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La storia navale nell'Italia di vent'anni fa



di Brian R. Sullivan

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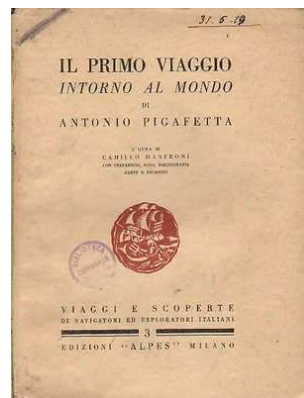


La storia navale nell'Italia di vent'anni fa

Di Brian R. Sullivan¹

Within the Italian university system, the teaching of naval and maritime history has been limited recently to only two schools, the Universities of Pisa and Rome, and to two scholars, the highly respected Mariano Gabriele and his student, Alberto Santoni. For many years earlier in this century, the University of Rome had a chair in naval history and policy, held by the illustrious expert on World War I at sea, Camillo Manfroni (1863-1935)². After the Second World War, Manfroni was effectively succeeded by Gabriele. However, since Gabriele was and remains a civil servant in the Ministry of Finance, he has been forbidden under Italian law from being an official professor at the University of Rome and has been only an *incaricato* (adjunct). Since such a position within the Italian university system has been abolished recently, it is now legally impossible for Gabriele to go on teaching at the University of Rome. Barring the unexpected, when Santoni eventually retires from the University of Pisa, the teaching of naval and maritime history may well cease there. In fact, officially, Santoni holds a chair in military history and technology and will probably be succeeded by a scholar of land warfare.

The situation within the Italian Navy educational system is slightly better. The Italian Naval Academy at Livorno offers a three-year course in naval history and policy taught by Commander Pier Paolo Ramoino. In



¹ B. R. Sullivan, "Twentieth Century Italy", in J. B. Hattendorf (Ed.), *Ubi sumus? The State of Naval and Maritime History*, Naval War College, Newport, R. I., 1994, pp. 180-189. Testo in pubblico dominio. Per gentile concessione del Naval War College.

² Manfroni's most significant published works include *La marina militare durante la guerra mondiale* (Bologna: 1923); *I nostri alleati navali* (Milan, 1927); *Storia della Marina italiana durante la guerra mondiale 1915-1918* (Bologna: 1933).

effect, Ramoino has attempted to carry on the work initiated by Camillo Manfroni at the University of Rome. In this effort Ramoino collaborates closely with Alberto Santoni, aided by the proximity of the Livorno Academy and the University of Pisa. Ramoino is attempting to expand his course to four years. However, most of the subject matter covered by Ramoino involves the naval and maritime history of other countries, rather than of Italy.



The Istituto di Guerra Marittima (1922), also located on the grounds of the Italian Naval Academy, is roughly equivalent in purpose and functioning to the U.S. Naval War College. That is, the Istituto di Guerra Marittima offers both a junior and senior course, corresponding to the command and staff college level and the war college level. For these courses, Commander Ramoino teaches a one-year course in naval strategy and history, with somewhat greater emphasis on Italian matters than is the case for his courses at the Naval Academy. However, the stress on the above-mentioned course at the Istituto di Guerra Marittima is on naval strategy, rather than history. Ramoino has succeeded in getting a number of prominent Italian military and naval historians to give guest lectures at the Italian Naval War College and to expand the teaching of Italian naval history there. However, given the politically sensitive nature of many aspects of Italian naval history, Ramoino has encountered difficulties. In fact, many of his students seem to have a greater knowledge of the naval history of Britain or the United States than of their own country.

The schools of the Italian Army and Air Force largely ignore naval history, whether that of Italy or of other nations. The two-year Italian Military Academy at Modena has abolished the teaching of the history of ground, sea, or air warfare.

When the graduates of the academy at Modena pass on to the two-year Scuola di Applicazione at Turin, they receive a one-year course in military history that includes a modest naval component. However, this is limited to such points as a passing mention of the battles of Trafalgar, Jutland, or Midway. The Italian Army War College (Scuola di Guerra) at

Civitavecchia offers a one-year course in military history. Naval history is covered by an annual conference with lectures by a few naval officers. Neither the Italian Air Force Academy nor the Italian Air War College offers any naval history whatsoever.

Italy has no equivalent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, although it does have a number of government high school-level vocational schools for mariners. The University of Naples offers a program in maritime studies that provides roughly the type of education available in the United States from Kings Point. However, in none of these schools is Italian maritime history taught, except for passing references.

In pleasant contrast to the state of the teaching of naval history is the status of Italian Navy official history. Such history falls under the jurisdiction of the Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare (USMM). The archives and publication service of the USMM are located in Rome, at present under the able direction of Admiral Renato Sicurezza.

The Navy historical archives are undoubtedly the best organized and most accessible of the three Italian services. They are devoted to the history of the Italian Navy since the amalgamation of the Sardinian and Neapolitan Navies in 1861, obviously covering only the age of steam. Utilizing teams of professional archivists and historians, the USMM directorate is completely reorganizing the archive and creating comprehensive finding aids as it progresses through its huge collection of documents. The USMM staff is extremely knowledgeable and very helpful. Probably the only serious criticism that one can make of the USMM archive is its lack of adequate photocopying services.

Two other archives in Rome also contain much material relevant to Italian naval and maritime history. The Archivio Centrale dello Stato in the EUR suburb holds the records of the Naval Ministry, the Merchant Marine Ministry, and also the records of cabinet discussions that sometimes touched on naval matters, Air Ministry records from the Fascist period that occasionally deal with relations with the Navy, and records of the Fascist-era Ministry of Communications that controlled ports and the merchant marine. The archives of the Foreign Ministry are located separately in the Foreign Ministry office and contain diplomatic records of

naval and disarmament conferences. Both these archives are quite well ordered and researchers can have access to good finding aids³.



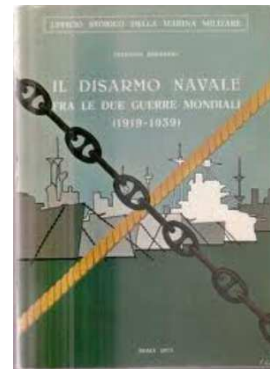
However, those using such archives must be prepared to deal with the frustrating practices of the Italian bureaucracy, especially those of its lowliest members. The publications of the USMM are generally well researched and of high quality, although they are devoted almost exclusively to technical and narrative questions. The single most impressive of the USMM publications remains its excellent twenty-three-volume history of the Italian Navy in World War II, *La marina italiana nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale*, published between 1950 and 1988 (including revisions of earlier volumes). The value of this massive work lies in its objectivity, accuracy, thoroughness and honesty of self-appraisal. It stands in striking contrast to the Navy's eight-volume official history of World War I (published under the heavy hand of Fascist censorship in 1935—42), to the Italian Army's official history of its operations and activities in World War II—the earlier volumes of which fall so short of historical objectivity that newer volumes are being produced to supersede the older—and to the Italian Air Force historical effort, which has never even issued an official history of the 1940—45 period that it has been willing to publish.

Much of the credit for the success of the Italian Navy's official history of World War II should go to Admiral Giuseppe Fioravanzo, the director of the USMM at the time of its publication. Admiral Fioravanzo was himself the author of a number of the twenty-three volumes and ensured the adherence of the entire project to the high standards that he laid down. Fioravanzo was ably assisted in the project by its other authors, notably Carlo De Risio, Aldo Cocchia, and P. F. Lupinacci. It is a pleasure to note that Admiral Sicurezza has restored the USMM to that same high level of performance.

³ For the records of the naval and merchant marine ministries, see *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato Italiani* (Rome: 1981), vol. 1, pp. 179-93.

Admiral Sicurezza is also president of the Commissione Italiana di Storia Militare, which is in the process of publishing a series of volumes entitled *L'Italia in Guerra*, on the history of Italy in the Second World War. These volumes, one for each year of Italian participation in the conflict, are resulting from annual conferences that began to be held in 1990. Each volume explores topics of considerable depth and breadth, going beyond the operations of the three services to include strategy, diplomacy, civil-military relations, propaganda, industrial production, weapons design and procurement, intelligence, logistics and German-Italian relations.

It is to be hoped that such an approach to official history will be reflected in future USMM publications in general. For too long even its best publications have been rather narrowly focussed. The USMM can be rightly proud of Giovanni Bernardi's massive work, *Il disarmo navale fra le due guerre mondiali* (1975) or Ezio Ferrante's short but excellent *La grande guerra in Adriatico* (1987).



Nonetheless, both studies would have benefitted from a greater and more frank analysis of related political and strategic questions. The naval historical office has recently issued a long-awaited monograph on a previously taboo subject: Mario Bargoni, *L'impegno navale italiano durante la Guerra Civile Spagnola (1936—1939)* (1992). In many ways, Bargoni's book is admirable, offering the first complete narrative of Italian naval operations in the Spanish Civil War, revealing many previously unknown facts and offering a candid assessment of the Navy's tactical, operational, and technical weaknesses. However, again there is a disappointing lack of strategic and political discussion and a failure to place Italian naval activities within the broader context of international naval, military, and diplomatic developments.

One hopes for the appearance of USMM publications on the development of Italian naval doctrine, strategic thinking, and warship design akin to such official Italian Army publications as Filippo Stefani, *La storia della dottrina e degli ordinamenti dell'Esercito italiano* (1984-85); Ferruccio Botti and Virgilio Ilari, *Il pensiero militare italiano dal primo al*

secondo dopoguerra (1985), and Lucio Ceva and Andrea Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'esercito fino al 1943* (1989). Mariano Gabriele has produced such monographs for the USMM on the earlier years of the Italian Navy: *Le convenzioni navali della Triplice* (1969) and in collaboration with Giuliano Friz (Fritz) : *La flotta come strumento di politica nei primi decenni dello stato unitario* (1973), and *La politica navale italiana dal 1885 al 1915* (1984). But there is a serious scholarly need for similar studies on the period of World War I, of Mussolini's expansion of the Italian Navy in the 1920s and 1930s, the naval aspects of the Italian-German alliance, and the Italian Navy as part of NATO's southern flank forces⁴.



Of indisputable merit is the USMM's quarterly *Bollettino d'Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare*, which has been published since 1987. Each 300 to 400-page issue is divided into two sections. One describes a section of the USMM archives and provides a detailed finding aid, the result of the ongoing reorganization and indexing project. (Eight recent issues provide a complete guide to the archive's holdings related to the Spanish Civil War.) The other section of each *Bollettino* contains fine scholarly articles on various aspects of post-1861 Italian naval history, of-

ten accompanied by complete documents.

Of related interest are the historical publications of the official Italian naval journal, *Rivista Marittima*, which are produced under the overall direction of Admirals Vincenzo Pellegrino and Francesco Pascazio. *Rivista Marittima* itself usually contains at least one historical article in each issue. However, such articles are aimed at Italian naval officers in general and are not always of the same high scholarly quality as those

⁴ However, USMM has published Mariano Gabriele, *Operazione C.3: Malta* (1965) on the strategic and operational planning for the aborted Axis seizure of Malta in mid-1942. Also useful in regard to Italian Navy strategy in World War II is the Italian Army Historical Office publication of the transcripts of the chiefs of staffs discussions during their 1939-43 meetings: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Ufficio Storico, *Verbali delle riunioni tenute dal capo di SM Generale*, 3 vols. (Rome: 1982-85).

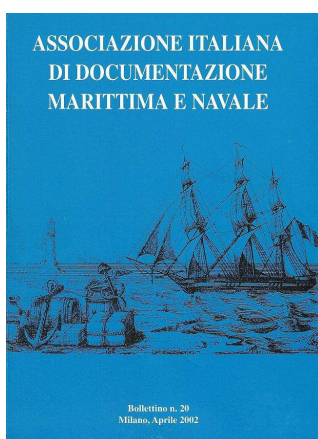
that appear in the *Bollettino*. On the other hand, one or more times a year, *Rivista Marittima* is accompanied by usually superb historical supplements in the same format as the journal. Among such supplements are Ezio Ferrante's short but illuminating biography, *Il Grande Ammiraglio Paolo Thaon di Revel* (1989), his examination of all-too-neglected subjects, *Il potere marittimo. Evoluzione ideologica in Italia, 1861—1939* (1982), and *Il pensiero strategico navale in Italia* (1988), and Erminio Bagnasco and Achille Rastelli's *Le costruzioni navali italiane per l'estero* (1991).

Beyond official publications, a fair number of Italian books and articles on Italian naval history have appeared since 1945. Most are popular and only a few scholarly; the majority, as might be expected, devoted to the Second World War period. However, recently, publications devoted to naval and maritime history prior to 1915 have appeared in increasing volume. Until the last twenty—five years or so, the general quality of such works was not very high, with the exception of the studies and memoirs of Admirals Alberto Da Zara, Vittorio Tur, Romeo Bernotti, and Angelo Iachino, and the work of Mariano Gabriele⁵.



⁵ Alberto Da Zara, *Pelle d'ammiraglio* (Milan: 1949); Vittorio Tur, *Plancia ammiraglio*, 3 vols. (Rome: 1958—63); Romeo Bernotti, *Cinquant'anni nella marina militare* (Milan: 1971); idem., *Storia della guerra nel Mediterraneo 1940-43* (Milan: 1960); Angelo Iachino, *La campagna navale di Lissa, 1866* (Milan: 1966); idem., *Le due Sirti* (Milan: 1953); idem., *Gaudo e Matapan* (Milan: 1946); idem., *Il punto su Matapan* (Milan, 1969); idem., *La sorpresa di Matapan* (Milan, 1962); idem., *Tramonto di una grande marina* (Milan, 1959). In addition to Gabriele's works cited elsewhere in this article, noteworthy are his *La politica navale italiana dall'Unità alla vigilia di Lissa* (Milan: 1958) and *Da Marsala allo Stretto. Aspetti navali della campagna di Sicilia* (Milan: 1961). Among the more important publications of these authors not already cited are: Alberto Santoni, *Il vero traditore. Il ruolo documentato di ULTRA nella guerra del Mediterraneo* (Milan: 1981); idem., *La seconda battaglia delta Sirte* (Rome: 1982); idem., *Da Lissa alia Falkland: storia e politica dell'età contemporanea* (Milan: 1987); idem., "Strategia marittima ed operazioni navali dell'anno 1940" in *L'Italia in guerra, il primo anno—1940* (Rome: n. d. [but 1991]); Francesco Mattesini, *Il giallo di Matapan* (Rome: 1985); idem., *La battaglia di Punto Stilo* (Rome: 1990); Santoni and Mattesini, *La partecipazione tedesca alla guerra aeronavale nel Mediterraneo* (Rome: 1980); Lucio Ceva, "L'evoluzione dei materiali bellici in Italia" in Ennio Di Nolfo, Romain Rainero and

Recently, however, as one sign of the revival of Italian military and naval history, a number of good studies have been published. These include the books and articles of the above-mentioned Alberto Santoni, Lucio Ceva, Andrea Curami, Ezio Ferrante, as well as Walter Polastro, Giorgio Giorgerini, Matteo Pizzigallo and Francesco Mattesini. Admittedly, some twenty or so Italians working in the field is not many. In fact, as an indication of the number of Italians devoted to naval and maritime history of all kinds, the International Naval Research Organization lists only about seventy—five Italian members.



However, one other group of Italians deserve to be mentioned as enthusiasts of Italian naval and maritime history: the Associazione Italiana di Documentazione Marittima e Navale (AID-MEN) and the Associazione Navemodellisti Bolognesi. Together, these organizations number about 250 members and are devoted to preserving photographs of ships and original builder's plans, building models, and publishing books and articles on ship designs. Prominent among these passionate experts are the famous Aldo Fraccaroli, as well as Erminio Bagnasco, Giorgio Giorgerini, Augusto Nani, Franco Gay, Elio Andò, Achille Rastelli and Gino Galuppini, each of whom has written one or more books on merchant or naval ship design, construction or armament⁶. All these

Brunello Vigezzi, eds., *L'Italia e la politica di potenza 1938—1940* (Milan: 1985); Ezio Ferrante, "Un rischi calcolato? Mussolini e gli ammiragli nella gestione della crisi di Corfù" in *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, no. 2, 1989; idem., "L'ammiraglio Lais, Roosevelt e la 'beffa' delle navi" in *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, no. 2, 1991; Walter Polastro "La marina militare nel primo dopoguerra, 1918-1925" in *Il Risorgimento* no. 3, 1977; Giorgio Giorgerini, *La battaglia dei convogli in Mediterraneo* (Milan: 1977); idem., "La preparazione e la mobilitazione della Marina italiana nel giugno 1940" in *L'Italia in guerra, il primo anno—1940* (Rome: n. d. [but 1991]); idem., "Il problema dei convogli e la guerra per mare" in *L'Italia in guerra, il secondo anno—1941* (Gaeta, 1992); Matteo Pizzigallo, "L'Italia alla conferenza di Washington (1921-1922)" in *Storia e Politica* July-September and October-December 1975.

⁶ Aldo Fraccaroli, *Italian Warships of World War I* (London: 1970); idem., *Italian Warships of World War II* (London: 1968); Erminio Bagnasco, *Submarines of World War Two* (London: 1977); idem., *Le armi delle navi italiane nella seconda guerra mondiale*

men have aided USMM over the years in its superb publications devoted to the specifications of Italian naval vessels and have authored many of them. Such work constitutes more the raw material for naval and maritime history rather than the heart of such studies, but it deserves mention for the painstaking care that has gone into its creation. Italian research and publication on ship design—perhaps reflecting Italian superiority in design of all kinds—is of particularly high quality. Italian maritime history has been advanced by an extensive series of excellent publications subsidized by the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI), the government holding agency created by the Fascist regime in 1933, which still plays a huge role in the Italian economy. IRI also maintains an extensive and well-ordered archive in Rome devoted to the history of Italian industry, especially the state-sponsored naval armaments, steel and shipbuilding industries, and the government-supported Italian ports. In contrast to the publications of the USMM, IRI's volumes have been devoted to Italian shipyards, ports, maritime and naval industries, and sea-borne commerce from the end of the Napoleonic period to the present. V. Marchese, Mariano Gabriele, Fulvio Babudieri, and L.A. Pagano have all produced volumes notable for their detail, accuracy and careful research⁷. Equally excellent private scholarship on the history of the

(Parma: 1978); Erminio Bagnasco and Elio Andò, *Navi e marinai italiani nella seconda guerra mondiale* (Parma: 1977); Erminio Bagnasco and Mark Grossman, *Italian Battleships of World War Two* (Missoula, Mont.: 1986); Erminio Bagnasco and Achille Rastelli, *Le costruzioni navali italiane per l'estero* (Rome: 1991); Giorgio Giorgerini and Augusto Nani, *Gli incrociatori italiani 1861-1964* (Rome: 1964); idem., *Le navi di linea italiane 1861-1961* (Rome: 1962); Franco Gay with Elio Andò and Franco Bargoni, *Orizzonte mare. Navi italiane nella seconda guerra mondiale*, 14 vols. (Rome: 1972-79); Franco and Valerio Gay, *The Cruiser Bartolomeo Colleoni* (London & Annapolis, 1987); Gino Galuppini, *Guida alle navi d'Italia. La marina da guerra dal 1861 ad oggi* (Milan: 1982).

⁷ V. Marchese, *L'industria armatoriale italiana dal 1815 al 1859* (Rome: 1955); idem., *L'industria ligure delle costruzioni nauali dal 1815 al 1859* (Rome: 1957); idem., *Il porto di Genova dal 1818 al 1891* (Rome: 1959); Mariano Gabriele, *L'industria armatoriale nei territori dello stato pontificio dal 1815 al 1880* (Rome: 1961); idem., *L'industria delle costruzioni nauali nei territori dello stato pontificio dal 1815 al 1880* (Rome, 1961); idem., *I porti dello stato pontificio dal 1815 al 1880* (Rome: 1963); Fulvio Babudieri, *L'industria armatoriale di Trieste e della regione giulia dal 1815 al 1918* (Rome: 1966); idem., *I porti di Trieste e della regione giulia dal 1815 al 1918* (Rome: 1967); L.A. Pagano, *L'industria armatoriale siciliana dal 1816 al 1880* (Rome: 1966).

Italian merchant marine, shipbuilding, maritime law and, of particular,



Italian ports was pioneered by Arturo Assante after the First World War⁸. More recently, such work has been continued and expanded (to include studies of the seafarers' union and maritime law, among other subjects) by Vito Dante Flore, Tomaso Gropallo, Francesco Ogliari, Ennio Poleggi, Guglielmo Salotti, Pasquale B. Trizio, and Ludovica De Courten⁹. Thanks in particular to the work of Gabriele in the area of Italian maritime history, there has been an unusual and happy integration of naval and maritime history in Italy.

Whatever other criticism can be fairly leveled at IRI, its support of such scholarship deserves high praise.

Outside of Italy, few historians have paid much attention to that country's naval and maritime history. What work has been done has been almost exclusively limited to the period from the Italian—Turkish War to the end of World War II and often in the context of Italian naval activities in alliance with or in conflict with other powers. Paul G. Halpern deserves special mention for his studies of the Mediterranean naval situation from 1908 to 1918¹⁰. Other Americans include MacGregor Knox, James Sadkovich and the author¹¹. Also, the French Pierre Barjot, Jean

⁸ Arturo Assante, *Il porto di Napoli* (Naples: 1938); idem., *La funzione mediterranea del porto di Napoli* (Naples: 1941).

⁹ Vito Dante Flore, *L'industria dei trasporti marittimi in Italia, 1860—1943* (Rome: 1970); idem., *L'inserimento nei mercati internazionali* (Rome: 1973); idem., *Le emergenze nazionali* (Rome, 1973); Tomaso Gropallo, *Navi a vapore ed armamento italiano dal 1818 ai nostri giorni* (Milan: 1976); Francesco Ogliari, *Trasporti marittimi di linea*, 1 vols. (Milan: 1975-87); Ennio Poleggi, *Porto di Genova: Storia e attualità* (Genoa: 1977); Guglielmo Salotti, Giuseppe Giulietti: *il sindacato dei marittimi dal 1910 al 1953* (Rome: 1982); Pasquale B. Trizio, *La marineria a vapore del Levante d'Italia 1876-1932* (Bari: 1983); Ludovica De Courten, *La Marina mercantile italiana nella politica di espansione, 1860-1914: industria, finanza e trasporti marittimi* (Rome: 1989).

¹⁰ Paul G. Halpern, *The Mediterranean Naval Situation, 1908-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1971); idem., *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1914-1918* (London: 1987).

¹¹ MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed 1939—1941. Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* (New York: 1982); idem., "The Italian Armed Forces, 1940-3" in Allan

Savant, and Raymond De Belot stand out for their work several decades ago on the naval aspects of the Second World War in the Mediterranean¹².

The Germans, Michael Salewski, Walter Baum, and most of all, Gerhard Schreiber deserve praise for their more recent studies, as do Josef Schroder and Jürgen Rohwer for their more specialized research¹³. In the area of Italian ship design and construction, Siegfried Breyer, Robert O.

R. Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness*, vol. III, *The Second World War* (Boston: 1988); James Sadkovich, "Aircraft Carriers and the Mediterranean: Rethinking the Obvious" in *Aerospace Historian*, December 1987; idem., "Re-evaluating Who Won the Italo-British Naval Conflict, 1940-42" in *European History Quarterly* October 1988; idem., "The Italian Navy in World War II: 1940-1943" in Sadkovich, ed., *Reevaluating Major Naval Combatants of World War II* (Westport, Ct.: 1990); Brian R. Sullivan, "Prisoner in the Mediterranean: The Evolution and Execution of Italian Maritime Strategy, 1919-1942" in William B. Cogar, ed., *Naval History. The Seventh Symposium of the U.S. Naval Academy* (Wilmington, Del.: 1988); idem., "A Fleet in Being: The Rise and Fall of Italian Sea Power, 1861-1943" in *The International History Review*, February 1988; idem., "The Italian Armed Forces, 1918—1940" in Millett and Murray, *op. cit.*, vol. II, *The Interwar Period*; idem., "The Strategy of the Decisive Weight: Italy, 1882-1922" in Williamson Murray, Alvin H. Bernstein, and MacGregor Knox, eds., *The Making of Strategy* (New York, 1993); "Italian Naval Power and the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921-1922" in *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Fall 1993.

¹² Pierre Barjot and Jean Savant, *Histoire mondiale de la Marine* (Paris: 1961); Raymond De Belot, *La guerra aeronavale nel Mediterraneo 1939-1945* (Milan: 1971).

¹³ Michael Salewski, *Die deutsche Seekriegsleitung 1935—1945*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main & Munich, 1970—75); Walter Baum, *Der Krieg der "Achsenmächte" im Mittelmeer-Raum. Die "Strategie" der Diktatoren* (Ottingen, Zurich & Frankfurt am Main: 1973); Gerhard Schreiber, "Italien im machtpolitischen Kalkül der deutschen Marineführung 1919 bis 1945" in *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, no. 62, 1982; idem., *Revisionisms und Weltmachtstreben. Marineführung und deutsch-italienische Beziehungen 1919 bis 1944* (Stuttgart: 1978); idem., "Die Seeschlacht von Matapan" in *Marineforum*, no. 50, 1975; Gerhard Schreiber et al., *Das Deutsche Reich in der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol. 3, *Der Mittelmeerraum und Südosteuropa: Von der 'non belligeranza' Italiens bis zum Kriegseintritt der Vereinigten Staaten* (Stuttgart, 1984); Josef Schroder, "Weicholds Plane zur Aktivierung der Seekriegführung im Jahre 1943" in *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, no. 19, 1969; Jürgen Rohwer, *Axis Submarine Successes 1939—1945* (Annapolis: 1983).

Dulin, Jr., and William H. Garzke, Jr., have published outstanding work¹⁴.

This brief survey of the state of Italian naval and maritime history indicates that much work in the field remains for the future, particularly in naval history.



To begin with, there is no truly adequate history of the Italian Navy. Fioravanzo's *La marina militare nel suo primo secolo di vita 1861—1961* (Rome, 1961) and Giuliano Colliva's *Uomini e navi nella storia della marina militare italiana* (Milan, 1971) are the best available. But neither are sufficiently detailed nor analytical, nor based on primary research, nor on extensive use of foreign sources. Both are also outdated, even in regard to recent Italian publication in the field.

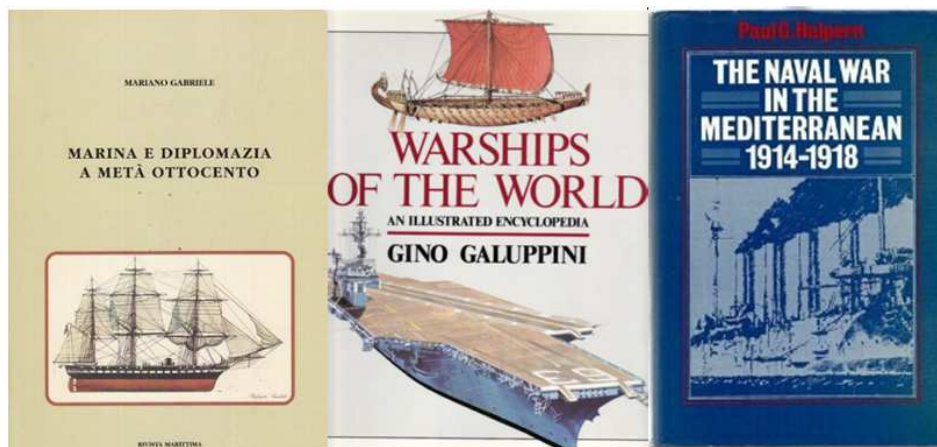
Scholarly biography, until recently, has not been emphasized in any area of Italian history. This is certainly true in regard to Italian naval history. Carlo Persano, Simone de Saint-Bon, Benedetto Brin, Augusto Riboty, Carlo Mirabello, Vittorio Cuniberti, Giovanni Bettolo, Giovanni Sechi, Luigi di Savoia, Paolo Thaon di Revel, Alfredo Acton, Costanzo Ciano, Umberto Pugliese, Giuseppe Sirianni, Domenico Cavagnari, Arturo Riccardi, Angelo Iachino, Inigo Campioni, and Romeo Bernotti all deserve modern, detached biographies. Ezio Ferrante has written a short study of Brin¹⁵ and the previously mentioned brief biography of Thaon di Revel. Recently, Aldo Santini has published a biography of Costanzo Ciano that covers his naval career to some extent¹⁶. Otherwise, with the exception of the short, although generally excellent, sketches and bibliographies that have appeared in the forty—odd volumes of the far from completed *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-) (up to the

¹⁴ Siegfried Breyer, *Battleships and Battle Cruisers 1905-1970* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1973); William H. Garzke, Jr. and Robert O. Dulin, Jr., *Battleships. Axis and Neutral Battleships in World War II* (Annapolis: 1985).

¹⁵ Ezio Ferrante, *Benedetto Brin e la questione marittima italiana 1866-1898*, Rome, 1983).

¹⁶ Aldo Santini, *Costanzo Ciano, il ganascia del fascismo* (Milan: 1993).

"Ds" so far) and the even shorter entries by MacGregor Knox and the author in Philip V. Cannistraro's *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Greenport, Ct.: 1982), all the above-mentioned major Italian naval figures lack objective studies of their lives.



A third aspect of Italian naval history that has been neglected is the period since 1945. Given the Italian political situation described above, this is to be expected. Bernardi's monograph for the USMM on the naval aspects and consequences of the 1947 peace treaty, the latter parts of Admiral Franco Maugeri's two books of memoirs, Enea Cerquetti's Marxist analysis of the Italian armed forces, 1945—1975, and Elizabeth Macintosh's unpublished doctoral dissertation on Italian naval arms sales and foreign policy, 1949—89, are the only major works known to the author¹⁷. The revelations that have emerged in recent months about the degree of corruption that has tainted relations between the Italian government and private industry will probably expand to Italian shipyards and naval armaments firms. If true, this would present yet another impediment to the study of recent Italian naval history.

¹⁷ Giovanni Bernardi, *La marina, gli armistizi e il trattato di pace, settembre 1943-dicembre 1951* (Rome: 1979); Franco Maugeri, *From the Ashes of Disgrace* (New York: 1948); idem., *Ricordi di un marinaio. La Marina italiana dai primi del Novecento al secondo dopoguerra nelle memorie di uno dei suoi capi* (Milan: 1980); Enea Cerquetti, *Le forze armate italiane dal 1945 al 1975* (Milan: 1975); Elizabeth Macintosh, "Italy: Defense Industries and the Arms Trade, 1949-1989," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1989.

For those interested in seeing Italian naval history, Venice provides its excellent Museo Storico Navale. The museum is only a short walk from St Mark's cathedral and illustrates the naval history of both Venice and of modern Italy.

The gaps in Italian naval and maritime historiography have been mentioned above. The most serious appears to be the near-total neglect of the teaching of naval and maritime history in Italian universities. Given Italy's re-emergence as a major power in the Mediterranean region, the Balkans, and in the European Community, and given the likely diminution of American naval power in the waters surrounding Italy, it is very much in the interest of Italian democracy that Italy's citizens understand such aspects of their nation's history. Over the last dozen years, Italian naval forces have returned to taking a major role in Italy's foreign policy, making operational deployments to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, to the waters off Lebanon, Libya and Somalia, to the Persian Gulf and to the coastlines of Albania and Croatia. Given the turbulence in North and East Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, such Italian naval operations seem likely to increase in future. Italy's citizens seem on the brink of remaking their nation's politics and of creating a new, far more accountable system of government.

While it is presumptuous for a non-Italian to so state, to make wise decisions about their national security, it would be best for Italians to have a far better knowledge of their naval and maritime past and present¹⁸.

¹⁸ In the writing of this article, the author has relied heavily on two publications of the Centro Interuniversitario di Studi e Ricerche Storico-Militare of the Universities of Padua, Pisa, and Turin: *La storiografia militare italiana negli ultimi venti anni* (Milan: 1985) and *Bibliografia italiana di storia e studi militari 1960-1984* (Milan: 1987). In addition, he wishes to express his gratitude for help from his friends Lucio Ceva, Willard C. Frank, Jr., and Paul G. Halpern.