



JONAS OF THE SEQUOIAS

Big Ancient Sequoias of Italy

A project by **Tiziano Fratus**

Sequoias arrived in Europe between 1840 and 1853. The first trees planted in the north of the country was in 1848, on the Burcina Hill (Bric Burcina) by Giovanni Piacenza, at the beginning history of the local botanic park; five specimens of *Sequoia sempervirens* planted to celebrate the enactment of Statuto Albertino, the first important Constitution the will be adopted also by the successive unified Reign of Italy (1861).

For what concern the first *Sequoiadendron giganteum* arrived in Italy we don't have documents but we know they arrived in the '50es and '60es of the XIX Century in some north region as Piemonte, Lombardia, Veneto, Friuli, Trentino and Tuscany.

Today, more than 150 years after, we could count sequoias in almost all the regions: Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardia, Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Toscana, Emilia Romagna, Marche, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicilia and Sardinia.

Centenarian Specimens are placed in Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardia, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trentino Alto Adige, Tuscany, Basilicata.

The most giants Trees are in Piedmont: tallest are the five sequoias in Park Burcina in Pollone, ranging 50 meters of Height, a few kilometers from Biella, the largest is one of the two big Giant Sequoias of a private garden in Roccavione, in the province of Cuneo, with the trunk circumference equal to 11 meters and 80 centimeters, at the base 16 meters and 10 centimeters.

The bigger concentration is in the woody Heart of Tuscany, at Reggello, 30 kilometers south of Florence; there, on the hill conducting to the Castle, you could meet more than 200 redwoods, some secular and some young. The largest is called Twin Sequoia (*Sequoia Gemella*), a tree constituted by two trunks, with a trunk girth of 842 centimeters.

A special sequoia is that one placed in Longarone, survived to the flood created on the day October 9 1963, when part of the hill Toc rushed into the artificial lake at the Weir: it was the Disaster of Vajont or Vajont Dam, with more 1917 deaths. The flooding lashed the valley and destroyed the villages of Longarone, Pirago, Rivalta, Villanova and Faè. A wave of 5 meters height hit Faè and also the giant sequoia placed in the second part of the XIX Century: the tree has survived but we could touch the sight of the damage, five meters debarking part in the trunk.

The photographic exhibition *Jonas of the Sequoias* is dedicated to the biggest Sequoias placed in the Italian Landscape, 20 color pictures of some of the most important Specimens.

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves,
Down from its lofty top rising two hundred feet high,
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs, out of its foot-thick bark,
That chant of the seasons and time, chant not of the past only but
the future.

Walt Whitman

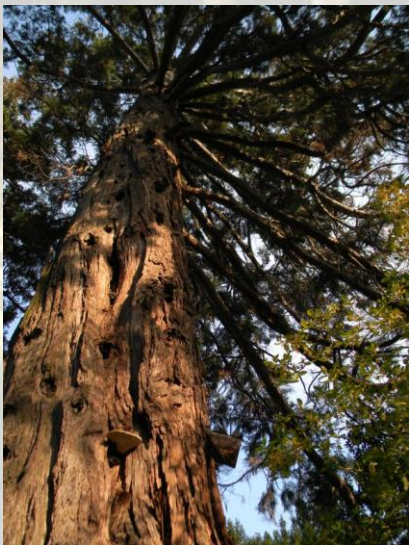
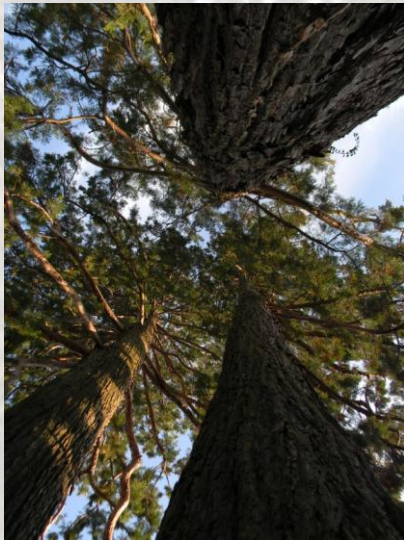
And I've been to the groves of Sequoia Big Trees,
Where beauty and grandeur combine,
Grand Temples of Nature for worship and ease,
Enchanting, inspiring, sublime!

Galen Clark

When you stand before a colossal wall
of reddish brown
a mass of tree bigger than any you've ever seen -
bigger than any living thing,
bigger than houses,
far bigger than ourselves,
It becomes more than
an experience of human and tree.

Ross L. Andrews







The Writer and Photographer

Tiziano Fratus is a walker, a tree seeker, a photographer, a writer, a scholar of landscapes, a designer of routes, a popularizer. He has published books and notebooks dedicated to trips and wanderings in the Italian Landscape, from the north of the Country, on the Alps, to the Southern Islands as Sicily and Sardinia, from the biggest Towns as Rome, Milan, Turin and Genoa to the little villages of the Provinces. Fratus works on a new form of identity, both local and international, through the evaluation of the heritage and secular trees in his region, the Piedmont (north west of Italy), his country and the world. He works to create a new simple way to feel as humans proud to live and work in a local regional part of the Earth and in the meanwhile on the whole planet. His *existential path* is reviewed by some of the most important Newspapers and Magazines, Radio Broadcastings and guested in Natural History Museums, Festivals, Botanic Gardens, Regional and National Parks.

Tiziano Fratus was born in Bergamo in 1975. He has lived most of his life in the Italian countryside working before in the little world of contemporary drama and then in that one of poetry publishing; at present he's living in a village at the foot of the Alps near two natural reserves. He has published twenty books of poetry around the world, from the north America to Singapore. In last years he dedicated his passion to Ecology and Ecosophy, the appreciation and enhancement of the Landscapes, Heritage and Secular Trees in his region, the Piedmont, in Italy and in the world. His personal declination of New Nature Writing is expressed in a series of books receiving attention from newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs and creating an editorial case. He held pictures exhibitions in important places as Museo del Paesaggio (Verbania), Corpo Forestale dello Stato (Rome), Giardini Botanici Hanbury (Mortola, Ventimiglia), Berni Gallery (Jersey, UK). The Regional Museum of Natural Sciences in Turin committed him a special exhibition dedicated to the big trees in Piedmont during the International Year of the Forests, *Grandi alberi fuori dal bosco. Un'alberografia di Tiziano Fratus in terra di Piemonte*. He invented the *Walks for Tree Seeker (Passeggiate per cercatori d'alberi)* and he's creating new *Itineraries for Tree Seekers* in the Regions Piedmont, Liguria and Tuscany.



Last books: *Homo Radix. Appunti per un cercatore di alberi (A Root Man. Notes for a Tree Seeker)*, *Le bocche di legno. Guida arborea del Piemonte (Wooden Mouths. An arboreal Guide to Piedmont)*, 2011; *Taccuino del cercatore di alberi. Giardini Botanici Hanbury (Blocknote for a Tree Seeker. Hanbury Botanic Gardens)*, 2011; *Poesie luterane (Lutheran poems)*, 2011; *Itinerari dei Ficus della Baia di Moreton a Sanremo e Bordighera (Moreton Bay Figs Itinerary in Sanremo and Bordighera)*, 2011; *Gli alberi pensano al mare. Itinerari nei boschi di Sassetta e nella Maremma livornese (Trees think about Sea. Itinerary in the Woods of Sassetta and in Maremma)*, 2011; *Ninguem sabe de nos (Nobody know about us. Selected poems)*, 2011, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Forthcoming books: *Terre di Grandi Alberi. Alberografie a Nord-Ovest (Lands of Big Trees. Treeographies in North-West)*, a Trip in the Italian North West; *Un ritratto ad olio ricamato nella lingua di Linneo (An Oil Portrait embroidered in the Language of Linnaeus)*, a Philosophical Pamphlet; *Giona delle Sequoie (Jonas of the Sequoias)*, a Botanic and Photographic Travel; *Il Bosco di Palermo (Palermo Wood)* – Florence, in collaboration with Palermo Botanical Garden; *Poesie con radici. Versi vecchi e nuovi (Roots Poems. Old and new verses)*; *L'Alber de Milan. Con gli occhi di Thoreau e le mani pronte a respirare; (Milan Trees. With Thoreau's Gaze and Ready-to-Breath Hands)* – Florence; *Le Dieu des Langues et des Radices (The Lord of Languages and Roots)* – Paris; *Itinerari per cercatori di alberi in terra di Sardegna (Itineraries for Tree Seekers in Sardinia)* – Cagliari.

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