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# Abruzzo National Park: Land of Dreams

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## SUMMARY

After centuries of seclusion, Pescasseroli and the upper Sangro River valley in Italy's central Apennine Mountains began opening to the world in the early twentieth century. Spearheading the drive was Ermino Sipari, cousin of the famous philosopher Benedetto Croce. Both Sipari and Croce, who was born in Pescasseroli, believed the natural world could bring great material and cultural benefits to the local population. All it would take was a proper land management structure. After a decade of debate in government, in the press, and in conservation circles, the result was the inauguration of Abruzzo National Park in 1922.

O those days so sacred in my memory! When the brave hunters ran up the steep mountains, I followed the chamois leaping from peak to peak; then returning home to the kisses of my sisters, I told them stories of the hunt.<sup>1</sup>

Francesco Saverio Sipari, uncle of Benedetto Croce

After an absence of 40 years, Benedetto Croce in 1910 returned to his birthplace Pescasseroli. Croce had entered the world in this secluded Abruzzo hamlet in the Apennine Mountains of central Italy in the winter of 1866. His parents had come there to stay with relatives, to escape a cholera epidemic ravaging Naples. By the time his cousin Erminio Sipari, co-founder and first director of Abruzzo National Park, finally coaxed him back to Pescasseroli from Naples, Croce was well established as the grand seigneur of Italian culture and a prospective senator.

It was a warm August day in 1910 as the word spread that Benedetto was back in town. Soon a crowd had gathered below one of the balconies of his cousin's family mansion, the Palazzo Sipari, to welcome home the famous native son. Croce celebrated his return to Pescasseroli by reminiscing, off-the-cuff, to the assembled throng.



FIGURE 1. The Palazzo Sipari, where Croce gave an impromptu speech to villagers in August 1910. This photo is dated October 1899 and was taken on the occasion of a visit by the Prince of Naples and future king, Vittorio Emanuele III.

This Pescasseroli, Croce told the crowd, was a place of fables, this mountain valley, a land of dreams. He had stayed away so long not because he despised Pescasseroli, but better to retain its land-of-dreams quality in his memory. Here was a place cut off from the world, blanketed in snow, where mothers told stories on stormy nights in front of a warm fire. Stories of strong and hearty men, of soldiers and bandits, of shepherds and sheep, of hunters and bears. Bear stories were best, he added, because a boy finds animals far more lively than people.<sup>2</sup>

Croce's triumphant return in 1910 was, in fact, only the start of many visits to Pescasseroli and the upper Sangro Valley, the heart of the future Abruzzo National Park. In 1912, for example, his younger cousin Erminio lured him there again, this time for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to inaugurate a new bus service to link the village of dreams to the outside world. Sipari was part of a new generation of leaders in Abruzzo who were spearheading the effort to have the region break out of the splendid isolation for which Croce revered it. Over the next two decades, Sipari directed a concerted public relations campaign to turn Croce's storybook land into a tourist resort. Pescasseroli may be located in remote mountains, Sipari wrote, and abandoned by the central government, but it had never lost its sense of civilisation and progress. Pescasseroli and its surroundings had a lot to offer those willing to journey for it. New roads and bus services would make the trip easier.

## LAY OF THE LAND

Pescasseroli is located on the flat lands of the upper Sangro River valley at an elevation of 4,000 feet. Its original site, however, was higher up a mountain towards its crest, the Latin *pesculum* meaning high place and steep. A baronial castle was built there in mediaeval times. Croce speculated that the name Pescasseroli came from *Pesculum ad Serolum* (steep place near the Sangro).<sup>3</sup> Over the years, the earthquakes that frequently rock Abruzzo convinced assorted barons and villagers alike to move to the lower, flatter ground. The sight of a mountain hamlet located on a valley floor – instead of perched on a hilltop in the usual Italian fashion – was odd enough for one mediaeval geographer to call Pescasseroli ‘the village that looks like a city’.<sup>4</sup>

The twelfth-century geographer’s remark has a resonance that strikes today. Pescasseroli has a broad boulevard that sweeps in from the north and south. On it moves a wide assortment of motorised, pedalled and pedestrian traffic. Lateral streets sprout east and west, cut off from the dust and noise of the main thoroughfare. After several blocks, these side-streets narrow and peter out into goat tracks and forest trails. The broad boulevard moving through the flat terrain gives the village the illusion of city. But under the plane trees of the piazza, old men lean on their canes in small-town fashion. In the back streets, children kick their footballs under flags of laundry. At the edge of town, just past a rock inscription commemorating the national park’s inauguration, rises a steep, forested mountain. Life in Pescasseroli still moves at the measured pace of a mountain settlement.

As early as 1909, Erminio Sipari recognised that the natural world surrounding Pescasseroli could attract a steady flow of tourists. In July of that year he organised the first motorised expedition to explore the area and its potential for tourism by car. Because of the region’s isolation, a wilderness had survived; Sipari reasoned that, because that wilderness had survived, the isolation could be broken. As a member of parliament and later director of Abruzzo National Park, he thus pursued a twin-track policy of encouraging the development of roads, hotels and tourists to end the isolation, while battling to preserve the wilderness against loggers, hunters and dam-builders. His management mission for the park was to pursue a middle path between those clamouring for more skiing facilities than could be handled and those calling for more wilderness than could be preserved.

## GENESIS OF THE PARK IDEA

Kings and bears are at the origin of the national park in Abruzzo. Pescasseroli and other villages in the upper Val di Sangro established a royal hunting reserve in 1872, chiefly on the initiative of Erminio Sipari’s father, Carmelo and his uncle,



FIGURE 2. Carmelo Sipari, father of Erminio Sipari and promoter of the royal hunting reserve in the Val di Sangro

Francesco Saverio Sipari. Though King Vittorio Emanuele II planned several trips to the area, he never actually made it. The hunting reserve was abolished when his successor, Umberto I, showed no interest in going after big game. The reserve was later revived when the Prince of Naples and future king Vittorio Emanuele III came to Pescasseroli for a bear hunt in 1899, as a guest of the Siparis. In 1912, however, the hunting reserve was abolished again. The decision to renounce the hunting grounds came as a moment of opportunity for conservationists, even as it opened up the area to hunting by the general public. Twenty-seven bears fell to hunters' bullets the first year after the King gave up his royal reserve.

Interest in establishing a national park had grown steadily from the turn of the century. In 1907, Giambattista Miliani, an industrialist and owner of

Italy's largest paper factory, wrote an article on US national parks which was published in *Nuova Antologia*, Italy's premier cultural magazine. Miliani was an energetic traveller and member of the Club Alpino Italiano, with a nose for both business and the outdoors.

In his article, Miliani combined historical narrative with descriptions of nature. Predictably, he heaped praise on both the natural and political worlds in the United States. The article's significance for Italian national parks lies in Miliani's detailed explanation of the concept of preserving land by withdrawing it from speculators. Essentially, Miliani introduced to the Italian public, for the first time, how a national park might be established. Furthermore, Miliani argued that the American experience was for export, that 'we could imitate it as well ... for the benefit of the people to save the wonders of nature and art from the destruction and encroachment of speculation'.<sup>5</sup>

Miliani argued that Italy was ready for a national park. The next question was, where? The answer came quickly. A young zoologist from Bologna, Alessandro Ghigi, made a scientific argument for creating a national park in Abruzzo. Ghigi was 37 years old when he first suggested creating the park in 1912. But the bearded, burly zoologist would remain a stalwart of Italian nature protection



FIGURE 3. Bear hunt near Pescasseroli in October 1921.



FIGURE 4. Erminio Sipari (left) with the Duke of Apulia (centre) and another hunter on the occasion of the last bear hunt before the creation of Abruzzo National Park



FIGURE 5. The San Rocco fountain at the outskirts of Pescasseroli, where an inscription was made September 9, 1922 to commemorate the founding of Abruzzo National Park. This photo is from the first decade of the twentieth century.

Val di Sangro. Conversely, the ubiquitous wolf was vermin, the animal everyone loved to hate. Even after the national park was created, the campaign to exterminate the wolf continued. But the bear was seen as docile, shy and worthy of protection. The bear was the Val di Sangro's gift to the outside world.<sup>6</sup> The royal hunting ground offered this gift of nature to the kings of Italy. Later, Erminio Sipari organised bear-hunting parties to draw important people to Pescasseroli. In fact, as director of Abruzzo National Park, Sipari had sole authority to authorise a bear hunt. Nowadays, the bear – a lovable, huggable bear, sitting legs outstretched in human fashion – is the symbol of Abruzzo National Park.

Lobbying among government officials in Rome and among private-sector groups such as the Touring Club Italiano in Milan planted seeds of support for a national park. When the royal house renounced its hunting grounds in Abruzzo in 1912, all the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. 'As soon as the royal house decided to give up its hunting reserve, I immediately began planning the first

until his death in 1970, at the age of 95. Ghigi's flirtation with Fascism only briefly tarnished his reputation in the Italian nature protection movement.

Ghigi made his first trip to the United States in 1907 to attend the Seventh International Zoological Conference in Boston. There he learned a mapping technique for showing areas with high wildlife densities. Using the technique in Italy, he discovered that the Val di Sangro and surrounding mountains had the country's highest proportion of rare and endangered wildlife. In fact, Ghigi put the scientific stamp of approval on a notion that other scientists, as well as Abruzzo locals, had long believed: that the bears and chamois of the Abruzzo mountains were special. The bear and chamois were thus noted as separate species, namely *Ursus arctos marsicanus* and *Rupicapra rupicapra ornata*.

The bear, in fact, took pride of place among the big mammals of the

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national park,' wrote Romualdo Pirota, president of the Italian Botanical Society.<sup>7</sup>

The Italian government took an initial step in early 1913. The head of the Ministry of Agriculture's hunting section, Ercole Sarti, officially proposed the creation of a national park for the areas inhabited by the bear and chamois. An inter-ministerial committee was established to study the park plan. The committee included Sarti, Pirota, and Luigi Parpagliolo (of the Ministry of Fine Arts).

## THE POLITICS OF SIPARI

The young Sipari launched his political career in 1913 by capturing a seat as a member of the Radical Party. The Radicals had formerly acted as a far-left opposition party to Giolitti's liberal government. By the time Sipari won his mandate, the Radicals had joined the Giolitti government. In adhering to the Radicals, Sipari was carrying on the long Enlightenment-inspired traditions of his ancestors. But he was also grounded in the political traditions of Abruzzo overall, for long a Radical stronghold. Though he was the first Sipari to enter parliament, going to Rome was like going to a family reunion. Many extended family members already walked the halls of government, including Benedetto Croce.

If Pescasseroli was a dreamland for Croce, it was every bit as much a piece of hard reality for Sipari, local notable and now a member of parliament. The local economy had survived for centuries on the immense flocks of sheep which grazed the valley in summer. In winter, the shepherds took their herds down well-worn paths to the flatlands of Apulia, following the ancient rhythm of transhumance. Pescasseroli was one of three staging areas in Abruzzo for the annual trek. The rich families in the valley – including the Siparis and the Croces – were all originally pastoral. They consolidated their wealth by purchasing land in Apulia. They rose to become members of the middle class or lower-level nobility.

But the pastoral way of life began to decline in the twentieth century. Sipari represented a new generation, progressive and modern in outlook, with faith in technology. Young Erminio took his degree at Turin's School of Electrical Engineering, Italy's nineteenth-century MIT. When he returned to Pescasseroli in 1905, he brought the town something Croce's fabled village never had: electricity. Sipari immediately set his skills to work to wire the valley for light.

Apart from his promise to modernise Pescasseroli, Sipari's electoral platform in 1913 also had an environmental agenda: 'the reforestation of our mountains in order to restore one of the most important sources of the wealth of the community ... Moreover, a gradual appreciation of the richness of our climate must be developed'.<sup>8</sup> The committee to investigate the establishment of





FIGURE 6. A panorama of Pescasseroli in the initial years of the twentieth century. The bare mountain is today completely reforested.

a national park in Abruzzo soon prepared the necessary legislation. However, a devastating earthquake in Abruzzo in January 1915, and Italy's entry into World War One a few months later, held back the creation of the park. But in the end, the Italian government itself was a far bigger obstacle. Even after the war, with the bears of the Val di Sangro under siege from hunters, the government continued to delay.

Another important factor inhibiting the park's creation was the local population's scepticism. Luigi Parpagliolo wrote that the words national park sounded strange to Italians.<sup>9</sup> Sipari knew that a campaign to raise public awareness would be one of his toughest jobs. The local population had not been sufficiently prepared to accept the idea. He noted that the 'utilitarian spirit of the masses could not be expected to suddenly respond in favour of the new idea'.<sup>10</sup>

After years of governmental apathy, the creation of a national park ultimately became too urgent to leave to political inaction. At a meeting in Rome on November 21, 1921, Sipari, together with Pirota, Parpagliolo and Sarti, formed a private organisation to establish and manage a national park in Abruzzo. Also playing a key role was Italy's most important nature protection group, Pro Montibus. As a private organisation, the Abruzzo National Park Agency raised funds from individuals and leased land from five communities in the Val di Sangro, including Pescasseroli. Finally, the park was inaugurated on September 9, 1922. Faced with this *fait accompli*, the government approved legislation to

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establish the park. In fact, the park's creation received an unexpected boost from the Fascists, newly arrived in Rome. Mussolini wanted to counter the perceived inaction of previous governments with the appearance of dynamism for his new regime. The upshot for nature protection was rapid government approval of both the Gran Paradiso National Park in north-west Italy and the Abruzzo National Park, in late 1922 and early 1923 respectively.

## THE PARK DEBATE

War and government apathy had delayed the park's creation. But because of the delay, the decade between 1912 and 1923 saw a lively debate about the type of national park suitable for Italy. Was it to be a scientific reserve? A tourist reserve? A hybrid of the two? Which foreign model was adaptable, the American – for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, or the Swiss – a jealously guarded reserve?

A handful of botanists and zoologists advocated a radical hands-off-nature position. In 1912, for example, Lino Vaccari of the Italian Botanical Society proposed his own definition of a national park. It did not include hotels and restaurants. 'A national park in the noblest sense is an immense region where the integral conservation of natural elements is possible'. If that definition seemed tame and acceptable to all, Vaccari later minced no words in calling for 'a complete abandoning of the land (within the park's borders) to the forces of nature'. He did not stop there, however. Vaccari also argued that 'conservation should lead not only to the preservation of natural monuments, but to the reconstitution of wilderness'.<sup>11</sup> Consistent, if minority, voices advocated a strict interpretation of national parks so that the full unfolding of nature could take place unimpeded.

Vaccari and Pirotta's original idea to make Abruzzo National Park a total reserve underwent modification after the Great War. The chief spokesperson for a more moderate (or in Sipari's thinking, more workable) vision was Ercole Sarti of the Ministry of Agriculture. Sarti provided a new premise for thinking about national parks. He wrote that 'An Italian national park must not be understood in a strict sense that prohibits all human activity. Rather, it is a question of applying limitations, not a total ban on utilising or modifying the territory'.<sup>12</sup> Sarti advocated dividing the park into a core area and a buffer area. The core area was to remain 'in the state it was at the time the park is formed'. In this area, all cultivation, grazing and hunting were strictly forbidden. Even vermin species, the wolf in particular, were to remain unmolested so that they 'could carry out their destructive work as demanded by the laws of nature to maintain an equilibrium'.

The Touring Club Italiano, with its energetic leader Luigi Bertarelli, took the opposite position. The Touring Club was influential in creating a national

consciousness for Italy. A thoroughly Milanese organisation, the TCI's prodigious output of guide books and maps introduced Italy's cultural and natural riches to a broad range of the public. More than any other organisation, the TCI helped create the concept of a united Italy. 'I imagine,' Bertarelli wrote, 'that thousands of Italians will get up from the table where they're reading these maps and head into the streets and cities, and see the beauty of our nation, where they'll find waiting for them the world the way we see it'.<sup>13</sup>

The way Bertarelli saw national parks was a far cry from the scientific view of Vaccari. Bertarelli had long backed the establishment of a national park in Abruzzo. In fact, Touring Club publications were the most important outlet for informing Italians about the purpose of a national park and the necessity of creating one. In an article he wrote in 1923, however, Bertarelli made an about-face on the Abruzzo National Park issue. His backtracking is something of a mystery. But it was likely due to the realisation that a national park might actually impose restrictions on land use which were beyond what the Touring Club wanted to see. The Touring Club's own mission was to expand roads, hotels and other tourist facilities for its members.

In the article, Bertarelli lashed out against the creation of the Abruzzo park. He did not want to see the Val di Sangro and the surrounding mountains become a nature sanctuary. Instead, he wanted a national park in Abruzzo to be 'an area of heavy tourist traffic. This just and reasonable aspiration is something to be reached in a very different way than through the burdensome creation of a national park'.<sup>14</sup>

In a twist of logic, Bertarelli portrayed himself as a lover of national parks by opposing the park for Abruzzo. A genuine national park, he said, was a restricted area for scientific study only. Abruzzo did not meet this high standard, he argued. His rhetorical ploy of claiming Abruzzo unworthy of park status made him appear as a supporter of 'true' national parks. In reality, Bertarelli and the TCI wanted to break down any obstacles standing in the way of developing tourism in areas of great natural beauty.

With the establishment of the national park in 1922, Sipari, as head of the park agency, was able to sift through all the arguments of the preceding decade to develop his own ideas about the Abruzzo park. He soon worked out a mission statement which synthesised the two extremes. The needs of the local population had to be balanced by the need for nature protection. Recreation and conservation were compatible, he argued. It was a tightrope that Sipari quickly learned how to walk.

'In contrast to the national parks in Switzerland and Piedmont (Gran Paradiso),' Sipari wrote in 1924, 'Abruzzo National Park was not founded solely for scientific purposes. Like those other two parks, the protection and improvement of the flora and the fauna and the conservation of geological formations and the landscape are important. But we are also planning to develop tourism and the hotel industry within and near the park'.<sup>15</sup>

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## LOCAL NEEDS VS. NATURAL NEEDS

Sipari had been conscious of the need for development since his return to Pescasseroli in 1905. He was aware that the park would succeed only with the support of the local residents. He, too, after all, was a local. But he soon found that backing the park's inhabitants was a tough stance to take, and it cost him some friends.

In 1925 the village of Opi asked the park agency for permission to cut an ancient stand of beech in the nearby Valle Fondillo. Opi and the Valle Fondillo had played an important role in the creation of the national park, thanks to a Boy Scout jamboree held in the valley in the summer of 1921. The success of hosting six hundred Boy Scouts convinced the Opi village council that tourism could bring with it material benefits. At the November 1921 meeting in Rome to establish the Abruzzo park, Opi was the first village to agree to lease a portion of its territory for establishing a national park.

Opi's logging request ran into the stiff opposition of two of the park's original promoters, Romualdo Pirotta and Ercole Sarti. Both men served on the park agency's administrative council. But at a council meeting convened to debate the



FIGURE 7. Erminio Sipari (seated, left) with other park officials and rangers at the Mon Repos Villa in Pescasseroli. The villa formerly belonged to the Sipari family and is nowadays a hotel.

Valle Fondillo logging issue, Pirotta walked out in protest, never to return to the park's management team. Sarti stayed long enough to cast the only vote against the logging, and then defected from the committee and park affairs. Sipari likened his position to that of an anvil – he got pounded from both sides.

Sipari counted on his local roots and secure political position to help him set his ideas into action. His role, he maintained, was to educate both locals and non-locals about the importance and mission of the national park. The conservation of nature meant thinking of future generations. It was his role, as a local speaking to locals, 'to get the conservation message through to the crude minds of loggers, to form for them a new conception of the forest, and to educate in the people a respect for nature'.<sup>16</sup> Sipari vowed to do all that was necessary, even to draw on American-style campaigns such as putting up signs that read 'Respect these plants: they're yours.'

Sipari was combative, and astute in using publicity. The park agency produced a steady stream of press releases, while sponsoring conservation-related events and hosting influential international guests. The chief naturalist of the US Park Service, Ansel Hall, visited the park in 1924. Hall came away impressed, remarking that Italy was far ahead of any other European country in the field of nature protection. The founder of Japan's national parks, Tsuyoshi Tamura, also left his calling card. Sipari's publicity blitz included a glossy brochure in English. All this was in keeping with Sipari's mission: 'Abruzzo National Park must become a major recreation centre, where persons of all ages and income will be able to find conditions appropriate for granting the mind and body peace'.

If Sipari found that simultaneously defending local interests and environmental interests made an anvil of him, the real pounding came from his encounters with the Fascist regime. The River Sangro was high on the list for potential sources of hydro-electric power. In 1924, the Ministry of Public Works approved a hydro-electric project within the park, despite the protests of the Pescasseroli municipal government and the Abruzzo National Park Agency. Throughout the year 1924, Sipari passionately opposed the plan. He launched a major press campaign, lined up a group of MPs against the plan, talked to Mussolini himself. Though the reasons for opposition varied, from the threat of malaria to the interruption of sheep migration, Sipari insisted that a hydro-electric project would damage the natural environment of the national park. After a year of intense political jockeying, the government reversed its decision. The statement accompanying the new decision said that the artificial lakes would 'render useless the purpose for which the national park was created in the first place.' Furthermore, the government added, no increase in hydro-electric energy would ever be able to offset the damage caused by the formation of artificial lakes.<sup>17</sup>

Sipari's spirited defence saved the Sangro River. But the battle to defend the river came at a great political price. He created enough enemies in Rome to cause

the blocking of his nomination as senator in 1929, and his eventual exclusion from parliament. With no political clout in Rome, the park agency's freedom to act independently diminished.

#### THE PARK AFTER SIPARI

On November 24, 1933, Sipari was ousted as park director and the park agency shut down. This dramatic action no longer had as much to do with a political vendetta as it did with Mussolini's centralist whims. Authority for both of Italy's national parks passed into the hands of the State Agency for National Forests. The same day Sipari was ousted, the Forest Militia marched in to run the park's affairs. Militia guards replaced local rangers who had been hired to keep out poachers. The new administration showed little enthusiasm for management. For young recruits from the Forest Militia school, an assignment to the national park was seen as a ticket to Italy's Siberia.

Erminio Sipari lived the rest of his life, until 1968, in Rome and in Abruzzo National Park. He never again was involved in the park's affairs, though not from a lack of desire. He was never asked. Nevertheless, Sipari remains one of the key figures in Italian environmental history. He was the first politician and conservationist to see the close links between national parks and regional development. Sipari understood in 1922 – in a way that many national park managers around the world have only recently come to learn – that nature protection must involve the needs of local people. Sipari used the expression *civiltà sulle montagne* – culture in the mountains. In other words, a national park or other type of reserve had to include the promotion of a region's cultural aspects, along with the defence of nature. Nowadays we have fancy terms for this concept. We call it sustainable development or ecotourism.

As Sipari's cousin, Benedetto Croce, noted in 1921, Pescasseroli had entered the twentieth century with a whole new set of problems, compared with the past, when it was 'a small feudal village, lost among the mountains and nearly inaccessible.' The challenge facing Pescasseroli, Croce wrote, would be to create a national park successfully, to turn a village into a resort, to throw open the valley to the world. These problems were wholly new, linked to the issues of a rising standard of living and economic pressures on the land. Pescasseroli, he predicted, would in a few years become as famous as any resort village in Switzerland. Croce understood that these changes meant the loss of his village of dreams.<sup>18</sup> But thanks to the visionary leadership of his cousin Erminio, Abruzzo National Park helped establish new ways of thinking about land management.

Sipari, in fact, had worked out a management and protection plan for Abruzzo National Park that extended over decades. He wrote in 1926 that 'Abruzzo National Park, unlike American national parks, created in a short time

and funded with millions of dollars, will take twenty or thirty years to set up. But in the meantime, we will have saved those animals that had been threatened and gradually improved the flora in the area'.<sup>19</sup> The Fascist takeover of the park not only cut short his plan; it decimated it. Publicity activities on behalf of the park withered. Educational services shrank and disappeared. Management was nowhere to be found.

After 1945, the post-war economic boom transformed every corner of the Italian landscape. The *dolce vita* also meant a sweet flow of cement. The 1950s and 1960s saw an unrestrained assault on the natural world of the Abruzzo National Park. From movie stars and politicians to ordinary citizens – they all wanted to ski the slopes of the park's mountains or fill its valley with condominiums, mostly empty apart from few weeks in the year. Ironically, Croce was right: Abruzzo National Park started to look like Switzerland.

By the late Sixties, the park had reached its nadir. There had not even been a park director for six years. But after a hiatus of several decades, Sipari's thirty-year mission for the park began to take shape a year after his death. In 1969, Franco Tassi was appointed park director, and is still at the helm of the park some 30 years later. Overcoming the inertia and apathy of the preceding two decades, Tassi has successfully implemented a management plan similar in its essentials to the one Sipari drew up in the 1920s: to provide recreational and educational services to the general public, to boost the cultural and economic well being of the local population, to consolidate and expand the protection of nature.<sup>20</sup>

## NOTES

The photographs accompanying this article are from the Archivi Sipari in Altivo and Pescasseroli, the archives of the Ente Autonomo Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo, and the archives of Rivista Abruzzese.

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Saverio Sipari, *Poesie* (Naples, 1846), 47.

<sup>2</sup> Croce's speech was published in *Rivista Abruzzese*, v. 1-2 (1966). Reprinted as 'Il discorso di Pescasseroli' in *La lunga guerra per il Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo* (Lanciano: Rivista Abruzzese, 1998), 'Quaderni' 24, 15-18.

<sup>3</sup> Benedetto Croce, 'Pescasseroli' in *Storia del Regno di Napoli* (Bari: Laterza, 1925), 369.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>5</sup> Giambattista Miliani, 'Il Grande Parco Nazionale di Yellowstone', *Nuova Antologia*, v. 12 (1907), 4.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the bear as a gift, see Luigi Piccioni, 'Il dono dell'orso: abitanti e plantigradi dell'Alta Val di Sangro tra Otto e Novecento', *Abruzzo Contemporaneo*, new series, v. 2 (1996), 62-113.

<sup>7</sup> Romualdo Pirota, *Il Parco Nazionale dell'Abruzzo* (Rome: Pro Montibus, 1917), 27.

<sup>8</sup> Erminio Sipari, *Relazione Sipari* (Rome, 1926), 268.

<sup>9</sup> Luigi Parpagiolo, 'Un Parco Nazionale in Abruzzo', *Nuova Antologia*, v. 279, (May

1918), 147.

<sup>10</sup> Sipari (1926), 72.

<sup>11</sup> Lino Vaccari, 'La protezione delle bellezze naturali e il Club Alpino Italiano', *Rivista Club Alpino Italiano*, v. 31 (1912), 376.

<sup>12</sup> Ercole Sarti, 'Il Parco Nazionale dell'Abruzzo', *Le vie d'Italia*. Touring Club Italiano, no. 11 (November 1918), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Cited in Giuseppe Vota, ed., *I 60 anni del Touring Club Italiano, 1895-1954* (Milan: TCI, 1954), 163.

<sup>14</sup> Luigi Bertarelli, *I parchi nazionali* (Milan: TCI, 1923), 26.

<sup>15</sup> Erminio Sipari, 'Il Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo', *Nuova Antologia* (July 16, 1924), 14.

<sup>16</sup> Sipari (1926), 270.

<sup>17</sup> Atti parlamentari. Camera dei deputati, Discussioni, XXVII legislatura, seduta December 16, 1927, 512-13. Cited in Luigi Piccioni, *Erminio Sipari: origini sociali e opere dell'artefice del Parco nazionale d'Abruzzo* (Camerino: University of Camerino, 1997), 93.

<sup>18</sup> Croce (1925), 393-94.

<sup>19</sup> Sipari (1926), 233.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on Sipari's vision of ecotourism and on the park's post-war decline, see 'Una visione in anticipo con i tempi: l'intreccio tutela ambientale-sviluppo turistico alle origini del Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo' in *La lunga guerra per il Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo* (Lanciano: Rivista Abruzzese, 1998), 'Quaderni' 24, 19-47, and 'Per la storia del Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo dalla ricostituzione al commissariamento, 1950-1963' also in *La lunga guerra per il Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo* (Lanciano: Rivista Abruzzese, 1998), 'Quaderni' 24, 67-116.



