

ER

EMILIA
ROMAGNA

N.1
2007

ECONOMIA ECONOMY
Cibi al top in Europa
Top foods in Europe

MUSEI MUSEUMS
Un mondo di figurine
A world of stickers

MUSICA, MAESTRO

A 50 anni dalla morte,
l'Emilia-Romagna festeggia
Arturo Toscanini, il più
legendario e conteso
direttore d'orchestra del mondo

MUSIC, MAESTRO

50 years from his death,
Emilia-Romagna celebrates
Arturo Toscanini, the most
legendary and sought-after
orchestra director in the world



EMILIA ROMAGNA

Trimestrale d'informazione a cura del Servizio stampa e informazione della Giunta regionale e della Consulta regionale dell'Emilia-Romagna per l'emigrazione e l'immigrazione. N. 1 - Anno X Marzo 2007

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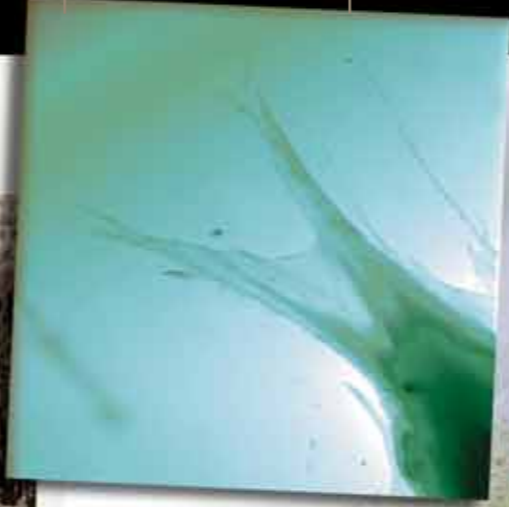
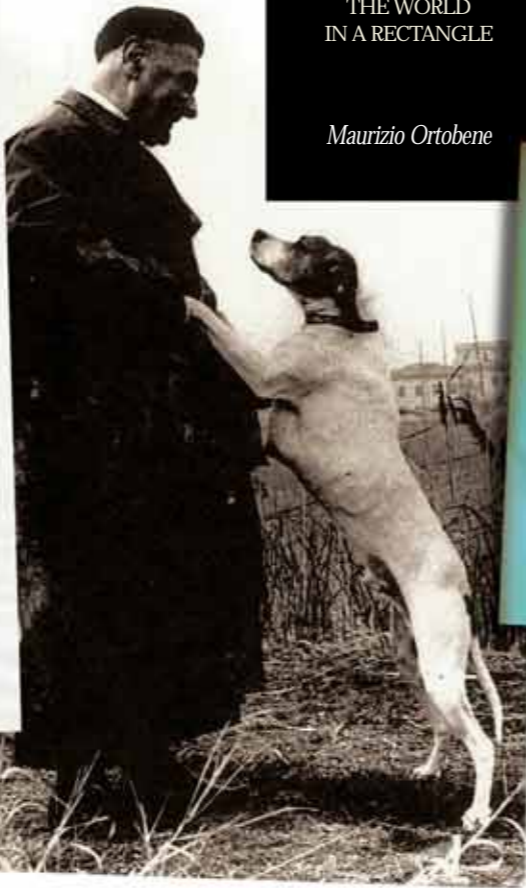
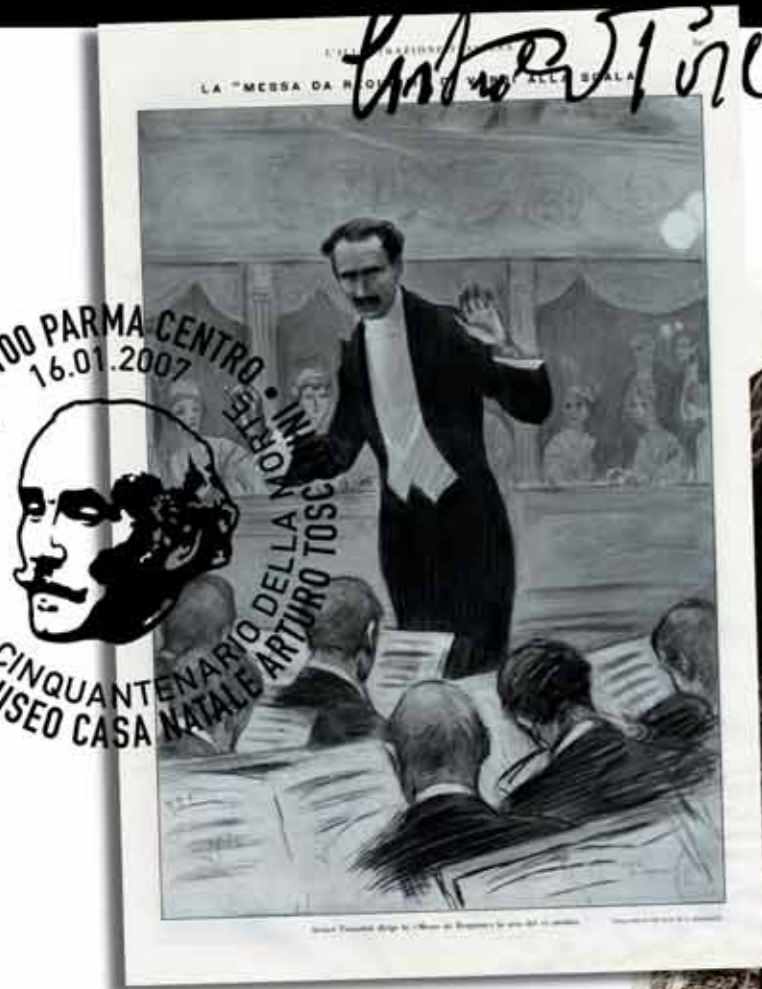
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In copertina / Cover-page:
due immagini tratte dalla collezione Museo "Casa natale Arturo Toscanini" / Istituzione Casa della Musica di Parma.
two images taken from the collection of "Birthplace of Arturo Toscanini" Museum / The House of Music, Parma

THE MAGIC WAND

by Giacomo Quadri

On the 16th of January 1957, Arturo Toscanini passed away in Riverdale, near New York. He had directed his last concert only three years prior, after a marvellous career that lasted almost 70 years. Half a century from that day, he is still a legendary figure. Born in Parma on the 25th of March 1867, for decades he was the most famous and sought-after orchestra director in the world. Concerts, exhibitions, conventions, publications, the opening of the house of his birth and various other activities – amongst which, the digitalisation of early twentieth-century periodicals where he was cited – take us through the entire year of the 50th anniversary of the maestro's death. The initiatives are promoted by the Emilia-Romagna Region, by the Ministry for Art and Culture and cultural activities of the main institutions of Parma.

In January, Parma opened the museum "Birthplace of Arturo Toscanini", the humble home of Oltretorrente where the artist was born into a Garibaldian family. The main nucleus of the museum, a stone's throw from the Giardino Ducale, contains a legacy of documents, images and memorabilia that the Toscanini family donated to the Town of Parma in 1967, for the hundred-year anniversary of the musician's birth. It was in that year that his birth home was opened to the public. The building has now been renovated to allow public access and is equipped with up-to-the-minute technology for the safekeeping of the documents, whilst the display area has been redesigned to offer visitors the chance to know, in an organic way, the life and artistic events of the greatest amongst orchestra directors.

The result is the creation of a densely suggestive and rigorously documented journey through the life of the maestro: from his relationship with Parma to those with his most loved composers, all supported by avant-garde multimedia technology with the final 'cherry' of a documentary

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that, - using period material as well as testimonies from the maestro's descendants and artists such as Lorin Maazel and Giuseppe Valdeno – paints a winning portrait of the toscaninian world. The program for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the death of Toscanini continues throughout the year with numerous concerts and events. Period images and music fill the Teatro Verdi of Busseto with the presence of the maestro until July, and allows visitors to relive a moment of extraordinary artistic and human joy. Toscanini, in fact, fittingly returns to the stage that twice saw him direct, in 1913 and 1926, the *Traviata* and *Falstaff* in homage to Verdi and his land. In April, in the former church of Santa Elisabetta in Parma, the Museum dedicated to "reproduced sound" opens. The didactical display is dedicated to the history of sound reproduction and music from Edison's phonograph to the present day: in this context, Toscanini was the first example of orchestra direction discographic divinism. Still in Parma, from April to June, at Bossi Bocchi house, an exhibition of ni-

neteenth and twentieth-century Italian paintings from the maestro's collections can be admired. As well as the artistic fortune of Toscanini there is also the digitalisation and sorting of music periodicals of the early twentieth Century and historical research on "Toscanini media phenomenon". It will be possible to enter the maestro's study to visit his library, the Steinway piano given to him by Vladimir Horowitz, works of art, photographs and personal belongings. A compact disc with operas for soprano and piano will also be produced. In Parma's library organization, you can access the library conserved in Toscanini's studio, with its Italian, English, French and German texts, mainly on music, amongst which there are eighty or so works on his beloved Wagner and his music.

KNOW-HOW & TASTE

by Paolo Cortese

Parmesan, Parma Ham, traditional Balsamic vinegar of Mode-

na, Brisighella's extra virgin olive oil, Bologna's 'mortadella', Ferrara's 'coppia' (a typical bread baked in the shape of a cross), green asparagus from Altedo and shallots of Romagna.

With 25 certified products, Emilia-Romagna is top of regional classifications and occupies first place in Europe for quantity and economic value of protected productions. This is confirmed by an investigation carried out by the "Qualivita" foundation of Siena, carried out on behalf of the Ministry for Political agriculture, on the value and market prospects of 155 Italian PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) products.

PDO and PGI products are crucial for Italy's image on international markets. Up until June, for example, in Glasgow and Edinburgh in Scotland, there will be seminars, tastings and restaurant offers for the promotion of Emilia-Romagna's products in the two cities. Consumers, however, must actually learn about the distinctive and qualitative values in order to choose them from retailers in the various countries. For this reason, alongside more strictly institutional actions, the recent initiatives of some mass-distribution groups aiming to increase the number of quality controlled products on offer become of great importance.

An example of enhancement and promotion of quality-controlled fruit and vegetable and agroindustrial products from Emilia Romagna can be represented by the agreement between the Region and Conad. Conad will put its own national retail network and those of its European partners (Belgian Colruyt, Swiss Coop, French E. Leclerc and German Rewe) at disposal for product marketing and promotional initiatives.

The program of initiatives sees the involvement of regional Consortiums for the protection of the 15 PDO products, the 11 PGIs and 20 RDO (Registered Designation of Origin) winemaking areas, in organizing the sale of these excellent re-

gional products in Italy and Europe. An innovative alliance in the agricultural world between Barilla and the Emilia-Romagna Region, proposes to develop the cultivation of quality hard wheat across the entire chain. The aim is to make the region a pole of excellence for the production of this cereal, and to supply the Parma-based company with an extremely competitive product, in quality terms, compared to imported grains.

The contract concerns the entire production chain of hard wheat: from the seed selecting industry to the transformation industry. It foresees the conveyance of 30 thousand tons of high quality hard wheat to Barilla, for the 2006-2007 cereal campaign. Emilia-Romagna has the chance to become a producer of national importance for the high quality of its local high-protein hard wheat, for the professional quality of its agricultural operators, and for the quality and sales strength of Barilla - currently the largest worldwide user of hard wheat for pasta production, with over 1,250,000 tons of wheat, the equivalent of 900,000 tons of pasta.

WHERE THE FUTURE IS BORN

by Marino Baresani

Intelligent video cameras that monitor traffic, mammograms that auto-diagnose, satellite tourist guides for cities of art, video-link setups to ambulances in emergency interventions: these are just a few examples of innovations made in Emilia-Romagna by five young high-tech regional businesses selected by Smau as part of the 20 stars of Italian innovation in information and communications technology.

Of these five businesses, four are based in Bologna and supported by Regional incubator I Tech Off (www.itechoff.it), coordinated by Aster: Alma Vision, Arcadia Lab, Econoetica and Waymedia (Bologna) and Mediabase (Parma).

"This important acknowledgement of regional high-tech companies confirms that Emilia-Romagna is also in the front rank in new business set-up, as shown by Lombardy Region research in which Emilia-Romagna was first for quantity of research spin-offs with over 100 in four years", observes regional busi-

ness production councillor Duccio Campagnoli. "This is the latest sign that important investments have been made in recent years, involving research centres, entrepreneurs and regional administration". The four companies from Bologna received the support of regional incubator I Tech Off that offers services to new businesses working in the field of information and communication technology. Here are the details in full. Alma Vision (www.almavision.it), a spin-off company of the University of Bologna, has developed technology that brings "intelligent" artificial vision to areas that include video surveillance, traffic monitoring and people counts. Video cameras that are able to "notice" the removal of objects, count vehicles, measure their speed and identify parking, automatically identify violations of the highway code, count pedestrians, record routes and attention paid to an observed object, a work of art in a museum for example. ArcadiaLab (www.arcadialab.com), on the other hand, uses image analysis research results carried out by the Physics department of the University of Bologna. Their peak product is a system for the identification of suspicious lesions in digital mammograms. Industrially, Arcadia Lab solutions are used for checking production line processes for potential defects. The company also develops programs and libraries for the transmission, filing, saving and printing of images in the medical field.

Econoetica (www.econoetica.com) brings us Arianna, a multimedia tourist guide for the city of Florence, which is connected to a satellite navigator. Rented to tourists in the form of a palm-top computer complete with headsets and microphone for 15 Euros per day, the guide allows for the easy identification of points of interest, best routes to take and information on services available in various areas. Works of art, hotels, shops, bars, and also markets and theatre and cinema programs, are all contained in Arianna's database. The guide is equipped with a search option, similar to those of the internet, which helps the tourist to quickly find what he or she is looking for. The palmtop is also Wi-Fi enabled so the tourist can use it to connect to the internet at access points across town, and can even be used to make phone calls.

Waymedia (www.waymedia.it) has developed solutions for short distance communications to mobile devices, such as mobiles and smartphones, palm-tops and ipods. Potential uses vary from proximity marketing campaigns to tourist services in cities of art and public utility info. Waymedia products are based on Bluetooth transmitters equipped with autonomous logic able to manage communications campaigns by recognizing the type of mobile contacted and adapting the content sent to the device. Mediabase (www.mediabase.it) began as a spin-off from the University of Parma and was then bought by Gruppo Sce Elettronica of Modena, and proposes the CameraCar, a revolutionary communication and video-control system for ambulances, buses, emergency services and modes of transport in general. The system shows images of events in real time, for example inside and outside an ambulance, for immediate information. An infrared video camera is placed in front of the vehicle and records the route. A second video camera inside allows for the real-time monitoring of passengers, directly from the companies operational base. The same recording can also gather qualitative information on on-board crew intervention and allows the viewer to intervene with other suggestions.

A PORTRAIT IN FIGURES

by Ermes Oldrini

A selection of numbers from Emilia-Romagna - from territory to environment, demographics to society, social politics to the economy, and public administration - are collected and printed for the first time in a single publication. It's called I numeri dell'Emilia-Romagna (the numbers of Emilia-Romagna), realized by the Region's Statistics office in the "Quaderni di statistica" collection, edited by Clueb. There are two objectives: the spreading of a useful instrument for data research and use, and to accompany the updating of the Region's political economic-financial record. The main information is:

POPULATION "on the basis of this data, we can rightly speak about a true 'demographic spring' for Emilia-Romagna, linked mostly to

the strong immigration", explains Regional vice-president and Finance councillor Flavio Delbono. Up until the 31st of December 2005, the population of Emilia Romagna was made up of 4,187,544 residents, an increase of 36,000 units compared to 2004; in the last decade it has grown by 250,000 units. In 2022, regional residents could reach the number of 4.7 million. Women account for 51.4 percent of the population. This relationship changes as age increases: there are more males amongst the young and, gradually, this decreases over time until, in the over-80 category, there is one man to every two women. The very young are on the increase. Known as an "elderly" region, Emilia-Romagna, the birth rate has increased over recent years, thanks to the presence of immigrants. This not only brings growth, but also rejuvenates the area. From 2000 to 2005, overall birth increase was at 13 percent (equal to 4,500 children) and showed that one in five babies have at least one foreign parent. While births have increased, marriages have decreased by over 20 percent in fewer than fifteen years. Over half a million students (approx. one in 8 inhabitants) attend the schools.

EXPORTS Although affected by negative circumstances, in 2005 Emilia-Romagna did however manifest signs of recovery, evidenced by the slight acceleration of the regional GDP (+ 0.9 percent). Still in 2005, exports increased by 7.7 percent, "weighing in" for 12.6 percent of the national total. Growth has occurred in all manufacturing divisions - which counts overall for 98 percent of overseas sales in Emilia-Romagna - with the exception of paper and non-metal material (ceramics) industries. Export increases recorded in 2005 are mainly due to US, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Chinese and Romanian markets.

ENTERPRISE At the end of 2005, there were 425,225 active businesses in Emilia-Romagna compared to 420,401 in 2004 (almost 5 thousand more), with a tendential increase of 1.1 percent. In percentages, the most consistent growth can be linked to property, computer, research and building enterprises. Overall, there is a business for every 10 residents (one in every 4 families) over the whole territory. Active businesses with female owners have exceeded a total of 85,000, registering a grea-

ter growth rate (+ 1.8 percent) compared to the total rate of active businesses in the region.

EMPLOYMENT with an employment rate of 71 percent, 68.4 percent employment and 3.8 percent unemployment (still for the year 2005), Emilia-Romagna is highly placed compared to other Italian regions. From the year 2004, employment has grown (1.4 percent) above the national average (0.7 percent) and employment rates, for both male and female, are placed above European averages. Female employment, in particular, is at 60 percent; this was reached earlier than the time-scale (2010) decreed by the Lisbon strategy for EU Countries. Compared to 2004, unemployment rates have registered + 0.1 percent, keeping it at one of the lowest national levels.

TECHNOLOGY In Emilia-Romagna around 87 percent of the population has the option of Broadband connections and UMTS signals reach around 79 percent. 🐾

THE WORLD IN A RECTANGLE

by Maurizio Ortobene

Who has never tried to barter their doubles? Who has never opened a colourful packet in frenzy, hoping to find the missing stickers? If you want to relive childhood passions, Modena now has a place like no other in the world, the new Museum of stickers at the Santa Margherita building (www.museodellafigurina.it). From the legendary Liebig to marvellous football albums, the Museum allows you to visit that fabulous and surprising world of small prints that populated the dreams of generations of children and now thrills many adults and image history scholars.

It all began with Giuseppe Panini's passion for collecting things. He was the founder of Panini Publishing and was responsible - alongside his brothers Benito, Franco Cosimo and Umberto - for stickers in the modern sense. With the desire to increase product value through a history of small prints, Giuseppe collected hundreds of thousands of pieces from all over the world, similar to stickers for their technique or function. The collection grew to a

point when, in 1986, it became a museum hosted within the company and was donated to the Town of Modena in 1986.

In following years, the museum concentrated on cataloguing the 500,000-strong collection, adding to it and displaying it via themed publications and exhibitions in prestigious locations throughout the country, preparing the ground for the opening of new spaces.

Flicking through the pages of the great "album of wonders" that makes up the original display of the new areas, the public finds a fresh view on the history and customs of the last 150 years, as narrated by these surprising objects of desire. Beginning with the chromolithographic technique and its advertising history, and the small and large companies that spread the stickers throughout the world (such as legendary Liebig), we discover other equally interesting "mementos" like cigarette cards, paper seals, cigar bands and old albums. The infinity of subjects collected within these small cards led to a turning point for the Panini brothers, represented here by the now legendary Footballer league album of 1961/1962, when stickers, previously used for preserves and detergents, acquired the status of an autonomous means of communication. Visitors to the museum can take a journey through memory and fantasy that makes stops in the worlds of cinema (Liebig cards revealed "cinematographer's tricks around 1912), sport, gastronomy, fashion and, surprisingly enough, also education. There are in fact thousands of collections that stimulated children to learn about far away countries, nature, scientific discovery and literary figures. 🐾

THE "HARPOONER" OF SOULS

by Renato Bertacchini

On the 28th of December 2006, at the Istituto Santa Teresa in Ravenna, Don Francesco Fuschini died at age 92. Harpooner and crucifix for the glory of the Lord, student, diarist and priest from Romagna, he was defined by Prezzolini "the greatest living Catholic writer". And for good reason it appears. His books were legendary indeed and reading *Non vendo il Papa* (Boni, 1978), *L'ultimo anarchico* (Il

Girasole, 1980), *Parole poverette* (Marsilio, 1981), *Mea culpa* (Rusconi, 1990, Marsilio, 1997) and *Vita da cani e da preti* (Marsilio, 1995) the existential parable of love for Jesus and his "sin" of wanting to be a writer as well as a priest become evident. An unusual priest, "harpooner" of souls, he had harpooned and poached eels in Comacchio. The weapons suited to him are the harpoon with eleven sharp barbs and the benedictory aspergillum. An exceptional seminarian, dedicated to the Gospel and to the Frontespizio (militant Florentine catholic newspaper of Bargellini), Don Franzchè was born in San Biagio d'Argenta, at the border between Ravenna and Ferrara. A merciless town of lagoon hatchery guards and "harpooners", where people who ate "poverty and malaria". His father, Giovanni Del Moro (who learned to write his name in the trenches of Carso) resorted to poaching in order to feed his family. Although not a political man, baptising his son in a land of unrepentant socialists would have meant losing the group's solidarity and alienation from his work and social friends. His mother and her sister took the matter in hand. Aunt Amadea, astride a bicycle with the baby in a bag, went to Don Amidi, a "specialist in clandestine baptisms". Francesco, "harpooner" and aspiring priest, meets with hostile resistance and he and his family find themselves isolated. On becoming priest of Porto Fuori, he finds himself up against anarchists, socialists, republicans, blacks, reds and greens, all rabid anticlericals. On the other hand, the dialect of Romagna, besides being traditionally anticlerical, became a liturgy on the lips of the Bishop of Brisighella: "Tu es sacerdos in aeternum", quickly confirmed: "I me prit, par sèmpar" (my priests, forever). It is the talk of a boastful community, mixed with the best literary classicism. It's the sincere and frank vernacular imbued with Bible and breviary that makes Don Franzchè a good and honest man and gives him the faith that appears in his works. 🐾

THE MEXICAN OF FERRARA

by Claudio Bacilieri

The hand that designed the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City is Italian. Amid Aztec ruins, colonial buildings, museums and murals, the Zó-

calo - the heart of the city - boasts the work of Ferrarese architect Adamo Boari among its main attractions. The task of building a new National Theatre - what the building was first to be used as - was entrusted to Boari in 1901, when peace imposed by President-Dictator Porfirio Díaz allowed the bourgeoisie to concentrate on its pastimes. Boari was chosen for the project as, at that time, he was considered to be the best architect working in Mexico. Born in Marra, near Ferrara, in 1863, Boari finished his civil engineering studies in Bologna in 1886 after starting out at the University of Ferrara. Three years later he and two friends set off for Brazil. It was from there that he sent drawings and projects for the first Italian Exhibition of Architecture in Turin in 1890. He also spent some time in Montevideo and Buenos Aires. In Brazil he dedicated himself to the construction of the Santos-Campiñas railway. Ill with yellow fever, he moved to Chicago following his convalescence, where he decided to return to Italy. He was soon recalled to Chicago, however, with a new task. In the American city he took part in the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and in 1899 he qualified as an architect. Still in Chicago, he was commissioned for work in Mexico between 1897 and 1899. After coming second in a competition for the building of the Palacio del Poder Legislativo, he was asked to design the cupola of the Church of Nuestra Señora del Carmen, the churches of Atotonilco el Alto and Matehuala and the Templo Expiatorio in the city of Guadalupe in Italian gothic style. Mexico featured increasingly Boari's life, so much so that he moved there in 1899. He designed a monument at Porfirio Díaz and, above all, participated in the construction of the Post Office Building (1902-07), with its mix of Venetian, Manuelian, and Plateresque styles. This was his most important work following the new National Theatre. He worked on the layout of the Palacio Nacional and his own home in Mexico City, considered to be the first example of modern architecture in the country for its smooth walls and sober layout.

In order to best prepare the project for the grand theatre of the Mexican capital (now the Palace of Fine Arts) Boari took to travelling across Europe and the United States, from

1901 to 1904, searching for the best studies and examples of theatre architecture. In Chicago he frequented the factory of Frank Lloyd Wright, leader of the organic movement and one of the best architects of the Twentieth century. There he drafted some initial plans for the building. In 1904 the building of the theatre was finally underway, under Boari's direction. The idea, focalised during the three years of preparation, was to reach a sort of auto representation of Mexican culture that can be compared, boldly, to foreign styles. "Today more than ever - said Boari - every country must boast of its own architectural styles and modernize them". Here it is that the neoclassic inspiration of the architect from Ferrara meets the decorative solutions of Art Nouveau then in vogue. We can say that the Mexican Belle Époque began with the Palacio de Bellas Artes. 🐾

WHEN THE WOLF RETURNS

by Giorgio Savona

After almost disappearing twenty years ago, wolves are repopulating the Emilia-Romagna Apennine range. Using genetic tracing, a monitoring project carried out by the Region has recorded twenty packs based mainly in the areas surrounding the parks of Foreste Casentinesi (in the district of Forlì-Cesena) and the Parco Nazionale del Crinale Tosco Emiliano (in the districts of Modena, Parma and Reggio Emilia). The presence of the wolf, most beloved fairytale animal, has also been recorded in the Bologna area, near the Parco del Corno alle Scale and Montesole.

Its return can be attributed to various factors, amongst which the wolf hunting ban (although still widespread), the demarcation of protected areas, and the depopulation of the mountain. Let's not forget that the Region also provides 100% refunds for any farm damage. In particular, the wolf is returning to those areas where wild hoofed animals are reappearing: boars, but mainly deer and roe, its natural prey. "As the battle for the return of the wolf has been won - explains regional Councillor for territorial safety, land and hunting defence Mariolui Bruschini - we must begin work

on cultural education as the presence of this animal provokes irrational fears. The commitment of one region, however, is not enough. For this reason I will promote the initiative at national level, involving the state and other regions, so that the wolf is recognized for what it really is, a resource, not a threat."

A protected species in Italy since 1972, Europe also considers the wolf to be of fundamental importance to the balance of the ecosystem and is protected by Habitat community directives. There are now two aims: to continue to study the species, monitoring numbers and movements, and the creation of environmental conditions that are favourable to wolves in the mountains - their natural habitat - to avoid forays to foothills and lowlands.

For this very reason the Region has sent resources for the rural development plan to appropriate forest managements. These will also serve to improve the quality of the woods. 🐾

THE PILGRIM'S ROUTE

by Anna Maria Martina

From Gran San Bernardo the route passes through Aosta, Pavia, the Po near Piacenza, Fidenza, Fornovo, the Cisa pass, Lucca, the Arno, Siena, Viterbo and then, finally, Rome. These were and still are the main stops of the Italian tract the Via Francigena, a route documented in 990 by Sigeric, the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is a route that takes us back to the roots of Christian Europe and allows the discovery of numerous remnants of Gothic and Romanesque art, both cultured and popular, that are distributed along the way: crosses, aedicules, monasteries, churches, sanctuaries, cathedrals, villages, parish churches and castles. Two new guides published by the Italian Touring Club cover the very same route that, for centuries, was walked by the many pilgrims travelling to the eternal city. Via Francigena: dal Gran San Bernardo ai luoghi santi di Roma (176 pages, 18 euro) allows you to easily follow the route and provides a wealth of historical, artistic and also practical information, thanks to an index on accommodation, restaurants,

farmhouses, hostels and museums. Overall it describes 15 different itineraries enriched by 21 maps.

The 'blue guide' *La Via Francigena dal Po a Lucca* (112 pages, 12,50 euro) is designed for those who wish to gain a better understanding of the Emilia and Tuscany tract of the ancient route. This guide too provides historical and artistic information as well as practical advice for organizing the trip. At the end of each chapter a "pedestrian route" is laid out for trekking enthusiasts. For those with little time spare, there is a section highlighting the best sights to see there. It's an opportunity to trace the steps of this ancient devotional route but is also enhances tourism and the economy of the rural-mountain area between the districts of Piacenza and Parma. There are currently 18 European partners involved in the initiative concerning also the Cammino de Santiago: Italian, Spaniards, French, Portuguese and Swedes. It's a strategic marketing project in collaboration with, as far as the Via Francigena is concerned, the Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi that foresees the creation of tourist packages, promotional material and a website. 🐾

HUNGER TRAVELS

by Claudio Bacilieri

In a very precise area of our country, the Apennine region of Parma and Piacenza, emigration has far reaching and various origins. Born of the need "to make a living" ("Per procacciarsi il vitto") this is the title of the book by Giuliano Mortali and Corrado Truffelli published by Edizioni Diabasis of Reggio Emilia in a series on Parma and its territory. The reason for emigrating is the same the world over: hunger. Historical tales of migratory fluxes, however, take disparate forms and directions. The Parma Diaspora - in particular that of the Taro and Ceno valleys researched by Mortali and Truffelli in the ancien régime and Kingdom of Italy - has spread to the four corners of the earth. This is supported by the incredible inventive capacity of its protagonists, who appear to have acquired a taste for, or have at least adapted to, a wandering existence. Many of

the beggars, vagabonds and street vendors that crowded European squares came from our Apennine region. Sifting through archives and searching in parish churches, Mortali and Truffelli brought to light a rich tapestry of names and dates from which beautiful and tragic memories emerge.

Tales of lives forced far away, like birds out of the nest. Somewhat like Winifred Georg Sebald's book, *Emigrants*, this archival obsession, although not literature, gathers documents, letters, postcards and old photographs that allow us to see a reality that the more it appears to be real, the more it evades us. So fantastical do these true stories appear.

The details collected in "Per procacciarsi il vitto" take us close to the threshold of the modern age: in 1596 Prince Federico Landi of Val Taro ordered the notification of the lands abandoned by their owners, a sign that immigration was already underway at that time. Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, many comings and goings can be observed between the mountain and the plains. Insufficient resources and a diet of chestnut flour and little else forced the womenfolk of the Apennine to beg in Parma or work in the mills of Oltrepò in Lombardy. The men, on the other hand, went to the valleys to become sawyers or woodcutters.

As early as the beginning of the Nineteenth century, the mountain dwellers widened their horizons and began "travelling over France, Germany and England, with bears, monkeys, camels, dogs and other amusing creatures", as noted by Don Corazza, parish priest of Carniglia in 1803. Upon their return, they had usually accumulated enough money to buy farms. In 1832 Lorenzo Molossi writes that they "return free of prejudices, more refined than ever, and with sufficient means to support themselves in old age". It's surprising to think that these vagabonds, who moved constantly from city to city in Europe, were an expression of a cosmopolitan world: they learned the languages, the currency and the customs of the places they travelled through and, therefore, returned to their remote villages with sources of knowledge unique to that time. 🐾