

"Le Ali del Littorio" – Book review
Anders Bruun

Guido Mannone "Le Ali del Littorio - Piccola Storia dell'Aviazione Civile Italiana". Published 2004, paperback, A4 size (11½ x 8 inches), 48 pages, 70 colour profiles, some 50 photos and other illustrations, text in Italian and English. It is probably available from Italian mail order houses, but SIG members can get it for €7.00 plus postage (€2.00 for Europe, €3.50 for Europe) from **Marino de Bortoli, Via Prati 12, Cassina Nuova, 20021 Bollate-Milano, Italy.**

This book is, as the title says, a short history of the civil Italian aviation. It covers the period between the world wars, during which Italy was a leading aviation country, as exemplified by the Schneider Trophy wins and several record breaking flights. The author, who was also the man behind the AliTricolori ALPS-printed model decal range, unfortunately passed away before its publication.

The book has eleven chapters, of which the three relating to the Schneider Trophy, the Savoia Marchetti S.55 twin hull flying boat of Italo Balbo fame, and the trimotor S.79 Corsa are probably of most interest to the R&R enthusiast. It is interesting to read about the Schneider Trophy from an Italian perspective. Most of the photos do not show the planes in their actual racing configuration, but there are colour profiles of ten different types. The transatlantic squadron flights in 1930 and 1933 form the centre of the story of the S.55, but its airline use is also described. There are

colour profiles of five of the Italian 1937 Istres-Damascus-Paris racers including the three first-finishing S.79 Corsas. The 1938 transatlantic flight of three S.79 Ts is also described, together with colour profiles of all planes. The red, white and green paint scheme of these S.79s is really gorgeous... There is also a lot of information about the Italian airlines of the era and the planes that they used - from the Junkers F.13 to the DC-3, with many interesting Italian types in between.



Most photos are small but the reproduction is pretty good. The colour profiles are in different scales, according to the size of the planes: 1/48 or 1/72 for the Schneider racers, 1/100, 1/120 or 1/144 for the bigger planes. They are nicely done, and include detail of markings, but some have suffered from being scanned at too low resolution. The running text is translated to English, but not photo captions and similar. The translation is a bit awkward in some places, but it doesn't detract from the value of the book.

I'm sure this little book will tell you a lot about Italian aviation that you didn't know before. It is not big, but nevertheless gives an interesting account of a less-known aspect of aviation's "golden age". I would have liked some more (and bigger) photos, but the colour profiles

really give life to the book.

*Thanks to **Marino de Bortoli** for the review example!*