

Dal primo cinema (semi)stabile aperto, l'Edison (25 aprile 1906), fino all'inizio della Prima guerra mondiale (28 luglio 1914), a Pola sono stati aperti, in centro città, dieci cinematografi stabili (l'ultimo di questo periodo è stato il cinema Eden, 12 gennaio 1913) di varia categoria, da quelli cittadino-ufficiali d'élite fino a quelli proletario-militari con programmi erotico-pornografici, di cui, agli albori della Grande Guerra, erano rimasti cinque attivi (Edison, Leopoldo, Minerva, Ideal ed Eden): entrambi i numeri (di cinema aperti e di cinema attivi) mostrano e dimostrano la tendenza della rapida cinematizzazione iniziata nelle città europee, della nuova forma d'intrattenimento che la Pola militare adottò ed accolse calorosamente.

### **The beginnings of cinemafication in Pula (before the Great War): the first movie-makers in Pula and the first erotic cinema**

#### **Summary**

As we could discern from Pula's daily and weekly newspapers, Pula hosted a total of 32 traveling cinemas from 21 November 1896 until World War I. Cinema Edison on Portarata was opened on 25 April 1906. Judging by its characteristics it could be considered permanent cinema were it not for the very brief period of its activity. The first officially declared permanent cinema in Pula, also the second permanent cinema on the territory of present-day Croatia was the Electric Cinema Internazionale (*Bioscopio elettrico Internazionale*) which opened with great pomp and began with regular screenings of films on 3 June 1906. Both cinemas, Edison and Internazionale, were either semi-permanent or, if one lowers the criteria somewhat, permanent cinemas. Since the Internazionale was opened by a resident of Pula it was considered a permanent cinema, despite only 44 days of consecutive screening of films in a barrack (a wooden shack), whereas the traveling Edison cinema was not, although it operated in better conditions and screened films in Pula's cinema for 37 days. According to existing sources, the first permanent cinema in Croatia was the Salone Edison in Rijeka (13 April 1906), the second permanent cinema was the Internazionale in Pula (3 June 1906), the third was cinema Excelsior in Pula (early July 1906), the fourth was cinema Edison in Pula (6 October 1906) and the fifth was cinema Pathé in Zagreb (November 1906).

During their visits and travels to various European cities, traveling cinemas offered, in addition to their usual repertoire of films, specialized erotic (or pioneering pornographic) short films, and this was the case in Pula as well, which, due to its naval and military status, militant urbanity and a liberal view on sexuality, was a specific phenomenon in itself. In the context of the first appearances of the so called "shameless clips" in European cinema, Pula was at the forefront with its screenings of "spicy films" compared to similar Austro-Hungarian cities, which is attributed to the greater level of tolerance by city and naval authorities. This practice of "black evenings" (*serate nere*, *Herrenabende*) had continued later in Pula's first permanent cinemas as well. An abundant supply of tolerated erotic and pornographic films was regularly featured in the repertoire of cinema Edison, the third permanent cinema in Pula opened on 6 October 1906. Indeed, one may freely call it the first erotic (or porno-erotic) cinema in Pula (and Croatia).

From the first open (semi) permanent cinema Edison (25 April 1906) until the beginning of World War I (28 July 1914) ten permanent cinemas (the last one opened during this period was cinema Eden, 12 January 1913) were opened in Pula's city centre, and were of different categories: from elite ones for officers and the middle class, to the proletarian and military cinemas screening erotic and pornographic programs. Out of these, only five remained active right before the Great War (Edison, Leopoldo, Minerva, Ideal, and Eden): both numbers (describing open and active cinemas) show and prove a European trend of the commencement of accelerated cinemafication of European cities. This leads to the conclusion that, before the Great War, Pula was a city that enjoyed an abundance of both venues and content, with a distribution system that followed in the footsteps of major European and world centres.