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Explanatory note

The essay was conceived and written by the two authors in close collaboration. More specifically, *Conclusions* were written by the two authors jointly. Rather, Andrea Mariani has written paragraphs 1 and 4, *Scrapbooks as Thesauri of the History of Cinema* and *The Social and Media Environments*, and Maria Ida Bernabei has written paragraphs 2 and 3, *Four Rhetorical Regimes* and *The Inner Universe of a Filmgoer*.

Venice, 01/04/2023

Maria Ida Bernabei
Andrea Mariani

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Ida Bernabei', with a stylized flourish at the end.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Mariani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Story of a cinema-goer: Seventy years of film viewing in the city of Udine as seen through ephemera

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Abstract:

This article is based on the collection of seven scrapbooks assembled by a cinema-goer of the city of Udine: Walter Faglioni, a cinephile and an amateur filmmaker. From 1926 to 1999, every day he took note of every film screened or broadcasted, which he watched, filling a total of 36 diaries. Using these records as a temporal guideline, he organized all the ephemera materials and clippings which he gathered into six scrapbooks, ordered by decades. These scrapbooks provide us with an exceptionally sophisticated and multi-faceted encyclopedic perspective on his own film viewing experience and habits: on the one hand, they are a valuable, rich and detailed source of information for the microhistory of the film circulation in the city of Udine and the impact of TV culture on local film consumption; on the other hand, they shed light on the historical and critical impulse toward film knowledge that characterizes a given cinephile culture; lastly, they patently manifest the peculiar historical value and the multilayered complexity of ephemeral media as personal archives, proving a nuanced source for the history of cinema-going.

Keywords: Cinema-going, Ephemera, Cinephilia/Telephilia, Scrapbook, Film and TV Culture

Scrapbooks as Thesauri of the History of Cinema

This article is based on the collection of seven scrapbooks, assembled by a cinema-goer of Udine: Walter Faglioni, who was a cinephile and an amateur filmmaker.¹ From 1926 to 1999, every day Faglioni took note of every film screened or broadcasted, which he watched, filling a total of 36 diaries. Using some of these records as a temporal guideline and a sort of Ur-text, he included the ephemera materials and clippings which he gathered during the entire period into seven scrapbooks (named *Antologia del cinema – Anthology of Cinema*) (See Fig. 1). These were ordered by decades, from number one to number seven, plus two

books [*libroni*], collecting only the titles of films from the century, in alphabetical order.² As time moved forward, Faglioni not only produced new scrapbooks but also overwrote the older ones, including increasingly sophisticated inceptions of critical, self-referential and memory writings. In this article we analyse these scrapbooks as a rich, multi-layered and complex source of (local) cinema history.



Fig. 1. Walter Faglioni, *Antologia del cinema* [*Anthology of cinema*] collection – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

On the one hand, we are interested in excavating the scrapbook as a ‘thesaurus’ of the self-reflexive experience of film viewing in a given geographic area, such as Udine – a small town in the North-East of Italy, during the time of almost one century. Jeffrey Klenotic, in a recent article, discussed the role and potentialities of such microhistories in the field of New Cinema History, stressing how “microhistories of movie audiences and cinema cultures can make greater or lesser contributions to an understanding of wider historical trends and patterns” when “integrated into the greater dynamics of social processes” (Klenotic 2020: 13). This observation forms one of the major axes in our arguments too. On the other hand, we also want to question these scrapbooks and the ephemera they incorporate (clippings, diary pages and screenings memorabilia) as particular forms of ‘meta-histories’ of cinema

(Hastie 2003), and a bridge between the films, which inspired them, and the context and time when those films were shown (Wickham 2010: 317).

By calling the scrapbook a *media-thesaurus*, we want to stress the role and function of ephemera as a source in the writing of cinema history. In particular, we recall what historian Cornelia Vissman said about the origins of the *thesauri* in the Middle Ages. *Thesauri* were technologies that supplanted the Roman administrative system: repertoires, lists, indexing, and semantic metadata. They were not actual ‘documents’ – in the *monumental*³ acceptance we can give to this notion – but rather mobile and portable ‘working memories’, kept for a relatively short time. They were precarious and temporary traces of a given act or operation, recorded for practical reasons, and never destined for long-term preservation.⁴ This point, in particular, allows us to stress how these ephemera were not just driven by an archival impulse but rather informed by a strong performative pulse that shaped their social function.⁵ Furthermore, Vissman’s account of *thesauri* also helps us shed light upon the kind of authority that characterises ephemera as a source for cinema history. As we will discuss, these materials are not proper archives, meant as emanating an *auctoritas* that we can articulate definite discourse analysis from. The authority of the person these objects are reflecting is weak, often evanescent. Thus, we should probably talk of a *weak discursive propensity*: its intensity and pertinence can be deployed in different rhetorical regimes, but its stability is constantly mined and uncertain. By paraphrasing Vivian Sobchack (2000: 304), it leads us to a field, or site, of (film) history that is unstable and shifting.

The microhistory we can derive from the materials belonging to Walter Faglioni has to come to terms with the fact that the statute of them as historical shreds of evidence and the patency of their maker’s will and awareness into them are constantly fluctuating in epistemic uncertainty. Here the scrapbook is not a film history encyclopaedia, a film screenings personal chronicle, or a film taste private diary: it is everything in between. So, from a strictly historical perspective, this case tells of how ephemera are delicate and questionable sources of history, demanding a constant hermeneutical exercise. To provide an exact date of manufacturing for each album was an infertile effort, and to classify a precise target and function for these objects too. Excavating ephemera as a source of history means to make a ‘monument’ from a labile trace, and ‘suggest[] that it has more value than may originally have been intended when these materials were created’ (Wickham 2010: 317). Every step into them could open original historical scenarios, even though it makes them volatile and vulnerable pasts.

This is not the first article to discuss the questionable reliability of the scrapbook as a historical source⁶, though this is a case where the ‘miscellany of cinema history’ (Hastie 2003) and the imbrications of everyday life of the film fan are entangled with an original, pervasive and systemic historical impulse. Furthermore, this research presents a valuable case of how a culture of cinema is produced within a long-lasting intermedial framework (Stead 2016: 3), where literary regimes encountered visual cultures and the physical practice of film-going in what Katie Day Good (2012, 559) called ‘personal media

assemblages'. Walter Faglioni was an amateur filmmaker, an amateur film critic and a professional school teacher. Therefore, his multiple film fan personality constantly impacted on the making of these albums, where educational impulses and artistic and intellectual enthusiastic experiments converged with his multi-coloured cultural world too. According to this premise, and in order to manage epistemic uncertainty, we propose to frame these objects from a prismatic perspective. We will stress the combination of four rhetorical regimes and two *performative 'vectors'*, where an internal and personal journey overlaps with the microhistory of local geography – the social and cultural environment of Faglioni – where a film aficionado grew up and lived for more than seventy years.

Four Rhetorical Regimes

A first regime we can isolate within the weak discursive propensity of Walter Faglioni's work is the film viewing chronicle. Each album is ordered by decades, according to a linear chronology. The film titles appear sorted by screening date (in most cases, when this information is confirmed), and in alphabetical order, with an occasional indication of the director and cast. There are some differences between the scrapbooks: for example, compared to the others, the first volume of the *Antologia del cinema* (ranging from the Lumière brothers to 1937) leaves more room for a visual rewriting of the history of cinema. In it, Faglioni mainly included ephemera, images and clippings. In fact, the listing of viewed films (whose precise reference is lost in time, together with the first screening diaries) is generically summarised into short 'focus' filmographies of actors. Here the screening date is replaced by the date of the film production, as Faglioni himself attested.⁷ Furthermore, within this rhetoric regime, the author often differentiated between the different screening settings: the cinema theatres of Udine (Ariston, Centrale, Odeon, Capitol and Cristallo), Pordenone, the Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche (a local film club association), or television, thus providing a geography of viewing locations.

A second regime pertains to reconstructing a proper history of cinema, articulated as an anthology, starting with the Lumière brothers. *Antologia del cinema* is actually the title Faglioni gives to the series (See **Fig. 2**). Chronologically arranged pages are devoted to films, directors and actors of great importance (See **Fig. 3**). Faglioni combines rich and diverse sources: images and advertising, clippings and handwritten contributions by himself, as authentic insights into cinema history. We find foci on the literary sources of some film genres (Neorealism, for example), fan culture trivia information (i.e. information on 'child actors' in the American or Italian cinema), and pages filled with film bibliographical sources. Within this rhetorical regime, we also find foci on specific actors, including a precise documentation of the date of their first screen appearance, their filmographies, and some peculiar screening memories related to them. Actually, all content is constantly filtered through Faglioni's own experience as a spectator. Through such foci, in fact, this encyclopedic framework interconnects with a memory and personal narrative (See **Fig. 4**).



Fig. 2. Walter Faglioni, *Antologia del cinema* [Anthology of cinema]–, n. 1 – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.



Fig. 3. Walter Faglioni, *Antologia del cinema* [Anthology of cinema]–, n. 1 – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

A third regime is related to film criticism: Walter Faglioni included brief essays of tentative film criticism, alternating his handwritten pieces with clippings by professional film critics from Italian film journals such as *Rivista del Cinematografo* and *Cineforum* or *Segnocinema*, among others. The Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche (CEC) film association provided some of these critical texts as informative brochures accompanying the screenings. These clippings often contain critical commentaries overwritten by the author. He puts his own

opinions alongside those of the critics or he questions the latter, for example, in the page dedicated to *Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls on the Heap* (*Pepi Luci Bom y Otras Chicas Del Monton*, Almodóvar, 1980). These ‘critical’ overwriting operations sometimes arise from the memory of a past screening, provoked by a later re-programming of the same film. These become occasions for re-evaluations: ‘a comic film, without evaluating its intrinsic values, which make it undoubtedly Keaton’s masterpiece’⁸, he says about Buster Keaton’s *The General* (1926), re-programmed by CEC film association of Udine sixty-five years after his first viewing. Similarly, Faglioni writes that Jean Vigo’s *L’Atalante* (1934) ‘seemed boring’ to him at first, but later he recognised it as ‘a forerunner of an original “magical realism” [...] that “leaves a mark” of what the then 29-year-old Jean Vigo could have done if death had not prevented him from finishing this last film’.⁹



Fig. 4. Walter Faglioni, *Antologia del cinema* [Anthology of cinema]–, n. 1 – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

A fourth regime, sometimes patent in the critical overwriting too, is the memorialist one, based on the ‘films I have seen’ or ‘I remember having seen’. This dimension discloses the varied range of dynamics of the memory performance, scrutinised by Faglioni himself with extreme awareness. A few memories are about the author’s childhood, such as his first time going to a cinema theatre, accompanied by his grandmother and aunt, or his first cinephile passion for actresses such as Dolores del Rio and Greta Garbo. Early years are less represented due to the loss of his first diaries. Most memories are regarding his film experience as a spectator in the city of Udine instead. Here descriptions concerning the cinema theatre environments are vivid: he describes the gradual decrease in local film-going, in the last scrapbooks, where, at some point, he finds himself ‘the only spectator in

the movie theatre'.¹⁰ The last scrapbook also reports a sentimental disaffection with the cinema, caused by the declining average quality of the films and his precarious health, limiting his mobility: 'I am tired. Tired of cinema' he finally writes in the last pages.¹¹ These four rhetoric regimes are instrumental to articulating an intellectual navigation along two vectors: one towards an auto-analytical scrutiny of the impact of cinema on this spectator's psychology and memory, and another extroverted towards the social and cultural geography of Faglioni's world.

The Inner Universe of a Filmgoer

Faglioni began to rework the information in his 36 diaries, perhaps from 1980 onwards¹², when the first Italian *Dizionario dei Film* (Rusconi, 1980) appeared, as he explicitly mentioned. Since then, he included the films which he had seen into two 'big books' [*libroni*], alphabetically ordered. The first alphabetic book, dedicated to silent and classical cinema, is currently missing, while the second one is preserved by the CEC archive and contains the films seen from 1981 to 1999. We believe that the drafting of these two 'big books' should be considered as a preliminary and parallel project to that of the *Antologia del cinema*¹³, which we can also hypothetically date back to the beginning of the 1980s. To set a precise starting date proves difficult though. *Antologia del cinema* – a project which was perhaps inspired by the enthusiasm for the centenary of cinema in the early 1990s – takes the form of an encyclopaedia of 'a century of the seventh art', and it is presented in 7 volumes: 1 (from the Lumière brothers to 1937), 2 (1938-1950), 3 (1951-1967), 4 (lost, probably covering the 1970s), 5 (1984-1991), 6 (1992-1995) and 7 (named *Antologia di Cinema e Teatro*, 1995-1997). Assuming this hypothesis of its genesis, we can conceive of this project as a veritable encyclopaedia, shaped by the author's recollections: 'a century of history of the seventh art' filtered through the memories of 71 years of a spectator's life. More specifically, according to our hypothesis, the scrapbooks are the result of repeated transcriptions and overwriting: he transcribed the 36 diaries in the two 'big alphabetic books' and expanded them into the seven scrapbooks, which in turn were still revised up to the last years of the maker's life.

We can locate the first crucial *vector of performance* to frame these scrapbooks' functions and origins in Faglioni's intimate and self-referential dimension. The date of July 18th, 1926 – the day the process of annotating the film diaries begins with Jack Holt's *The Lone Wolf* (1924), screened at the Splendor in Modena, where Faglioni spent his childhood – is mentioned several times. He remembered it again on the 71st anniversary of the occasion (July 18th 1997), when the author took the opportunity to retrace the genesis of his work. Faglioni remembers when he moved from Modena to Udine in the late 1920s and regrets having thrown the first diaries 'into the rubble'. This passage introduces a theme that pervades the entire collection of scrapbooks: the sense of loss due to the lacunae of memory and the uphill struggle to restore it. In the transition from experiencing the live events to writing the film diaries, the author declares a loss. The entire encyclopaedia is a masterful attempt to exorcise this constitutive loss of memory. It is a continuous effort to

‘rebuild the gaps’, whether they be ‘gaps of entire years’, or gaps from the point of view of ‘historical-critical evaluations’, as he writes. This sense of frustration – ‘it is hard work’, ‘it never ends!’, as Faglioni complains – also returns in the account of the second transcription (from the film diaries to the two alphabetical books). Here it takes the form of the ‘chaos’ (as Faglioni admits, stressing the overwhelming abundance of information to handle and control) and the ‘approximation (perhaps more by deficiency than excess)’ that characterises this stage of re-creation.

Read as ‘egodocuments’¹⁴, for preserving and shaping individual memory, these scrapbooks seamlessly mix the celebration of pivotal moments in the history of cinema – ‘1953. Sofia Loren’s dazzling and blazing [*folgorante e sfolgorante*] career begins’ – with annotations of essential moments in the author’s personal history, such as his attendance at the gymnasium in Modena, the recollection of his theatre-loving mother, and the date when he began teaching Scenic Art at the Tomadini music school in Udine – ‘my pupils Guerrini Bondino (tenor) and Bonaldo Giaiotti (bass) will become famous’.¹⁵ Hence, the scrapbooks illustrate what Victor Burgin (2004: 68) points out (when he discusses film scenes specifically): ‘the tendency for personal history to be mixed with recollections from films and other media productions’. Nevertheless, the stratification of memory is denser in the retrospective re-contextualisation of some of the screenings Faglioni attended during the early period. These are moments of introspection in which the memory of the distant past and the perception of a long life lived are conveyed by the gap between the critical awareness of the first and the second viewing: of Jean Vigo’s *L’Atalante*, for example, he acknowledges years later that ‘it has some merit’; of *Acciaio* (Ruttman, 1933) and *Sole* (Blasetti, 1929) he admits:

When – sixty years ago! – I saw these films, I certainly could not judge them as I do now, seeing them again [...]. I can say that I was not enthusiastic at that time, and I ignored the essential purpose of the two ‘documentary’ films aimed at propagandising the meritorious ‘works of the regime’.¹⁶

When remembered, thanks to a new screening, Faglioni describes films of the past evoking labile images: reviewing Buster Keaton’s *The General*, he says, ‘I rediscovered images that were known to me, but had disappeared from memory’. For this reason, it is challenging to fit Faglioni’s memories of film into the tripartition identified by Annette Kuhn (2011: 87): ‘firstly, remembered scenes or images from films (Type A memories); secondly, situated memories of films (Type B memories); and finally, memories of cinema-going (Type C memories)’. Faglioni’s are instead authentic ‘performances of memory’ (Kuhn 2010) that are emerging from the memorial gap between the two screenings, and they crystallise in a sort of cross-re-enactment that seem to exceed the three categories of Kuhn (See **Fig. 5**). Said differently, there is no one memory of film, nor memory of one event: material superimposition in the scrapbooking allegorically stands for a temporal and memorial

superimposition, where boundaries are blurred. It is an *evocation* of film, in its simultaneous past and present, that keeps any formal intellectual reduction unstable.

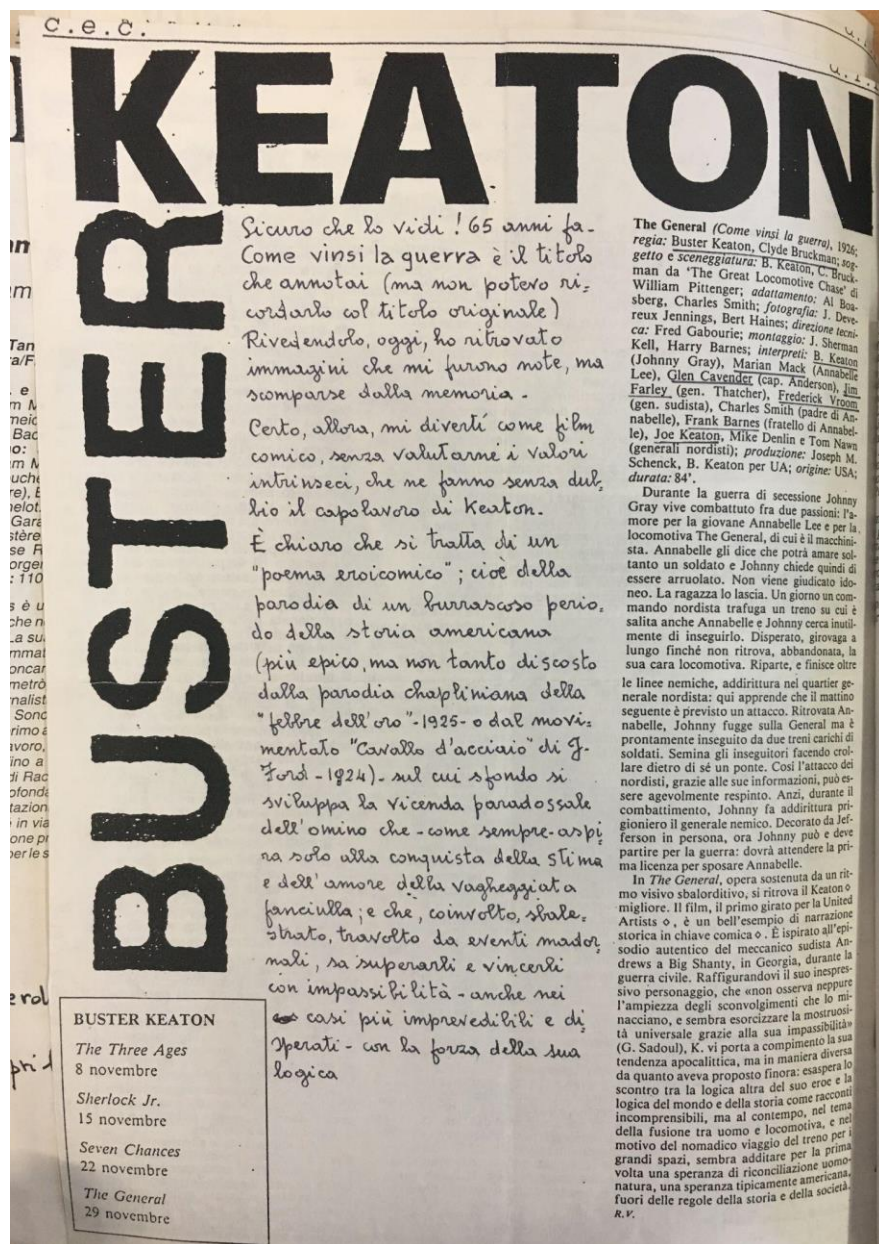


Fig. 5. Walter Fagioni, *Antologia del cinema* [Anthology of cinema]–, n. 5 – Fund Walter Fagioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

Furthermore, the scrutiny Fagioni himself carries out into his memory dynamics is striking. The awareness with which he precisely names them, referring to a lexicon that winks at neuroscience and psychology of perception, is impressive. One could find, for example, a detailed account of the synesthetic functioning of involuntary memory in two clippings from an exercise book, slightly overlapped on the scrapbook page dedicated to Dolores del Rio (See **Fig. 6**). The first reads:

Memory's tricks! Today (March 22nd, '95), I do not remember what I did ... 2 days ago! (if I do not look in my diary!). Instead ... seeing this photo of Dolores del Rio again, the song – Italian, I think; not 'adapted' from original American or Mexican music – from the film RAMONA (1928) jumped into the mnemonic department of my brain [...].

Well, given that – with the 'tune' phonographed in the associative 'projection' area of my brain – my words have been rolling around again – after 68 years of quiescence, I really want to stop them here, on paper, so that words (and music by ear) will no longer flee into the cosmic untraceable!¹⁷

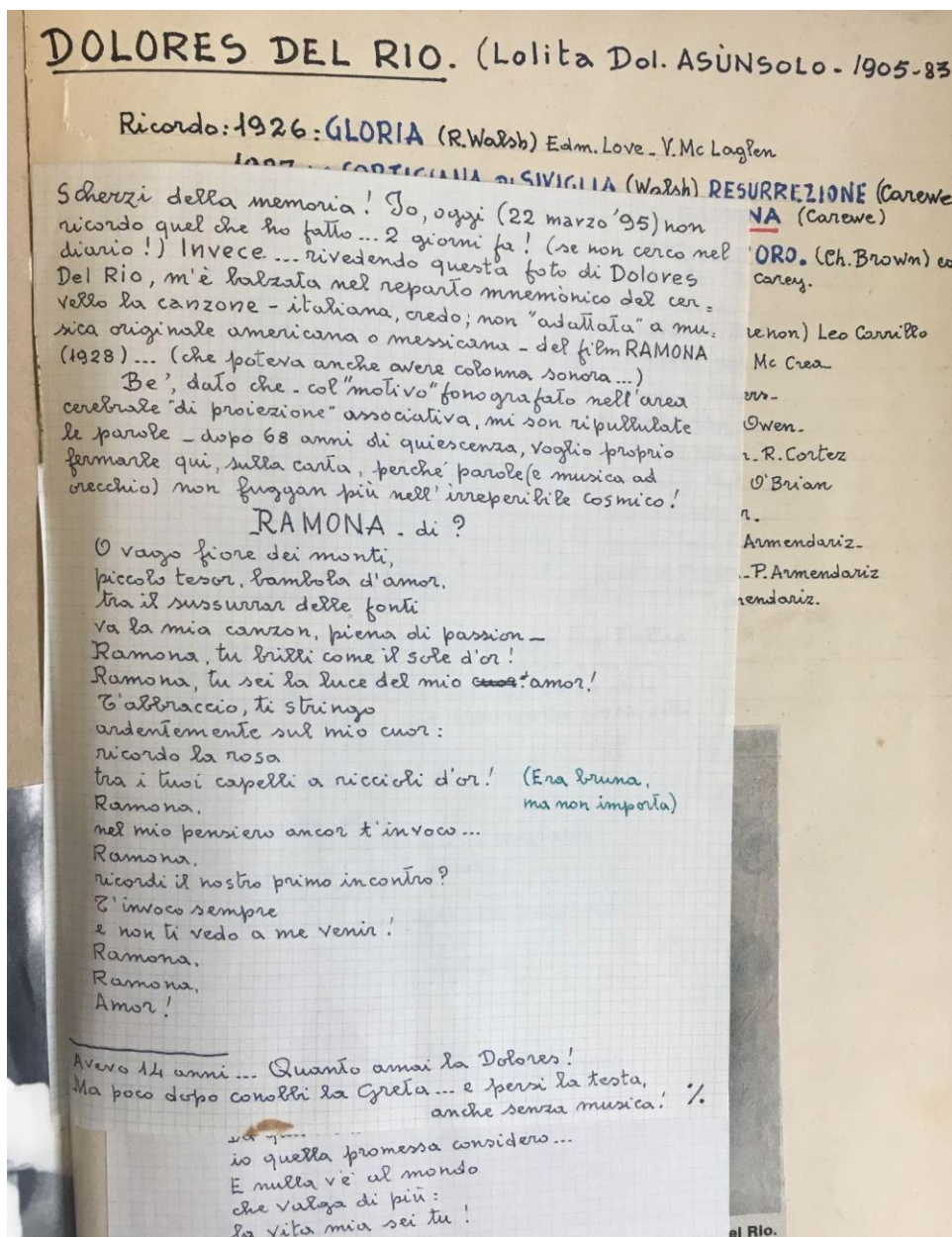


Fig. 6. Walter Faglioni, Antologia del cinema [Anthology of cinema]-, n. 1 – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

While the lyrics of this song appear on the scrapbook page, the assertions about ‘associative projection’ continue on the following leaf. So, ‘since as they say, cherries are moreish’ – he writes, a second song derived from another film by Dolores del Rio, *Maruska* (Carewe, 1929), comes to his mind *automatically* – ‘in...throat, down memory and up pre-chords’, he writes – and is punctually transcribed into the scrapbook.¹⁸

These are a few examples of the performative complexity these scrapbooks enable and project onto the inner side of his creator. By assuming a slightly different perspective, these objects can also reveal the outer world of this cinephile and the external factors of the genesis and compositions of his scrapbooks.

The Social and Media Environments

Katie Day Good (2012) emphasised the media heritage of the *album amicorum*, while discussing the relational functions of the scrapbook and the social connectivity it enables. However, the social function of Walter Faglioni’s scrapbooks is not patent. They are not just ‘the equivalent of the poor family’s cabinet of curiosities’ (Tucker, Ott and Buckler 2006: 6). They do not exclusively serve personal storage, nor are they made to share ‘treasured objects’ in order to show social status or artistic taste. Nevertheless, they make *visible* an existing social net of relations: they disclose the geography of the social and cultural performances in Udine. According to that, we can isolate some evidence of an exogenic, relational set of operations that constitutes the cultural and media environment where Faglioni’s assertions take form.

First and foremost, these scrapbooks bring up the media infrastructures that enable the circulation of the primary sources Faglioni relies on: traditional theatres, the local cine-club and film associations, the TV broadcasting system, journals and magazines. Walter Faglioni’s scrapbooks implicitly report on an age of abundance where films and film-related visual and textual materials consistently – and repeatedly – circulated in a wide variety of forms. Contrary to what literature suggests about the scrapbooking affinity to commonplace books, where hand-copied passages of books and periodicals served as tactics of cultural filtering (Gruber Garvey 2004: 209), these scrapbooks indulge this abundance. Repetition (of reiterated showing of the same film) and superimposition (of clippings about the same film) tell of an avid collection of film memories that mirrors overwhelming forms of film accessibility and availability. The critical and historic rhetoric regimes Walter Faglioni refers to are forms of rational navigation through waves of materials that foster a *bulimic* media consumption. In fact, there is no proper selection: he reports and classifies every show from auteur film to porn. More interestingly, these scrapbooks are reverberating a culture of cinema-going and a TV culture too. According to this, cinephilia and telephilia have overlaps, as well as two systems of values. Walter Faglioni’s peculiar cinephilia throughout these scrapbooks tells of the decline of one of its distinctive aspects – the quality of uniqueness and rarity of the ‘film discovery’ – and the influence of what Francesco Casetti and Mariagrazia Fanchi (2004: 39) described as the barycentre of telephilia: ‘to master the existent, to observe and wield control over TV scheduling, challenging and dominating

programs' simultaneity by taking and storing segments from it'. Far before expressing a taste, the lists and clippings in Faglioni's scrapbooks create palimpsests. They tend to a paroxysmic (and sometimes masochistic) impulse to 'master[] the existent', by providing equal room to film rarities and commercial films, all the way up to nasties. A blockbuster video culture had not yet influenced his cinephilia (Robnik 2005) – nor is there strong evidence of VCR recording or VHS collecting practices.¹⁹ Instead, his consumption habits are deeply bound to a 'telephiliac' approach. TV broadcasting seems to provide a growing number of the film shows Faglioni watched. Many film titles are labelled with a "TV" mark beside them, especially from the 1980s onwards, when Faglioni's everyday film diet must have been understandably fostered by an abundant availability of film broadcasts.²⁰ TV culture is also reverberating through the overwhelming number of clippings out of TV magazines and programmes guides. These are, by far, the most prevalent throughout the albums. From the 1980s onwards, though cine-club going habits seem to remain very attractive to Faglioni, (while cinema theatres screenings are progressively deserted), the CEC cine-club sessions co-exists with a peculiar TV-minded approach, patent in the organization of listings and chronicles of the films viewed. This double-edged tendency allows us to question the opposition between a 'fan-as-consumer' and a 'fandom-as-anti-commercial'. Faglioni's work attests to how this difference 'falsifies the fan's experience by positioning fan and consumer as separable cultural identities' (Hills 2002: 5). In fact, descending into this general tendency, Faglioni's scrapbooks let two counter-tactics emerge: not in the form of 'resistance' to 'consumerism abundance', but as a form of *mastering* it. These two counter-tactics reveal original taste-making processes that take the form of a complex intellectual and creative a-synchronic dialogue with the film critics' community, and a tendency towards a peculiar kind of film sociology.

Faglioni seems to set up a fictional dialogue with the clippings of film reviews, published on screening brochures by the cine-clubs and film associations of Udine or in film journals. It is a solitary 'deaf' dialogue in which Faglioni counters the institutional reports or statements about films. Lisa Stead (2016: 127-28) provides evidence of such a kind of imaginary 'film talks' already in the early twentieth century: they were enlivened by film journal readers into film diaries or chronicles and inspired by eminent film critics whose writing style was imitated or contested. Thus, the 'baroque, redundant, even congested vein of the film', that film critic Tullio Kezich identifies in *Giulietta degli Spiriti* (Fellini, 1965), becomes, in Faglioni's words, 'the ambitious fantasies', 'the phantasmagorical re-evocations of the magmatic cerebralisms of the Maestro from Rimini', to which he nonetheless admits that he is not attracted.²¹ Or again, the dialectic that film critic Claudio Siniscalchi identifies in Vasilij Picul's *Little Vera* (*Malenkaya Vera*, 1988) between the 'failures of communism' and the assumption of 'certain Western myths as status symbols', analysed as 'material for reflection' on the 'illness of living', returns in Faglioni's terms as a 'denunciation of the failure of the communist system' and the 'revelation of the decadence of moral values that leads to uncontrolled reactions and existential catastrophes'.²² If, on the one hand, this is still certainly part of a negotiation of personal taste and identity, on the other, it is a 'mute'

form of connectivity to a community of film critics in Italy that during the period of the early 1980s was massifying forms of taste-building and classification. For example, as briefly mentioned before, the operation of scrapbooking undergoing the 'Anthology n. 1', devoted to silent cinema, was provoked – as Faglioni himself declares – by the scarce coverage of silent films in the first critical *Dizionario dei film* (Farinotti, 1980) published in Italy in 1980.²³

Furthermore, this solitary 'deaf' dialogue with the film critics community also reverberates in some original assembling practices. Faglioni creatively re-interpreted systems of film criticism 'evaluation' that circulated in Italian journals and magazines since the 1950s.²⁴ The usual ratings 'from one to four little stars' assigned to each film are substituted by a sophisticated graphical lexicon that Faglioni implemented in his scrapbooks. This graphical lexicon helps him to organise and classify the overabundant amount of films he watched. For instance, film titles written in capital letters and/or blue ink stand for repeated screenings, the dotted underlining below one title is marking uncertainty of judgement, while red ink is magnifying the importance of a given film. Other graphic strategies – green ink, black ink or full underlining – are less recognisable and less stable, but a solid effort to 'moderate' the film stream, which Faglioni was exposed to, emerges (See Fig. 7). Despite these procedures and the role of the taste-making process enabled by the scrapbook, a significant emphasis is put on the number of films Faglioni can process every year: he highlights a final 'score' for each year, the sum of screenings and shows he watched. Thus, abundance and the accumulation of a film *cultural capital* seem to maintain a valuable priority for Faglioni.

A second relevant counter-tactic emerging from the bulimic media environment that serves Faglioni's film diet is represented by his tentative essays on the 'sociology of local cinema'. The historical rhetoric regime he articulates informs an attentive 'live' picture of the status of cinema-going in Udine. This attitude is particularly evident from the 1980s onwards, when, as pieces of evidence seem to suggest, he started working on scrapbooking and alphabetic books. As a matter of fact, these descriptions are not more 'memories' or 'historical documentations', but rather 'real-time pictures' with an ethnographical inclination. In the opening of the second alphabetic book of 1982 (See **Fig. 8**), he writes:

In the eighties, nasty and porn films circulation dramatically increases, while valuable films are more and more scarce. 'Sexy comedies' are all the rage too, together with 'musicals', 'sci-fi', 'horror' and 'adventure', full of violence and obscenities [...] 'martial arts films' tend to disappear (Bruce Lee died) [...] crisis is generalised; America is surviving thanks to marvellous special effects [...] The audience attendance in the theatres is enormously decreasing: television broadcasts new and old films.²⁵

On February 28th, 1995, he painted a clear picture of the crisis of the film audience attendance in the city of Udine:

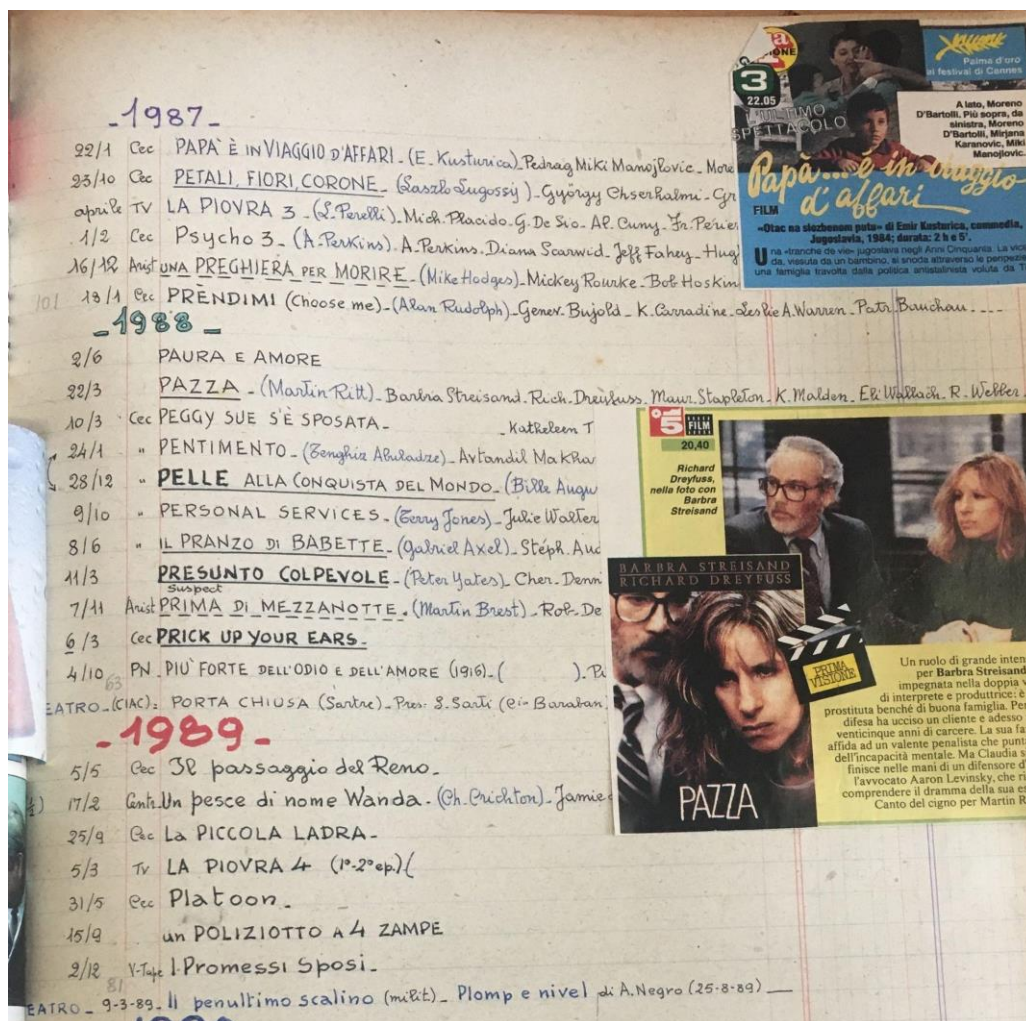


Fig. 7. Walter Faglioni, I film visti (1981-1999) [alphabetic book, n. 2] – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

I do not understand how the film distribution goes in Udine, in the cinema theatres (five in total) belonging to SAUTEC [the Friuli regional film distribution agency] (in fact, the 'Diana' – a porn cinema theatre – the 'Puccini' and the 'CEC' are run by other owners). Only the 'CEC' theatre can count on a notable audience. In the 'Ariston', 'Capitol', 'Centrale', 'Cristallo' [and] 'Odeon', the stalls area is empty during the afternoon programs (20 to 30 people in the balconies). The last show (at 10 to 12 pm o'clock) is more popular, as cashiers seem to attest. Some films have a long run, of almost one month (and more: up to fifty days!) Why? To encourage hesitant spectators?... To cover the high costs of the film loan? When the film turn-over was more frequent (and there were two kinds of seats with different prices), *habitué* film-goers – primarily older adults – packed into the hall. Today, with every seat at the same price, everyone prefers the balconies (although they are rarely numerous).²⁶

These samples of 'sociology' of cinema in the city of Udine represent a rational counterpoint to the data bulimia Faglioni strives to master and a genuine attempt to analyse this

abundance of information critically. As these quotes show, he pays attention to recurring film genres, elaborating on product innovations, and tries to explain the steady decline of participation in cinema theatres' screenings, speculating about distribution policies. Furthermore, these statements offer the occasion to connect himself to the real-time social status of film going in Udine. Mentioning the 'cashiers' observations on audience attendance presumes a dialogue he initiated with them, with possible interviews, and a real attempt to get reliable evidence on the state of cinema in the city, during a specific historical period.

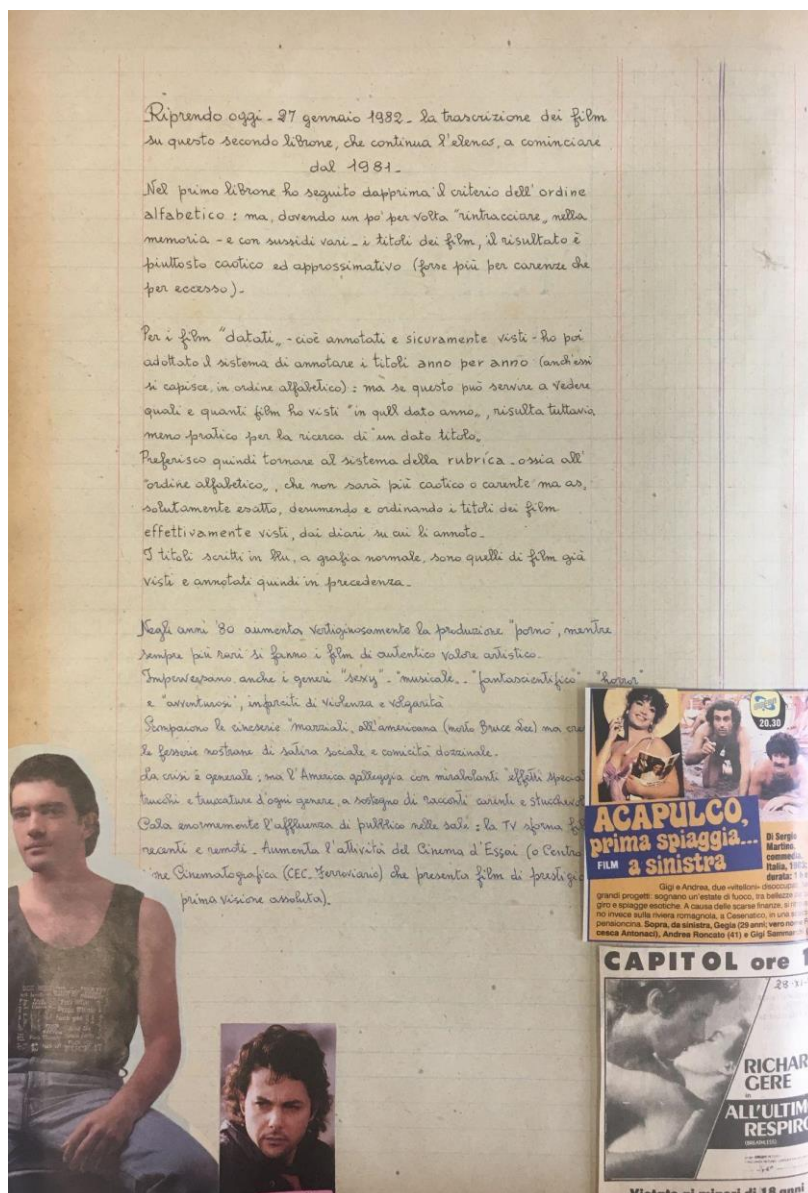


Fig. 8. Walter Faglioni, *I film visti (1981-1999)* [alphabetic book, n. 2] – Fund Walter Faglioni. Courtesy of Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, Udine.

Conclusions

The case of Walter Faglioni's scrapbooks is an emblematic example of the complexity of

such ephemera as a source of cinema history. The statute of the scrapbook as historical evidence is uncertain, and a deep reading proved how fragile and multi-layered its connections to personal memory, historical time and the geography of social life are. Furthermore, Faglioni's scrapbooks and film books are the personal *thesauri* of a filmgoer, providing an example of the complex cultural negotiation between cinephilia and fandom in film culture. On the one hand, cinephilia demands historiographical and critical accuracy. Conversely, fandom incorporates these rational and intellectual impulses in an experiential, personal and emotional mode. On the one hand, there is evidence of the encyclopedic inspiration leading this work, aimed at structuring and rationalising a scientific knowledge of film, up to the project of rewriting a 'century of cinema history'. There is rigour in his lists of titles and methodical data systematisation²⁷, and an in-depth, educational approach to film genres and actors' careers, or biographies. However, Faglioni's critical praxis is also diminished in a very personal, almost childish, way, for example, in the form of short exclamatory notes concerning the films' enjoyment – 'What a great return of the sentimental comedy! I planted it halfway through!'; 'Ambitious, voyeuristic film. I've seen half of it!'; 'This meatloaf isn't entirely digestible'.²⁸ The value of these objects lies in keeping all these levels inextricably intertwined. Childishness and professionalism, encyclopedic rationality and filters of memory, rigour and playfulness bring to a masterly exercise in film amateurism.

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Notes:

¹ Centro Espressioni Cinematografiche, an independent film association in the city of Udine, received Faglioni's album from his family and archived it a few years ago. Film-related material belonging to Walter Faglioni's activity in the local cine-club (films and scripts) are preserved by the Friuli regional film archive Cineteca del Friuli. We hereby thank these institutions for their help during this research.

² Some of these archival materials are still missing: Faglioni's screening diaries are lost, as well as the fourth scrapbook (the 'Seventies') and the first film alphabetic book.

³ We are recovering here the dialectical shift from document to monument, highlighted by Le Goff (1978).

⁴ See Vissman 2008: 72. Not surprisingly, preservation protocols for such a wide variety of ephemeral materials are a challenge for film archives or film museums: they often store them in so-called 'bunch collections' as multi-species agglomerates. A brilliant exception are cinema museums explicitly devoted to ephemera and fan cultures, such as the Film and Television department at The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, or the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum at the University of Exeter.

⁵ On this issue, see also Day Good 2012: 569.

⁶ See Gruber Garvey 2004; Helfand 2008; Day Good 2012.

⁷ In terms of the silent film period, Faglioni states that: 'titles are indicated with the (sometimes imprecise) date of the year of production, not with the screening date (because I did not note them down, you understand!)': Walter Faglioni, *I film visti (1981-1999)* [alphabetic book n. 2].

⁸ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 5 [scrapbook].

⁹ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 6 [scrapbook].

¹⁰ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 6 [scrapbook].

¹¹ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 7 [scrapbook]: 'Sono stanco. Stanco di cinema... Che è stato sempre, sin da quand'ero bambino, il mio svago preferito, la scuola più frequentata... Ho diritto d'essere arcistrafo. Raramente i film d'oggi riescono ad interessarmi, a coinvolgermi, a commuovermi o a divertirmi; a trasmettermi un "messaggio" convincente e soddisfacente'.

¹² Unfortunately, no trace of any of these diaries survived. The process of data transcription and elaboration from the diaries is explicitly mentioned and described into the *Antologie Albums*, in the form of brief introductions to each volume.

¹³ These two series – the alphabetical books and the actual *Antologia del Cinema* – differ both in material terms and in the method of data presentation and visualisation: the second alphabetical book is presented as an address book, with the spaces for the alphabet letters created by cuts in the edges of the pages. The presence of in-depth articles is minimal, as are newspaper clippings, only illustrative to specific films. Films are listed in alphabetical order by date of release.

¹⁴ For an overview on this kind of sources see Bardet, Arnoul and Ruggiu 2010; Dekker 2002.

¹⁵ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 3 [scrapbook].

¹⁶ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 6 [scrapbook]: 'Quando – sessant'anni fa! – vidi questi film, certo non potei giudicarli come ora, rivedendoli, li giudico [...]. Posso dire che allora non mi

entusiasmarono e non fermi l'attenzione sullo scopo essenziale delle due opere "documentarie" miranti a propagandare le meritorie "opere del regime".

¹⁷ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 1 [scrapbook]: 'Scherzi della memoria! Io, oggi (22 marzo '95) non ricordo quel che ho fatto ... 2 giorni fa! (se non cerco nel diario!). Invece ... rivedendo questa foto di Dolores del Rio m'è balzata nel reparto mnemonico del cervello la canzone – italiana, credo; non "adattata" a musica originale americana o messicana – del film RAMONA (1928) [...]. Bè, dato che – col "motivo" fonografato nell'area cerebrale "di proiezione" associativa, mi si son ripullulate le parole – dopo 68 anni di quiescenza, voglio proprio fermarle qui, sulla carta, perché parole (e musica ad orecchio) non fuggan più nell'irreperibile cosmico!'.

¹⁸ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 1 [scrapbook].

¹⁹ A relatively scarce number of film titles is marked with a "VR", probably standing for "Video Recorder".

²⁰ Although Faglioni is not regularly reporting this kind of information, thus, this cannot be the exclusive or sufficient evidence for such an influence.

²¹ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 3 [scrapbook]. The quotation from T. Kezich's *Il film Sessanta* is reproduced in a critique distributed at the CEC on March 8th, 1991, and was underlined by Faglioni, who notes his opinion, quoted here, on the side.

²² Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 5 [scrapbook] includes a critique from Claudio Siniscalchi, «Piccola Vera», *Rivista del Cinematografo* 1 (1990).

²³ He even pasted handmade tabs of some missing silent films into the Dictionary book too. This connection allows us to hypothesise when the Anthology n. 1 about silent films was made. In fact, data from the original screening diaries reporting lists of films viewed in the 1920s and 1930s, lay the foundation of a visually rich and multi-layered scrapbook made from clippings from TV and film journals announcing 'old films' shows and retrospectives in the age of television.

²⁴ Film critic Morando Morandini referred to this schematic legend in his film columns in newspapers *La notte* and *Il giorno* in the early 1950s.

²⁵ 'Negli anni '80 aumenta vertiginosamente la produzione "porno", mentre sempre più rari si fanno i film di autentico valore artistico. Imperversano anche i generi "sexy", "musicale", "fantascientifico", "horror", e "avventurosi", infarciti di violenza e volgarità. Scompaiono le cineserie marziali all'americana (morto Bruce Lee) [...]. La crisi è generale: ma l'America galleggia con mirabolanti effetti speciali, trucchi e truccature d'ogni genere a sostegno di racconti carenti e stucchevoli. Cala enormemente l'affluenza di pubblico nelle sale: la TV sforna film recenti e remoti': Faglioni, *I film visti (1981-1999)* [alphabetic book n. 2], p. 4.

²⁶ 'Quello che non capisco è come funziona il "mercato" qui a Udine, nelle sale (5) della SAUTEC (il "Diana" – luci rosse – il "Puccini" e il "Cec" sono di altre gestioni). Solo al "Cec" trovo notevole affluenza (di soci). "Ariston", "Capitol", "Centrale", "Cristallo", "Odeon" hanno platea vuota (nel pom.) in media 20-30 pers. in galleria. L'ultimo spettacolo. (22-24) è più frequentato (dicono le cassiere). Certi film però occupano le sale per un mese (e più: anche 50 giorni!) Perché? Per indurre i restii ad andarci ... perché il film copra l'alto costo di noleggio ... insomma quando i film "ruotavano" più spesso (e c'erano due ordini di posti a prezzo lievemente differenziato) più spesso gli *habitués* – soprattutto anziani – affollavano la platea... Oggi, a prezzo unico, tutti vanno in galleria (ma raramente l'affollano)': Faglioni, *Anthology of Cinema*, n. 6 [scrapbook], final page.

²⁷ Among the titles on the list and cataloguing, see Belknap 2004 and Eco 2009.

²⁸ Faglioni, *Anthology of cinema*, n. 5 [scrapbook] on *Bye Bye Baby* (E. Oldoini, 1988) and *Nuit d'été en ville* (M. Deville, 1990); *Anthology of cinema*, n. 6 [scrapbook], on *Dancin' Thru the Dark* (M. Ockrent, 1991).