

The background of the cover is a grid of black lines. The top-right quadrant is a solid red rectangle. The bottom-left quadrant is a solid green rectangle. The remaining areas are white, except for a small red rectangle on the right edge and a small green rectangle on the left edge.

Italian Canadiana

VOLUME 39.1 / SPRING 2025

Italian Canadiana

Italian Canadiana is the peer-reviewed journal of the Frank Iacobucci Centre for Italian Canadian Studies (University of Toronto). It publishes scholarly research articles and reviews in English, French, and Italian devoted to research on all aspects of the lives, history, art, and literature of Italians and their descendants in Canada and the rest of North America (Mexico, the USA) both in recent as well as in earlier periods.

Editor

Konrad Eisenbichler, University of Toronto

Managing Editor

Mattia Ragazzoni, University of Toronto

Editorial Board

Salvatore Bancheri, University of Toronto

Cristina Caracchini, Western University

Luca Codignola, University of Notre Dame / St Mary's University

Alessandra Ferraro, Università di Udine

Roberta Iannacito-Provenzano, Toronto Metropolitan University

Diana Iuele Colilli, Laurentian University

Anna Mongibello, Università di Napoli "L'Orientale"

Gabriele Niccoli, St Jerome's University – University of Waterloo

Oriana Palusci, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"

Sandra Parmegiani, University of Guelph

Joseph Pivato, Athabasca University

Sarah Rolfe Prodan, Stanford University

Luca Somigli, University of Toronto

Pasquale Verdicchio, University of California San Diego

Copy Editing: Manuela Di Franco, Samantha Rohrig,

Olivier Séguin-Brault, and The Editing Company

Typesetting: Anabela Piersol

Cover Design: Maureen Morin

© 2025 by the authors. Authors retain copyright and grant Iter Press right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Public License (CC BY-NC) that allows others to use and share the work with an acknowledgement of the work's authorship and initial publication in this journal, as long as it is not used for commercial purposes. This license does not waive the author's moral rights.



Italian Canadiana

c/o Iter Press

J. P. Robarts Research Library University of Toronto

130 St. George St.

Toronto, ON M5S 1A5 Canada

1-800-331-3219

Editorial: italcan@itercanada.ca

Subscriptions: client@erudit.org

Published biannually.

Articles should be submitted via the journal's web site at <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/italiancan>.

To propose a special issue, please contact the editor at konrad.eisenbichler@utoronto.ca.

Books for review: please contact the editor at konrad.eisenbichler@utoronto.ca.

For further information please visit <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/italiancan> or contact the editor at konrad.eisenbichler@utoronto.ca.



Iter Press

NEW YORK | TORONTO

ISSN 2564-2340

Italian Canadiana

VOLUME 39.1 / SPRING 2025

Contents

Articles

- Une femme à la fenêtre* de Bianca Zagolin : un exemple d'émancipation féminine et migrante entre Italie et Québec
Elena Ravera 5
- Modelli di repertorio delle varietà italoromanze all'estero e nell'emigrazione di ritorno
Margherita Di Salvo 19
- America in Rome: Race, Stereotypes, and Cultural Identities in the Series *Home Sweet Rome!*
Carolina Caterina Minguzzi 45

Book Reviews

- Averna, Marta, Gennaro Postiglione, and Roberto Rizzi, eds. *The Italian Presence in Post-War America, 1949–1972: Architecture, Design, Fashion*. Transatlantic Transfers: Studi e ricerche interdisciplinari 1. 2 vols. Sesto San Giovanni (MI): Mimesis Edizioni, 2023.
Nicole De Togni 71
- Bastianutti, Diego. *Castaways and Other Writings, 1996–2024*. Edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, with an Introduction by Rosanna Turcinovich Giuricin. Arpa d'or 6. Toronto: Club Giuliano Dalmato, 2025.
Henry Veggian 74
- Canton, Licia, ed. *Here & Now: An Anthology of Queer Italian-Canadian Writing*. Vol. 2. Montreal: Longbridge Books, 2024.
Roberto Binetti 77
- Canton, Licia, Giulia De Gasperi, and Decio Cusmano, eds. *A Literary Harvest: Canadian Writing About Wine and Other Libations*. Montreal: Longbridge Books, 2025.
Cassandra Marsillo 81

Cinotto, Simone, e Giulia Crisanti, a cura di. <i>Un oceano di stile: Produzione e consumo di Made in Italy negli Stati Uniti del dopoguerra</i> . Transatlantic Transfers: Studi e ricerche interdisciplinari 2. Sesto San Giovanni (MI): Mimesis Edizioni, 2023.	
<i>Elena Ravera</i>	84
Favaro, Francesca. <i>La Lettrice – Racconti. The Reader – Stories</i> . I Classici del futuro. Termoli (CB): Aristodemica Edizioni, 2025.	
<i>Maria Pia Spadafora</i>	87
Guicciardi, Luigi Maria. <i>Jazz and Exile: Mario Fragiaco, That Tin Trumpet from Italy's Eastern Border</i> . Translated by Edoardo Leone. Edited and annotated by Konrad Eisenbichler. Arpa d'or 5. Toronto: Club Giuliano Dalmato, 2024.	
<i>Donald Beecher</i>	90
Gunn, Genni. <i>The Cipher</i> . Winnipeg: Signature Editions, 2024.	
<i>John Calabrò</i>	95
Mazzucchelli, Chiara. <i>Bastimenti d'inchostro: La Grande emigrazione nella letteratura siciliana (1876–1924)</i> . Palermo: Kalós, 2024.	
<i>Gabriel Niccoli</i>	98
Militano, Carmelo. <i>The Patina of Melancholy</i> . Victoria, BC: Ekstasis Editions, 2022.	
<i>Bianca Lakoseljac</i>	102
Pietropaolo, Vincenzo. <i>From Factory Worker to Senator: A Biography of Peter Bosa</i> . Arpa d'or 7. Toronto: Club Giuliano Dalmato, 2025.	
<i>Teresa Russo</i>	105
Books Received	109
Contributors	111

Mazzucchelli, Chiara.

Bastimenti d'inchiostro: La Grande emigrazione nella letteratura siciliana (1876–1924).

Palermo: Kalós, 2024. Pp. 151. ISBN 979-12-80198-93-8 (paperback) €20.00.

As Salvatore Ferlita observes in his preface to Chiara Mazzucchelli's consummately researched and thoroughly documented work on the great emigration of Sicilian literature (destined mostly to the United States) in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, Sicily witnessed a veritable odyssey, an unprecedented exodus of quasi-Biblical proportions that would unalterably change the island's economic, social, and cultural landscape. But what was the tragic prequel to this exodus? What human and historical conditions led to this migratory phenomenon? And how did the Italian literary imagination, more specifically, the Sicilian literary elites, treat this massive demographic earthquake?

Mazzucchelli's historical and critical treatment of such questions, with particularly detailed attention to the last query, is lucidly and persuasively articulated in this engaging and multidisciplinary narrative that, supported by a substantive and useful array of footnotes and bibliography, provides a persuasive and full account of the phenomenon. By virtue of its systemic probing into the literature, history, anthropology, and sociology of the time, the study goes a long way into filling a hitherto aggrieved lacuna, thus shedding new light not only on this Sicilian anomalous migratory event but also, and significantly, on the effects this mass emigration had on the nascent Italian post-unification process as well as on the *vexata quaestio* of the so-called *questione meridionale*, the bitterly persistent social and economic fracture between the north and the south of Italy.

The study starts with a brief but well-sustained introduction meant to articulate concisely the succession of questions, motifs, and themes that will define the nature of the five chapters that follow it (each, except for the first, focusing on the four Sicilian writers who treated that mass emigration from the island: Giovanni Verga, Maria Messina, Luigi Capuana, and Luigi Pirandello). Noting that some fourteen million Italians left Italy to cross the Atlantic in the period under study, Mazzucchelli intends to illustrate, among other significant issues, the vital importance of the Sicilian literary production on emigration from the island vis-à-vis the astounding relative silence (what she labels "la grande omissione," the title of the first chapter) on the part of major Italian writers. Thus, while it is true that prominent exponents of the Italian

literary milieu—canonical writers and celebrated poets such as Edmondo De Amicis and Giovanni Pascoli—broached (albeit only on the surface and ever so lightly) this alarming emigration question at a time when the process of Italian unification and national identity was at stake, they did not seem to want to delve deeply and seriously into the root causes of this societal and existential crisis, an ominous reluctance due to, Mazzucchelli deftly proposes, the fear of perhaps finding themselves unwittingly investigating what could easily have turned out to be one of the causes in the very dismantling of the whole project of the budding Italian unification.

In her meticulous and, as mentioned, scrupulously researched narrative, Mazzucchelli leaves no stone unturned in order to provide the reader with a highly erudite and critically grounded text that is a hauntingly realistic and efficacious rendering of the plight of Sicilian emigrants in their search for survival. And this she is able to do both from within and outside of the imaginative literature at hand. Backed by the interdisciplinarity of her research and the literature produced not just by the Italian and Sicilian authors mentioned but also by some of the well-known and lesser-known Italian-American writers of the early decades of the twentieth century such as, perhaps the most important, John Fante, Mazzucchelli is able to frame a clearer picture of the Sicilian immigrant to the United States. It is an image that, while seemingly pretty well in line with what transpires from the pages penned by the mentioned Italian and Sicilian writers of the period—in so far as the usual and essential topological structures of migrant literature are concerned: displacement, loss, survival, identity, nostalgia, triumph, and so forth—does nonetheless deviate in ways that in their researched realism are significant for a more proper understanding of this human and existential drama.

Yet, notwithstanding the parallelisms one may find between the imaginative literature at hand and what lies outside of that realm (that is, in this work's pages), what strikes the reader in Mazzucchelli's study is the attempted veracity on the part of the author, in contrast to the often-romanticized literary renditions, of this migratory drama—a veracity that smacks of partial certification, grounded on researched documentation, of the imagined or fantasized reality of the professional writer. It is only a partial certification simply because any fictional narrative can never in a full sense become a tool, an organ, of truth. Perhaps writing might have served in this guise through some of the early Italian immigrant writers themselves, a sort of naïf literature in which autobiography and life experience reigned, with narratives void of much rhetorical artifice. Were these early Italian immigrants writing outside

of the sacrosanct temple of legitimate literature? Such would, of course, no longer be the case in North American Italian “diasporic” literature in which, even when some of those quintessential migratory topoi are rehashed, they are duly and rigorously treated, as they should be, *ad arte*. As Mazzucchelli convincingly argues when discussing Verga, and even more so with Capuana and Pirandello, the literary medium has to deal with its self-created evils, with its particular brand of self-imposed obligations. These Sicilian authors’ literary veracity vis-à-vis the great Sicilian exodus of the period needs to be functional, useful, and respondent to their bourgeois capitalist interests. As wealthy landowners (both Verga and Capuana) and sulphur mine merchants (as in the case of Pirandello’s own family, as well as his wife’s), their inauspicious stance towards the Sicilian mass migration, beyond the trauma and perils of the act itself, is also motivated to a considerable degree by the ensuing lack of *manodopera*, of the cheap and slavish labour needed to make such capitalist ventures operative and profitable, thus perpetuating the economic and social status quo of the island.

While the writings of Verga, Capuana, and Pirandello on the Sicilian great emigration also has to be functional to their literary, pedagogical, editorial, and existential aspirations and amplifications (as are those of De Amicis and Pascoli), Messina provides a more down-to-earth and self-representational aspect of the Sicilian migratory phenomenon. She is able to mirror herself in a very human manner in the despair of the dolorous mothers, the orphan-like children, and the abandoned wives clothed in black, all longing and pining for the return of their loved ones, alone and melancholy in that distant America. But Mazzucchelli’s searching eye on these authors’ pages, again supported by the available historical and sociological writing on the subject, is also able to extract further plausible causes for the Sicilian exodus such as, for instance, mass emigration being a peaceful and resigned form of social revolt, a manifestation of enduring distrust towards local, regional, and national governments intent on preserving social and economic structures so as not to ignite discontent among the capitalist classes. Another interesting but fruitful digression is the degree of the varied forms of misogyny expressed by the examined authors towards their female colleagues, another example (for this reader) of a similar elitist presumptuousness they would have likely exercised towards the labourers in their midst, if not overtly in their writing. One page (73) that particularly impressed this reader, and which speaks eloquently to Mazzucchelli’s critical acumen and aesthetic sensibility in both reading and writing, is the one comparing Maria Messina’s nonna Lidda

having to let go of the only *raison d'être* left in her waning existence—her beloved grandson, still a child, leaving for America—with chapter 34 of Alessandro Manzoni's *Promessi sposi*. The desolate but dignified nonna Lidda will die of grief soon after, another of emigration's deadly stabs for those who remain. Mazzucchelli's own intense lyricism in recounting both narratives is no less penetrating.

Finely crafted with considerable critical skill and sophistication, Chiara Mazzucchelli's *Bastimenti d'inchostro* is an instructive and engaging read on a crucial topic of mass emigration that needed to be revisited in its multidisciplinary, transcultural, and comparative context. It is a truly important contribution to a full and proper understanding of the manner in which the great emigration from Sicily was envisioned and fashioned by the Sicilian literary elite during the Italian post-unification period and the early decades of the twentieth century.

GABRIEL NICCOLI

St. Jerome's University – University of Waterloo