

The cessation of the Italian journal *Belfagor* with the last issue of 2012 is a real tragedy for Italian culture. *Belfagor* was unique in all the world as an irreverent and impeccably scholarly journal of *varia umanità* (or the general humanities) in an age of dismal and relentless academic specialization. Founded by Luigi Russo, director of the Scuola Normale Superiore, as soon as possible after the fall of Mussolini, *Belfagor* was cautiously encouraged by that eminent anti-fascist Benedetto Croce, with the suggestion that a *measured* machiavellianism was most likely to succeed. The journal has been edited since 1961 by the founder's son, late professor of Greek at Bari, Carlo Ferdinando Russo. Now a nonagenarian, he well deserves his rest. But there remain 67 years of articles by scholars of the stature of Eugenio Garin, Leo Spitzer, Delio Cantimori or Sebastino Timpanaro. Olschki has just published the essential guide to the first 65 volumes, Antonio Resta's *Indici 1946-2010* (2012, pp.lxii+288, 60 euros) with an introduction, *Chi va piano*, by the editor, and a retrospective glance by Gabriele Turi. The end of *Belfagor* may signify *il tramonto della cultura italiana* — but just as Shackleton and his crew were able to read the *Times Literary Supplement* a year late in Antarctica, discerning readers will continue to refresh themselves by dipping into *Belfagor* for many years to come.

IAN JACKSON, «The Book Collector», London, Autumn 2012