



The Stefano Castaways

by Stefano Skurla
translated by Amedeo Sala
edited by
John Melville-Jones

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www.warrigalpress.com.au
bobsheppard@warrigalpress.com.au
08 92950891

The Stefano Castaways publishes for the first time Canon Skurla's full account of the wreck of the barque *Stefano* on the north-west coast of Western Australia in 1875. The book also details the experiences of the survivors who were rescued by an Aboriginal group. The survivors lived with them for several months before being taken to Fremantle and returning to their European homeland.

The original Italian text is accompanied by a full and accurate English translation made by the late Amedeo Sala and edited by John Melville-Jones against an original manuscript of this work held in the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral, Rijeka. Reports of the search made for the survivors and their reception in Fremantle are printed from Western Australian newspapers.

The book also contains chapters by Alan Dench (on the evidence for the local Aboriginal languages which are contained in the text), Kevin Kenneally (on the passages in Skurla's account that describe the vegetation of the area) and Michael McCarthy (on the discovery of the remains of a vessel which is believed to be the *Stefano*). A map drawn by Annie Boyd shows the probable location of a number of the landmarks mentioned in Skurla's text.

The tale of the castaways is an impressive and inspiring tale of human endurance, worth reading for its own sake. In addition to this, the book paints a fascinating picture of the life that was led by the Aboriginal people in that area. It also brings to life some of the features of the Colonial society of that time. Finally, the account of the underwater search for the wreck will be of great interest to maritime archaeologists everywhere.

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