

# Transcribing the Italian Correspondence of Canon Raffaele Martelli, 1853-1864

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The New Norcia Archives contain some 175 letters written in Italian by Canon Raffaele Martelli, dated between 1853 and 1864. The value of these letters lies not only in their significance to the history of the Italian language, but also to the social and religious history of early colonial Western Australia. This paper describes a year-long project involving the transcription of the Martelli letters, including the origin and context of the project, and explores what insights may be gained from a broader understanding of these letters. The author discusses the methodology adopted for transcription, the question of textual layout, as well as how best to manage abbreviations and salutations. Reasons for the inclusion of an Appendix to the work and suggestions for future steps in the translation process are proffered in a brief conclusion.

**B**orn in March 1811, Canon Raffaele Martelli arrived in Fremantle in 1853 and spent the rest of his life in Western Australia, until his death in 1880. Originally from Ancona on Italy's Adriatic coast, he met Rosendo Salvado on 15 October 1851 at the Benedictine Abbey in Subiaco. The encounter of these two men, and the experience of seeing firsthand the work being done at the Abbey to prepare monks for the Western Australian mission, clearly moved Martelli to the point that he too volunteered.<sup>1</sup>

The Archives of the Benedictine monastery at New Norcia contain 175 letters written in Italian by Canon Raffaele Martelli between 1853 and 1864. These letters are invaluable from many points of view, including those interested in the historical presence of the Italian language in Australia, the historical development of Italian in general, as well as for historians interested in the life and times of an Italian missionary priest in early colonial Western Australia. The aim of this paper is to describe a year-long project involving the transcription of these let-

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## About the Author



**JOSHUA J BROWN** teaches Italian at the University of Western Australia. His research interests include the language history of Italy, particularly northern vernaculars in the Middle Ages, as well as sociolinguistics of contemporary Italy. He has previously published on the spread of Tuscan in northern Italy during the 1400s in *Italica* as well as the social variation of Milanese vernacular in merchant texts in *Italian Studies*. Unexpected friendships and a series of chance encounters have led him to a new research project—the letters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary priest Raffaele Martelli.



Raffaele Martelli, 1876 [NNA W7-B6-3]

ters, the origin and context of the project and what insights may be gained from a further investigation of them. In order to gain a better understanding of where the initial idea for this project arose, and what studies have been conducted on these research areas in the past, it will be helpful to look at previous work on letters in Italian in the New Norcia Archives and elsewhere.

## Letters in Italian in Western Australia and the New Norcia Archives

Different types of correspondence in Italian written between the period 1850-1950 in several archives throughout Western Australia have been studied from various points of view. This correspondence includes personal writing, Italian newspapers produced in Australia, as well as letters written by immigrants. Letters in Italian in the New Norcia Archives have been investigated principally from a linguistic

or historical point of view. I look at these two main types of studies below in turn, taking a chronological approach.

Some of the earliest work done on these letters was carried out by Italian exchange students from the Università Cattolica 'Sacro Cuore' in Milan who were studying at the University of Western Australia during 2009. The Martelli letters, and other documents in Italian in the New Norcia Archives, formed the object of study for these students writing their dissertations. One study, for example, focused on a small sample of the Martelli letters, concentrating on a period of two years. In particular, Lucia Boerci's study, *L'italiano in Australia nell'Ottocento: lettere di R. Martelli a R. Salvado (1858-1859)* contains transcriptions of fifteen letters. At the same time as this study was being completed, Lucia Rovetta from the same university was writing on the language of newspapers in the 1950s. Her thesis, *L'italiano giornalistico in Australia: Il Canguro (1955-1956)*, was further proof of increased interest in the historical presence of Italian

in Australia. Another thesis, written by Ilaria Assi and also from 2009, was entitled *Lettere di emigrati italiani in Australia Occidentale (1930-1950)*. Assi's work considered letters written in Italian by Italian migrants to Western Australia, providing a transcription of the letters as well as a linguistic analysis.

Work in 2010 continued in the same linguistic vein, but tended to focus on letters in New Norcia written by people other than Martelli. The Regnoli family were long-standing acquaintances of both Martelli and Salvado, and Martelli makes references to his Roman friend Pietro Regnoli several times. Four students from the Università Cattolica 'Sacro Cuore' wrote their theses on letters in Italian not by Martelli. Firstly, Federica Verdina provided a linguistic analysis of the letters of Malvina Regnoli, who was Pietro's sister, in her thesis *L'italiano epistolare da Roma al Western Australia. Malvina Regnoli scrive a Rosendo Salvado (1868-1873)*.

In 2011, Laura Bertoli's thesis looked at letters of Italian emigrants housed in the National Archives in Perth between 1914-1916 while Matteo Colombo's attention focused on Martelli, providing a transcription and linguistic analysis of a sample of his letters of 1862. The discovery of these further letters in Italian, and the relatively early date in which they were written, raised questions as to the historical presence of Italian in early colonial Western Australia. This issue was taken up by John Kinder, professor of Italian Studies at UWA, in his article on Italian as a language of communication in Australia before mass migration. His study suggested that Italian may have been more widely known in the Swan River Colony than what is currently recorded in the available histories of language in Australia.<sup>2</sup> A year later, Michele Colombo, professor of Italian philology at the Università Cattolica 'Sacro Cuore' in Milan, along with Kinder, considered what implications this finding had for the linguistic situation in Italy. While the majority of Italians were speakers of dialect at the time of the country's unification in 1861, many Italians were also acquiring Italian themselves. Kinder & Colombo's argument suggested that, in fact, Italian may have been more widely known, not just in Australia, but also throughout the whole of Italy, than what has traditionally been described, basing their study, in part, on source material from the New Norcia Archives.<sup>3</sup>



Malvina Regnoli, 1884 [NNA W6-A3-5-001]

Other work on letters in Italian in the New Norcia Archives has been from a historical perspective. Emily Coffey's 2010 Honours thesis from UWA, for example, entitled *The Canon of Ancona: an Italian missionary in Fremantle, 1854-1855*, was the first ever account of Martelli's years immediately after his arrival. In the same year, Kinder wrote a first overview of Martelli's correspondence, providing details of Martelli's family background, his relationship to Salvado and an initial description of his letters.<sup>4</sup> Another article by the same author in 2011 provided further details on letters in Italian in the New Norcia Archives as well as detailing the content and major themes with which Martelli's letters are concerned.<sup>5</sup> Madeline Plester's 2012 Honours thesis from UWA also took a historical perspective by focusing on letters from Pietro Regnoli to Martelli between 1863-1870, also held in the New Norcia Archives. In 2013, another exchange student from Milan, Simone Pregolato, is transcribing a sample of Pietro Regnoli's letters and is supplementing his work by providing a linguistic analysis.

These studies provided the context for my project on Martelli. Ongoing work by Kinder into Raffaele Martelli, including research into his family background, his social network, his letters and their significance for Italy and Australia, is providing critical information about many facets of early life in Western Australia, the presence of the Italian language and early missionary work in the Swan River Colony.<sup>6</sup>

The prospect of producing a volume containing a transcription and translation of all Martelli's letters written in Italian had become too enticing and I enthusiastically proposed the project for the 2012 Abbot Placid Spearritt Memorial Scholarship. The rest of this essay deals with the Martelli letters, the challenges presented with their transcription and how solutions were found in order to solve them.

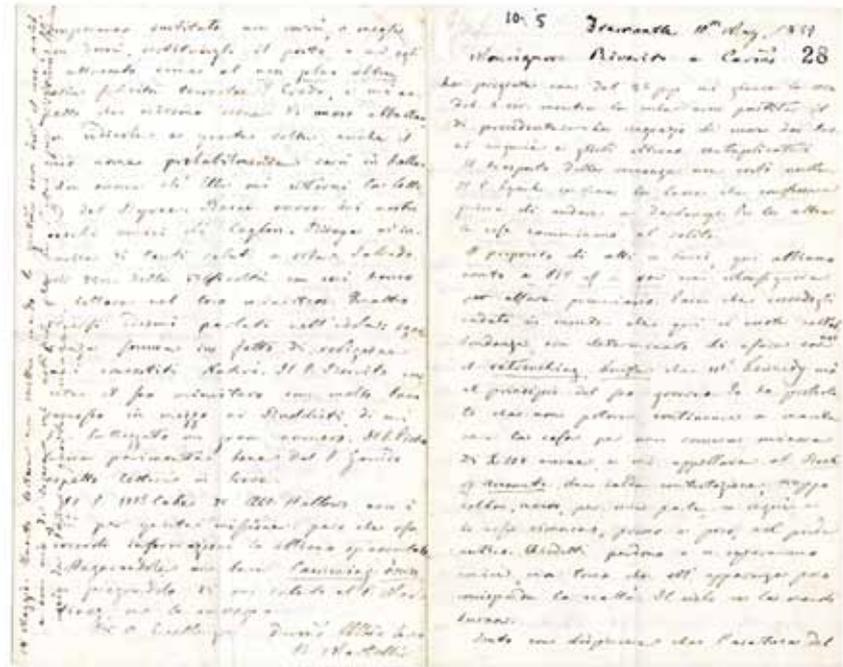
## The Martelli Letters

The Martelli letters 'make up a unique subset of the documents in Italian found in the New Norcia Archives'.<sup>7</sup> Using figures provided by Teresa de Castro in describing all the correspondence received by Bishop Salvado between 1868 and 1900<sup>8</sup>, Kinder notes that a rough estimate may be made of letters in Italian in the New Norcia Archives.<sup>9</sup> This estimate is reckoned at 395 letters in Italian, just over 5% of the

New Norcia Archives. Since the 175 letters written in Italian by Martelli pre-date the *terminus post quem* for de Castro’s corpus, we may include these extra 175 to Kinder’s 395 estimate, bringing the total number of letters in Italian to 570.

## Constructing the Corpus

In my corpus, all Martelli’s Italian correspondence is addressed to Rosendo Salvado with the exception of letters 9, 71 and 175, which were sent to Venancio Garrido. The first part of letter 144 is to Garrido, and there follows a second letter to Salvado. As Kinder has noted, ‘not one letter from Salvado to Martelli has survived, so it is not possible to follow their conversation on paper’. But even if these letters had survived, ‘it would be a mistake to think that we could solve all the mysteries and answer all the questions if only we could get our hands on all the letters the two correspondents ever wrote each other, for any collection of letters that survives from the past is to some extent a random selection’.<sup>10</sup> We are able to hear, as it were, only one side of a conversation, and are forced to make inferences about what Martelli’s correspondents are writing back to him.

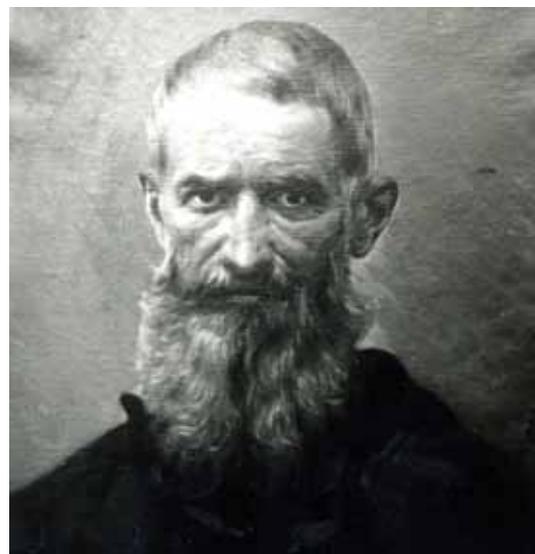


Letter from Martelli, 1859 [NNA 2234A-14-046]

As a priest in early colonial Western Australia, Martelli was stationed in a number of localities in and around Perth and his letters were therefore sent from various locations around the Swan River Colony. Letter 20 was sent from an unknown location. For the remainder of the corpus, letters 2-44 were sent from Fremantle, letter 45 from Perth, letters 46-62 from Toodyay, letters 63-64 from York, letters 65-66 from Toodyay, letter 67 from York, letter 68 from Toodyay, and letters 69-175 from Fremantle.



Bishop Salvado, 1870 [NNA W6-B3-2-133]



Prior Venancio Garrido [NNA W6.B3.2.053]

One might think that it was a simple task to take all of Martelli's letters in Italian and simply transcribe them, yet nothing could be further from the truth. Initially, the project aimed to produce a volume containing transcriptions of all his letters, not just those in Italian, but also in French and English. It was soon realised, however, that a transcription of all the Martelli letters would become unmanageable. In order to create a more homogeneous corpus, a decision was made to focus just on his correspondence in Italian, and provide a transcription and translation of these letters. This reduced the number of letters to be included in the corpus from over 200 to 175, and established the chronological limits for the corpus between 1853 and 1864. In addition to rendering the corpus more uniform, this decision was in fact suggested by the nature of Martelli's letters themselves, since (for some unknown reason) he wrote only English after 1864, and also sometimes (though rarely) in French. No further letters of Martelli in Italian are held by the Archives.

As soon as the question of which letters in which languages should be defined as the corpus, other issues of selection and inclusion arose.

One of the initial problems involved in constructing the corpus was to consider a number of letters that either appear undated or appear to have been given an incorrect date in their Archive number. In most cases, it was possible to suggest an approximate dating by using several means. This included the contextual information of the letters, comparisons of the colour of the paper Martelli used, the way he signed his name, as well as his handwriting. For example, almost all letters by Martelli include the date, month and year in which the letters were written. An undated letter found in folder 1870 in which Martelli writes to Salvado from Fremantle about permissions concerning liturgical practice, however, contained no date nor month. It was far from obvious when it had actually been written since, in the manuscript, the year does not actually appear.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, it is likely that the letter is from late May 1854. This is for several reasons: the only other letters in which Martelli asks Salvado for permission concerning liturgical practice also all date from 1854; the handwriting is similar to this year; and the greetings Martelli used in 1854 were often *Monsignore Riverito* or *Riverendissimo*—the same as this undated letter. Other reasons include:

the fact that he signed himself *Raff. Martelli*, which he never does after February 1865; the fact that the letter is in Italian whereas all letters from 1870 are in English; and that Martelli was not in Fremantle in 1870. In order to make it clear to the reader why undated letters appear where they do in the corpus, all reasons for the decision are given in a note at the start of these letters.

Another problem was raised by letters containing writing by several different people. Decisions needed to be taken with regard to whether writing by people other than Martelli should be included in the corpus or not, and the order in which to present the sections written in different hands. One manuscript, for example, contains a first letter from a person known only as Mr Farrelly to Martelli, dated 8 May 1854 in English. Martelli's letter in Italian, dated 9 May, immediately follows Farrelly's.<sup>12</sup> In this case, it was decided to transcribe both items of correspondence since the recipient of Martelli's letter would have received and read both Farrelly's and Martelli's letters. Including both items means that a contemporary reader will have the same experience of reading them as that of Martelli's recipient. In other cases, certain letters in Spanish written by people other than Martelli have been eliminated from the corpus. This was the case with a letter by Jaime Micalet, dated 28 August 1854, which Martelli may or may not have seen<sup>13</sup>, or a letter by Martelli with notes on the reverse of the folio that seem to be in another hand, probably Salvado's since this letter was addressed to him.<sup>14</sup>

## Methodology and Transcription

Once decisions regarding the construction of the corpus had been made, only then could transcription of Martelli's letters begin! But even before that, the methodology of how to transcribe them still had to be decided. The question of how much intervention is to be made in the text by the person carrying out the transcription can have a significant impact on its presentation, as can be seen by contrasting the following examples, taken from the Master's thesis mentioned earlier by Verdina and my transcription:

### (1) Verdina's transcription:<sup>15</sup>

[1] Eccell(en)za Rev(erendissi)ma | Roma  
15 Dicembre 1871 | [2] O perchè mai l'E.

V. mi ha abbandona-  
ta? [3] E appunto nel  
tempo in cui ho più bisogno di consi-  
gli

**(2) My transcription:<sup>16</sup>**

Mi permette di fare in Chiesa la divozione  
del Mese di Giugno, consecrato al Preziosis-  
simo Sangue di J.C.?

Ho terminato da lungo tempo di applicare  
la messa secondo la sua intenzione. Ne ho  
dette cento. Devo continuare?

Writing out Verdina's transcription according to the criteria I used for the Martelli letters renders the presentation of the text noticeably different, as can be seen in example (3) below. This difference is even more pronounced when my transcription is re-written using Verdina's criteria, as in example (4):

**(3) Verdina's transcription using my criteria:**

Eccell.za Rev.ma

Roma 15 Dicembre 1871

O perchè mai l'E. V. mi ha abbandonata? E  
appunto nel tempo in cui ho più bisogno di  
consigli

**(4) My transcription using Verdina's criteria:**

[1] Mi permette di fare in Chiesa | la di-  
vozione del Mese di Giugno, | consecrato  
al Preziosissimo Sangue | di J.C.? | [2] Ho  
terminato da lungo tempo | di applicare la  
messa secondo | la sua intenzione. [3] Ne ho  
dette | cento. [4] Devo continuare?

As can be seen from example (1), Verdina has provided heavier editorial intervention than I have. Her decision to number every sentence, write out abbreviated words in full, and signal to the reader when the author of the letter begins a new line by inserting a vertical line, including in the middle of a word (eg 'abbandona-  
ta' and 'consigli'), provide the reader with more information concerning the layout of the text in the original manuscript, but is less easily read than example (2). Since the Martelli letters will likely appeal to a broad range of readers with diverse interests, a decision was made to facilitate legibility of the manuscripts over excessive

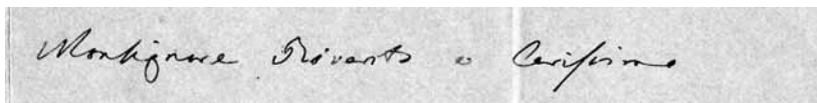
editorial criteria. Therefore, abbreviations have not been written out. At the same time, the transcription still remains faithful to the original manuscript by maintaining underlined words that are underlined by Martelli, and by adopting the same paragraph separation that he uses. I also decided to maintain all hyphens and quotation marks. All spellings and capitalisation which vary from modern usage have been maintained, such as the letter 'j' (no longer used in modern Italian), as well as *lapsus calami*.

Decisions about all these details required careful consideration before the transcription could begin, and all of these details ultimately impact on the way the text is presented to the reader. Since these letters are of broad interest to a potentially highly diversified readership, decisions about editorial interventions were made with an ideal readership in mind, including those interested in the history of Western Australia, migration and missionary history, as well as Italian migration. The fidelity of the transcription to the original manuscripts means that those interested in the Italian language in Australia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century will also be able to take advantage of a reliable critical edition for linguistic analyses.

The question of how to transcribe abbreviations required special attention. In wanting to remain faithful to the representation of the text on the page, a decision was made not to write abbreviations out in full. Instead, the abbreviations adopted by Martelli have been transcribed as they appear in the manuscript, such as *Rev.mo* for *Reverendissimo* and *Dev.mo* for *Devotissimo*. A list of all abbreviations and what each one stands for appears at the beginning of the work. Martelli abbreviated both English and Italian words, such as *Br.* for *Brother* and *d.o* for *detto* 'aforementioned'. Some abbreviations are used only once, such as *f.* for 'feet'. Months are often abbreviated, as in *Oct.* for 'October'. In order to write the word *congregazione* 'congregation', Martelli adopts no less than four different abbreviations: *congreg.ne*, *congregaz.*, *congr.ne* and *cong.ne*! In this particular case, it is also interesting to note Martelli's decision to write the full-stop within the abbreviation, unlike English usage.

The opening salutations at the start of Martelli's letters are particularly fascinating. The salutation he uses in addressing Bishop Salvado has few variations and remains constant. Its most typical form is *Mon-*

*signore riverito* (or *reverendo*) *e carissimo* ‘Revered (or Reverend) and very dear Monsignor’ or *Monsignore reverendissimo e carissimo* ‘Very reverend and very dear Monsignor’. These titles are also abbreviated to produce *Monsignor rev. mo e car.mo.* Only when writing to Garrido (and only once to Salva-



Martelli's salutation to Salvado [NNA 2234A-9-94]

do) does Martelli close his letter by signing himself *Vostro Affezionatissimo Amico*, ‘Your Most Affectionate Friend’. The question of whether a writer would abbreviate salutations at all is also raised by Antonelli. He notes that ‘the title was commensurate, along with the addressee’s rank, to the different social status of the sender, whether it be of a greater, equal or lesser degree’. He goes on to say that by not writing the title out in full ‘abbreviations of the type *Ill.mo*, *Ecc.mo* *Sig.e* [*Illustrissimo*, “Most Illustrious”, *Eccellentissimo*, *Signore* “Most Excellent Sir”] could be considered as a lowering of a level of respect’!<sup>17</sup> In Martelli’s case, abbreviating titles appears to have been more a matter of saving ink and paper rather than a lack of respect, as his typical closing salutation (*subscriptio*) makes clear. This is often in the form: *Baciando il Sacro Anello, mi rassegno con l’usata venerazione*, ‘Kissing your Sacred Ring, I resign myself with the usual veneration’. To modern eyes, this may seem excessive, but profusion of this order back then ‘was less important, and the order of the day’.<sup>18</sup>

## Appendix of Persons Mentioned

A final, and unexpected, task involved providing an Appendix to the work. The Appendix consists of a list of all names of persons mentioned in the Martelli letters, including all occurrences of each name in the corpus. I say ‘unexpected’ in the sense that the Appendix did not form part of the original plan for this project, but it soon became clear that such a tool would prove indispensable for further research on the Martelli letters. Consulting secondary literature on the history of early Western Australia, family and economic histories as well as studies of early Australia, I was able to provide brief biographical notes on almost every person mentioned in the letters, their background and their connection to Martelli, the Swan River Colony and New Norcia. This informa-

tion is provided in order to give future researchers the essential contextual information regarding the people mentioned by Martelli. These range from persons of historical fame, such as Napoleon and the

Italian statesman Cavour, to his personal acquaintances, third parties, as well as to persons about whom it has

been impossible to find any information at all.

One person mentioned is Vladimir Sergeivich Pecherin (or Petcherine). A controversial figure in his native Russia (he is mentioned in many literary works, including Dostoevsky), he left Russia, converted to Catholicism in 1840 and was ordained a Redemptorist priest. He became known as one of the best Redemptorist preachers in Ireland. In 1855, he was accused, but acquitted, of burning Protestant Bibles in Kingstown, Co. Dublin. The case was widely covered in the press. In 1861, he left the Redemptorists and held the post of chaplain to the Mater Hospital in Dublin until his death. Four sermons by Pecherin were included in a collection of sermons published in 1849 under the auspices of Cardinal Wiseman, whose collected *Essays* Martelli was reading in 1861.<sup>19</sup>

Elsewhere in his letters, Martelli comes to speak of international politics. In a letter of 2 February 1859, for example, he writes:

I doubt that the British government intends to discontinue transportation to Western Australia, since they will need workers in England to build fortifications along the Coasts, made necessary, or prudent, by Napoleon III’s mysterious progress.<sup>20</sup>

References to Italian politicians are not lacking either. Following the death of Italy’s first prime-minister, Camillo Benso of Cavour, in June 1861, Martelli writes to Salvado in August, stating with simplicity that ‘Cavour is dead and, from what one reads in the *Armonia*, a very religious newspaper, it seems he died a good Catholic’. He is quick to point out, however, that ‘how the circumstances of his final fate may be reconciled with the conduct

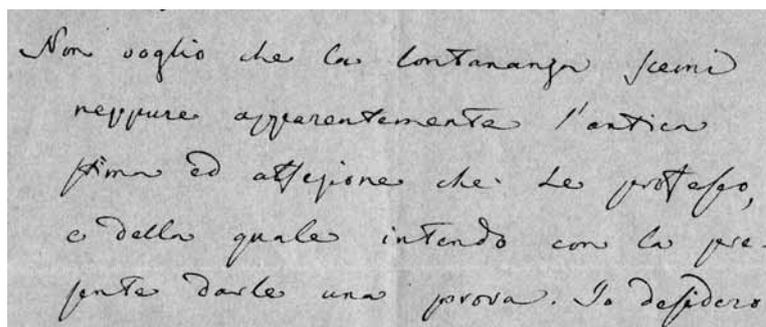
of his government towards the Church and other Italian Courts, I cannot understand'.<sup>21</sup> Martelli also seems to have kept track of political movements in Italy. In the same sentence, he makes reference to the Pope, the first King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuel II (1820-1878), as well as Giuseppe Garibaldi, an Italian general, politician and one of Italy's 'fathers of the fatherland', when he writes that 'the Pope is caught between two fires: Vittorio on the one hand and Garibaldi on the other. Will France intervene to let him keep Rome at least?'.<sup>22</sup>

Martelli is also curious about exploration of the unknown parts of *terra australis*. In a letter of 5 August 1859, he refers to John McDouall Stuart, one of the most accomplished and famous of all Australia's inland explorers. Martelli says he is 'eager to know more details about the discoveries made in Australia's inland by Mr Stuart to know whether there are inhabitants there. Since the country is so fertile, as he says, it would be strange if there were not aborigines there'.<sup>23</sup>

Other figures referenced by Martelli are completely anonymous. A case in point is someone referred to simply as 'Jack', who suffered a wound on his right leg which required amputation. Martelli writes that Jack had spent much time with Europeans, having served in a family, and so had learnt 'some notion of Christianity and a few prayers'.<sup>24</sup> The amputation of his leg was delayed for fear of him dying during surgery. In the end the operation went ahead, without any form of anaesthesia, and Martelli reports he was left alone 'in a field, abandoned like a dog'.<sup>25</sup> Others still are mentioned only once and only in passing, such as a Mr John Lillis, Senior, who we are told is simply 'sick with danger' and that Martelli 'heard his confession'.<sup>26</sup> By consulting the *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, I was able to discover that John Lillis arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1852 and worked as the Commissariat Storekeeper in Fremantle from 1854-55. He died in 1855.

Martelli also seems to have formed a relationship with Guillermo Bigliagoro (1829-1879), a young Aboriginal man and Salvado's trusted companion on the many trips he made between New Norcia and Perth. In 1857, Bigliagoro made an agreement

with Salvado that he would remain at the Mission as a general servant at a rate of six pounds per year plus meals. Part of the agreement included that he attend daily religious and other instructions, and to attend Chapel on Sundays and Holy Days.<sup>27</sup> Martelli references him only in passing in a letter of 23 May 1860, writing that 'the first point is wool, the bullocks, horses, wheat, all these matters are untouchable. Bigliagoro can remain calm'.<sup>28</sup>



Opening sentence of a letter from Martelli to Garrido [NNA 2234A-9-94]

## Translating the Letters

The translation of the letters is in progress, and provides a new set of challenges. Matters relating to formality, style and register need to be carefully considered: should these mirror Martelli's own usage, or should the translation be a contemporary rendering of his language? Should it adopt a colloquial style to reflect his close relationship to Salvado, or should it be more distanced to demonstrate his deference when addressing his contemporary? An example might be seen from the opening line of Martelli's letter to Garrido of 16 April 1854.<sup>29</sup> I have given the original Italian below, a literal English translation and a contemporary English translation:

### Original Italian

Non voglio che la lontananza scemi neppure apparentemente l'antica stima ed affezione che Le professo, e della quale intendo con la presente darle una prova.

### Literal English translation

I do not want the distance to lessen not even in an apparent way the old esteem and af-

fection that I profess to you, and of which I intend to provide proof with the present (letter).

### Contemporary English translation

I don't want our distance to lessen our friendship even a little bit, and I hope this letter is proof to you of that.

I have never received an email with an opening line equivalent in tone and style to the literal English translation myself! Remaining faithful to these aspects of his language, or rendering it more palatable, more 'modern' to our modern ears, will influence the way we view him, his language as well as the content of what he is 'saying'. Aspects such as these do not translate easily or equally from one language to another, if at all. Hitting the right balance between each of them is an exciting and new challenge to be met sometime in the near future.

## Conclusion

It is hoped that this correspondence will soon be published and made available for scholars in the not too distant future. As mentioned at the start of this essay, the Martelli letters are invaluable from many points of view, not least for their linguistic and historical interest—and work is ongoing.

As seen above, Martelli makes references to people (even if not known to him personally) from many walks of life: explorers, royalty, politicians, but also persons of humble origin, farmers, store-keepers, taveners and beggars. As Kinder has said, 'what strikes one most about these letters is their ordinariness... Canon Martelli does not usually write of extraordinary things, dramatic events, scandalous happenings'.<sup>30</sup> This is true. But the writing is in itself an event, and when viewed from a distance of over 150 years, appears an extraordinary occurrence. Of course, for the time in which they were written, this is nothing out of the ordinary—'Martelli led a life of repetition, of routine, of a great number of small things of great importance'.<sup>31</sup> The fact that the letters have survived at all, in such number, condition and from such an early date, is itself remarkable.

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## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Prof John Kinder and to Dr Marinella Caruso for comments on a previous version of this paper. Generous financial assistance for this project was provided by the 2012 Abbot Placid Spearritt Memorial Scholarship. Unfailing support was provided by Mr Peter Hocking from the New Norcia Archives and Abbot John Herbert, both to whom I offer my sincere thanks. I also thank all members of the Archives, Research and Publications committee of New Norcia for their understanding in bringing this project to fruition as well as to the broader Benedictine Community of New Norcia. Finally, a special thank you to Prof John Kinder for his encouragement and support in overseeing every aspect of this work.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For further biographical information about Martelli see J Kinder, 'The correspondence of Canon Raffaele Martelli in the New Norcia Archives: a first overview', *New Norcia Studies*, vol. 18, 2010, pp. 59-67.

<sup>2</sup> J Kinder, 'Italian as a language of communication in Australia before mass migration: the case of Western Australia', *Spunti e Ricerche*, vol. 26, 2011, pp. 78-90.

<sup>3</sup> M Colombo & J Kinder, 'Italian as a language of communication in nineteenth-century Italy and abroad', *Italica*, vol. 89, 2012, pp. 109-121.

<sup>4</sup> Kinder, 'The correspondence', loc cit.

<sup>5</sup> See J Kinder, "I'm writing simply to say that I have nothing to

write about": the Martelli letters, 1854-1864', *New Norcia Studies*, vol. 19, 2011, pp. 19-38.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, J Kinder, 'Raffaele Martelli, da Ancona all'Australia Occidentale: due metà di una vita', in M Severini (ed.), *Viaggi e viaggiatori nell'Ottocento*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2013, pp. 353-366.

<sup>7</sup> Kinder, 'I'm writing', p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> For details of de Castro's studies, see Kinder, 'I'm writing', p. 30, n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> For further details, see Kinder, 'I'm writing'.

<sup>10</sup> Kinder, 'I'm writing', p. 21. In footnote 8 of the same article,

Kinder specifies that so far searches have been carried out for letters from Salvado to Martelli in the Catholic Archives, Perth, and in the Catholic parishes of Toodyay, Northam and York, where Martelli served in the last decade of his life. The Benedictine abbeys of San Paolo fuori le Mura (Rome) and Santa Scolastica (Subiaco, Italy) contain material on Martelli and some letters from him, but no letters written to him. The Diocesan Archive of Ancona-Osimo contains no documentation on Martelli at all.

- <sup>11</sup> R Martelli, collection of personal correspondence to R Salvado, New Norcia Archives [NNA], Acc. 2234A, date unknown, file 25.958. In his study on the form and language of 19<sup>th</sup> century letters written in Italian, Antonelli remarks 'it is not rare for the year to be omitted or for one to use abbreviations when writing months, for example, as in *7bre, 9bre, Xbre* and the like'. See G Antonelli, *Tipologia linguistica del genere epistolare nel primo Ottocento*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Rome, 2003, p. 33. In only one letter does Martelli use a numeral in order to abbreviate the month, writing *7.tbre* for *Settembre* (Martelli, 23 September 1860, file 15.257).
- <sup>12</sup> Farrelly, personal correspondence to R Martelli, 8 May 1854, NNA, Acc. 2234A, file 9.112 and R Martelli, personal correspondence to Farrelly, 9 May 1854, NNA, Acc. 2234A, file 9.113.
- <sup>13</sup> J Micalet, personal correspondence to R Martelli, 28 August 1854, NNA, Acc. 2234A/file 9.169.
- <sup>14</sup> Martelli, 25 October 1862, file 17.178.
- <sup>15</sup> For the full transcription of this letter, see F Verdina, *L'italiano epistolare da Roma al Western Australia. Malvina Regnoli scrive a Rosendo Salvado (1860-1873)*, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, 2010, p. 57.
- <sup>16</sup> Martelli, date unknown, file 25.958.
- <sup>17</sup> Antonelli, loc. cit.
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.
- <sup>19</sup> For further details on Pecherine, see E MacWhite, 'Towards a bibliography of Father Vladimir S Pecherine (1807-1885): a progress report and bibliography', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 80C, 1980, pp. 109-158.
- <sup>20</sup> Martelli, 2 February 1859, file S1-A3-4-002. 'Si dubita che il governo Britannico abbia intenzione di scontinuar la trasportazi-

one a Western Australia, per ragione che avranno bisogno di opere in Inghilterra per intraprendere lavori di fortificazioni lungo le Coste, resi necessari, o prudenti, dal misterioso procedere di Napoleone III.'

- <sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 16 August 1861, file 16.087. 'Cavour è morto, e, da quanto si legge nell'Armonia, giornale religiosissimo, sembra morto da buon Cattolico'; 'Come le circostanze del suo ultimo fine si conciliano con la sua condotta governativa verso la Chiesa e le altre Corti Italiane, io non comprendo.'
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 14 November 1860, file 15.289. 'Il Papa si trova tra due fuochi: Vittorio da un lato Garibaldi dall'altro. S'interporrà Francia per conservargli almeno Roma?'
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 5 August 1859, file 14.073 'Sono anche bramoso di conoscere più minutamente intorno alle scoperte fatte nell'interno di Australia da Mr. Stuart, per sapere se vi sono abitanti. Il paese essendo, come egli dice, così fertile, sarebbe strano che non vi fossero aborigeni.'
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, 19 February 1854, file 9.45. 'Ha imparato qualche nozione di Cristianesimo e qualche preghiera.'
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, 21 February 1854, file 25.872. 'Il povero Jack giaceva in un campo, abbandonato come un cane.'
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 16 February 1855, file 10A.020. 'Mr. Lillis, Sen. è malato con pericolo. Ho udito la sua confessione.'
- <sup>27</sup> Further information on Bigliagoro may be found in N Green & L Tilbrook (eds.), *Aborigines of New Norcia, 1845-1914*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1989; N Green, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians, pre-1829-1888*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1987, p. 6; R Salvado, *The Salvado Memoirs*, ed. & trans. EJ Stormon, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1977; and NP Wiseman, 'The Benedictines in Western Australia. The history of a missionary enterprise', *The Dublin Review*, vol. 88, no. 3, January 1881, pp. 56-76.
- <sup>28</sup> Martelli, 23 May 1860, file 15.215. 'Primo punto, la lana, i bullocks, i cavalli, il grano, tutte queste faccende sono intangibili. Bigliagoro può star tranquillo.'
- <sup>29</sup> Martelli, personal correspondence to Garrido, 16 April 1854, NNA, Acc. 2234A, file 9.94.
- <sup>30</sup> Kinder, 'I'm writing', p. 30.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*