

IN THE NAME of BEAUTY

Enit: 100 years of cultural policy
and tourism strategy in Italy



ITALIA



Manuel Barrese

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On the cover

Alerbo Moroni,
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Enit turns one hundred years old this year. It was Francesco Saverio Nitti's government that decided to found the organisation back in 1919 to help promote Italy's image abroad.

The institution has survived a century of history, one that has certainly not lacked challenges and difficult times, but its strategic importance as an essential tool for promoting tourism on a national and international level persists.

This publication takes us on a journey through time, a journey through the creativity and talent of the artists, graphic designers, photographers, directors and documentary filmmakers who have worked for Enit. Posters, advertising campaigns, publications and photographs allow us to take a look back at society's changes and contradictions, the unrest it has experienced, and the changing cultural climate. It is a precious and shared heritage that we must use to take stock, start a new page and look to the future. As I write this, tourism is growing exponentially around the globe, the number of travellers is increasing, and with it, the number of competing destinations. The digital revolution and the emergence of new markets require us to maintain a united vision of Italy's tourism initiatives, and we must do so by supporting the companies working in the industry, through a network of offices both in Italy and abroad. The road ahead offers so much potential, as long as we focus on our vision and continue to build a strong national network.

From pioneering competitions for the best tourist poster to photography contests on social media, our mission never changes. It is the same today as it was a century ago: to spread the word about Italy, this extraordinary union of art, land, beauty, and of course, *bella vita*.

Dario Franceschini

Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and of Tourism

Over the last 100 years of Italian history, tourism has assumed a variety of shapes and colours, from the greyness of its edginess in the war years, to the pale shades and mellowed lines of the reconstruction period, the bold, in-your-face colours of the economic boom and the modern dynamicity of the present day.

Enit has accompanied each and every traveller in his journeys over the years, painting dreamy images to draw him to the most exclusive destinations, whispering innovative ideas for visiting places in his ear, and promoting the best of our most authentic hospitality.

In the centuries-old pathway of Italian tourism, Enit has learned to speak many languages, not only due to its widespread presence throughout the world, but also because like all the operators in this unique economic segment it has evolved along with the market and the demand, playing not just an active but a pro-active role in communicating the essence and spirit of our country during every period of history.

Over time, Enit has worked to patch together a cross-section of Italy and repaint it as a wonderful place. Since its emergence in the aftermath of the First World War, Enit has fostered Italy's revival, recovery, and new beginnings. It has underpinned the country's transition from fighting *against* something to fighting *for* something.

The tourism industry has always been a peaceful one and during the post-war period, Enit was also tasked with pursuing this noble cause by promoting an image of Italy as a country that had been 'reawakened' from the horrors of war, taking the time to faithfully represent the communities and individuals that called the Italian peninsula their home.

Enit was also entrusted with carrying out research and statistical surveys, in addition to promoting tourism activities abroad. During the 1950s and 60s, Enit also tried its hand at filmmaking, successfully producing a series of short tourist propaganda films.

In this way, Enit helped to promote culture through its role as an institution, its collaborations with graphic artists and painters of varying degrees of fame and the diverse realities it depicted in the hope of representing a faithful cross-section of Italy.

Over the years, Enit entrusted the production of many of its propaganda films to a series of exceptional auteurs, and the results were exhibited at a number of major trade fairs. These films explored new territory and went beyond the typical documentaries made about Italy at the time.

Not only did Enit work to produce striking designs, it also printed copies of posters, billboards, advertisements and displays, in addition to devising strategies for their distribution.

These days, tourism is a major driving force of economic growth and a scientific, sector-specific and segmented industry. It is a world that involves both tangible entities (such as public transport and restaurants, etc.), and intangible factors, such as the promotion of traditions, local culture, a sense of belonging, and most importantly, emotions. In fact, these factors frequently contribute to what makes a tourist destination 'unique,' often playing a key role in attracting holiday-makers.

Ultimately, Enit owes its 100-year journey to its strong foundations, which have their roots firmly planted in Italy's magnificent beauty.

Giorgio Palmucci
President, Enit

The Italian hospitality industry owes its success in no small part to Enit. Over the past 100 years, the tourism industry has grown exponentially from 900,000 visitors in 1911 to almost 64 million visitors in 2019, while the industry's contribution to the economy has skyrocketed from 2.5 billion lira back in 1924 to almost 42 billion euros today.

Throughout the twentieth century and into the millennium, Italy has proved its position as a leading tourist destination time and time again, attracting visitors from nearby nations and from much further afield.

If we were to draw an imaginary line from 1919 to 2019, we would see a sharp, upward trend due to the fact that the tourism market has experienced such unrelenting growth.

From 1897 (the first year in which Luigi Bodio recorded how many tourists visited Italy) to the present day, Enit has kept a watchful eye over the number of tourists travelling to Italy, lending an operational hand in the industry's development, which has seen visitors range from the everyman to members of high society, thanks partly to the travel agency boom and the development of new means of transport. In fact, this past century has borne witness to a number of revolutions that have changed what the very word 'holiday' means to us today. Back in the early twentieth century, people would talk about going on a 'trip,' which later came to be described as a 'holiday,' before it evolved into a 'getaway,' and finally into a veritable 'experience.'

Entrusting Enit to intercept the flow of international travellers and harness the tourism industry's propulsive energy marked a real turning point for Italy.

Enit helped incentivise the tourism industry, which in turn led to the founding of a number of large hotel chains. According to Enit's research department, five billion lira was initially invested in Italy's hotel sector, with 9,806 businesses offering 235,000 beds to tourists back in 1924, that number has since risen to around 216,000 accommodation facilities offering over five million beds in 2019.

Enit has also lent a hand in the promotion and modernisation of Italy's tourism facilities through the provision of employee training courses, which has undoubtedly improved the quality of the services on offer.

And the Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo (Enit) continues to set its sights on new goals for the tourism industry to this day, adopting a modern and segmented approach to the market.

In fact, Italy recorded over 216.5 million overnight stays in 2018 alone, exceeding France (140.7 million stays) and boasting better results than Spain (301 million stays).

In 2018, the total number of overnight stays at Italian accommodation facilities also increased and neared 429 million. In fact, the international tourism sector is growing more than the domestic one and now represents 50.5% of all trips made in Italy and international spending in Italy, which now amounts to 41.7 billion euros, increased further in 2018.

Enit's three-year plan (2019-2021) focuses on new tourism values such as sustainability, accessibility and innovation, in addition to initiatives aimed at promoting off-season tourism, growing value, collaboration with Sistema Italia and local authorities to develop a set of overarching promotional strategies, an emphasis on the Made in Italy brand, and finally, Italy's competitive position as a leading international tourist destination.

Italy stands out for this extraordinary vocation for tourism and it is undoubtedly one of the qualities that fans the rest of the world's passion for our country.

Giovanni Bastianelli
Managing Director, Enit

INTRODUCTION

For the first time, Manuel Barrese's book reconstructs the role of Enit within Italian political history and artistic culture. The author takes as his starting point the works that were published at the time of the anniversary of Enit's founding, devoting particular attention to the period between the birth of the organization in 1919 and the 1960s. In this period, Enit showed particular vitality, and the documentation for this period is more accessible than for more recent times. Since no inventory existed for Enit's historical archives, researching and writing this book was far from easy. The author succeeded in this task only by carrying out detailed, rigorous research, in which he carefully matched archival documents (primarily documents from the Central Archives of the State and the archives of the State Railways) with a large number of items published in various forms by Enit, looking for clues, whether large or small.

The book focuses on a variety of topics, including the policy of cooperation and mutual support that existed between Enit and organizations such as the State Railways and the Touring Club of Italy (which, founded in 1894, was the first private organization dedicated to tourism in Italy), the opening of offices abroad and what this meant for the construction of an image of Italy abroad, the evolution of Enit's responsibilities (with Enit taking on particularly important roles during the fascist period), and the complex intertwining of strategies for commercial, political, and cultural objectives.

The author gives pride of place to Enit's use of images for the purpose of communication. In an age when degrees are being offered in Visual Studies, communication through images is an important subject, and it intersects with a topic that academic research has only addressed tangentially so far, that of tourist images. Barrese shows that Enit formed a cultural identity for Italy, and he demonstrates this primarily in the fields of poster design (with Enit having printed no less than 547,000 posters in its first nine years in existence) and published works.

Starting out with images for towns and regions, over the years Enit gave impetus to the formation of stereotypes and fixed visual patterns — such as a white spruce tree seen from a window — within which the distinctive features of the landscape, history, and culture of each town would be defined. In this way, the creativity of the artist and the needs of the client would intersect in the context of mass communication, a field that is very topical today.

Some of the biggest names of the era worked with Enit, among whom Barrese spotlights such individuals as Marcello Dudovich, one of the fathers of advertising poster art, and Marcello Nizzoli, a designer and graphic artist, as well as artists with a futuristic leaning, such as Mino Delle Site and RAM (Ruggero Michahelles). One surprising individual discovered by Barrese was Virgilio Retrosi, who began working for Enit in the 1930s as both poster artist and photographer; this was a significant combination of professions that had not been known of until then.

One valuable feature of the book are its illustrations, which provide a nice selection of the pictures in Enit's rediscovered photo archive. The photo archive, which includes many tens of thousands of prints, makes up a visual repertoire of extraordinary interest, not just from the viewpoint of photography but also from a historical, sociological, anthropological, and cultural perspective. The photographs in Enit's archive are currently being inventoried and digitalized, and after reading this volume I can only hope that the same will be done for the rest of the archive, so that before long the entire archive can be made accessible to the public. If this happens, it will then be possible for much additional research to follow in the footsteps of this book, a work that is full of valuable information and which will prove indispensable for future efforts to explore the history of Enit in greater depth.

Ilaria Schiaffini

Professor of Contemporary Art History
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I would like to start by thanking Enit for having given me the opportunity to explore such a fascinating area of study and research. The support I received from Minerva4art proved essential, and specifically that of Fabiana Ciafrei and Daniela Feudo, whose brilliance and perseverance helped me greatly. I would also like to thank Yara Cancilla and Sabina Colantoni, whose expertise was indispensable while writing this book. My gratitude goes likewise to Ilaria Schiaffini, who very kindly wrote the introduction. Finally, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Massimo Moretti for our fruitful discussions and for his generosity.

Manuel Barrese
Author

Chapter One

The origins and development of Enit

The inter-war period

After the end of the First World War, Italy had the increasingly urgent need to modernize and streamline¹ everything in its multifaceted tourism industry. As it is possible to imagine, Italy's involvement in the Great War had had a disastrous impact on the nation's tourism industry:² although Italy enjoyed abundant historical, artistic, and scenic attractions, the obstacles to mobility due to the threat of war suddenly deprived the country not only of its traditional, impressive influx of visitors from abroad but also of the substantial economic income that came from tourism³. It must not be forgotten that in 1912, just one year after the high-flown celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Italian unification, the General Manager of the Bank of Italy, Bonaldo Stringher, had estimated that the national treasury could count on receiving at least 450 million lire per year from the tourism industry. In 1919, under the government of Francesco Saverio Nitti, the decision was made to

attempt to repair the damage by setting up a special commission – led by Meuccio Ruini, Under-Secretary for Industry, Trade, and Labor – with the purpose of studying proposals for boosting the number of trips made to Italy, a number that, in that very year, had dropped dramatically⁴. As a result, by means of Decree Law no. 2099 of October 12, 1919 – which was published on November 22 of that year in issue no. 276 of the *Official Gazette* and converted into Law no. 610 of April 7, 1921 – the Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche⁵ (Italian National Tourist Organization, or “Enit”) was established. For the first time, the Italian government was ready to take an active role in national tourism policy by creating an organization responsible for promoting Italy's image around the world, primarily by means of advertising campaigns and publications in a variety of languages. Enit set itself up in Rome, with its management office in Via Vicenza, but in 1921 it moved its headquarters on a permanent basis to nearby Via Marghera. Enit received most of its

¹ For an in-depth historical view of tourism in Italy, see R. J. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World 1860-1960*, London 1996; A. Berrino, *Storia del turismo in Italia*, Bologna 2011; and T. Syrjämaa, *Visitez l'Italie. Italian State Tourist Propaganda Abroad 1919-1943. Administrative Structure and Practical Realization*, Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, Turku 1997.

² Cf. A. Treves, *Anni di guerra, anni di svolta. Il turismo italiano durante la prima guerra mondiale*, in G. Botta (ed.), *Studi geografici sul paesaggio*, Milan 1989, pp. 249-299.

³ F. Paloscia, *Il turismo nell'economia italiana dall'Unità d'Italia a oggi*, Rome 2004.

⁴ In 1910, 700,000 visitors from abroad arrived in Italy. In 1919, however, only 180,000 foreigners were recorded as being in Italy. Cf. A. Sereno, A. Agosteo, *Fascismo e turismo (Politica e storia del turismo sociale)*, vol. 21, Viterbo 2007, p. 35.

⁵ For works of that time concerning Enit, see *L'Istituto per l'Incremento delle Industrie Turistiche*, in “Le Vie d'Italia”, III, 11, November 1919, pp. 645-649; and L. Rava, *Che cosa è l'Enit*, in “Rassegna Italiana del Mediterraneo”, V, 59, December 1925, pp. 397-400.

funding from the government, which provided 500,000 lire per year. This was supplemented by proceeds from the tax on hotel bills – the so-called “tourist tax”, established by Royal Decree-Law no. 676 of May 4, 1929, and subsequently abolished by Royal Decree-Law no. 551 of March 18, 1923 – which in 1921 brought in a total revenue of approximately one and a half million lire⁶.

Even prior to 1919, however, a new, more dynamic outlook on tourism had begun to take root in Italian public opinion. This outlook received a crucial boost from Maggiorino Ferraris, a liberal senator and the editor of the magazine *Nuova Antologia*. Ferraris had grasped, back at the dawn of the industry, the financial possibilities that would come with proper promotion of tourism, and he suggested that an organization entirely dedicated to tourism be created, along the lines of what was done in countries beyond the Alps. In fact, tourism was managed very differently abroad: in Switzerland, Germany, and France, the organizations involved in boosting the development of tourism had for some time already been carrying out carefully planned large-scale actions. For instance, in Austria, under the Habsburgs, the first national tourist office in Europe had been set up, and this office, thanks to considerable financial support, began investing immediately in advertising, and it is not a coincidence that at the 1906 Milan International Exposition, the Austrian tourism office already had its own delegation⁷. However, Italy took as its primary model France’s *Office National du Tourisme*, which commenced its op-

erations in 1910 and was reorganized in 1917; although this French agency has been criticized on a number of points⁸, it nevertheless served as a valid model on which the foundations for a more modern and efficient tourism policy could be laid.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in Italy the variety of organizations dedicated to developing the tourism industry was clearly variegated and excessively fragmented. Under the auspices of Ferraris, in 1901 the Società Italiana degli Albergatori (Italian Hotel-keepers Association) founded the Associazione Nazionale per il Movimento dei Forestieri (National Association for the Movement of Foreigners), which two years later was turned into a non-profit organization. There were also, scattered here and there around Italy, small local associations (“Pro Loco” associations) for the purpose of promoting regions, individual cities, or spa resorts. In addition, the Touring Club Italiano⁹ had been active since 1893; headquartered in Milan, the Touring Club was a private tourism organization that, over the years, had gained more and more support, thanks in part to its sophisticated use of the media and advertising photos. When Enit was established in 1919, it faced the need of dealing and dialoguing with the Touring Club in order to clarify and differentiate their respective programs and privileges. Although the two organizations were pursuing similar objectives, they actually had very different spheres of influence and needed to remain independent. Following on the establishment of Enit, the President of the Touring Club Italiano, Luigi

⁶ A. Gerelli, *L'Enit nel 1921*, in “Le Vie d’Italia”, XXVIII, 8, August 1922, pp. 825-826.

⁷ *L'Istituto per l'Incremento delle Industrie Turistiche*, in “Le Vie d’Italia”, op. cit., p. 647. On the development of tourism in France, see C. Bertho-Lavenir, *La roue et le stylo. Comment nous sommes devenus touristes*, Paris 1999.

⁸ *L'Istituto per l'Incremento delle Industrie Turistiche*, in “Le Vie d’Italia”, op. cit., p. 646.

⁹ R. J. B. Bosworth, *The Touring Club Italiano and the Nationalization of the Italian Bourgeoisie*, in “European History Quarterly”, 27, 3, 1997, pp. 371-410; S. Pivato, *Il Touring club italiano*, Bologna 2006.

Vittorio Bertarelli (1859-1926), wrote the following in the magazine *Le Vie d'Italia*:

It would be helpful at this point to make it clear that we believe that it would be petty to think that the Touring Club can mainly look upon the emergence of a strong organization for tourism with doubts, or worse, with jealous fears... Enit has come into existence in a different field, the field of government. The government, precisely because it is a government, holds within itself the means to solve a number of tourism problems that no private initiative could possibly solve. Up to now, the resources that the government had available for tourism have almost always been only potential resources. Enit will need to put those potential resources into effect¹⁰.

The high esteem in which the Touring Club was held became clear when Enit was founded. This esteem was evident from the fact that of the eleven positions on Enit's board of directors, no less than three were given to individuals from the top ranks of the Touring Club: Luigi Vittorio Bertarelli, mentioned above, who was appointed Vice President of Enit, Attilio Gerelli, and Italo Bonardi¹¹. And the management of Enit also naturally included representatives of other organizations that were active in the field of tourism: Carlo Montù for the Associazione



Fig. 1 – Michele Oro (in «Ospitalità Italiana», II, 3, 1927)

Nazionale per il Movimento dei Forestieri, Carlo Fioroni for the Società Italiana degli Albergatori, and Alfredo Fortunati for the Unione delle Camere di Commercio (Union of Chambers of Commerce). Lastly, there were five Enit executives appointed by the government: Ubaldo Comandini, formerly General Commissioner for Civil Assistance and a minister without portfolio in the Boselli administration; Vincenzo Camanni, who was General Manager of Credit, Cooperation, and Private Insurance in the Ministry of Industry; Carlo Pugliesi, the Deputy Director General of Customs and Indirect Taxes in the Ministry of Finance; and Ludovico Silenzi, an attorney. The post of President of Enit was filled by Luigi Rava (1860-1938), an influential legal scholar who had previously been

Minister of Public Instruction and Minister of Finance, and who had promulgated one of the first laws in Italy for the protection of the environment and cultural heritage (Law no. 411 of 1905 for the preservation of the Ravenna Pinewoods). The position of General Manager, on the other hand, was filled by Michele Oro (1878-1949), formerly head of the advertising office of the State Railways, who was one of individuals in Italy most skilled in organizing tourism and who, according to sources, in short order was able to make himself the very embodiment of Enit (fig. 1)¹². The

¹⁰ L. V. Bertarelli, *E.N.I.T. (Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche)*, in “Le Vie d'Italia”, IV, 4, April 1920, p. 194.

¹¹ Italo Bonardi was Secretary General of the Rome delegation of the Touring Club Italiano and Senior Trade Inspector at the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labor; Attilio Gerelli was Deputy Secretary General of Touring Club Italiano.

¹² “Michele Oro and Enit were one and the same: the intelligence and energy of the former got completely transfused into the life of the latter, which grew exuberantly and became more successful with the passing of each day, both abroad and at home.” Ed., *Le grandi figure del turismo: Michele Oro*, in “Ospitalità Italiana”, II, 3, 1927, p. 40.

direct involvement, at a high level, of an expert civil servant from the professional sphere of the State Railways reveals how important a role the State Railways would play in the future of Enit. Especially in Enit's early years, contact between Enit and the State Railways was multi-faceted, and this contact was guaranteed by Oro himself who – based on what the archival documentation reveals – simultaneously served as both the head of the advertising department at the State Railways and the General Manager of Enit, though this did provoke some reservations and discontent.¹³ Despite this overlapping of powers, the top management of the State Railways was not only willing to turn over to this new entity, Enit, the managing of railway ticket sales offices, but even agreed to assist Enit in the coordination, implementation, and dissemination of advertising campaigns. The minutes of the State Railways' board of directors state: "In addition to publications, the National Organization will be responsible for preparing slides for conferences and enlarged photos, and will arrange for the production of cinema films that show Italy as it is... For these special means of advertising, the State Railways may grant, on a case-by-case basis, its financial assistance and its support, within the limits of the laws and regulations in force."¹⁴ The fields in which Enit and the State Railways would work together were carefully outlined immediately, and, as shown below, they were focused mainly in the area of illustrative images – especially advertising

posters – and promotional publications (i.e., guides, pamphlets, and brochures). The minutes of meetings of the State Railways' board of directors are rather explicit in this regard: "Whenever the Organization may decide to implement a program of photographic illustrations of Italy, whether by means of postcards, actual photographs, or photographs reproduced by rotogravure, not just from the viewpoints of art and scenery but also from those of history, folklore, and industry, the railway management is committed to facilitating the development and implementation of the program in every way and with all the means available to it."¹⁵

Enit, following on the "glorious tradition of the Touring Club and the admirable tradition of the State Railways",¹⁶ immediately launched a large-scale program to promote – primarily outside Italy but also within the country – Italy's artistic and naturalistic heritage. One factor behind the undertaking of such an ambitious initiative was the awareness of something that was not self-evident: that while the flow of tourists was limited by the efficiency of the various means of transportation, it might also be steered and influenced both by effective publicity information and by providing a system of services at the starting points of travel in the major cities of Italy and the world. Along these lines, in March 1921 the Consorzio Italiano per Uffici di Viaggio e Turismo (Italian Consortium for Travel and Tourism Offices) was founded,¹⁷ (figs. 2-4) which would

¹³ The inappropriateness of Michele Oro filling both of these positions was noted repeatedly by the Board of the State Railways. Cf. AFS, *Consiglio di amministrazione*, fiscal year 1920-1921, minutes of the 5th meeting, Rome, July 8, 1920.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ G. Ruata, *L' "E.N.I.T." e l'industria termale italiana*, in "Le Vie d'Italia", XXVII, 4, January 1921, p. 51.

¹⁷ Cf. L.V. Bertarelli, *La prima rete. Milano, Parigi, Londra,*

Nuova York, Ginevra, Lucerna, Zurigo, Basilea, San Gallo, Lugano, in "Le Vie d'Italia", XXVII, April 1921, pp. 383-389; Id., *Dalla semina al frutto*, in "Le Vie d'Italia", XXVII, September 1921, pp. 940-944; Id., *Impianti grandiosi di propaganda italiana. Contributo alla ricostruzione economica del dopoguerra*, in "Le Vie d'Italia", XXVIII, April 1922, pp. 395-399; A. Gerelli, *L'Enit nel 1921*, op. cit., pp. 829-831; and L.V. Bertarelli, *L'Enit per l'italianità all'estero*, in "Le Vie d'Italia", XXIX, January 1923, pp. 65-72.



Fig. 2 – Enit propaganda offices abroad (from "Le Vie d'Italia", XXIX, 1 January, 1923)

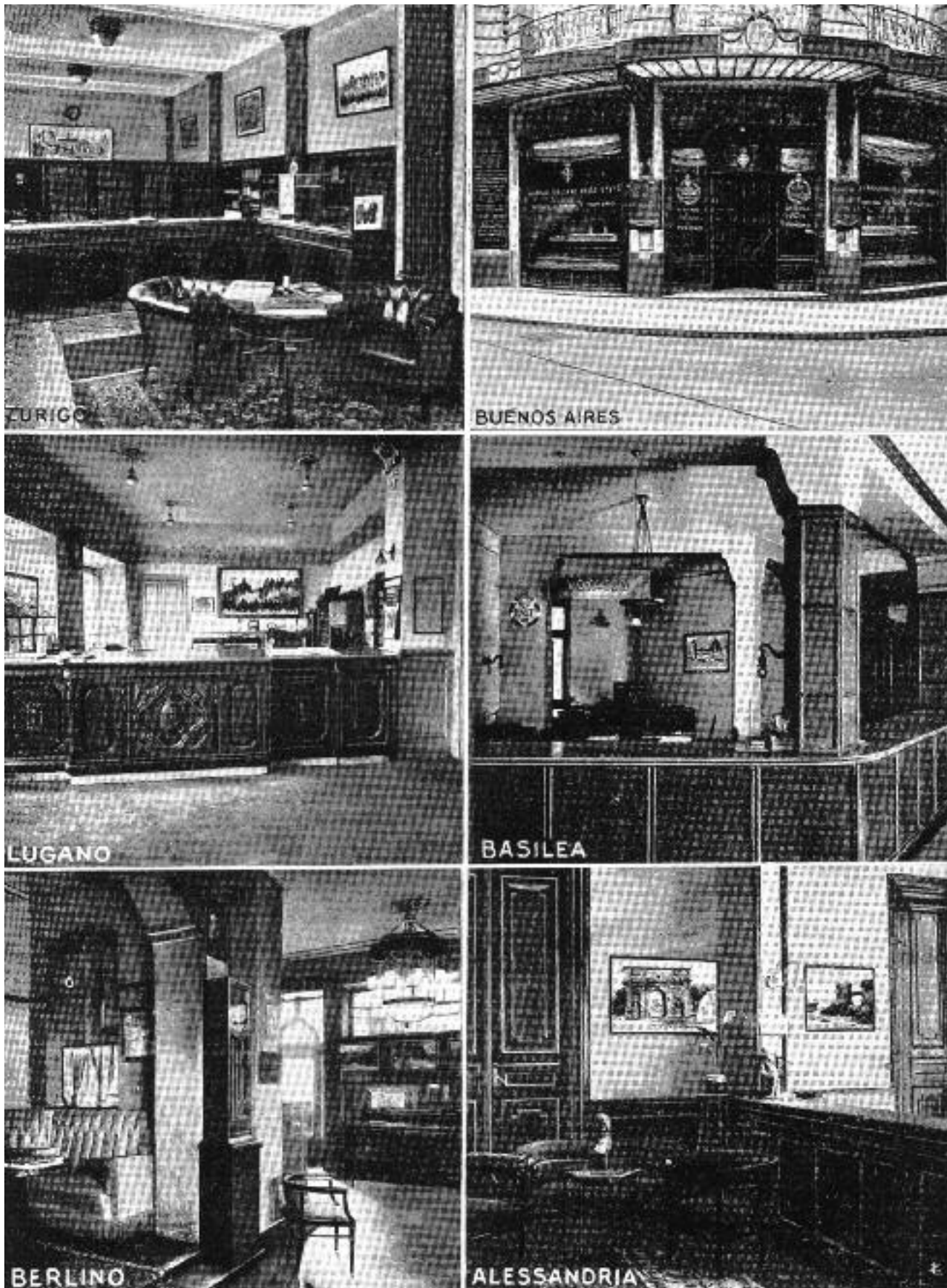


Fig. 3 – Enit propaganda offices abroad (from “Le Vie d’Italia”, XXIX, 1 January, 1923)



Fig. 4 – Enit propaganda offices abroad (from “Le Vie d’Italia”, XXIX, 1, January, 1923)

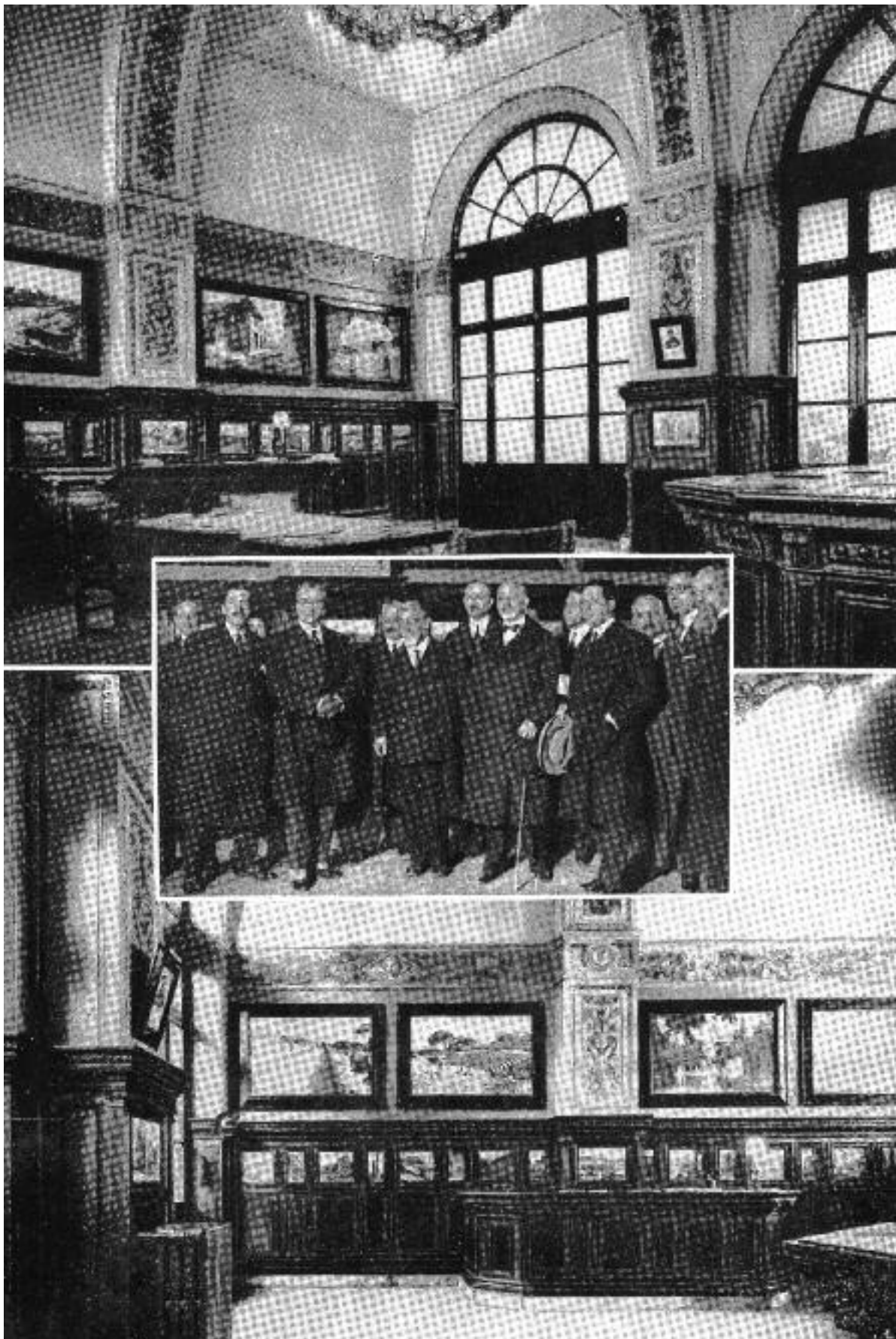


Fig. 5 –Inauguration of the Enit office at the Termini station in Rome (from “Le Vie d’Italia”, XXXII, 5 May 1926)



Fig. 6 – Italian consortium for the offices of travel and tourism, London office, Waterloo Place 12 – Regent Street (in «Le Vie d'Italia», XXVII, 4, April 1921)

be specifically involved in setting up and operating Enit outposts – not just abroad but also in Italy (fig. 5) – that would be responsible for optimizing tourism advertising that favored Italy and, above all, for assisting tourists with whatever they might need, everything from passenger tickets, trips, hotels, and guides to itineraries, maps, information offices, and interpreter booths at stations. The clear operational strategy behind the Consortium was explained as follows in a passage of a report published by the magazine *Le Vie d'Italia*:

The program of the offices was and is for them to do the best and the most that they can, with the program's practical, concrete aim being inspired by the English motto “to please

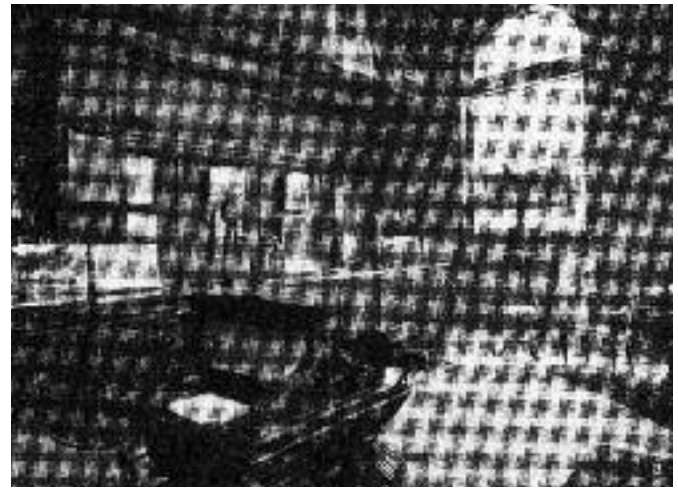


Fig. 7 – Italian consortium for the offices of travel and tourism, room inside the London office, (in «Le Vie d'Italia», XXVII, 4, April 1921)

the public”, which should also mean searching for this “public” both at home and abroad, and making our advertising and publicity compete with those of other countries while completely distancing ours from any particularistic interests that would conflict with the broader economic and national goal that is the ultimate goal of Enit as an organization.¹⁸

The main purpose of the Consortium was to have all the activities and tasks that previously had been carried out under independent management – not always with positive economic results and a positive image – be carried out at centers that were officially connected to Enit. In fact, the Consortium linked up and coordinated the initiatives of Enit with those of institutions, organizations, and companies that had already been working in the tourism industry for some time. The State Railways and the Unione delle Camere di Commercio had an automatic right to take part in the Consortium, but banking institutions, travel companies, and transportation firms¹⁹ that

¹⁸ A. Gerelli, *L'Enit nel 1921*, op. cit., pp. 830-831.

¹⁹ Navigazione Generale Italiana, Società Italiana dei

Servizi Marittimi, Banca Commerciale Italiana, Credito Italiano, Banco di Roma, and Credito Marittimo Italiano.



Fig. 8 – Italian consortium for the offices of travel and tourism, Paris office, Rue du 4 Septembre 20 (in «Le Vie d'Italia», XXVII, 4, April 1921)

were able to pay Enit at least 20,000 lire per year were also allowed to join the Consortium. In just a short time, the Consortium succeeded in setting up an initial network of offices here and there around the world. The offices in London²⁰ (figs. 6-7), Paris²¹ (figs. 8-9), and New York,²² which already existed and were run by Banca Commerciale Italiana, Banco di Roma, and Compagnia delle Carrozze con Letti (Sleeping-Car Company), respec-

²⁰ 12 Waterloo Place (Regent Street).

²¹ 20 Rue du 4 Septembre.

²² 281 Fifth Avenue.

²³ 17 Centralbahnstrasse.

²⁴ 3 Rue du Mont Blanc.

²⁵ 2 Schweizerhofquai.

²⁶ Piazza Rezzonico.

²⁷ 20 Leonhardstrasse.

²⁸ 80 Bahnhofstrasse.

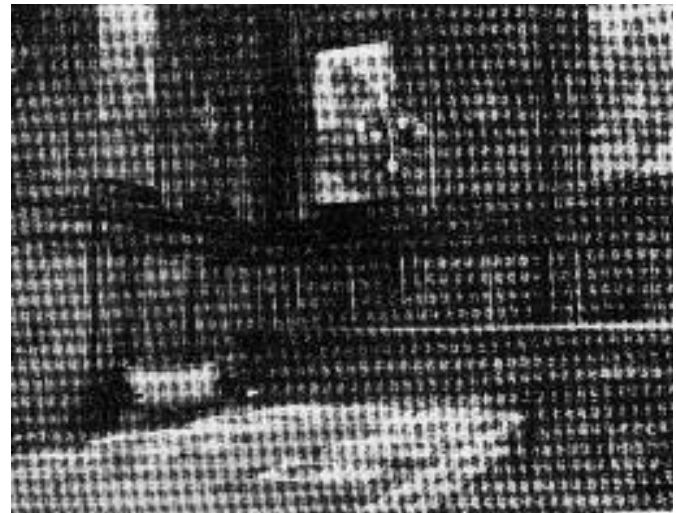


Fig. 9 – Italian consortium for the offices of travel and tourism, room inside the Paris office, (in «Le Vie d'Italia», XXVII, 4, April 1921)

tively, had already been placed under the control of Enit in December 1920 following the signing of an agreement with the State Railways, and subsequently no less than six offices were opened in Switzerland, specifically in Basel,²³ Geneva,²⁴ Lucerne,²⁵ Lugano,²⁶ St. Gallen,²⁷ and Zurich (fig. 10).²⁸ In 1921, offices were opened in Vienna,²⁹ Munich,³⁰ Berlin,³¹ Barcelona,³² Madrid,³³ Rio de Janeiro,³⁴ Buenos Aires,³⁵ Alexandria (in Egypt),³⁶ Cairo,³⁷ and in Nice³⁸, an important point for handling tourist traffic on the border with France, and lastly, in Brussels. Although it was clear that opening offices abroad was a sensible thing to do, especially in order to attract and direct large numbers of travelers to Italy, Enit offices were not to be looked upon as simple, isolated ticket sellers, since in fact each office acted as a “focal point for an entire, complex advertis-

²⁹ 6 Kärntnerring.

³⁰ 14 Maffeistrasse.

³¹ 47 Unter den Linden.

³² 3 Rambla Santa Monica.

³³ 47 Calle Alcalà.

³⁴ 2, 4, 6 Avenida Rio.

³⁵ La Valle Esq. Florida.

³⁶ 3 Rue Cherif Pacha.

³⁷ 4 Sharia Kamel.

³⁸ 10 Avenue de la Victoire.

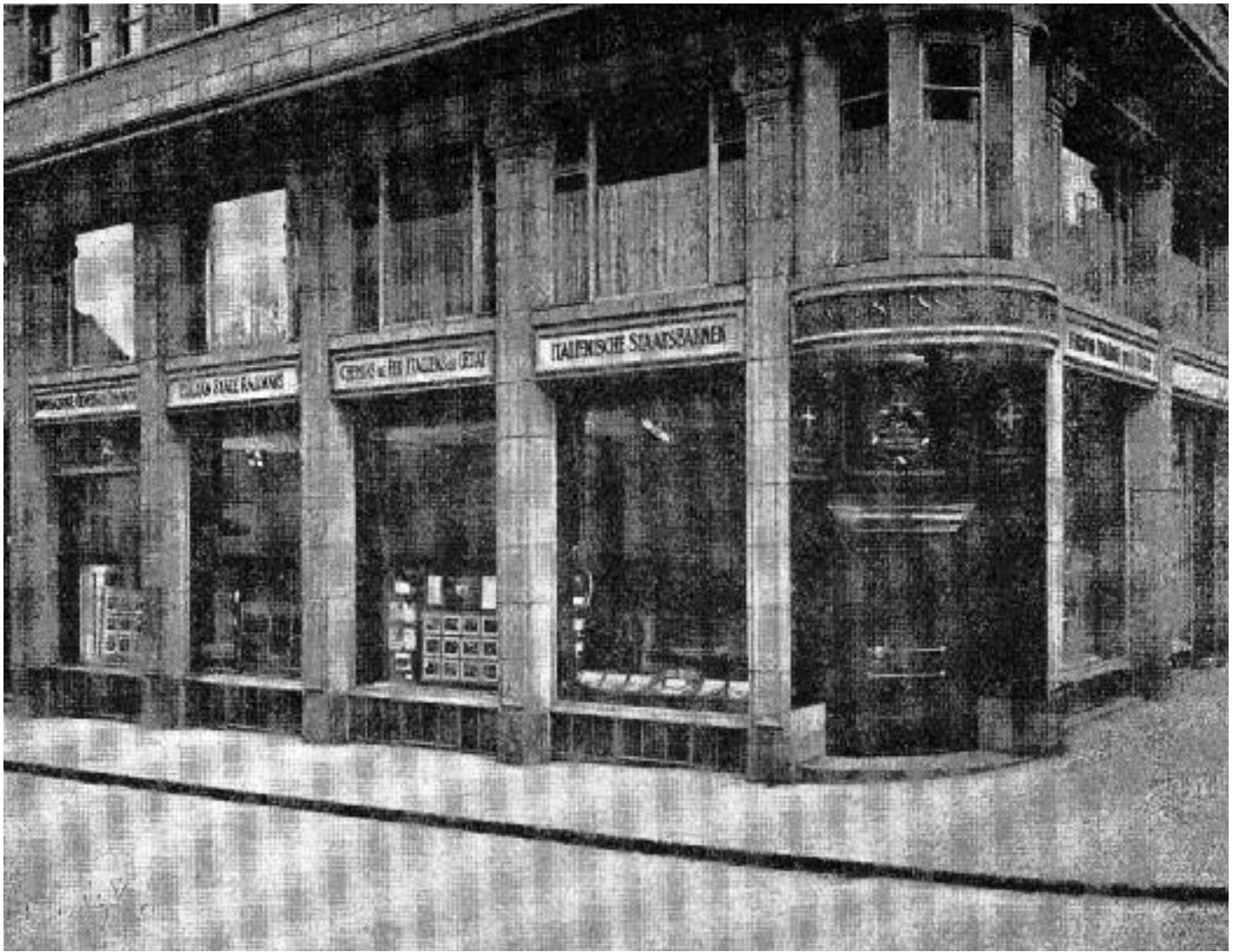


Fig. 10 – Italian consortium for the offices of travel and tourism, Zurich Office, Bahnhofstrasse 80, (in «Le Vie d'Italia», XXVII, 9, September 1921)

ing campaign.”³⁹ The offices were located in well-targeted, carefully studied locations, generally on the busiest and most central streets of major capitals. Similar care was given to the furnishing and decoration of the offices. Bertarelli wrote, “In the Paris office, which is decorated in a pure Italian style that is simple, severe, and noble, it is a pleasure to see ... portraits of our great monuments.”⁴⁰ In fact, it was common practice to decorate Enit’s foreign offices with attractive photographs and advertising posters “of our health resorts, of our hotel

complexes, of our spas, of our beaches, of our artistic cities, of entire regions of ours”⁴¹ in order to induce foreign tourists to travel to Italy. In addition, at these offices interested members of the public could easily find books, guidebooks, and maps self-produced in various languages by Enit and the Touring Club. To give visibility – even outside the borders of Italy – to particularly significant events, Enit made a point of handing out at its offices large numbers of copies of photographs showing, for instance, the death of Pope Benedict XV, the election

³⁹ Bertarelli, *La prima rete*, op. cit., p. 384.

⁴⁰ Id., *Impianti grandiosi di propaganda*, op. cit., p. 397.

⁴¹ Id., *La prima rete*, op. cit., p. 389.

of Pope Pius XI (1921), and the ceremony of the American delegation paying its respects to the Unknown Soldier (January 18, 1922).⁴² Most of the photographs distributed abroad were also meant to serve as visual support to the many articles on Italy and its beautiful sights that were published on a daily basis in foreign periodicals and magazines beginning in the 1920s.⁴³ The contents of these articles – which, in the opinion of Ugo Ojetti, were written in too unoriginal and naïve a style⁴⁴ – were provided by Enit’s press office. This office, in order to catch the attention and goodwill not just of Italians but also of foreigners, early on began to dedicate a certain amount of money each year to buying advertising space with various press services abroad.⁴⁵ Paid advertisements became one of the forms of publicity that Enit used the most, and their use remained a common practice with the organization even after World War II, as can be seen from the large number of albums – still owned by Enit – that contain excerpts from articles in various languages that conveniently mention artistic or scenic attractions in Italy and the efficiency of the country’s tourism industry.⁴⁶ In order to have important practical information on tourism – such as rail dis-

counts and reductions in hotel prices – reach a wider international audience, Enit took care to submit to the foreign press special press releases written in French, English, and German. The organization’s efforts to obtain the goodwill of the international press, and the organization’s resulting promotion of Italy as a preferred destination for travelers from around the world, became clear in special projects. In fact, Enit fairly often held contests to give awards for the best tourism articles on Italy published abroad in prestigious magazines such as *The National Geographic*.⁴⁷

At the end of the 1930s, as the winds of war blew through Europe more and more briskly, Italy used the overseas offices of Enit to try to penetrate, in a subtle yet pervasive manner, “hot” geographic areas that were agitated by precarious political and diplomatic balances. A typical example of this was the attention that was devoted to Yugoslavia.⁴⁸ With the goal of establishing a strong Italian presence in the country and simultaneously opposing German dominance in the region of the Danube and the Balkans, Dino Alfieri, the Minister of Popular Culture, believed it necessary to take action to have a Publicity and

⁴² *Atti ufficiali dell’Ente Nazionale per le Industrie turistiche*, in “Le Vie d’Italia”, XXVIII, 8, August 1922, p. 401.

⁴³ *L’attività e le iniziative dell’Enit*, in “Le Vie d’Italia”, XXIX, 6, June 1923, p. 681; *I giudizi della stampa estera sulla nostra organizzazione turistica*, in “L’Albergo in Italia”, II, 4, April 1926, pp. 224–227; *L’Italia turistica nella stampa straniera*, in “Ospitalità Italiana”, III, VI, 1928, pp. 39–42; and *Pubblicità di Aziende italiane sulla stampa quotidiana ed illustrata straniera*, in “La Pubblicità d’Italia”, II, 15–16, September–October 1938, pp. 30–35.

⁴⁴ U. Ojetti, *L’“Enit”, il tempo buono e il mare turchino*, in “Pegaso”, III, 5, May 1931, p. 587.

⁴⁵ For instance, in 1923 Enit’s budget allocated 320,000 lire for paid advertising. Cf. Bertarelli, *L’Enit per l’italianità all’estero*, op. cit., p. 66.

⁴⁶ “Another important activity is gathering news and articles from Italian and foreign periodicals. This is done not only by directly reading newspapers and magazines, but also by making use of the clipping service of *Eco della Stampa*. On a daily basis, therefore, an abundant collection of items is highlight-

ed and classified, and once this has been read by and used in the various offices, it is organized into an unpretentious but useful tourism archive. News and articles from foreign newspapers are also collected into special newsletters that reflect somewhat how foreigners view tourism in Italy, and which are therefore well received by newspaper and trade-press publishers.” *Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche. Relazione sull’attività svolta nell’anno 1927. 1928, anno VI*, pp. 13–14, a printed text stored in ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928–1930)*, 2-1, 8138.

⁴⁷ For example, in 1929 Enit gave an award to Paul Wilstach, an American, for the article *Holidays Among the Hill Towns of Umbria and Tuscany*, which was published in “The National Geographic” in Washington (LIII, 4, April 1928). Cf. *Notiziario turistico*, in “Supplemento tecnico mensile della Ospitalità Italiana”, VII, 3, March 1929, p. 73.

⁴⁸ M. Pacetti (ed.), *L’imperialismo italiano e la Jugoslavia*, conference proceedings (Ancona, October 14–16, 1977), Urbino 1981; and M. Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia (1922–1939)*, Bari 2006.

Tourism Office be opened as soon as possible in Belgrade, the capital of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In a note written on August 17, 1938, that is just a few months after the Nazis' alarming *Anschluss* of Austria, he stated that the Office should be involved, on the one hand, in "political penetration" and "development of tourist flows" and, on the other hand, in "cultural penetration by means of the dissemination of our literary works through the lending of books and the supplying of catalogs so as to boost the quantity of Italian books exported from the country."⁴⁹ To emphasize the closeness between the two countries, Minister Alfieri decided to set the date for the opening of the Enit office in the capital of Yugoslavia on March 25, 1939, that is the anniversary of the signing of the Pact of Belgrade⁵⁰ (March 25, 1937). A Ministry document contains the following: "For obvious reasons, everything possible must be done to emphasize the March 25th anniversary... The Royal Minister has suggested that there be held... a cinematic show with regional touristic publicity films from Italy... It would also be advisable to hold a celebration of the anniversary by means of radio and the press as well."⁵¹ Enit's offices served as cornerstones of Italian spirit abroad – to such an extent that they were described as "tricolored lighthouses in foreign lands" – but they also took on a very specific political usefulness because they not infrequently served as observation posts. In the tense atmosphere that was leading to World War II, Enit's

offices used to provide the Italian authorities with precious information on the actions of foreign powers. In a memorandum from the summer of 1939, Decio Magrini, the General Manager for Tourism at the Ministry of Popular Culture, highlighted the subtle frictions that existed at that time between Italy and Germany with regard to the area of Yugoslavia:

The Enit office in Prague confidentially reports that it has found out, from a reliable source, that the action that the German agencies responsible for tourism are carrying out in the Ostmark in favor of Yugoslavia and at the expense of Italian tourism is being extended into Bohemia and Moravia.

In fact, it turns out that although the National Police issue permits for trips to Yugoslavia without much difficulty, obstacles are still in place for trips to Italy, and persons who request permits for Italy are told that our nation's borders are closed to tourist visits, and in other cases they are even encouraged to go to Yugoslavia rather than Italy.⁵²

The Italian Consortium for Travel and Tourism Offices not only succeeded in expanding across the globe by means of its own efficient agencies,⁵³ but it also succeeded in generating considerable profits, which in large part came from the concession for selling tickets to the public that the Consortium obtained pursuant to an agreement with the State Railways signed on December 20, 1923. This privilege placed the offices that were

⁴⁹ ACS, *Ministry of Popular Culture (1926-1945)*, Cabinet, General Affairs, file no. 90.

⁵⁰ The Pact of Belgrade, signed by Galeazzo Ciano and Yugoslavia's Prime Minister, Milan Stojadinovi, guaranteed the existing borders and the status quo in the Adriatic.

⁵¹ ACS, *Ministry of Popular Culture (1926-1945)*, Cabinet, General Affairs, file no. 90, note of March 13, 1939.

⁵² ACS, *Ministry of Popular Culture (1926-1945)*, Cabinet, General Affairs, file no. 90, note of August 1, 1939.

⁵³ In its first five years, the Consortium came to hold 34 travel and tourism offices abroad and 48 in Italy, 24 interpreter services in stations, and 150 correspondent agencies spread around the world. Cf. *Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche. Relazione sull'attività svolta nell'anno 1927. 1928, anno VI*, pp. 13-14, a printed text stored in ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928-1930)*, 2-1, 8138. p. 36.

under the Consortium in an effectively superior position with respect to all other privately-owned travel companies which, finding themselves in an objectively inferior position, could not benefit from the special terms that were granted only to a state-controlled body like Enit. In order to separate the publicity tasks from purely commercial activity, in 1926 and 1927 two legislative measures were issued that radically altered Enit. Royal Decree-Law no. 1430 of August 6, 1926, resolved that Enit could only take part in travel and tourism companies – including the offices of the Consortium – when this was approved by the Minister of Economy. And Royal Decree-Law no. 225 of February 17, 1927, founded the *Compagnia Italiana Turismo*⁵⁴ (Italian Tourism Company, CIT), a corporation with 5 million lire in capital; this company was founded with funds from Enit, the State Railways, Banco di Napoli, and Banco di Sicilia. CIT was placed under the leadership of Ezio Maria Gray⁵⁵ (1885-1969), an ambitious nationalist and one of the very first fascists. CIT would replace Enit in the managing of the offices that relied on the Consortium and related ticket offices (fig. 11). As a result, the role of Enit, an organization devoted exclusively to publicity, came to be redefined, in that Enit, which was regarded as the government’s tourism office, became an organization that was freed from any concerns about turning a profit and was placed above any competition. With regard



Fig. 11 – Logo of the *Compagnia Italiana Turismo* (CIT)

to this, Luigi Rava, the President of Enit, said the following: “There is ‘tourism politics’ and there is a ‘tourism industry’.”⁵⁶ As a result of these reforms, Enit’s interests and goals not only were made to become more specifically “political” but they also came to coincide with a superior form of protection, cultural promotion, and the study of tourism.

Due to its obvious zeal for promoting Italy, Enit was not left unmoved by the enormous power of radio to spread messages. With Mussolini’s permission, and after having entered into appropriate agreements with the Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche (EIAR), Enit decided to “colonize” the airwaves by means of radio broadcasts focusing on tourism. With an inaugural speech delivered by the General Manager himself, Enit’s *Radio Giornale* newscast was officially launched on September 12, 1927, from the Rome radio station. The newscast was roughly 10 minutes long, and was broadcast every evening simultaneously from the Milan, Naples, Rome, Genoa, Turin, and Bolzano radio stations. The broadcast report was very important, and for this reason it was prepared with great care by Enit employees, since it provided both Italian and foreign listeners with practical tourist information (e.g., news about rail discounts, automobile services, and hotel facilities). In addition, every Thursday the news was broadcast in a foreign language (French, English, German, or Spanish),

⁵⁴ L. Poretto, *Che cos’è la CIT?*, in “*Ospitalità Italiana*”, II, 3, 1927, pp. 30-31; and E. M. Gray, *Una forza nazionale. La Compagnia Italiana del Turismo e il suo programma*, in “*Ospitalità Italiana*”, II, 5, 1927, pp. 22-24.

⁵⁵ *L’On. Ezio Maria Gray presidente della Compagnia pel*

turismo, in “*Il Giornale d’Italia*”, March 19, 1927.

⁵⁶ *Atti ufficiali dell’Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche. Il programma dell’Enit in un’intervista col Sen. Rava*, in “*Le Vie d’Italia*”, XXXIII, 9, September 1927, p. 1085.

and on Saturdays the broadcast usually was entirely dedicated to describing one specific tourist spot in Italy.⁵⁷

Royal Decree-Law no. 1461 of July 7, 1927, resolved that the Istituto Nazionale di Propaganda Aeronautica be closed; as a result, Enit came to inherit the right to produce promotional material for civil aviation, and it did its best to publicize air travel (fig. 12).

Enit also enhanced its international reputation by means of accurate statistical studies that were produced annually by its highly regarded industry experts, such as Marco Avancini, Rodolfo Benini, and Angelo Mariotti. The latter eventually became General Manager of Enit. To assess the significance of the movement of foreigners in Italy by means of even more accurate parameters, Enit, with the support of the Istituto Centrale di Statistica (Central Institute of Statistics), established at border crossings in 1930 a program to record the number of tourists entering and exiting Italy at the nation's borders.⁵⁸

Although Enit made progress in improving publicity, the creation of CIT and the transfer of control to CIT over travel offices and ticket-selling services did not improve Enit's financial situation but instead worsened it and gave rise to a variety of concerns among staff.⁵⁹ The share of CIT's profits that, by law, was to be dedicated to increasing the amount of tourism publicity turned out to be insufficient to guarantee Enit the funds necessary for it to step up its activities, and therefore in 1928 a considerable decrease in the number of foreigners traveling to Italy was record-



Fig. 12 – Mario Borgoni, *Le linee aeree d'Italia*, 1927, Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 70 x 100.5 cm

ed.⁶⁰ Severe financial limitations arising due to – among other things – interference by CIT in regulating national tourist affairs thrust Enit into a period of deep crisis. Unease and discontent became particularly evident at the end of 1928, when the Minister of Economy received a report prepared by Guglielmo Alterocca – a journalist who headed Enit's Press Office – that reported administrative irregularities and failures at Enit

⁵⁷ *Enit Radio Giornale*, ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928-1930)*, file no. 3, no. 2-1, doc. 8138.

⁵⁸ *Una nuova statistica per valutare il movimento turistico straniero in Italia*, in “*Le Vie d'Italia*”, XXXVI, 3, March 1930, p. 240.

⁵⁹ E. Maurizi, *L'Enit e le agenzie turistiche*, in “*Supplemento tecnico mensile della Ospitalità Italiana*”, VII, 3, March 1929, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁰ Typewritten report by Angelo Mariotti, September 1928, p. 4. ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928-1930)*.

and included explicit accusations against Enit employees. Because of the delicate nature of the situation, two different internal inquiries were undertaken, the first being entrusted to Alfredo Maraldi, an accountant, and the second to Tancredi Oddone, a councilor of the Court of Audit. Together, the inquiries brought to light some actual violations, but they were treated with a certain degree of forbearance. As the report by Minister of Economy Alessandro Martelli – dated September 1929 – indicates, the investigations were able to verify “a few technical allegations” that, for the most part, “were not of a serious nature and ... neither brought into question the honesty of the administrators nor raised any concerns concerning the assets and good name of the Organization.” Apparently contradicting itself, however, the report states the following: “The vast majority of the matters found are truly of a technical nature. They consist of the sorts of merely administrative and accounting-related irregularities that occur very frequently in the operations of semi-public bodies that, unlike bodies directly controlled by the government, are not required to strictly comply with the rules found in laws and regulations on general government accounting. It should also be noted that the allegations mainly concern the operations of the travel and tourism offices, which were assigned to Compagnia Italiana del Turismo back in 1927.”⁶¹ Based on these considerations, the Ministry of Economy made it clear that it had decided not to take action with regard to Enit, dropping the accusations that had originally been made by Guglielmo Alterocca. But Alterocca was fired, and he attempted to argue his case by appealing to Mussolini himself:

Duce,

As a journalist (I was for twenty years the editor of *La Tribuna*), last February I requested of Your Excellency that an inquiry be carried out regarding the operations of Enit, where, as head of the organization’s Press Office, I had found and was finding deficiencies and irregularities.

The inquiry has taken place. It was entrusted to the upright rigor of a judge from the Court of Audit, and it lasted approximately four months.

I do not know what the inquiry found, but I am certain that I was not in error, and I am certain, in fact, that I was doing a service to the administration of the State when I took upon myself the responsibility of reporting a state of affairs that *Popolo d’Italia* itself repeatedly identified as the cause of Italy’s tourism crisis. My certainty is based on my conscience and on the fact that although two months have passed since the conclusion of the inquiry, no allegations have been made against me for the action that I took.

Therefore, I have waited until now, and continue to wait, for the President of Enit – who placed me “on leave” for the duration of the inquiry and beyond, even up to today – to inform me of the inquiry as far as I am concerned, and to have me return to work. Instead, the President of Enit, after telling me that the results of the inquiry are secret, and that he wants there to be “neither winners nor losers” (sic...) due to the inquiry, informed me by letter on August 10th that “for financial reasons” he had eliminated my position, that of head of the Press Office, and that by September 1st I must leave the Organization. By means of these “financial” grounds, which on their own are not open to question, a blow is being delivered to a man

⁶¹ *Inchiesta sul funzionamento dell’E.N.I.T.*, a typewritten report by Alessandro Martelli, September 14, 1929. ACS,

Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928-1930), file no. 3, no. 2-1, doc. 8138.

who simply did his duty, and he is being given no way to defend himself.

I, therefore, find that I need to attempt the final and decisive defense: appealing to the irrevocable justice of the Duce.

I therefore ask Your Excellency to treat me in a fascist manner, that is, with fairness. If I have erred, may I be punished clearly, but if I have not erred, may I be left in honor at my job or else, as I have been constantly requesting since the time I left *La Tribuna*, may I be given a job at a newspaper (at *Il Messaggero*, or back at *La Tribuna*).

I therefore request of Your Excellency a brief audience – and I add to this an entreaty that I may have this audience as soon as possible – in which I may set forth certain things that I would not say to anyone other than the Duce.

In the meantime, I ask for the suspension of the order by means of which the President of Enit thought it advisable to remove from the Organization a journalist who, out of professional habit, is inclined to observe everything that passes before his eyes.

To the personal references of mine that were indicated to Your Excellency in the letter I sent last February I would like to add today that His Excellency Mr. Rocco, to whom I am distantly related, and His Excellency Mr. Lessona, who has full knowledge of the situation, can provide information about me.⁶²

Alterocca was considered to be a far from reliable source because, based on the results of the inquiry, he appeared to be motivated by personal resentment toward Angelo Mariotti,⁶³ a well-

known expert in statistics, a professor of Economics at the University of Rome, and a pioneer in the study of tourism economics,⁶⁴ who in May 1927 had been appointed the new General Manager of Enit.

In any case, while the inquiries were underway, and hence at the same time as the crisis, Enit had already taken steps to implement a comprehensive internal reorganization process that, as already partly seen, would change the nature of the organization and, at the same time, lead to changes in management personnel. Besides Mariotti, who in 1927 succeeded Michele Oro in the top management post, at the beginning of 1929 a new President of Enit was appointed: Giovanni Cesare Majoni (1876-1969), a jurist from Piedmont who had already had a brilliant career as a diplomat with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in various cities around the world. A change of President had been pushed for by Ezio Maria Gray, the controversial and ambitious manager of Enit's "rival", CIT, who in 1927 had not hesitated, in a report to Mussolini, to point out the limits and unsuitability of Luigi Rava, then approaching the age of 70, whom he readily described as "a gentleman, but who is not fully up to the task due to his age, due to serious bereavements in his family that have left him profoundly shaken, and due to a way of thinking that is no longer suited to the dynamic needs of the Regime."⁶⁵ Therefore, on January 25, 1929, Rava, who had guided the destiny of Enit ever since its founding in 1919, submitted his resignation in a letter that he sent to the Minister of Economy:

⁶² Handwritten letter by Guglielmo Alterocca, August 13, 1929. ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, Affari Generali (1928-1930)*, file no. 3, no. 2-1, doc. 8138.

⁶³ *Inchiesta sul funzionamento dell'E.N.I.T.*, a typewritten report by Alessandro Martelli, September 14, 1929.

⁶⁴ Cf. A. Mariotti, *L'industria del forestiero in Italia. Economia e politica del turismo*, Bologna 1923. Id., *Corso*

di economia turistica, Novara 1933; and Id., *Raccolta di studi sul turismo*, ed. Franco Demarinis, Roma 1974.

⁶⁵ *Proposta sul funzionamento e coordinamento di organismi turistici*, a typewritten report by E. M. Gray, November 22, 1927, ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928-1930)*, file no. 3, no. 2-1, doc. 8138.

Your Excellency,

After my repeated requests that Enit's board of directors, which had expired, be renewed, in your quite kind letter of the 4th of this month you entrusted me with the task of remaining in office as President, pending the new reform. Given that the reform was approved by the most recent Council of Ministers, and that Enit will – as I had the honor to explain to you, and as you hoped – remain and live with its old, amended duties and be endowed with more abundant and adequate financial resources, today, after an intense nine years of passionate and unselfish work, I feel it my duty to make the position of President available to the Government so that another, who is less busy than I am with so many offices and public duties, may take up the position and dedicate to it all the energy that is necessary.

I thank Your Excellency for the demonstrations of trust that you have shown me even in this recent time of studies and renewal, for having kept me in office during the delicate period that now has come to an end, and for having always supported my work with the authoritative approval that I desired. I leave Enit with a solid asset base (built up in recent years) and in a situation of wide renown, and I wish it the very best, in conformity with the lofty and powerful ideals of Italian spirit that the national government has set forth, ideals with which I at all times imbued my own work, the work of my colleagues on the former board of directors, and the work of all the Organization's officers.

Whatever the case may be, Rava was hailed as an authoritative and respected professional. A clear sign of esteem came from Benito Mussolini himself who, through a letter, desired to express his gratitude for the work Rava had done:

Distinguished Senator,

As you leave the Office of President of Enit, in which you have served for many years with great passion, lively conscientiousness, and absolute unselfishness, I would like to convey to you, along with my thanks, my warmest Romagna farewell. As you have done in other Offices and as you do always, you have rendered to the Nation important services that cannot be forgotten. Yours Truly,

Mussolini⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Enit was urgently restructured in order to resolve financial difficulties.⁶⁷ Royal Decree Law No. 187 dated 31 January 1929 established that the following institutions were to donate funds to the association: the Ministry of Economy and Finance (1,500,000 Lire), the State Railways (600,000 Lire), the Interior Ministry (100,000 Lire), the Ministry of Corporations and various cooperative organisations linked to tourism (2,500,000 Lire), which had been allowed to join the reformed Board of Directors in 1928.⁶⁸ On the basis of these new directives, Enit was granted some state responsibilities, including the supervision of private travel agencies

⁶⁶ Typewritten copy of handwritten letter, February 2, 1929. ACS, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs (1928-1930)*, file no. 3, no. 2-1, doc. 8138. Mussolini had already expressed his approval for what Rava was doing at Enit, both in a letter dated February 29, 1928, and in a telegram sent on August 18, 1928.

⁶⁷ *Schema di R. D. Legge recante norme per il nuovo ordinamento dell'ente nazionale per le industrie turistiche*, 9 September 1928. ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Min-*

istri, Gabinetto, Affari Generali (1928-1930), Sheet 3, No. 2-1, Ref No. 8138.

⁶⁸ La Confederazione Nazionale Fascista dei Trasporti Marittimi ed Aerei, la Confederazione Nazionale Fascista dei Commercianti, la Confederazione Nazionale Fascista Bancaria, la Confederazione Nazionale Fascista dell'Industria Italiana, la Confederazione Nazionale Fascista Enti Autarchici, the Italian Touring Club, the Regio Automobil Club d'Italia. Cfr. *Il Consiglio dell'Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche*, in "Le Vie d'Italia," XXXIV, 8 August 1928, p. 675.

and the right to supervise and inspect tourist accommodation facilities. To this end, the national register of hotel companies was established, compiled and updated based on the classifications provided for in Article 2 of Law No. 613 of 3 April 1926. In essence, the 1929 provision served to reaffirm Enit's state-controlled status and aimed to establish constant, comprehensive contact between the central institution and peripheral organisations operating in the tourism industry. On the basis of this programme of reform, specific technical advisory committees were set up to oversee propaganda, accommodation and spa resorts, maritime and air tourism, inland transportation, hotels and vocational training.⁶⁹

However, the negative effects of the crisis persisted for a long time. Due to the unfavourable international economic situation at the time, which just so happened to coincide with the Wall Street Crash (24 October 1929), Enit's financial situation had far from recovered. Given the difficult situation, on 29 October 1929, Giovanni Cesare Majoni decided to step down as president of the association after less than a year in service. In September of that year, he sent a confidential memo to the head of government, Benito Mussolini:

I have been unable to effectively carry out the mandate that your Excellency entrusted to me by appointing me president of the Enit. I believe – and I do not consider this to be an exaggeration – that the association is very important to the national economy. I

am reluctant to state the following facts, because it is not in the style of the regime, but I feel unable to continue to chair Enit under these conditions, which ultimately render it impossible to either totally or partially achieve the necessary goals as part of a comprehensive and well-defined programme. I hope that Your Excellency does not view this decision as a reflection of my personal opinion of the campaign, which is ultimately based on a number of factors. I am well aware that turning down roles, firing unnecessary employees, getting rid of subsidies and resisting pressure or adjustments, as I have done, does not result in an atmosphere of general support. This should not enter into the equation for any servant of the State. But my indispensable need to inform Your Excellency of the detrimental state of affairs, as Your Excellency asks of us all, has prompted my writing to you.⁷⁰

The resigning Majoni – who went on to become Italy's ambassador to Japan – was replaced by Fulvio Suvich (1887-1980), a diplomat from Trieste who was formerly an undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was later destined to become ambassador of Italy to Washington. Under Suvich's leadership, Enit underwent a season of change and transformation. In fact, based on Mussolini's own suggestions, Royal Decree No. 371 was enacted on 23 March 1931, with which a General Commissariat for Tourism was set up to manage, supervise and coordinate the public, private, national and regional tourism bodies and committees that often found themselves interfering with one another,

⁶⁹ *Il Consiglio d'Amministrazione dell'Enit*, in "Le Vie d'Italia," XXXVI, 4 April 1930, p. 320.

⁷⁰ Typewritten letter sent from G. C. Majoni to Mussolini

on 30 September 1929. ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Gabinetto, Affari Generali (1928-1930)*, Sheet 3, No. 2-1, Ref No. 8138

resulting in a loss of resources and funds.⁷¹ It was a totalitarian solution that adopted the regime's centralising and corporatist policy in an attempt to stop disagreements bubbling beneath the surface of the two primary Italian tourist institutions in existence at the time, Enit and CIT. Together with the Commissariat – chaired by Enit president Fulvio Suvich – the Central Tourism Council was set up, which was an advisory and research body based in the Palazzo del Viminale and chaired by Mussolini himself. The provision was particularly significant because Mussolini used his position as the head of government to formally call for the handling and regulation of all comprehensive tourism-related activities.

The new Commissariat was able to spread its propaganda even more widely through modern means of communication (general and specialist press, cinema, radio and advertising posters) and aimed to promote its own portrait of Italy as broadly as possible. In a discussion in the House in 1931, Italo Bonardi – a Touring Club delegate, historic member of Enit's Board of Directors and a Member of Parliament since 1929 – stated the following:

In addition to collective advertising [...], we need to understand the power of 'free' advertising, which is ultimately more effective. This is precisely what the Commissariat must work on developing in its role as an altruistic propaganda body. [...] The Germans brought us more with Goethe's Italian Journey and Heine's Reiserbilder than we can hope to achieve by distributing free leaflets,

which often end up in the bin. We must remember that each country is unique. France attracts foreigners with entertainment [...], we must attract them with the glory of our past, current achievements and our country's natural, sunlit beauty. All we need to do is improve our means, because we already have the attractions to showcase. It's also worth remembering that we've managed to put on original, folklore, sporting, and theatrical events that we must promote, both in general, and by drawing attention to the services required to admire Italy's points of interest, be it by advertising easy journeys, hotel prices or railway discounts in order to avoid greeting foreigners with a nasty surprise.⁷²

Despite the gallant efforts of a number of enlightened individuals at the organisation, Enit's was slow to regain momentum. In general, the effects of the Great Depression and the political instability connected with the rise of Hitler in Germany resulted, unsurprisingly, in a natural decrease in tourism. Suffice it to say that in 1933 the Holy See called for a special Jubilee to celebrate the nineteenth anniversary of the Redemption in order to encourage people to visit Rome.

Enit continued to undergo a number of internal changes over the course of 1934. Pursuant to Royal Decree Law No. 1851 of 21 November 1934 and No. 1925 of 3 December 1934, the newly established Commissariat for Tourism was placed within a General Directorate of Tourism,⁷³ which was itself dependent on the Undersecretariat for Press and Propaganda, an important fascist association – initially governed

⁷¹ *Il Commissariato del Turismo*, in "Le Vie d'Italia," XXXVII, 5 May 1931, p. 400; *Il Decreto per l'attuazione del Commissariato per il Turismo*, in "Le Vie d'Italia," XXXVII, 7 July 1931, p. 560.

⁷² *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati, Legislatura*

XXVIII – Tornata del 1° dicembre 1931, p. 5580.

⁷³ *L'inquadramento del Commissariato per il Turismo e dell'Enit nel Sottosegretariato per la Stampa e la Propaganda*, in "Le Vie d'Italia," XLI, 1 January 1935, p. 77.

by Galeazzo Ciano – which was transformed into a real ministry in 1935, assuming the title of Ministry of Popular Culture in 1937. The new provision used additional centralisation tactics to respond to a need to bring the State’s numerous, dispersed, tourism initiatives under the control of a single management centre, namely the Directorate General for Tourism, which was chaired by Oreste Bonomi, who oversaw all tourist initiatives until the fall of the fascist regime.

The rebirth of Enit in post-war Italy

As previously mentioned, Enit was founded in November 1919, a few months after the historic signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which was an attempt to give a renewed – and unfortunately short-lived – structure to Europe, which had been savaged by World War One. It must be noted, however, that Enit also underwent a period of ‘rebirth’ following the tragedy of World War Two. Between the 1940s and 1950s, the institution was forced to reflect on its important role and, in part, to rebuild itself following the totalitarian structure to which it had been subjected under Mussolini’s dictatorship. It’s been said that “when the cannons stopped firing, Enit found itself in a post-war situation that was no different from that of hundreds of thousands of Italians. It was, in fact, not only homeless, but incredibly poor.”⁷⁴ The Special Tourism Commissioner who, in the service of the Council Presidency, replaced the abolished Minister of Popular Culture in 1947, found himself in a disastrous economic situation. In addition to restoring the institution’s finances, the Commissioner insisted that Enit needed to establish a set

of democratic principles that belonged to a new, constructive tourism policy. The attractions that once seemed to appeal to foreign travellers were reviewed in the light of the changed socio-political climate. After 1945, Enit gave life to a somewhat breezier, more agile tourism campaign. And, not surprisingly, the two general managers who were to decide Enit’s fate during the 1950s – Mario De Cesare and Alfonso Di Paolo – attempted to turn this ambitious challenge into concrete results. Their aim was to establish the tourism industry as a peaceful one by launching Enit sponsoring activities as part of an ambitious yet noble plan: to offer the Italian peninsula a professional framework that went beyond the obvious points of interest, such as natural landscapes and historical-artistic wonders, in order to faithfully convey the human element of those same regions. Four distinct campaign sectors were set up for the purpose: two for print publications and art, a third for advertising and a fourth for cinematographic and radio propaganda. The sector dedicated to propaganda materials was handled by Enit’s foreign delegations, which were tasked with ensuring that the work of the various sectors was communicated globally via a special distribution system. Thus, now defined in terms of its limitations and responsibilities, Enit could resume the activities that had been interrupted due to force majeure and engage in producing periodical publications, brochures, leaflets, posters, newsreels, photographs and advertisements in its capacity as the technical body of the Tourist Commissariat. During this period of rebirth, Enit also sought to diversify its operational programmes by organising cultural events aimed at promoting

⁷⁴ G. Barrella, *Il turismo sotto la sigla dell.E. N. I. T.*, in “L’Italia,” 118 April 1958, p. 9.

dialogue between different countries at its official headquarters in Rome. In November 1952, the institution sponsored the *Prima mostra di artisti stranieri residenti in Italia* (lit. The first exhibition of foreign artists residing in Italy),⁷⁵ which showcased the work of fifty painters and sculptors from a number of far-reaching countries, who were more or less well known and worked with both abstract and figure-based art. The exhibition was curated by Alfonso Giardini and Elena Baggio and its grand opening was a splendid event attended by important figures from the diplomatic and cultural worlds, and perhaps most importantly, Lionello Venturi, Italy's leading art critic.

During the 1950s – known as Italy's "dolce vita" years – the country experienced a period of general and beneficial recovery which, as is well known, led to its famous "economic boom." The tourism sector's significant international expansion strongly influenced the country's recovery. These positive circumstances were also aided by a series of important reforms: in view of the imminent Olympics to be held in Rome in 1960, a number of peripheral tourist bodies were overhauled in 1958, including the Provincial Tourist Boards (EPT) and Independent Resort, Accommodation and Tourism companies. These entities were forced to rely more heavily on the State via a series of additional funding provisions. The

Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment was thus established during Segni's government with Law No. 617 of 31 July 1959. Under the leadership of the Christian Democrats, this newly established Ministry, presided over by Umberto Tupini (1889-1973) and then Alberto Folchi (1897-1977), took a natural interest in Enit, which was further reformed and updated with a view to creating an overarching national tourism policy. Decree No. 1041 of 27 August 1960 established a fundamental set of regulations for the institution's future activities which, despite retaining its original abbreviation, was renamed the Italian National Tourist Board. "The institution is closely linked to the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, in the sense that it will shape its action plans as per the governing body's general directives. That is not to say that the association will regain any operative independence, which had to be restored and must therefore be safeguarded," stated Minister Folchi in 1964 on the eve of the inauguration of the new Administrative Council.⁷⁶ As underlined in Article 2 of the new law restructuring its operative activities, Enit was entrusted with research into and statistical modelling of tourism and, above all, the exclusive responsibility of tourism campaigns abroad.⁷⁷ By the mid-20th century, it was clear that the organisation's management team was focused on promoting Italy via appropriate, mod-

⁷⁵ Newspapers listed the following artists as participating in the exhibition: Robert Savary (France), Joaquin Vaquero Turcios (Spain), Josef Strachota and Gerda Kreutzer (Austria), Eva Fischer (Yugoslavia), Denise De Vischer (Belgium), Marco Grigorian (Iran), Cecilia Exacoustos (Germany) and Sam Fisher (USA). Cfr. *Prima Mostra degli artisti stranieri organizzata dall'Enit*, in "Il Giornale del Turismo," 27 November 1952; Girace, *Mostre d'arte all'E. N. I. T.*, in "Il Giornale del Turismo," 4 December 1952.

⁷⁶ *Vita nuova dell'Enit che riacquista la sua autonomia*, in "L'Italia Turistica," V, 3, 10 February 1961.

⁷⁷ "The association is tasked with promoting and increasing

foreign tourism in Italy, and it must do so by executing the Ministry for Tourism and Entertainment's general directives. In order to do so, it must: a) carry out tourist propaganda abroad, b) establish and manage representative offices and information abroad and at the border, c) prepare and process the elements to be researched and investigated on the international tourist market, d) collect statistical data on the movement of tourists in the manner established by the Ministry for Tourism and Entertainment." You can find the complete list of Enit directives in the following article: *Entrano in vigore le leggi per il riordinamento dell'organizzazione turistica*, in "L'Italia Turistica," IV, 14-15, August-September 1960.

ern and impactful means. Between the 1950s and 1960s, Enit astutely targeted the fertile sector of documentary cinema by producing short tourist propaganda films. Enit's films were presented at major sector exhibitions and were produced so as to move past the numerous boring, stereotypical documentaries on Italy that were available at the time. The creation of these films was entrusted to a number of individuals, including the exceptional auteur Luciano Emmer⁷⁸ who directed *Confidenzialmente Roma*, *Un sogno e una città*, *In pieno sole*, *Azzurro e verde* and *Bologna-Firenze chilometri 84,700*.⁷⁹ "I've been able to make these films thanks to Enit's absolute trust in me," stated the director. "So much so that there's not been any actual screenplay. I've been left to create impressions and observations, like a travel journal: impressions that use the medium of film to represent the perspective of foreign tourists. [...] We need films that are capable of reaching an international audience more easily and more widely [...]. We need to produce content based on new criteria, and we need to distribute it via new systems."⁸⁰

This drive to renew both the media and propaganda circuits was also promoted by Enit president Giovanni Maggio who made the following statement with remarkable foresight in 1961:

The means of tourist propaganda are endless and are fundamentally linked to time and places [...]. I can only reiterate that the numerous tools we have used thus far need to be revisited, strengthened and expanded. But that is not to say that we should neglect our search for new means, as the world continues turning and we need to find new forms of propaganda dictated by the dynamism that runs more than just our airplanes.⁸¹

The socialist Giovanni Caporaso was on the same wavelength. In 1964, he was appointed the new president of Enit and, together with general manager Augusto Premoli (1911-2004), was responsible for strengthening Enit's delegations in the United States⁸² for the start of the association's so-called "Plan America." In fact, he declared:

Enit's two main areas of activity are market research and propaganda. Propaganda is Enit's primary goal. Market research is an indispensable tool, a sort of compass [...] that we can use to orient ourselves in the seas of competition and to probe the mysterious currents of public opinion. [...] An essential condition is that we strengthen and modernise our Enit branches in North America and forge a closer bond with central tourism authorities.⁸³

⁷⁸ Cfr. S. Francia di Celle, E. Ghezzi (edited by), *Mister(o) Emmer*, Turin 2004, p. 264.

⁷⁹ Colour documentary made with INCOM; broadly speaking, the short film's central theme was a friendship between two young people from two famous Italian cities brought closer by the Autostrada del Sole. The documentary was presented at the III National Review of Tourist Film in Venice (15-17 May 1964) during which it received First Prize and the Grand Prix. The film also received an award (the Silver Star) from the jury at the International Week of Tourist Film and Luanco (Asturias).

⁸⁰ *Dal documentario al film nella propaganda turistica*, in "L'Italia Turistica," VII, 23, 10 December 1963.

⁸¹ R. Suster, *Le prime dichiarazioni del Presidente dell'Enit*, in "L'Italia Turistica," V, 3, 10 February 1961.

⁸² A. Premoli, *La propaganda e le agenzie di viaggio*, in *Il turismo italiano negli anni '60*, Round table proceedings organised by the National Tourism Committee (Rome, Palazzo Altieri, 17-18 December 1964), Rome 1966, pp. 172-180. A. Giannuli, *Il noto servizio. Le spie di Giulio Andreotti*, Rome 2013, pp. 73-74.

⁸³ R. Suster, *Le prime dichiarazioni del Presidente dell'Enit*, in "L'Italia Turistica," VIII, 15-16, 25 August 1964.

Chapter Two

Enit and the art of poster design

Designing posters for the tourism industry

Founded in 1919, Enit is perhaps best characterised by the posters it produced for the tourism industry. In fact, it could be argued that the organisation came to dominate this field and, in short, succeeded in effectively promoting Italy's multiple attractions to potential visitors. Although yet to be fully explored by the numerous studies on advertising graphics produced in Italy between the two world wars,¹

over the course of the 1930s, visual advertising in the tourism industry gradually acquired its own artistic independence, aided by debate, specialised articles,² exhibitions and trade-specific competitions. As an example, in March 1929, the National Fascist Trade Confederation launched a competition on tourist propaganda posters. Among the three hundred sketches sent to members of the jury were artworks by Alfredo Biagini, Enrico Del Debbio, Giovanni Guerrini and Cipriano Efisio Oppo, which were ex-

¹ For an initial critical study of tourist billboards, see: A. Villari, *Viaggiare in Italia percorrendo la modernità*, in D. Cimorelli, A. Villari (edited by), *Manifesti. Viaggio in Italia attraverso la pubblicità 1895-1960*, Cinisello Balsamo 2010, pp. 14-51. Volumes containing a number of iconographic materials include: P. Lodola, *Italia manifesta. Il volto dell'Italia attraverso i manifesti. Dalla raccolta di Alessandro Bellenda*, Bergamo 2003; L. Ottaviani, *Travel Italia. L'età d'oro del manifesto turistico dalla collezione Alessandro Bellenda, Alassio*, Milano 2007.

For an overview of advertising graphics between the two world wars, see: P. Sparti (edited by), *L'Italia che cambia attraverso i manifesti della collezione Salce*, exhibition cat. (Milan, Palazzo della Permanente; Milan, Palazzo Dugnani, 12 September-29 October 1989), Florence 1989; L. Menegazzi (edited by), *Il manifesto italiano*, Milan 1995; K. Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes. Italian Advertising under Fascism*, Minneapolis-London 1995; G. Mughini, M. Scudiero, *Il manifesto pubblicitario italiano. Da Dudovich a Depero 1890-1940*, exhibition cat. (Milan, AltriMusei in Porta Romana, 9 October-21 December 1997), Milan 1997; G. Mori, *Esempi di grafica pubblicitaria dagli anni venti ai primi anni trenta*

alla raccolta Bertarelli, in C. Salsi (edited by), *Pubblicità & Arte. Grafica internazionale dall'affiche alla Pop Art*, Geneva-Milan 2007, pp. 61-70; A. Villari (edited by), *L'arte della pubblicità. I manifesti italiani e le avanguardie 1920-1945*, exhibition cat. (Forlì, Musei San Domenico, 21 September-30 November 2008), Cinisello Balsamo 2008; A. Villari (edited by), *Manifesti. Pubblicità e vita italiana 1895-1945*, Cinisello Balsamo 2009; A. Villari, *Immagine e comunicazione del Fascismo. Il dibattito sulla pubblicità e l'arte "novissima" del manifesto*, in F. Mazzocca (edited by), *Novecento. Arte e storia tra le due guerre*, exhibition cat. (Forlì, Musei San Domenico, 2 February-16 June 2013), Cinisello Balsamo 2013, pp. 4-83; D. Cimorelli, S. Roffi (edited by), *Pubblicità! La nascita della comunicazione moderna 1890-1957*, exhibition cat. (Mamiano di Traversetolo-Parma, 9 September-10 December 2017), Cinisello Balsamo 2017; M. Mazza (edited by), *Illustri persuasioni tra le due guerre. Capolavori pubblicitari dalla collezione Salce*, exhibition cat. (Treviso, 14 October 2017-14 January 2018), Cinisello Balsamo 2017.

² E. Panarari, *Il cartello turistico (considerazioni artistiche)*, in "L'Artista Moderno," 29, 21, 10 November 1930, pp. 385-388.



Fig. 1 – Exhibit of tourist posters, 1929 (in «Ospitalità Italiana», October 1929)

hibited in Rome and Munich³ (fig. 1). What's more, as part of the first major exhibition on advertising design organised by the National Fascist Union of Fine Arts at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome in February 1936, a specific section was set up to showcase the best entries to a competition organised by the General Tourism Body on the four seasons⁴ (figs. 2-6). Enit's commitment to endorse Italy abroad was all-encompassing and certainly went beyond commissioning artists to produce advertising posters capable of catching people's attention and promoting tourism to a specific region, city, or artistic, folk or sporting attraction. In addition to creating the images themselves, the association was also tasked with printing a number

³ Trento-born artist Carlo Segatta won the lakes section, Libera won Trentino Alto Adige, Giuseppe Piombanti won Tuscany, Achille Morbiducci won Emilia Romagna and Le Marche, the architects Romano and Castellazzi won Umbria, Petrucci and Rossi won for their poster dedicated to Rome, Giuseppe Latini won for Abruzzo, Puglia and Calabria, Salvatore Friscia won for Sicily, and, last but not least Alberto Ripamonti won for Sardinia. The Brescia Trade Federation awarded a special prize to Spallanzani's Lake Garda poster. Cfr. *Schema del Bando di concorso per quindici cartelli murali*, in "Supplemento tecnico mensile della Ospitalità Italiana," VII, 3 March



Fig. 2 – Mario Romano, *Autumn in Italy*, 1936 (in the catalogue *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria Roma A. XIV, 1936*)

of physical copies and employing a strict, branched distribution strategy, which consisted

1929. *La Propaganda turistica italiana all'Esposizione di Monaco di Baviera*, in "L'Impero," 13 October 1929. *Il Concorso per i Cartelli turistici bandito dalla Federazione*, in "Ospitalità Italiana," IV, 11, November 1929, pp. 87-88.

⁴ *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria*, Rome 1936, p. 61. For reviews from the period, see: A. Neppi, *La prima mostra nazionale del cartellone inaugurata a Roma*, in "La Cultura Moderna," XLV, 3, March 1936, pp. 121-124; Gem, *Arte pubblicitaria (la mostra romana)*, in "Illustrazione Toscana e dell'Etruria," XIV, March 1936, pp. 18-20.



Fig. 3 – Ruggero Alfredo Michaelles (RAM), *L'inverno in Italia*, 1936 (in the catalogue *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria Roma A. XIV, 1936*)



Fig. 5 – Walter Resentera, *Summer in Italy*, 1936 (in the catalogue *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria Roma A. XIV, 1936*)



Fig. 4 – Costantino Nivola, *Sestrieres*, 1936 (in the catalogue *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria Roma A. XIV, 1936*)



Fig. 6 – Giacometti, *Spring in Italy*, 1936 (in the catalogue *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria Roma A. XIV*, 1936)

of producing posters, signs, advertisements, reference artwork and commercial advertisements. In this sense, the association had an enormous and fairly frenzied workload. In the period between 1919 and 1927 alone, Enit produced and installed around 574,000 posters in tourist propaganda circuits.⁵ Of course, its efforts were focused in key border towns, in areas of major Italian cities visited by international travellers and, above all, in Enit’s international foreign of-

⁵ *Le pubblicazioni dell’Enit dal 1920 al 1927*, Rome 1928.



Fig. 7 – Enit office in Stockholm, Sweden, 1940

fices and delegations, where they were exhibited – in a museum-like style – to encourage foreign tourists to visit Italy (fig. 7).

People started to appreciate the power and pervasiveness of Enit-branded advertising propaganda fairly early on. In 1930, an article stated that “all you need to do is visit the foyer or waiting room of a major train station to admire a series of magnificent, picturesque interpretations of Italian cities [...] mounted on the walls. For those who have yet to spot one, I’m referring to the posters created by the National Association of Tourist Industries (Enit), which are currently displayed far and wide, both in Italy and abroad, for the highly patriotic purpose of spreading the word about our enchanting country.”⁶

Between the 1920s and 1930s, discourse and opinion were generally in favour of poster art. In the same period in which Enit – and not without some internal struggles – came to consolidate its role and prestige in the field of national tourism

⁶ E. Panarari, *Il cartello turistico*, cit., p. 387.

policy management, the world of graphic art and advertising illustrations was experiencing great creative fervour. It was, in fact, a versatile expressive medium that could be adapted to the linguistic needs of modern life and, where used for sales purposes, exploited to bring in concrete financial income. Moreover, illustrated advertisements afforded wide margins of experimentation to established and exacting artists, who began to try their hand at poster design with increasing enthusiasm. The fascist regime soon picked up on the potential of posters as a means of mass communication and consequently made frequent and unscrupulous use of them. In strict alignment with Mussolini's directives, numerous prominent representatives of fascist art institutions publicly supported the use of poster art. In 1936, Antonio Maraini – an influential sculptor, secretary of the Venice Biennale and commissioner of the National Fascist Union of Fine Arts – not only attributed “qualities that once were expended [...] on vaulted ceilings and frescoed walls” to poster art, but also defined it as “useful and alive [...], the art of our time.” Maraini also spoke of “the secrets behind its power of seduction as an aesthetic expression, unscathed by the issue plaguing most modern art: uselessness. [...] So much so that many of the Cubist, Futurist and Expressionist movements into which we've channeled our anxious desire for novelty, (without being able to tolerate painting or sculpture), have instead found a perfectly justified, accepted, and admired application in poster art.”⁷

A number of supporters of visual advertising belonged to the Futurist Movement⁸ and devoted

ed themselves to creating iconic advertisements. A key example is Fortunato Depero, who wrote an article entitled *Futurism and Advertising Art*⁹ in 1931 and created a number of famous posters. However, the overall importance attributed to visual advertisements was not exclusively owed to their artistic qualities. Even before Antonio Maraini described poster art as “useful art,” Gerardo Dottori – a theorist and Aeropainting Futurist – highlighted the educational qualities and values afforded to the masses by some of the more effective works of art. In 1929, he stated that “it is not a paradox to say that a population's degree of artistic education can largely depend on the value of its poster artists, given that billboards are the only form of art subjected to the gaze and judgment of all. After a while, you get used to it and no longer see it as solely monumental. Instead, these posters, which are continuously renewed and updated, draw us in with clever gimmicks that force us to look at them.”¹⁰ In 1931, Dottori went on to state that: “this form of art is the best way to directly influence a population's aesthetic taste.”¹¹

In addition to the high level of respect given to ‘general-purpose’ billboards and posters, 1920s Italy also gave particular importance to visual advertising sectors that were directly or indirectly controlled by the State. As noted at the time by industry treatises, state-controlled tourist propaganda belonging to associations such as Enit was considered useful to the community and, therefore, viewed as a service that gave prestige to Italy and assisted the national

⁷ A. Maraini, *Prefazione*, in *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone e della grafica pubblicitaria*, Rome 1936, p. 7.

⁸ Cfr. C. Salaris, *Il futurismo e la pubblicità. Dalla pubblicità dell'arte all'arte della pubblicità*, Milan 1986.

⁹ F. Depero in *Numero unico futurista Campari*, Rovereto 1930.

¹⁰ G. Dottori, *Artisti del cartello lanciatore: Seneca*, in “L'Impero,” 9 November 1929.

¹¹ Id., *Il cartello lanciatore*, in “Oggi e Domani,” 9 December 1931.

economy.¹² It is specifically from this standpoint that we can begin to understand the particularities of advertising posters created for the tourism industry. Said posters – and especially those produced by Enit – went on to gain both a symbolic and aesthetic value precisely because they helped to promote a specific image of Italy abroad and within the country’s own national borders. In a nation that had only recently been unified and was still not particularly cohesive from the point of view of values and identity myths, idealised depictions of the *Bel Paese* on these billboards functioned as cardinal points which could be used to orient – and implicitly impose on the masses – a visual and self-celebratory narrative of Italy. Moreover, by the beginning of the 1930s, commentators were starting to emphasise the public utility of Enit’s advertising campaigns, stating that “the artists creating these tourism posters will find an effective and serious incentive in this great institution. And if they are to devote themselves to this art with passion and strong will [...], they will not only advance the medium, but will make themselves worthy of the nation for having participated in raising awareness [...] of some of Italy’s most enchanting regions.”¹³ In 1928, Enit issued a report stating that “the large colourful billboards illustrating Italian cities and artistic attractions are much sought after [...], not only abroad but also in Italy, where they are often requested by teachers to decorate schools in both city and rural locations. This is how young Italians come to learn of the beauty of their country from a very young

age.”¹⁴ The national interest in posters encouraging tourism to Italy was further cemented in 1929 when, through a legislative measure proposed jointly by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior, all “objective, general-purpose and tourism-related posters displayed on the premises of the agencies themselves” were declared “exempt from standard advertising fees, regardless of where said posters are placed and in whatever language they are written.”¹⁵

Considering the numerous political implications polarised around the concept of tourism, Enit took on a crucial, and in some ways unique, role in creating a competitive, recognisable and impactful means of visual propaganda. Its posters – often created with the financial assistance of the State Railways and printed by specialised companies such as Barabino & Graeve in Genoa and Pizzi and Pizio, which had offices in Milan and Rome (fig. 8) – became a seductive and gentle figurative medium capable of promoting Italy’s *genius loci*, which had been strengthened by the regime. In 1930, it was pointed out that “artistic posters have a *direct* and *immediate* effect on the majority of tourists, compensating for and perhaps exceeding the efficacy of beautiful, literary descriptions.”¹⁶ It’s also worth noting that the designs devised by artists working for Enit were not exclusively intended for large billboards, but were often also used as covers for small brochures, leaflets and guidebooks. The concept of integrated advertising solutions also began to assert itself thanks to sector treatises which, in

¹² “La propaganda turistica italiana può anche considerarsi come un tipico esempio di pubblicità svolta all’estero a favore dell’economia nazionale.” A. Minello, *La pubblicità nel campo dell’economia aziendale e nazionale*, Milan 1935.

¹³ E. Panerari, *Il cartello turistico*, cit., p. 387-388.

¹⁴ *Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche. Relazione sull’attività svolta nell’anno 1927. 1928, anno VI*, pp. 11-

12., printed text kept in ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Gabinetto, Affari Generali (1928-1930)*, 2-1, 8138.

¹⁵ *Schema di regio decreto che dichiara esenti dalla disciplina delle pubbliche affissioni i cartelli di propaganda turistica*, in ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Gabinetto, Affari Generali (1928-1930)*, 2-1, 8138.

¹⁶ E. Panerari, *Il cartello turistico*, cit., p. 386.



Fig. 8 – Stand of the graphic studio Pizzi & Pizio – Milan-Rome, I Mostra Nazionale del Cartellone e della Grafica Pubblicitaria, Rome 1936. Below, left, Enit poster for Rome by V. Retrosi

fact, stated that, “the poster is one of those forms of propaganda that can no longer exist independently of other means of advertising.”¹⁷

Compared to the equally valid advertisements produced by provincial tourist organisations at the time, such as CIT (fig. 9) or Shipping Society, Enit was able to develop a global production and publicity system for advertisements that contained well-defined aesthetic symbols. Enit always opted for elegant designs with effective compositional layouts that were rarely daring and nearly always based on traditional landscape views. Needing to promote villages, art cities and holiday resorts – and therefore real places – the

association opted for a visual style that limited the use of avant-garde, abstract or stylistic elements. Bauhaus-style modernist techniques were banned from Enit’s visual grammar because, in line with the canons of tourist advertising at the time, they were deemed to be misleading and uncommunicative. “Certain artists, especially from overseas, have [...] created signs that, despite being undisputedly original, are not much liked, and more importantly, have nothing to say. They are either simple, confusing or too far removed from the point. They are disconnected from their cause and far-fetched.”¹⁸ Furthermore, in order to guarantee clarity and high levels of readability, pictorial elements were kept separate from lettering on posters.

In order to ensure a uniform, clear approach that was as close to the phenomenal world as possible, Enit posters – and tourist propaganda advertisements in general – featured crisp imagery depicting landscapes. On the basis of this trend, trade press asserted in no uncertain terms that: “unlike tourist posters, no other artform is forced to remain so loyal to reality.”¹⁹ However, the ‘photographic’ realism sought and depicted on tourist posters was filtered through the personal gaze of artists, whose skills in devising concise concepts guaranteed an aesthetically pleasing and effective result that went far beyond the scope of *tout court* illustration. Dino Villani, an influential graphic designer and authoritative advertising expert, stated that “when it comes to tourist posters, photography is not able to provide the same wealth of detail, vivacity and prominence that can be achieved by the skilled artistic interpretation of a landscape.”²⁰ Therefore, a successful tourist poster relied on

¹⁷ A. Minello, *La pubblicità*, cit., p. 221.

¹⁸ E. Panarari, *Il cartello turistico*, cit., p. 386.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ D. Villani, *La pubblicità e i suoi segreti*, Milan 1946, p. 140.



Fig. 9 – Posters of the Compagnia Italiana Turismo (CIT), 1929

the artist's attempt to communicate the feel of a place. That is to say that it was necessary to transform a place into a work of art and not just to simply reproduce it. Although restricted somewhat by the need for faithful representations, many talented Enit artists were able to come up with unconventional depictions of Italy's attractions without employing a painterly effect but, rather, by developing the artistic characteristics of poster art as a separate artform. In 1930, it was stated that "this sort of art should be strictly 'poster-like.'" That is to say that colour should play a dominant role. This artform should shy away from soft shades, gentle colours, uniformity and precise details. It demands strong lines, bright colours, contrast and

powerful shapes."²¹ This belief was clearly shared by Marcello Dudovich,²² who was a great innovator of Italian poster art and was already making waves at the beginning of the twentieth century while working for the Touring Club. In around 1928, Dudovich succeeded in devising a poster that featured an enlarged version of Donatello's Equestrian Statue of Gattamelata in front of the Basilica of Saint Anthony of Padua (fig. 10). Later, in 1933, Dudovich worked on a tourist poster for Grado (fig. 11) – a town in the Upper Adriatic, located between Trieste and Venice – using just a few interlinking elements (the outline of a woman in a "Novecento style" and a bold, solid-blue slanting line representing the sea). In a more distinctly 'déco'

²¹ E. Panarari, *Il cartello turistico*, cit., pp. 386-387.

²² R. Curci (edited by), *Marcello Dudovich. Oltre il mani-*

festo, exhibition cat. (Trieste, Museo Revoltella, 19 December 2002-30 April 2003), Milan 2002.



Fig. 10 – Marcello Dudovich, *Padova*, 1928 ca., Edizioni S.T.A.R., Milan, Chromolithograph, 65.5 x 103 cm

style, Giovanni Guerrini succeeded in enhancing and transforming the town of Cesenatico's conventional landscape into a quasi-abstract triumph of shapes and colours, featuring two Byzantine columns and sailboats moored in a bay (fig. 12).

It is also worth noting that by focusing attention on landscapes, a number of artists employed by Enit – most likely independently and subconsciously – resorted to a simple visual trick that had great symbolic value: the use of a window. In fact, a number of Italy's tourist destinations were depicted using a strict perspec-

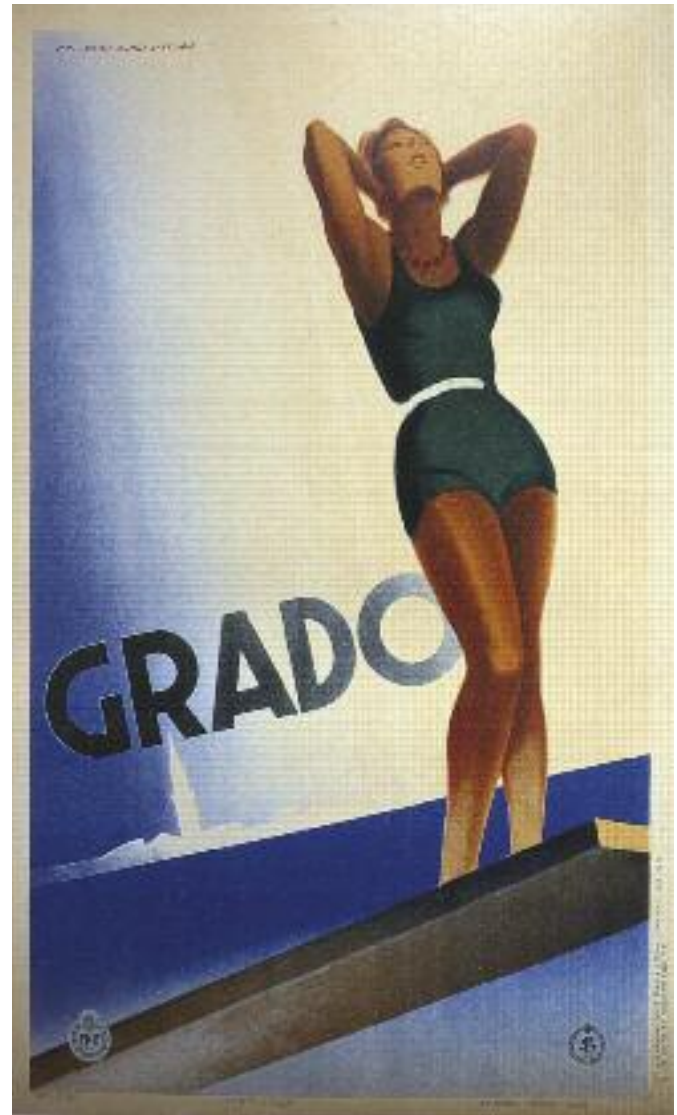


Fig. 11 – Marcello Dudovich, *Grado*, 1933, Studio Editoriale Turistico, Milan, Chromolithograph, 61.5 x 99.6 cm

tive composition bordered by a frame, room or opening (figs. 13-26). By using loggias, parapets, tree scenes and windows from different eras, lifeless two-dimensional spaces were transformed by Enit artists into illusionist perspectives that were pitched as a “window onto Italy,” through which one could functionally look out and enjoy the country's varying and beautiful landscapes. This was a clever gimmick that not only focused on – or rather emblemised – the visual experience at the heart of a satisfying interaction with the tourist destination at hand, but also employed the window motif as



Fig. 12 – Giovanni Guerrini, *Cesenatico*, 1927, Novissima, Rome, Chromolithograph, 70 x 101 cm

an excellent way to celebrate Italy’s historical, artistic and naturalistic heritage, because it was in itself a reference to a means of expression used in Italian Renaissance art: perspective. The use of a frame to offer a preview of the representational world was a common theme in fifteenth and sixteenth century artistic literature. In fact, Leon Battista Alberti once defined painting as “an open window from whence I look at what will be painted there.”²³ As per Panofsky’s astute comments on painted surfaces, the Enit tourist propaganda posters took on a value of

“transparent surfaces through which we can picture ourselves looking at a space.”²⁴

A number of well-known graphic artists and painters from a range of backgrounds worked for Enit. Some of these artists – such as the famous Marcello Dudovich, Marcello Nizzoli and Ruggero Alfredo Michahelles, AKA RAM – had on-off relationships with the institution. Others, such as Virgilio Retrosi and Mino Delle Site, were employed on a regular basis. It was well known that “travel and trade agencies and tourism publishing companies” had a “constant and continuous need for propaganda, which consisted of posters, brochures and advertisements,” for which they made use of artists who occasionally became “full-time content creators with a stable income.”²⁵

Posters produced by Enit provide valuable insight into the underlying visual unconscious of the regime’s tourism policy. In fact, we can use advertising images to pinpoint both the policy employed by this prominent fascist propaganda sector, and the evolving ideas of tourism that the State hoped to impose. Indicatively, propaganda produced under the regime preferred to lure in tourists by focusing on ancient vestiges and monuments in small towns rather than on new fascist artistic or urban-architectural achievements. With the exception of brochures praising the city of Latina founded in the Pontine Marshes (**fig. 27**), and posters devised to promote tourism to overseas colonies such as Rhodes and Tripoli (**figs. 28**), Enit’s graphic materials gave little space to the celebration of fascist undertakings. A significant exception to this rule was the cover image of a guidebook

²³ L.B. Alberti, *Della Pittura* (1436), critical edition edited by L. Mallè, Florence 1950, p. 70.

²⁴ E. Panofsky, *La prospettiva come “forma simbolica,”*

Milan 1961, pp. 61-62.

²⁵ A. Maraini, *Prefazione*, in *Prima mostra nazionale del cartellone*, cit., p. 7.

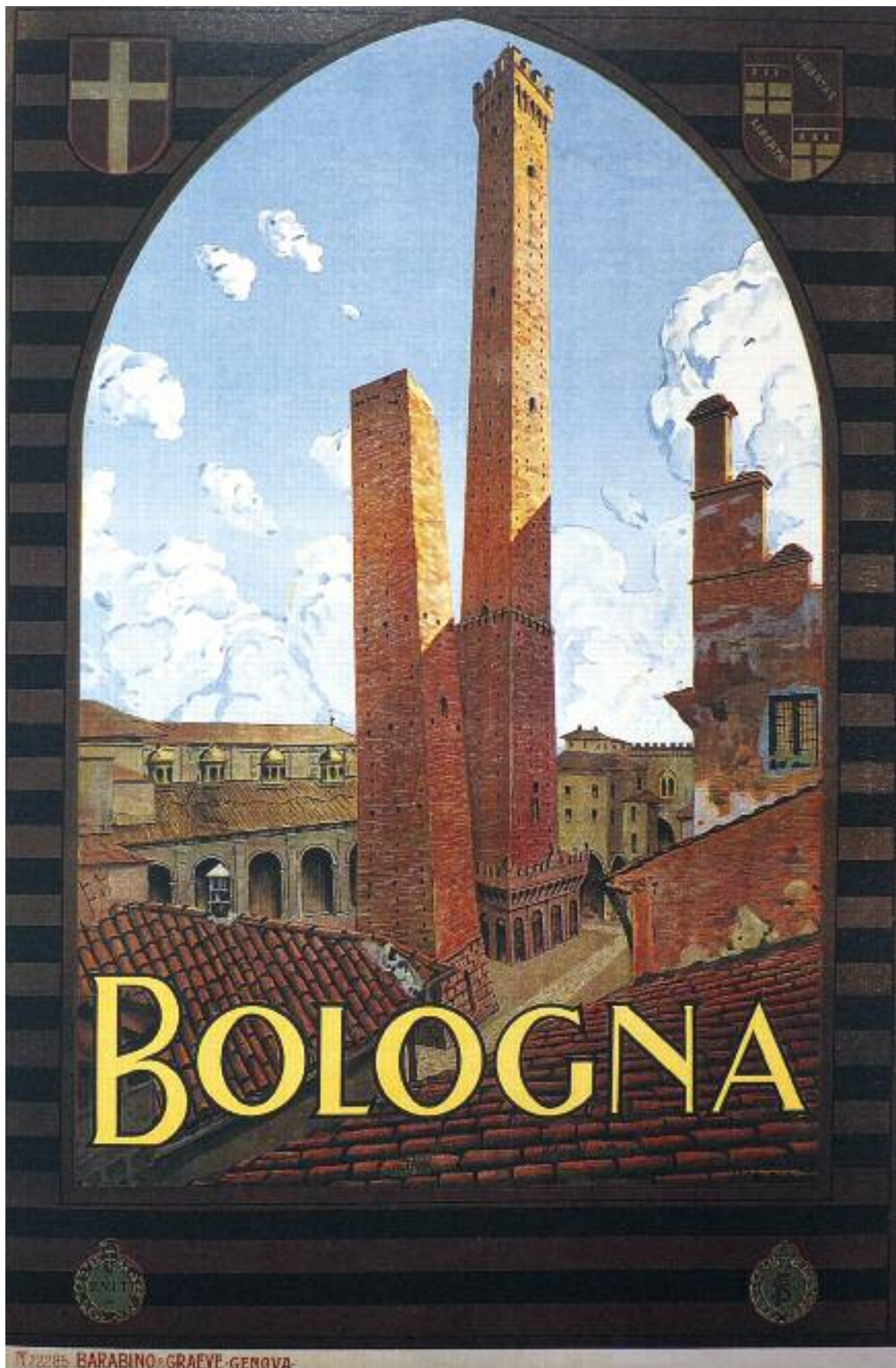


Fig. 13 – Severino Trematore, Bologna, 1928 ca., Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 69 x 99.5

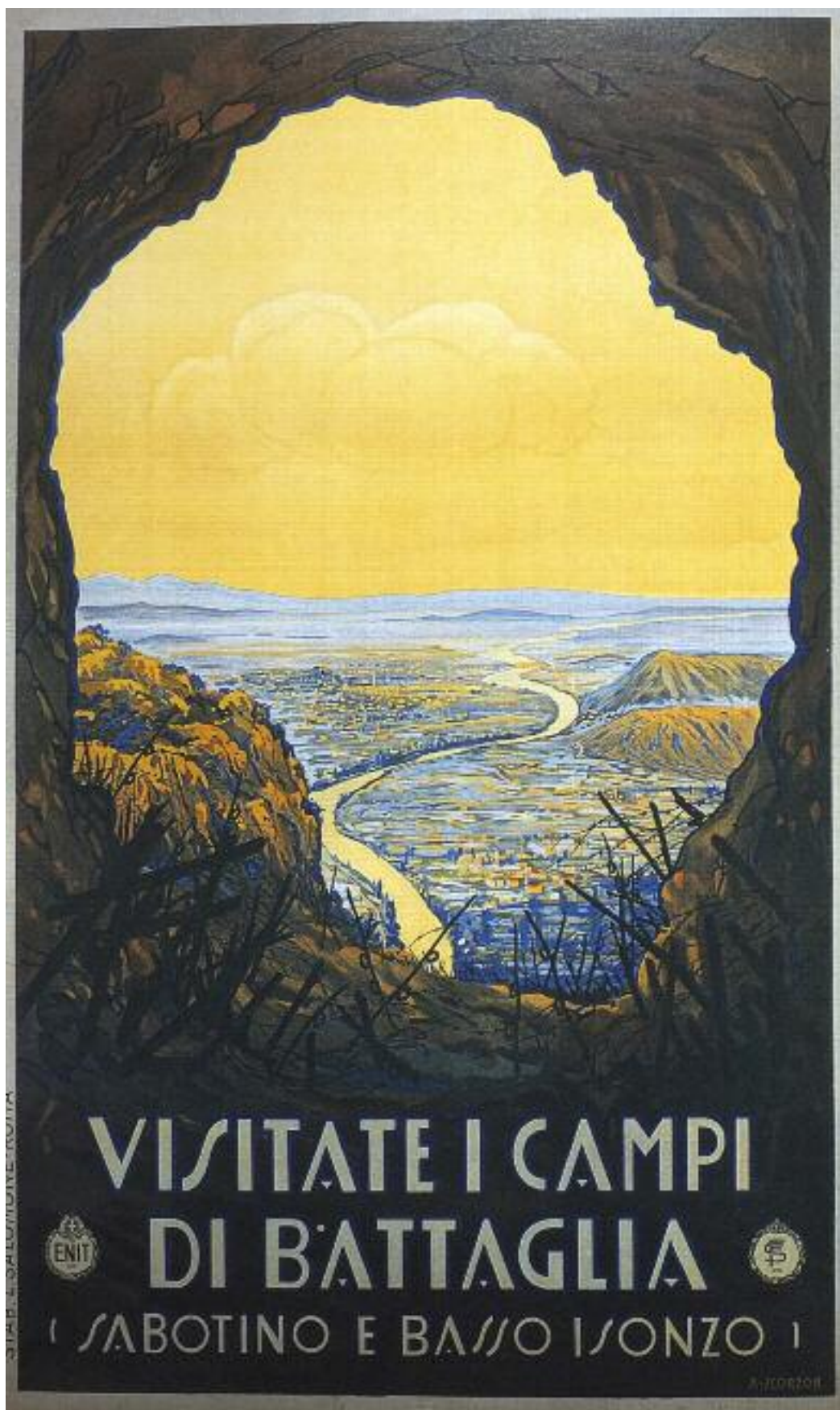


Fig. 14 – Amos Scorzon, (*Visit the Battlefields*), 1928 ca., Stabilimento L. Salomone, Rome, Chromolithograph, 63.5 x 100 cm

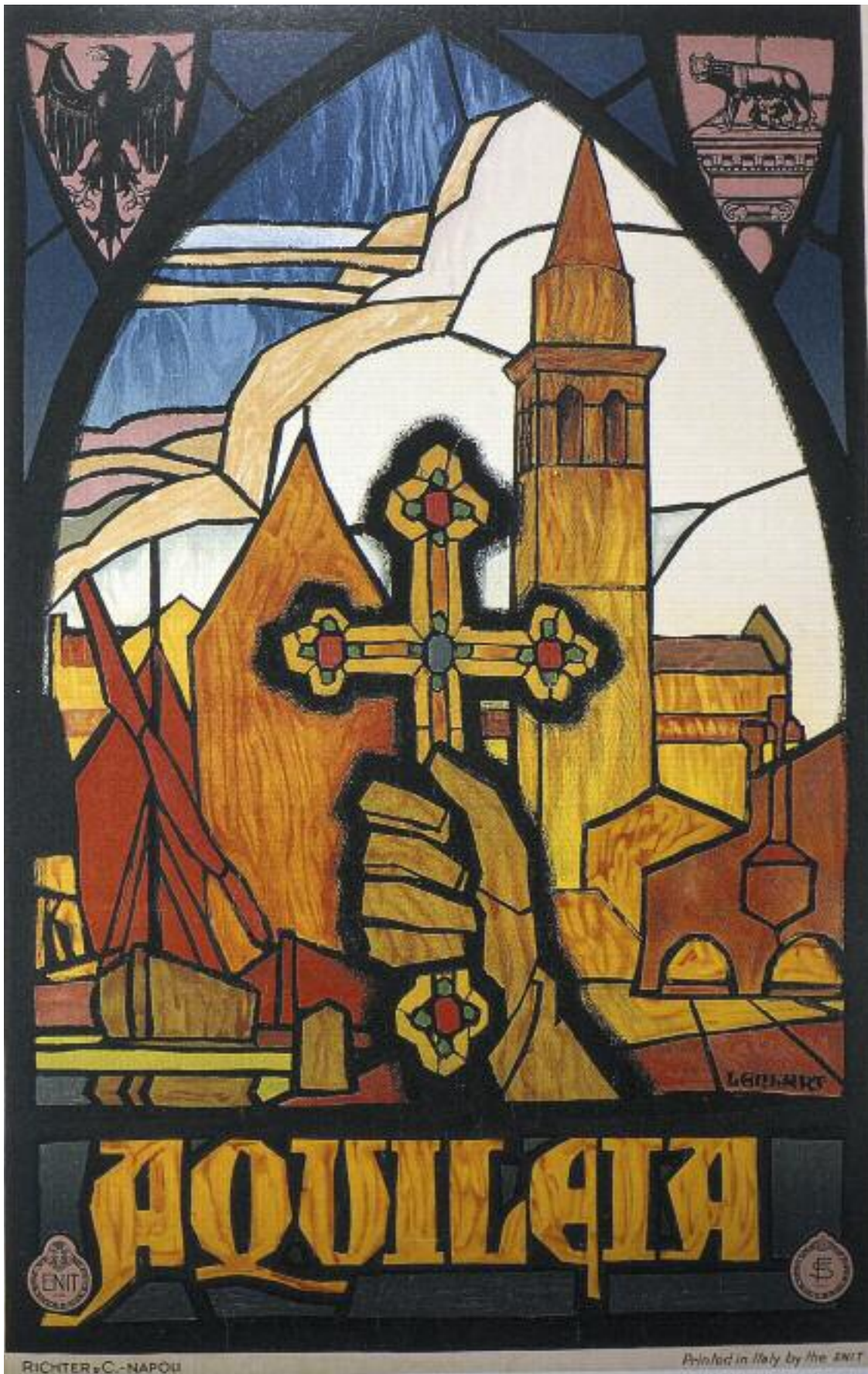


Fig. 15 – Franz Lenhart, *Aquilaia*, 1928 ca., Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 64 x 98.5 cm



Fig. 16 – Unknown, *Lago d'Orta*, 1925 ca., Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 69.7 x 96.5 cm

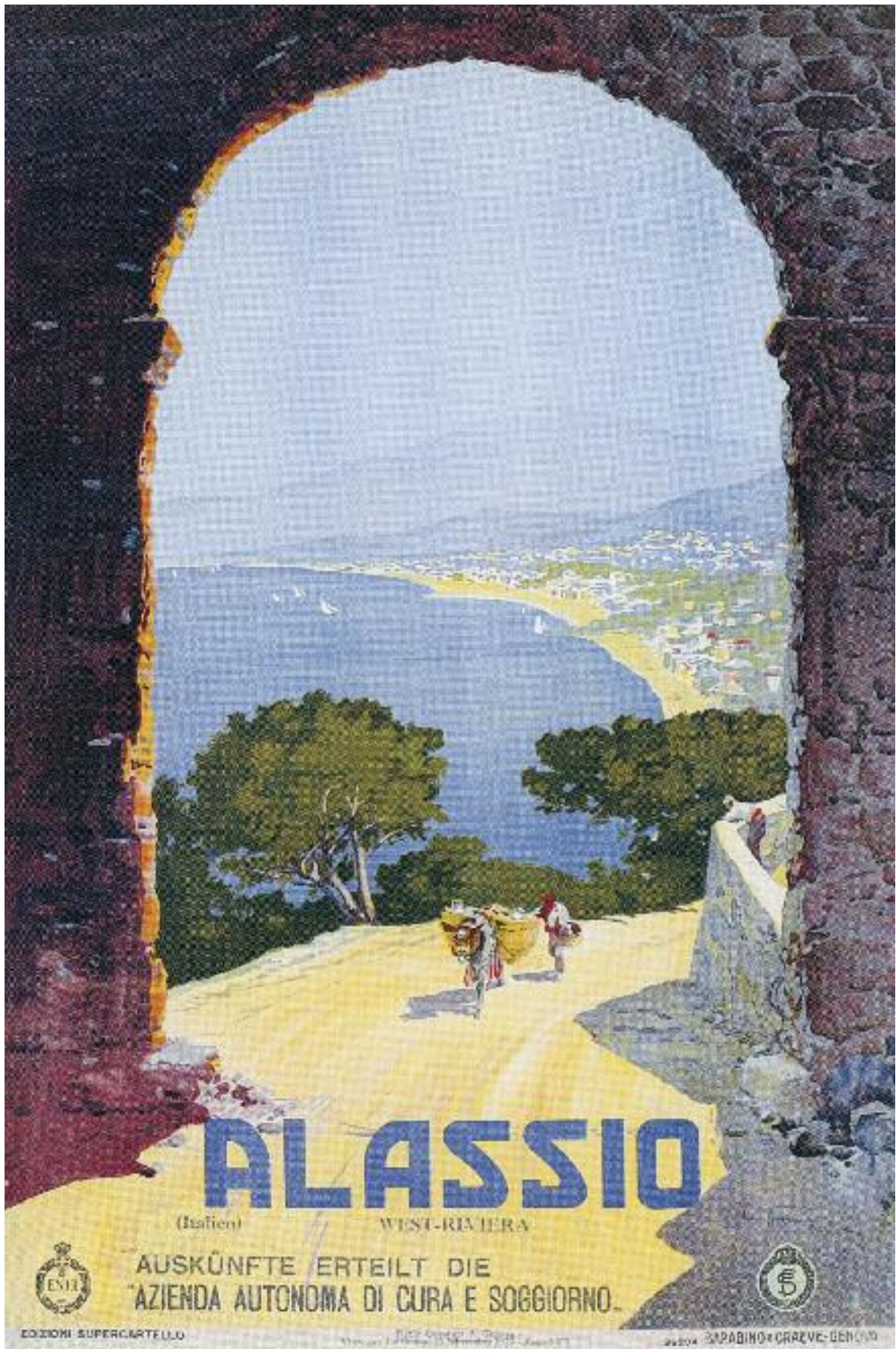


Fig. 17 – Aurelio Craffonara, *Allassio*, 1929, Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 70 x 100 cm

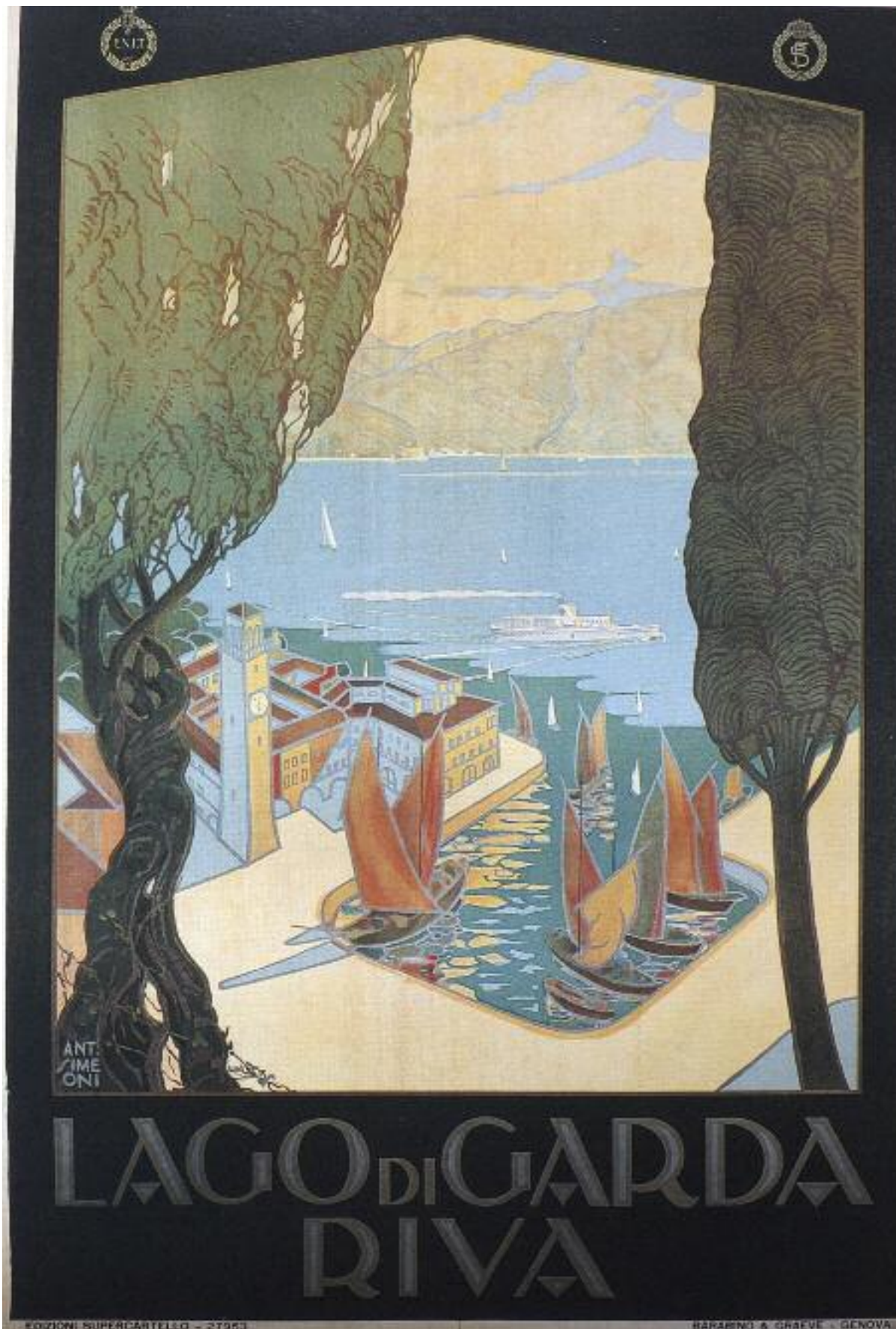


Fig. 18 – Antonio Simeoni, *Riva del Garda*, 1926 ca., Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 70 x 100 cm



Fig. 19 – Unknown, *Venezia*, 1938, Stabilimento L. Salomone, Rome, Offset, 67.7 x 98.7 cm



Fig. 20 – Unknown, *Siena*, 1925 ca., Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 70.5 x 97 cm



Fig. 21 – Vittorio Grassi, *Assisi*, 1926, Grafia, Rome, Chromolithograph, 68.8 x 99.5 cm

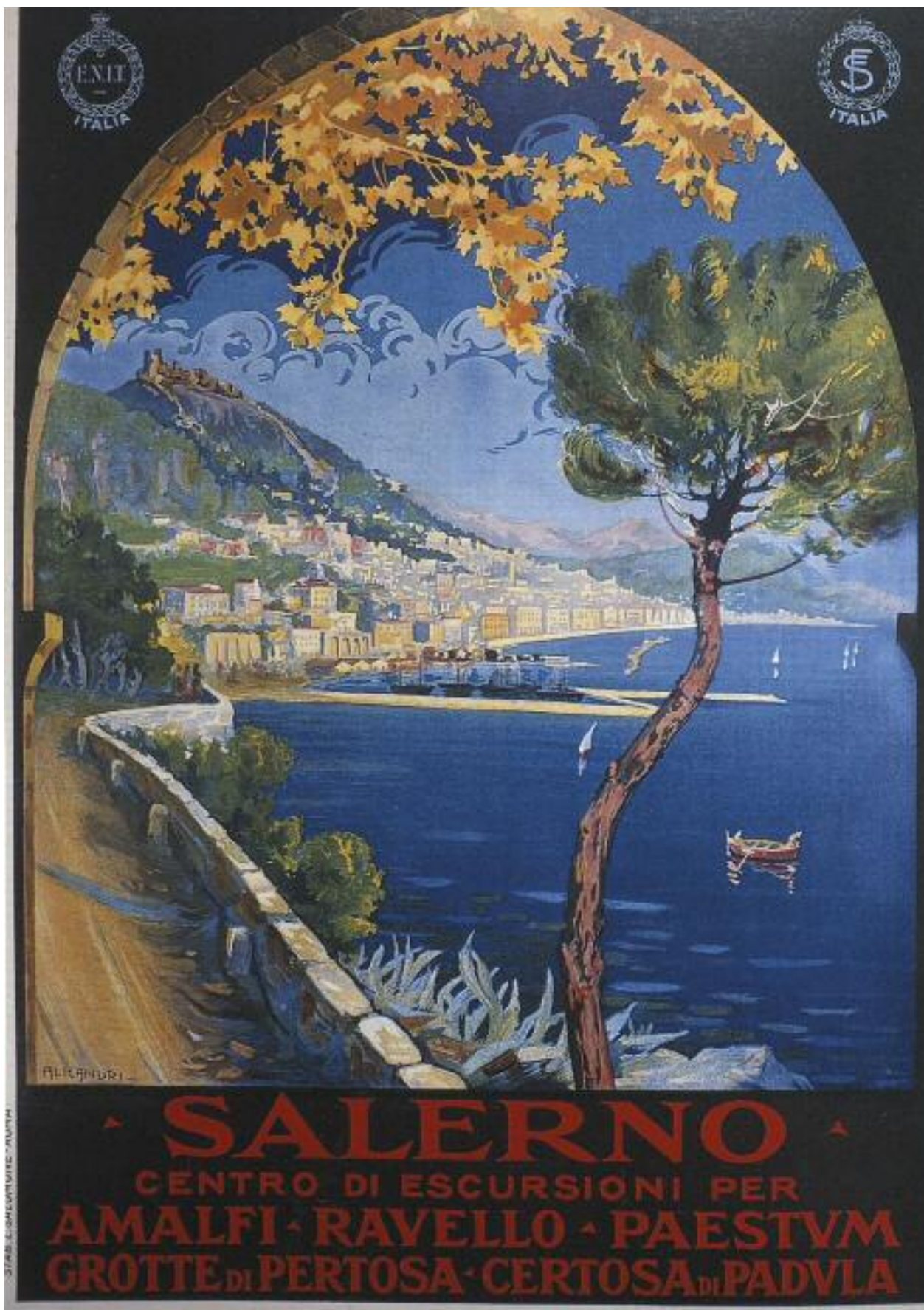


Fig. 22 – Vincenzo Alicandri, *Salerno*, Stabilimento L. Salomone, Rome, Chromolithograph, 71 x 100.5 cm

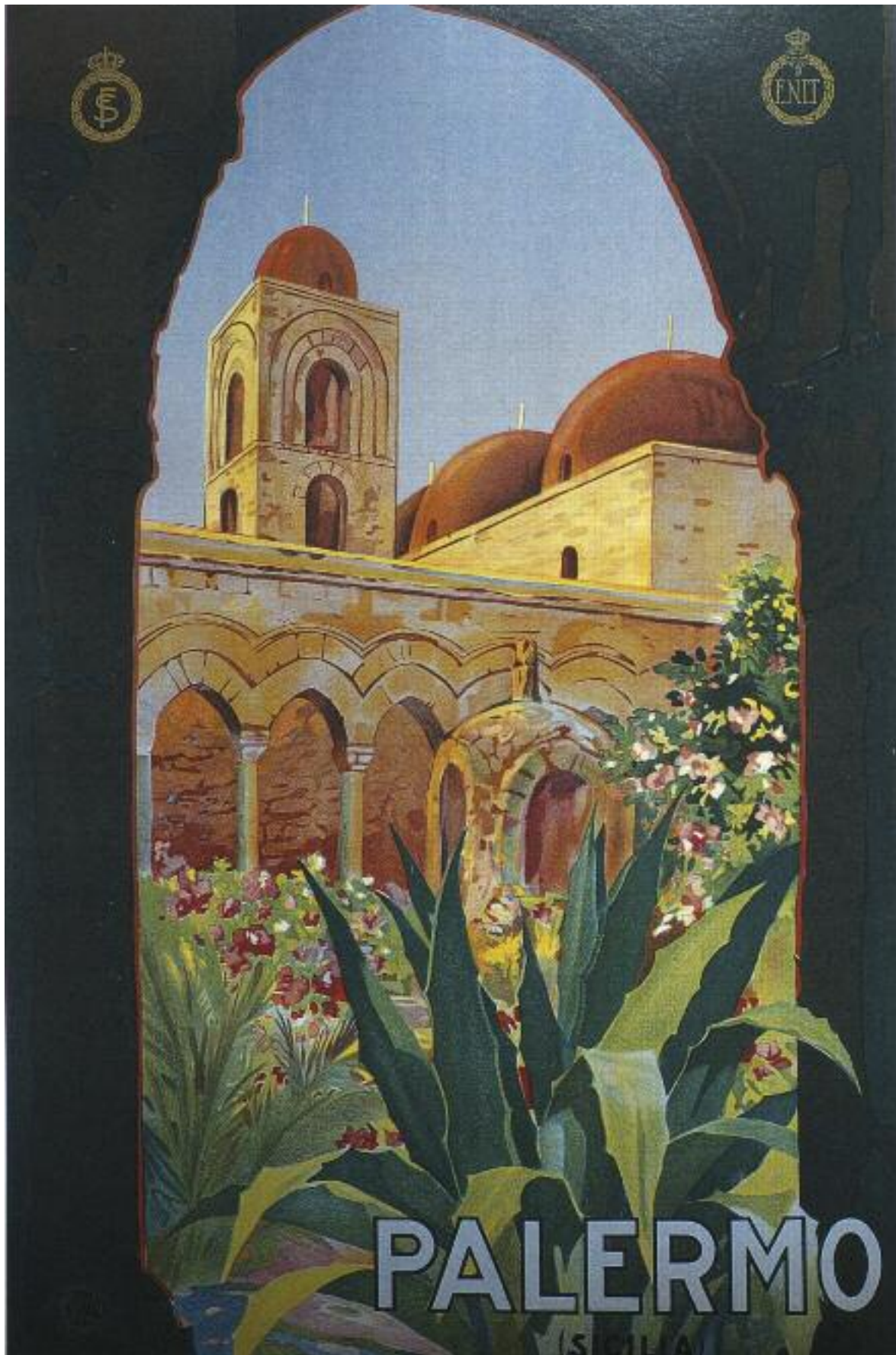


Fig. 23 – Unknown, *Palermo*, Stabilimento A. Marzi, Rome, Chromolithograph, 66.5 x 99 cm

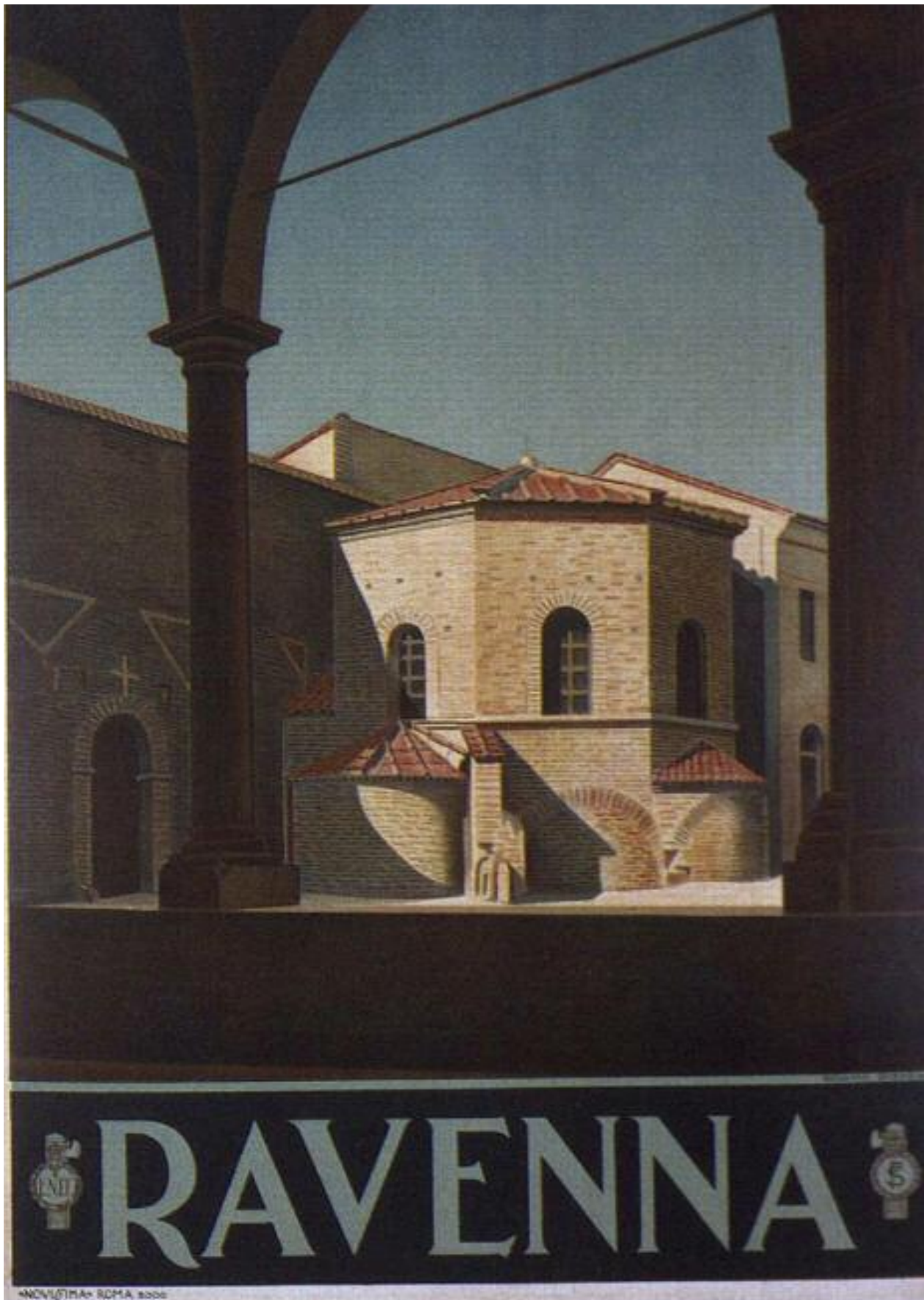


Fig. 24 – Giovanni Guerrini, *Ravenna*, 1929 ca., Novissima, Chromolithograph, 68 x 99.5 cm



Fig. 25 – Guglielmo Ghini, *Lucca*, 1952 A.G.A.F., Florence, Offset, 62.3 x 100 cm

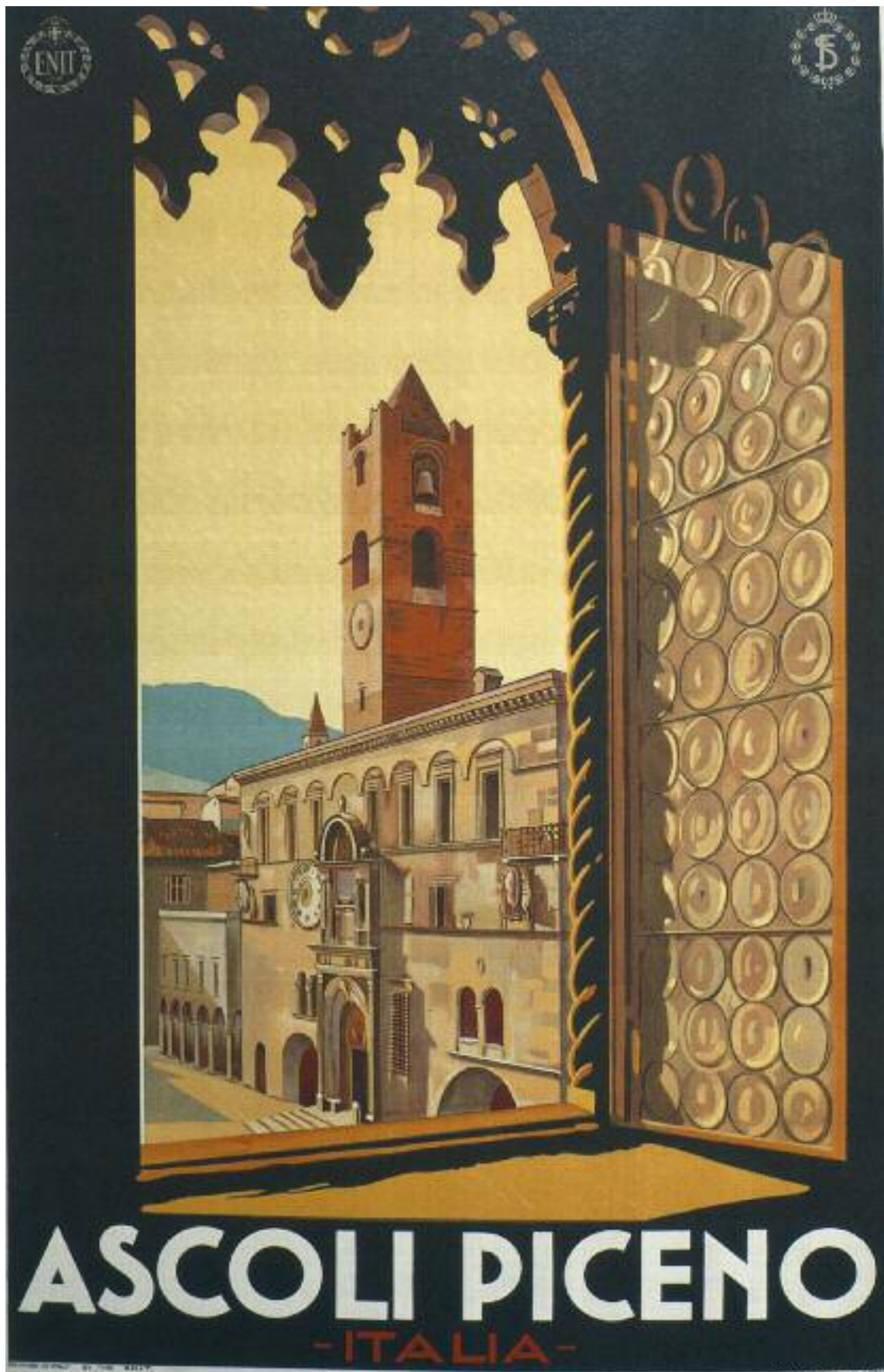


Fig. 26 – Unknown, *Ascoli Piceno*, 1932, Grafiche I.G.A.P., Chromolithograph, 62 x 100 cm

entitled *Connaissez-vous l'Italie?* published in 1939. An unknown author chose to put Giuseppe Graziosi's equestrian statue of Mussolini on the front cover, which he had created for the *Littoriali* organised in Bologna in 1940. Graziosi's unique monument was distinctly "anti-modern" and drew inspiration from classical-Renaissance statues depicting leaders on horseback (fig. 29). Another example is the poster devised for Trieste, which had long been an isolated and disputed city and only became part of Italy in 1920 following the Treaty of Rapallo. Said poster purposefully depicted – and in a certain sense beautified, thanks to the poster's alluring night-time setting – a monument built by the fascists: the imposing Victory Lighthouse designed by architect Arduino Berlam, which featured Giovanni Meyer's stern statue of an anonymous sailor (fig. 30).

Part of Enit's visual communication strategy appears to focus on the myth – in a rather *Belle Époque* fashion – of elitist tourism as the preserve of the privileged and upper classes. Between the 1920s and 1930s – and in line with the fantasy of a falsely carefree and flirtatious Italy that was brought into vogue by the *Telefoni Bianchi* era – glossy advertisements featuring swimmers on the beaches of the Adriatic coast starting to crop up (fig. 31), along with elegant women in mountain landscapes (fig. 32), the young offspring of high-society skiing (fig. 33) or playing golf (fig. 34) and the good-looking bourgeoisie depicted traveling around at ease in sports cars (fig. 35) or on convenient city trams (fig. 36). That being said, there was also an aspect of Enit poster art dedicated to glorifying regionalism, small villages and traditional habits and customs. In hindsight, this was not a contradiction in terms, as the regime aimed to depict itself both as a modern nation, a

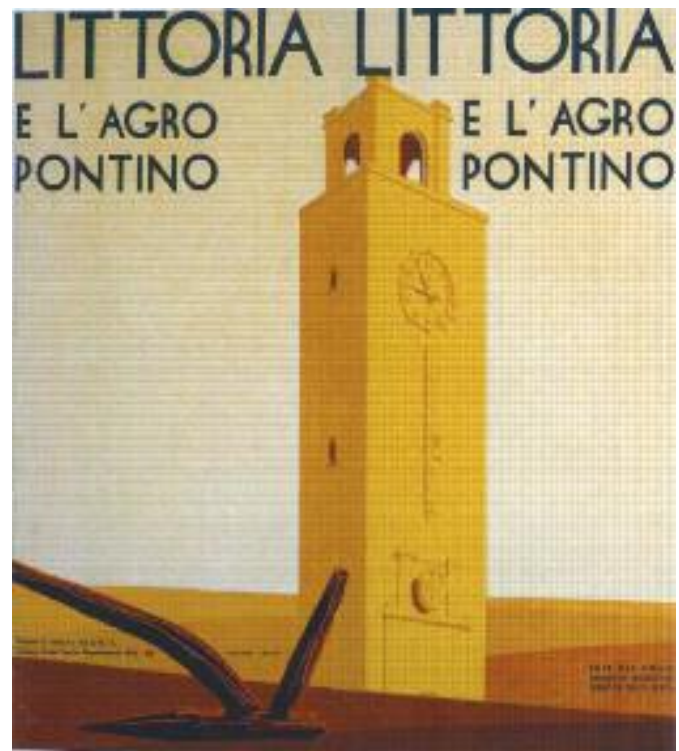


Fig. 27 – Unknown, *Littoria e l'Agro Pontino*, Enit brochure, 1934



Fig. 28 – Unknown, *Tripoli*, 1930 ca., S.T.E.N., Turin, Chromolithograph, 61.7 x 100.2 cm



Fig. 29 – Unknown, *Connaissiez-vous l'Italie ?*, Enit guide, 1930 ca.



Fig. 30 – Giorgio Viola, *Trieste*, 1930 ca., Grafiche Modiano, Trieste, Chromolithograph, 64 x 100 cm

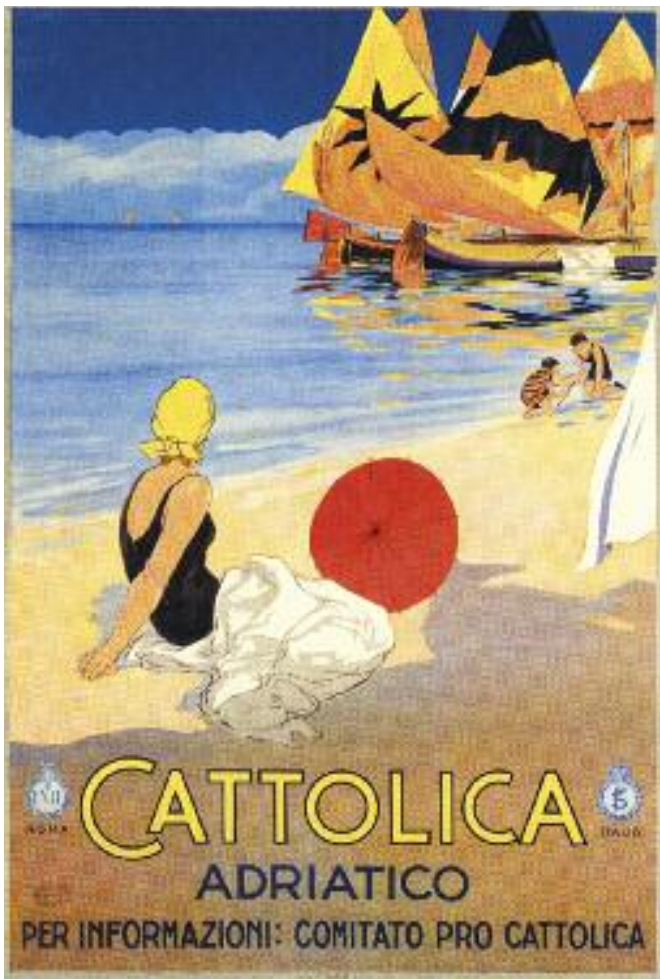


Fig. 31 – Giulio Ferrari, *Cattolica*, 1924, Stabilimento A. Marzi, Rome, Chromolithograph, 100 x 70 cm

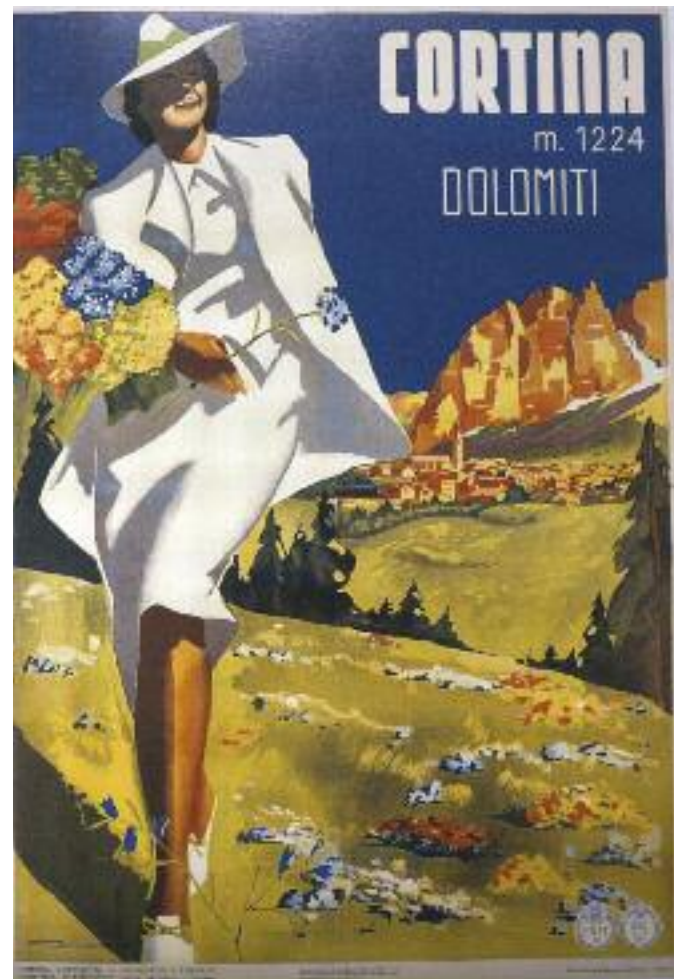


Fig. 32 – Michele Ortino, *Cortina*, 1938, S.A.I.G.A. previously Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 69 x 99.6 cm

destination for civil and high-end tourism, and as an ancient land, proud of its centuries-old traditions. Ruggero Alfredo Michaelles – a brilliant and versatile artist from Florence – was able to express this polarity well with two beautiful posters created in 1935, in which he was inspired by De Chirico’s metaphysics to represent Italy as striving towards modernity (note the reference to the railway network), while at the same time, a nation linked to the cult of classical art and its unique Mediterranean spirit (figs. 37-38).

Artists who were trained in the various cold and linear forms of European Liberty at the beginning of the twentieth century continued

the practice well into the 1920s. Said approach resulted in posters with a classical feel characterised by accurate and somewhat stereotypical depictions of landscapes. Artists such as Vincenzo Alicandri, Mario Borgoni, Aurelio Craffonara and Attilio Ravaglia were inspired not only by canonical forms of landscape painting, but also by the more popular tradition of postcard art, which gave particular emphasis to monuments and iconic landscapes. By pursuing ‘unsophisticated’ and stereotypical visual forms, exemplified by the overused narrative of Italy as possessing a thousand regional identities – an Italy that Tullio De Mauro effectively defined as “a land



Fig. 33 – Paolo Antonio Paschetto, (*Winter sports in Italy*). *Dolomiti e Alpi orientali*, 1926 ca., Stabilimento L. Salomone, Rome, Chromolithograph, 68.6 x 99.5 cm



Fig. 35 – Unknown, *Rome. (Tram tour)*, Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 68.7 x 99.4 cm



Fig. 34 – Franz Lenhart, *Bozen-Gries*, 1934, Lit. G. Linke, Bolzano, Chromolithograph, 62 x 95 cm



Fig. 36 – Vincenzo Alicandri, *Abruzzo*, 1926, Grafia S.A.I.I.G., Rome, Chromolithograph, 68 x 98 cm



Fig. 37 – Ruggero Alfredo Michaelles (RAM), *Kennst du das Land? Italien*, 1935 ca., Gros-Monti & C., Turin, Chromolithograph, 63 x 100.2 cm



Fig. 38 – Ruggero Alfredo Michaelles (RAM), *Italy*, 1935, Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 62 x 99.8 cm

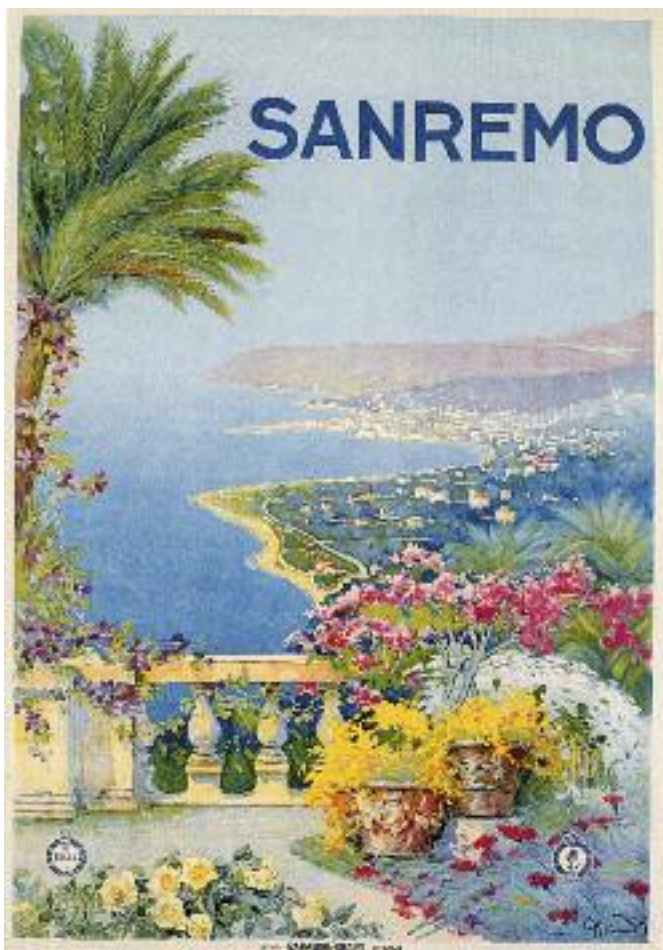


Fig. 39 – Vincenzo Alicandri, *Sanremo*, 1928 ca., Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 68.7 x 99 cm

of towns”²⁶ – Enit was able to establish a poster prototype that guaranteed a large financial return (figs. 39-42). A strong sense of attachment to the Leopardian concept of *borgo natio* (or small country town) emerges when analysing the numerous tourist posters devised by the association to emphasise the typical aspects of rural life, namely a church, town hall and a piazza. What’s more, it was not uncommon for key members of the local community to choose the places to be depicted on posters, which was in keeping with traditional countryside spirit. This was the case, for example, when devising a poster for Brescia,

²⁶ T. De Mauro, *L’Italia delle Italie*, 1979, p. 10.

whose picturesque depiction of the Torre del Popolo, Palazzo del Broletto and Loggia delle Grida was created by Vincenzo Alicandri – a painter from Abruzzo – on the recommendation of Augusto Turati, a leading figure in Brescia’s fascist movement and national secretary of the PNF from 1926 onwards²⁷ (figs. 43).

Depicting typical rural attractions in a postcard-like style – with clear blue skies, boats moored in bays and meadows overflowing with flowers –



Fig. 40 – Mario Borgoni, *Capri*, 1927 ca., Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 64.5 x 100 cm

²⁷ *Un cartello di propaganda turistica per Brescia*, in “Le Vie d’Italia,” XXXIV, 3 March 1923, p. 269.

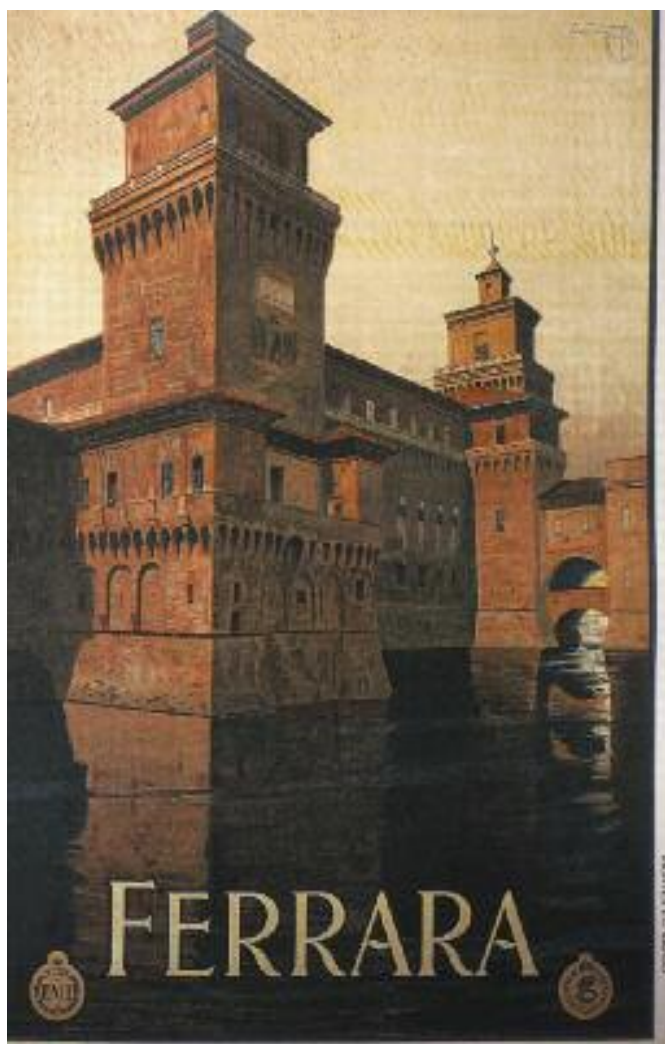


Fig. 41 – Mario Borgoni, *Ferrara*, 1927 ca., Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 68 x 97 cm

became fairly common practice in national tourist advertising. Italy's love of folkloric themes and picturesque images, on the other hand, had already been understood by Ugo Ojetti in 1931, who stated that "a sense of purity lingers, one that wholeheartedly belongs to the tourism industry."²⁸ This preference for sketch art persisted for a long time and continued to manifest itself in the period following World War Two. During a tourist poster exhibition organised in Rome in 1950, in the courtyard of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza

²⁸ U. Ojetti, *L' "Enit", il tempo buono e il mare turchino*, in "Pegaso," III, 5 May 1931, p. 587.

²⁹ G. Perazzi, *Il cartellone turistico deve essere efficace*, in



Fig. 42 – Aldo Cigheri, *Pesaro*, 1954, Saiga, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 49.5 x 68.6 cm

church, critics found themselves faced with "an excruciating collection of artworks in poor taste,"²⁹ and could not help commenting that "these posters are full of swallows and roses, just like the postcards Marmittone (a simple-minded Italian cartoon character) sends to his love."³⁰ The need to create simple, understandable and direct tourist advertisements resulted in various elements being caricatured, which could be somewhat cloying. That being said, when interpreted ironically, they could also be viewed with

"Il Giornale del Turismo," 27 July 1950.

³⁰ L. Natoli, *Mostre da non mostrare. Cercansi tecnici per la propaganda*, in "Il Giornale del Turismo," 6 July 1950.



Fig. 43 – Vincenzo Alicandri, *Brescia*, 1928, Richter & C., Naples, Chromolithograph, 70 x 100 cm

a certain positivity. Many of the Italian tourist posters produced in the 1950s were designed by Mario Puppo (figs. 44), a graphic designer and illustrator who is unfortunately not well known and whose signature style consisted of the use of easily interpretable symbols and characters (such as his poster for Finale Ligure, which features a charming goldfish in a rubber dinghy sporting a bathing suit and sunglasses and smoking a cigar) (fig. 45).

As previously noted, Enit's limitless poster repertoire by no means lacked designs charac-

terised by outdated graphics and iconography. That being said, a combination of abstract and figurative elements often appeared in posters designed by Cassandre (who went by the alias Adolphe Jean-Marie Guyon), which were distantly influenced by the Surreal-Futurist movement.³¹ Among the vast and varied posters created by the artist – who was born in Ukraine to French parents, before working in



Fig. 44 – Mario Puppo, *Procida*, 1952, A. Pizzi S.p.A., Milan, Offset, 61.7 x 99.5 cm

³¹ Cfr. A. Weill, *Cassandre*, Paris 2005.

France, Italy and the United States – was a commission for Enit in partnership with the State Railways in 1936 (fig. 46). In said poster, Cassandre juxtaposes Catholic symbols (the ethereal profile of the Madonna with the baby Jesus) with classical art (a pair of Corinthian columns in chiaroscuro). Between the 1930s and 1940s, a trend emerged that relied on original and sight-based depictions of the country’s historical and artistic heritage in order to encourage tourism to Italian cities. With this in mind, in 1937, painter Carlo Mattioli devised a poster featuring a grey Correggio-style face overlooking a medieval church (fig. 47). A similar approach was employed by Giuseppe Riccobaldi, who created a brand of sorts for the city of Mantua in 1948, using the frescoes painted by Andrea Mantegna in the city’s Castello di San Giorgio (fig. 48).

However, it was during the period following the Second World War that, due to increasing international tourism, a need to “rejuvenate” the image of Italy’s cities led to the demand for a new style of poster that made use of more advanced post-Bauhaus graphic experimental techniques. This abandonment of naturalistic descriptive imagery in favour of modern linguistic forms is primarily evident when comparing the posters created by Marcello Nizzoli for Enit in the 1920s and 1930s – such as his poster for Bergamo, which features a traditional view of the town from above (fig. 49) –



Fig. 45 – Mario Puppo, *Finale Ligure*, 1950, S.A.I.G.A. previously Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 70 x 100 cm

with his 1952 poster for Milan (fig. 50). The latter constitutes a veritable feat of Italian graphic art and was awarded the Arlecchino d’Oro at the very first edition of the *Mostra del manifesto turistico internazionale* (lit. International Tourist Poster Exhibition) in Livorno in 1961. The artist created the poster using a collage of two-dimensional shapes and entered it into the competition organised by Milan’s



Fig. 46 – Cassandre (Adolphe Jean-Marie Mouron), *Italy*, 1936, Officine Grafiche Coen & C., Milan, Chromolithograph, 62 X 100 cm

Provincial Tourism Board.³² Nizzoli – who was an expert artist, famous for creating iconic posters for the Campari brand – used the competition guidelines to his advantage, which stated that entries should feature no more than six colours. By opting for a compact graphic style similar to that of Albe Stenier and Max Huber, in addition to Matisse’s *papiers découpés* technique, Nizzoli created the white outline of a steeple and a towering medieval



Fig. 47 – Carlo Mattioli, *Visit Parma and its province*, 1937, Grafiche I.G.A.P., Rome, Offset and Chromolithograph, 64.5 x 98.5 cm

spire, which were in themselves a reference to the Milan Cathedral. The images were set against a black background, partially interspersed with polychrome inserts, which were combined to replicate the effect of a Gothic stained-glass window.

Yet another poster representing a turning point in Enit’s expressive canon during the immediate post-war period was a design for

progetto.” Collection directed by A.C. Quintavalle, Milan 1990, p. 322.

³² Cfr. P. Pagliari’s page in *Marcello Nizzoli*, “Gli archivi del

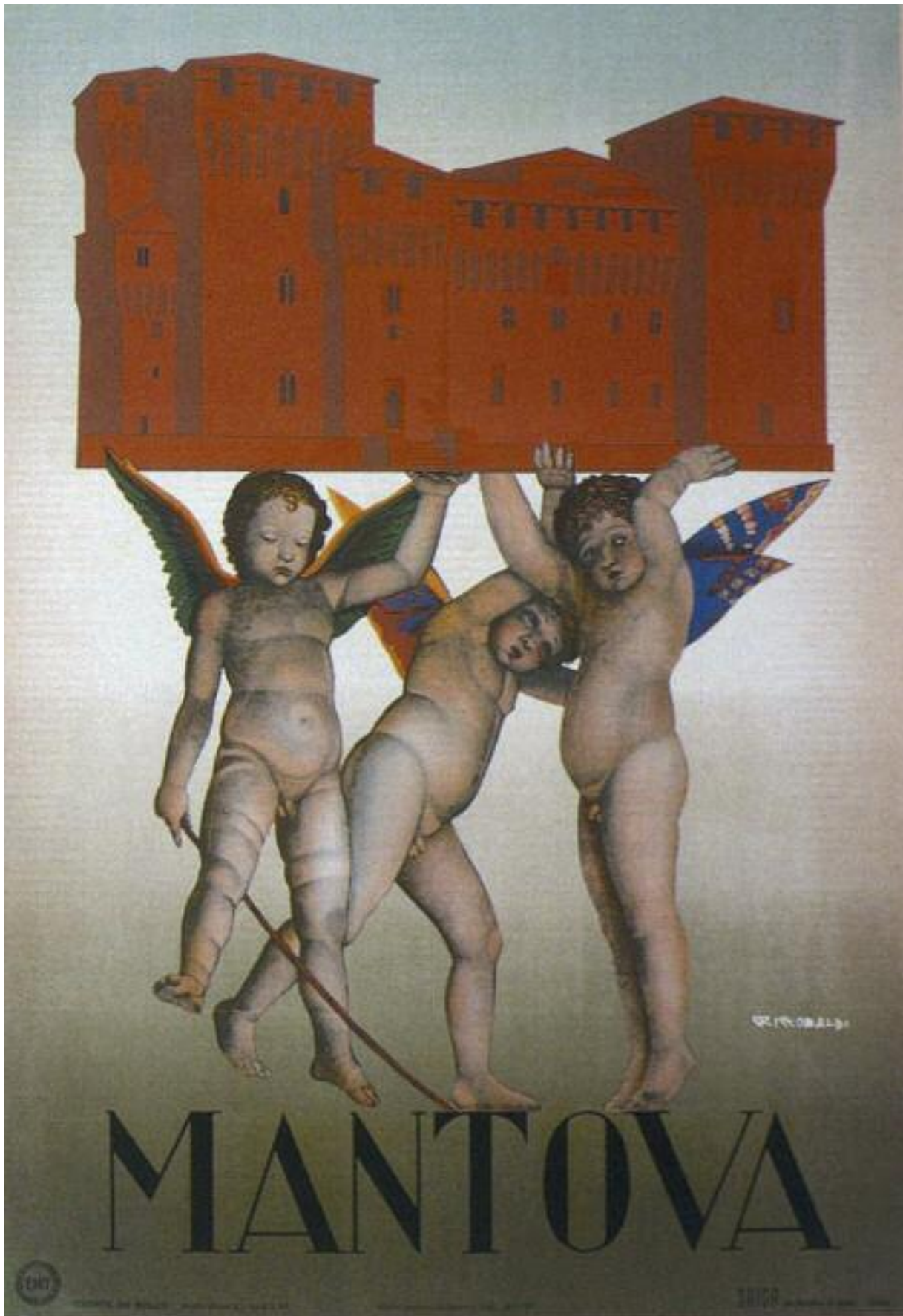


Fig. 48 – Giuseppe Riccobaldi, Mantova, 1948, S.A.I.G.A. previously Barabino & Graeve, Genoa, Chromolithograph, 68.3 x 99.5 cm



Fig. 49 – Marcello Nizzoli, *Bergamo*, 1927, Edizioni Star, Milan, Chromolithograph, 70 x 98 cm

the *Mostra della ricostruzione nazionale* (1950) by Rolando Monti and Francesco Perotti, painters and close friends who belonged to the Scuola Romana movement.³³ By combining a small selection of shapes and colours, the two artists created a dramatic, bare-bones ‘neorealism’ of sorts. In fact, in addition to a single stroke of colour, their poster was entirely dominated by an

indistinct brick ruin and a solitary chimney (fig. 51).

The *Mostra della Ricostruzione*, held at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, was an attempt to document Italy’s industrial progress and the enormous efforts employed in the five years following the end of the war to rebuild infrastructures that were vital to civilian life. The tourism sector was also included in the exhibition – given that it was seen as the driving force behind the national economy – and Enit participated by setting up a display supervised by architect Luigi Orestano and painter Mino Delle Site,³⁴ who collaborated with Virgilio Retrosi and sculptor Edgardo Mannucci to outfit the space. As evidenced by sources at the time,³⁵ the artist created two narrative panels depicting the ups and downs of the tourism industry during and after the war (the closing of borders, the banning of foreign traffic, the gradual rebuilding of accommodation facilities after 1945 and the huge influx of visitors to Italy for the 1950 Jubilee). Delle Site – who was a versatile artist trained within the ranks of second-wave Futurism and already active in the field of monumental painting by the 1930s – was one of Enit’s most successful poster designers after 1950. His tourist posters, which were characterised by simple visual pleasures and irony and influenced by futuristic, dynamic trends, gained widespread acclaim and recognition at major sector events. In 1950, for example, Delle Site won a competition launched

³³ In 1955, Rolando Monti wrote a biographical profile on his friend Perotti for an exhibition at the Quadriennale. Cfr. *VII Quadriennale Nazionale d’Arte di Roma* (November 1955–April 1956), Rome 1955, pp. 70–71.

³⁴ E. Crispolti (edited by), *Mino Delle Site. Aereopittura e*

oltre, exhibition cat. (Lecce, Museo Provinciale Sigismondo Castromediano, 15 October–3 December 1989), Milan 1989.

³⁵ G. Perazzi, *La mostra della Ricostruzione documenta l’immenso sforzo ricostruttivo del Paese*, in “Il Giornale del Turismo,” 18 May 1950.



Fig. 50 – Marcello Nizzoli, *Milan*, 1952, Industrie Grafiche N. Moneta, Milan, Chromolithograph, 62 x 98 cm

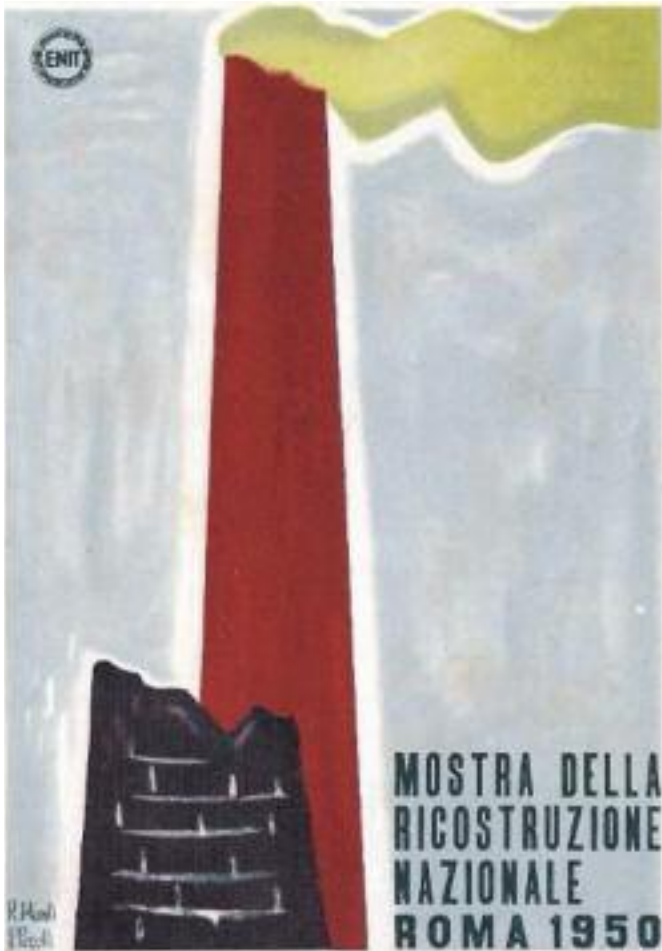


Fig. 51 – Rolando Monti, Francesco Perotti, *Mostra della Ricostruzione*, 1949-1950, photo-mechanical reproduction, 100.4 x 69.8 cm

by Enit for his poster depicting Sardinia's tourist attractions (fig. 52). In 1956, Delle Site won first prize in the New Delhi tourist poster competition with a design that juxtaposed various iconographic elements in front of an open window,³⁶ thereby successfully encapsulating Italy's excellence in the food, artistic, literary and music fields (fig. 53). It was a simple yet pleasing solution that, despite being far from the artist's bold 'futurist licence,' presented a clear message that was easy to unpick.

³⁶ For further information on window iconography, please see pp. XXX of the same volume.

³⁷ Cfr. F. Tetro, *La donazione di ceramiche degli allievi*, in F. Tetro (edited by), *Il Museo Duilio Cambellotti a Latina. Opere scelte dalla collezione*, Rome 2002, pp. 139-141; cfr.

Virgilio Retrosi – poster designer and photographer

Virgilio Retrosi (1892-1975) produced some truly unique artwork in Rome between the two world wars, as well as in Italy in general. Although the few studies dedicated to him remember him as a ceramist,³⁷ he had a versatile career that explored a number of different techniques and disciplines. Suffice it to say that, in 1936, crit-



Fig. 52 – Mino Delle Site, *Sardinia*, 1951, Stabilimento L. Salomone, Rome, Offset, 62.5 x 100.2 cm

a brief biographical profile on Retrosi in I. de Guttry, M.P. Maino (edited by), *Artisti e fornaci. La felice stagione della ceramica a Roma e nel Lazio (1880-1930)*, exhibition cat. (Rome, Museo di Roma in Trastevere, 17 July-28 September 2003), Rome 2003, pp. 167-168.



Fig. 53 – Mino Delle Site, *Italy*, 1956

ics were calling him “easily inspired” and an artist who had successfully accomplished “a number of things in very different fields.”³⁸ He achieved some noteworthy results in the fields of illustration, advertising graphics, monumental decorative mosaics³⁹ and, as new documentary evidence reveals, photography and photomontage. Retrosi’s familiarity with photography was of particular importance because it underscored his curiosity with modern artistic expression and exposed the close-minded prejudice of provincialism, which was still weighing down the ‘minor’ artists not closely involved with the avant-garde in the Scuola Romana movement. Just like his master and friend Duilio Cambellotti, Retrosi had a rather critical opinion of the linguistic radicalism of the avant-gardes and, specifically, the provocations of futurist painters who had started to gain followers in Rome in the 1910s. Uncoincidentally, in May of 1914, Retrosi appeared in newspapers after taking part in a protest demonstration against a futurist ‘happening’ organised at the Sprovieri Gallery in Via del Tritone.⁴⁰ Having trained at Rome’s Institute of Fine Arts under the guidance of Duilio Cambellotti⁴¹ – who ran the institute’s ornamental plastics course from 1908 onwards – Retrosi debuted his work at Rome’s grand exhibition in 1911, which was organised to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Unification of Italy. There, he exhibited a work of art entitled *ciotola con cardo* (lit. Bowl with This-

tle), which closely mimicked the style adopted by his master. In his younger years as an artist, Retrosi favoured the use of ceramics, but was open to other forms of art. As early as 1912 and 1913, he was devising illustrations for “La Casa”, an important magazine on “the aesthetics, decorum and governance of the modern home,” around which Cambellotti’s literary clique had gathered. His approach to the poster business was fairly gradual. He created one poster in 1925, commissioned by the Institute of Hygiene, Insurance and Social Assistance (IPAS), which showed a few late *Jugend* influences, such as Medusa’s frowning, a monstrous face wrapped in coils of snakes, intended to depict the lethal diseases of the time (fig. 54).

Previously a soldier in World War I and a member of the National Fascist Party from 1925 onwards, Retrosi worked for state-controlled and fascist organisations for a number of years. His work included editing illustrations for pamphlets and events sponsored by provincial branches of the National Recreational Club (OND), the Governorate of Rome and the Lazio Union of Fine Arts (figs. 55). In 1936, Retrosi participated in the first edition of the *Mostra nazionale del cartellone* (lit. National Billboard Exhibition) as a member of the jury, an exhibitor and also as the individual tasked with setting up Modiano’s Pizio and Pizzi stand. In 1937, he won a competition to create a work of art for the National Health Fund’s trade member wall calendar⁴² (CNMAC).

³⁸ Gem, *Arte pubblicitaria*, cit., p. 20.

³⁹ Cfr. M. Finazzi. *Virgilio Retrosi e Duilio Cambellotti. I disegni per i mosaici a Santa Maria degli Argentini*, in *Coni d’ombra. Arte a Roma 1900-1940. Contributi critici*, exhibition cat. (Rome, Galleria Simone Aleandri Arte Moderna, March-April 2019), pp. 311-332.

⁴⁰ *Scappellotti plastici e valori verbali alla Galleria futurista*, in “Il Piccolo Giornale d’Italia,” 5-6 May 1914.

⁴¹ For reproductions of Retrosi’s artwork while attending Cambellotti’s course cfr. M.P. Maino, *Duilio Cambellotti. L’amato maestro*, in *Coni d’ombra*, cit., p. 44.

⁴² *Relazione della commissione giudicatrice del concorso per un cartello ad uso calendario murale (nominata dal Comitato Amministratore del Fondo di Previdenza, nella seduta del 127 giugno 1936-XIV)*, in “Assistenza Fascista,” II, 5, June-July 1937, p. 439.



Fig. 54 – Virgilio Retrosi, (*Fighting against the avoidable social evils means elevating individual wellness and the moral and economic power of the nation!*), 1925, Sociale (Institute of Hygiene, Insurance and Social Assistance – IPAS)

He was then frequently employed by the Ministry of Popular Culture, so much that, from 1942 onwards, he conceived and created several works of war propaganda. In the 1930s, he began working for Enit as a poster designer and photographer. Retrosi's photography skills – which are yet to be properly discovered – were greatly appreciated by his contemporaries. In fact, an unpublished document by the Ministry of Popular Culture emphasised this point, stating that “given your quality as a skilled photographer, as shown by the numerous purchases made by this Ministry through the Directorate of Tourism, and by the competitions you have won, please continue to create photomontages and the like.”⁴³

Albeit a gradual process, by the beginning of the 1930s, photography had begun to take root within the advertising world's linguistic syntax,⁴⁴ so much so that, in 1932, Edoardo Persico came to define it as “the most effective means of advertising illustration” and “an unparalleled means of propaganda thanks to its clarity of vision.”⁴⁵ Like many other celebrated modernist artists – such as Erberto Carbone, Bruno Munari and Luigi Veronesi – Retrosi not only perceived and experimented with the potential of photography, but soon specialised in photomontage or – as it was called in the 1920s – ‘photomosaic’. He then moved on to combine

photographic elements with a range of diverse, classical graphic and pictorial elements within his posters. Given his modern, cross-cutting approach, aimed at enhancing both the traditional practice of drawing and the artistic opportunities afforded by photography and photomontage, Retrosi eventually founded his own art studio on Via Clementina in Rome. His desire to combine photography with the pictorial discipline is fairly evident when analysing the posters he produced for Enit. In some instances, Retrosi focused on a single illustration, framing it – and you could even say magnifying it – in the foreground (figs. 56). In other instances, he preferred to assemble a combination of images using a process similar to photomontage (fig. 57-60). What's more, the numerous photo murals he created for the regime's grand educational exhibits – on the themes of wheat, maternity, childhood, and minerals, hosted at the Circus Maximus in the 1930s – were pervaded by a sense of classic monumentalism owed to his compositions' highly precise aesthetics.⁴⁶

From 1945 onwards, Retrosi's authority in the field of tourist advertising was unwavering. Suffice it to say that, as part of the European Tourism Commission's international competition in 1952, he won third prize for best poster inspired by the theme of “*Le voyage est le mar-*

⁴³ *Pro-memoria per il direttore dell'ufficio N.U.P.I.E. del Ministero della Cultura Popolare*, ACS, Ministero della Cultura Popolare Direzione Generale servizi della propaganda (1930-1944), envelope 24, s. d.

⁴⁴ Cfr. M. Dalla Mura, “*Artisti di altro carattere*”: *i manifesti fotografici degli anni trenta nella Collezione Salce*, in *Illustri persuasioni tra le due guerre*, cit., pp. 31-39.

⁴⁵ E. Persico, *Foto e pubblicità*, in “La Casa Bella,” September 1932, republished in E. Persico, *Tutte le opere (1923-1935)*, edited by G. Veronesi, Milan 1964, p. 278.

⁴⁶ On the ideologically and aesthetically ambiguous status of photomurals in the 1930s, please see R. Golan, *Muralnomad. Le paradoxe de l'image murale en Europe (1927-1957)*, Paris 2018, pp. 194-251.



Fig. 55 – Virgilio Retrosi, Sketches and research for posters (in «La Pubblicità d'Italia», II, 17-18, November-December 1938)

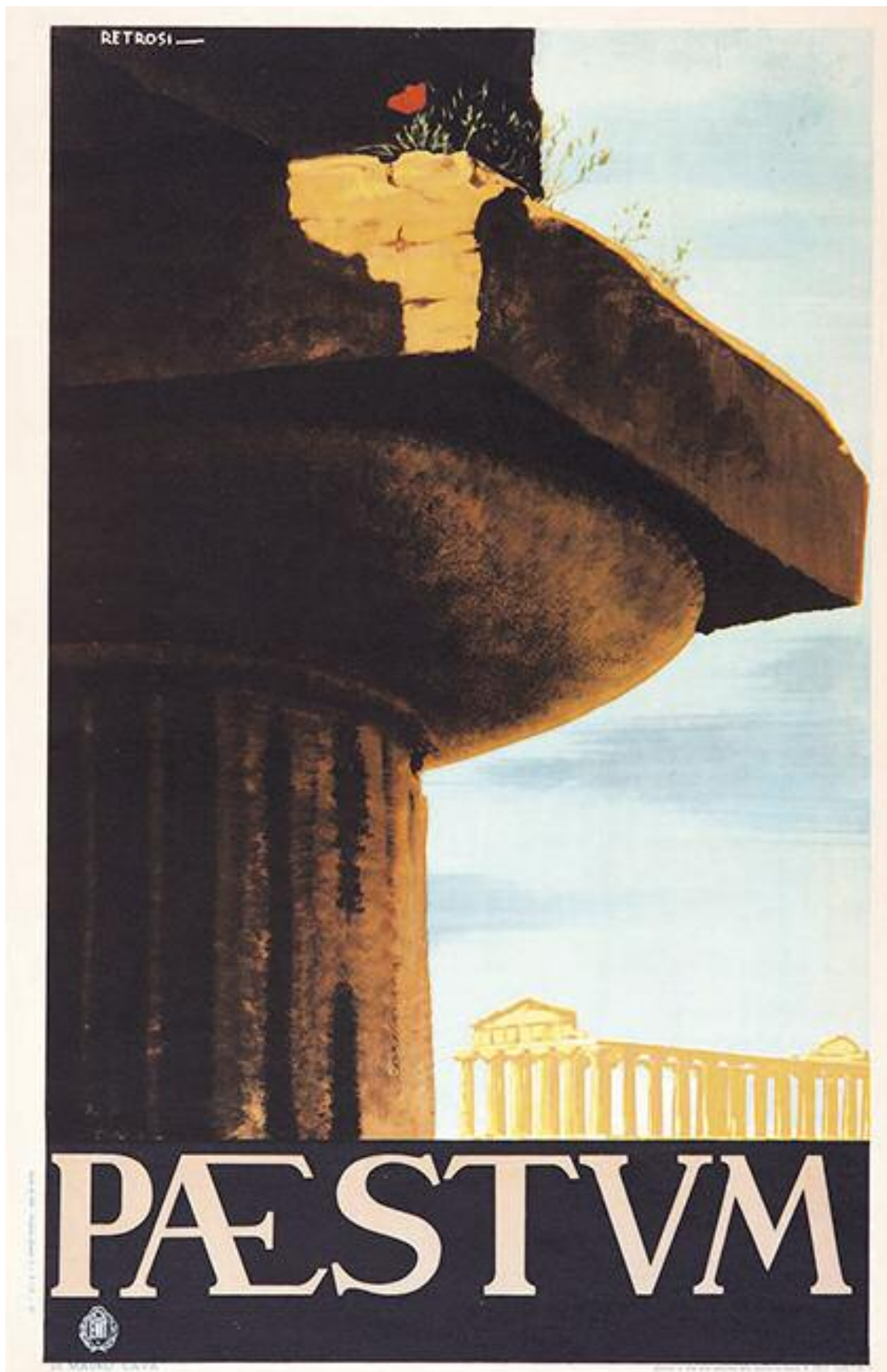


Fig. 56 – Virgilio Retrosi, *Paestum*, 1950, Di Mauro-Cava, Rome, Offset, 99.2 x 63.8 cm



Fig. 57 – Virgilio Retrosi, *La "direttissima Bologna-Firenze"*, 1934



Fig. 59 – Virgilio Retrosi, *Italie*, 1932



Fig. 58 – Virgilio Retrosi, *Festival internazionale della bellezza e della grazia*, 1949, Offset, Stabilimento L. Gigli, Rome, 34.5 x 21.5 cm



Fig. 60 – Virgilio Retrosi, *Roma*, 1930-1935 ca., Novissima, Rome, Chromolithograph, 100.5 x 62 cm

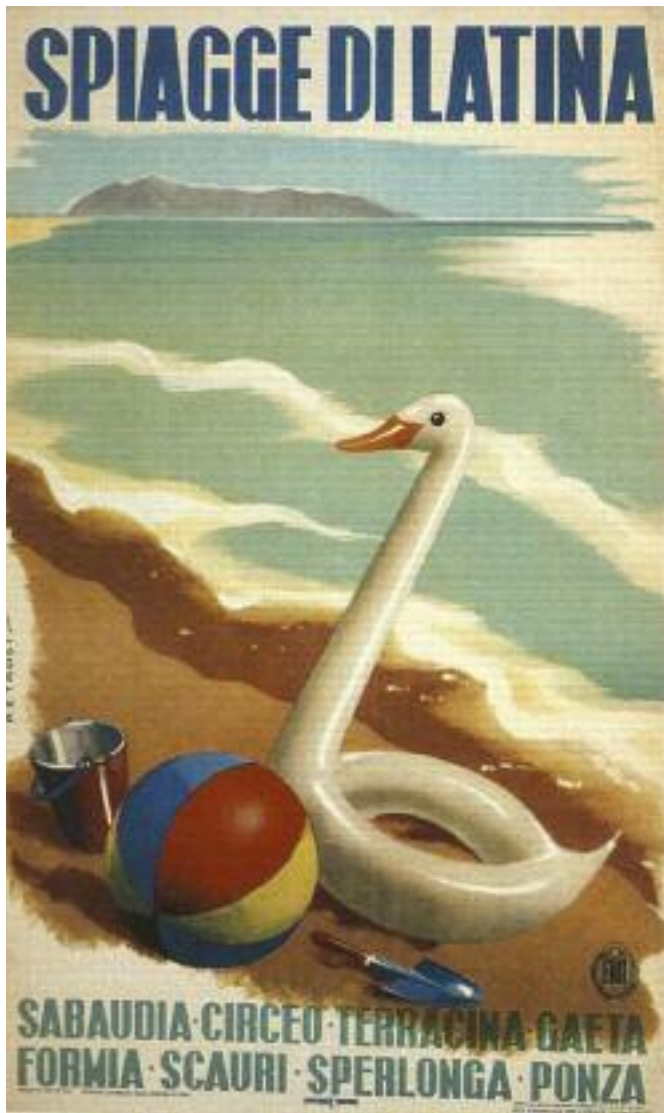


Fig. 61 – Virgilio Retrosi, (*Beaches of Latina*), 1947 ca., Grafiche Gigli, Rome, Chromolithograph, 100 x 62 cm

que de la liberté.”⁴⁷ During this post-war period, Retrosi continued to maintain close ties to Enit. However, his previous impetus for experimentation eventually began to falter, and the posters he created in later life depicted a pleasant but somewhat anecdotal realism (fig. 61).

⁴⁷ *Riunite all’Enit personalità e tecnici*, in “Il Giornale del Turismo,” 20 March 1952.

Chapter Three

Enit and the publishing industry

Enit publications under the banner of diversification

Using the publishing industry to spread propaganda was one of Enit's primary *modi operandi*. The institution financed a number of publishing projects (books, pamphlets and magazines) in order to promote awareness of Italy's tourist attractions both at the national and international level. It is, however, necessary to point out that Enit never printed or distributed any guidebooks. The task of creating guidebooks to provide tourists with useful information was entrusted to organisations such as the Italian Touring Club. The publications promoted and funded by Enit varied in length and were usually issued in a number of languages. These publications often painted a "colourful picture of Italy's attractions and points of interest,"¹ with the hope that pleasant images and evocative descriptions of the *Bel Paese* could be pitched as a virtual invitation to visit them in the flesh. It is no coincidence that from 1919 onwards, Enit pursued a strategy of highly curated editorial content, images and lettering.

Enit had a very modern vision for its time, and as such, was able to differentiate reading materials depending on user needs and the changing socio-political climate. Rather than endorsing a single, uniform idea of tourism, Enit published materials intended to promote art, culture, folklore, food, wine and patriotism.

When it came to showcasing Italy's attractions, pamphlets dedicated to the country's 'cities of art' garnered considerable success. In fact, the layout of these slender publications was almost always the same. They consisted of a stylish cover, eight rotogravure-printed pages, pleasant images of monuments and landscapes and, finally, a map of the city in question (**fig. 1**). Emblematic of this particular style was a guidebook created for Syracuse² containing an introduction by the Sicilian historian Enrico Mauceri, a map by the Touring Club and illustrations by Duilio Cambellotti. It is also worth noting that the drawings and friezes (**fig. 2**) depicted by the skilled Roman artist – who was also a set designer for Syracuse's Greek theatre from 1914 to 1948³ – were in part inspired by the successionist movement and created in a style

¹ *Relazione sull'attività svolta nell'anno 1927. Le pubblicazioni*, 1928, year VI, pp. 8-11, print version kept at the ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Gabinetto, Affari Generali (1928-1930)*, 2-1, 8138.

² *Siracusa. Rappresentazioni classiche al Teatro greco e descrizione della città*, Italian, English and French edition, Rome 1920. For more information on the guidebook, please refer to *Le rappresentazioni classiche al teatro greco di Siracusa*,

in "Le Vie d'Italia," XXVII, 4 April 1921, pp. 398-399.

³ For more information on this aspect of Cambellotti's work, please refer to M. Centanni, "Per la finzione contro il trucco." *La poetica di Duilio Cambellotti a Siracusa e la rinascita del teatro all'aperto*, in D. Fonti, F. Tetro (edited by), *Duilio Cambellotti. Mito, sogno, realtà*, exhibition cat. (Rome, Musei di Villa Torlonia, 6 June-11 November 2018), Cinisello Balsamo 2018, pp. 76-87.



Fig. 1 – Advertisement of the most recent Enit publications dell'Enit (mid-1930s)

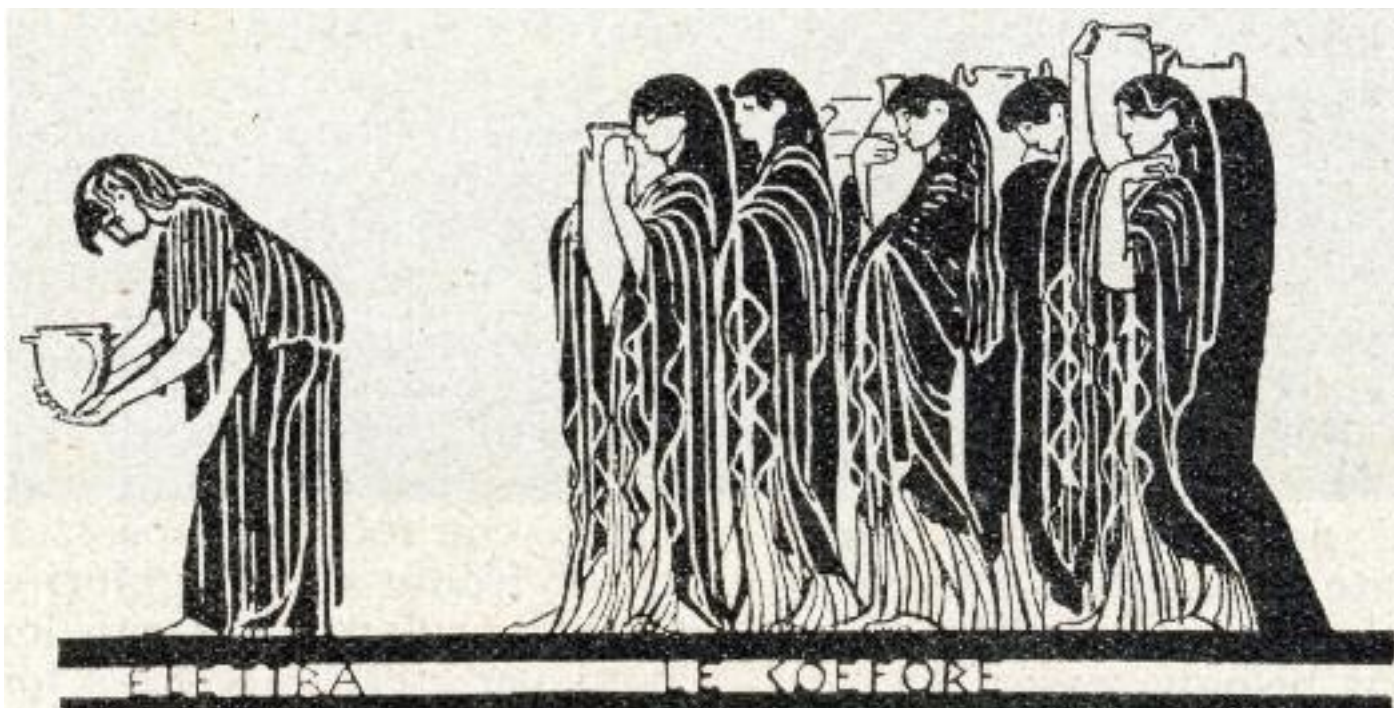


Fig. 2 – Duilio Cambellotti, fregi dalla guida *Siracusa. Rappresentazioni classiche al Teatro greco e descrizione della città*, Rome 1920

that was subsequently used in advertising posters for a number of classic Syracusan theatre productions, including a famous poster financed by Enit and the State Railways in 1948 (fig. 3).

Having understood the importance of ‘religious tourism’ – or pilgrimages to places of worship – in 1923, Enit commissioned a book that was defined as a ‘sacred geographical’ text of sorts. *I santuari d’Italia* – which was elegantly illustrated and featured an introduction by Carlo Bandini – was unusually successful, resulting in the publication of several revised editions (in 1927, 1942 and for the jubilee in 1950).

During a climate of political revanchism following the First World War, in 1920, Enit published a pocket-sized pamphlet entitled *I campi della gloria*, which included a brief but well-defined

description of places in which Italy “had harnessed the glory of Vittorio Veneto with the passion and sacrifice of his most devoted children.”⁴ In addition to its obvious patriotic and nationalistic intentions, the publication also fed into a broader initiative to promote tourism to Italy’s battlefields. Under the auspices of Enit, and in the interest of local tourism companies, day trips were organised to battlefields near Mestre, Rovereto, Trento, Trieste and Belluno via “comfortable and elegant modes of transportation”⁵. In order to celebrate the glories of the Risorgimento – which were shortly thereafter unduly exploited by Fascist propaganda – Enit launched a dedicated line of patriotic publications, which were published in 1927 and included the following: *Francesco Crispi e la*

⁴ *Relazione sull’attività svolta nell’anno 1927*, cit., p. 9.

⁵ *Per la visita ai campi di battaglia italiani*, in “Le Vie d’Italia,” XXVII, 8 August 1921, p. 897.



Fig. 3 – Duilio Cambellotti, *Greek theatre of Siracusa*, 1948, Grafiche I.G.A.P., Rome, Colour print on paper, 68.5 x 99 cm

spedizione dei mille, Il Vallone di Rovito e i fratelli Bandiera and *Programma dei pellegrinaggi garibaldini*.

Enit dedicated a specific sector to internal tourism arrangements. A study entitled *Gli organi della politica turistica in Italia e all'estero*, for example, audited and analysed associations tasked with overseeing and promoting tourism around the world. In addition, the *Annuario degli alberghi* (fig. 4) was released annually in four languages and was used as a handy tool for regulating Italian accommodation rates. Enit was also tasked with periodically distributing foreign language newsletters to the international press (*Enit Mittellungen* in Germany, *Enit Nouvelles* in



Fig. 4 – *Italia (Annual hotel directory)*, 1940

France, *Enit News* in the UK, *Noticiero Turistico* in Spain).

In line with a number of pre-established editorial directives, Enit also dedicated time to scientific topics that covered more than just tourism policy. *La bibliografia idrologica italiana* deserves a special mention here. This influential text was published in 1921 and was compiled by Giuseppe Ravaglia, a former Professor of Medicine at the University of Bologna. The tome contained over five hundred pages and included an introduction by the president of Enit, Luigi Rava, who called it a “monument to our waters and thermal spas.”

In addition to specialist essays, Enit also printed pamphlets on seemingly trivial topics that were vital to promoting tourism. At first glance, a brochure titled *Il golf attira il turista* (1926) (lit. Golf Attracts Tourists) might seem somewhat trivial in nature, whereas in actual fact, it helped to promote an area of interest to foreign – and especially Anglo-Saxon – tourists, thereby encouraging Italian resort managers to build new

golf courses at their facilities.⁶ Enit published an eloquent poster in 1926 for the same purpose, which featured a clever combination of text and images. The poster was created by graphic designer and poster artist Livio Apolloni and aimed to promote the Lombard towns of Cadenabbia and Tremezzo by depicting a pleasant game of golf on the shores of Lake Como (fig. 5).

Alongside more traditional printing methods, Enit also participated in a few ambitious ‘hybrid’ publishing projects, which combined poster art with advertising brochures. In order to raise awareness of Italy’s food and wine specialities, a colourful geographic-artistic map was published in 1931⁷ “in the flowery style adopted by cartographers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reinterpreted, however, in a modern key”⁸ (fig. 6). Umberto Zimelli – a painter, illustrator, ceramicist and scenographer from Forlì – was key to this operation and drew pictures of traditional regional Italian dishes in a lively, concise style that was reminiscent of the *déco* style embraced by Gio Ponti, Giulio Rosso and Tommaso Buzzi. Zimelli’s work featured fruit and sweet treats from Sicily, pizza from Campania, suckling lamb and artichokes from Rome, cappelletti from Romagna, fish soup from Liguria and traditional bagna cauda from Piedmont.

Enit also encouraged the publication of sector magazines that were easy to read and could easily be distributed among foreign tourist offices. One of Enit’s most important publications was undoubtedly “Le Vie d’Italia,” (fig. 7) which was launched in 1917 as an Italian Touring Club magazine before being officially adopted by Enit in 1919. In fact, alongside editorial and news-



Fig. 5 – Livio Apolloni, *Cadenabbia – Tremezzo*, 1926, Novissima, Rome, Chromolithograph, 70 x 100 cm

based articles about tourism, the magazine also contained official organisation bulletins and documents. Enit’s close collaboration with the Touring Club was also expressed through the co-publication of a magazine entitled “L’Albergo d’Italia.”

Enit went on to publish numerous other tourism periodicals in the 1920s and 1930s, examples of which include the “Rivista delle Stazioni di Cura, Soggiorno e Turismo,” which was launched in 1926, the “Piccola Guida di Roma,” published in

⁶ For more information on the importance of golf for the tourism industry, please refer to G. Giulini, *I campi del golf in Italia*, in “Le Vie d’Italia” XLII, 9 September 1936, pp. 601-611.

⁷ *L’Italia gastronomica. Una carta...appetitosa*, in “Enotria,” May 1932, p. 254.

⁸ *Una carta gastronomica d’Italia*, in “Le Vie d’Italia,” XXXVIII, 5 May 1932, p. 400.



Fig. 6 – Umberto Zimelli, *Italie gastronomique*, 1931



Fig. 7 – «Le Vie d'Italia», cover

Italian and English on a monthly basis by the Propaganda Office of the Governorate, and lastly, the “Turismo d’Italia” magazine, which was launched in 1925 and published by the Libreria del Littorio on a monthly basis. Thanks to Raffaello Riccardi’s political advocacy – who had formerly been the undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications, a minister of parliament, president of the National Export Institute and head of the Ministry of Exchange and Currency from 1939 onwards – “Turismo d’Italia” benefited from a number of advantages and, as evidenced by archival documents, reaped sub-

⁹ ACS, *Ministero della Cultura Popolare, Gabinetto, Sovvenzioni 1931-1944*, page. 241. On 16 May 1939, addressing the Minister of Popular Culture, Dino Alfieri directly, Riccardi wrote: “Dear Alfieri, I am grateful for the



Fig. 8 – «Italia», cover, (February 1936)

stantial economic rewards from 1939 to 1942.⁹ The foreign press was targeted by a dedicated propaganda magazine entitled “Italia,” which was published by Enit on a monthly basis in collaboration with the State Railways (figs. 8-11). The magazine was composed of pages of photographs in a bold, modernist style and featured short excerpts in French, German and English aimed at endorsing Italy’s tourist resorts and the unique benefits of the Italian lifestyle. The *Made in Italy* initiative promoted by the magazine cov-

financial support you have granted to “Turismo d’Italia.” I perfectly understand the numerous difficulties you have had to overcome to accept my request and I would therefore like to extend my deepest gratitude.”



Fig. 9 – «Italia», cover, (July 1936)



Fig. 10 – «Italia», cover, (September 1936)



Fig. 11 – «Italia», cover, (October 1936)



Fig. 12 – *Mussolini's Italy* (in «Italia», Autumn-winter 1935-136)

ered a wide range of sectors, including those linked to classical art, fashion, cooking, parties, popular events and, inevitably, the fascist regime, its rituals and rhetoric (figs. 12-15). The “Italia” magazine was further expanded after World War II with the release of a subsection entitled “Rivista Turistica Ferroviaria.” Elena Boggio – an interesting individual who is still not well known – was appointed the magazine’s senior editor¹⁰ and subsequently requested the services of illustrator Mino delle Site (figs. 16-17). Boggio made sure to raise awareness of contemporary 1950s art from a

¹⁰ Elena Boggio was also the artistic director of “Vita Italiana” in the 1950s, the Enit magazine run by Alfonso Vittorio Giardini.



Fig. 13 – *La Mode italienne – Die Italienische Mode* (in «Italia», August 136)

non-specialist but informative point of view. In addition to biographical profiles on painters who were popular in this new Italy – such as Renato Guttuso and Franco Gentilini¹¹ (fig. 18) – the magazine also included a number of brief but important articles on exhibitions held in private galleries. On one particular occasion, the magazine included a feature on a solo show dedicated to Mario Sironi held at La Bussola gallery in Rome in 1957 (fig. 19), in addition to news-based articles on the evolution of the art market and exhibition spaces in Rome. It was within this context

¹¹ *Pittori d'oggi: Guttuso*, in “Italia. Rivista turistica ferroviaria”, 107, May 1957, p. 14; *Pittori d'oggi: Franco Gentilini*, in *Ivi*, 108, June 1957, p. 16.

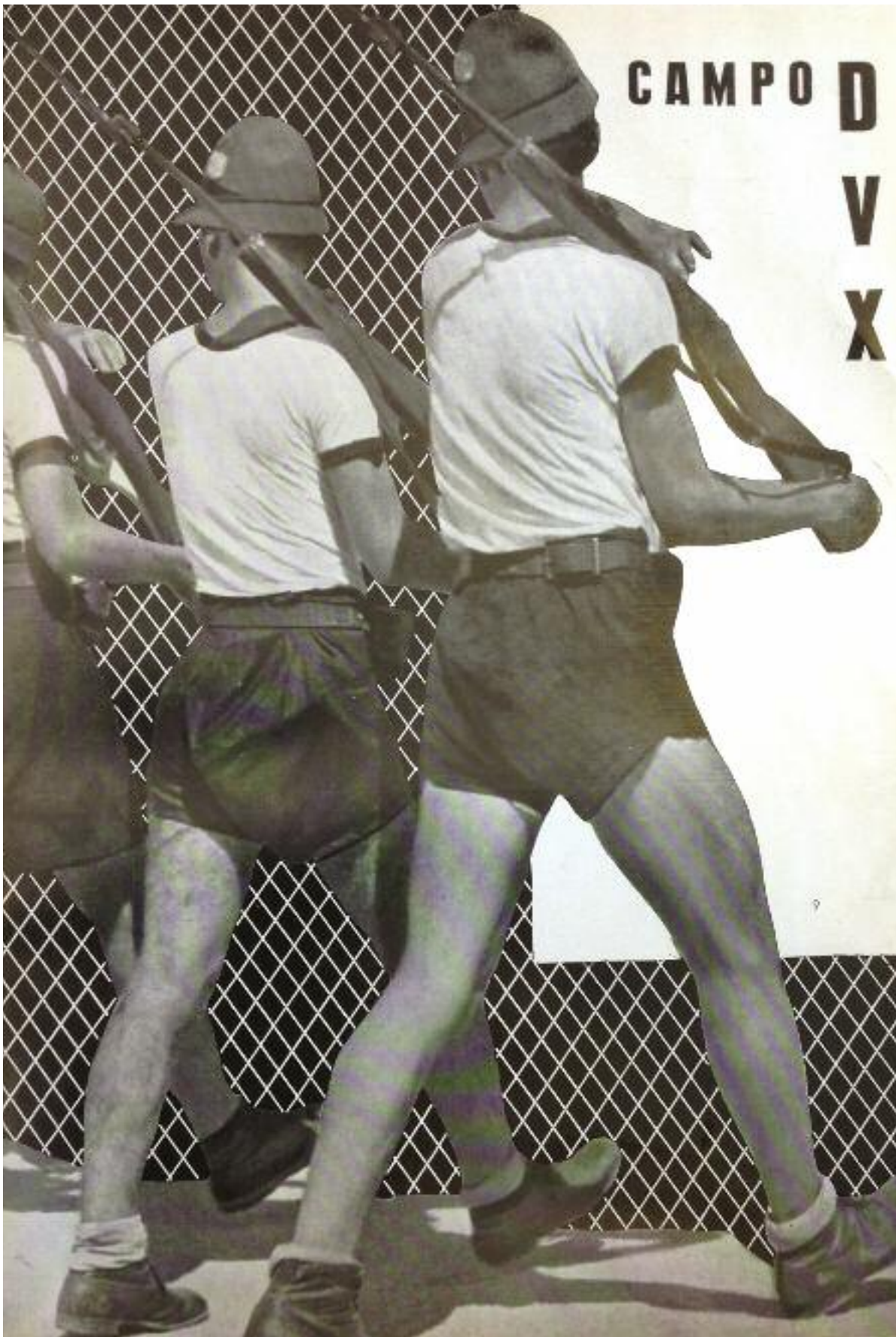


Fig. 14 – *Campo Dux* (in «Italia», September 136)



Fig. 15 – *Les arts décoratifs en Italie – Die Decorative Künste in Italien – Decorative art in Italy* (in «Italia», May 1936)



Fig. 16 – Mino Delle Site, illustration of the article by L. Jannattoni, *Roma nuova*, in «L'Italia. Rivista turistica e ferroviaria», October 1958



Fig. 17 – Mino Delle Site, illustration of the article by L. Jannattoni, *Roma nuova*, in «L'Italia. Rivista turistica e ferroviaria», October 1958



Artisti d'oggi: FRANCO GENTILINI

FRANCO GENTILINI, pittore di oggi, è nato a Roma nel 1912. Ha studiato alla Scuola Libera di Belle Arti di Roma, dove ha conosciuto il maestro G. De Chirico. Ha lavorato in varie gallerie e ha esposto in Italia e all'estero. Le sue opere sono caratterizzate da una forte ispirazione classicheggiante, con un uso sapiente della luce e del colore. Ha una grande padronanza della tecnica pittorica e una sensibilità acuta per i valori estetici. Le sue opere sono state acquistate da importanti collezionisti e musei.

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Fig. 18 – Pittori d'oggi: Franco Gentilini (in «L'Italia. Rivista turistica e ferroviaria», June 1957)

that the journalist and painter Marcello Gallian stated the following in 1957:

There are so many galleries in Rome I've lost count. Galleries take up entire streets, not only in Piazza di Spagna, but also in truly unexpected places, nestled between a butcher's shop and a fashion house, for example. It's not that the actual heart of the art gallery scene has moved to Rome – given that it was once based on Via Ripetta, and then on Via Propaganda before moving to Via Sistina and the area sur-

¹² M. Gallian, *Atlante d'arte*, in "Italia. Rivista turistica ferroviaria," 109, July 1957, p. 5.



L'ultimo Sironi

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Fig. 19 – L'ultimo Sironi (in «L'Italia. Rivista turistica e ferroviaria», March 1957)

rounding Via Veneto – but that a number of small oases have started to crop up just about everywhere. What's more, a number of famous watering holes are now trying their hand at art shows. Soon, we'll have the good fortune of visiting huge multi-storey glass stores where we'll be able to buy shoes, paintings, some mayonnaise and perhaps a beautiful wax figurine, all at the same time.¹²

Exerting control over tourist publications: the Hints about Rome scandal

With the Fascist regime in full swing, Enit reserved the right to examine the contents of all tourist publications destined for national and international markets that were to bear the organisation's name. Indeed, Enit's control over tourist publications was fairly extensive, and a quick glance at guidebooks and Baedeker guides reveals that a fairly specific image of Italy was being portrayed to foreign audiences. As was certainly the case with almost all publications published under Mussolini's dictatorship, Enit was able to censor anything it considered inappropriate or unwelcome. This practice was allowed for both editorial texts produced directly by the institution and for specialist publications produced by third parties, to which Enit often added its own initials.

In 1929, however, Enit momentarily lost its grip of the tourist publication sector due to a guidebook entitled *Hints about Rome*¹³ (fig. 20). The text in question was published in English in Budapest and was destined for wide circulation. However, the publication included a number of stereotypical descriptions of Italy and painted a somewhat negative picture of Rome, thereby compromising the city's reputation, as well as that of Enit, despite the organisation actually authorising its publication. As documentary sources attest,¹⁴ in addition to being recommended by Antonio Widmar – the esteemed Head of Press for the Italian Legation in Budapest and an author, among other things, of pro-Italian writings for “Corvina” magazine

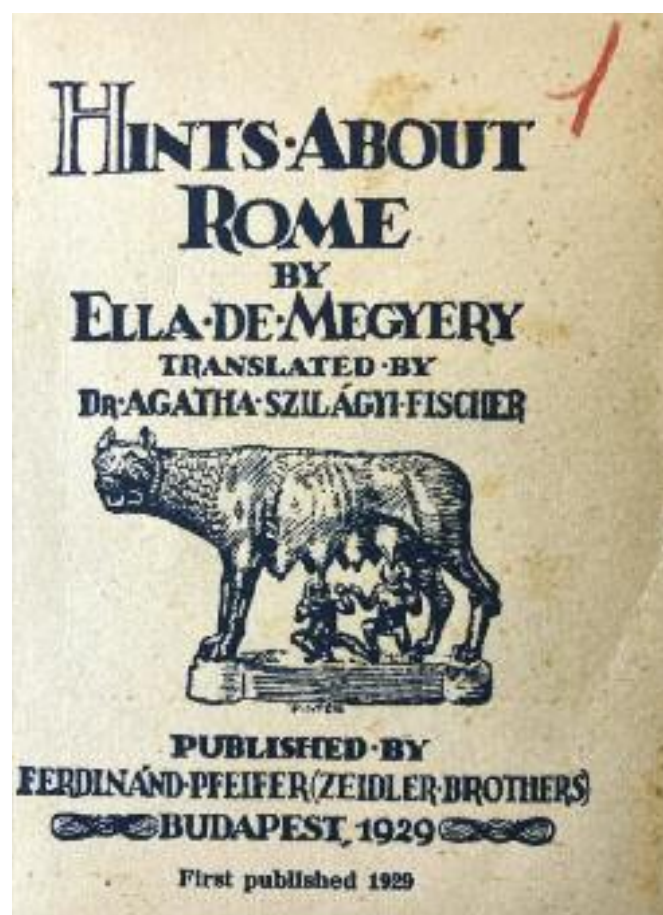


Fig. 20 – Title page of the book by Ella De Megyery, *Hints about Rome*, Budapest 1929

– the book's author, Ella De Megyery, had agreed to have her drafts reviewed before publication. The necessary restrictions, however, were not imposed and Enit soon found itself incredibly embarrassed to discover that it had approved a guidebook containing misspellings, incorrectly transcribed Italian words and, above all, a less than idyllic depiction of Rome. The book, which featured the official Enit symbol on its back cover, also contained a number of more serious errors. Alongside sentences stating that “tortellini alla Bolognese” and “maccheroni alla Milanese” were traditional

¹³ E. De Megyery, *Hints about Rome*, translated by A. Szilágyi-Fischer, published by Ferdinand-Pfeifer (Zeidler

Brothers), Budapest 1929.

¹⁴ ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Gabinetto, Affari generali (1928-1930)*, pag. 2. 2-1 8138.

dishes from Rome,¹⁵ the guide included a number of risky statements. According to Ella De Megyery, in fact, Rome's streets were not only dirty but far too crowded with vehicles and, even worse, unsafe. "In London or Paris the policemen take care of your safety in the traffic, here you must mind yourself, as the traffic is only regulated on the main thoroughfares," she stated.¹⁶ Along the same lines, the author alarmed readers by recommending they not take local law enforcement too seriously because it was seen as inefficient and ill mannered.¹⁷ The author also recommended staying away from certain neighbourhoods, and in several passages pushed her descriptions to the extreme, stating the following in relation to Rome's Trastevere district:

There are merchants of cheese, vegetables, dingy little grocers shops, bars, amongst which the people buzz like as many beetles. Dirty little children turn up amongst the wheels of your carriage quite unexpectedly, whilst fellows a little order, exercise the noble art of throwing the disc, which competition ends generally in a tremendous row, not quite inoffensive, as sometimes even their knives are unsheathed. The inhabitants of Trastevere were known as great fighters, for many a century, and they have not changed, ever since. This part of Rome is the home of picturesque shabbiness, and filth, which with its cobblestoned pavement, basks in the sunshine on the borders of the Tiber. It is the quaintest part of Rome, reminding us of a town of the time of St. Francis of Assisi.¹⁸

Word of the damning statements contained in *Hints about Rome* soon spread, eventually reaching Mussolini's Secretariat, who was both alarmed and irritated by the scandal and immediately asked the president of Enit, Fulvio Suvich, for an explanation, who, on his part, attempted to shirk off all responsibility and, where possible, play down the scandal. In a memo sent to the Duce's private secretary, Alessandro Chiavolini, he stated:

With regard to the note on Ms. Ella de Megyery's guidebook, I would just like to point out that the author was in fact recommended by Mr. Antonio Widmar, who is the Head of Press for the Legation in Budapest. What's more, the author was formally obliged to have her print drafts reviewed before publication, which did not happen. If this obligation had been abided by – which Enit's endorsement of the text was indeed contingent upon, following the Governorate of Rome's own endorsement – there is no doubt that the severely inaccurate statements contained in the guidebook would have never been printed. The result would have been a guidebook that not only promoted tourism to Italy, but that was also written by a foreigner in a friendly and enthusiastic tone. There is no doubt that Ms. De Megyery's work was in fact inspired by positive feelings. As a whole, it's worth viewing her writing in this light – including her unpleasant chapter on Trastevere (which would certainly have been removed from the edition revised by Enit) – given that said chapter was not intended to be disparaging, but was ultimately rooted in the misguided and unfortunately stereotypical opinions foreign tourists often have of our traditions and people when looking to find some "local colour."¹⁹

¹⁵ E. De Megyery, *Hints about Rome*, cit., p. 40.

¹⁶ *Ivi*, p. 127.

¹⁷ *Ivi*, p. 130.

¹⁸ *Ivi*, p. 136.

¹⁹ *Appunto per l'On Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*, typewritten document dated 10 November 1929, ACS, *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Gabinetto, Affari generali (1928-1930)*, pag. 2. 2-1 8138.

Chapter Four

A journey through Italy – The Enit photography archives

Photography was rightly considered a powerful and effective tool for tourist propaganda from the beginning of the twentieth century. A trade article dating back to 1924¹ states that photography – a ‘faithful and truthful’ medium – was considered the best way to encourage foreigners to visit Italy as it was able to offer an instant, unambiguous and objective depiction of the country’s beautiful history, art and landscapes. The article goes on to state that, “if those same attractions were depicted in paintings – even by renowned artists – they wouldn’t have quite the same psychological effect. People are often too easily led to think that an artist contributing his or her personality to an artwork can alter reality. But it is in fact this very reality that tourists hope to find at the heart of an artistic interpretation, with natural beauty giving the artwork its spirit.”²

During this pioneering time, Enit already understood the importance and pervasiveness of photography in relation to the practical management of national tourism policies. As attested by sources at the time, Enit possessed its own photography archive as early as 1921.³ As previously touched upon in previous chapters, Enit systematically commissioned photographic campaigns

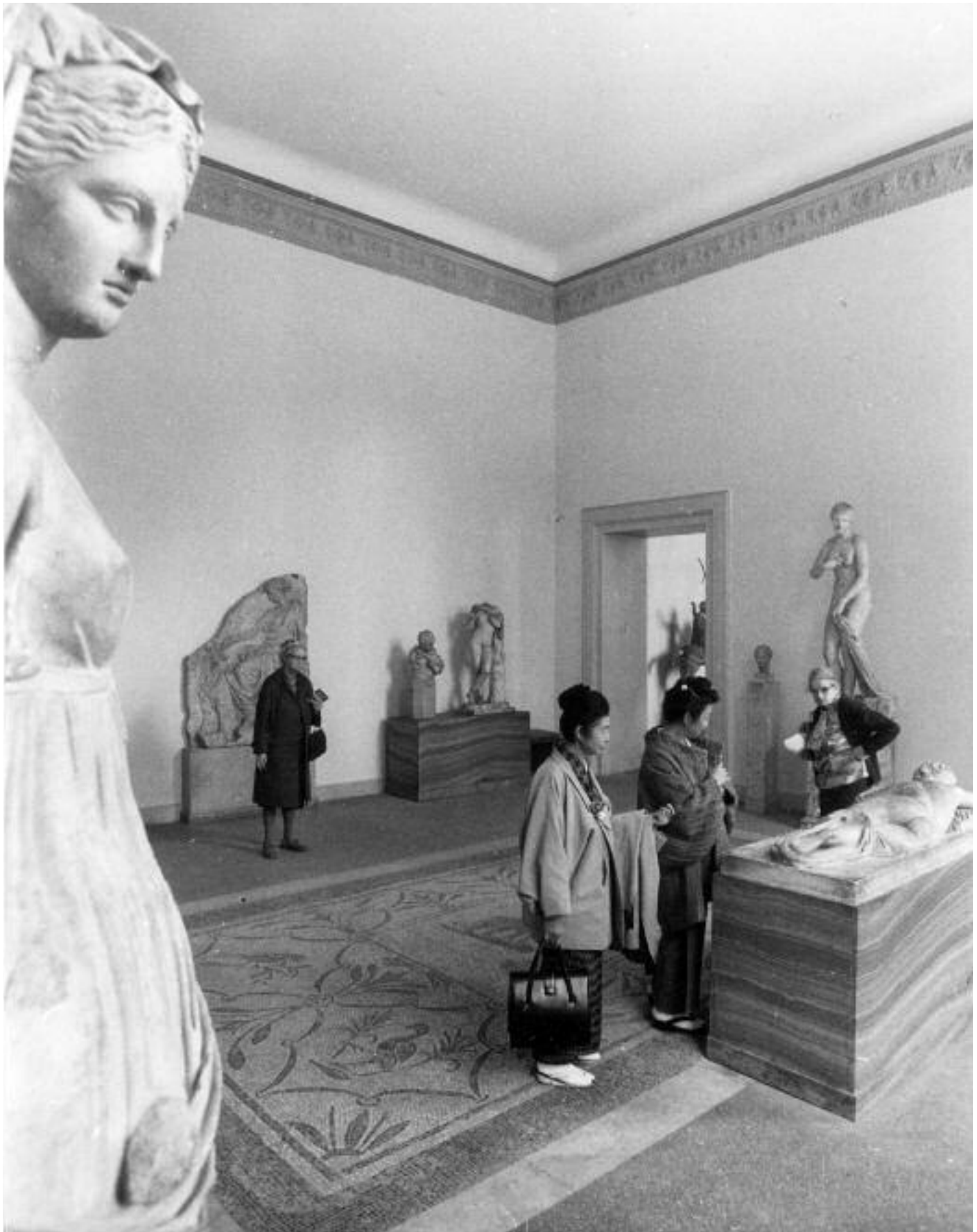
with the aim of capturing shots of monuments, works of art, landscapes, folk festivals, urban city scenes and life in the numerous rural villages scattered throughout the country. These diverse and precious materials – which were to be distributed throughout the world in publications and foreign tourist office propaganda – gradually increased over the years and now remain in Enit’s photography archives. A research and organisation effort is currently underway to restructure this truly unique archive both chronologically – the collection includes prints ranging from the 1920s to the early 1980s – and by subject matter. In fact, not only does the Enit photography archive allow us to reconstruct a moment in Italian history, it also allows us to grasp the innumerable and often fatal changes that Italy suffered throughout the length of the country, as well as the social and anthropological changes that occurred within greatly varying regional realities. From a documentary perspective – but not one without some operative enthusiasm – the photographs kept in the Enit archive show a dynamic and changeable Italy, permeated by archaic legacies and an openness to modernity – a fact that must be remembered and valued in the years to come.

¹ G. Arosio, *La fotografia gigante e il turismo*, in ‘Le Vie d’Italia,’ XXX, 10 October 1924, pp. 1096-1100.

² *Ivi*, p. 1097.

³ G. Mariotti, *La propaganda turistica nel 1925*, in ‘Ospital-

ità Italiana,’ I, 4 September-October 1926, p. 31. By 1921, the Enit had already distributed approx. 2,611 photographs worldwide. Cfr. A. Gerelli, *L’Enit nel 1921*, in ‘Le Vie d’Italia,’ XXVIII, 8 August 1922, p. 828.



Lazio, Rome – National Roman Museum, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme



Lazio, Rome – Water tower in EUR



Lazio, Rome – Pincian Hill



Lazio, Rome – EUR, Viale della Civiltà del Lavoro from the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana



Lazio, Rome – Scala Sancta



Lazio, Rome – Colosseum



Lazio, Rome – Colosseum



Lazio, Rome – Via Veneto



Lazio, Roma – Roman Forum



Lazio, Rome – Fountain in Piazza Sant'Alessio



Lazio, Rome – Piazza Navona



Lazio, Rome – Spanish Steps in Piazza di Spagna



Lazio, Rome – View from the Pincian Hill



Lazio, Rome – Piazza del Campidoglio



Lazio, Rome – Forum



Lazio, Sperlonga (Latina) – Beach



Lazio, Terracina (Latina) – Duomo



Lazio, Sabaudia (Latina) – Circeo, as seen from the lake



Valle d'Aosta, Aosta – Gran San Bernardo Lake



Piedmont, Turin – Palazzo Madama



Piedmont, Turin – Palazzo del Lavoro – at night



Piedmont, Asti – Montemagno – Vineyards towards Moncalvo



Trentino Alto Adige, Merano (Bolzano) – View



Trentino Alto Adige, Bolzano, Via Bottai – antique hotel sign and the “Casa Massimiliano”
Bozen, Altes Amtshaus in der Bindergasse



Liguria, Camogli (Genoa) – Port



Lombardy, Milan – Duomo Cathedral



Lombardy, Brescia – Gardone – Riviera



Lombardy, Brescia – Isoletta di S. Paolo (Iseo Lake) from the Sensole harbour of Monte Isola



Lombardy, Brescia – Garda Lake



Lombardy, Mantua – Piazza delle Erbe – Basilica of Sant'Andrea seen from the Rotonda di S. Lorenzo



Lombardy, Mantua – Palazzo Ducale – “Gonzaga Iconographic Exhibit”



Veneto, Venice – Canal Grande – the Riva del Vin



Veneto, Venice – a 'calle' (a narrow street)



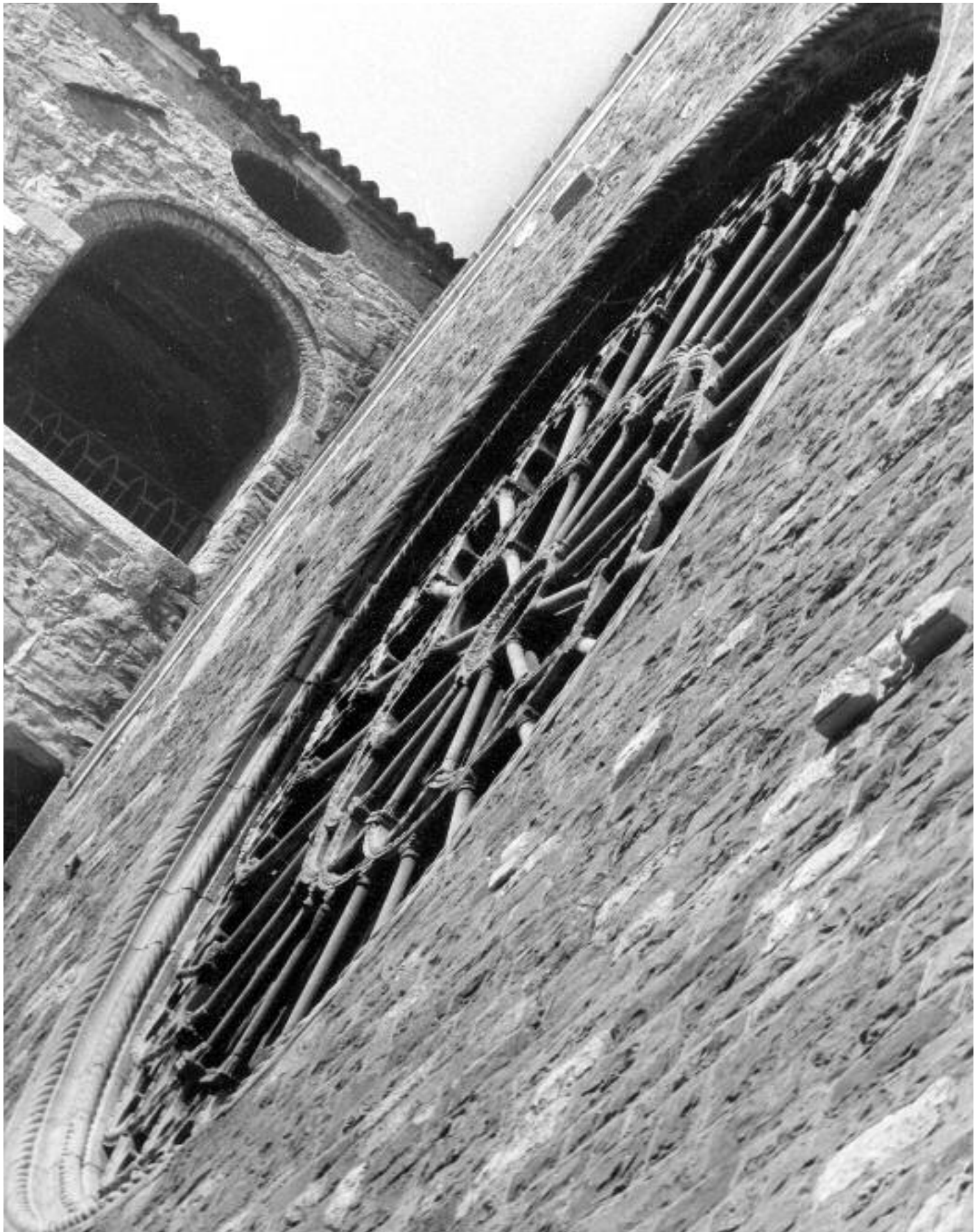
Veneto, Padua – The domes of the Basilica del Santo seen from a cloister



Veneto, Padua – University – Anatomical Theatre



Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trieste – The Canal Grande



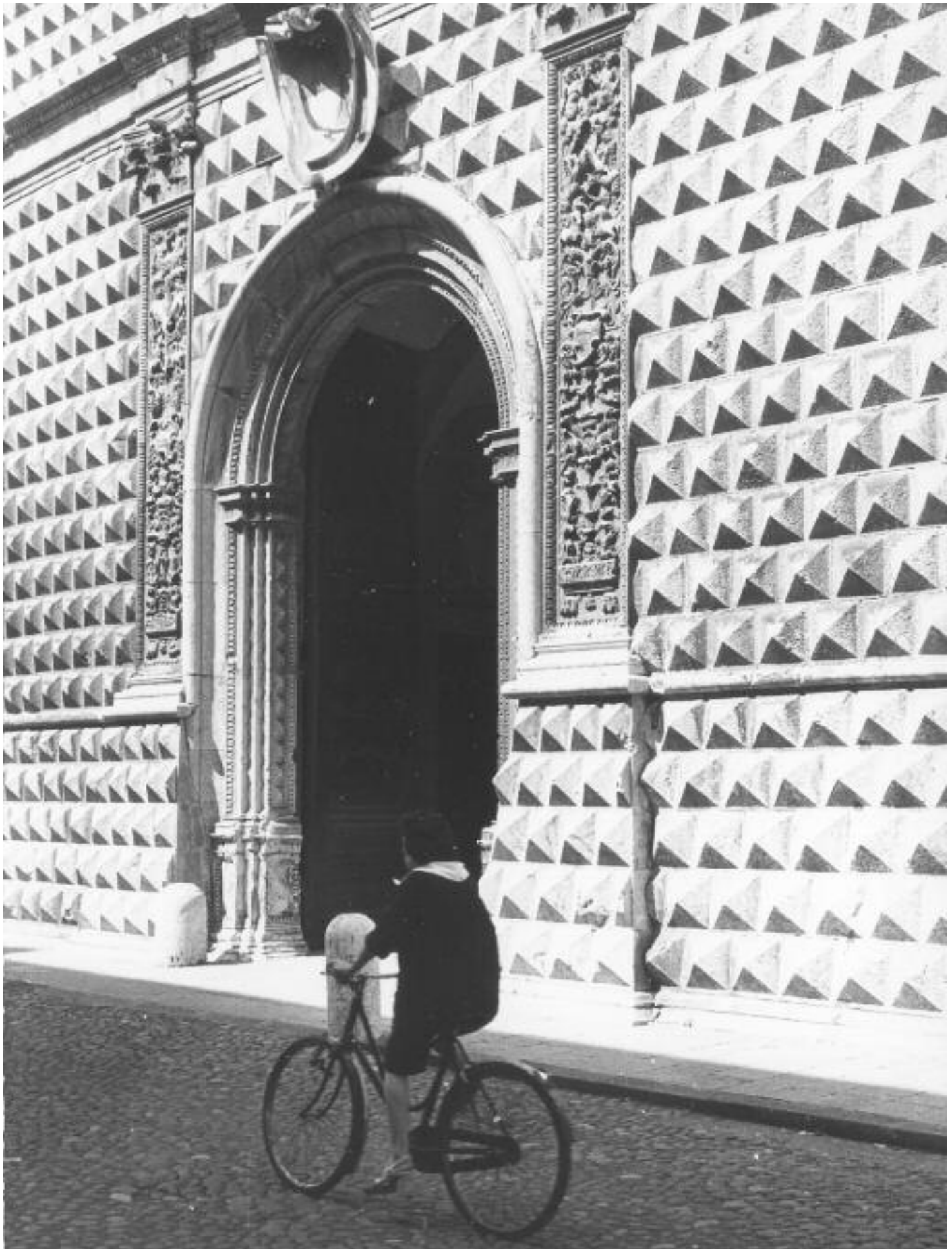
Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trieste – Basilica di S. Giusto



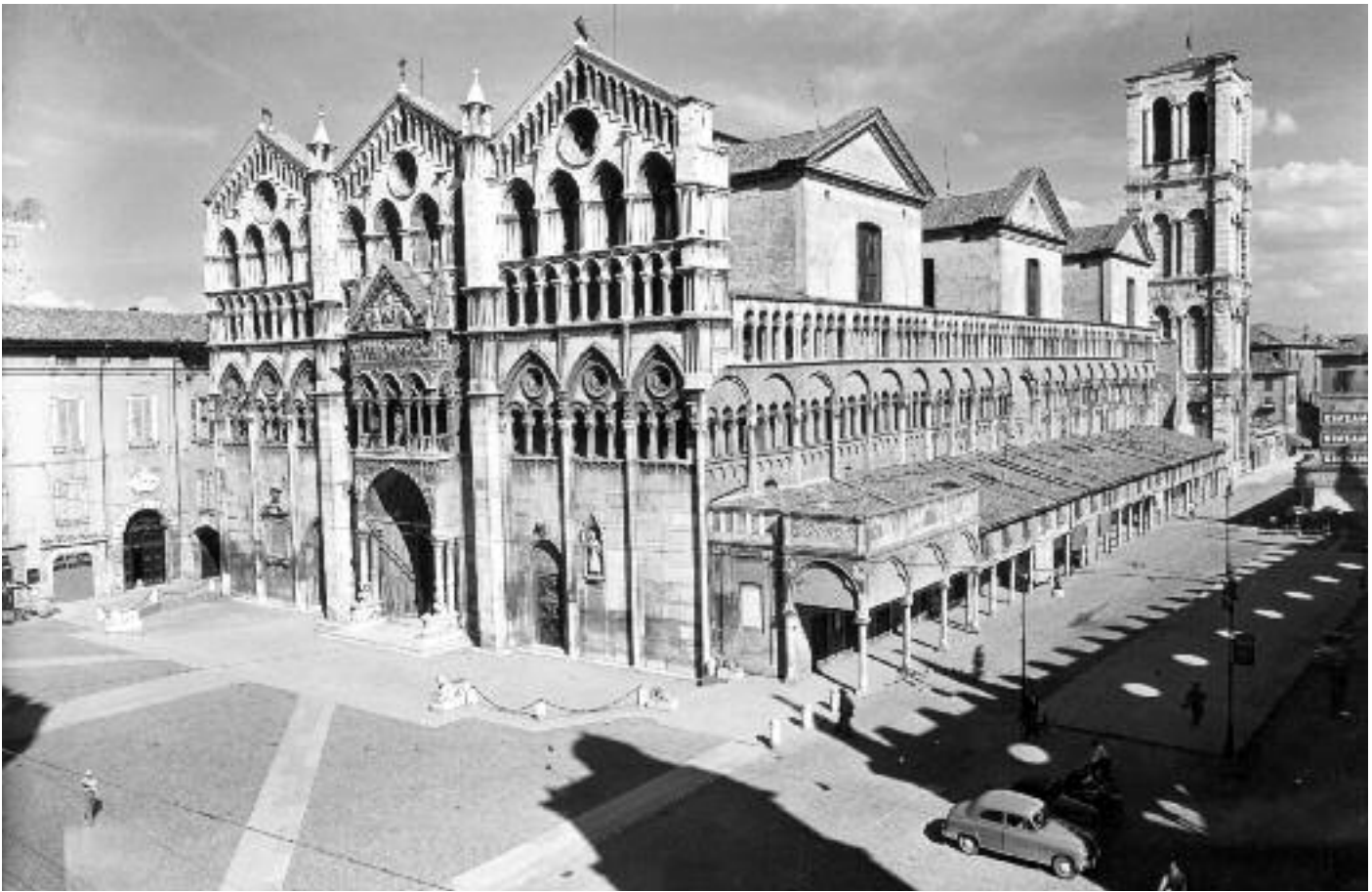
Emilia Romagna, Comacchio (Ferrara) – View



Emilia Romagna, Ferrara – Castello Estense



Emilia Romagna, Ferrara – Palazzo dei Diamanti



Emilia Romagna, Ferrara – Cathedral



Emilia Romagna, Cattolica (Rimini) – View of Sunbathers at Sea



Emilia Romagna, Ravenna – Baptistery



Emilia Romagna, Ravenna – Basilica of San Vitale



Tuscany, Florence – View of the Arno River



Tuscany, Florence – Baptistery – Porta del Paradiso (Gates of Paradise)



Tuscany, Isola del Giglio (Grosseto) – Golfo del Campese



Tuscany, Unloading fish at Santo Stefano



Tuscany, Volterra – Guarnacci Museum



Tuscany, Florence – The restoration of works of art following the flood of 4 November 1966



Tuscany, Florence – The restoration of works of art following the flood of 4 November 1966



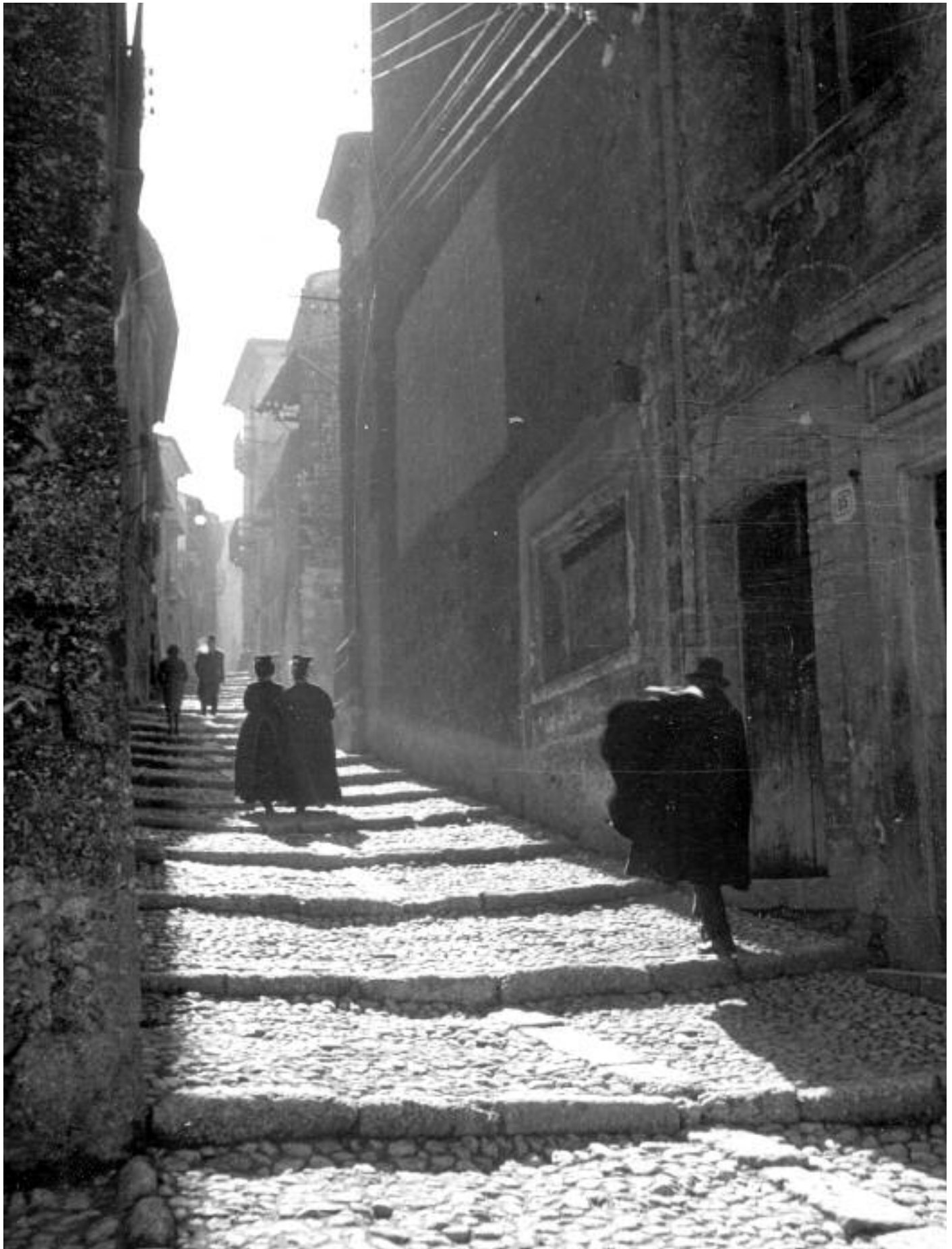
Tuscany, Florence – The restoration of works of art following the flood of 4 November 1966



Tuscany, Porto Ercole – Nautical club



Abruzzo, Ovindoli – Alpino Monument



Abruzzo, Scanno (L'Aquila) – City Road del Municipio



Marche, Macerata – Rural work



Marche, Pesaro – Ceramiche Molaroni ceramics



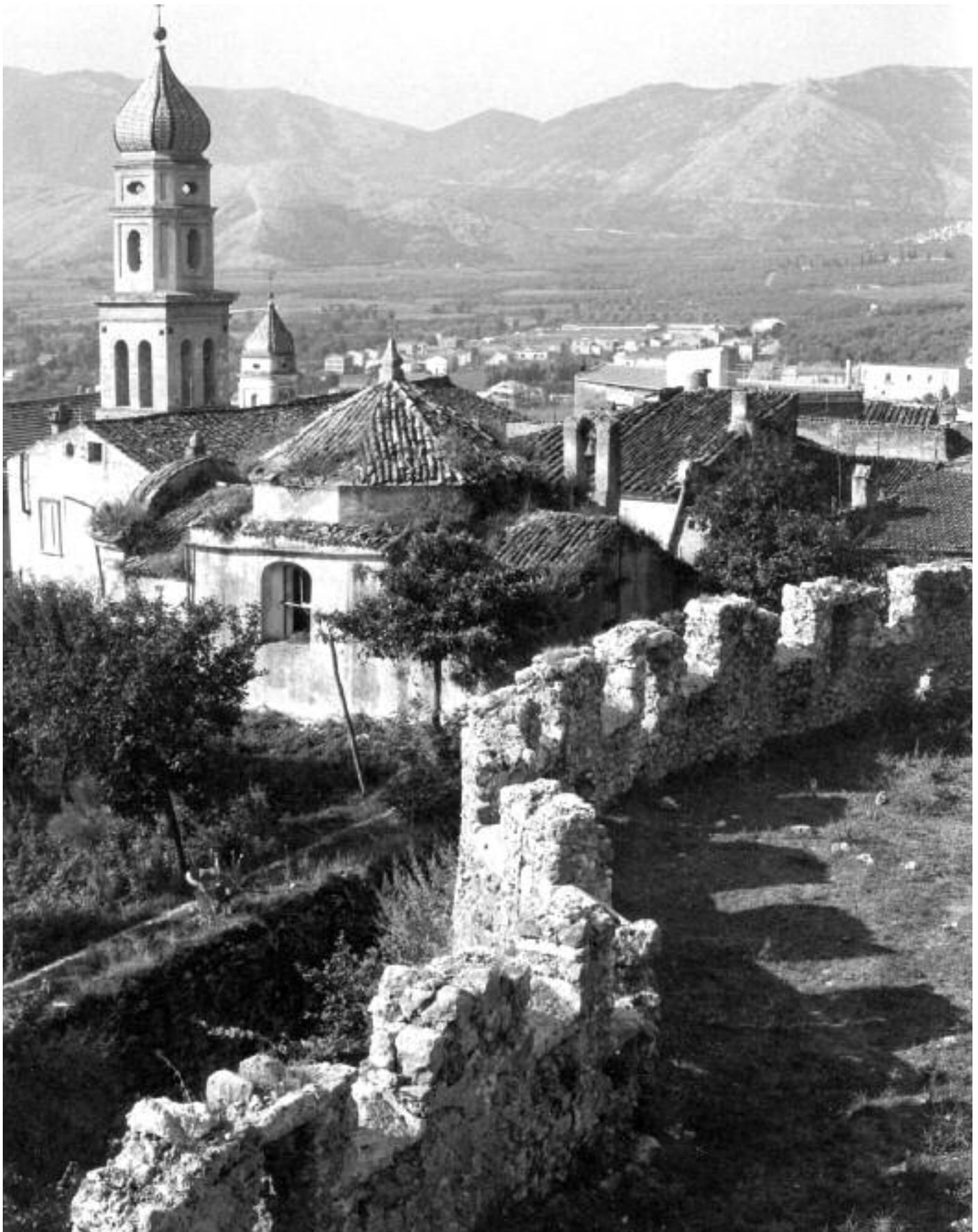
Marche, Macerata – Country scene



Umbria, Perugia – Piazza IV Novembre



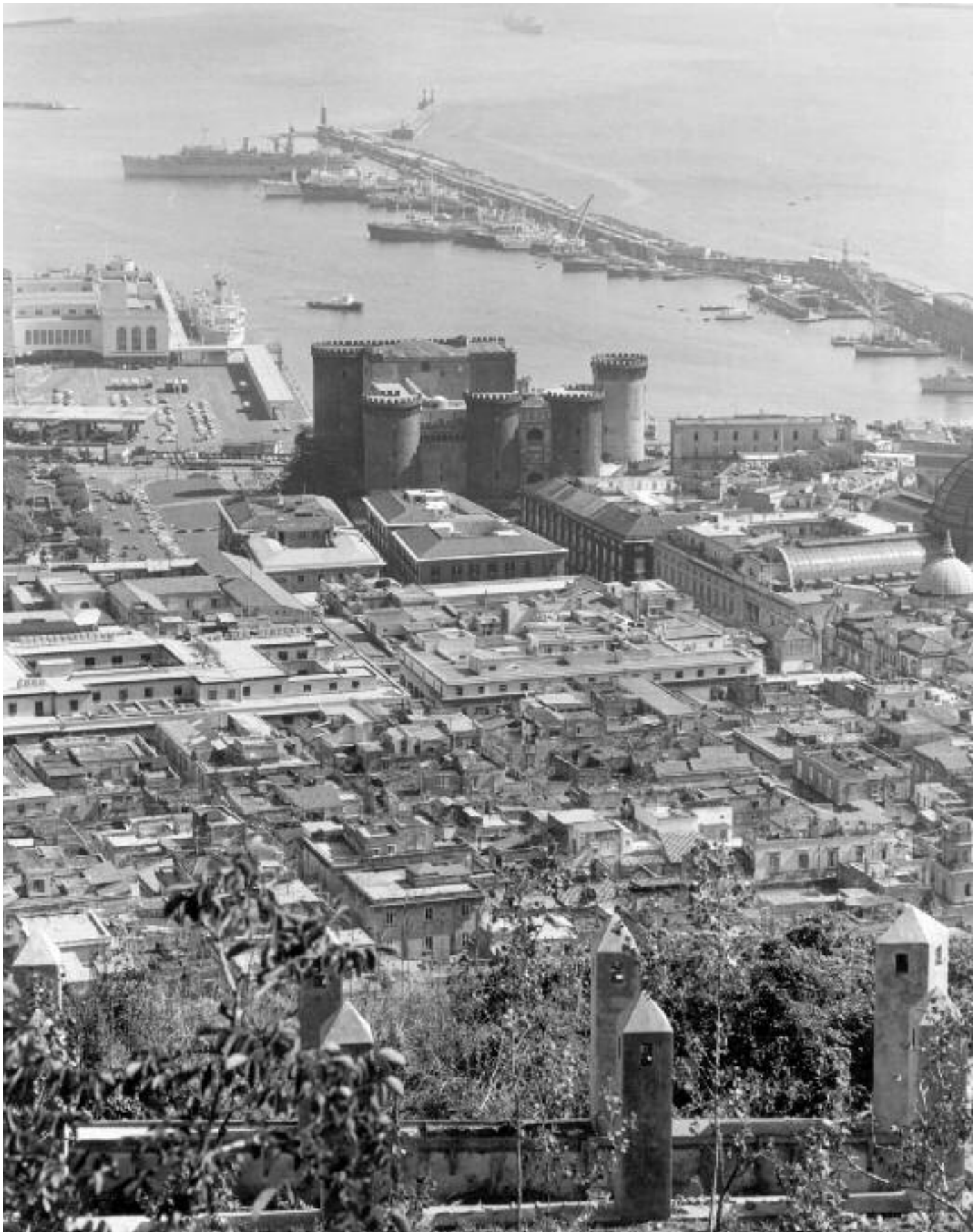
Umbria, Assisi – Basilica of Saint Clare



Molise, Venafrò – View of the castle merlons



Molise, Campobasso – Celebration of the Mysteries



Campania, Naples – View of Castel Nuovo and the Maritime Station



Campania, Naples – Mount Vesuvius



Campania, Naples – Piazza del Plebiscito



Campania, Capri – Marina with view of the Faraglioni



Campania, Pompeii – Temple of Apollo



Apuglia, Andria – Castel del Monte



Apuglia, Castel del Monte – Countryside



Apuglia, Fasano – Trulli (traditional dry-stone huts with conical roof)



Apuglia, Alberobello – Trulli (traditional dry-stone huts with conical roof)



Basilicata, Basilicata – Maratea – Port



Basilicata, Rionero in Vulture – Salon



Basilicata, Matera – View



Calabria, Tiriolo – Craftsmanship



Calabria, Stilo – Holy Saturday



Calabria, Badolato



Sardinia, Codrongianos – SS. Trinità di Saccargia



Sardinia, Porto Cervo



Sardinia, Porto Rafael – View



Sardinia, Cagliari – Sagra di S. Ephisio (Festival of Saint Ephysius)



Sicily, Taormina – Greek Theatre



Sicily, Palermo – Teatro Massimo



Vatican Basilica – Opening of the Second Vatican Council



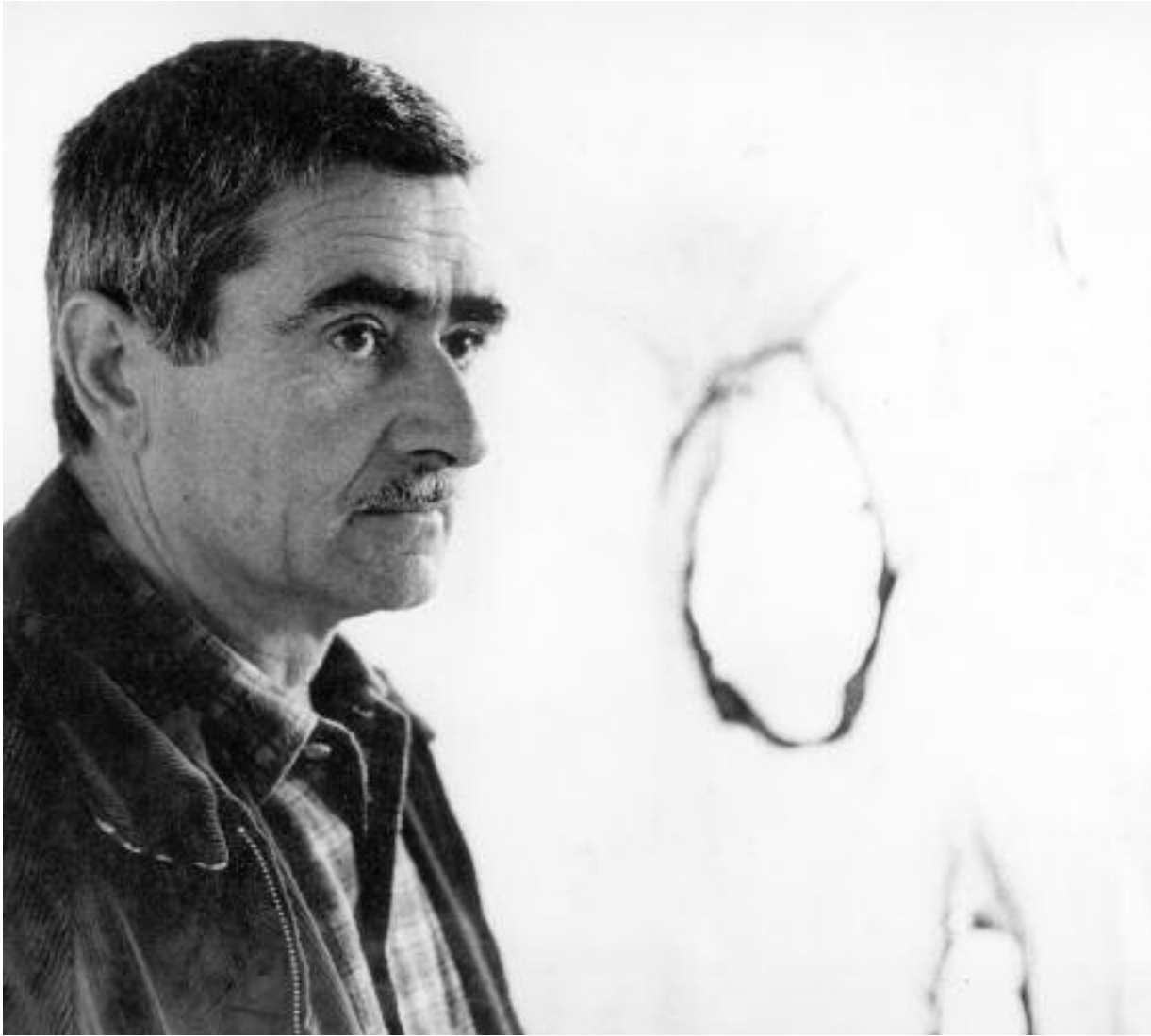
Rome, Ninfeo di Villa Giulia – Premio Strega being awarded to Natalia Ginsburg



Arnaldo Pomodoro in the Italsider steelworks during the production of the *Colonna d'acciaio* (steel column) for the art exhibition *Scultura nella città* (Arnaldo Pomodoro is the first on the left wearing the white jumper)



Gastone Novelli (1925-1968)



Alberto Burri (1915-1995)

SUMMARY

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A journey through Italy – The Enit photography archives “ 103

Founded 100 years ago, ENIT was originally known as the *Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche* before changing its name to the *Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo* in 2016. Focusing on the period between its founding in 1919 and the 1960s – a decade characterised by a lively and productive spirit – this book takes a look back at the history and cultural heritage of Italy's tourism board, delving into its century-long dedication to promoting Italy abroad.

This publication explores how ENIT came to be founded, the strategies it employed to promote Italy's attractions and the innovative marketing tools it devised over the years. Embark on a fascinating, historical journey that culminates in a collection of never-before-seen photographs taken from ENIT's own archives, yet further testament to the institution's impressive initiatives to document Italy and promote its charm all over the world.

An additional project is currently underway to catalogue and digitise ENIT's cultural assets, in the hope of being able to make them available to the public in the near future, so that you may continue to satisfy your curiosity piqued by this informative and essential publication.

Manuel Barrese graduated from the University of Rome, La Sapienza, with a Ph.D. in Art History. His scientific articles have been published in the magazines: «Ricerche di Storia dell'arte» and «Bollettino dei Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie». He is the author of the monograph *Pittura murale nella Roma postunitaria. Tendenze, sopravvivenze, innovazioni (1870-1915)*.



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