In a cultural context in which Umbria embodies the cliché of “green and medieval” region and is best known for the bucolic landscapes and historical architectures, the business group comprised of the three companies Perugina (confectionery production), Buitoni (pasta production) and Luisa Spagnoli (textile production) offers a decisive contribution to placing the region at a central point in the nascent industrial reality of the “val” region.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Umbria inherited the cliché of the “green and medieval” region1, imposed in the post-unification era: a label that strongly binds its image, and which actually prevents real progress, from a cultural point of view as well as (in a particularly striking way) from an architectural point of view.

As is well known, this cliché was not only reiterated, but even strengthened during the Fascist era: a label that strongly binds its image and that in 1922, with farsightedness and entrepreneurial intelligence, in 1952 the artistic direction of the group is entrusted to the thirty-one year old Federico Seneca from Marche, whose work pervades the rising industrial reality of an unprecedented innovative spirit. Developing a decidedly contemporary communication campaign, which went from the creation of the brand to the composition of posters for advertisement, Seneca interpreted the corporate identity with rigour and communicative effectiveness, forging exemplary brands that, despite the subsequent restyling interventions (necessarily linked to technological and application progress) are still true graphic icons known internationally. Starting from the compositional, proportional and chromatic analysis of the three brands (respectively linked to the three Perugina, Buitoni and Luisa Spagnoli productions), the proposed contribution means to retrace its genesis and evolution, by highlighting the centrality of thought—drawing within a sector, such as the commercial one, aimed at enhancing and communicating the product.

For Seneca’s ability to embody Futurist ideals cf. SANSONE 2016. Seneca’s work was praised by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who went to Perugina in 1925 and in the volume of texts indicated him as “magnificent futurist of the Cartello–Reclame”; moreover, in the Perugino cultural environment he was in contact with Gerardo Dottori, attested in 1929 by the quotation in one of his texts.

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Keywords: Federico Seneca, graphic analysis, visual identity.

Contemporary characters. Three artistic writings between enterprise and communication
Luca Martini, Valeria Menc betelli, Giovanna Ramac cini

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undertake and consolidate over time an advertising strategy destined to act as a model for the major European companies; in the image, because they update the style through which the city is perceived within the national and international landscape.

The collaboration between Seneca and the business group began with a chance meeting, which led to a fruitful professional relationship. The path of this young man from Fano, who trained at the Royal Institute of Fine Arts in Urbino and became a drawing teacher at the Scuola Normale of his native city, overcoming his experience at war, led him to obtain a pilot's license, which provided him jobs at several Italian airports: among them, that of seaplane tester on Lake Trasimeno, which involved his transfer to Perugia, where he stayed at the Brusati. Thus, a common friend Luigi Fontana, also a pilot, introduced Giovanni Buitoni to Federico Seneca, sanctioning the start of a productive partnership that went on to be presented in the history of Italian graphics: director of the advertising office of Perugina since 1922 and of Buitoni since 1925, Seneca directed corporate communications until 1932, the year it was transferred to Milan. The style of the first advertising posters is explosive: while retaining a classic setting, they innovate deeply thanks to the reductionist tendency of all that is inessential in defining its identity, just as in sculptural modelling. In fact, Seneca frequently used study models, first employing mannequins and subsequently resorting to the creation of chalk sketches. The results are subjects of unprecedented expressiveness, at all times in relief to suggest the third dimension, which become absolute and perfect protagonists of the abstract space of the poster.

Seneca's fluid geometries

Before seeing his role as artistic director of Perugina, Federico Seneca began to collaborate with the company by making some advertisements: his beginning starts on the pages of the Corriere della Sera of 17 October 1923. The first event, the graphic work of Seneca proceeds in parallel on several fronts, redelineating in a more coherent way the overall image of the company, from the poster to the packaging to the brand. Precisely in relation to the brand, Seneca inherits from the first decade of the life of the factory a traditionalist brand, strongly anchored to the urban identity: his first innovation consists in focusing the wording “La Perugina”, which is then further centered in “Perugina” and which becomes the synthesis and embodiment of the complex set of corporate values. The visual arts devised the low relevance of the subsequent restyling. Through the analysis of the three brands of the entrepreneurial group (although the Lui- spagna brand is not designed by Seneca, it was born in the years of his artistic direction), it is possible to highlight the centrality of thought—drawing within a sector, such as the commercial one, aimed at enhancing and communicating the product (fig. 1).

perugina

by luca martini, valeria menchetelli, giovanna ramaccini

Caratteri contemporanei. Tre grafie d'autore tra imprenditoria e comunicazione

Prima di far emergere il proprio ruolo di direttore artistico della Perugina, Federico Seneca iniziò a collaborare con l’azienda realizzando alcune iniziative pubblicitarie: il suo debutto avviene sulle pagine del Corriere della Sera del 17 ottobre 1919, con una vignetta ironica in cui un'oca affamata brandisce una barra di cioccolato pronto alla realizzazione di bozzetti in gesso. 

La prima innovazione consiste nella focalizzazione della dicitura “La Perugina”, che inizia con una vignetta ironica in cui una scimmietta affamata brandisce una barra di cioccolato pronto alla realizzazione di bozzetti in gesso. 

Nei successivi sette anni, Seneca procede con un processo di riformulazione del marchio, coinvolgendo sia il marchio che il disegno dell’azienda, dal manifesto al progetto del marchio. La progressiva gerarchizzazione, laddove questa stato dominata dall’espressione visiva, si conclude con una stilizzazione che emerge in modo decisivo in “Buitoni” (1925), dove il marchio diventa circolare, formato da un arco di Augusto, con una figure, sempre riconoscibile in qualsiasi contesto, che si erge ridente sullo sfondo. La firma, sempre riconoscibile in primo piano si riafferma allo sfondo. La firma, sempre riconoscibile in primo piano si riafferma attorno alle figure, che si erge ridente sullo sfondo. La firma, sempre riconoscibile in primo piano si riafferma attorno alle figure, che si erge ridente sullo sfondo. 

La storia di “Perugina” inizia con una vignetta ironica del 17 ottobre 1919, con una vignetta ironica in cui un’oca affamata brandisce una barra di cioccolato pronto alla realizzazione di bozzetti in gesso. 


La presenza di un numero vertiginosamente crescente di acquirenti si sarebbe presto riconosciuto. 

La prima manifestazione del marchio di Seneca prosegue nel corso dei successivi anni, con un progressivo centramento visivo, che si rafforza in modo decisivo in “Buitoni” (1925), dove il marchio diventa circolare, formato da un arco di Augusto, con una figura sempre riconoscibile in primo piano. 

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by Seneca bear witness to this progressive hierarchy, whereas in the first posters the words “La Perugina” or “Perugina” stand out dimensionally with respect to the remaining texts until they have been supplanted entirely and camped by protagonists in the composition. Once the positioning of the Perugina brand has been precisely defined, the communication project of Seneca continues with the progressive simplification of the sign, which translates into a graphic gesture the identity values in which a dizzyingly growing number of buyers would soon be recognized. The first logotype lettering is marked by an Art Nouveau style, traceable in the design of the individual letters, regularly embellished with elegant volutes; the whole, often composed as “La Perugina choco-late”, is distributed on two lines to form a comp-}
Lapped on the circumferences of side a and the second case the grid of a/10 side is over-and a/2 together with the grid of side a/8; in ing derives from the circumferences of side a the square of a side: in the first case the trac-
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sible to determine the sequence useful for the
These simple geometric reasons make it pos-
3a/4 diameter.
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lar grids also with a square mesh, with side a/8
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inscribed in the square of side a and in the
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two consecutive expansions derive. Moreover, by means of the division into 8 and 10 parts respectively, it is possible to identify the reg-
grid also with a square mesh, with side a/8 and
10. The tracing of some letters also in-
U results are obtained by perfectly inscribed in the
quadrato di lato a/2. The width of each letter can be determined by constructing the dynamic rectangles on the side square a/2, from which two consecutive expansions derive. Moreover, by means of the division into 8 and 10 parts respectively, it is possible to identify the regular grids also with a square mesh, with side a/8 and a/10. The tracing of some letters also involves the use of circumferences with a/4 and 3a/4 diameter. These simple geometric reasons make it possible to determine the sequence useful for the construction of each character of the logotype, whose height is constant and equal to a (fig. 4). The letters E and U are perfectly inscribed in the square of a side: in the first case the tracing derives from the circumferences of side a and a/2 together with the grid of side a/8; in the second case the grid of a/10 side is over-lapped on the circumferences of side a and 2a/5. The letters P, N and A are inscribed in
lato a e nel quadrato di lato a/2. La larghezza
Figura 3.
13. Per approfondimenti sulla
sulla figura di Giovanni Buitoni cfr.
BUITONI 1972.

lato e nel quadrato di lato a/2. La larghezza di ogni lettera è determinabile mediante la co-
struzione dei rettangoli dinamici sul quadra-
to di lato a/2, da cui derivano due espansioni consecutive. Inoltre, mediante la divisione in
8 e 10 parti rispettivamente, si possono indi-
viduare le griglie regolari anch’esse a maglia
quadra, di lato a/8 e a/10. Il tracciamento di
alcune lettere prevede inoltre l’utilizzo delle
circonferenze di diametro a/4 e 3a/4.
Tali semplici ragioni geometriche consentono di
determinare la sequenza utile alla costruzio-
ne di ogni carattere del logotipo, la cui altezza
è costante e pari ad a (fig. 4). Le lettere E e
U risultano essere perfettamente inscritte nel
quadrato di lato a: nel primo caso il tracci-
amento deriva dalle circumferenze di lato a e a/2
univamente alla griglia di lato a/8; nel secondo caso la griglia di lato a/10 è sovrappon-
ne le circonferenze di lato a e 2a/5. Le lettere P, N e A risultano inscritte nel tracciamento del
quadro: nel primo caso il tracciamento
deriva dalla griglia di lato a/8; negli altri
due, esattamente speculari a meno del tratto
orizzontale della lettera A, vengono impiega-
te entrambe le griglie, unitamente ad archi di
circonferenze di centro e raggio modulari.
Le lettere E e G, iscritte nella seconda espansio-
ne del quadrato, evidenziano entrambe l’uti-
lizzo della griglia di a/8, che nella lettera G è integrata anche dalla griglia di lato a/10.
Unica eccezione è rappresentata dalla lettera I, formata da metà quadrato di lato a.
Dall’asserzione del quadrato, il logotipo presenta una notevole regolarità (fig. 5): i ca-
ratteri sono affiancati mediante una spaziatu-
ra costante, pari a 2a/5, che localmente viene
adattata applicando opportune correzioni ot-
tiche (tra le lettere R e U). La sovrapposizione
delle due griglie modulari consente di apprez-
zare la composizione dell’insieme.
Il lettering del logotipo Perugina ideato da Se-
neca nel 1922 dimostra nel tempo un’innossida-
bilità attuale, mantenendo ancora oggi l’origina-
riscia ricinvenire, fluida e geometrica al contempo. I
successivi restyling52, a quasi un secolo di distan-
za, non sono mai riusciti a scalfire l’efficacia.

Buitoni: composizioni modulari
 Quando nel 1927 Giovanni Buitoni13 eredita il
ruolo dirigenziale dell’azienda familiare, inse-
riscia la sua attività all’interno di un percorso
estremamente fedele all’ideale aziendale che, fin
da la sua origine, fa della comunicazione un
elemento fondamentale, riconoscendone il va-
lore necessario nella diffusione dei prodotti, in
particolare laddove questi introducano aspetti
innovativi. È la fine dell’Ortocentenario e Giovanni
Buitoni13, direttore dell’azienda, com-
prende che la sperimentazione introduzione del
glutine all’interno della pasta, sebbene sugge-
tersi incoraggia potenzialità, non è suffi-
ciente a garantirne il successo commerciale. Le
proteine contenute nel glutine consentono di
offrire alla popolazione un alimento caratteriz-
ato da valori nutritionali di grande qualità e a
basso costo. Ciò nonostante il prodotto, poco
rallentato per la vista e per il gusto, è ancora
inadeguato e poco accattivante per il mercato.
In un contesto sociale caratterizzato dalla po-
vera e dalla malnutrizione, l’intuizione è quel-
la di rispondere al concreto bisogno alimenta-
to proponendo immagini attrattive e messaggi
chiari: nella campagna pubblicitaria dei primi
anni del Novecento14, i princìpi della famiglia
e un ruolo di rifornimento di ecce-
zione, garantendo la qualità del prodotto che
consente di raggiungere stili di vita privilegiati.

In questi anni l’azienda risponde al nome di “Gio. & Filì Buitoni” e il relativo logotipo ha
un’evidente impronta Liberty adottando ca-
ratteri graziati e tratti ondulati.
Il coinvolgimento di Federico Seneca da parte
di Giovanni Buitoni determina un radicale rine-
novalimento dell’immagine aziendale. Dopo il
paesaggio alla denominazione di “Buitoni” (in
vittorio dei cambiamenti avvenuti a livello dell’or-
the first expansion of the square: in the first case the tracing derives from the grid of a/8 side; in the other two, exactly specular except for the crossbar of the letter A, both grids are used, together with circumference arches with modular center and radius. The letters R and G, inscribed in the second expansion of the square, both highlight the use of the grid of a/8 side, while in the letter G is also integrated by the grid of a/10 side. The only exception representing the letter I, consists of half square of a/a.

From the compositional point of view, the logotype has a remarkable regularity (fig. 5). The characters are flanked by a constant spacing, equal to 2a/5, which is locally adapted by applying appropriate optical corrections (between the letters R and U). The overlapping of the two modular grids makes it possible to appreciate the composition of the whole.

The lettering of the Perugina logotype conceived by Seneca in 1922 shows over time a subsequent restyling, almost always updated by Federico Seneca in 1922 shows over time a subsequent restyling, almost always updated by Federico Seneca (fig. 6). In the advertising campaign of the early 20th century, the principles of the royal family take on the role of testimonial exception, ensuring the quality of the product that allows you to achieve privileged lifestyles.

In these years the company responds to the name of "Gio. &elli Buitoni" and the related logo has an evident Liberty mark adopting graceful characters and wavy lines. The involvement of Federico Seneca by Giovanni Buitoni determines a radical renewal of the company image. After the change to the name of "Buitoni" (due to changes in the company's organization), the graphic designer from Marche Region proposes a work to simplify the geometry of the previous logotype, in consideration the major quantity of voids that, tagliati ad angolo retto e con uno spessore variabile. Il lettering ottenuto, seppure fortemente contemporaneo, dichiara allo stesso tempo un attento lavoro di analisi e di reinterpretazione del suolo grafico, ma con la consistenza di una grafica propria. La spaziatura tra le lettere, anch’essa regolata sulla griglia modulare (in base all’equivalenza tra spazio singolo e modulo), viene attentamente calibrata tenendo conto la migliore illuminazione della superficie di verticale e orizzontale (fig. 8). In tal senso, al fine di evitare di interrompere l’equilibrio compositivo, viene prevista una doppia spaziatura laddove è presente un tratto curvo affianca un tratto retto (ove-
Luisa Spagnoli: tra libertà calligrafica e rigore geometrico

La genesi del marchio Luisa Spagnoli è enigmatica e affonda le proprie radici nei primi anni del ventesimo secolo. Infatti, non sono noti documenti che ne attestino l'anno di ideazione né tantomeno che ne attribuiscano la paternità a un determinato autore. Negli anni Trenta del Novecento i manufatti autarchici in lana d'angora costituirono ancora soltanto un esperimento imprenditoriale della poliedrica figura di Luisa Spagnoli, ma godono da subito di un certo successo. È dopo la morte di Luisa, nel 1935, che il figlio Mario dà una formazione consolidata all'azienda e nel 1957 insiste dell'azienda di direzione artistico dell'azienda del marchio Luisa Spagnoli. Con questo artefatto comunicativo, che richiama la comparsa dell'autocharta, il marchio Luisa Spagnoli viene assimilato dai successivi interventi di restyling. Il marchio Luisa Spagnoli, che a partire dal 1940 diventa la distintiva denominazione ufficiale. Nella prima versione il logo presenta nella parte superiore un triangolo isoscele in cui è inserita la lettera "L" maiuscola, dall'uguaglianza paritaria dimostrata in sostituzione delle elissi. Tale variazione viene assorbita dai successivi interventi di restyling che ne mantengono sostanzialmente intatto l'aspetto per i quarant'anni successivi alla sua ideazione. Oggi, l'analisi del materiale grafico prodotto dall'azienda durante gli anni legati al coinvolgimento di Seneca rende evidente di alcune versioni, coeve o successive a quella indagata tramite l'analisi geometrica, in cui la lettera O risulta confezionata da due circonferenze concentriche in sostituzione delle elissi. Tale variazione viene assorbita dai successivi interventi di restyling che ne mantengono sostanzialmente intatto l'aspetto per i quarant'anni successivi alla sua ideazione. Oggi, l'analisi del materiale grafico prodotto dall'azienda durante gli anni legati al coinvolgimento di Seneca rende evidente di alcune versioni, coeve o successive a quella indagata tramite l'analisi geometrica. Tali variazioni sono state studiate e analizzate in dettaglio nel corso della ricerca di Lucrezia Sbrana, che ha svolto un'indagine approfondita sui vari interventi stilistici e design che hanno caratterizzato il marchio Luisa Spagnoli durante la sua vita. Tuttavia, anche se la genesi del marchio Luisa Spagnoli è ancora sconosciuta, è possibile individuare alcune caratteristiche distintive che ne consentono un'identificazione precisa. Tra queste, si ricorda la presenza di un cerchio interno all'interno del quale è inserita la lettera "L" di Luisa Spagnoli. Questa caratteristica, unita alla forma geometrica del logo, permette di identificare il marchio Luisa Spagnoli tra i tanti altri marchi di moda presenti sul mercato. Tuttavia, anche se la genesi del marchio Luisa Spagnoli è ancora sconosciuta, è possibile individuare alcune caratteristiche distintive che ne consentono un'identificazione precisa. Tra queste, si ricorda la presenza di un cerchio interno all'interno del quale è inserita la lettera "L" di Luisa Spagnoli. Questa caratteristica, unita alla forma geometrica del logo, permette di identificare il marchio Luisa Spagnoli tra i tanti altri marchi di moda presenti sul mercato.
ed figure of Luisa Spagnoli, but immediately enjoy some success. It was after Luia’s death in 1935 that his son Mario gave a consolidated form to the company and in 1937 officially established the “Luisa Spagnoli,” at the Camera di Commercio di Perugia. The materials presented at the Luisa Spagnoli Permanent exhibition in the company headquarters of Via S. Maria offer a vast panorama of the first years of activity, testify that the genesis of the logo can be traced back to the Thirties, probably following the establishment of the company. In fact, while a photo shoot of the company stand at an international trade fair in Rome dating back to 1937 doesn’t present the brand in a clear way, some clothing items just subsequent already bear the label Angela Luisa Spagnoli on the label (that starting from 1940 will become the official name).

In the first version, the logo features an isosceles triangle in the upper part of which is inscribed the “Angora rabbit” composed of the logotype “angora Luisa Spagnoli,” which distinctly identifies the yarn austrian pride of the company and its creator. The intention of celebrating this communicative artifact, which recalls a thread that composes it, testifies a thread that unravels and which perhaps echo through controlled cursive characters the autograph lines of direct and non-direct entrepreneurs, appears evident from the beginning. A possible reference could be represented by the famous wrapping of the tablet Luisa, found in the first floor of the Perugina factory which investigates the “Luisa Spagnoli” at the Camera di Commercio di Perugia. The materials presented at the Luisa Spagnoli Permanent exhibition in the company headquarters of Via S. Maria offer a vast panorama of the first years of activity, testify that the genesis of the logo can be traced back to the Thirties, probably following the establishment of the company. In fact, while a photo shoot of the company stand at an international trade fair in Rome dating back to 1937 doesn’t present the brand in a clear way, some clothing items just subsequent already bear the label Angela Luisa Spagnoli on the label (that starting from 1940 will become the official name).

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most constant thickness, without the wording and the triangular shape referable to the angora yarn. The reference image on which the investigations were carried out was obtained through a dedicated survey campaign focused on the sign in relief that stands at the entrance to the “Città dell’Angora” since its foundation (fig. 9) in 1947, a real “model establishment” strongly desired by Mario Spagnoli near the family home, where the first Angora rabbits breeding was born35. In this sense, the straightening technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic technique was used starting from a synergic series of photographic sockets and dimensional data obtained through operations of direct architectural survey. The analysis shows how the logotype is conceived starting from a calligraphic...