

'UNA ITALIA AUSTRALE'?

TWO ITALIAN TRAVELLERS DESCRIBE NEW ZEALAND

A few years ago, the publication of the English translation of an Italian work about New Zealand caused quite a stir. The book in question, *Storia della Nuova Zelanda e dei suoi abitatori* [History of New Zealand and Its Inhabitants], had been originally written in the 1890s by Felice Vaggioli, a Benedictine monk who had lived in New Zealand as a missionary between 1879 and 1887.¹ Vaggioli's pro-Maori stance and his very negative representation of British colonial domination were what appealed most to the New Zealand audience. Such representation, reports John Crockett, the book's translator, was also the cause of the destruction of most of the copies of the book: "The British authorities, through diplomatic channels, had had the volume of Dom Felice Vaggioli's *Storia della Nuova Zelanda* removed from circulation because they considered it unflattering towards England". Thus "the volumes were slowly destroyed from the 1930s to the 1950s" (quoted in Crockett 2001, viii). Today, in fact, very few libraries hold the original publication in Italian.

Crockett's translation, however interesting and thought-provoking for a history of New Zealand's colonial past, covers only the second part of Vaggioli's ponderous work. The first part, in fact, a 500 plus page volume containing a geographical description of New Zealand, of its flora and fauna, and of Maori customs and traditions, remains untranslated.

About 20 years after the original publication of Vaggioli's book in 1891, another Italian traveler wrote his description of New Zealand. Giuseppe Capra, though like Vaggioli a member of the clergy, did not come to New Zealand as a missionary, but as a geographer.² Capra's description of New Zealand appeared in two works: *La Nuova Zelanda: una Italia australe* [New Zealand: an Italy in the Southern Hemisphere] , a 30 page booklet, of 1911; and a much more expanded version published two years later, with the title *La Nuova Zelanda: il paese dei Maori* [New Zealand: the Land of the Maori].

I must confess that it was the title of Capra's first book and its suggestion of a 'cultural encounter' between Italy and New Zealand that roused my interest. I was surprised that an Italian would describe New Zealand as the Italy of the Southern hemisphere. The first step in my research, then, was to see how and to what extent Capra drew a comparison between Italy and New Zealand in his 1911 work. Then, I went to Vaggioli's description of New Zealand to see if and how it shared Capra's opinions on New Zealand's geography and climate. While reading their works, though, I was struck by the references and allusions to Italian settlers in New Zealand and to how an Italian might – or might not - make a living in this country. Thus, I set out to see how Vaggioli and Capra depicted the life conditions of Italian migrants in New Zealand and what kind of indications they offered – warnings, suggestions, favorable comparisons – meant to attract Italian migrants to – or discourage them from - New Zealand. In this paper, then, I will focus on how these two early Italian travelers represent New Zealand to an Italian audience – to perspective settlers, perhaps - by reporting on the

life conditions of Italian migrants, and by using Italy as a term of reference for everything New Zealand. Finally, I hope not only to highlight an early view of New Zealand seen by Italian eyes, but also to uncover an implicit representation of how Italy viewed itself about a century ago.

In the introduction to his book, Felice Vaggioli clearly states the basis for his 'literary' enterprise: Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, who was in charge of the congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, had specifically requested that missionaries of every region "collect and preserve for history's sake as much as they could find among the savages about their ancient habits and costumes" (Vaggioli 1891, 1).³ Considering moreover, Vaggioli adds, that "in Italy there is absolutely no knowledge either of the country or its inhabitants" (2),⁴ the Benedictine monk wrote his "scholarly study for a general, discerning audience" (Crockett 2001, xii). It soon becomes apparent, however, that Vaggioli has also in mind the interests and concerns of prospective emigrants to New Zealand. And it is in fact for the benefit of those who "leave by the thousands every year, like flights of migrating birds, towards the new world and the southern hemisphere, in search of a more favorable sky and a more hospitable land", in particular those who "may want to choose New Zealand as their adoptive country" (Vaggioli 1891, 31), that Vaggioli writes many of his more personal and more colourful remarks.⁵ Although he warns his readers from the beginning not to expect a refined literary text, one of the main fascinations of his book resides precisely in his

flourished use of the language, which I cannot begin to emulate in my translation.⁶

Capra's publication apparently was not commissioned by any religious entity; rather, it appears to have been destined to a lay, general public. The publishing information of the 1911 booklet indicates that it is an extract from the bulletin of the Italian Geographic Society. Capra's goal in visiting New Zealand, as he states at the beginning of his writing, was to keep track of all his emigrant countryfolk, pursuing an "ideal of brotherliness"⁷ that for two months took him "often unto regions [...] almost ignored by civilization" (Capra 1911, 3).⁸ His relationship with Italian emigrants is underlined in the initial lines of his work, in which he raises his most pressing question to them – a question that is still being asked in Italy to modern-day emigrants, like myself: "What made you undertake such a long journey which would bring you to the ends of the earth, to the very antipodes of Italy?" (3).⁹ The reported answer sets the tone for the rest of his work. While aware of the enormous distance which separates them from their land of origin, Italian immigrants to New Zealand consider themselves lucky, since, they claim, "everything here contributes to keeping alive the image of our Italy in ourselves; and, looking around, we may often have the illusion that what we see is our homeland" (3).¹⁰ Capra reports that he himself had the experience of finding, 20,000 km away from home, "the same enchanting images of our landscapes, the same infinitely picturesque views of our Italy" (4).¹¹ Thus, Capra sets about his task to describe New Zealand by using Italy as a means of comparison.

In the first few pages of his work, Capra enumerates some of the main geographical traits of New Zealand, always trying to find an Italian equivalent for each. He begins by listing the main cities, calling Auckland "the Palermo of New Zealand" thanks to its semitropical vegetation.¹² Wellington, he continues, "is similar to Naples for its position on the coast. Christchurch has the same climate as Rome and Dunedin the same as Venice" (4).¹³

The mountains of New Zealand, Capra states, are justly called "the Austral Alps", since they share the same "views and wonders", although their aspect is even "more imposing and majestic ... newer and purer" (4).¹⁴ Mount Cook, he specifies, reminds one of Mount Blanc, while Mount Balloon has the same "gigantic pyramidal boldness" of the Matterhorn (5).¹⁵ The similarities in geography are further confirmed by Tongariro, which reminds one of Mount Etna (6),¹⁶ and by lakes Anau, Manapouri, and Wakatipu, which would be a "faithful copy" of Lombardy's lakes if they were surrounded by villages and towns and a numerous population (8).¹⁷

Finally, the shape of New Zealand itself is similar to Italy's: Capra finds that the three islands which make up New Zealand, North, South, and Stewart, "have the overall shape of a boot, pointing its foot toward the Equator" (4).¹⁸

We will often find Italy used as a term of comparison for New Zealand in Vaggioli's book as well, beginning with its position on the globe, which the author sets "as much below the Equator as Italy is above" (Vaggioli 1891, 11).¹⁹ As for its extension, Vaggioli explains that "if we wanted to give to

New Zealand a space in Italy, it would extend from Sicily to way up beyond the Alps, and would reach with its foot almost up to the city of Munich, Bavaria" (12).²⁰ The image of the foot is immediately clarified by reference to New Zealand's shape, which Vaggioli also describes as similar to the Italian 'boot': "The shape of New Zealand is quite similar to that of Italy; like the latter it presents the shape of a gigantic and very regular boot, but in the opposite position than Italy; since the leg of the boot of New Zealand begins in the South and goes in a North-Easterly direction; and the plant or foot is formed by the Northern half of the Northern Island, which takes a rectangular direction toward the North-West" (12-13).²¹

In his description of the mountain and river systems of New Zealand, Vaggioli makes no reference to Italy except when mentioning Mount Cook, which, like Capra, he identifies as "the Mount Blanc of New Zealand" (21). He indicates, however, that New Zealand is not "as rich in valleys and plains as Italy" (23).²²

As for the climate, which Capra, as we have seen, mentions only in passing and in comparison to Italy, Vaggioli wants to make sure that nobody would ever think that the climate in New Zealand could be comparable to that of Italy. To those writers who had the pretense of affirming that "the climate in New Zealand is almost the same as that in our Italy", he replies that "on the contrary, the climates of the two countries have very little in common" (31).²³ Those visitors who have praised the New Zealand climate "as if it were the climate of Eden, which preserves even from death its fortunate inhabitants"²⁴ were in fact coming from "the excessive cold, the

smoke and the continuous fogs of Great Britain",²⁵ which explains the favorable comparison (35). He then lists the geographical reasons for the differences, the opposition in seasons, concluding that in New Zealand "the Summer heat is less burning than in Italy, and the Winter cold less intense" (33),²⁶ and that possibly the climate of the North Island could be compared to the climate in Calabria (34). Vaggioli's main problem with the New Zealand climate is that it is so excessively variable that "it's not rare to have in 24 hours, in Summer as in Winter, perfect calm, rain, winds, shining sun, clouds, [and] excessive heat" (36).²⁷ From his personal experience, Vaggioli warns the prospective emigrant of the humidity, which will cause shoes, cloths, and books to be covered with white spots (38). He also suggests to take the following health precautions: First, "never wear clothes that are too light, in order to avoid colds and pneumonias";²⁸ and even in Summer, always wear a woolen undershirt (39). Second, always air bedrooms, and never sleep in a bed in a room that has not been aired for several days. It could lead to rheumatic infections and heart trouble (40). Finally, European settlers should be particularly careful with the water, always taking the precaution of boiling it (40). Many migrants, Vaggioli sadly notes, in order to avoid the water problem have taken to drinking alcohol instead, ending up with even more poisons in their bodies, and risking a premature demise.

Vaggioli concludes his geographical report of New Zealand with a description of the volcanic system, and with a reassurance to the concerned migrants: although New Zealand is full of volcanic activities, there is no

indication that a natural catastrophe will make this country “disappear among the waves of the Pacific Ocean” (65).²⁹

After the discussion of geography and climate, the two works take off in two different directions. Vaggioli embarks on a description of the minerals, then the flora and the fauna of New Zealand. Capra sets out to describe the activities and resources from which New Zealand and its settlers – Italians among them – derive their wealth. There will be, however, a few instances in which the two authors touch on the same topic. Both Capra and Vaggioli, for example, stress the importance of gold in the development of the country. The search for gold either from mines or from “sluicing”, for example, was one of the main appeals New Zealand held for emigrants.³⁰ Capra, in fact, mentions that Italians work in the gold mines of Lyell (Capra 1911, 22). Both writers, however, appear to want to discourage anyone from investing too much hope in such an enterprise. Vaggioli writes a lengthy explanation about the different methods of extracting the mineral. Then, in the footnotes he explains that, far from trying to lure Italians to New Zealand under the mirage of gold, he wants to encourage “the Italian people not to neglect the rich mines that are under their feet”.³¹ Italian soil and waters are rich in gold as well, and they could “bring more prosperity to Italy than what gold mines have brought to New Zealand” (Vaggioli 1891, 85).³² Unfortunately, Vaggioli concludes, Italian legislation prevents the development of this kind of industry. Capra, on the other hand, mentions the numerous Italian emigrants who have come to New Zealand attracted by the gold rush. However, the

portrait that he presents is not at all encouraging for future settlers. The Italians that one meets in the gold towns are old and infirm. They “know only how to lament the good, adventurous life of old; they will tell you about vanished wealth, about wonderful illusions which have disappeared in the desolation of a pitiful reality” (Capra 1911, 10).³³

Though mining may not be profitable enough to attract Italians to New Zealand, Capra mentions that vine-growing is. It is well developed in the North Island, and Italians are excelling at it (Capra 1911, 22). Strangely enough, however, in his treatise of the New Zealand flora Vaggioli warns his readers that in spite of numerous attempts, he was unable to grow vineyards in the North Island. He also bemoans the fact that olives would never become profitable in New Zealand. “We were forced to consider as very uncertain, not to say impossible, any large production of wine and oil in the country”,³⁴ he affirms, due to the “perpetually variable climate” (Vaggioli 1891, 127).³⁵

As for other job opportunities, Capra mentions having seen some musicians from Viggiano, who, with their Italian music, were cheering up the vacationers in Queenstown (Capra 1911, 9).³⁶ Capra also remembers having met some Italian fishermen in Dunedin, where they had introduced the use of steamboats for fishing. “It is very moving”, Capra comments, “to see boats painted with the colors of the Italian flag in such a far-away land” (24).³⁷ Vaggioli does not comment on the possible profits coming from the activity of fishing. As for the culinary aspects of the fish themselves, he only

mentions them in his description of New Zealand fauna. The edible fish, he says, "do not have the taste of the Mediterranean fish" (Vaggioli 1891, 157).³⁸ Even the shellfish he considers inferior to the European kind (161).³⁹

Capra goes to great pains to stress how legislation in New Zealand could be favorable to workers: how the State tries to avoid the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few citizens; how it strives to prevent social oppression and abuses; how the maximum number of weekly working hours is set by law; how workers, in factories and farms, are insured for any kind of accidents that may occur to them; how the government provides a pension to anybody who is 65, be they citizens by birth or by naturalization (Capra 1911, 18-21). Many Italians who have settled in New Zealand, he reports, take advantage of their retirement money which allows them "to spend their final years free from financial worries".⁴⁰ In sum, "the worker is his own master and king" (21).⁴¹ Finally, Capra mentions that in New Zealand one notices a general sense of happiness and prosperity, which the Italian immigrants also enjoy: "even our Italians lead a life that is more open, more comfortable, more in harmony with others", he concludes (23).⁴²

According to Capra's description, then, there seems to be no better place on earth than this Italy of the Southern hemisphere, this country that he enthusiastically defines "the most wonderful region in the Southern hemisphere, if not in the entire universe" (4).⁴³ But despite all of his enthusiasm for New Zealand, Capra still has to come to terms with the problem of remoteness and the subsequent feelings of loneliness and

abandonment that the Italian migrants in this country may experience – migrants who, as Capra has to admit, before his own journey to New Zealand may not have heard Italian spoken for years and years, or received news from their families or from their homeland.⁴⁴

It seems in fact significant that the only individual “migrant voice” that we hear in Capra’s report, after the initial, contented general answers of the first page, is the voice of a man made sick by loneliness. In the thermal baths of Rotorua, Capra tells us, he happened to meet some Italians, but only one of them stuck in his memory: an old man from Como who begged him to stay with him for at least one day, crying that he was “alone, abandoned ... without the company of any Italian” (16).⁴⁵ Although Capra later mentions in passing that from New Zealand ports ships leave regularly, “thus diminishing its remoteness and isolation” (23),⁴⁶ a reader cannot help but wonder why Capra felt the need to insert the voice of the lonely old man from Como in his edenic description of New Zealand.

Vaggioli’s experience of Italian migrants in New Zealand couldn’t be more different from Capra’s. He touches on the topic in his unpublished autobiography, “Le avventure di un refrattario descritte da lui stesso”, recently translated into English as *A Deserter’s Adventures*. On the one hand, it is easy to see that his negative impression of Italian migrants is connected to their religious habits, and so maybe not totally informative with respect to their life conditions. First, Vaggioli talks briefly about what he defines as “shameful characteristics” of all the Italians who go abroad to

improve their lot. He claims that even when they do well economically, they will “cry poor” and will not contribute to the Church. Even worse, while they were practicing Catholics at home, once abroad, with a few exceptions, they stop attending religious services. “They are a thousand times worse than Protestants!” he laments (Vaggioli 2001, 179). On the other hand, Vaggioli also mentions the bad reputation that Italian migrants seem to have acquired: “Italians, in general, are disliked and even despised by the British, who consider them an inferior race, only slightly better than the Chinese, because they lack education and manners and are too brash”.

Very few Italians populated New Zealand during his time there, Vaggioli remembers. “According to the 1876 census, there were 300 throughout the colony, including those from the Italian Tyrol, Trieste and Istria”. In the Auckland area, there were about 60, of whom Vaggioli mentions only a couple as being good Catholic: “a certain Amodeo from Trieste, [who] was captain of a New Zealand shipping company steamer” (179); and a successful baker from Genoa. The rest, Vaggioli recalls, were Southerners, who hardly ever went to Church, and who, for the great part, were fishermen.⁴⁷ While their working conditions were acceptable, and “with the good wages they earned they could have lived comfortably and been able to save half their income”, they tended to waste most of their earnings on drinking and gambling, thus “leaving their family in misery” (180). Vaggioli recalls two further episodes involving Italians: two workers from Trento who came to see him when he was in Gisborne, asking for a dispensation from the banns of marriage because of their (pretended) poverty; and a

Neapolitan woman, married to a fisherman, in whose house "poverty and squalor were apparent everywhere" (182).

On the one hand, Vaggioli feels bad speaking ill of his compatriots. On the other, he would not have liked to be considered one of them. He later explains that, when he was abroad as a missionary, he never mentioned that he was Italian. While this was due partly to historical reasons - to his disapproval of the newly formed kingdom of Italy - he preferred to conceal his national identity mainly because of the bad reputation Italians enjoyed abroad. "Quite frankly", he explains, "I would have been ashamed to say I was Italian. I would rather have said I was a subject of the Sultan of Turkey. I thus declared I was an Austrian subject" (183).⁴⁸

We may find several reasons to explain the fact that Felice Vaggioli and Giuseppe Capra portray New Zealand geography, climate and conditions of life in very different ways. First of all, the purpose of their travel to New Zealand (one came as a missionary, the other as a geographer) and the length of their stay. While Capra was likely to consider his two-month mission to reach out to his Italian "brothers" successful, we know that Vaggioli was quite disillusioned with his missionary experience in New Zealand. In fact, in 1887 he requested to be sent back home - officially because of his bad health; however, in his autobiography he reveals that he had had mixed feelings about the whole experience right from the beginning: "I went to New Zealand believing that our mission would not succeed, and things did not work out well. After seven years I returned to Europe to avoid

witnessing the mission's collapse" (Vaggioli 2001, x). Thus, while we read in Capra's geographical work the enthusiasm of the discoverer of an exotic paradise, where everything is like home or maybe even better, Vaggioli's historical treatise cannot but resonate with personal memories of disappointing experiences and of homesickness.

The different "sponsors" of their works (the Catholic Church and the Geographic Society) may have had a deep influence on the style and content of Vaggioli's and Capra's works. In their depiction of the life of the migrants, for example, Vaggioli is more concerned about their loss of faith – and their little financial contribution to the Church - than about their working or retirement opportunities, that Capra emphasizes.

The different lengths of their works (the first 170 pages of a 500-page volume compared to the first 22 pages of a 30-page publication) also make for very different styles: while Vaggioli is prone to long and detailed descriptions, colorful comments and moralizing discussions, Capra has to synthesize and go directly to the main point. Only rarely, like in the case of the memorable old man from Rotorua, does he stop to mention a particular episode of his stay in New Zealand.

Though not a researcher by profession, Vaggioli means for his History of New Zealand to be a piece of scholarly work. He explains at the beginning of his book how he relies on the research of earlier scholars;⁴⁹ and he will often footnote his assertions with a learned reference to authority. Capra does not mention any background study, and one may well wonder whether

or not he was familiar with Vaggioli's work and used it as a source of background information.

Finally, the timing of their stay (the 1880s and the 1910s) may have been particularly significant for their description of the conditions of life of the Italian settlers. In fact, one can attribute the discrepancies to the different waves of migration that the two authors witnessed during their stay in New Zealand. A recent study done by the Italian Embassy in Wellington states that the Italian migration in New Zealand began in the 1870s.⁵⁰ Two early attempts at "assisted migration" - 230 people sent to Wellington between 1875 and 1876 to work in the railroad construction, and 200 Venetian families to farm in Jackson Bay, Westland - were unsuccessful. The Italians, then, acquired the reputation of being "physically unfit for colonial life" and were despised by New Zealanders for their "innate laziness". This seems to be the kind of migrant experience, which gave rise to the bad reputation for Italians, that Vaggioli refers to.

A second, more successful wave of migration began in 1896 as a "chain migration", from the provinces of Belluno and Pistoia. The first migrants settled in Lower Hutt, where they started growing fruits and vegetables. Other migrants from Massa Lubrense and Sorrento settled in Nelson, where they devoted themselves to vegetable growing as well, especially hothouse tomatoes. From Massa Lubrense also came another group of Italians who settled in Hawkes Bay, and earned their keep as apple growers. The largest Italian settlement in New Zealand, however, was in Island Bay; it consisted mostly of fishermen from Massa Lubrense and

Stromboli.⁵¹ It is probable that Capra, who in fact stresses agriculture and fishing as fruitful activities for Italians, came in contact with this second, more thriving kind of migration.⁵²

Inevitably, however, both Capra and Vaggioli find themselves trying to “domesticate” or render familiar a distant and unfamiliar land by comparing it to their country of origin. Capra finds that the geography, the landscapes, the cultivations and the climate are so similar to those of Italy that Italians may, for a moment, forget their distance from home. Moreover, the progressive legislation which Capra presents as superior to the Italian will compensate for any feeling of homesickness that one may eventually experience. In sum, Capra’s enthusiastic appraisal of all aspects of New Zealand, from the geography to the weather, from legislation to the people, may be read as an attempt to attract Italians to settle and find their wealth in New Zealand, a country geographically very similar to Italy, but with many more employment and economic opportunities.⁵³

Vaggioli, on the other hand, is not trying to represent New Zealand as another Italy. When he uses Italy in his text, it is only to allow his readers to come to terms with a country that is so distant and different from Italy. Moreover, Vaggioli’s frequent comparison between Italian and New Zealand reality (climate, food, possibilities of economic growth, etc) are all in favor of his native land. After reading his book, what Italian would want to migrate to a country where the climate is so uncertain, the familiar cultivations impossible, and even the food not as good as at home -- not to mention the risks of catastrophic volcanic eruptions - or of losing one’s immortal soul.

Vaggioli's expression of discontent with these many aspects of New Zealand life reads more like the memory of a difficult personal experience. It is as if eight difficult years in Auckland, Gisborne, and Coromandel led Vaggioli to the desire to enlighten and warn those who may want to come to New Zealand hoping to find "the Italy of the Southern hemisphere", or maybe even a better Italy.

Finally, I would like to discuss the effect that these texts have on a contemporary reader, in particular on readers, like myself, who are Italian and are living – maybe permanently – in New Zealand. We may perhaps cringe at Capra's comparison between Auckland and Palermo. We may probably sympathize with Vaggioli's complaints about the weather. We may even have experienced the effects of homesickness, caused by the enormous distance between the two countries, that Vaggioli suffered and Capra reported. But more than that, I think these two texts can give us a further cause for reflection if we consider the way that New Zealand is represented in the contemporary Italian collective imagination. A recent study, spurred by Italy's participation in the last America's Cup in 2000, still defines as "highly unlikely" any encounter between Italians and New Zealand (Luciano 2001, 32). The study further comments that the contemporary representations of New Zealand in Italy could fall in three main categories: on the one hand, New Zealand is portrayed as an exotic, escapist paradise. On the other hand, New Zealand is described as more like Italy than expected (32-34). Giuseppe Capra's *La Nuova Zelanda: una Italia australe* in a certain sense puts together the two categories, representing New Zealand both as a paradise

and as an image of Italy. The fact that nobody in Italy today would make this kind of comparison should make us reflect on how much Italy has changed, and how Italy's contemporary representation of itself would be far from paradise.

The third category that this recent study lists is one of "ethnocentricity"; that is, one in which "everything about New Zealand itself became peripheral and became important only as it might be relevant to the Italian representation of itself" (Luciano 2001, 35). It seems to me that reading Vaggioli's book in this light may be a way of better appreciating this opinionated and patronizing account of a country, based on a failed missionary experience. The first part of Vaggioli's *Storia della Nuova Zelanda e dei suoi abitatori* could be considered as valuable today for what it tells us about Italian history, customs and idiosyncrasies, as for what has been described as its "biased, slanted, prejudiced and one-sided" depiction of New Zealand (Brooking xxii).

T. S. Eliot identified the process of discovery and self-discovery in these famous lines:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.⁵⁴

It is certainly true that Felice Vaggioli and Giuseppe Capra, at the end of all their exploring, were able to give us an idea of the way in which not only New Zealand, but also Italy was represented between the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century. It may be only fair that for us too, as

it was for them, it was necessary to come to the ends of the earth to
“discover” how Italy used to represent itself.

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¹ For a biographical note on Felice Vaggioli (1845-1921), see Crockett vii-xii.

² Giuseppe Capra, (1873-1952) was a priest but also a geographer, ethnographer, and photographer. His career as traveler began in 1904 when he visited Eastern and Central North America. After his extensive experience of solo traveling throughout the Americas, Asia and Africa, he later lectured in "Political and Economic Geography" and "Italian Geographical Explorations" at the universities of Rome and Perugia. His publications include books on the Congo, Burma, and the Philippines. See http://www.touringclub.it/qui/tci/news/afghani/vdm_01.shtml. Online, April 30, 2002.

The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology at the University of Padua keeps various objects, from Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, that Capra donated between 1928-29. From New Zealand he brought a carved wooden ornament, representing a protective divinity and meant to ornate the front of a house, as well as other traditional Maori objects, such as a whalebone spatula, and a carved wooden club decorated with paua shell. See <http://www1.crui.it/musei/Collezioni.asp?IDC=104>. Online, April 30, 2002.

³ "raccoliere e conservare per la storia quanto mai potevano rintracciare fra i selvaggi dei vetusti loro costumi e usanze". All translations from the first volume of Vaggioli's *Storia della Nuova Zelanda e dei suoi abitatori*, as of Capra's *La Nuova Zelanda: una Italia australe* and *La Nuova Zelanda: il paese dei Maori*, are my own.

⁴ "in Italia non si ha veruna contezza né di quel paese, né dei suoi abitatori".

⁵ "sen partono a migliaia ogni anno, come stormi d'augelli emigranti, verso il nuovo mondo e l'emisfero del sud in cerca di un cielo più propizio e di una terra più ospitale. A beneficio di tutti costoro, e particolarmente di que' che intendessero scegliere la Nuova Zelanda per loro patria adottiva...".

⁶ "Non aspettarti da me adunque, lettore benevolo, romantiche ed incantevoli descrizioni, esposte con fiorita e briosa dicitura; giacché rimarresti deluso nelle tue speranze. Io sono un povero Missionario che vengo a parteciparti in linguaggio semplice e piano quanto trovasi d'interessante nella Nuova Zelanda, sia rispetto alle sue qualità e bellezze naturali, sia ai costumi dei suoi abitatori" (Vaggioli 1891, 3).

⁷ "perseguito un ideale di affratellamento".

⁸ "viaggiando sovente per regioni eccentriche e quasi ignorate dalla civiltà".

⁹ "Come mai voi vi siete indotti ad un così lungo viaggio, portandovi proprio in capo al mondo, agli antipodi anzi dall'Italia?"

¹⁰ "qui tutto concorre a tener viva in noi l'immagine della nostra Italia; e perché, guardandoci intorno, possiamo bene spesso avere l'illusione che quelli che vediamo siano ancora i nostri paesi".

¹¹ "gli stessi incantevoli aspetti dei nostri paesaggi, gli stessi panorami infinitamente pittoreschi d'Italia nostra".

¹² "Auckland ... è la Palermo della Nuova Zelanda per la vegetazione semitropicale".

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- ¹³ "Wellington ... somiglia a Napoli per la posizione sul mare. Christchurch ... ha il clima di Roma e Dunedin quello di Venezia".
- ¹⁴ "La Nuova Zelanda è traversata nell'isola Sud, da una catena di monti alti e diruti meritatamente chiamati Alpi Australi, perché delle Alpi presentano appunto i panorami e le meraviglie più caratteristiche, però di aspetto quasi più imponente e grandioso, e, direi, più nuovo e puro".
- ¹⁵ "Il monte Cook ... ci ricorda il superbo profilo del Monte Bianco". "il monte Balloon ... ha il gigantesco ardimento piramidale del Cervino".
- ¹⁶ "L'Etna fumante ci è rammentata dal Tongariro".
- ¹⁷ "I nostri bellissimi laghi lombardi avrebbero nella Nuova Zelanda copia fedele in quelli d'Anau, Manapouri e Wakatipu ... se una numerosa popolazione, le ville eleganti, grosse borgate, industrie cittadine ne animassero, come da noi, le pittoresche rive".
- ¹⁸ "Compresa in tre isole allineate, due grandi – la Nord e la Sud – ed una più piccola, la Steward, prende nel suo complesso figura di uno stivale, che volga il piede verso l'Equatore".
- ¹⁹ "tanto più sotto l'Equatore quanto l'Italia ne è più sopra".
- ²⁰ "Se si volesse dare alla Nuova Zelanda un posto in Italia, essa si estenderebbe dalla Sicilia, molto al di là delle Alpi, e giungerebbe col suo piede fino presso la città di Monaco di Baviera".
- ²¹ "La forma della Nuova Zelanda è quasi simile a quella dell'Italia; come questa ci presenta le forme di uno stivale gigantesco ed assai regolare, ma in posizione inversa da quella dell'Italia, perocché la gamba dello stivale della Nuova Zelanda comincia al Sud e dirigesì verso il nord-est; e la pianta o piede è formato dalla metà settentrionale dell'isola del nord, che prende una rettangolare direzione verso il nord-ovest".
- ²² "non è ricca di valli e pianure come l'Italia".
- ²³ "Alcuni scrittori han preteso che il clima della Nuova Zelanda sia pressoché uguale a quello della nostra Italia [...] ma noi diciamo per lo contrario che i climi dei due paesi han pochissimi caratteri in cui si somigliano".
- ²⁴ "come se fosse quello del paradiso terrestre che campa perfino da morte i fortunati suoi abitatori".
- ²⁵ "i freddi eccessivi, il fumo e le nebbie costanti della Gran Bretagna".
- ²⁶ "il calore dell'estate è assai meno ardente che in Italia, e parimenti il freddo dell'inverno è assai meno intenso".
- ²⁷ "non è raro avere in 24 ore sì d'estate che d'inverno calma perfetta, pioggia, venti, sole lucente, nuvolo, caldo eccessivo".
- ²⁸ "La prima cautela è non esser troppo leggermente vestito, onde evitare raffreddori e pneumonie".
- ²⁹ "una generale catastrofe che faccia sparire il paese fra le onde dell'Oceano Pacifico".
- ³⁰ "Sluicing" is the term that Capra uses in his text, adding that Italians often translate it as "slusare". He explains that "it consists of forcefully and continuously splashing water against the gold-filled soil" [consiste nel proiettare dell'acqua con forza e a getto continuo, contro il terreno ricco d'oro] (Capra 1911, 10).

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- ³¹ "volevamo incoraggiare il popolo Italiano a non trasandare le ricche miniere che esistono sotto i suoi piedi".
- ³² "potrebbero forse dare maggiore prosperità all'Italia di quello che le miniere aurifere hanno dato e danno alla Nuova Zelanda".
- ³³ "italiani poveri, acciaccosi che non sanno ormai che rimpiangere la bella vita avventurosa di un tempo e vi raccontano di ricchezze sfumate, di splendidi miraggi svaniti nella desolazione di una realtà miseranda".
- ³⁴ "fummo forzati di risguardare come incertissima per non dire impossibile una gran produzione di vino e di olio nel paese".
- ³⁵ "clima perpetuamente incostante".
- ³⁶ "dolci note riempivano l'aria; erano musicisti ambulanti di Viggiano, che rallegravano con melodie italiane i neozelandesi recatisi per spasso e riposo a Queenstown"
- ³⁷ "Commovente, in così lontane contrade, vedere delle barche dipinte col tricolore italiano".
- ³⁸ "nemmeno questi hanno il sapore dei pesci del Mediterraneo".
- ³⁹ "la carne è inferiore a quella dei gamberi e aragoste di Europa".
- ⁴⁰ "scorrere gli ultimi anni tranquillamente al riparo dalle preoccupazioni del bisogno".
- ⁴¹ "L'operaio è il padrone e il re". Capra, however, quickly hastens to mention that the legislation is favorable ("non è per nulla oppressiva") also for the factory owners (Capra 1911, 21-22).
- ⁴² "anche i nostri Italiani menano una vita più aperta, più comoda, più in comunità con gli altri"
- ⁴³ "la regione più meravigliosa del mondo Australe, se non dell'Universo tutto".
- ⁴⁴ "italiani che da anni e anni più non l'udivano [l'idioma natio], e della famiglia, della patria, più non avevano nuove" (Capra 1911, 4).
- ⁴⁵ "un venerando vecchio comasco, il quale afflitto più dalla tetra solitudine e dall'abbandono che dai mali, da anni giaceva speranzoso sempre di salute, in un misero bugigattolo, egli, che aveva passato la vita faticando e lavorando! Povero vecchio, mi baciò piangendo, pregando di fermarmi almeno un giorno da lui. – Sono solo, abbandonato, ammalato – mi diceva – non ho più la compagnia di un Italiano, non ne odo più l'accento!".
- ⁴⁶ "Dai suoi porti partono navi per tutte le parti del mondo, diminuendone così la lontananza e l'isolamento".
- ⁴⁷ Crockett footnotes this passage commenting on a possible prejudice against Southerners on the part of Vaggioli, born in Tuscany. (Crockett 2001, 180).
- ⁴⁸ Vaggioli's reasons included his disapproval for the newly formed kingdom of Italy, whose government "hates, despises and despoils the Catholic Church and the Papacy" (Vaggioli 2001, 183).
- ⁴⁹ Vaggioli explains that, for background reference, he has made use "delle pregevoli ricerche fatte da Sir Giorgio Grey, dai Dottori Thomson ed Hochstetter, dal Ministro Anglicano Ricardo Taylor, e da parecchi altri autori" (Vaggioli 1891, 2).

⁵⁰ Nicoletto, Maris. "L'emigrazione italiana in Nuova Zelanda: origini, evoluzione storica e caratteristiche". Unpublished document, 2001. I am grateful to Roberta Abodi, commercial attaché of the Italian Embassy in Wellington, for making this document available for my research. On Italian migration to New Zealand, see also Laracy 1973, and Ballara 1975.

⁵¹ The study also mentions those individual Italians who came with the gold rush, and after the exhaustion of the goldfields either went into farming, or went back to Italy, or moved to Australia.

⁵² Another recent study sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage states that from 1871 to 1880 there was a period of government-assisted immigration, of which about 100,000 people benefited. The economic difficulties of the 1880s and early 1890s, combined with the fact that assistance was terminated during the late 1880s, made New Zealand a less attractive option for migrants. The numbers increased again once assisted migration was restored in 1904 ("Immigration to New Zealand 1840-1914". <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/gallery/brit-nz/immigra-all.htm>. Online, May 27, 2002.) Again, these historical facts may help explain the differences in Vaggioli's and Capra's attitudes towards migration.

⁵³ The implicit attempt to attract Italians to New Zealand is made explicit in Capra's later book *La Nuova Zelanda: il paese dei Maori*, when he says, for example, that "Italian emigrants would find here an environment that, both because of climate and soil conditions, would be much more suitable and convenient to them than most of the other countries where they now tend to go" [Gli emigrati italiani ... troverebbero qui un ambiente a loro molto più adatto e conveniente, sia dal lato climatico, che per le condizioni del suolo, di quello che non sia il più gran numero delle regioni ove ora si dirigono] (Capra 1913, 115). Later in his book, he also mentions that the traveling time is about 40 days (197), and that the cost of the ticket from Genoa is between 1600 and 2200 lire for first class; between 1000 to 1350 lire for second, and between 400 and 600 lire for third (198).

⁵⁴ T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets". *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971. 145.