

Lucia Savi. *A New History of Made in Italy.
Fashion and Textile in Post-War Italy.* Bloomsbury,
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Simona Segre Reinach*

University of Bologna (Italy)

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The project for this important volume published by Bloomsbury takes its starting point from two moments of research that involved the author: an exhibition on Italian fashion held in 2014 at the V&A in London (“The Glamour of Italian Fashion” curated by Sonnet Stanfill), in which Lucia Savi collaborated as a research assistant, and the PhD that followed. The research, which focused on Italian textiles, particularly located in the silk and wool districts, gave Savi the cue to delve into the evolving relationship between textiles and fashion, identifying a particular methodology she calls inside-out. And indeed, as is clear from the succession of chapters, this is a book based on overturning many stereotypes and clichés around the motivations for Italian fashion success. The book aims to investigate the ways in which ‘made in Italy’ was produced and represented from the second half of the 1940s, when it was still in its infancy, to the 1980s when it was already world famous for its prêt-à-porter. The starting point of this research is the relationship between fashion creation and textile production and the ways in which ideas and materials have come together in an entirely new way within the global fashion system, linking production, commerce, aesthetics and new interpretations of national identity. The fundamental role of textiles, in the author’s opinion not sufficiently explored so far, remains at the centre of her research: the reader is thus led through the different stages of a historical and cultural journey on the role of materials, textiles and fibres, in the formation of Italian fashion. Objects in their broadest and most cultural dimension constitute the primary source of Savi’s research — which is inspired by recent works such as Jonathan Faiers’ on Tartan — to analyse the many aspects of Italian fashion. The primary sources were fundamental to the writing of the book: archives, interviews, magazines and newspapers. The inside-out method allowed her to see the evolution of the relationship between fashion and textiles — discovering the alternation of moments in which textile innovation was the driving force behind style innovation and others in which the opposite occurred. The period covered by the study is several decades, from 1940 to 1985; this has enabled a better understanding of the turning points and the role of materials made in Italy, but also from elsewhere. There are six chapters: in the first one the role of fibres and textiles in the

* ✉ simona.segrereinach@unibo.it

post-World War II period is analysed; in the second chapter the relationship between Italian exports to the United States and the consequences on design is analysed; in the third chapter the transformation that took place in the 1960s is analysed; the fourth chapter analyses the relationship between fashion and industry and the role of textile intermediaries, the so-called *Carnettisti*, active above all in the 1950s-1960s; the fifth chapter deals with the rise of the city of Milan as the capital of fashion and the heart of Italian-made goods; the sixth and final chapter deals with the challenges of Italian fashion in mass production.

The book is a very useful tool both for fashion scholars and theorists who can find previously unpublished insights, and for students who can approach the meaning and role of Italian fashion in a critical yet accessible way.