PREFACE

For some years now, beginning in the late 1990s, I have been pleased to participate in the conference and related work of the Canadian Society for Italian Studies (CSIS). In particular this participation has involved the organization of panel sessions on Italian-Canadian topics as well as my own presentations in some of those sessions. In the course of this work I have been encouraged not only by the willingness of colleagues to respond to requests for participation but also by the good quality of their proposals and, eventually, their actual presentations. One annual CSIS conference in particular—that held in 2006—was more than typically gratifying both because of the number of colleagues who collaborated in Italian-Canadian panel sessions and also because of the welcome invitation received from the Society's journal, *Quaderni d'italianistica*, to publish some of the papers from that annual conference in a special Italian-Canadian studies issue. The journal's spring issue for 2007 (volume XXVIII, no. 1) appeared with the subtitle "Italians in Canada: Selected Proceedings from the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Italian Studies, York University, 27-29 May 2006" and featured a total of seven articles dealing with various aspects of Italian-Canadian studies. I was very pleased to have been able to guest edit that issue but I would also like to acknowledge here the encouragement and support of the then journal editor, Konrad Eisenbichler.

The year after the publication of that issue of *Quaderni* I was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at York University, an appointment which included the position of chair designate and director of The Mariano A. Elia Chair in Italian-Canadian Studies. As many readers will know, the chair I now direct at York University has a trifold mandate—teaching, research (and its dissemination), and community outreach—all of which are very well-served through participation in, and contribution to the scholarly work of an organization like CSIS. My appointment to the chair has reinforced (not that any reinforcement was needed!) my commitment to the advancement of Italian-Canadian studies. Since this appointment I have, of course, continued to organize panel sessions on Italian-Canadian topics for CSIS conferences. A very recent one, held in 2010 in Montreal at Concordia University, in conjunction with the annual Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, was particularly rich in its Italian-Canadian content. For this meeting of CSIS—which was held from 28-30 May—I was able to organize five panel sessions. These five sessions eventually totalled fifteen presentations which included a number of scholarly disciplines and whose

subject matter ranged widely across various aspects of Italian-Canadian studies. From these presentations a total of five articles have been selected for this issue of *Quaderni* and, with possibly one exception, the scholars presented here are beginning their careers in this field (if not in academe itself) and, I hope, will be encouraged to continue in it.

Four of the five articles included are significant, in part, because they focus on subjects drawn from what has become the core of Italian-Canadian reality; namely, the experiences of Italian immigrants and their descendants in Canada in the post-World War II period. According to this grouping we can begin this introductory overview with the article by three accomplished scholars—Olga Zorzi Pugliese, Guido Pugliese and Angelo Principe—on the painter Albert (Umberto) Chiarandini. The seventeen-year-old Chiarandini arrived in Canada in the inter-war period but his considerable fame developed in the post-World War II period, in particular in the 1960s and 1970s. The authors present Chiarandini to us through a careful analysis of some ten canvases drawn from a variety of collections and from a vast repertoire produced by the artist. The paintings on which the authors focus reveal Chiarandini's engagement with Canadian life in general in the post-war period and with significant events from that period, as well as his deep concern with the human condition.

Chiarandini was part of an older generation of Italian Canadians but this is not true for Nino Ricci whose award winning novel *Lives of the Saints* is analyzed by Michela Baldo. In this instance Ricci's novel, which focuses on the world left behind in southern Italy during the mass migration after World War II, is studied for the use of the belief in *malocchio* and of the role of that belief in the lives of the villagers in the fictional setting of Valle del Sole in Italy's Molise Region. Baldo notes that *malocchio* appears in the works of a number of Italian-Canadian authors but in *Lives of the Saints* its role is central for the novel's narrative emplotment. An understanding of that role provides insights into the condition of women in the imagined world of the Italian countryside after World War II.

Nino Ricci's name also recurs in two of the remaining three articles in this issue of *Quaderni* and in both cases the novelist is mentioned in connection with his writings in the relatively short-lived, Toronto-based magazine, *Eyetalian*. In that magazine, according to Michele Amatiello in his article about CHIN Radio AM 1540, Ricci was critical of the station's broadcasting because its programming tended to take advantage of nostalgia amongst immigrants and promoted ethnic stereotyping. Amatiello does not agree with this criticism of the programs broadcast by Ontario's first foreign-language radio station. He argues, instead, that the broadcaster was

responsive to the station's audience and that it attempted both to fulfill their needs for entertainment and to help them to adapt to their new Canadian environment. His study includes an interesting discussion about one of the broadcaster's best-known promotional activities, the CHIN International Picnic. In this annual event Amatiello sees the desire of CHIN's creator, Johnny Lombardi, to create a venue where diverse cultural groups could meet and celebrate together.

CHIN Radio might be considered emblematic of the post-World War II immigration and of the audience of immigrants to which the station appealed successfully beginning in the 1960s. According to Domenico Servello, however, in his detailed reading of the Toronto-based magazine *Eyetalian*, the immigrant generation was not the magazine's target audience. Rather, it addressed a younger audience, in general those who arrived in Canada as young or child immigrants as well as those who were born in Canada in the first and possibly second generation after the immigrants. As already suggested, the magazine was an important forum for writers like Nino Ricci whose name appears frequently in *Eyetalian* because he was both a regular columnist in its pages and also because he contributed feature articles. Servello notes that the dominant concern expressed in the pages of *Eyetalian* was the post-immigrant struggle with issues of identity. In his review of the contents of the magazine he highlights three areas through which the magazine sought to engage with young Italian Canadians and their concern about identity: this was addressed through articles critical of identity issues, through those which emphasized the complexity of identity, and through those which promoted the retention of a variety of cultural practices.

Finally in this issue, Gabriella Colussi Arthur presents the results of an ongoing investigation into an immigrant experience with its origins in the pre-World War II period but also with strong connections to the immigration from Italy to Canada that occurred after the war. Colussi Arthur focuses on a subset of emigrants from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, those from the *comune* of Zoppola, a group to which she is connected directly as a descendant through her immigrant parents and for which she is interested in writing a broader history of their experience in Canada. She has begun this undertaking with the analysis presented here of records derived from the famous Ellis Island ships' manifests collections. In these records she has located the journeys of Zoppolani who travelled from their *comune* of origin via a number of European ports to New York but who were, in fact, headed for destinations located in far away British Columbia. Her study is an insightful effort to evaluate the Ellis Island records as

sources for the study of emigration and to suggest both their strengths and possible shortcomings.

In closing I would like to thank all those who have collaborated over the years by participating in CSIS conference sessions or in other circumstances. These collaborations, of course, are fundamental for the continuing development of Italian-Canadian studies.

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