

My unforgettable stay at Ermide's and Alessandro's home (17th October 2006 in Bresso)

By Michael Negele

This contribution is a short recollecting to the 75th birthday of my dear friend Alessandro Sanvito.



Ermide and Alessandro Sanvito with Jurgen Stigter
in Amsterdam 2005

From time to time I am in the quite advantageous situation to get a business trip combined with a short visit to a chess book collecting friend or a historical place related to chess. It was nearly eight years ago that I could by chance arrange one of the most intriguing opportunities to admire a real treasure of chess books.

Mid of October 2006, I had to perform a training session for some Italian colleagues at the Bayer production site in Garbagnate near Milan. With no hesitation I had cancelled the invitation by the site head for dinner well in advance, and was now waiting at my hotel for my dear friend Alessandro Sanvito to pick me up. We had met already twice before personally, so during the annual meeting of the Ken Whyld Association in Amsterdam in 2005 and again at the Chess Olympiad in Turin in 2006.

So I was a little bit excited, if my host would arrive timely in the hotel lobby. With his typical charming smile Alessandro finally showed up and we drove in his car around the quite busy suburbs of greater Milan to his home in Bresso, about 15 km to go. The name in the address sounded quite well familiar to me, and I learnt that Don Luigi Sturzo (1871–1959) was an Italian Catholic priest and politician who is considered one of the fathers of Christian democracy.



Alessandro, Bert Corneth and
in the background Peter Holmgren
(Amsterdam 2005)



Adolivio Capece (another Italian chess addict), Alessandro,
Jurgen and John Donaldson in Torino (2006)

When we arrived, Ermide, the perfect housewife, had already prepared a delicious Italian supper, of course *antipasti, pasta and dolce*, and for me also some red wine. We talked a lot about family life, my employer Bayer and my former holidays in Italy, even about my just started weight-watchers experiences. But no chess books around . . .

Only after two hours, we stopped our friendly chat and Alessandro guarded me in a most solemn mood to his study. It seemed to me to be served a great honor entering this “shrine” with all its treasures. In the tiny room all books and magazines were very precisely shelved, and in a soft lime-light Alessandro started to tell me many details of these ancient chess manuscripts. Naturally most of these precious papers were “only” colored copies of those originals, Alessandro had excavated in his painstaking research work in Italian libraries. But I could also see all those famous early Italian chess books, this time originals in marvelous condition. My host explained to me that he formerly worked as a sworn appraiser at Milan’s jewelry stock-exchange. So it was most obvious that Alessandro was well acquainted to handle precious stuff.

He also talked about his long-term friendship with the famous Italian chess scholar, Dr. Adriano Chicco (1907-1990), pointing out that he, Alessandro, was not at all Dr. Chicco’s very industrious pupil.

(*Bibliografia Essenziale* of A. Chicco, taken from Alessandro Sanvito: *L’Opera Scacchistica di Adriano Chicco* [Milano, February 1992, published by the author])

Several hours we spent in the study, meanwhile Ermide had already wished “Buona notte” and I finally had to ask my host kindly to get back to my hotel. Late after midnight I was dropped safely, and the only misadventure I had to complain was not having had my camera at hand during this nice evening. So I can only dwell with my memory . . .

At multos annos, dear Ermide & Alessandro, and I still hope for another visit in your nice home, this time well equipped to take hundreds of photos.



KWA meeting in Torino: The late Prof. Pagni at the left, sitting in front of Andreas Saremba. Next to Alessandro Sanvito: Romano Bellucci, Jurgen Stigter and Tamás Erdélyi.