

The “Società Magna Grecia” in Fascist Italy

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The serious crisis that troubles Italy, still tormented after years of war, makes it difficult for the government to fulfil its task of satisfying the spiritual needs of the Country. [...] Nowadays it is an act of real *Italianità* to support, even on a small scale, not only social initiatives, but also those that focus on the conservation and valorisation of the country's natural beauty and cultural heritage. That is why we, Friends of the Mezzogiorno, plan to found a Society that aims at the protection of one of the richest, but also most forgotten regions of our country: ancient Magna Graecia.

This statement was published in October 1920, in a circular letter sent to numerous members of the upper class of Italian society¹. This letter announced the founding of the Società Magna Grecia, and was a call for membership². The actual initiative was

I am very grateful to the board of ANIMI and to Dott. ssa C. Cassani for permission to access the archives of Umberto Zanotti Bianco and the Società Magna Grecia, housed in the office of ANIMI at Rome. What is presented here is part of a larger research project that hopefully will result in a biography of Zanotti Bianco. I warmly thank the colleagues of the Équipe de Recherche ERASME, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, in particular Prof. Corinne Bonnet and Prof. Philippe Foro, for the inspiring Journée d'études. Last but not least, I thank Malena B. McGrath (Rome), who kindly corrected my English.

¹ The text of the letter can be found in U. ZANOTTI BIANCO, “Paolo Orsi e la Società Magna Grecia”, in *Paolo Orsi. Suppl. a Archivio Storico per la Calabria*, Rome, 1935, p. 324-325.

² For the Società Magna Grecia see M. PAOLETTI, “Umberto Zanotti Bianco e la Società Magna Grecia”, *Bollettino della Domus Mazziniana* 38 (1992), p. 5-30; N. DE HAAN,