

Università degli Studi Roma Tre

XXXI Convegno Internazionale di Studi Cinematografici

40 + 40 = 80 Years of Images about the Shoah (1945-1985-2025)

a cura di Ivelise Perniola e Francesco Pitassio

17 - 18 novembre 2025

Dipartimento di Filosofia, Comunicazione e Spettacolo

Via Ostiense, 139

Museo Fondazione Shoah

Via del Portico d'Ottavia, 29

La struttura dello sguardo. Visione, analisi, comprensione

Martedì 18 novembre ore 14.00 - 15.45

The First Italian Cinematic Representation of Nazi Extermination Camps: L'ebreo errante by Goffredo Alessandrini

Carolina Caterina Minguzzi (Ricercatrice Indipendente)

This paper examines *L'ebreo errante* (1948) by Goffredo Alessandrini, the first Italian film to represent the Holocaust and to set the majority of its plot within a Nazi extermination camp for Jews. Significantly, the depiction of this camp, reconstructed for the screen, was shaped by the creative input of a survivor of Mauthausen, Aldo Bizzarri. Drawing on production documents from the Central State Archive in Rome, censorship reports, and the original synopsis of the subject by Giovan Battista Angioletti, I analyze the film as both a historical document and a problematic representation of the Holocaust. *L'ebreo errante* is thus a significant, but also a controversial, lacking the historical awareness, understanding, and sensitivity that we have come to expect of visualizations of the Shoah. Alessandrini's film deserves analysis because it emerged in a historical context in which Italy was reluctant to confront its complicity in the Holocaust. *L'ebreo errante* may therefore be understood to have raised Italian awareness about the Nazi genocide, but it did so at a cost. As I show, Alessandrini's film perpetuates clichéd and even anti-Semitic narratives, illustrating how media can shape collective memory and reinforce distorted historical narratives. Through a process of remediation, Alessandrini's film mixes a realistic depiction of the Holocaust with cinematic and cultural clichés rooted in popular and genre traditions. The methodology combines film analysis with a review of primary sources including contemporary critical and journalistic reception, the film's *fotoromanzo*, and Fascist-era publications such as *La Difesa della Razza*. I also engage with secondary scholarship, especially the work of Marcello Pezzetti, Robert Gordon, Damiano Garofalo, and Silvana Patriarca. While I suggest that these narrative and visual conventions continued to shape later portrayals of the Holocaust, my focus is on situating *L'ebreo errante* within a broader system of representation circulating in 20th-century European culture.

Carolina Minguzzi recently completed a master's in Italian studies at the University of Notre Dame, where her research focused on early Italian cinematic representations of Nazi extermination camps, with particular attention to Goffredo Alessandrini's *L'ebreo errante*. She previously earned a master's degree in film studies from the University of Bologna, where her thesis focused on Guido Aristarco's archive, the director of *Cinema Nuovo*. She also completed her bachelor's degree in film studies at the University of Bologna, with a thesis on Jerry Lewis in DC Comics. Her research mainly focuses on Italian Cinema, Neorealism, Fascism and Resistance, Post-war Italian history, Film Criticism, the international circulation of media products (and their national mediations), and women's studies. She works as a film festival critic and film critic for *Cinefilia Ritrovata*, the online magazine of the Cineteca of Bologna, *E Muto Fu*, and *Streamofilia*.