

# The Florence Floods—What The Papers Said

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DAVID ALEXANDER

Department of Geography  
University College London  
Gower Street  
London WC1E 6BT England

ABSTRACT / The floods of 1966 in Northern Italy provoked varying reactions from officialdom and the press. Political and

administrative problems received as much coverage as the environmental effects of the disaster, but learned opinion gained a new, if rather temporary, status in the newspapers of the time. In retrospect, economic recovery seems to have occurred more rapidly than predicted in the gloomy forecasts of the time, although a clear picture of the disruption caused by the floods took weeks to emerge.

*Oh! let us never, never doubt  
What nobody is sure about!*

—HILAIRE BELLOC

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On the night of Friday, 4 November 1966, the worst flood in over 400 years washed through the city of Florence in Northern Italy, destroying lives, property, and priceless treasures. Journalists in Italy and the rest of the world dipped their pens into the floodwaters and wrote for months. Over twelve years have passed since that traumatic night, and it is now possible to examine with detachment the contemporary reaction—the flotsam of prejudice, denunciation, and sensationalism bobbing about in a murky sea of fact, fiction, and conjecture. A study of such reaction may help us to understand how future hazards are to be faced and how environmental decision-making has been affected during the aftermath.

## A Brief Summary of the Event

On 4 and 5 November 1966, 200–250 mm of precipitation fell on the Ligurian side of the Apennines in Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, and of this, about 180 mm fell on the fourth. Thus, between 15 and 22% of mean total annual precipitation fell on the Arno basin in northern Tuscany in 48 hours, and between 10 and 15% fell during the first half of this period. Heavier precipitation occurred in the basins of southern Tuscany, such as

the Ombrone, where up to 44% of total annual precipitation fell in the 48-hour period (e.g., 268 mm at Batignano, see Fig. 1). The regions of Lombardy, Veneto, and Venezia-Giulia were also badly affected; for example up to 150 mm of precipitation (25% of the mean annual total) fell on the Adige, Barchiglione, Isonzo, and Brenta basins, and up to 300 mm (35%) fell on the Piave, Livenza, and Tagliamento catchments during this period. In addition, a cyclone over Venice brought winds of more than 100 km/hr and sea level rose to 1.9 m, flooding the city and remaining 1.1 m higher than datum for more than 24 hours.<sup>1</sup>

The severity of the problem was far from uniform. Catchments such as the Arno (about 5000 km<sup>2</sup>) were already saturated by melting snow, although less than 10 mm of rain had fallen on 3 November. Thus the peak flow arrived very suddenly. The Ombrone basin, and many of the montane basins north of the Po river suffered severe erosion as they had a relatively large area of exposed sedimentary deposits. A greater precipitation and discharge had been recorded on 2 September 1965, in the Tagliamento basin in Venezia-Giulia, but the dis-

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<sup>1</sup>Consiglio Superiore dei Lavori Pubblici (1966). 'Eventi eccezionali alluvionali e mareggiate del novembre 1966 e relativi problemi di carattere generale e particolare' Assemblea Generale: Adunza Straordinaria del 16 November 1966, Voto No. 1740.

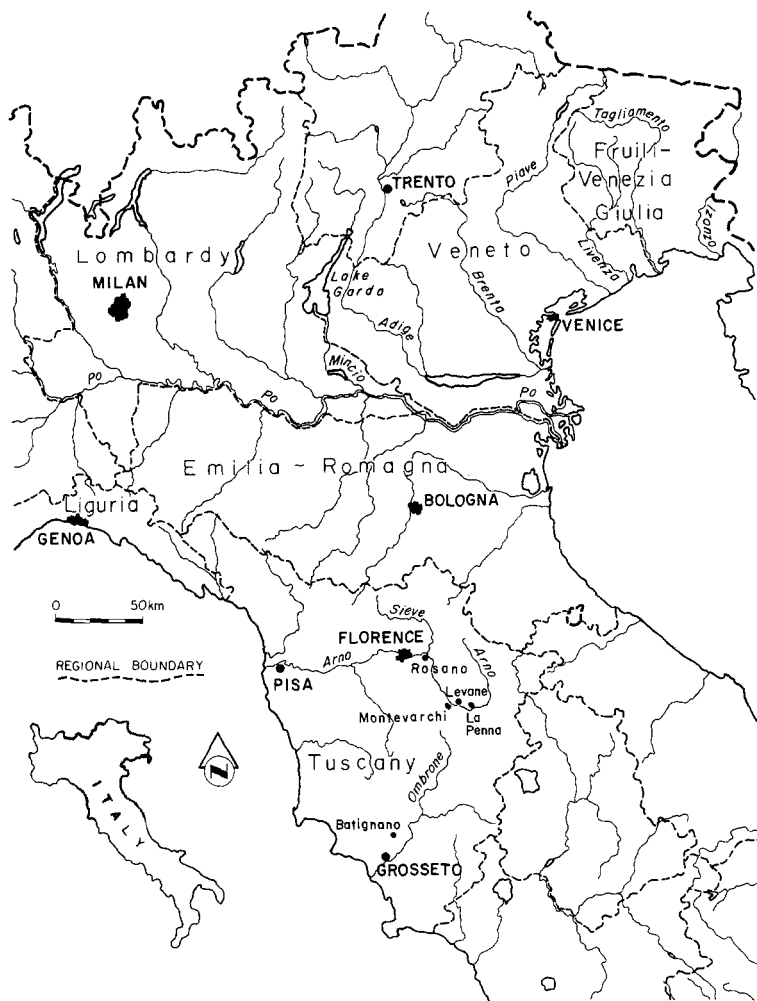
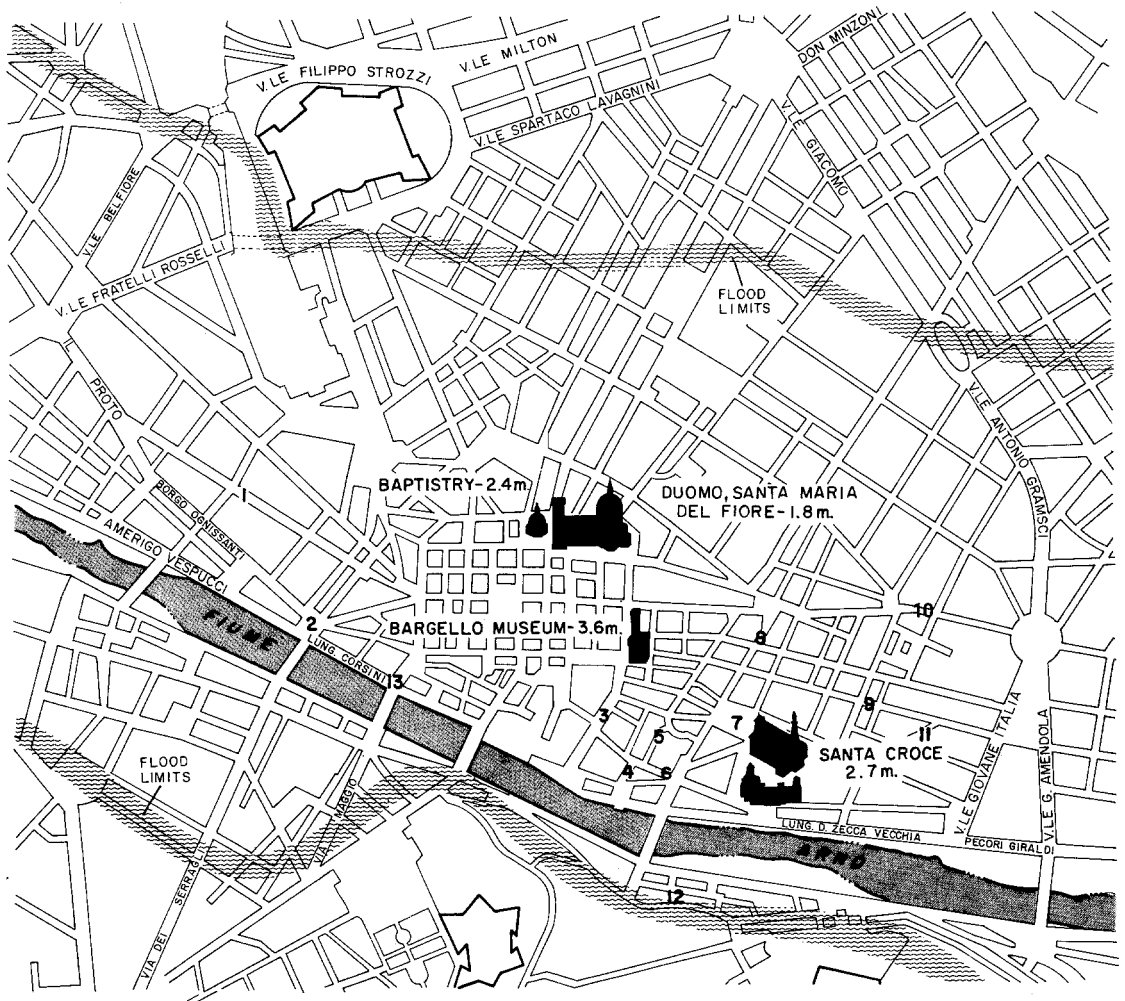


Figure 1. Location map of Northern Italy.

charge of 2200 cumecs reported for the Adige river has a calculated recurrence interval of 70 years. Maximum stages of 11.0 and 10.33 m were reported on 4 and 5 November 1966, at Nave di Rosano on the River Arno 16 km upstream from Florence, but further downstream at San Giovanni alla Vena the maximum stage of 8.94 m recorded at this time had been equalled in 1929. Further

north, Lake Garda rose by 0.37 m and discharged water at the rate of 110–130 cumecs into the River Mincio.

But it was in the city of Florence that the most spectacular damage occurred. The Arno burst its banks at 5:00 a.m. on Friday, 4 November 1966. Subsequently the water level rose to a maximum of 1.8 m in the Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore, 2.4 m in the Baptistry, 3.65 m



**Figure 2.** A portion of the City of Florence showing the approximate limits of the floods of 1966 and the bench marks of some representative flood heights within four silhouetted buildings. Flood levels at other locations are referenced below by numbers 1 through 13. These levels were reported in the citations given in footnotes 1, 2, and 30 of this article. Figures available for other flood heights are presented in brackets. 1 Via Palazzuolo: 2.25 m (1844: 1.32 m) 2 Piazza Goldoni: 1.61 m (1844: 0.91 m) 3 Via dei Leoni: 4.35 m (1844: 1.75 m) 4 Via Mosca: 4.60 m (1844: 1.75 m) 5 Via dei Rustici: 4.49 m (1557: 3.74 m) 6 Via dei Neri: 4.92 m (1333: 4.22 m) 7 Piazza Santa Croce: 4.45 m (1557: 3.50 m) 8 Via Verdi: 4.50 m (1844: 1.67 m) 9 Via dei Conciatori: 5.20 m (1844: 1.80 m) 10 Borgo la Croce: 4.21 m (1844: 1.00 m) 11 Via delle Casine: 4.92 m (1844: 1.84 m) 12 Via San Niccolò: 4.20 m (1557: 3.97 m) 13 Lungarno Corsini: 3.66 m.

inside the Bargello museum, 2.75 m in the church of Santa Croce, 3.35 m in San Ambrogio, 4.26 m in SS. Apostoli and 3.96 m in San Nicolo' oltr'Arno.<sup>2</sup> Many other buildings of importance and their contents were similarly affected, and on average the flood of 1966 reached a stage about 0.5 m higher than two other floods, those of 1333 and 1557, of which circumstantial records have been preserved.

At Levane, 56 km upstream from Florence, 4 million m<sup>3</sup> of water were released when the floodgates were opened in the La Penna dam at 9:00 p.m. on 4 November. Although the resulting surge devastated parts of the village of Montevarchi, 8 km downstream, it had comparatively little effect on the combined floodwaters of the Arno and Sieve rivers at Florence. Eventually, the water level in the city came over the Ponte Vecchio,<sup>3</sup> but that ancient structure has fortunately survived to be refurbished.

After three weeks of turmoil, 112 deaths had been accounted for—32 of which occurred in Florence—and 800 municipalities had been affected, of which Florence and Grosseto suffered the worst. In the countryside 12,000 farms and homes had been damaged, and 10,000 dwellings had suffered in the cities. Vineyards, forests, and farmland had been destroyed, 50,000 farm animals had died or were slaughtered and 16,000 pieces of agricultural machinery had been damaged or ruined. Many factories were closed, and special taxes had to be levied on all Italians to provide money for compensation and unemployment benefit.

The ensuing destruction of works of art, early literature, and archaeological exhibits has gained a place in history and will never be completely rectified. Some years later, Florence still showed external signs of the flood, for the combination of mud, debris, and liberated central-heating oil could not easily be removed from the urban fabric. The flooding had been complemented by massive alluviation throughout the flooded areas.<sup>4</sup>

The failure of the Italian Ministry of Public Works to honor the provision made in the laws of 1954 and 1962 for reforestation and flood protection works was

<sup>2</sup>"Dawn of a disaster," *Sunday Times Magazine* (London), 11 December 1966. "I livelli delle inondazioni," *La Nazione* (Rome), 12 December 1966.

<sup>3</sup>"L'Italia con l'acqua alla gola," *Domenica del Corriere* (Milan), 20 November 1966.

<sup>4</sup>"Duro colpo all'agricoltura le alluvioni nella Lombardia," *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 12 November 1966.

exposed<sup>5</sup> and new provisions were hastily voted into law, including the provision of 5 billion lire (\$6 million) for combating the effects of flood alluvium, landslides and similar damage.<sup>6</sup>

## The Italian Press

Unlike the British and American daily press, Italian newspapers cannot easily be divided into "quality" and "popular." Journalism in Italy seeks to inform rather than to entertain and generally produces a copious quantity of factual reporting, comment, and criticism. In the less august papers the distinction between these categories is sometimes blurred, but information content is nonetheless high. In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend toward cynicism and fatalism in the style of Italian reporting,<sup>7</sup> but after the 1966 disaster hot-headed oratory prevailed.<sup>8</sup>

The nonpartisan right-wing press frequently used the disaster as an excuse to castigate the Christian Democrat (right-wing) government of Italy, but there was also a more general lack of confidence in the country's political system, as a leader in the *Corriere della Sera* pointed out: "the parliamentary inquiry into the disaster has failed to observe one fundamental point: that the State, under any government, has *never* really tried to prepare for unforeseen natural hazards."<sup>9</sup> This writer was also at pains to point out that the argumentative stance of the opposition Communist Party lacked a constructive element and, perhaps predictably, he ignored the Communist Party plan for granting aid to the stricken regions, which was so widely publicised in *l'Unita*, the communist daily.<sup>10</sup>

Annotated maps of the affected catchments and of

<sup>5</sup>"Lo scandalo dello scolmatore nella denuncia di docenti e di geologi," *l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966. "Italian floods: Act of God, omission of man," *The Economist* (London), 12 November 1966. "Moro accenna alla necessita di rivedere i piani economici," *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966.

<sup>6</sup>"Ampia revisione del Piano chiesta da esponenti della D.C.," *Il Tempo* (Rome), 13 November 1966.

<sup>7</sup>"Morire nella citta di cartone," *La Repubblica* (Rome), 30 November 1978.

<sup>8</sup>"Perche la natura si vendica?" (contemporary magazine article, source unknown).

<sup>9</sup>"I fatti e le speculazioni," *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 13 November 1966.

<sup>10</sup>*l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966.

Florence figure prominently in several articles throughout the political spectrum,<sup>11</sup> and all shades of opinion combined to denounce the national system of political, geological, hydrological, and relief administration.<sup>12</sup>

Suddenly, the layman was made aware that the whole country was under attack from soil erosion on inadequately protected slopes and flooding across neglected barrages and levees.<sup>13</sup> Even today these problems are often tacitly ignored by the country's engineers when they have to contend with low-budget projects for building pipelines and roads across unstable landscapes.<sup>14</sup>

*Il Tempo*, a right-wing paper, sought the view of geologists and physical geographers from the research institutes of Italy who, eager to publicize their cause, claimed that much of Italy was still *terra incognita* from the geological point of view, and that adequate geological and morphological maps had been lacking since the Geological Map of Italy was formally inaugurated in 1860.<sup>15</sup> The paper asked what had happened to the 5500 graduates of geology living in Italy (it is interesting that the number of qualified geologists rises in stages from 4500 at the beginning of the article!), given that only 33 posts were available in the State Geological Service. It ended with a fierce attack on government ministers for devoting funds exclusively to industry and neglecting the defense of the soil—an accusation that has seldom been so strongly repeated in these days of economic uncertainty and factory closure.

*L'Unita*, for the Communists, reported informed opinion that the river discharge control system had “collapsed in a few days throughout Tuscany and the vicinity.”<sup>16</sup> The article quoted a letter from a professor at the University of Pisa to the president of the republic and

the president of the Italian Parliament which gave detailed examples of how prior action could have lessened the effect of the catastrophic floods on the lower reaches of the River Arno. The letter and the article are both well balanced; they state at the outset that many of the effects could not have been avoided. But these words are printed alongside articles with the tone of “We have lost everything” scream tearful women<sup>17</sup> and “Fate and responsibility.”<sup>18</sup> The latter stated that environmental scientists were well aware of the dangers and went on to attribute much of the disaster, with some justification, to governmental lassitude, while also pointing out that many Italian geologists were unemployed. The paper thus achieved a curious balance between quoting the politicians and academics, who gave either an argumentative or a practical analysis, and reporting—or perhaps exaggerating—the views of ordinary people and lesser officials, who seemed to have treated the event more as an “act of God” or “visitation upon sinners.”

Intense interest in environmental hazards persisted for many weeks in Italy<sup>19</sup> (“Why is Italy the Land of Floods?” 16 December 1966<sup>20</sup>) and experts were listened to with unusual attentiveness (“Pessimism of the Meteorologists”<sup>21</sup>). *Il Tempo* took care to emphasize that the South, well-known for its soil erosion since the 1909 Parliamentary Enquiry into the Condition of the Southern Peasants, is equally at risk.<sup>22</sup> But it took a more reassuring line about the work of administrators and politicians in controlling disease, deprivation, and disoccupation<sup>23</sup> than the left-wing press, which was annoyed that government politicians had seemed initially reluctant to commit themselves both by paying frequent and prompt visits to the affected areas of the North and by making sweeping alterations in the allocation of funds.<sup>24</sup>

## The British Reaction

A fortnight after the event, the *Sunday Times* published the results of their “special enquiry” conducted in

<sup>11</sup>*Domenica del Corriere* (Milan), 20 November 1966. “La vendetta dei fiumi,” *Tribuna Illustrata* (Rome) 20 November 1966. “Il sistema idrico crollato in pochi giorni dalla Toscana in su,” *l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966. “La pioggia crea nuovi timori,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966.

<sup>12</sup>“Gazzarra comunista al Senato mentre Moro parla dell'alluvione,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966. “La rabbia aiuta i fiorentini a risollevarsi,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966.

<sup>13</sup>“Moro: il disastro dell'alluvione ci impegna a realizzare un'efficace difesa del suolo,” *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 12 November 1966.

<sup>14</sup>V. Cotecchia and M. del Prete, “Geologia dei dintorni di Vietri di Potenza e particolari caratteri d'instabilità dei versanti in flysch ed argille varicolori,” *Geologia Applicata e Idrogeologia*, (1970): 90.

<sup>15</sup>“L'Italia è ‘inesplorata’ dal punto di vista geologico,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 26 November 1966.

<sup>16</sup>“Il sistema idrico,” *l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966.

<sup>17</sup>““Abbiamo perduto tutto” gridano le donne in lacrime,” *l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966.

<sup>18</sup>“Lo scandalo,” *l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966.

<sup>19</sup>“L'Italia deve imparare a guardare al cielo,” *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 13 November 1966.

<sup>20</sup>“Conferenza del professore Medi sulle cause dell'alluvione,” *Il Messaggero* (Rome), 15 November 1966.

<sup>21</sup>“Pessimisti i meteorologi,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966.

<sup>22</sup>“La pioggia crea nuovi timori,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966.

<sup>23</sup>“Moro accenna,” *Il Tempo* (Rome), 12 November 1966.

<sup>24</sup>“Lo scandalo,” *l'Unita* (Rome), 8 November 1966.

Florence,<sup>25</sup> which revealed that the hydroelectric stations upstream had released substantial flood surges into the Arno just before disaster struck the city, and that the Florentines had not been warned of the danger as there was a risk of panic—both facts that, one suspects, were well known in Italy at the time of publication in Britain.<sup>26</sup> Coverage of the Italian floods in the British “quality” press remained high for some weeks, and tended to present a digest of factual information that appeared concurrently in the Italian newspapers. As in Italy, informed opinion was sought, but with regard to the worth and restoration of art treasures, rather than the environmental hazard. In both countries it appeared that a “doomwatch” attitude was prevailing as the weather forecast continued to be ominous.<sup>27</sup>

*The Times* gave a great deal of information on the physiogeography, history, politics, and economics involved in the flood,<sup>28</sup> but tempered this with anecdotal material that in retrospect seems incongruous. *The Times* also threw some light on the British predicament when it reported that a well-known Englishman had protested that he had been prohibited by the Bank of England from contributing to the British Consulate Relief Fund in Florence because he could not provide adequate documentary evidence that Florence was flooded.<sup>29</sup>

Six weeks after the floods the *Sunday Times Magazine* devoted an issue to the devastation of Florence.<sup>30</sup> The British Consul was praised for his humanity, fortitude, and generosity, while the Italian administrators were castigated for ineptitude (yet they, of course, bore the full burden of the crisis) and visiting American politicians were portrayed as publicity-seeking charlatans. The human drama was vividly portrayed in a series of vignettes which, although they give the reader the full

flavor of coping with an advancing floodwave, are distinctly larger than life. Much use was made of a street plan of Florence that originally appeared in the Italian press<sup>31</sup> as the first attempt to assess the extent of damage to the city’s treasures.

*New Scientist* published an article inspired by the Italian floods and written by a leading British hydrologist,<sup>32</sup> but out of a total of 58 column-centimeters in his article, only 11.5 concern the Italian situation and, inexplicably, 21 are given over to a description of the flood hazard in Britain. Meanwhile *The Economist* gave a close analysis of the costs of floodworks in northern Italy and the balance of public spending there, especially the lack of attention to reafforestation, coupled with a brief explanation of the event.<sup>33</sup>

In general, there was little to be seen in the British press that had not already been published in some form in Italy. Some of it became magnified in the translation—more usually human drama than economic facts—and the artistic effects seemed to attract more attention than the environmental ones.

### Leisure Reading: The Italian Magazines

Cover designers working for Italian magazines at the time had a penchant for depicting exaggerated human suffering,<sup>34</sup> cars floating like corks on a tumultuous lake bounded by the most well-known buildings in Florence,<sup>35</sup> and celebrities gapping in horror at scenes of unparalleled disaster.<sup>36</sup> The actual volume of space in the magazine devoted to the disaster tended to be surprisingly limited and was often dominated by photographs which had been carefully chosen for their dramatic impact. Human misery was emphasized, the role of the state bureaucracy in reparations was investigated<sup>37</sup> and, encouragingly, spatial aspects of the disaster were not neglected. The magazines were quick to point out the extent of disrup-

<sup>25</sup>“Dam gates were opened before Florence flood,” *Sunday Times* (London), 20 November 1966.

<sup>26</sup>The following two articles reflected opinion that had clearly been fermenting for some weeks in Italy: “Lo scarico della diga dell’Arno fu aumentato per salvare gli impianti,” *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 16 December 1966. “Sospetti su otto funzionari dell’ENEL per la disastrosa alluvione a Firenze,” *Il Messaggero* (Rome), 12 January 1967.

<sup>27</sup>“Fears in the Dolomites of further disasters in the spring,” *The Times* (London), 25 November 1966. “Il sistema idrico,” *l’Unità* (Rome), 8 November 1966.

<sup>28</sup>“Political recrimination follows the Italian floods,” *The Times* (London), 15 December 1966. “The ruins of Florentine art: What the floods have cost civilization,” *The Times* (London), 23 November 1966.

<sup>29</sup>“Red tape cheque,” *The Times* (London) 29 December 1966.

<sup>30</sup>“Florence: Saving the treasures,” *Sunday Times Magazine* (London), 11 December 1966.

<sup>31</sup>“I livelli,” *La Nazione* (Rome), 12 December 1966. (Reprint).

<sup>32</sup>“Learning from the Italian floods,” *New Scientist* (London), 17 December 1966.

<sup>33</sup>*The Economist* (London), 12 November 1966.

<sup>34</sup>“Il diluvio,” *l’Epoca* (Milan), 13 November 1966.

<sup>35</sup>“L’Italia,” *Domenica del Corriere* (Milan), 20 November 1966.

<sup>36</sup>“Richard Burton racconta al mondo: La tragedia di Firenze,” *Tribuna Illustrata* (Rome), 20 November 1966.

<sup>37</sup>“Dopo l’acqua la burocrazia,” *Tribuna Illustrata* (Rome), 20 November 1966.

tion throughout Italy.<sup>38</sup> They also publicized the location of major environmental hazards; and it is of note that the areas of greatest risk were perceived to be in the more populous and economically important coastal plains. Interestingly, the destruction of art treasures had very little coverage, and the same is true in Italian newspapers published concurrently. A cartoon portrayed one of the contemporary political leaders in ragged clothes crouching on a raft in the midst of the floods but still flying the tattered emblem "five-year plan."

It appears that a catchphrase was needed before the public could comprehend the magnitude of the disaster: Magazines carried phrases like "the vendetta of the rivers,"<sup>39</sup> "Italy with a throat full of water,"<sup>40</sup> and "out of the slime."<sup>41</sup> But even in the less astute publications there was a tendency to recall previous natural disasters for the sake of comparing them with events in 1966 (e.g., "New Pompeii"<sup>42</sup>). As one might expect, the frequency of events cited increased dramatically from the late 1950s onward, whereas few events were mentioned from the period immediately after the 1915–1918 war. Previous events described by Italian magazine writers tended to reflect available information on casualties and damage, whereas there is some evidence that hydrological information had filtered through to the better quality newspapers and thus had enabled them to give a clearer picture of which events (notably the 1929 and 1951 floods) had had a particularly marked impact on the natural environment.<sup>43</sup>

## Perspective

Violent volcanism, earthquake, pollution, flooding, alluviation, and slope collapse have plagued Italy since time immemorial. Studies of the country's environmental hazards were well underway by the dawn of the present century; for example, Almagia's encyclopedic work on the spatial distribution of major landslides in Italy, which was published in 1907 and 1910 and which listed 504

catastrophic slides that occurred in Italy during the period 1103–1908.<sup>44</sup> Environmental data are particularly difficult to obtain from official Italian sources, but summary data on land utilization, meteorology, climate, river flow, and so on, are freely published and readily available.<sup>45</sup> There is, however, insubstantial evidence that the warnings of environmental scientists have at last been heeded: Natural disasters continue to afflict the nation.

In 1966 the Italian press vividly illustrated the dilemma of the government: How to provide money for flood control, reforestation, unemployment benefit, relief work, and reconstruction without increasing expenditure in the public sector to an unmanageable level. It does not appear that the floods caused the kind of economic recession that was widely predicted in the press on the basis of parliamentary statements,<sup>46</sup> and the well-known resilience of the people of Florence was magnificently demonstrated throughout the aftermath.<sup>47</sup>

At the end of the decade, fears were expressed in the British press that artistic renovation had been inadequate and too slow, but the battered Cimabue crucifix, now the centerpiece of a new museum gallery, has come to symbolize the resurrection of the city's treasures.

The first lesson to be drawn from press coverage of the Italian floods of 1966 is that the preoccupations and preconceptions of writers will often tend to divert them from straightforward accounts of events—perhaps toward a lengthy and tenuous comparison with events elsewhere. Second, there is frequently a strong tendency for reports to decline into cozy accounts of exaggerated human drama—"how the ordinary people are coping"—which further distort the picture. It is clear that journalists will write about the kind of events that they imagine will interest their readers. Thus, in Italy the artistic losses took second place to the human and environmental effects; but they are paramount among the British reporting, which may perhaps have been addressing a public that thinks of Florence primarily as a museum of the Renaissance and has but a hazy idea of accelerated soil erosion. In Italy, it took several weeks

<sup>38</sup>"La vendetta," *Tribuna Illustrata* (Rome), 20 November 1966.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>"L'Italia" *Domenica del Corriere* (Milan), 20 November 1966.

<sup>41</sup>"Fuori dal fango," *Lo Specchio* (Rome), 20 November 1966.

<sup>42</sup>"Cinquemila persone a Firenze sono rimaste senza un alloggio," *Il Messaggero* (Rome), 15 November 1966.

<sup>43</sup>"La geologia può fronteggiare qualsiasi calamita naturale," *Il Messaggero* (Rome), 16 December 1966.

<sup>44</sup>R. Almagia, "Studi geografici sulle frane in Italia," *Memorie della Società Geografica Italiana*, 13 (1907): 342pp.; 14 (1910): 431pp.

<sup>45</sup>For example, Servizio Idrografico Italiano, *Le sorgenti italiane* (2nd ed.), Pubblicazione No. 14 (1953).

<sup>46</sup>"Appello di Moro alla nazione per un lungo impegno di austerità," *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 18 November 1966.

<sup>47</sup>"A Firenze si vedono più volentieri che bisognosi," *Il Tempo* (Rome), 13 November 1966. "I fatti e le speculazioni," *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), 13 November 1966.

before a comprehensive picture of the level of disruption of national life emerged,<sup>48</sup> and several months before the political situation became clear.<sup>49</sup> Upon reading the newspaper reports of the time, it is difficult to decide whether the effects of the flood or those of the alluviation which followed in its wake concerned the Italian public the most. Both had lasting effects.

Twelve years later, when a block of flats in a suburb of Naples collapsed after prolonged rainstorms had activated shearing within the underlying tuff, the newspaper *La Repubblica*, disturbed by the similarity with previous disasters, commented as follows: "The collapse yesterday at Frattamaggiore is, in fact, a typical Italian tragedy, which could have been avoided and which involves long-standing, easily attributable responsibilities,"<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>"La vendetta," *Tribuna Illustrata* (Rome), 20 November 1966.  
"Cinquemila persone," *Il Messaggero* (Rome), 16 December 1966.

<sup>49</sup>"Non funzionò una diga nel disastro di Firenze," *Corriere della Sera* (Rome), 28 December 1966. See also Footnote 26.

<sup>50</sup>"Morire nella città," *La Repubblica* (Rome), 30 November 1978.