Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri. Dipartimento per gli Affari Regionali. Dipartimento per l'Informazione e l'Editoria. *Italia, territori, culture. Profili del paesaggio culturale italiano, regioni, simboli*. Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato S.p.A., 2003. Pp. 326.

This full-colour, trilingual (Italian, English, French) volume, which offers the reader an impressive panorama of all the regions of Italy, is the product of an initiative promoted by the Ministro per gli Affari Regionali and the resulting collaboration with the individual regions themselves. In his introduction, Minister of Regional Affairs Sen. Enrico La Loggia explains that, "mentre l'Europa si prepara, nel contesto del semestre europeo di presidenza italiana, a discutere del suo futuro prossimo, del suo rapporto con i paesi e le entità che la formano, le Regioni italiane hanno voluto rendere testimonianza, con una manifestazione culturale unitaria, a latere della riunione dei ministri europei responsabili delle autonomie regionali, ai loro valori culturali, ai simboli nei quali il proprio territorio si riconosce e dove è riconoscibile nel contempo il valore culturale della nazione Italia" (8).

The book amply satisfies this objective by offering both the student and instructor of Italian a series of "chapters" in alphabetical order by region. From l'Abruzzo to il Veneto, in each chapter, the region's historical and cultural profile is documented textually and photographically within a space of eight to ten pages. What follows is a section intitled "Bene Simbolo," comprised of three or four pages, which presents a "symbol" (either a specific place or an object found within the region) which each region deemed to be reflective of its past, present and future: "alcune Regioni si erano già poste l'obiettivo di caratterizzare il proprio territorio con un simbolo che ne condensasse la storia e la cultura; per alcune altre è stata l'occasione per riflettere esse stesse su cosa meglio le indentificasse presso i propri cittadini, i connazionali, l'Europa tutta" (12). From Aquileia in Friuli Venezia Giulia to the Sicilian sculpture *Il Satiro danzante*, the symbolic icons chosen by the regions quite accurately reflect the words of Senator La Loggia: "L'Italia vive la sua esperienza unitaria soltanto da poco più di un secolo, ma vanta una "anzianità culturale" che pochi paesi al mondo hanno" (6).

Each chapter closes with the section "Informazioni." On this page the reader finds a list of the region's *province* (as well as their coat of arms), the region's population and geographical statistics (for example, total area and percentage of mountainous and coastal areas) and finally, the region's office and Internet address. Among the volume's comprehensive yet concise descriptions of the cultural and historical richness of each region are a dozen or so spectacular photographs that complement the text beautifully.

Although it is directed to the general reader conversant in any of the three languages in which the text is written and to the European Union countries, *Italia, territori, culture* also has good potential as a textbook. The didactic options for this publication are numerous, but they are also contingent on its availability and cost. There is no information included within the volume regarding these two very important factors to consider when evaluating the viability of a course text. Students enrolled in a course (offered in any of volume's languages) which presents

different aspects of Italian culture (or even a higher level Italian language course which incorporates a cultural component), could make efficacious use of this publication. There are a few *infelicità linguistiche* in the English and French translations and it should be noted that the Italian used here is quite formal—this is after all, a “government” publication, not an Italian as a Second Language text. From a purely linguistic standpoint, it would be most suitable for advanced students of Italian language. This having been said, the utility of the available translations should not, however, be ignored when considering this book for an Intermediate language course.

In conclusion, *Italia, territori, culture* offers a wealth of information and images that would most certainly enrich a student’s knowledge and appreciation for Italian history and culture. This publication clearly demonstrates that, although Italy is a full and willing partner in the European community, its geographical boundaries encompass an infinity of distinct linguistic, cultural and regional traditions.

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