



The Beautiful Country: Tourism and the Impossible State of Destination Italy (Toronto Italian Studies)

Stephanie Malia Hom

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Every year, Italy swells with millions of tourists who infuse the economy with billions of dollars and almost outnumber Italians themselves. In fact, Italy has been a model tourist destination for longer than it has been a modern state. *The Beautiful Country* explores the enduring popularity of “destination Italy,” and its role in the development of the global mass tourism industry. Stephanie Malia Hom tracks the evolution of this particular touristic imaginary through texts, practices, and spaces, beginning with the guidebooks that frame Italy as an idealized land of leisure and finishing with destination Italy’s replication around the world. Today, more tourists encounter Italy through places like Las Vegas’s The Venetian Hotel and Casino or Dubai’s Mercato shopping mall than experience the country in Italy itself.

Using an interdisciplinary methodology that includes archival research, ethnographic fieldwork, literary criticism, and spatial analysis, *The Beautiful Country* reveals destination Italy’s paramount role in the creation of modern mass tourism.

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