

1. Family Origins – Medieval Italy, Milan and the Village of Molteno

DRAFT ONLY

Anthony Molteno, Pall Mall printseller, his shop only a couple of hundred yards from Trafalgar Square – only it didn't actually exist when he was running his business. And his wife, Mary Lewis, a Londoner who came from just beyond the nearby parish of St Martin in the Fields. It's over two and a half centuries since these ancestors were born – Anthony in 1751, Mary in 1758. We don't know what they looked like for this was two generations before photography was invented. And before America's War of Independence or the French Revolution. Britain's Industrial Revolution hadn't really started either. But Mary's tombstone still lies there – you can see it set into the floor of the crypt of St Martin in the Fields crypt, which has now been turned into a restaurant!

Every member of the Molteno and the related Murray families in South Africa is descended from these two. So are all their relations in England and Scotland, Hawaii, Kenya, Australia and New Zealand, and a number of other countries. So rare is the surname, in fact, that today there are only a handful of other Moltenos, unrelated to Anthony in all probability, living in Italy, France and Argentina.

Anthony was warmly remembered in one of the London papers years after his death – in fact, in a report on the passing of his son James Anthony Molteno, who had taken over the business – as 'old Molteno who flourished in our boyhood. He came, with others of his calling, from the "the sweet South" – chiefly from Como and Milan. Among this company was the highly respected Paul Colnaghi, Molteno, Torre, Zanetti, Bolongaro, Salmoni etc – men to whom much merit is due for introducing a love of Art to this country, when Englishmen neglected it for the pursuit of less refining modes of money-making.'

The Village of Molteno in the Brianza

Where, then, did Anthony come from? And what do we know of the origins of his family? There is no better way of finding out than driving north from the great city of Milan. The wide plain of the River Po soon gives way to a series of little hummocks that rise out of the flatness. Perched on one of these midway between Como and Lecco at the southern end of Lake Como is the ancient village of Molteno. Lift your eyes and you see further to your north two little lakes, Pusiano and Annone, and beyond them mountains rising sharply to the snow-covered peaks of the Alps. This is the village from which the family took its name. It is situated in a beautiful and fertile part of Lombardy called the Brianza or *Il Bel Paese* ('the lovely country').

The Brianza nowadays is no longer primarily an agricultural area. Milan is the industrial heart of Italy. And whether the result of an insouciant disregard for planning or a deliberate strategy to provide employment in the countryside, the old villages are now surrounded by a rather messy mix of farmland, spacious new housing and the occasional factory.

Molteno is no different. When I visited in 1998 with my lifelong friend, Dario Longhi, the village and surrounding countryside did not have the feel of being primarily agricultural. There was no farmers' market, no tractors cluttering the streets leaving muddy trails. Instead within sight but not actually in the village itself, there were factories -- Konig making chains for cars to put on when the roads are snow-covered. Black and Decker. Iveco. A textile factory.

A century ago, Anthony's greatgrandson, Percy Molteno, described the scene. It was not so different from today: 'The slopes are covered with vines and mulberry trees; the church towers above the town, crowning the hilltop and commanding extensive views from its broad steps. The houses cluster in narrow, crooked streets about the lower slopes and base of the hill. It must have formed a strong position as a fortress, and though the castle has disappeared, the spot is still known as the Piazza di Castello.'¹

You can also still see the huge granite blocks of the castle base fringing a grassy knoll on which a few animals now graze. Much of the village was probably constructed from stone recycled from the castle when it was destroyed in early medieval times. The oldest house still standing today goes back to around 1600 and has stalls for livestock on the ground floor with the farmer's living quarters in the warmth above. As Dario and I stood on the little piazza in front of the church of S. Giorgio, we looked down on the orange tiles of the houses falling away below us, with just the one, cobbled street – too steep and narrow for cars – curling up the hill. They were laid in the old Roman style – thick clay half pipes in alternate rows, one facing to the sky, the next humping its back to the heavens to keep off the rain. A wonderful feeling of strength and continuity and the design wisdom of earlier ages. And as I looked out over the beauty of the scene, saw the mountains close by and stared up at the warm blue sky, I felt a sudden continuity with the Nature I had grown up with at the Cape six thousand miles away. Not for nothing did the Molteno family leave one Mediterranean climate only to put down roots in another.

Our first port of call was the office of the *commune*. Hardly had we stared at a noticeboard with the usual signs of civic life – minutes of meetings, agendas, public announcements – and walked in the door and explained ourselves, but excitement broke out when people heard my name was Molteno. We were ushered upstairs into the civic chamber – tables and chairs ranged round the walls, the *gonfalone* (official coat of arms of the *commune*) stretched out on its frame, and within a couple of minutes, the mayor Signore Francesco Riva, the leading official of the Council (the *assessore*), and a photographer gathered round us. Dario did sterling work explaining why I was visiting. There were smiles and laughter and the warmest of welcomes. Photographs of our formally shaking hands were taken. The book relating the history of the village was given to me, with the mayor inscribing it 'con affetto e simpatie'.²

But more surprises were in store. Signor Pier Carlo Galimberti , the *assessore*, insisted on taking us to see the village priest who lived in the *casa parrocchiale* next door to the church. To my immense

¹ P. A. Molteno, *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, London: Smith, Elder& Co., 1900, p. 3.

² Carlo Marcora, *MOLTENO memorie di famiglia*, Lecco, 1978. This substantial book provides lots of detail about early Moltenos inch IV on the medieval period (esp. pp. 44-45).

surprise, Don Carlo Ambrosoni got out an old boxfile in which were stored all sorts of bits and pieces about the connection with our family in South Africa and the little town of Molteno called after my greatgrandfather, Sir John Charles Molteno.³ We then walked into the church – the oldest part, the thick-walled sacristy, dating back to the 13th century and part of the original castle chapel. And then the church proper which was built 300 years ago with a beautiful vaulted ceiling painted with holy scenes. After that we went into the cool gloom of the parish archive office where Don Ambrosoni showed us the parish records of births, marriages and deaths going back to the year 1570. Finally, an hour or more later, we came away amid warm protestations of further contact. We wandered down the short steep cobbled street, past a tiny fountain oozing a small spray of water into a shallow basin, and Signor Galimberti invited us to join him and his family for lunch.

A Connection between the village and Molteno family?

A mere coincidence of name, of course, is not enough to establish any more substantial connection between the village and the Molteno family. A couple of pointers, however, are worth exploring.

Does the surname, Molteno, itself throw any light on the matter? It is certainly extremely rare, even in Italy, as any Italian phone book will confirm. No one called Molteno lives in the village today. It was apparently common practice when someone moved away to identify themselves by taking the village name as their surname. Nearly two-fifths of Italian surnames derive from geographical or ethnic origins.⁴ Don Ambrosoni and Signor Galimberti explained to me that the surname would originally have been de Molteno (ie. from ...), but was later shortened to Molteno. A further change took place in the late 18th century when the surname often came to be spelled Molteni.

Another possible pointer to a connection is the undoubtedly fact that Anthony Molteno himself came from Milan just eight miles down the road from the village. What's more, a strong tradition existed among his descendants that the family had a much closer connection with the village than just sharing the name. And this is supported by the historian, Virginio Longoni.⁵

But first a word about the very early history of the village. It already existed in Roman times. And when the Empire began to buckle and Northern Italy was invaded by the Visigoths, Milan and surrounding villages like Molteno suffered terribly. The city was captured by Uraja, the son of King

³ Carlo Marcora's history of the village proudly includes a chapter devoted to John Charles entitled 'Molteno trapiantata nell'Africa! And in August 2008 there was a ceremonial visit by Don Carlo Ambrosoni and nine of his parishioners to the dusty little town of Molteno in the Eastern Province of South Africa. There they were met by His Excellency Mr Yekani, the Mayor, amidst a fanfare of drums and spent two days of speeches, concerts, holy masses, lunches and dinners forging 'indelible footprints' and the dawn of a new 'incubated symbiosis' between the two communities.

⁴ T. R. Cole, *Italian Genealogical Records: How to Use Italian Civil, Ecclesiastical & Other Records in Family History Research*, Salt Lake City: Ancestry Incorporate, 1995, p. 27.

⁵ V. Longoni, *I castelli medievali della Bevera*, Sistema Bibliotecara Brianteo, not dated (but c. 1995), p. 125. Nearly half the book comprises long extracts from ancient Latin sources.

Vitiges. The inhabitants appealed to the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian in Byzantium (known later as Constantinople and today as Istanbul). He sent General Belisarius who drove the ‘barbarians’ out.⁶ But some families responded to the continual disorder that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire by fortifying their hilltop villages and establishing a more secure protection for themselves by basing themselves also in the city of Milan itself.

Longoni, in his detailed account of the twelve *commune* of the Brianza, concludes that there was a castle overlooking Molteno around 1,000 A.D. The hilltop with its swampy ground round about made it a suitable location. And the general disorder made defensive castles necessary. He also asserts that it was the *Famiglia de Molteno* who built the castle as well as being benefactors of the village church of S Giorgio, and that we know it was a noble family.

Certainly, all this is what Anthony’s descendants have long regarded as historical facts. And in the late 19th century, several members of the family actually began to visit the village. It started in the autumn of 1889. Percy Molteno and Bessie Currie, son of the first Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and daughter of Sir Donald Currie who was one of Victorian England’s great shipowners, were getting married. Percy wrote to his elder sister, Betty, about their intended honeymoon.⁷ They were heading for Italy and ‘I mean to go to Molteno ..., but I don’t expect we will find any traces of our family as it is several centuries since they were there.’ There is no record, in fact, of Percy and Bessie’s visit in the local church’s *Liber Chronicus*, a log of events happening in the village.

Two years later, Percy’s younger brother, Wallace, while on a visit to Europe before settling down as a farmer in the Cape, decided to visit the area too. He also wrote to Betty – ‘this country is called the garden of Lombardy and it is very beautiful with its gardens, trees and villas, and the Alps with their snow peaks all round.’⁸ But he did not feel at all romantic about his Italian ancestry. In fact he was very down to earth and told her, ‘I am very disappointed to find the Italians such a dirty lot of people and in such poverty!’

The village priest of the time, Don Paolo Bonanomi, did record the next visit by members of the family. It was April 1895.⁹ And pouring with rain. Suddenly ‘a lady and gentleman came to see me in the parish house. The gentleman was rather stocky and robust. About 40 years old. He didn’t say a word. But the lady was very friendly.... She explained to me in French the reason for their visit. She told me they were from Africa. In their family they had kept a tradition that their ancestors had built the church of Molteno in the early days of the Crusades. And that afterwards they had left ... in Africa. She and her husband had now come to Molteno with the explicit purpose of seeing the

⁶ This account is based on *A Sketch of the History of the Molteno Family*, collected by P. A. Molteno and compiled by R. F. M. Immelman. It can be read in full at <http://www.moltenofamily.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Immelman-Molteno-family.pdf>

⁷ P. A. Molteno to E. Molteno, 3.10.1889. All family letters, unless otherwise stated, are to be found in the Special Collections of the University of Cape Town.

⁸ W. Molteno to E. Molteno, 4.10.1891).

⁹ This account (translated) is drawn from the village’s *Liber Chronicus*, reproduced in Marcora, op.cit., p. 223.

church which had been the work of their ancestors. I answered that they could visit the church, but they wouldn't find anything they were looking for because, even admitting the mistaken fact stated by the senora, the church had been pulled down when the new one was built in 1713.¹⁰ These visitors were in fact another of Percy and Wallace's sisters, Caroline Molteno, and her husband, the Royal Navy surgeon Dr C. F. K. Murray, about whom we will hear a lot later in this story. Caroline wrote to Percy about the visit, describing it as like making a pilgrimage.¹⁰ She added that the priest knew of no records, nor had heard any mention, of the Molteno family in the place.

This idea of the family having actually originated in the village existed in another branch of Anthony's family – his son James Anthony's descendants. One of his great grandsons, Denis Lee, was part of the Allied Forces who fought their way up Italy during the Second World War. Denis had heard the same story from his mother, Elsie Rose Molteno. And after the collapse of Mussolini's puppet republic in Northern Italy at the end of the War, he was able to visit the village himself. He talked to the parish priest who welcomed him with open arms and told him of the visits by these other Moltenos half a century before, and that they had said the church had been erected by their family.¹¹

But it is when one turns to the history of medieval Milan, and more historical records come to hand, that we discover numerous individuals down the centuries actually called Molteno.

The Moltenos in Medieval Milan

Here we owe everything to Percy Molteno. He planned to write a biography of his father. And he employed an Italian historian, Carlo Gamberini of the famous Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, to see what he could find out about the existence of the family. The manuscripts and books Gamberini found were often in Latin and, on occasion, 'almost illegible in parts and can only be read with great trouble'. And the results were too fragmentary to make a coherent history. Writing to Percy in November 1889 he made clear: 'I have found nothing important except a handful of citations referring to Molteno ... in various memoirs, chronicles and printed mss.'¹² But it is interesting to see what he gleaned.

The earliest incident in which a Molteno features dates as far back as the 12th century and wars waged by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. What happened is all the most interesting

¹⁰ Caroline Murray to Percy Molteno, 9.10.1895.

¹¹ Denis Lee to Fiona Lorimer, 3.12.1981.

¹² A 22 page translation of the extracts (and archival sources), originally in Latin or Italian, that he sent Percy Molteno can be found in Collection BC601 in the University of Cape Town Library. Much of what follows draws on this information. I have not burdened this chapter with reproducing the full number of references to Moltenos or citing each source Gamberini quotes from. For example, he found that the Molteno family appeared in a 'List of families [dated 1377] in the domain of Milan noted for their fiefs, their jurisdictions and titles.' And an ancient Dictionary of Italy and Lombardy, in the section on the village of Molteno, stated that 'it produced the noble family of Molteno which family derived its origin thence and founded the parish church.'

because two competing views of what took place have survived. In 1158 the Emperor fell out with the Pope in Rome and invaded Northern Italy. He conquered town after town, but got stuck outside the largest of them all, the walled city of Milan. A dramatic story has come down in the family of how, in the depth of night, a Molteno who had access to one of the gates crept out and handed over the keys to Barbarossa. The investing army promptly occupied the city and within a couple of weeks almost totally destroyed it and killed many of its inhabitants. This Molteno was rewarded by the Emperor by being allowed to display the imperial eagle in his coat of arms.

The extraordinary thing is how much of this story actually happened. The city was already divided into factions before Barbarossa's arrival, with one side sick and tired of being ruled by the Counts of Angleria. Thirty-one families, including Menaduxius de Molteno, supported the Archbishop having spiritual *and temporal* authority over them instead of the Counts. They took advantage of Barbarossa's army being just outside the city and authorised the Archbishop to go to the Emperor and offer him overlordship. These leading families did not want their city's destruction of course, but they did want 'the destruction of the Counts of Angleria' as they were 'desirous of shaking off their yoke from their necks'. Barbarossa for his part, while betraying these families in turn and laying waste to the city, did also 'confirm their privileges, increase their titles, grant the bearing of the Eagle Crowned, and call the families [here follows the list, including Molteno] Barons of the Empire.'

Little wonder followers of the Counts of Angleria presented what happened in a very different light. 'These are the traitors who arranged the handing over and the conditions.... The first traitor was [and here follows a list of names ending again with] Menaduxius de Molteno, son of the Lord Flacius.'

In the centuries that followed, many Moltenos crop up playing significant roles in the life of their city, but not as some kind of hereditary nobles but as prominent citizens. It is important to understand the historical transformation that affected the people of the Brianza in the mid 13th Century. They were apparently starting to emancipate themselves from their feudal submission to the local nobility. Longoni argues, for example, that by 1250 the castle at Molteno was no longer relevant, and at some point fell into ruin. And it seems clear that the Molteno family was from this time increasingly based in Milan itself, rather than their ancestral village.

Little is known, judging by the research Percy commissioned, about the Moltenos in the 14th century. But one event saw yet another Molteno get involved in politics. Longoni relates (p. 45) how a spirit of rebellion grew up in the villages around Milan again. These villages had hitherto been governed on feudal lines, the local nobility being subject in turn to more powerful nobles in Milan. At some point, the rural population joined forces with these local nobles in support of Pope Gregory IX's crusade against Duke Bernabo Visconti who ruled Milan. But they were defeated and the leaders imprisoned in the Castle of Trezzo d'Adda. Twelve years passed. Bernabo's nephew succeeded to the dukedom. And on 7 June 1385 he granted an amnesty to all those involved including the Molteno family. This restoration of Visconti rule, however, was short-lived as Milan in the next century became an independent city state.

Many Moltenos became prominent in various walks of life during the 15th century. Percy, a lawyer himself, points to 'Georgius di Molteno appearing as the head of the great College of Advocates and

Notaries at various times between 1403 and 1435.¹³ Much more dramatically, a few years later following the death of the Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, in 1447, ‘the citizens abhorred the command of one person and wanted freedom, and [so] elected six of the leading citizens from each *porta* [ie quarter of the city].’ Petrolus de Molteno was one of those elected to govern the city which now became a republic. And the next year, Filippo de Molteno was also chosen as one of the ‘*capitani della liberta Repubblica di Milano*'.¹⁴ On 1st March 1448 he joined the others in swearing an oath to uphold the liberty of the city. These councillors, Percy quotes, were ‘the best, wealthiest and most useful citizens, and loving the peaceful condition of their country’.

At this time, other family members were involved in business. In 1438, Giovanolo de Molteno was admitted to the Guild of Merchants dealing in ‘fine wool’, as was his brother, Ambrogio, and later, Giovanolo’s son, Enrico de Molteno. And over the years, a dozen or so Moltenos were recorded as members of this Guild trading in the great piazza of Milan.

Other Moltenos were in business as general merchants and financiers during the 14th and 15th centuries. Giovanni de Molteno made a big loan in 1314 to the Ospedale Maggiore in Milan. In 1425, Duke Filippo Maria Visconti gave both Filippo and Benedetto de Molteno a general safe conduct to travel and do business for six months throughout the whole region round Milan. Longoni thinks this indicates how Moltenos were engaging in business on a large scale. Certainly 20 years later, in 1465, Pietro de Molteno, was described as a ‘*grosso mercante*’ and made a large loan to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza.

And at the end of the century, in the year 1498, another Molteno was one of those in charge of the building of the city’s great cathedral, the *Duomo*.¹⁵

What are we to make of all this random detail? I suggest we can draw several conclusions. First, the obvious one – there is, rather frustratingly, too little documentary evidence to construct a coherent history of the Molteno family in medieval Italy.¹⁶ But it is clear the family were identifiably in

¹³ P. A. Molteno, *The Life and Times*, op.cit., p. 5.

¹⁴ Longoni, op. cit. P. 45.

¹⁵ This was probably Giovanni Molteno who was listed in 1503 as one of the many architects and engineers responsible for building and maintaining the great cathedral from 1387 onwards. See F. Hodges, *Description of the Exterior and Interior of the Cathedral of Milan*, Milan, Typography of Young Workmen, 1924. But it could be an even earlier man, Giorgio de Molteno, who was listed in 1406 as one of the builders of the Cathedral and who three years later was listed as one of the 72 members of the Consilium Generale of Milan. In the mid 19th century, Mary Molteno stopped in Milan on her travels, visited the Cathedral and told her sister, Catherine, how she had seen a large tablet with the names of the architects in gold letters ‘and our name Molteno was among them’. (Catherine Molteno to Betty Molteno, 20.2.1922)

¹⁶ The Moltenos I have listed here by no means exhaust the full number of members of the family mentioned in various ancient documents. To cite just two more examples, Elena Molteno erected a family vault in the Ducal Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in 1514, in memory of her husband and son. And Hieronymus Molteno, a physician and member of Milan’s College of Physicians, built a tomb with his brother in 1586 for their mother, wife of Giovanni Giacomo Molteno, and her descendants in the Basilican Church of St Eustorgio.

existence roughly a thousand years ago. And they were minor nobility presiding over their own little castle and property in the village of Molteno. At a very early date, however, the family's centre of gravity shifted to the only city in the region, Milan. Here they became involved politically at various points in time while earning their living and pursuing many different occupations— notably in business and the law, but also in medicine, architecture and the Church.

The Milanese Republic was not left in peace by Europe's monarchs for long. The French captured the city in 1500. The Emperor Charles V annexed it 25 years later. And it remained ruled by his Spanish successors for the next 200 years until Austria took it over in 1714. The Austrian imperial family continued to rule it until the French Revolution. These long years saw not just the Milan's political subjugation but also its economic decline. And the fortunes of its old families decayed.¹⁷

What happened to the Molteno family in the 17th and 18th centuries when Milan lost its independence and fell into decline is not known. We also do not know whether it was the vexations of Austrian rule or the need to look elsewhere in order to earn a living that precipitated young Anthony Molteno in the early 1770s into leaving the city where his family had lived for centuries. And we can only guess how much he knew of the immensely long and rather distinguished history of his family. But judging by the strong sense of family identity he passed down to his descendants and which is very much still alive today, it is reasonable to conclude that he must have had a considerable sense of belonging to a lineage of which he could be proud. And this brings us to one last question about the family's Italian ancestry.

The Molteno Family Crest and Coat of Arms

Some Moltenos have liked to believe that they are of noble ancestry.¹⁸ Percy Molteno in particular pursued the matter. He had married into an up and coming Scottish family; his father in law, Sir Donald Currie, while in no way of aristocratic lineage, had become an immensely successful shipping owner who, like Percy's own father, had been knighted in recognition. Perhaps Percy as a newcomer to upper class society in London felt the need to remind people that he came of a family with far more ancient roots than most of them.

What of the facts? As we have seen, there was a Molteno family in Lombardy in ancient times who were minor nobility. This family had a coat of arms, and one that incorporated the imperial eagle of the Holy Roman Emperor. Carlo Marcora's history of the village describes these arms in precise detail.¹⁹ And an Italian heraldic dictionary explains that the bearing of a black eagle on a background

¹⁷ *A Sketch of the History of the Molteno Family*, op. cit.

¹⁸ It was once said that behind every great fortune lies a great crime. It may also be said that behind every 'noble family' and the estates it inherits lie at some point in time a war of conquest, much ingratiating oneself with kings and despoliation of those who actually work the land!

¹⁹ Marcora, op. cit., p. 46.

of gold denotes a brave and intrepid mind, accompanied by the helpful addition of a stable fortune!²⁰

But it is equally clear no genealogical line of descent from this early medieval family has been traced to the various Moltenos living in Milan as prominent citizens centuries later, let alone to Anthony's particular family. Nor will this ever be possible. The village priest in Molteno explained to me that it was only in the 1570s that the Archbishop of Milan ordered parishes to keep full baptismal, marriage and death records. These records still exist, unindexed, in the *casa parrocchiale* in Molteno in scores of bound volumes, but only since that date. By this time the Moltenos had long departed for Milan.

I know of no evidence that Anthony Molteno thought of himself as of aristocratic descent. Percy, however, was not the only one of his descendants to think he must have been. In the Bristow family (descended from Anthony's daughter Mary Molteno who married Charles Bristow), there is something called the Bristow Ring which shows the top part of the Molteno coat of arms. And Anthony's son, Charles Dominic Molteno, had a seal 'which consists of the Eagle, crowned, with his initials under it.'²¹ In yet another branch of Anthony's family, the descendants of his eldest son James Anthony Molteno knew of the existence of a Molteno family crest.²²

Relying on the impress he had got from his uncle, Percy wrote to the English authorities to try and get official recognition of the coat of arms. Addressed to 'The most noble Henry, Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal and Hereditary Marshal of England', the quaint letter proceeds as follows:

'The Memorial of Percy Alport Molteno [... son of Sir John Charles Molteno, Knight Commander of the most distinguished Order of St Michael and St George... and (grandson of) Hercules Crosse Jarvis, Member of the Legislative Council and a Justice of the Peace for the said Colony, all deceased].

'Herewith:

'That your Memorialist's family originally of the Kingdom of Italy have borne and used for their Arms Or on a fence argent between an eagle displayed and crowned sable in chief, and two bendlet gates in an ancient gateway surmounted by two towers of the last between two trees proper, but being unable to establish a legal right to the said Coat owing to the fact of there being no recognised College of Arms in the said kingdom [of Italy] and being desirous of having Arms and Crest legally established and recorded to him, he therefore requests the favour of Your Grace's Warrant to the King of Arms for granting and confirming the said Coat, in so far as the Laws of Arms will permit, with such differences as may be necessary together with a suitable Crest to be borne by him and his descendants and by the other descendants of his father, the said Sir John Charles Molteno, and that Arms for Jarvis may at the same time be granted to be borne.'

²⁰ F.Hirst's unpublished biography of Percy Molteno, p. 94. See <http://www.moltenofamily.net/biographies/a-man-of-principle-the-life-of-percy-alport-molteno-m-p-by-francis-hirst-2/>.

²¹ Percy Molteno to Caroline Murray, 6.11.1890. Charles Dominic's stepdaughter, Miss Glass, gave an impress of the seal to Percy at this time. The seal itself had been lost.

²² Herbert George Molteno to his nephew Kenneth Lee, 26.5.1942: 'My father [Frederick Molteno, b. 1840] often spoke of it, but I never saw it.'

I have not found any trace of a reply!

Nearly a century later, Percy's niece, Kathleen Murray, returned to the fray and took the matter up with the Italian authorities. The Istituto Genealogico Italiano sent this reply, dated 11 June 1986: 'Having carefully examined the reproductions of the Arms enclosed in your letter, we have consulted all the available works on Heraldry, but have failed to find any trace of it even in the printed and/or manuscript collections of Coats-of-Arms, as left behind by the heraldists.' The letter goes on to say, however, that they do know of 'a Crest of the MOLTENI family emblazoned per fess or and gules'.

Undeterred by the Duke of Norfolk not acceding to his request, Percy used the impress of his Great Uncle Charles Dominic Molteno's seal to have his own version of the family crest constructed. The Archives at the University of Cape Town contain many drawings and other artefacts relating to the crest he commissioned.²³ And to which he added the motto, *Semper Fidelis* ('Always keeping the faith').

Since then, Percy's Molteno family crest has taken on a life of its own. C. Pama's *Heraldry of South African Families* (p. 215) describes it very precisely and ascribes it to Sir John Charles Molteno – 'Tierced in fess 1 or, an eagle displayed sable, crowned or, beaked and armed gules; 2 argent, a castle double towered gules between two fir-trees on mounts in base vert; 3 or two bends sable.' Burke's *Landed Gentry*, in its first edition after the end of the Second World War, for some reason sent its draft entry for Percy's son, Donald Jarvis Molteno, to Jarvis's first cousin, Malcolm Molteno. This describes the Coat of Arms in slightly different terms, notably 'eagle wings displayed sa., crowned with an imperial crown'. Malcolm, for his part, long displayed the Molteno Coat of Arms mounted on a handsome plaque which he secured to the wall of his house in Chichester.²⁴

²³ UCT Special Collections, Box 106 in BC601.

²⁴ It is now in the hands of his stepson, Robin Soldan, who has it at his home in Suffolk.