits (on the last day) to the two above-mentioned museums, to the city of Noto Antica and ended with a concert by Carlo Muratori, a folk singer who performs Sicilian traditional music, in the town of Palazzolo Acreide. I retained interest in attending this conference and event mainly because, through the research I undertook in Palermo, I realized that emigration of citizens from Palazzolo Acreide and Ragusa had been significant throughout the decades. This is reflected by the existence of two associations operating in Sydney, Palazzolo Acreide and Ragusani nel mondo (Citizens of Ragusa in the World). I was therefore interested to explore what the situation was in this area of Sicily, the South-East.

At the conference Professor Marcello Saija identified that the emigrants from the Hyblean region (South-West of Sicily) were better off than the people living in the Sicilia del latifondo (the feudal areas of Sicily, in the Centre-West). This was because

the land was leased to peasants in much smaller patches through a contract known as *emphytheusis*, permitting the creation of a richer ‘middle-class-like’ peasant. Emigrants from the Hyblean region (the Provinces of Ragusa and Siracusa) were equally subject to the culture of emigration which was present in Sicily, but people left for transatlantic destinations from this area about 40 years later than the others: in the first decades of the 20th C. Again, the preferred destination was initially the USA. Emigration from these areas occurred in an organized fashion, through the intermediate, well organized Società di Mutuo Soccorso which I have referred to above¹⁸. Many immigrants to the USA returned to their homeland enriched, with the purpose of buying more land. These dynamics operated before the Second World War. After the Second World War chain-migration continued, encouraged by the accounts of the returning emigrants from the USA Hyblean people, however, changed their prevalent destinations to Australia, Canada and South America. Overall, we can maintain that migration from the Hyblean area was less spurred by desperation and poverty compared to other areas. People left to enhance their wealth, rather than to escape abject living conditions. Visually, the agrarian *emphytheusis* lease system produced a landscape typical of the Hyblean High Plateau: small land portions divided by low, dry stone delimitation walls.

Being able to visit the museums Antonino Uccello and Gaetano Pennino created, was particularly significant for me to familiarize myself with research work on musical folklore and on Sicilian peasant culture, through its vast collection of work tools and manufactured products. Uccello and Pennino (as his successor) have concentrated their research in particular on the people of the Hyblean region, which as I have discussed, is of interest for my research as the land of departure of many emigrants. As I mentioned in paragraph 2.1, Pennino undertook a commendable editorial initiative by re-releasing Uccello’s field recordings (contained in two volumes both with two CDs attached *Era Sicilia , canti di carcere e mafia* and in *Antonino Uccello etnomusicologo*) and by encouraging and supervising the edition of new field-recordings of traditional music in Buscemi (the volume with CD *Musica e tradizione*

¹⁸ Some examples are the: Società di Mutuo Soccorso di Santa Croce Camerina (Prov. Ragusa) of Patterson (USA); Società Figli di Ragusa (sons of Ragusa) of Brooklyn (New York). Figlie di Canicattini Bagni (Daughters of Canicattini Bagni) is a rare example of a feminine-based American *Società di Mutuo Soccorso*.

orale a Buscemi), the latter being an outcome of the research by Sergio Bonanzinga and Rosario Acquaviva.

The museums presenting at the event were Museo Etnografico de Castilla y Leon, from Spain, Etnografiskais Brivdabas Muzejz, from Latvia, Musée de Normandie, from France, Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina, from the Italian Region of Trentino, Museo della Vita e delle Tradizioni Popolari Sarde, from the Italian Region of Sardegna¹⁹. The major achievement of the event was to put Sicily and the studies of its folklore (musical and material culture) back on the European map at a highly regarded academic level. For my research, the most interesting part was being able to visit the sites where the people who were recorded by Uccello and Pennino once lived. The towns of Palazzolo Acreide, Noto and Buscemi still run on an economy (and are theatres of a lifestyle) which is not significantly different from the one Uccello witnessed and documented in the mid-1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Industry is totally absent in this area of Sicily, which still lives off the land. Particularly in Buscemi, having the privilege to visit the workshops and dwellings of the local inhabitants (now turned into museums) was crucial to my understanding of the extremely archaic world that the emigrants who left for Australia came from. As an example, the Wine Press workshop, where the press, built in the early 19th C and in use until the 1950s, has been found almost identical in structure to a Greek wine press dating from the 1 C B.C. As well as the Wine Press workshop, the museum in Buscemi comprises another seven locations which can be visited: ‘the watchkeeper’s house’ (a casa ru massaru – in Sicilian), ‘the blacksmith’s workshop’, ‘the agricultural day labourer’s house’, ‘the tinker’s shop’, ‘the carpenter’s shop’, ‘the olive press’, ‘the cobbler’s shop’.

¹⁹ Translation: Ethnographic Museum of Castilla and Leon, Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum, Museum of Normandy, Museum of the Life and Costumes of the Trentino Folk, Museum of Sardinian Life and Folklore.



3.11. The *casa ro iurnataru* (house of the day-worker), part of the Museum circuit of Buscemi (photo Garigliano, 2005).

Another open-air and ‘functioning’ museum is The Water Mill Santa Lucia, in the territory of Palazzolo Acreide. Most of these dwellings and workshops were in use until the 1960s, in some cases until the 1970s. On the last night, listening to the concert of Carlo Muratori at the Cinema-Theatre King of Palazzolo Acreide was an appropriate conclusion to an overview of how the Hyblean people, starting from the

1950s until today, have rediscovered and re-valued their musical traditions and peasant culture since the early days in which these were in danger of extinction. Muratori has been a collector of songs 'in the field' himself, and has been engaged, since the 1970s, in rearranging and staging traditional songs from the area, reviving the tradition from the Hyblean area. The major outcome of my visit was that through the works of Uccello and Pennino, I was able to witness live what life of Sicilians pre-emigration to Australia was like.

Muratori has worked with Guggino and Gaetano Pennino and has produced records published on Italian and international labels²⁰.

3.2.5. Aeolian Islands:

a. Preparatory research:

After I had learnt about Aeolian migration to Australia and its importance at the Palermo exhibition and conference²¹ I resolved to acquaint myself with all research material ever produced regarding Aeolian folk music.

The earliest publication of interest is the book *Canti popolari Siciliani*²² (1871) compiled by two 19th C folklorists, Lizio-Bruno and Magno, containing a collection of transcribed texts of mainland Sicilian (mainly from the Province of Messina) and Aeolian folk songs. Earlier again, references to folksongs can be found in 19th C travel diary *Die Liparischen Inseln* (The Lipari Islands) (1893-96), written by the blue-blooded Ludwig Salvator, of the House of Habsburg-Lothringen²³. After these publications, no sign of ethnological research in the Aeolian Islands is to be found until the 1990s, when Bonanzinga himself and ethnomusicologist and musician,

²⁰ Beginning with a folk revival group named I Cilliri (from Siracusa) in 1979, Muratori has produced around 10 albums, some of which in his name, covering much of the traditional Sicilian repertoire – for further details, see www.carlomuratori.it.

²¹ Chapter 1, para. 1.3.1. and Chapter 3, par 3.2.2. .

²² See Bibliography and Appendix d.

²³ Son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Leopold 2nd, his travel diary consists of a monumental work (8 vols), encompassing all the geographical and human aspects of the Aeolian Islands, abundantly illustrated with exquisite engravings. See Appendix d – Habsburg heading – and Bibliography – D'Austria heading – for full references of his work, both in German and in Italian translation.

Orazio Corsaro (born 1947) went to the islands with the aim of documenting their traditional music. Their research resulted in the publication of two papers: Sergio Bonanzinga wrote the article *A vuci longa* on the work songs of Lipari, published in the cultural magazine *Nuove Effemeridi* and Orazio Corsaro wrote the article ‘Il patrimonio musicale: I suoni e gli strumenti’ (The Musical Patrimony: Sounds and Musical Instruments), published as a musical section of the volume *Atlante dei Beni Etno-Antropologici Eoliani* (Ethnological and Anthropological Atlas of the Aeolian Islands), an anthology of essays on many facets of Aeolian culture supervised by Dr Sergio Todesco, Chair of the Soprintendenza Beni Culturali Provincia di Messina²⁴ and Curator of Museum on Pastoral life of the Province of Messina. These publications were based on field research carried out by both scholars, which consisted of a series of audio recordings and photographic documentation of the musicians and their instruments.

Bonanzinga’s article *A vuci longa* (The Long Voice) is actually a study of a recording of a work song ‘Amuri, amuri, amuri amuri mia’ (My Love) sung by former peasant Rosa Russo, of Quattropani (a village on the island of Lipari). This track was part of the CD *Il Ciclo della vita*, along with the recording of a serenade called ‘Acula chi d’argentu porti l’ali’ (Silver-Feathered Eagle), sung with guitar accompaniment by Giovanni Paino, also from Quattropani²⁵.

Corsaro presents in his article a summary of some material on the Aeolian Island music along with the results of his field research. Among the most interesting of Corsaro’s recordings and photographs are those of a bagpipe player from the island of Vulcano named Giuseppe Martello. In these photos and recordings he plays both alone and accompanying his wife, who sings. The tracks of these recordings are in the article, but the actual photographs of the zampogna player were included in another publication regarding the bagpipe of the Province of Messina, *La zampogna*

²⁴ Could be loosely translated: the Cultural Affairs Trust of the Province of Messina.

²⁵ Along with these recordings, Bonanzinga released in 2005 a CD, *Musiques de Sicile*, in which he presents another two tracks recorded in Lipari, ‘La spagnola’ (the Spaniard woman) and ‘La figghia svinturata’ (the unlucky daughter), sung and accompanied on guitar by multi-instrumentalist Bartoluzzo Ruggiero. As this release occurred long after I went to the Aeolian Islands, I am not including it in this section, which only reports the material I had in hand at the time.

*messinese*²⁶. Unfortunately for us, Corsaro never managed to make these field recordings publicly available and they still remain his private property. As well as enquiring of Prof. Bonanzinga, I also asked D'Ambra and Prof. Saija for any information about traditional music in the Aeolian Islands. The name of Bartoluzzo²⁷ Ruggiero was the first to come up in both cases. Corsaro confirmed the importance of Ruggiero and gave me more precise details of him²⁸. He also told me of the existence of a folkloristic group named Folk Arte, to his knowledge currently directed by the pharmacist of Lipari, Dr. Carmelo Sparacino²⁹. Corsaro also endorsed and approved of my interest in the work and activity of the brothers Angelo and Benito Merlino, two talented musicians and composers of music inspired by the Aeolian tradition. To my knowledge at the time, the Merlinos were the only musicians who had a profile outside the Aeolian Islands due to their release of CDs and records of their music on the international market³⁰. On the basis of this information I set out on my research³¹.

Later in my research I found that Corsaro had actually been actively involved in the musical life of Lipari (see paragraph d. below, 1 May 2005 – Angelo Ferlazzo etc...): in the 1980s Corsaro taught in middle school for three years in Vulcano, while he was artistic director of Folk Arte and playing with nearly all the amateur and professional musicians on the islands. Since then, Corsaro has continued to be an ambassador and prime interpreter of Sicilian bagpipe in the world; in 2002 he entered the Luigi Cinque

²⁶ Corsaro, Orazio (1992) *La zampogna messinese: Riflessioni su uno strumento popolare*, Sala Bolognese: Forni.

²⁷ Bartoluzzo ('little'-Bartolo) is the nickname for Bartolo or Bartolomeo (Bartholomew), a name very popular in the Aeolian Islands, where Saint Bartholomew is the Patron Saint and Protector Saint.

²⁸ Thanks to Mr. Corsaro's more precise information I was able to find the website of Bartoluzzo Ruggiero (created and maintained by his son): www.bartoluzzoruggiero.it.

²⁹ Upon my arrival in Lipari, I learnt that Dr Carmelo Sparacino had died just a few months before my visit.

³⁰ Benito Merlino, who now lives in Paris, is the more well-known of the two brothers. His CDs can be easily purchased through Amazon and he is a highly renowned musician in France. Angelo's recordings, just as numerous as his brother's, have been marketed in a far less effective way, also given the different paths in life which divided the brothers after the early stages of their musical careers, when they performed together. For further details on the life and works of the Merlino brothers, please refer to paragraph 3.2.5, dedicated to Angelo, in this Chapter.

³¹ Towards the end of my research, I found some YouTube videos on Holy Week in Lipari and on Good Friday which can be useful in having an idea of the religious/chant traditions in Lipari today. I have included details on these videos in the Bibliography section.

Tarantula Hypertex O'rchestra³² with whom, together with Luigi Cinque, Armenian duduk player Djivan Gasparyan and other world music stars, they played at the WOMAD Festival held in Palermo, the same year. The group released a CD (2002, *Tangerine Café*) and Corsaro's performances as a zampogna player were also in the CD *Sunaulòs* (2004), containing the music program Luigi Cinque and Orazio Corsaro presented at the 4th International Festival of the Zampogna of Scapoli³³. His latest musical endeavour has been his involvement with Charlette Shulamit Ottolenghi's group, Ottolenghi being a Jewish-Italian woman, in which they present a program attempting to deliver to the public Ottolenghi's interpretation of what Sicilian music of Arabic times would have sounded like³⁴.

b. 29 April 2005 – First and successive interview with Bartoluzzo Ruggiero (1924-2007):

I visited Bartoluzzo on two occasions, 29 April 2005 and 27 May 2006. Both visits were at his house, in via Giuseppe Garibaldi, one of the main streets of Lipari town. Bartoluzzo, when I first interviewed him, was 81.

The last of 17 children, with two of his elder brothers guitar and violin musicians before him, he was a multi-talented musician. Throughout his life, whilst he earned his living as a barber, he learnt how to play the guitar, the violin and later the mandolin. He told me that above all, the mandolin is the instrument he prefers to play, because “penetra l'anima”, it penetrates the soul. Playing in the bars, cafes and squares of Lipari, he reported having seen many people cry (both locals and foreigners) moved by the soulful sound of the mandolin. In his youth, the major occasions when he would play the mandolin were marriages, christenings, birthdays or even simple get-togethers. He learnt to play the guitar first, then the violin and at last the mandolin which he took up seriously in the 1960s. He spent his early childhood on the island of Alicudi, the smallest of the seven Aeolian Islands, where he remembers listening to the tunes played by an old fisherman on the accordion.

³² Spelling is actually correct, it is not a typing error.

³³ Held yearly in the Molise region, in Central Italy. Website: www.zampogna.org.

³⁴ The program is called *Fawwara – Acqua di fonte*. For more info, see the groups' website: www.shulamitvoice.com.

They were mostly dance tunes³⁵. His father was a butcher, and he remembers working with him in his youth. In his teens he recalls starting to play mandolin regularly, in his spare-time at his barber shop. Though he practised at his barber shop as a pastime, he began to be professionally engaged and performed for many, many serenades³⁶. Serenades were common in the 1930s and 1940s and he remembers performing with guitarists and bass players on cold nights during the island's winter. They even used to travel on rowing boats, from island to island, at night, to go and perform a serenade someone had commissioned them to do. It was through these kind of performances for the local population, that his playing, repertoire and style were refined and he reached a certain local celebrity. Then the Second World War broke out; he remembers there was nothing left to eat, no money, not even electricity. People went back to bartering. He remembers surviving on carob and oranges, and preserving meat in blocks of ice. He never wrote songs about the war. The only tragic event he wrote a song about was the *onda anomala* (the tsunami) which hit Stromboli in 1935. He started writing his own music after the Second World War, when he realized that many of the musical traditions in the Aeolians were disappearing. People became more and more interested in his music as the mandolin became even rarer. He started writing music about his personal memories and the sounds of the pre-war Aeolians and their traditional activities. Some examples are:

‘U luntru’ – The ‘luntru’ is an untranslatable word which indicates a particular type of fishing net used by Aeolian fishermen who fished at night. It is a song portraying the traditional night fishing activities in Lipari.

³⁵ He later explained to me that he wrote a song in remembrance of these tunes, heard from the old man's playing of the accordion in his youth. This song was included in his cassette *Le Isole Eolie*.

³⁶ Serenades can be described as a musical offering or dedication which a suitor commissioned for a desired girl. These performances were held at night, usually under the courted girl's bedroom window, the lover and devotee usually being absent or at least invisible from the window. The mandolin was the most typical instrument played in the serenade, and it is traditionally regarded as the most suitable to win a woman's heart. Other instruments usually accompanied the mandolin, which played the lead melody. These instruments were typically a guitar and a bass, sometimes the violin (which competed with the mandolin as ‘romantic’ – and hence lead – instrument). The tunes played in serenades were often instrumental versions of classical Neapolitan love songs, together with a repertoire of waltzes. Along with instrumental serenades, song serenades were also practised. These were unaccompanied by musical instruments, required a very strong voice, and the texts and musical modules used in them were improvised according to a traditional set of rules. This kind of serenade was very risky, as it was a much more explicit form of courtship. This was inadmissible in Sicily until the 1950s, when many marriages and engagements were not free but arranged by the parents of the young couples (often simply for economic reasons). The lover who dared to present a voice serenade truly risked getting gunned down if his courtship was not agreed to by the young girl's father (whose property, in those days, she literally was).

‘Festa di San Bartolomeo’ – a song describing the Feast of Saint Bartholomew’s day (the Patron Saint of the Aeolian Islands).

‘A ittata di l’astricu’ – song describing the ‘the laying of the roof’. This activity in the old days (pre–Second World War) signified the completion of the building process of a house (which in those days consisted of only one room, used for everything). Roof-laying (which was flat in the Aeolian traditional house) was undertaken with incredible stamina, working up to 24 hours without stopping. The women of the neighbourhood provided food to the workmen and hired musicians who made long working hours less harsh by playing lively, rhythmic music.

The songs Bartoluzzo wrote are very personal and vivid descriptions of a world that was disappearing before his eyes and which he wanted to immortalize. He has recorded the aforementioned three songs on a self-produced cassette, *Eolie – folklore eoliano* (1980), successively re-released on a CD entitled *Bartoluzzo, il cantore delle Eolie*, containing some additional songs. While he described these songs and the stories behind them to me, he held the texts of the songs in his hands, printed on the sleeve notes of the cassette, which he then gave to me at the end of our interview. Bartoluzzo recalls that prior to the Second World War the accordion was the most common instrument, in particular the southern Italian accordion which goes by the name of *organetto*, literally meaning ‘little organ’³⁷. As well as that, small orchestras of string instruments³⁸ were most common. Guitar, mandolin, violin and hand-plucked bass were the instruments played in the town of Lipari. The *organetto*, on the other hand, was played also in the most remote parts of the islands, as I learnt later (by interviewing Nino Ferlazzo), often in those same mountainous parts where the *zampogna* or *ciaramedda* were played.

One of the most interesting facts he said about the music played for private functions (which is the original milieu of string instruments) was that guests at the function often used to join him on other traditional instruments such as *tamburelli* (tambourines), *troccule* (traditional wooden shakers), *campanelli* (bells) and *triangoli* (triangles). What I found even more surprising was that he told me that people

³⁷ Generally intended in English as button accordion, an instrument counting two to eight bass keys, opposed to the chromatic accordion which counts 12 to 120 bass keys.

³⁸ As described in note 33.

danced, and still dance nowadays, to the music of his mandolin. It is extremely rare at the present time to find occasions in which the mandolin is used to accompany dance, and not solely for passive entertainment or spectacle. Bartoluzzo is still capable of making people dance with mandolin music. This is also because the social and cultural conditions in which Bartoluzzo is still operating, have not yet changed to a sufficient extent to cancel the cultural milieu in which such occasions have been occurring for centuries. After the Second World War, when he started touring with his mandolin as a performer, he went to America, Germany and Australia, all places where he has family (and places where a considerable number of Sicilian and Aeolian emigrants live). Talking about his family, Bartoluzzo said he has three sons, two of whom live in Lipari, and one in Padova in northern Italy.

One of his nephews left after the Second World War for Sydney, Australia. He has been to Australia twice, nine and eight years ago, staying respectively for four and two months, both times visiting relatives in Sydney and Melbourne. He performed in many Italian clubs, most of which were founded by emigrants from southern Italy, and he even played live on a local radio broadcast. The most extraordinary experience he remembers overall in Sydney was playing at the Marconi Club before an audience of nearly 3000 people. As well as touring in foreign countries he has also played extensively in Italy outside the Aeolians and very often in locations throughout Sicily and Calabria. He said that he has also had occasion to play with Tom Sinatra, one of Italy's most famous contemporary mandolin players³⁹. After having talked about his life and music, and commented and explained the texts of his songs, I asked him if he could play some music for me on the mandolin. From another side of the house, he brought an electric mandolin, which he specified was made by Carmelo Catania, a luthier from Mascalucia, a town in the Province of Catania. I recorded three pieces on the mandolin and took some short films of him.

When I called Orazio Corsaro before going to Lipari, he said that he maintains that both his and Bonanzinga's interest in Bartoluzzo's music certainly have had an effect on the way he relates to his music. They had interviewed and recorded Bartoluzzo in

³⁹ I had already come across the name of Tom Sinatra in the course of my preceding research on luthiers and guitar and mandolin music in Palermo, which resulted in the publication of my BA Hons thesis *La liuteria a Palermo – Una prima ricognizione sul campo* (Lutherie in Palermo – A first reconnaissance in the field).

1983 as an already mature man. Orazio speculated that the fact of being approached by two anthropologists made Bartoluzzo aware that the kind of music he was playing and the instruments he was playing, were no longer ordinary. He became aware that he was a cultural icon in the Aeolian Islands. It was then that he began to exploit this new image in a more lucrative and semi-professional way, recording cassettes with the help of his son Christian and touring in clubs outside the traditional Lipari venues. My investigations before the trip revealed he had set up a website (www.bartoluzzoruggiero.it) through which he sells recordings of his music in various formats (cassette and CD).

The figure of Bartoluzzo is even more interesting if we consider the traditional figure that the artisan-musician once represented in Sicily⁴⁰. He is one of the very rare living exponents of this tradition. Sadly, Bartoluzzo Ruggiero passed away on 27 November 2007⁴¹.



3.12. Baroluzzo Ruggiero playing his mandolin in his home, in Lipari (photo Garigliano, 2005).

⁴⁰ On the figure of the barber-artisan and string musician in Southern Italy there is a quite vast literature (in Italian). I personally investigated to some extent the environment of the artisans-string instruments players in Palermo, in my BA Hons thesis, mentioned in note 35.

⁴¹ Several videos on Bartoluzzo Ruggiero have been broadcasted on YouTube. I have included details in the Bibliography.

c. April 2005 and May 2006 – First and successive interviews with Rossano Giorgi, Giuseppe Bianchi, Nicola Merlo and Luigi Barrica:

On the morning of 30 April 2005 I met Rossano Giorgi in Lipari, where he works as a teacher. Giorgi is 52; he is a guitarist and is still playing in the clubs around Lipari and on mainland Sicily. He started his musical career following the Merlino brothers to Paris, 1974 to 1978, as part of the *Folkmusici delle Eolie*. Giorgi stayed in Paris for five years, playing in clubs and living a bohemian lifestyle, after which he returned to Lipari, where he eventually became a primary school teacher. Back in Lipari, Giorgi continued pursuing his love for music and in particular for folk music of the Aeolian Islands. He was founding member of the group *Legenda Meligunis*⁴², performing original compositions and songs sung in Aeolian dialect. With his group, Giorgi released an LP album in 1980, which has not been re-released since. Today, *Legenda Meligunis*'s album is a cult item, unfindable on the internet. Giorgi was part of this Group together with Giovanni Ruggiero, now 52, on guitar, (Bartoluzzo's son, who was also one of the main composers and leader of the band), Nicola Merlo, now 42, on guitar and vocals, Luigi Barrica, now in his late 40s, on drums and percussion and Giovanni Gullotta, now 56, on flutes. Giorgi is Nicola Merlo's cousin, and their grandfather used to play and sing the guitar. Giorgi's father, on the other side, was a cooper, played guitar and the violin, and used to play with Bartoluzzo Ruggiero, who has been Rossano's first guitar teacher (he remembers playing with Bartoluzzo at the age of 15). His father, whose name was Bartolo as well, used to go with Bartoluzzo to play for the film crew of *Vulcano*, by Dieterle, in 1949, while Rossellini was filming *Stromboli*, with Ingrid Bergman, at the same time. They used to go from island to island by paddle boat, at night.

On 29 May 2006 I met Giorgi again, at the *Chitarra Bar*⁴³, around 22:30. He was playing with Nicola Merlo (who is also the owner of the *Chitarra Bar*) and other musicians outdoors in Marina Corta. On my arrival I managed to record 'Lu purtuni' (the front door), 'La Grotta del Bue Marino' (The Seal's Cave) and an unidentified tarantella song, whose initial verse is 'Sicilianedda' (Sicilian Maiden). He told me that

⁴² Legend of Meligunis. Meligunis is the Greek name of the Island of Lipari, whose full name in Greek was Liparaion Meligunis. Meligunis means in Greek language – 'generating honey'. Liparaion instead derives from King Liparo, who the legends say had come to the Islands from continental Italy (more precisely, from Campania, in ancient times known as Ausonia).

⁴³ www.chitarrabar.com.

he is re-recording the songs he performed with Legenda Meligunis, plus some new songs, with a new group. Prior to these three songs he played another beautiful song in Aeolian dialect called ‘Ossidiana’ (Obsidian), also included in the new CD. Rossano told me this new group is called ‘Sciara Ranni’ (translatable as ‘big lava flow’), after the very famous and impressive volcanic lava flow of the Island-Volcano Stromboli, which runs into the sea.



3.13. Left to right, Nicola Merlo, me and Luigi Barrica at the Chitarra Bar, in Marina Corta, Lipari (photo Garigliano, 2006)

The day after, on 30 May 2006, I met in by chance with Luigi Barrica, the former drummer of Legenda Meligunis and nowadays also journalist, covering news from the Aeolian Islands for one of the main Italian newspapers, *La Repubblica*. He told me that he is currently playing with Giorgi and others, re-recording the songs of Legenda Meligunis and some new compositions (e.g. ‘Ossidiana’). He provided me with some further information regarding Legenda Meligunis, namely that the group had been active over a period of seven years, from 1980 to 1987, undertaking several tours in Italy at folk festivals and had also made some appearances on television (on RAI 3, in a program called Folk Italia, and on pay TV channels). He added that, even after the group’s dissolution, he, Rossano Giorgi and Nicola Merlo continued to play the songs of the Legenda Meligunis up until nowadays. Differently than Rossano, he informs

me that a person by the name of Felicino Famularo was a founding member of Legenda Meligunis, a name I was already familiar with, as Sonia D'Ambra mentioned him and his father as folk musicians from Vulcano. In the new group Sciara Ranni, a man nicknamed Zio Gay entered the band; very often playing at the Chitarra Bar, he had also participated as a session musician with Legenda Meligunis. Zio Gay is now a stable member of Sciara Ranni.

Barrica told me that at the time Legenda Meligunis was in full activity, it was defined by Renzo Arbore⁴⁴ as one of the most outstanding Italian folk bands, together with Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare and Canzoniere del Lazio. Barrica says that the members of Legenda Meligunis still play together informally and that throughout the years they have had extraordinary opportunities to play with personalities such as Lucio Dalla, Mino Reitano, Pupo and Teresa De Sio. He added that, as Angelo Merlino⁴⁵, he also has had a long-lasting passion for Latin-American music, inherited from his father. His grandfather, who was a dancer and guitarist, travelled to New York and had become expert in South American music. In New York he founded a school of flamenco guitar and South American dances. Back in the Islands, he spread the taste for that music and dance to his children, grandchildren and the wider community. He revealed that, in fact, his favourite percussion instrument is the congas, the Brazilian drums.

On 30 May 2005 I met Giuseppe Bianchi⁴⁶, a folk dancer in the folk group I Cantori Popolari delle Isole Eolie⁴⁷. I had the chance to meet Giuseppe a second time, on 27 May 2006, when I returned to Lipari and filmed a live performance, actually a rehearsal of the group in the gym where they practice.

⁴⁴ Famous Italian TV showman who promoted a festival of new songs in Sicilian dialect in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁴⁵ An Aeolian singer/songwriter whom I will mention in 3.2.5. e.

⁴⁶ Also referred to as Joe Bianchi.

⁴⁷ 'The Folk Singers of the Aeolian Islands' whom I will also call for brevity from now onwards I Cantori Eoliani, 'The Aeolian Singers'.



3.14. Joe Bianchi and I in the practice gym of the Cantori Popolari delle Isole Eolie, in Canneto, Lipari. Note the mural depicting Canneto and the many awards collected by the group, which performed in many folkloristic events around the world, including Australia (photo Garigliano, 2005)

I had first noticed the Cantori Eoliani during my internet research on folk groups in the Aeolian Islands. I found the details of the Cantori Eoliani on the website of the F. I. T. P. Federazione Italiana Tradizioni Popolari (Italian Federation for Folklore)⁴⁸, where Joe Bianchi was listed as contact person.

I met Bianchi at his workplace, the Hospital of Lipari, immediately after having met Rossano Giorgi at the Istituto Tecnico (Technical School). One of the first questions I asked him was regarding the sources from which the group draws its repertoire. He says that the repertoire of the Group, in its greater part, does not differ greatly from that of most Sicilian folk groups, which stage their interpretation of the songs and dances transcribed and described by the great 19th C Sicilian folklorists: Giuseppe Pitré, Albero Favara, Serafino Amabile Guastella, Salvatore Salamone Marino, Lionardo Vigo and so on (I have included a complete list of these scholars and folklorists in Appendix (d), listing their works as well). He also told me that I Cantori Eoliani and their Artistic Director, Nino Alessandro, are strictly connected with

⁴⁸ www.fitp.org/sicilia.htm.

another important Sicilian folk group, I Canterini Popolari dei Peloritani, from Messina, whose artistic director, Lillo Alessandro, is Nino's brother. Allegedly the most longevous folk group of Sicily, and founded in the 1930s, I Canterini Popolari dei Peloritani has ever since been 'the original' from which many 'copy groups' (including I Cantori Eoliani) multiplied throughout Sicily. Folk groups have since taken part in many of the Patron Saints festivals and *Sagre*⁴⁹, entering the consciousness of the folk, although a genre of spectacle introduced and organized by the literate bourgeoisie.

I first had the chance to meet Nicola Merlo on 30 March 2005 in his bar, the Chitarra Bar (Guitar Bar), in the centre of Lipari, in the quarter of Marina Corta (it means 'short seafront'). I would meet Nicola a second and third time as well, in 2006, on 29 and 30 May, as in his bar I interviewed and recorded Rossano Giorgi and Luigi Barrica. Before arriving in Lipari, I had researched on the internet for 'music in Lipari', and found a review of this place. It seemed interesting. The website reported that local musicians, as well as celebrities of Italian pop music (i.e. the world-famous Lucio Dalla, originally from Bologna) performed there. The owner is Nicola Merlo, a passionate guitar player. I got to the bar quite early, when it was still closed. When Merlo opened we sat at the table behaving much as ordinary customers rather than as researchers on the job, so as not to spoil the spontaneity of the event. No food or drink was served; the evening was exclusively music-oriented. To tell the truth, it was impossible to get served – there was no service and one had to go to the counter and ask for one's drink. The evening was a solo performance by Nicola Merlo, who sang 10 to 12 songs. I recorded six songs. His repertoire was very diverse. It ranged from Italian pop songs from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (songs by the biggest names in the Cantautore [singer-songwriter] genre) to traditional Sicilian folk songs (Otello Profazio's versions of the Sicilian and Calabrian Tarantella), and English American pop songs. The audience in the Bar seemed very much at home, and we were the only newcomers – everyone else knew one another. Nicola had a very strong interaction with his audience, who sang with him and cheered. When each song was over he would ask the people what they next wanted to hear. There was obviously a fixed repertoire, well-known to the bar's patrons. At the end of the performance I went to

⁴⁹ Community gatherings and celebrations connected to harvest or to the local produce.

speak to Nicola Merlo, introducing us, telling him about my research and advising him of the fact that I had recorded some of his songs. He was very happy to hear that someone at the academic level had some interest in Aeolian music, or at least, in music in the Aeolian Islands. What I found most interesting about Nicola was the unconventionality and openness which permeated his Guitar Bar. His venue was a melting pot for styles and artists from the most diverse backgrounds. From Bartoluzzo, to Rossano Giorgi⁵⁰, from the Merlino brothers to Lucio Dalla, everybody had the opportunity to sing along with Nicola in his bar, creating an atmosphere unique to Lipari. The island's opening up to tourism and the subsequent rise in the level of personal income of the Aeolian inhabitants (also due to funds from returning emigrants) has not changed the 'family dimension' of entertainment in Marina Corta, where strangers are welcome and are witness to a local gathering of friends, playing the songs that most appeal to their tastes. It was not so much the repertoire played that evening, but the modality in which the music was played that spoke of the Aeolian aesthetic and ethics of music. Hence in the Chitarra Bar it is the *modus operandi* of music making used in 'the old days' that can be observed.

d. 1 May 2005 – First and successive interviews with Angelo Ferlazzo and Salvatore Biviano:

On the afternoon of 1 May afternoon I met Angelo Ferlazzo, in his fishing gear shop, Punto Mare, in Canneto. On 27 May 2006 I had a chance to meet him again, and in that occasion he would invite me to sit in on the rehearsals of the folkloristic group he performs in as a dancer. He was not one of the people I had planned to meet, I was recommended to see him by a man called Tano, a bar owner in Canneto. I was recommended to meet him as his father was director of a folk group, Folk Arte, now no longer active, and he is now a folkdancer in I Cantori Eoliani, together with Joe Bianchi. Now aged 45, he has been dancing in folk groups since he was 16 years old. I first asked him about Folk Arte. He said that it was the folk group which was active in Lipari town, together with the Cantori Eoliani. It had been the most longevous group on Lipari, and Angelo Merlino, Carmelo Sparacino, Orazio Corsaro and his father, whose name was also Angelo (nicknamed Lino), were its directors. The group

⁵⁰ Sonia D'Ambra on the same day told me of this musician, Rossano Giorgi, a person whom I would interview on 30 May 2006. Nicola Merlo himself, the same evening, told me the Merlino and Lucio Dalla were regular customers of his Chitarra Bar.

ceased all activity following the death of the last director, Doctor Carmelo Sparacino, the pharmacist of Lipari. Angelo's wife, who is Romanian, is also a dancer in the Cantori Eoliani. Regarding the music in Lipari he says that he remembers from when he was a child, that people from the mountain villages of Pianoconte and Quattropiani (still on the island of Lipari, but in the high zones) used to play the *organetto* and the *zampogna*. Of Orazio Corsaro he says he was an excellent zampogna and tambourine player and directed the group for five years, in the 1980s. As a dancer in Folk Arte he has been to Sydney twice, in 1990 and in 1991, dancing both in Five Dock and at the Opera House. Angelo Ferlazzo had given me the precious opportunity of filming a rehearsal of the group where he currently performs as a dancer, wearing Sicilian costume, in Canneto. On that occasion, I also interviewed the director of the Cantori Eoliani, Nino Alessandro (whom I mentioned in 3.2.5.c).



3.15. Salvatore Biviano's booklet of the CD (and musical production) *Australia Ottava Isola* (Australia Eighth Island) displaying symbols and views of Australia, Sydney and Canneto.

On the afternoon of 1 May 2005 I met Salvatore Biviano, aged 56, in Canneto, on the seafront promenade, Marina Garibaldi. I would have the chance to meet Salvatore again, on 28 and 30 May 2006. He is the leader of a folk group called Momenti Eoliani (Aeolian Moments). He remembers he first started playing the guitar at the age of 13. As I described the purpose of my research, he said that he has been to

Australia twice to perform with the group, in 2003. Regarding the theme of Aeolian emigrants to Australia he had composed a concept album, entitled *Australia Ottava Isola delle Eolie*⁵¹ (Australia Eighth Aeolian Island – the Aeolian Islands being seven in number), produced with the support of the Provincia Regionale di Messina (Messina Regional Province). As he told me about this album, he called one of his nephews and asked him to bring a couple of copies of his CDs, to show me. As the nephew returned with the CDs we talked about his album on Australia. He explained that the texts of the songs narrate the typical family history of an Aeolian immigrant to Australia: starting from the description of the poor living conditions in the Aeolians after the war, the painful separation from the beloved Islands and family, the creation of a new and prosperous life in Australia, marriage and parenthood to Australian-born children, the commitment not to forget the native land and the hope to return there in the last days of one's life and to die there. The texts are written and sung in Sicilian, in the local Aeolian dialect. They are extremely sentimental and painted with nostalgia. There are five in the group including him, and most of the Momenti Eoliani Group, which includes also 12 child dancers, is made up of family members and relatives. He explained that the number of members of the group has varied greatly over the years. Regarding the instruments used by the group and the arrangements of the songs, Salvatore said they are flexible and interchangeable in order to adapt to different situations. The current line-up of the group is:

Salvatore Biviano, born in Lipari 10 April 1949 – Guitar and vocals

Bartolo Lo Ricco, born in Lipari 22 August 1956 – Keyboards

Graziella Biviano, born in Lipari 3 July 1967 – Clarinet, tambourine and vocals

Eraldo Biviano, born in Lipari 22 June 1954 – Percussion and vocals

Lorelisa Biviano, born in Lipari 25 February 1977 – Saxophone, flute and vocals

Biviano said that he prefers to play compositions within the Sicilian traditional style on modern instruments rather than on older instruments (more traditional) because he feels the sound is closer to people's sensibilities nowadays. In particular occasions, though, the keyboard player takes up the accordion and the percussionist takes up the *ciavurrazzu*⁵².

⁵¹ The title of this thesis has been inspired by the title of this CD.

⁵² A 'friction percussion' which consists of a clay pot whose opening is covered with a rug, which is tightly secured to the pot, in the centre of which a stick is introduced. The sound is produced by rubbing the hand on the stick, which has been previously wet to ease the sliding movement. The sound



3.16. Salvatore Biviano and I on the sea wall of Canneto holding a copy of *Australia Ottava Isola* (photo Garigliano, 2005).

is produced by the movement of the hand on the stick, which produces vibrations on the rug, which are amplified by the cavity of the clay pot.



3.17. The extended Momenti Eoliani group, in 1998, in an official photo (photo is property of Salvatore Biviano).

Along with *Australia Ottava Isola delle Eolie* Momenti Eoliani self-produced another album, which Salvatore gave me, *Eolie in Musica* (Aeolian Islands in music). Both of these albums, in the format of a CD, were produced in the year 2000.

I asked him on which occasions they would perform their music. He said that for example the next day, 1 May (Italian National Holiday – Workers’ Day), they would be performing in the square of Canneto. The occasions in which the group performs are mainly public holidays and on significant dates of the religious calendar. As examples he cited the Festa di San Bartolomeo and the Quadaruni ‘i San Giuseppe (literally – Saint Joseph’s big cauldron).

We continued our interview commenting on the Aeolian islander’s migrant experience to Australia and how the profile of the local population had changed in the last 50 years. He said that now, more than half the original population of the islands

had left. Very few ‘original’ Aeolians were left. Many people who live here now have bought the houses of the Aeolians, who emigrated 50 years ago in absolute poverty, often selling their house in order to pay their trip over to Australia. Since the 1950s and 1960s, when the islands came to world and Italian attention, many outsiders have moved in, intermarrying with Aeolians and gradually transforming the Archipelago into a VIP holiday resort. Tourism had its great boost in the 1960s, developing throughout the following 30 years, until the 1990s, when the Aeolians established themselves as the holiday location for individuals, couples or small groups, looking for an out-of-the-way, nature-oriented holiday.

The very few Aeolians who have not sold their house and migrated are considered a truly privileged category nowadays. Considering this in relation to the fact that almost without exception every Aeolian islander has a relative in Australia, Salvatore stressed that it is thanks to the people that have not sold their home to outsiders that communication with the ‘other’ Aeolians, part of the family, on the other side of the world is still possible.

Salvatore maintains that an Aeolian cultural identity has been able to survive thanks to the very few Aeolians who have kept their house and heroically have not left in times of famine, after the Second World War.

The Biviano family is no exception to this, counting several branches in Australia, between Sydney and Melbourne.

Salvatore also said about the ethnic Aeolians (not the newcomers, who have taken their place) “ce n’è più fuori che dentro” (there are more Aeolians outside of the Archipelago than living in it). He quoted that in the Aeolians today there is a total population of 12.000 people, while in Five Dock, at the times he went, there was an Aeolian population of 15.000 people, to be doubled considering the second generation immigrants. He believed that Aeolians in Australia retain much more of the traditional customs than the people found in the islands today. Of their knowledge of traditional song, he said that they both had none. The so-called traditional musicians who are active today in Lipari, including himself and his band, are presenting mostly reconstructed, artificial or straightforward invented traditions.

I shall further discuss the perception Aeolians musicians have of themselves, in Chapter 5 and in the conclusions.

e. 2 May 2005 – First and successive interviews with Angelo Merlino (1940-2007), Giovanni Ullu and Geri Palamara:

Angelo Merlino has been one of the key figures throughout my research and his musical production has been subject to special attention on my part⁵³. I have met Angelo Merlino six times in the last three years of his life, both alone and with other musicians and both on Lipari and in Sydney. My first interview took place on 2 May 2005 in Canneto (Lipari) at the Bar Mezzapica, together with his collaborator Giovanni Ullu; our second encounter was at the Festa di San Bartolomeo in Five Dock (Sydney) on 12 February 2006 and was followed by an interview at his sister Irma's house in Croydon (Sydney), on 14 February 2006; my third interview and recording of his performance occurred in his home in Canneto (Lipari) on 26 May 2006 and was followed by a performance on the Mezzapica Bar, together with Geri Palamara, on 28 May 2007; the last occasion on which I met him, together with many other people, was in Lipari on 11 June 2007, when I presented a paper on the topic of this thesis. Given the number of times I have met Angelo Merlino, in this paragraph I shall not relate a detailed account of the circumstances of our encounters; rather, I shall provide a section of biographical information, listing his production⁵⁴, followed by an analysis of his work. Merlino has been one of the most interesting figures in my thesis, given his quintessential role as a musician operating between Italy and Australia and because of his adoption of different musical idioms. A short essay analysing his work and expanding on reflections derived from it will follow the biographical section. I end the paragraph with the mentioning of Angelo Merlino's musician friends Giovanni Ullu and Geri Palamara, who I met through him.

⁵³ See Garigliano (2007) in Bibliography.

⁵⁴ I have listed the entirety of Merlino's production in the Discography section of this thesis. I have divided his discography in 2 major sections: "Verified" and "Discography yet subject to verification". "Verified" discography contains albums which are contained in catalogues available online at the website of the Record Label (Buda Musique), home productions which are not available on mainstream market but which I have viewed in person and out of print/catalogue albums which are still available for purchase from record retailers. "Discography yet subject to verification" contains albums which Angelo Merlino either claimed he produced or that he collaborated in. These albums include some which go under other artists' names, home productions which I haven't had a chance to see and albums which are not available through retailers and which aren't listed in any online catalogue.

Angelo Merlino was born in Lipari on 12 February 1940 to a Sicilian father who was appointed general practitioner for the Aeolian Islands, and a Uruguayan mother, Amanda, who was of Aeolian descent. Amanda was influential in the formation of young Angelo, as she sang and played guitar, instilling in him love for South American music. Angelo's elder brother, Benito, has lived in Paris since his youth and is also a well-known musician. His elder sister, Irma, migrated to Sydney, Australia in her youth. Angelo spent his early childhood on the scantily inhabited island of Filicudi, which is in many aspects still remote and archaic. Attending High School in Messina, he enrolled first in Medicine and then in Languages Degrees at the University of the same city.



3.18. Left to right: Angelo Merlino, me and Giovanni Ullu in the Bar Mezzapica of Canneto, Lipari (photo Garigliano, 2005).

Angelo's life as a professional musician started in 1973, following his elder brother's venture to Paris in the early 60s. Benito and Angelo formed a group named Folk Musici delle Eolie (Aeolian Folk Musicians). Angelo started a life commuting to and from Paris for 10 years, from 1980 to 1990. In these years, when he was in Lipari, Angelo founded together with Professor Pino Pajno, the Folkloristic Group Folk Arte,

which will since then have a long life and many artistic directors, and started working for the Aeolian Islands Tourist Board, bringing to life many initiatives. When in Paris, he and his brother established themselves in the European folk music scene. This brought him into contact with many international stars, whom were to be influential in his life, notably south-American musician Atahualpa Yupanqui and the group Los Calchakis. These musicians enhanced Angelo's taste for the creation of hybrid music, cross-fertilizing Sicilian and South-American melodies and themes.

The first major work in which Angelo expressed this hybridity was the *Missa Eoliana*, the Aeolian Mass, a sequence of songs recounting the Passion of Jesus Christ in Sicilian dialect. The Mass was originally included on a side of the 1978 LP *Missa Eoliana et Visages de Sicile* (Aeolian Mass and Faces of Sicily). The inspiration for this 'Mass' was the 1969 Los Calchakis performance of the *Misa Criolla*⁵⁵ (Creole Mass), an interpretation of the original and homonymous composition by Argentinean composer Ariel Ramirez which integrated Argentinean and Bolivian folklore into Church music. In these 10 years in Paris Angelo Merlino and his Folk Musici released another album under his name, *Tarantelle de Sicile* (1976), Merlino produced one album with Atahualpa Yupanqui (home production - 1985) and he was a featured musician on 3 of Yupanqui's releases as well as on Los Calchakis' 1979 album *Recuerdo*. In 1990 Angelo released his second and last album under his name in France which is still commercially available: *Chants de l'Italie du Sud*, published by Buda Musique.

In these years the Merlino brothers performed mainly in France: in Paris, at the Opéra Garnier, in the Notre Dame Cathedral (where they performed the première of the *Missa Eoliana*), at the Theatre Du Vieux Colombier, at Nanterre University and in Aix en Provence. A couple of times their performances were broadcasted by several French television shows (he recalls *Le Grand Echiquier*, on Antenne 2). They also performed in Berlin (Cabaret *Chez Nous*), in Switzerland (Zurich, Locarno, Lucerna), in South America (Montevideo, in Uruguay) and in several locations in Italy (Milano, in the *Piccolo Teatro* of Giorgio Strehler and at *Pier Lombardo* Theatres, in Rome, Palermo, Messina, Catania). It was also in these years that the Merlino brothers have

⁵⁵ The first official LP release by Los Calchakis will be in 1976.

started their visits to Australia, where they will return several times throughout their lives. Facilitated by their sister's presence there and especially on the occasion of the Festa di San Bartolomeo in Five Dock Park, in which they played several times, the Merlino brothers performed both together and with autonomous bands on the other side of the world, making their music and their records known to their overseas compatriots. Angelo Merlino also told me that in these years he had the opportunity to play in and visit his mother's country, Uruguay.



3.19. Angelo Merlino singing and playing guitar in his home, in Canneto (photo Garigliano, 2006).

After 10 years of commuting to Paris, Angelo returned to Lipari where he married, had children, continued his activity of touristic promotion of the Islands and worked for several insurance companies while never giving up his life as a musician. He was till commuting to Paris and recording regularly with his brother Benito's internationally well-established band throughout the 90s and in the 2000 years, producing seven albums up to date, published by the French label Buda Musique. A highlight of their career together was Angelo and Benito's 1995 recording of a double CD entitled *Amore e rivolta* (Love and revolt) co-written with Sicilian poet and philosopher Lanza Del Vasto and Atahualpa Yupanqui.

In 2003 Angelo recorded a CD dedicated to Chilean folksinger Violeta Parra (*Gracias a la vida*); this CD was the first of those recorded by Angelo Merlino's new label, Associazione Culturale Atahualpa Yupanqui (Atahualpa Yupanqui Cultural Association), founded with his daughter Armandina and named after the man whom he regards as his master. In 2005 Angelo dedicated an album to Atahualpa, who died in 1990 (*Homenaje para Atahualpa*).

The advent of this label marks a new phase in Angelo's life wherein, based in Lipari, he promotes the culture of the islands and their musical traditions through musical initiatives. In doing so, he managed to marry the two activities which he had been undertaking in parallel all along his life. Boat tours to Filicudi in which he recounts to tourists the Aeolian Islands' traditional stories and legends in music; the yearly performance of the Missa Eoliana (Aeolian Mass) in the church of San Cristoforo at Easter and the involvement of tourists in traditional swordfish hunt boat tours with musical accompaniment are the three activities which he managed to implement on a regular basis, developing an original musical and ethnic new form of tourism.



3.20. Angelo Merlino singing and playing guitar on his roof terrace in his home, in Canneto (photo Garigliano, 2006).

In 2006 Angelo Merlino recorded, *Antologia Musicale delle Isole Eolie*, an ambitious, self-produced multi-disciplinary project. The CD includes a set of songs describing

each one of the seven Aeolian Islands and their traditional fishing practices. The associated DVD, conceived by Angelo and Teodoro Mercuri, illustrates the geological history and archaeology of the Aeolian Islands and Angelo's cultural initiatives. In 2005, Angelo played songs from this album both in Italy and in Australia where he performed to emigrant audiences in Sydney and Melbourne. Angelo's musical production is distinguished by its hybrid quality. Born into a multicultural family he has, since his childhood, had an original outlook on the different identities inherent in his Sicilian and Aeolian cultural heritages. The musical awareness instilled in the brothers by their mother was enhanced by the cultural awakening (described above) which the islands underwent in the immediate post-Second World War period.

The Merlinos grew up immersed in this 'new image', sensing all the appeal the Islands held for non-locals. Benito Merlino exported, first to Paris and then the rest of the world, the best of what the Aeolians had to offer, what he had learned and what he had talent for: the music of the time of myth. Many parallels could be made with the same type of image-construction that has occurred in Nova Scotia, Canada, as illustrated by Ian McKay (1953: Chapters 1 and 2). McKay speaks in his essay of a myth of a 'time of innocence', a 'golden age' for which the man of the industrial and post-industrial society strives.

By exporting their stories and myths into the global world, Angelo and Benito saved this heritage before it could be swept away by the emerging consumer culture. They responded with great efficiency and creativity to the challenges of a changing world. Such adaptation and change in order to preserve identity in a new frame is the most important sign that a culture is still alive and well.

Within a contemporary Mediterranean context, it is important to consider that Merlino's music was hardly ever published on a major (or even medium-scale) record label. In this sense he can be considered as an 'underground' and, in some ways, 'cult' artist, appealing to a small, dedicated local audience, many of whom knew him personally. He was influenced by the European Folk Revival movement of the 70s,

but always remained on the fringes of it, eschewing easily marketable ‘Sicilian ethnic’ product⁵⁶.



3.21. Angelo Merlino's Sicilian and Latin-American musical instruments; note the hand-painted Sicilian tambourine in the centre and the charango (made with armadillo shell). He also displays his photo with Domenico Modugno, who visited and loved Lipari and with whom he was friends (photo Garigliano, 2006).

Angelo, together with Benito, has influenced a whole generation of young Aeolian musicians who define themselves as folk artists. The Merlinos are regarded as spiritual fathers of the musical community of the islands. Their music is widely and diversely performed in restaurants and bars. It has a deep connection with the land and its people and gives voice and resonance to the Islanders' contemporary views of reality. The Latin American idiom is perceived as an original form of music by the people, and not as a 'metisse' or a 'pastiche' from somewhere else. Unmistakable proof of the fact that this music is contemporary folk is that some islanders sing the Merlino brothers' songs without knowing who composed them. Thus, even within the lifetime of its creator, the music has entered the public domain.

I shall now introduce the figures of Giovanni Ullu and Geri Palamara, whom I met throughout my encounters with Angelo Merlino in Lipari, both in 2005 and in 2006.

⁵⁶ Several videos on Angelo Merlino's performances and on tribute concerts have been made available to the public by A. Merlino's son, Aldo, and by Carmelo Travia, one of his accompanying musicians. I have included details on these videos in the Bibliography.

Ullu has contributed to the arrangements and recording of three singles and an album by Merlino, while Palamara is simply a long time friend with whom Merlino has spent time and with whom he has played music. I judged relevant to include information on these musicians here as they have been associated with Angelo Merlino, on whom I have just included a lengthy section, and also because of the interconnectedness of all musicians in Lipari and the islands. As we have seen in the previous paragraphs and will see in the following, all musicians on Lipari, and also from other Aeolian Islands, are bound to meet, given the geographic restrictedness and the few venues available for performance of all kinds of music. The description of the musical environment of the Islands is important for the rendering of the general cultural climate in which the musicians who have had contact with Australia⁵⁷ have lived and continue to live.

I met Giovanni Ullu on 2 May 2005 and on 28 May 2006, both times with Angelo Merlino in the Bar Mezzapica of Canneto, where they both performed for me after an interview, and on 11 June 2007 at my paper presentation, in Lipari. Ullu has been involved with Angelo Merlino since the creation of the Associazione Culturale Atahualpa Yupanqui, in 2003. Born in Sardinia but raised and trained as a musician in Rome, Ullu entered the world of music foremost as an Italian pop composer. His most successful song at the time (between mid-1976 and the mid-1980s) had been 'Pazza Idea' (Crazy Thought), performed by Patty Pravo, an Italian pop music star. Treasuring his experience in music production studios and in music editing and not disdaining folk music (and in particular Latin-American), he moved permanently to Lipari in the early 2000 years, where he was introduced by Angelo Merlino to the works of Atahualpa Yupanqui and Violeta Parra. With Merlino since 2003 he recorded *Onda Anomala*, *Gracias a la vida*, *Homenaje para Atahualpa*, both performing with him and supervising the musical production. At least since 2005 he has also developed an interest in Christian music, writing several songs both of praise and on his personal Christian experience.

I met Geri Palamara on 28 May 2006 at the Bar Mezzapica of Canneto (Lipari), where he performed together with Angelo Merlino and Giovanni Ullu. Born in 1939 and of

⁵⁷ Through migration, either personal, or of relatives.

Aeolian background, Palamara has developed a career as multifaceted artist and a political activist since 1957. Well-known all over Italy and in New York, he is a painter, sculptor and, most importantly, *cantastorie* (traditional Sicilian singer and storyteller). He currently lives in Lipari, where he maintains his studio.

Until recent years (1970s), the *cantastorie* were important and common intermediaries in disseminating information between the literate, bourgeois classes and the urban and rural (often illiterate) proletariat. From the 1970s until today, the *cantastorie* have been progressively changing their profile as literacy has increased and access to television has become widespread even among the poorest and relatively uneducated. Cantastorie have been, and still are, the creators and the torch bearers of the vox populi, commenting on current affairs, expressing and interpreting them in often a sarcastic and critical way.

Palamara has published a number of albums with major and minor Italian record labels, both as a Sicilian *cantastorie* and as an Italian *cantautore* (singer-songwriter), engaging in themes of social protest (often referring to models such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger) and being a frontline spokesman for the Pacifist movement. Starting as a singer-songwriter in Sicilian, participating in local folk festivals, Palamara's career as a folk singer took off in the 1970s, when he worked with play director Pino Correnti, who in the 1960s was manager of the Manzoni theatre of Milano. In the 1970s Palamara appeared on TV as a folk singer at a national level and participated in Italy's most important folk festivals, together with Rosa Balistreri and Lino Patruno. In 1979 he composed the songs and music for *Ventu di Tunni*, a show by Pino Correnti in which he performed side by side with Rosa Balistreri, in the minor archipelagos of Sicily. Geri Palamara has had contacts with Antonino Buttitta, Elsa Guggino and most ethnomusicologists who were active in the 1970s, having worked closely with renowned female Sicilian folk singer Rosa Balistreri. In the 1970s, Palamara was also involved with the Teatro dei Pupi Emanuele Macrì⁵⁸, he established himself as a recording performer of national calibre in Milano, where in 1979 he founded Panarea Club in the Milanese neighbourhood of Brera. The 1980s are the apex of his career, both as an artist/performer and a *cantastorie*. During this

⁵⁸ A traditional Sicilian puppet theatre, which I had the chance to meet in Australia in 2006. See photos 4.28. and 4.29. in Chapter 4.

time he opened a studio in New York. Among his most grandiose spectacles were those which he performed with boat installation in the navigli (canal system) in Milano, the reconstruction of the Aeolian Islands in plastic and wood in New York, the staging of a spectacle on battle ships in the Straits of Messina, the staging of a play and performance in the Greek Island of Rhodes, recounting the historical expulsion of the Knights of Rhodes from the island.

Further details on Palamara's biography and works can be found on his website: www.geripalamara.it. Unfortunately, he does not provide a complete discography on his website. Several interviews and filmed performances of Palamara's works are available on YouTube and on the website of the Istituto Luce (State Cinematography Department established by Mussolini – website: www.luce.it).

f. 3 May 2005 – First and successive interviews with Antonino Sciacchitano, Antonino Cipriano, Giovanni Iacono and Francesca Sparacino:

I had heard of Antonino Sciacchitano from Angelo Ferlazzo, who had given me his phone number. Tano, the owner of one of the bars in Canneto, and Sonia D'Ambra, told me of the existence of a marble craftsman in Pianoconte who played the accordion. Following up this lead I realized that this person was Antonino Cipriano. Upon my first visit to him, two other musicians also volunteered to be interviewed and talk about their musicianship, Antonino Sciacchitano and Giovanni Iacono. The following section delivers the information I gathered in two interviews: on 3 May 2005, in which I interviewed Antonino Sciacchitano, Antonino Cipriano and Giovanni Iacono, documented through analogue tape recordings and photographic material; and on 27 May 2007, when I met Sciacchitano and Cipriano again and had the chance to film their performances, as well as confirm and enquire on details of much of the information they provided.



3.22. Antonino Sciacchitano and his organetto in Quattropani, Lipari, Contrada Varesana (photo Garigliano, 2005).

I only knew that he played the accordion and lived in Pianoconte, a mountain suburb of Lipari. More exactly he lived in Contrada Varesana, outside the small town of Pianoconte. As I did not have many clear indications on where his house was, I asked. It was by word of mouth that I got to his house in the countryside, following directions of Antonino's nephew over the phone. As I arrived I was offered coffee and Antonino, a man of 75, brought out his instrument.

With much surprise I realized that it wasn't an ordinary accordion, it was an *organetto*, the typical Southern Italian squeezebox, with eight basses. It was a Castagnari, a brand which is produced in the Central Italian Region of Marche in a town called Recanati, generally famous for having been the birthplace of the famous Italian poet and writer, Giacomo Leopardi. Without losing any time, Antonino started playing it straight away, very excited that someone came to visit him especially for musical purposes. He started off playing a mazurka called 'l'acidduzzu di me cummari' (the little bird of my godmother), a Sicilian traditional song whose text is filled with 'naughty' double-meanings, of which he played only the melody (he didn't sing the words).

After a very short while, the word having spread that I had come to record some musicians, another man came along, Antonino Cipriano, also 75 years old. He came with a proper accordion. He started playing as well, the same pieces Sciacchitano knows. Sciacchitano explained that they often play together, so they know many pieces in common. Apart from 'l'acidduzzu', they play other Italian popular tunes, such as 'Piemontesina' (the Piedmontese lass), 'La Campagnola' (the country lass) and 'Marina'. As well as these well known dance songs (they are both mazurkas), learnt from the radio in the 1950s, they played dance tunes that were not originally accompanied by words, such as polkas, waltzes, tarantellas. They explained that the main occasions in which they used to play their instruments were dance parties. Until the 1960s, radio and television were nearly absent from the Aeolian Islands, and certainly even more so in the remote community of Pianoconte. The only tunes they had learnt were those they had heard on the radio, in downtown Lipari, when they went there. Their repertoire is a mix of music learnt from the radio and from oral tradition, from elder musicians, as well as new songs of 'folkloristic' inspiration being composed and broadcasted on the radio (such as 'Piemontesina' and 'La Campagnola') in the 1960s and 1970s. Traditional songs that existed in innumerable variants all over Southern Italy were recorded by particular bands or artists and broadcasted.

Hence, a curious phenomenon of 'homogenization' (and in a certain sense, commercialization or even globalization) of traditional songs took place. Artists such as the Calabrian Otello Profazio and the Sicilian Rosa Balistreri, together with musicians who are more definable as folk musicians, such as Ignazio Privitera e il suo complesso (Ignazio Privitera and his ensemble), from Catania, recorded a 'standardized' version of many folk songs, which were then broadcasted on the radio, recorded onto LPs (and later on cassettes) and then sold and distributed. Thus both Sciacchitano and Cipriano are musical 'products' of an era when oral tradition was still alive, but was gradually being appropriated and standardized by radio. They are living representatives of amateur rural musicians of an era (the 1950s and 1960s, the years when they learnt the repertoire they still play today) when regional identities were for the first time unifying into a national identity, thanks to the empowered media of radio and television.

As these considerations came to my mind, following the answers I received to my questions, I was recording all the pieces both musicians were playing. I asked Sciacchitano more about the occasions and locations in which they used to play. He said they used to play in private houses, which traditionally comprised one room in the Aeolian Islands, on the events of important dates of the Sacred calendar (Christmas, Easter and so on), for private functions (such as baptisms, weddings and other rejoicing occasions) and on the occasions of community events such as La Festa del Vino, the wine festival, which is held in November. He said the most frequent occasions were simply dance parties among young people at the age of courtship and marriage. As there was no other form of entertainment in Pianoconte in those years, playing and dancing to live music was the favourite pastime.

Sciacchitano and Cipriano have been the entertainers of that community for many years, until television became accessible to everyone and radio and recorded music rendered their music progressively less required. He explained they used to learn up to eight pieces in a sequence; once they had played all of them they started the sequence all over again. He explained that the houses at the time were so small that people often had to take turns in dancing. Only about 10 people fitted in the house. Cipriano then told me that a friend of his who played the mandolin was going to call in shortly – and so he did. Giovanni Iacono, aged 67 years, turned up with his instrument and started playing. One of the first things he told me was that he started playing again only two weeks ago. He had learnt the mandolin when he was young, but then stopped playing when he got married, he explained. When he was young (presumably in his late teens and early twenties) he used to play in an ensemble that included violin, mandolin, clarinet and the drum set. They use to play in Lipari, town.

He also used to play serenades, as Sciacchitano did with his accordion. Sciacchitano, on this note, sang an ‘address’ that he used to begin a serenade. The serenade, a musical practice which I briefly illustrated earlier in this Chapter (refer to note 33), could feature instrumental music, vocal music or both combined. During our interview, he played a series of pieces, all of which were related to the genres that both Sciacchitano and Cipriano played. These are (and they all were recorded): ‘La vita e’ bella’ (life is beautiful), a waltz; ‘La Campagnola’, ‘Calabrisella’; ‘Vieni dolce amore’, ‘La spagnola’, ‘Terra straniera’, ‘Vola colomba’, ‘Vola stornello’, ‘Come fa

zaza', 'Vitti na crozza', 'Vecchio scarpone', 'Polka saltante', 'Reginella', 'Rosamunda', 'Arrivederci Roma'.

Continuing my interview, questions to Iacono and to Sciacchitano interwove. One of the questions I asked Sciacchitano was if he remembered, in past times, if he ever played for people making wine in the traditional way (i.e. breaking the grapes with their feet stomping on them in a very large barrel). He answered that yes, not only he did, because in Pianoconte they used to make wine that way, but someone even recorded him while he played. This was particularly interesting, as it testifies a use of music in work. This is one of the most typical situations in which music becomes a real 'tradition', as it is associated with a particular, repetitive action performed in everyday life (or at least, in everyday life of some years ago). I first heard of the custom of playing music on the accordion as assistance to the traditional wine production method when on 30 May 2005 I went to visit the Museo Civico di Lingua, in Salina, with Professor Saija. This anthropology museum, in a suburb of a Salina town called Lingua (which in Italian means 'tongue', most probably from the shape of the land) on the island of Salina, was an old windmill and residence which overlooked a small saltpan. The saltpan was on one of the western extremities of the island, facing Palermo.



3.23. Antonino Cipriano and his fisarmonica (photo Garigliano, 2006).



3.24 . Antonino Sciacchitano enraptured in organetto playing (photo Garigliano, 2005).

At last, on 3 May 2005 afternoon, I met with Francesca Sparacino, one of the daughters of Carmelo Sparacino, the pharmacist who was the last director of the group Folk Arte. A woman now in her early 40s, she remembered being in the group, with her brothers and sisters, since she was a child. The group has been active since the mid-1970s and was founded by Angelo Merlino and Professor Pino Paino. For some years in the 1980s⁵⁹, Orazio Corsaro took the direction of the group and in the 1990s, his father, Carmelo Sparacino, carried the flame. She recalls that some of the managerial aspects and artistic direction of the group were also undertaken by Dr Zitelli (who now lives in Milazzo) and Nino Sulfaro, who was also an accordion player (and who is now dead). When her father took the direction of the group, she and her siblings (four in total) entered the group, together with five other members of the Barrica family and members from three other families. Under Carmelo Sparacino, the Folk Arte worked in close collaboration with I Cantori Eoliani, from whom, often, they drew both musical material and choreographies, while also treasuring the experiences and costumes inherited from the Merlino and Corsaro times. Francesca informed me that, in her time (the 90s), Folk Arte was mainly a folkloristic dance group, relying either on recordings or on the musicians of I Cantori for the musical

⁵⁹ The years when Corsaro resided in Vulcano, mentioned earlier in this Chapter, in the 3.2.5.a, dedicated to Corsaro.

basis on which to dance. She recalls that in the Nineties, several Festival Internazionale del Folklore⁶⁰ were hosted in Lipari, where as many as 8 groups used to participate. She also recalled that at Christmas time, when she was younger, there were several bagpipe players in Vulcano, of whom she did not remember the names, who used to come and play in Lipari and play novena. She also recalled that at Christmas times I Cantori Eoliani staged a Living Nativity Scene in Lipari.

Although Francesca Sparacino's recollections of the activities of the group lacked detail, they were sufficient to make me conclude that the main function of Folk Arte was social. Several families connected through the activity of the group, under the inspired direction of some scholars and ethnomusicologists, who were more learned. Particularly in considering the case of Folk Arte, we can see how much, in folkloristic groups, there is cultural distance between the people who choose the program and how to implement it (through costumes and dance) and the dancers. The dancers and singers were pure menial actors, having no consciousness of what they were representing on stage.

g. Musica popolaresca:

Ruggiero, Iacono, Cipriano and Sciacchitano perform, mainly by memory, *musica popolaresca*. I take this definition from an article by Rocco Forte entitled *Popolaresco e bancarella*, published in 2002⁶¹, in which he draws a profile of a specific musical production which took place in Italy and in the Italian emigrant communities in most countries around the world, between the 1920s and the 1970s. 'Popolaresco' in Italian is a term generally intended to describe music which is not 'popolare' (i.e. music handed down by oral tradition) but instead music originally written in the folk style (such as many of the Neapolitan folk songs as we know them today) and recorded in an original format.

Musica popolaresca, hence, escapes that essential characteristic of original folk music: the variability of its text and/or its music due to oral transmission (and hence susceptibility to personal interpretation); it has original lyrics and music either written

⁶⁰ International Folklore Festival, in which folkloristic groups participated.

⁶¹ In *World Music Magazine* 26, see Bibliography.

or recorded by a definitely identifiable author or musician, of which all successive versions are imitations. Of course, it is possible for a *popolaresco* tune to undergo various ‘incarnations’ if one of the successive versions is judged by the public to be more updated or successful than in its original version; nevertheless, the possibility of identifying an original author remains a defining characteristic of this kind of music.

Musica popolare in most cases originates, ‘grows’, on the humus of grass roots oral tradition musical practices which have been carried on by the folk of a certain region (but have never been formalised). Examples of *musica popolare* are the ubiquitous and Neapolitan *O Sole Mio*, written in 1898 by authors no-one remembers (lyrics by Giovanni Capurro and music by Eduardo Di Capua), and the Sicilian ‘E Vui Durmiti Ancora’ (a *mattinata*, originally for voice and piano, published in 1927, with lyrics by Daniele Formisano and music by Gaetano Emanuel Calì). Both songs were written in the 19th C and have been passed down many generations.

‘O Sole Mio’ and the Neapolitan songs (or songs written in the *Canzone Napoletana*, Neapolitan Song, style) were originally written by authors who would write for certain performers and who originally had not imagined the melody to accompany their composition. Neapolitan song hence necessitated the author of the lyrics (often specialized in the craft of song writing), the arranger (to put the lyrics to music) and the singer (often songs would be written for a particular occasion and for a particular distinguished singer). Sicilian songs in the *popolaresco* style, on the other hand, started quite later than the Neapolitan, in the era of 78 rpm, when an original version of the song was recorded. This means that the release ‘comes into being’ already with an original standard which is reproducible and learnable from a mechanical device. *Popolaresco* genre, started in Naples and expanded to the whole South of Italy and survived the ages, lasting until today. From the 78 rpm the releases of this genre go all the way to the CD. For an example and samples of what *musica popolare* is one can browse the catalogue of the website www.musicanapoletana.com which contains the widest selection available in Italy today.