

Cabiria, the masterpiece.

In the history of Italian silent films, no movie can equal *Cabiria* in importance and success. The film was made between 1913 and 1914 and was distributed worldwide starting in March 1914. The attention and public success it achieved at the time rightfully place it alongside many Hollywood blockbusters of later eras, which made the history of cinema. Pastrone's masterpiece was immediately popular and, right from the beginning, it attracted the attention of producers and the press for its impressive advances in the development of the cinematographic art form.

Pastrone's project registered a series of many "firsts." It was the first film ever to be over three hours long. No Italian producer had ever before dared to invest a sum that was twenty times higher than the average cost of a film at the time. No director had ever sensed – and taken advantage of – the expressive potential of the movements of a movie camera when mounted on a "carrello". Thanks to this invention, which Pastrone developed with his ingenious collaborator Segundo de Chomón, the movie camera finally began to move around inside the set. No one had ever before dared to take elephants and several hundred actors to the Alps, in the dead of winter, to film Hannibal's crossing. It was the first film ever to take advantage of a true marketing campaign.

Today, no book about the history of cinema can fail to exalt the film's peculiarities, list its merits and underline its main characteristics. *Cabiria* is celebrated as the triumph of super-productions and as one of the first and of the most extraordinary attempts to unite the newly invented cinematographic art form with the expressive means of literature, painting, architecture, music and theatre.