Italian

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4261

Recorded in the Field by Alan Lomax with Diego Carpitella



## This C Piedmont, Edited by Alan Lomax, Anna Lomax (notes and translation), Carla Bianco (texts), with comments by Diego Carpitella Piedmont, Emelia, Lombardy



## ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4261

### Side 1

Band 1. The bells of Alpine cattle - Alan Lomax, Coll.
Band 2. Montagnes Valdotaines - Diego Carpitella, Coll.
Band 3. Paparone (tarantella) - Diego Carpitella, Coll.
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- Alan Lomax & Diego Carpitella, Coll.
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EMILIA
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EMILIA
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# Italian, Piedmont, Emelia, Lombardy Music

Recorded in the Field by Alan Lomax with Diego Carpitella

Edited by Alan Lomax, Anna Lomax (notes and translation), Carla Bianco (texts), with comments by Diego Carpitella



Collected and edited by Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella Booklet editor and translator: Anna Lomax Italian Texts: Carla Bianca Research: Diego Carpitella, Carla Bianca, Anna Lomax Notes written by Anna Lomax and Alan Lomax

Between the Alps and the Appenine Massif, the gentle Po threads through the jeweled cities of the North from Turin and Milan to Bologna and Ferrarra. This great green valley of the North has nourished a cultural tradition belonging more to the center of Europe than to the Mediterranean. It is a world of communal dances, of voices blending in harmony, or equitable relationship between sturdy men and independent women, of non-punishing sexual mores, and of a democratic and equalitarian political tradition. Not only did the cities of this region support the flowering of the Italian Renaissance, but later in Piedmont generated the movement that brought democracy and unity to all Italy. Even today, the radical and progressive forces of the country are most securely based in the North. This

libertarian sp'irit enlivens most of the songs that follow. They come from three different historically important regions of this ancient province of the Celts.

Gallia Transpadana was the Roman name for <u>Piedmont</u>, and under Augustus (49 B.C.) it became, with Lombardy, the 11th region of the Empire. For centuries migrants and invaders have poured through the Alpine passes: The Gauls and the Celts, who penetrated all of Italy, but settled mostly in the North; the Roman legions who settled in the Po valley in the 6th century, bringing with them an Arian form of Christianity; and Frankish invaders under Charlemagne in 774, who settled in the northern mountains and plains and whose traces still remain in the French patois spoken in many communities of the Val d'Aosta. From 1000 AD until the 18th century, the region was controlled by the Duchy of Savoy, though the papacy tried repeatedly to lay its hands on it. During this period cities grew apace, each one with its own artisan lore. In the country roundabout, the peasants held to their older folk traditions.

From this separation of rural and urban culture marked differences began to develop between peasant or rustic music and the "popular" music of the urban artisan-worker. This "artigano" music, until recently was thought to be the only Italian folk music. Italy's independence and unification in 1870 did not bring the two closer together, but rather, as northern cities became industrialized, urban music grew less distinctively regional and more in keeping with the widely popularized Neopolitan tradition of song, while the rural folk song traditions were hidden away in ever more retired villages.

Before Roman supremacy <u>Emilia-Romagna</u> belonged, as did all of Central Italy, to the Etruscans. The region takes its name from the Roman <u>Via Aemilia</u>, that led from Piacenza to Rimini. In the 6th century <u>Emilia-Romagna</u> became a Byzantine exarch, and later passed through the hands of Pope Nicholas III (1278). Cesare Borgia (15th century), and the powerful Farnese dukedom. In the early 19th century Napoleon's despotic mistriss. Marie Louis, ruled from Parma - a truly appropriate setting for Stendhal's novel of political battle and intrigue.

In the part of Emilia that lies in the plain one finds some of the most fertile land in Italy, sown in rice. Close beside modern industrial cities, in the Emilian Appenines, are villages where ancient songs and rituals live in a setting of traditional pastoral culture. This same contrast one finds all through the North, where modern cities rise only a few miles away from isolated mountain villages whose culture dates back for centuries. Indeed, the whole circle of the Alps that encloses the Po valley is sown with linguistic and folkloritive enclaves. One of these, <u>Gurro</u>, will be heard on Side 1, #9 and 10; others are touched upon in <u>Veneto</u>, Folkways #

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| 8.  | Jodoler (yodeling song)            | Diego Carpitella              |
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|     | Emilia                             |                               |
| 00  | - /                                |                               |

### Side 1. Band 1.

22. Trescone (folkdance)

### Bells of Alpine Cattle

Alan Lomax

These sounds come from the French-speaking Alpine north-western province of Piedmont. For untold centuries, the pastoral people in the Alpine centre of Europe have gone with their animals up into the mountain pastures for the summer. Often this was the task of the young men and women and together, in the green meadows and during the bright days of the Alpine summer, were made the marriages of these independent people.

One day along a road in the French speaking Val d'Aosta I recorded the beginning of this ancient summer pilgrimage. The herd of cows was moving along the road of social precedence. At the head stepped the most productive milker in the herd, at her throat the biggest of the bronze bells and between her horns a high garland of flowers and shining ornaments. A few paces behind, came her three Court attendants with somewhat smaller bells and less lavish crowns.

Then came small garlands and bells of middle tone and after them the ruck of heiffers with little bells ringing. With no other central plan than the stately rhythm of the walkers. this whole orchestra of bells, swinging against the bovine delaps, weaves a heterophony that far out-does the calculations of Cage and Bertolotti.

Band 2.

(Numbers 2-8 were recorded by Diego Carpitella)

Montagnes Valdotaines (Mountains of Val d'Aosta)

A small chorus of village artisans performs one of the patriotic songs so popular among these mountaineers, who have for centuries been Italy's first line of resistance against invaders. The French began settling in the Val d'Aosta in the Middle Ages, and today their communities make up one of Italy's "ethnic islands". The population is bilingual. These eight songs are all sung in French patois, in urban-artisan style, and with the yodel so common to this area.

(Nus, Val d'Aosta, Oct., 1954)

Band 3.

### Paparogne (Tarantella)

This vigorous and typically Northern community dance is patriotically termed a "tarantella" by The Piedmontese. However, its vigorous four square rhythm, its communal character, its hand drum and friction drum orchestra reminds one of the square dances and the Morris dances of the North more than the flowing dances of the South.

(Cogne, Val d'Aosta, Oct., 1954)

Band 4.

### Nen Maria nostra frighietta

In an isolated mountain village three old peasant women sing an epic-lyric ballad employing occasional chords in an ancient Translation: manner.

(Lillas, Val d'Aosta, Oct., 1954)

Band 5.

### Nini. mon pupon (lullaby)

Mrs. Maria Glany, a 42-year-old country woman from Lillas, bounces her baby to one of the typical rhythmic lullables of the North, where mothers dandle and play with their children to put them to sleep.

> Nini, mon pupon, Fai lu sonno, Ninî, mon pupôn, Fai lu sonnu.

Translation:

Nini, my little one, Go to sleep, Nini, my little one, Go to sleep. Etc ...

Bands 6 & 7

6. A la Sante de Noe 7. La Blanchiseuse

A mixed chorus of worker-artisans singing two French songs well known throughout the entire Franco-Piedmont area. (Nus, Val d'Aosta, Oct., 1954)

Band 8.

### Jodeler (Yodelling)

A group of women sing a typical Alpine "calling song" accompanied on the guitar. This rich, open-voiced yodelling style, so common in Alpine Europe and rare elsewhere, is one aspect of open-voiced singing style found in cultures where permissive sexual standards are in force.

Band 9.

### Che bel felice incontro (What a Happy Encounter)

The village of Gurro is high in the Alps, not far from the glaciers. Its people live by pastoralism, by migratory labor and by smuggling. According to legend, the present history of Gurro began when it was occupied in the Renaissance by a band of Scotch soldier adventurers fleeing up into the Alps from a lost battle. Granted temporary permission to stay by local inhabitants, they soon began stealing women from nearby hamlets and then settled down for good. This is how the present day inhabitants of Gurro explain several curious facts: the many Gaelic words in the local dialect, the plaid underskirts worn by the girls, the custom of mid-night marriage and the entirely secret honeymoons of Gurrese couples.

Only after the intervention of a handsome young smuggler did seven lovely mountain girls consent to stand in front of the microphone for half an hour and sing, throwing their voices far out across the valley with such force that the tape machine distorted the sound. This is the pure old Piedmontese style, in parallel chords, dwelling upon and prolonging the harmonies, rhythmically free, intensely and passionately lyrical. Each of these songs consists of a string of wellknown quatrains, which may be put together in any order at the whim of the leader. In this love song of derision the rejected boy says, with bitter irony --

Che bel felice incontro, Ho mai fatt' questa matina, 'Ncuntra' la mia spusina, Il bongiorno lei mi da.

Me la metto sott' ai piedi, Me la metto sotto ai sassi, Ma piuttosto che sposarti. Vo nel mare a sprofonda'

What a happy encounter, I had this morning. I met my dear bride, And she gave me good morning.

I'll step on you, I'll pile stones on you. And begore I'd marry you, I'd throw myself into the sea.

Band 10.

### Quei cacciatori (Those Hunters)

A popular love song of the mountains, sung by the same group of peasant girls. Gurro, Novaro, Piedmont.

Mo famme vedere quell'anima bella (2) Che sembra una stella caduta dal ciel, (2)

Caduta del cielo, mandata da dio, Al pianto mio la voglio veder, (2)

Translation:

Let me see that beautiful soul, She's like a star fallen from the sky.

Fallen from the sky, sent here by God, And to my sorrow, I want to see her.

(Note: All the following songs were recorded by Alan Lomax)

Band 11.

### La ricciola (A waltz)

In the little villages near Milan where you are served truffles on your beefsteak, there survives the noble tradition of urban artisan folk music. The Tonco village band is composed of the cobbler, the seamstress, the

blacksmith, the barber and the butcher and they officiate at all public celebration with trumpet, trombone, violin, accordion and bass. They play with a singing tone, a loose and vibrant rhythm and a confidence in themselves as an orchestra which marks an old and sure tradition. Village bands playing in this style can be found in Central Europe all the way East into Central Russia, but I myself have heard no performance more surefooted and charming than that of rural Piedmont. It is a question whether this style was born in Northern Italy or merely matured here. Whatever the answer, this of Tonco is generic music.

Band 12.

### Eviva il Mongra' (Viva monferatto)

A patriotic piece that is played and sung when the people of Monferrato wish to celebrate.

Eviva il Monfra! Eviva il Monfra' Eviva, vous...

Side II

Band 1

NOTE: The following songs were recorded Band 3. by Alan Lomax

### La Monferrina

A famous 19th century dance performed by the Tonco band.

E bundi, bundi, bundi, Uno alla volta, sotto alla porta, E bundi, bundi, bundi, Uno alla volta, e poi mai pi.

E bundi, ... Ancora una vira, sotta la riva...

Translation:

And good day, good day, good day, One at a time, under the door, And good day, good day, good day, One at a time, and then no more.

And good day,....
One more turn, under she comes...

Band 2.

### Maria Giuanna (Drinking Song)

This is the most famous drinking song in Italy, also called "al funeral del briagon", or, "The Drunkard's Funeral". It's moral -- wine is the only escape from man's wretched condition. Wine makes everything seem attractive, even death.

E ha passaie sor dotor, -Cosa e, Maria Giuana, oh, Cosa e, Maria Giuana, oh, trulla lalla. -

-Se savisse, sor dotor, Mi l'hai tanta mal da testa, oh, Mi l'hai tanta mal da testa, oh, trulla lalla. -

-Sa i bevisse nen tan vin, Mal la testa passeria, oh, Mal la testa passeria, oh, trulla lalla: -

Alle quand' chi meuira mi, Veui cam sôtro de 'na crota, oh, Veui cam sotro de 'na crota, oh, trulla lalla.

Demmigiane par cusin, Cu ses bote per candele, oh, Cu ses bote per candele, oh, trulla lalla:

Translation:

Sir Doctor passed this way "What ails you, Maria Giovanna oh!" (2) trulla lalla.

"If you only knew, Sir Doctor, Such a headache, oh!" (2) trulla lalla.

"If you didn't drink so much wine Your headache would pass, oh!" (2) trulla lalla.

( A verse is missing here. Giovanna says that if she didn't drink she would die. Then she dictates her last will.)

"When I die I want to be buried under a wine cellar, oh!" (2) trulla lalla:

"With a ten gallon jug for my cushion, And six bottles for candle sticks, oh!" (2) trulla lalla

### Io parto per l'America (I'm Leaving For America)

The theme of betrayed love should not disguise the social significance of this song. Found through Central and Northern Italy, it bears testimony to the shifts that took place among vast segments of the Northern Italian peasant population at the turn of the century, when thousands of laborers, and sometimes whole villages, migrated to America to seek for a better life. The immigrant of this song is eager to depart to leave behind the hard lot of the poor Italian peasant. His farewell to Italy conveys little real regret.

(A mixed country chorus from Casorzo, Emilia, October, 1954)

Io parto per l'America, Sul lungo bastimento, Parto col cuor contento Per non vederti più. Parto col cuor contento Per non vederti più.

Ma prima di partire, Faro un giro in piazza, Veder se c'e qualche ragazza Per piangera per me. Veder so c'e qualche ragazza Per piangera per me.

Ragazze non vi sono, C'e solo la villana, Addio, terra italiana, Non ti vedro mai piu: Addio, terra italiana, Non ti vedro mai piu.

### Translation:

I'm leaving for America, On that long ship, I'm leaving with my heart content That I shall see you no more (2)

But before I depart, I'll take a walk around the square, To see if there is some young girl Who will cry for me.

There are no young girls, There is only a village woman. Goodbye, Italian land, I shall see you no more.

### Voga, voga (Row, row)

A mixed village chorus in rural Lombardy sings a Venetian popular song once widely known in the North. Many songs like this have the superficial appearance of the genuine popular, but turn out in the end to be empty of meaning, feeling, or genuine imagery -- fake folk songs.

(Biella Belbo, October, 1954)

Gondolier, gondolier, Gondolier, gondolier, Giala notte si fa oscura.(repeat verse)

Voga, voga, senza paura, Voga, voga senza paura, Voga, voga senza paura, La tua barca riverra. (repeat verse)

Gondolier, gondolier, Gondolier, gondolier, S'avvicina un grande scoglio.(repeat verse)

Per levarci da questo imbroglio, Per levarci da questo imbroglio, Per levarci da questo imbroglio, La tua barca gira di qua. (repeat verse)

Gondolier, gondolier,
Gondolier, gondolier,
La tua barca si e fermata
Daje, daje una remata,
Daje, dage una remata,
Daje, dage una remata,
La tua barca rivera. (repeat verse)

### Translation:

Gondolier, gondolier (2) The night grows dark; Row, row, never fear, Your boat will arrive (2)

Condolier, gondolier, We're coming to a big rock; To get us out of trouble, Turn your boat this way.

Gondolier, gondolier, Your boat is stuck, Pull, pull on the oars, And your boat will arrive.

### Band 17, 18

17. A March 18. Overture from Rigoletto

These remarkable sounds were produced in the tiny, rustic village of Bottanucco, Bergamo, Lombardy, by the local panpipe band. Almost every locality in Northern Italy has a band of wind instruments, but in Bottanucco we have the survival (even though encouraged by local folklore movement) of a kind of orchestra that may date far back in time. Panpipes are among the most ancient and widely distributed instruments. Orchestras of panpipes occur in Russia, The East Indies, in Central America and especially in the highlands of Peru. Here the honest artisans of Bottanucco have enlarged their panpipe band to the dimensions of a small symphony. Some pipes are six to eight feet long. Sounding like a circus calliope coming to town, 25 handmade panpipes tootle forth the musical chestnuts of the 19th century in remarkable concert.

### Band 19.

### O. Pinota (Ballad)

The rice harvest along the Po is brought in by crews of stalwart women who, while they work, sing the ancient ballads of erotic adventures so much loved in the North. While they rested and ate their lunch under the poplar

trees, Delfia, Marva, Aida, Letisia, Rita and Silvana recalled the story of <u>La Pinota</u>, who, with charming reluctance and clad only in her nightgown, opened the door to her lover. In the next verse of the ballad, Pinota is delivered of three children and proposes that they be baptized at the shrine of St. Martine, patron of the cockolds.

Bible: Vidossi, n.18, p.489. Borgatti, p.50. Nigra, n.76, p.456. Cirese E., Vol.1, p.232, n.412.

O Pinota, bela Pinota, Una grasia vorei da te (repeat twice)

Dimi, dimi, che grasia voi? Una note dormir con te. (repeat twice)

Vieni, vieni, le undici ore, Quando mama e papa non c'e. (repeat twice)

Le undici ore son gia sonate, O Pinota, vien giu d'aprir. (repeat twice)

Son qui scalsa, in camiciola, Dami il tempo de rivestir. (repeat twice)

E' tutto inutile che tu ti vesti, Tanto nuda mi piaci a me. (repeat twice)

La Pinota de quindici anni, Era madre de tre bambin.

E 'ndaremo a batesare Nela chiesa di San Martin

### Translation:

Oh, Pinota, pretty Pinota, I ask you one little favor.

Tell me, tell me, what is this favor?
Just to sleep a night with you.

Come at eleven o'clock, While mama and papa are out.

Now the hour strikes eleven, Pinota, come open the door.

I'm here, barefoot and in my nightgown, Give me time to get dressed.

What's the use of getting dressed, Since it's naked I like you best.

Miss Pinota, just fifteen, Is the mother of three children.

And we'll go to baptize them At the shrine of St. Martin.

### Band 20.

### Ninna nanna (lullaby)

Celeste Cappelli, a slippermaker of the villare of Parre (Bergamo), is a celebrated singer of folksongs with the silvery, clear and tremulous voice so typical of Lombardy. Here she croons the lullaby of the region, alternately promising rewards and punishment to her child.

Ah! Ah!
Ah! Ah!
Se tu farei nini te daro i coche,
Se tu farei 'l cati ta dero i bote.
Se tu farei nini, te daro i coche,
Se tu farei 'l cati ta dero i bote.

### Ah! Ah!

(La donna parla al bambino:)

Fa la nana, fa la nana, bello de la mamma, fa La nana, cui bei angelin, bello de la mama, oh! Oh! Fe la nana, che brava gh'e Rosalba, oh! oh!

### Translation:

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! If you sleep, I'll give you a fresh laid egg, If you're bad, I'll beat you.

(She speaks to the child:)

Sleep, sleep, mama's love, sleep, With the pretty angels, mama's love, oh! oh! Sleep, Rosalba is so good! oh! oh!

Band 21.

L'e rivato unbastimento (A Ship Has Come to Port)

Giua Bonetti, singing crony of Signora Cappelli, leads a group of her friends in an ancient ballad found all over Italy. Its theme appears in the folk poetry of other European countries (see, for example, Child, in his preface to the Scots-English ballad "Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet"). In accordance with the chivalrous etiquette of the Middle Ages, the knight errant, forced by circumstances to share the bed of his host's wife, puts his sword between the lady and himself, facing dishonour should he take advantage of her proximity. The following is a parody of this custom: the hero is a clever pilgrim who seems to care less for his honour than for a bit of fun.

L' e'rivato un bastimento, valbiro, Tutto pieno di bei solda' e il biroccio 'l va, e il biroccia 'l va,

L' e 'rivato un bastimento Tutto pieno di bei solda'.

L'era dentro un pellegrino, valbiro, Che cercava la carità, e il biroccio 'l va, (2) L'era dentro un pellegrino Che cercava la carità.

Carita, buoni signori,
valbiro,
Un po' di paglia per dormir,
e il biroccio 'l va (2)
Carita, buoni signori,
Un po' di paglia per dormir.

Se tu fosti un galantuomo, valbiro,
Ti daria la mia mije,
e il biroccio 'l va, (2)
Se tu fossi un galantuomo

Ti daria la mia mije.

Galantom l'era el mi' pare,
valbiro,

Galantom saro anca me, e 'l biroccio 'l va (2)

Galantom l'era el me' pare, Galantom saro anca me.

Ti daria una coperta, valbiro,
Tutta piena di campanel,
e 'l biroccio al va, (2)
Ti daria una coperta,
Tutta piena di campanel.

E al pun' de la messanote,
valbiro,
Campanel sentia sonà,
e 'l biroccia al va (2)
E al punt' de la messanote,
Campanel sentia sonà.

A ship has come to port, valbiro, All full of handsome soldiers, And the buggy rides (2) A ship has come to port, All full of handsome soldiers.

On the ship there was a pilgrim, He went begging for charity,

Charity, good Sirs, And a little straw to sleep on.

If you were a gentleman, I'd give you my wife's bed.

My father was a gentleman, So I'll be a gentleman, too.

I'll give you a quilt, All covered with little bells.

At the stroke of midnight, The little bells were ringing.

Band 22.

### Trescone

Played on the violin and guitar by artisans of Riolunato in Modena, this is one of the popular folk dances of North Italy. A dance caller directs a string of mixed couples through complex formations from the familiar quadrille or square dance.

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