



Communicating Italy to British and American tourists between the wars: tourist representations of Italy and adaptation to the specificity of the target audience

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ABSTRACT: The study of tourism discourse in the first decades of the twentieth century is important for its central role in the formation of individual and collective identities. This period witnessed a remarkable transition in which tourist discourse functioned not only as a means of communication, but also as a stage for the expression of different identities. Such articulation within the discourse laid the groundwork for the development of contemporary tourism practices.

However, a crucial area that needs to be explored is the role of tourism promotion, particularly in relation to institutional tourism communication in foreign languages during the inter-war period. It is worth investigating the extent to which promoters in the early 1920s understood the objectives and methods required to shape the image of a destination.

This study examines the strategies used to promote Italy to English-speaking tourists during the early stages of institutional tourism promotion, marked by the creation of ENIT in 1919. In particular, it analyses the evolution of approaches aimed at increasing the effectiveness of tourism promotion and targeting.

KEY WORDS: Tourism promotional discourse; tourism studies; tourism translation; tourism history; translation and adaptation



INTRODUCTION

The way in which tourist discourse was employed in a particular historical period such as that between the two world wars seems to be an important topic to investigate, given its role as a channel for the articulation of specific individual and social identities. This historical period witnessed a significant transformation, where tourist discourse served not only as a means of communication but also as a platform for expressing personal and collective identities. This articulation within discourse laid the groundwork for the development of today's tourism practices. As Stewart has put it, "the commercial promotion of tourism anticipated the strategies of modern marketing and its preoccupation with the identification of tourist types differentiated by tastes, preferences and motivations" (Stewart 40).

Hom has argued that Italian national identity is closely linked to the country's status as a tourist destination and that the development of mass tourism is intertwined with the consolidation of Italy's national identity. This association dates back to the late 18th century, when Italy's appeal was brought out through the Grand Tour and later, in the 19th century, popularised for the masses through guidebooks such as those of Baedeker and Murray. From travel narratives throughout history to the proliferation of tourist guidebooks, tourism communication has always presented Italy as a cohesive entity. As a result, foreign tourists have constructed an imaginary 'destination Italy' which, paradoxically, has given the nation more substance (Bosworth 3).

However, one aspect that deserves in-depth examination is the role of tourism promotion, and particularly an analysis of institutional tourism communication in foreign languages in the period between the two world wars. This raises a crucial question: to what extent were the promoters responsible for creating institutional tourism communication in the early 1920s aware of the goals and means required to shape a destination's image?

This article analyses the strategies used to promote Italy to English-speaking visitors in the early stages of institutional tourism promotion with the creation of ENIT in 1919. In particular, it examines how these approaches to improving the effectiveness of tourism promotion and targeting evolved at a time when marketing techniques, intercultural communication and translation strategies were still in their early stages of development.

CONTEXTUALIZING ENIT'S INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Battilani (7) has argued that the 1920s and 1930s were a complex period for the European economy, including the Italian economy, which influenced consumer behaviour. Tourism had a cyclical pattern, but it experienced significant expansion,



especially in Italy. With the rise of the Fascist regime, Italy took on a new and central role in the dynamics between European nations and North America. The regime's foreign policy, which aimed to build a new society based on totalitarian principles, lacked a clear trajectory and had conflicting positions on tourism (Pretelli 57). While on the one hand, from a nationalist perspective, it challenged the stereotypes prevalent in travel literature that portrayed Italy as picturesque and backward, on the other, it actively promoted the modernisation of the tourist industry, fully aware of its economic importance.

During the inter-war period, foreign tourists came mainly from the same countries as in previous decades: Austria (former part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), Germany, Switzerland, France, Great Britain and the United States. However, the proportions of tourists from these countries changed over time: the number of British consistently declined in the 1930s, while there was a substantial increase in American visitors in the first half of the decade. In 1928 alone, 205,711 Americans arrived against 155,510 British. The Americans were particularly popular for their relatively high levels of spending during their stay in Italy (Battilani 114).

In the 1930s, important measures were introduced to stimulate tourism. These included the introduction of hotel vouchers, petrol vouchers, and the creation of special tourist cheques, which allowed foreign visitors to benefit from favourable exchange rates. Tizzoni (155) has claimed that these policies aimed to increase international flows and simultaneously serve the regime's ideological and political agenda. This perspective has found support in historical studies (Pretelli; Di Legge) and cultural analyses, such as those of Hom and, to some extent, Aliano. Hom (119) has argued that the Fascist regime strategically used bureaucratic mechanisms, notably through the establishment of ENIT in 1919, to coordinate long-term tourism planning. As the Fascist regime gained power, government representatives exercised influence within ENIT, triggering the regime's appropriation of the tourism industry to support its policies and project an international 'tourist gaze' (Urry) controlled by the regime.

Aliano has sought to assess how effective tourism promotion was in portraying a modern and dynamic 'new Italy', which aimed to challenge the traditional images of an old, romantic Italy, long rooted in the English literary tradition. Although the Fascist government invested heavily in reshaping the image of Italy for foreign tourists, these efforts failed to dismantle the deeply ingrained traditional perception of this country. As a result, Fascist Italy existed alongside the timeless Italy of the past, demonstrating both the potential and the limitations of tourist communication in rethinking national identities and their representation abroad.

Syrjämaa's analysis partly echoes Aliano's reflections, suggesting a coherent and sophisticated communication in ENIT's tourism promotion, in an attempt to replace the old perception of a poor and backward Italy with a new image of modernity and progress. In fact, Syrjämaa has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the wide range of tourism promotional literature produced by ENIT, including not only the organisation's annual reports but also a wealth of contemporary documentation ranging from ministerial decrees to correspondence with foreign embassies. Her in-depth study of this material has shown that ENIT's tourism promotion was not primarily



intended as an ideological tool, but rather as a means of supporting the tourism industry and Italy's economic interests on the international stage. Compared to other forms of Fascist propaganda, direct references to Fascism were relatively rare in ENIT publications. Instead, the emphasis was on promoting Italy's modern features, such as its advanced transport system and sports facilities. This deliberate avoidance of political content highlights the separation between tourism promotion and the wider political goals of the regime. Tourism promoters, aware of the dangers of mixing politics and tourism, often advocated keeping the two separate,¹ and their practical approach put economic interests before the ideological concerns of tourism. In short, the relative scarcity of explicit political messages seemed to allow tourism promotion to appeal to a wide audience without alienating potential visitors. Thus, despite the turbulent historical events, tourism promotion managed to attract large numbers of visitors, and marketed Italy as a tourist destination.

TOURISM PROMOTIONAL TEXTS AND GUIDEBOOKS: A DIFFERENCE IN KIND OR DEGREE?

The difference between tourism promotional communication and tourist guidebooks has often been debated, the former being often defined generically as a discourse type (Cook, Bhatia, Jaworska) and the latter as the prototypical textual genre of tourism (Calvi *linguaggio*, Calvi *géneros*). Tourism promotional communication aims to attract potential visitors by presenting destinations and attractions in a compelling way. Guidebooks, on the other hand, focus on practical advice and information for visitors. However, seeing them as completely separate may be an oversimplification, and rather than categorically separating the two, they should be considered along the spectrum of different aspects and textual typologies that characterise tourism communication. This perspective is crucial when analysing tourism promotion over time, given the inevitable influence of early guidebooks on its development.

Historically, the guidebook originated as a textual genre embodied by figures such as Baedeker and Murray (Buzard 90), in which a subject, the publisher, acted as a personal intermediary for tourists. Positioned between the complexity of travel organisation and the needs of modern tourists, these pioneering companies offered guidance, advice and assistance. In their hands, the essential character of the tourist guidebook was crystallized. Designed to be easily held in the hand of the tourist, it stood for accessibility, reliability and standardisation. Baedeker imagined the guidebook as a tool to foster travellers' independence, enabling them to navigate the world with confidence.

¹ See for example Pietro Barrera, head of ENIT's press office, who argued that tourist propaganda should not be political, as strategically designed promotional material could appeal even to those sceptical of the political establishment. In Syrjamaa 339, quoting extracts from a lecture given by Barrera in 1941.



Seaton's distinction between *vade mecum* and *belles lettres* texts highlights the complex role of guidebooks. These texts serve a dual purpose: they provide practical guidance while also presenting subjective travel experiences. As a result, they are inherently selective, offering curated perspectives that may limit genuine exploration. Yet, in contrast to Barthes's critique of guidebooks as instrument of control or 'agents of blindness', Peel and Sørensen have argued for their empowering role in travel. They see them as dynamic mediators, facilitating the construction and dissemination of tourist knowledge and experience. In their view, guidebooks fulfil a fundamental need for orientation, offering insights and evaluations.

While the critical literature on guidebooks tends to emphasise the aspects that are generally missing or underrepresented in tourist promotion material, some studies suggest the existence of features that today, as in the past, blur the boundaries between the two. For example, Santulli (183-184) highlights the impersonal nature of discourse in contemporary travel guides. As a result, the absence of the speaking subject makes it difficult to discern the main purpose of the guidebook, which is to instruct and advise. As will be shown, Italian institutional tourism promotion is also characterised by a generic and impersonal address, aimed at providing a glossy overview of the destination to a wide and rather undefined audience.

Torresi makes a clear distinction between travel guidebooks and tourism promotional materials, but she also highlights the promotional aspects inherent in both types of texts (123). In particular, she stresses the importance of cultural adaptations in determining the persuasive impact of tourism discourse on its target audience. Tourists seek out destinations that match their expectations, and effective tourism copywriters, whether working for tourism boards or guidebook publishers, should tailor their texts accordingly.

In terms of linguistic functions, Flinz (XXII), following Bühler's tripartite model, argues that guidebooks have primarily informative and persuasive purposes, often incorporating directive functions. Although directive elements are more common in guidebooks, tourism promotional texts share many of the linguistic features identified by Flinz (XXIII), in particular a predominance of positive adjectives and superlatives, typical collocations and stylistic devices. Furthermore, these texts use impersonal and elliptical forms such as lists, especially in the practical information sections, are characterised by a significant presence of proper names and location details and, finally, they often present an alternation between past and present verb tenses to denote temporal distance and proximity.

However, when the two genres are examined over time, a significant difference becomes apparent, particularly in terms of how the texts are tailored to the needs and interests of the target audience. While guidebooks identify the target public in terms of language and content and engage them with a system of tailored practical information, early tourism promotion lacked the whole apparatus of audience profiling. In the first half of the twentieth century, as mass tourism was beginning to spread in the wake of pioneering tour operators such as the British Thomas Cook, institutional tourism



promotion had to be invented from scratch, before the concepts of marketing and branding emerged. In Italy, this was the challenge faced by ENIT, whose task was to centralise tourism practices, including promotion in different languages, and to present the country to the international public for the first time as a new, coherent tourist destination.

ENIT'S CORE PUBLICATION, THE *ITALY* BOOKLET: THE ITALIAN START TEXT

As early as 1920 ENIT began producing and publishing tourism promotional material in a variety of European languages (see Podda in this issue). The aim was to promote Italy as a tourist destination to international visitors from Europe and North and South America. Although some of ENIT's publications were sold, most of them were distributed free of charge to various bodies such as banks, hotels, trade fairs and foreign tourism associations and were published anonymously.

The main publication was the pamphlet *Italia*, first appeared in 1920 in Italian, English and French editions. It focused on the presentation of Italy's traditional attractions, in line with ENIT's goal "to please the public" (ENIT 1921 30).

In the course of our research, 10 editions of this booklet in English were found, in addition to the first publication, which can be considered the start text in Italian. The versions to be examined will be referred to as follows:

- A *Italia* 1920, Italian language edition;
- B1 *Italy* 1921, edition distributed in London;
- B2 *Italy* 1921, edition distributed in New York;
- C *Italy* 1923 or 1924;
- D *Italy* 1928, deluxe edition;
- E1 *Italy* 1930, English edition;
- E2 *Italy* 1930, deluxe American edition;
- F1 *Italy* 1931, English edition;
- F2 *Italy* 1931, American edition;
- G *Italy* 1933 or 1934;
- H *Italy* 1937.²

² All texts cited, with the exception of *Italia* A and *Italy* C and D, were sourced from the ENIT Library in Rome, whom we thank for granting us access to these as well as other materials. The dates of publication are not always explicit: as a consequence, the dating was often done by consulting ENIT's annual reports. Similar problems arise when trying to identify the target audience. Spelling conventions, both British and American, are not consistently indicative within these publications. As a result, I often had to refer to the edition mentions in the ENIT reports or rely on contextual clues within the texts themselves to identify a specific audience. Only occasionally were precise indications available on the title pages.



The first Italian edition of *Italia A*, published in folder form, includes a brief introduction on travelling in Italy, once inconvenient and risky, but now facilitated by modern infrastructures such as road, rail and sea transport. Comfortable hotels, multilingual staff and numerous facilities for visiting museums and galleries complete the picture of a nation that strives to present itself as modern and advanced, also thanks to the consortia that oversee tourism activities, including ENIT, the Touring Club Italiano and even the CAI, the mountain climbing association. Short thematic sections follow, highlighting what are considered to be Italy's main attractions: first the climate, next the art cities, then the Alps, the Ligurian Riviera, and finally lakes and spas. The geographical description of Italy ends with a cursory mention of the southern regions, concentrating only on the Gulf of Naples and Sicily.

From a linguistic point of view, the style is impersonal, without a speaking subject, while the receiver is described by various terms that seem to be used interchangeably, such as “foreigner”, “visitor”, “traveller”. The term “tourist” appears only once, in the section dedicated to Naples. The high frequency of terms used to define foreign visitors suggests that the brochure is aimed at international tourists rather than Italians. In particular, a passage in the section dedicated to the Ligurian Riviera clearly indicates a promotional effort to attract visitors from northern Europe: “Mentre i paesi nordici sono avvolti dalle nebbie, bagnati dalle piogge, percossi dai geli, sulla riviera italiana è un tepido sole, un mare profondamente azzurro, un trionfo di piante e di fiori” (*Italia A* 9).³

At the same time, however, the text lacks adaptation strategies that would make the information accessible to a non-local, i.e. non-Italian or “Outsider visitor” (Katan, Agorni). In fact, several sections contain lists of roughly geolocated places, whose names are simply juxtaposed without any reference to their specific characteristics.

Italia A displays some of the linguistic features characterising guidebooks (Flinz), as well as tourism promotion, as argued earlier, such as the abundance of positive adjectives, a sophisticated stylistic approach that incorporates rhetorical devices such as similes⁴ and metaphors,⁵ impersonal address, the alternation of verbs in the past and present tense to express time distance, etc. Finally, the presence of images in this booklet should also be mentioned: they are black and white drawings, closely related to the text contents as they illustrate the locations mentioned.

³ “While the Nordic countries are shrouded in fog, bathed in rain, battered by frost, on the Italian Riviera it is a warm sun, a deep blue sea, a triumph of plants and flowers” (my trans.).

⁴ For example: “il bizantino può dirsi come *l'aureo anello di congiunzione* dell'arte romana con quella italiana”, “the Byzantine can be said to be the golden link between Roman and Italian art”, *Italia A* 4.

⁵ For example: “*le pure sorgenti della latinità*”, (“the pure springs of Latinity”), *Italia A* 4.

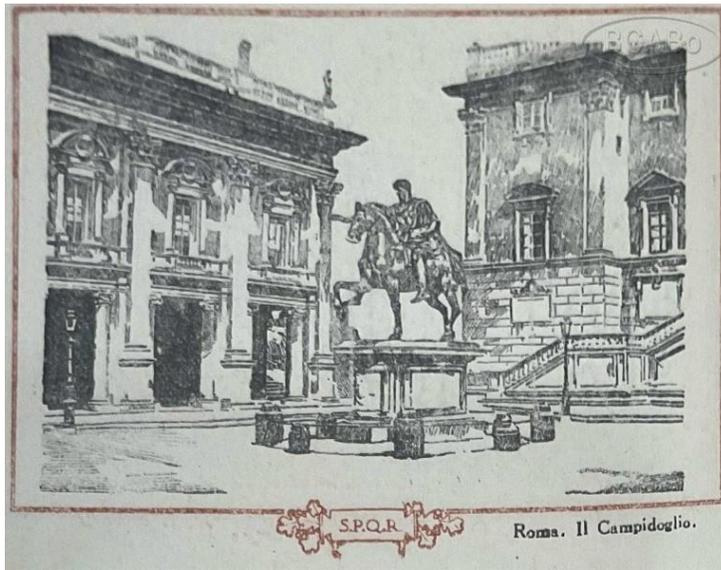


Fig. 1. Source: *Italia A*, p. 3.⁶

To conclude, this text appears to serve as a kind of template, or start text for the production of versions in various languages. This hypothesis is supported by an extract from a publication by the Touring Club Italiano, which in the 1920s and 1930s produced the first guidebooks to Italy for international visitors, complementing ENIT's promotional efforts:

Occorreva innanzitutto preparare un testo italiano che potesse servire di base per le edizioni straniere. Infatti ciascuna di queste doveva essere qualcosa di più e di meglio che una traduzione, un adattamento al pubblico particolare cui si rivolgeva. Per esempio, un inglese avrà caro che la sua guida indichi con particolari notizie una sosta di Byron o le tombe di Shelley e di Keats o un riferimento a Shakespeare, mentre un tedesco cercherà di preferenza quanto si collega a Goethe o Wagner o gli avvenimenti storici connessi con la sua patria (Vota 199).⁷

The strategy referred to in this passage obviously concerns an organisation other than ENIT, but it could be an indication of a textual composition strategy in use at the time, which could be employed in the early stages of tourism promotion.

⁶ The image was sourced from an original copy preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale Archiginnasio in Bologna. The library has granted permission for its use and publication in this issue.

⁷ "It was first necessary to prepare an Italian text that could serve as a basis for the foreign editions. In fact, each of these had to be something more and better than a translation, an adaptation to the particular audience it addressed. For example, an Englishman will be keen for his guidebook to mention a visit by Byron or the tombs of Shelley and Keats or a reference to Shakespeare, while a German will prefer to look for something related to Goethe or Wagner or historical events connected with his homeland." (my trans.). Giuseppe Vota was the author of the first volume on the activities of the Touring Club Italiano, *I sessant'anni del Touring Club Italiano 1894-1954*.



ADAPTATION TO THE TARGET AUDIENCE OF ENIT'S TOURISM PROMOTION: ITALY'S VERSIONS, 1921-1937

Syrjämaa has argued that, in the *Italy* booklets, the identification of the target audience remains unclear. Although I agree in principle, in this section I would like to present the actual efforts made by ENIT in this direction and, more specifically, the ways in which the effectiveness of tourism promotion and targeting was improved in the English versions of the core publication *Italy*.

ENIT favoured quantity over quality in the production of tourist material. The standardised cheap brochures were in fact aimed at a large, indistinct group of readers who may not have had any intention of travelling to Italy and who generally paid little attention to this type of material. The emphasis was therefore on printing large quantities in order to identify potential tourists among the large numbers.

By the mid-1920s the total number of pages published had risen to over 80 million, but by 1927 it had fallen to less than 30 million. However, with the establishment of the Commission for Tourism at the turn of the decade, the landscape changed dramatically. In 1933, more than 400 million pages were produced (Syrjämaa 88). The standardised booklet series *Italy* continued to be printed because of its cost-effectiveness.

The most obvious method of adaptation of the *Italy* booklet is that the English-language publications specify their target audience as either British, on the one hand, or American, on the other. However, it is necessary to analyse these texts carefully, as the stated target definition does not always correspond to the facts: this is the case with the 1921 publications, *Italy* B1 and B2, distributed in London and New York respectively, which, despite having different covers, present exactly the same texts and illustrations.⁸

Both the content and the structure of the B1 and B2 versions are identical to those of the start text, *Italia* A, as all sections are reproduced. Therefore, these two versions can be properly considered as translations. However, a comparison between the introduction and the rest of the text shows a slight difference in terms of language fluency. In fact, the translator of the introduction slightly deviates from the original text to produce a simpler and more fluent version. In the following example *Italia* A and *Italy* B1 are compared:

Un viaggio in Italia fu sempre la meta luminosa d'ogni persona avente anima d'artista, anche quando il viaggiare era incomodo e rischioso. Grandi poeti scesero in tutti i tempi le Alpi per godere il cielo d'Italia, che celebrarono in pagine immortali. Oggi un viaggio attraverso questo incantato Paese può essere privilegio di molti, per le facili comunicazioni, per il grande numero d'alberghi modernamente organizzati così nelle grandi città che nelle minori, e graduati per ogni condizione di persone, in maniera che tutti possono trovarvi il loro agio, il loro *comfort* (*Italia* A 2).⁹

⁸ Both of them also feature the same verse by Byron on the title page "Italia, O Italia! Thou who hast the fatal gift of beauty".

⁹ A more literal translation of this excerpt could be: "A journey to Italy was always the bright place for every person with an artist's soul, even when travelling was inconvenient and risky. Great poets throughout the ages descended the Alps to enjoy the Italian sky, which they celebrated in immortal pages. Today, a journey through this enchanted country can be the privilege of many, because of the easy



To visit Italy has always been a great attraction for everyone. In all ages great poets have crossed the Alps to enjoy the Italian sky, mountain, seas, and lakes, and have immortalized its beauty. Travelling has now become much less difficult in a country which is so full of charm, as there are now a large number of well-organized modern hotels in the cities as well as in the towns, so that every class of tourist can find his comfort. (*Italy B2 3*)

In the rest of the booklet, on the other hand, there is a tendency to stick more closely to the start text, and the result is sometimes unsatisfactory because the meaning is not always easy to understand. In fact, the promotional message suggesting the opportunity to escape the oppressive heat of big cities by choosing a holiday in the fresh mountain climate is lost in translation:

Chi viene in Italia trova un riposo alle fatiche ed un ristoro alle calure estive delle grandi città anche in tutti i luoghi freschi e ridenti delle vallate superbe delle Alpi, e sulle verdi alture dell'Appennino, sia per la ricchezza di vegetazione che per la finezza dell'aria (*Italia A 6*).¹⁰

When one comes to Italy one may find rest, and enjoy the heat of summer in the cities, or the freshness to be obtained in the smiling valleys of the Alps and on the verdant heights of the Apennines with their rich vegetation and their clear pure air. (*Italy B2 7,8*)

In the case of *Italy B1* and *B2*, ENIT seems to have been at least partially aware of the importance of linguistic accuracy and commissioned a native speaker to translate the introduction. The rest of the text probably did not receive the same attention due to cost constraints.¹¹

The next version, *Italy C*, introduces a number of interesting features. Instead of the black and white drawings of the previous editions, photographs are included, mainly depicting views of cities and places of interest.

There are also significant changes in the language, indicating an increased focus on the quality of communication: the English version is much less faithful to the start text *Italia A*, and the language is fluent. For these reasons, *Italy C* cannot be considered a translation, since the first signs of implementing adaptation strategies appear. For example, the version of the passage reproduced above not only perfectly captures the sense of the original Italian text, but also simplifies it, making it more concise and natural for the target audience, including the use of collocations typical of the English language:

communications, the large number of hotels modernly organised both in the large cities and in the smaller ones, and graded for every condition of people, so that everyone can find their ease, their comfort." (my trans.).

¹⁰ This is my literal translation for this passage: "Those who come to Italy also find rest from the fatigue and relief from the summer heat of the big cities in all the cool and pleasant places in the superb valleys of the Alps, and on the green heights of the Apennines, both because of the richness of the vegetation and the fineness of the air".

¹¹ Syrjamaa points out that the introductions to the booklets in various foreign languages were often written by native authors. For example, the introduction to the 1921 editions was written by Janet Penrose Trevelyan, a very unique case of translator identification in the *Italy* booklets. See also ENIT 1922 8.



The traveller finds in Italy throughout the hot months of the year cool weather and restful quiet in the smiling villages and towns of the Alpine valleys and on the grassy summit of the Appennines (*Italy C 14-15*).

The most notable change in *Italy C* from previous editions is its updated content. The introduction has been omitted and replaced by an appendix that presents a very realistic picture of Italy by focusing on contemporary economic and cultural landscapes. The economic section highlights achievements in agriculture and industry, while the cultural one describes Italy's prestigious libraries, art galleries and concert halls.¹²

The *Italy D* version, which is a deluxe version, introduces substantial changes, both in terms of content structure and language. The subdivision into thematic paragraphs disappears and the booklet becomes a kind of itinerary covering the peninsula from south to north, in a rather geographically confusing way, as, for example, the Ligurian Riviera is mentioned alongside the Amalfi Riviera.

The most significant innovation, however, concerns the identification of the target audience, which is clearly defined as "English visitors" in a section on Sicily (*Italy D 18 and 24*). Not only that, but in defending Naples as a city that had too often been subjected to malicious criticism by foreign tourists, a proper strategy of cultural adaptation is carried out, comparing the city with places well known to English audiences:

Naples is a place apart, and misunderstood and maligned by many foreigners who seem to expect a garden city by the sea and ignore the history of the town, and the fact that it is Italy's "Liverpool", not a "Blackpool". It is a fascinating city, teeming with interest, and to enjoy it one must have an enthusiasm for local colour and the picturesque and unusual (*Italy D 12*).¹³

This version also includes a series of rhetorical questions directly involving the reader by simulating an imaginary dialogue between the guidebook author and the tourist. All this seems to break the impersonal aura that characterised ENIT's tourism promotion up to this point: "I want to spend the Winter in Italy", the prospective traveller may say, "where do you advise me to go?" Well, the choice is wide. (*Italy D 14*)¹⁴

Overall, *Italy D* appears to have been written by a native English speaker, Major W. Stormont, director of the ENIT office in London, known for his informative brochures aimed at the British public.¹⁵ This edition can therefore be seen as a proper adaptation

¹² Also noteworthy is the first reproduction of the railway map that connected not only the entire peninsula, but Italy itself to Europe, in particular to European capitals such as Paris, London, Brussels and Berlin. This map will be reproduced in many of the later editions of Italy.

¹³ See also the section dedicated to the Riviera Ligure di Levante, "Shelley and Byron associations" are mentioned for the benefit of "English people". *Italy D 26*.

¹⁴ See another example of the same strategy: "Then for the summer months. Which shall it be, mountains, lakes or sea? Well, Italy has a long, long coast line, with every type of resort from the small and little known to the extremely fashionable, from the simple charms of Levanto to the gay cosmopolitan life of the Lido", *Italy D 36*.

¹⁵ In his works, *Winter in Italy 1923* and *Summer in Italy 1923*, which are mentioned in the final part of this booklet, Stormont set out to reshape the perception of Italy's summer climate as unhealthy and to promote winter sports, aiming to shift the status of Italy from a tourist resort limited to a few short seasons to a year-round travel destination.



for the British public, both linguistically and culturally. The illustrations are also remarkable, with full-page colour artist drawings. However, there are some inconsistencies between the visuals and the text, possibly due to the complex layout of the deluxe edition. In the example below, an image of Lake Maggiore is displayed next to a paragraph describing the city of Naples.

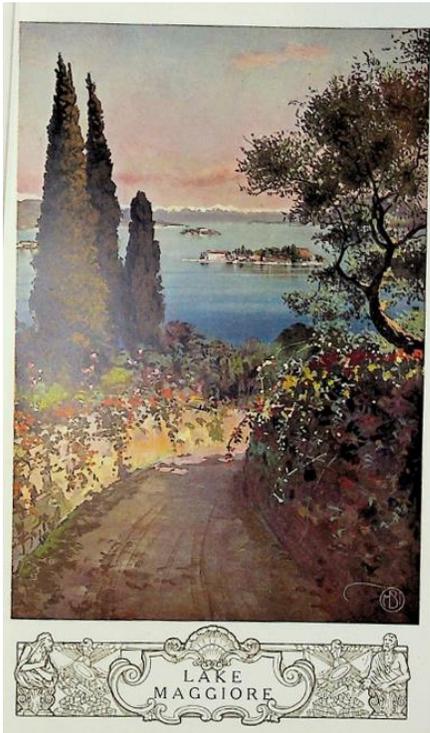


Fig. 2. Source: *Italy D* 13.¹⁶

The *Italy D* edition is no doubt the most fluent in English and best suited to a British audience, hence it is not surprising that the same text was reproduced in the cheaper *Italy E*.¹⁷ In terms of content, only the references to the new Italian colonies in North Africa are new, and in keeping with the times.¹⁸

In the early 1930s, the *Italy* booklet remained ENIT's main publication, with a considerable print run of 1.2 million in 1931 and 0.7 million in 1932 (Syrjämaa 200). This period marked a significant change, as illustrations became increasingly important. An

¹⁶ The image was sourced from an original copy preserved in the Civica Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli, Castello Sforzesco, Milan. The library has granted permission for its use and publication in this issue.

¹⁷ *Italy E* lacks the sophisticated graphics of the previous edition, but instead presents full-page plates of paintings alongside photographs bearing the name of the photographic studio that produced them.

¹⁸ "A little further afield but close to Italy and easily, quickly, and comfortably reached therefrom are the Italian possessions of Tripolitania, North Africa and the enchanting Island of Rhodes in the Aegean". *Italy E*, 7. Other references are to be found in the last part of the brochure, 22-24.



interesting phenomenon, however, is that the illustrations become increasingly detached from the content of the texts and seem to follow a different narrative thread from the written text. It is possible to speculate that the texts were assigned to translators or copywriters with increasingly good linguistic skills, while the insertion of images into the texts could have been carried out by staff who did not necessarily have language competences.

In the 1930s the audience profiling appears to become more accurate: efforts in this direction have already been noticed in both D and E1, with references to a British public only. In 1930, for the first time, a new version was produced targeting the American public, and not just nominally. *Italy* E2 clearly states “American Edition” on the title page and contains detailed travel information for reaching Italy by ship directly from New York.¹⁹ Also, the first references to air transport appear, as well as to the new motorway network. The practical information is in fact much more detailed than in previous editions: tourists are informed that visits to museums, art galleries and even archaeological sites were free and, in many cases, they did not need a visa. Syrjämaa (89) mentions Luigi Rava, the first president of ENIT, who, as early as 1926, insisted that publications had to be tailored to the American public, providing practical information rather than focusing on landscape and cultural attractions only.

The climate remains Italy’s main ‘attraction’, but a new element, sport, also plays an important role, signalling the government’s growing desire to present a more marketable image of Italy alongside the traditional one.²⁰ In addition, a whole section explores the ‘modern colonization’ experiments in the Italian territories in North Africa, expanding on a theme that had already been addressed in the British edition E1 of the same year. However, in this version, intended for an American audience, it is presented in an overly militaristic tone with unmistakable racist connotations, reflecting the escalating influence of the Fascist government at the time:

the civil work of the new colonists has been able to follow the military conquest of the Italian troops. The development of abandoned land is going on with courage and vigour. The natives now take an interest in the development of their property. Every inch of the redeemed soil is made profitable (*Italy* E2 30).

Throughout the booklet, however, references to the Fascist regime are rare, and what emerges is a desire to present the American public with an image of a progressive nation, with particular emphasis on practical information about hospitality and leisure activities.

In 1931, ENIT published two English-language editions for British and American audiences, *Italy* F1 and F2 respectively. The F2 version is a reproduction of the 1930

¹⁹ “To reach Italy directly from New York one may sail on Italian steamship lines which have some of the newest and fastest vessels on the Atlantic”. *Italy* E 2 7-8.

²⁰ “Italy today is a great sporting nation. The new generation is alert and enterprising and loves the element of contest. It is a tradition from the days of old when the Romans crowded the Coliseum. The new Forum for the Olympic Games in Rome, named after Mussolini, now under construction, will contain seats for 100,000 spectators, tennis courts and other sports equipment.” *Italy* E2 12.



American version E2, but interestingly both F1 and F2 refine the practical information content by introducing a detailed appendix entitled 'Useful Information'.²¹

The adaptation for the British audience, *Italy* F1, presents a completely new introduction, and linguistically speaking, although the English is correct, it lacks the more direct appeal to the recipient introduced in Stormont's versions. In fact, the register used in this booklet is rather sophisticated, and the style appears somewhat stilted.²²

The most innovative aspect of this version is the attempt to find greater geographical cohesion in the presentation of Italy by proposing a coherent itinerary. The journey begins in the North, precisely from Piedmont, crosses Lombardy, and continues in the three "Venetias": "Venetia, Tridentine Venetia, and Julian Venetia" (*Italy* F1 7). Then it goes on to describe Liguria, Emilia Romagna, and Tuscany, and then Umbria, before moving on to the Marches and finally to Abruzzo, which had been never mentioned before. The itinerary therefore takes the tourist through the centre of Italy in a geographically accurate way, with a good description of the diversity of the areas crossed. To the south, the route makes only the usual references to Naples and Sicily, but for the first time Sardinia is introduced, a region still little known to tourists but worth visiting "because it is rich in natural attractions and archaeological curiosities" (*Italy* F1 14).

The itinerary occupies the first half of *Italy* F1, and is seamlessly supplemented by a lengthy section dedicated to practical information, mainly regarding transports and leisure, that is "the social and sporting attractions which are so sought after by the modern tourist" (17). Here, the focus on contemporary British audiences is more evident, especially when it comes to sports such as golf, winter skiing, polo and even fox hunting (18).

Unlike the American version F2, the English version F1 makes no reference to the Italian colonies, which is another significant indication of reader adaptation. It is likely that prospective British tourists in the early 1930s would have been less tolerant than Americans of the aggressive foreign policy of the Fascist government, and the text is therefore adapted on the basis of political considerations.

Italy F1 is extremely innovative, both in terms of content, with the introduction of a coherent geographical itinerary, and in terms of the space devoted to practical information and leisure. These aspects are beginning to characterise a type of tourism that is not only linked to the climatic, scenic and artistic aspects of the destination, but is also perceived as more recreational. However, the adaptation of this edition to the expectations of an increasingly identified British audience seems to be at odds with the quality of the language used. In fact, this version adopts a sophisticated style and

²¹ This section provides practical guidance on various aspects of international travel, including updated passport regulations and procedures for declaring transit at borders.

²² See for example this paragraph: "In the North of Piedmont, surrounded by a veritable amphitheatre of mountains (Mont Blanc, Mt. Rose and the Matterhorn (Cervino) are the highest peaks in Europe, watered by the Po, with a verdant and intensively cultivated plain, and the idyllic peace of its picturesque hills, where the vine reigns supreme", *Italy* F1 4.



register that is arguably less suited to the tastes of the British audience than some of the versions previously analysed (D and E1).

Significantly, ENIT was aware of this contradiction and in a later edition, possibly dated 1933 or 1934, offered a new version, *Italy G*, in which the language is much more fluent, suggesting the intervention of a native speaker. The geographical itinerary of the F1 edition is maintained and even perfected, in the sense that the regional layout is reproduced and more interesting details are offered. For example, Trieste is described as the most important Italian port (*Italy G* 3), the carnival in Viareggio is referred to (4) and the burials of Galla Placidia, Theodoric and Dante in Ravenna are mentioned (5). An important innovation is the introduction of some regions never mentioned before, extending the itinerary southwards with the appearance of Calabria and “Apulia” (corresponding to modern-day Puglia).

At the end of the geographical itinerary, as in the F1 version, a long section is devoted to practical information, particularly on transport by rail or air (9-10). This progressive image of Italy somehow coexists with a more traditional one when, for example, Italian hospitality is described as a sort of “old-fashioned and typically Italian cordiality ... practically always to be found” (12).

Surprisingly, however, the identification of the target audience is vague and can perhaps be deduced from the sports mentioned, in particular golf, polo, fox-hunting and 'trotting and flat racing' (14), which together suggest a British audience. Finally, this edition is completely devoid of ideological references to the Fascist regime, except for brief mentions of the “National Stadium of the Fascist Party” in Rome and the “Littoriale” in Bologna (13). Even the Italian colonies are dismissed in less than three lines, with references to Tripoli and Rhodes, “transformed by the Italians into comfortable holiday resorts” (8).

The booklet concludes with an appendix of “Useful Information”, even more detailed than that published in F1 and F2, and a section listing a series of ENIT publications, grouped according to areas of interest (regions, cities, art centres, etc.), in a sort of “advertising within the advertising” style (18-21).

The last booklet to be analysed is *Italy H*, dated 1937, a version without any indication of the target public. Similar to *Italy F1*, it offers a very coherent geographical itinerary where cities, landscapes, artistic features, etc. are set in a clear direction from the south to the north of the peninsula.

This version, however, lacks the emphasis on practical information found in F1 and F2. *Italy H* makes no mention of transport, apart from a stylised map of the peninsula with suggested motorway routes. Sport is only briefly mentioned in the description of the Dolomites (27), and even the climate, a classic Italian tourist attraction, is only marginally covered in the sections on the Ligurian Riviera and Sicily (33).

Another distinctive feature is the language, which is much smoother than in previous versions, especially F1. There are many collocations and clichés typical of the language of tourism, easily recognisable by an English-speaking audience.²³

²³ Here are just a few examples: “the innumerable attractions of this enchanted land” (*Italy F1* 5); “a paradise of blue and green” (*Italy F1* 6); “noble history and age-long traditions” (*Italy F1* 20).



Finally, given that *Italy H* was published in 1937, a considerable number of references to the innovations introduced by the Fascist government, and even to its ideological characteristics, might have been expected. References to Fascism are present, but not to a great extent. This version draws attention to Italy as a “modern, progressive nation watched with anxious interest [...] by the people of every country” because of the government’s ability to maintain ‘order and discipline’ (12-13), rather than emphasising its totalitarian agenda. This may seem unexpected at the time, almost on the brink of the Second World War, unless, as Syrjämaa suggests, it was a calculated decision aimed at appealing to the few English-speaking tourists who were still inclined to visit Italy in such a troubled historical context, while avoiding the possibility of alienating them with excessive references to a totalitarian ideology.

DATA VISUALISATION

The results of the detailed analysis presented in the previous section are summarised and illustrated in the graph below, in which a series of criteria have been defined in order to map the evolution of tourism promotion as represented by ENIT’s main publication, the *Italy* booklet. The elements taken into account and mapped according to their absence, frequency of occurrence or quality are the following:

- The quality of the English language, assessed in terms of its degree of adherence to the source text, accuracy, fluency and naturalness.
- The identification of the target audience, either British or American, which may be absent in some versions or only nominally present in others (i.e. the target audience appears on the cover of the booklet but does not correspond to the content). In some cases, the “adaptation” concerns only specific information such as travel information, or, on the other hand, effective cultural adaptation strategies may appear.
- The emphasis on practical information, which may be absent, or present in varying degrees, and may be included in the text or in separate sections or annexes.
- The inclusion of leisure activities, such as sports, leisure and cultural activities, which may be absent, or used for promotional purposes, signalling the beginning of a perception of an innovative type of tourism, i.e. recreational tourism, more in line with the interests of the target audience.
- The presence of a geographical itinerary more or less coherent with the Italian territory.
- The frequency and variety of illustrations, in the form of black and white or colour drawings, photographs and artistic illustrations.
- The relationship between the images and the texts, in which a more or less strong connection and coherence is to be found.
- Finally, the presence of ideological contents linked to the Fascist regime, which, as Table 1 demonstrates, is more pronounced in the American editions.

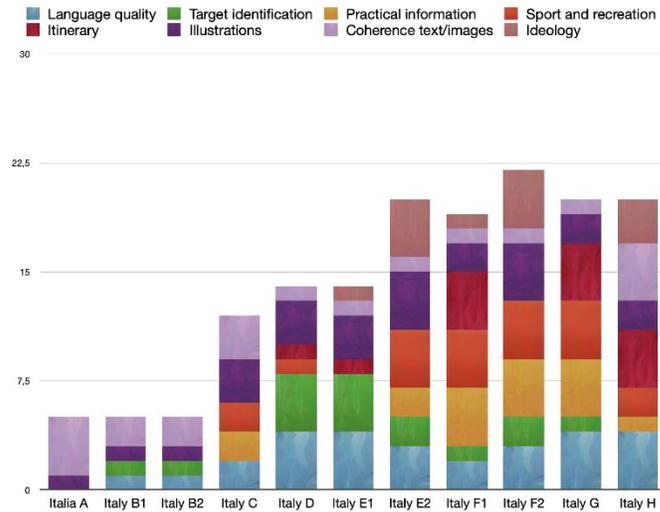


Table 1. The evolution of ENIT's tourism promotion in the *Italy's* booklets, 1920-1937.

These criteria are not meant to be exhaustive, but can be used heuristically as indicators of ENIT's efforts to make tourism promotion more effective and to refine strategies for adapting texts to the target audience. Clearly, the results are subject to many variables; for example, the budget allocated to ENIT in certain years has a significant impact on the illustrations or the quality of the publication as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The detailed analysis carried out in the previous section, in its chronological examination, has shown that the concept of adaptation of tourism promotion is complex and multifaceted. The fact that ENIT produced versions in English for two specific audiences, the British and the Americans, has made the results of this research particularly interesting. In fact, the adaptation strategies turned out to be much more complex than mere linguistic features, as in the Italian booklets no distinction is made between British and American English. The adaptation strategies I have identified therefore relate to other characteristics, briefly sketched out in the criteria above. For example, the structure of the brochure itself, divided into thematic sections or characterised by the presence of a geographically coherent itinerary, seems to indicate a concern to improve advertising techniques, which are increasingly personalised and empower tourists by satisfying their basic need for orientation. The increasing focus on the quality of the English language and the introduction of formulas for direct audience involvement and cultural adaptation strategies, especially those aimed at a British audience, are evidence of ENIT's awareness of the fundamental role of language in tourism promotion. The variety and quality of the images also indicate a desire to improve the effectiveness of this type of textual advertising and to engage the final



recipient more directly. Similar considerations could be made when analysing the trend towards a new perception of recreational tourism. Finally, the presence or absence of ideological elements is significant, not so much in terms of their promotional potential, which could have discouraged rather than promoted tourism in this historical period, but in terms of their more obvious and pronounced presence in the editions aimed at an American, as opposed to a British audience.

The development is not linear, as is often the case in empirical research, and the decline in the last versions, on the eve of the Second World War, is particularly significant. However, it does show a trend towards greater complexity in ENIT's tourism communication over the years, demonstrating a gradual awareness of the composite nature of tourism promotion and a first, embryonic articulation of the specificity of the identities targeted.

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