



# Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema (New Directions in National Cinemas)

*Ruth Ben-Ghiat*

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Ruth Ben-Ghiat provides the first in-depth study of feature and documentary films produced under the auspices of Mussolini's government that took as their subjects or settings Italy's African and Balkan colonies. These "empire films" were Italy's entry into an international market for the exotic. The films engaged its most experienced and cosmopolitan directors (Augusto Genina, Mario Camerini) as well as new filmmakers (Roberto Rossellini) who would make their marks in the postwar years. Ben-Ghiat sees these films as part of the aesthetic development that would lead to neo-realism. Shot in Libya, Somalia, and Ethiopia, these movies reinforced Fascist racial and labor policies and were largely forgotten after the war. Ben-Ghiat restores them to Italian and international film history in this gripping account of empire, war, and the cinema of dictatorship.

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