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Private Life and Public Morals: Fascism and the 'Problem' of Homosexuality

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This article analyses the Fascist attitude towards homosexuals, the strategies and motivations for repressive actions taken against them, and the masculine canon and lifestyle that the Fascist regime tried to disseminate. The emphasis placed on sexual morality and virility permits the expansion of the research to the political use of accusations of 'pederasty'; this tool was used in personal rivalries to gain positions of power, and proved useful in discrediting opponents or distancing inconvenient figures. The study also illustrates how a person's private conduct tended to become a visible sign of ideological 'faith', and how conformity to the Fascist morality was indispensable in consolidating the meaning of party membership and the image of the ideal militant. As the totalitarian experiment progressed, the boundary between public and private spheres gradually thinned. However, disapproval of homosexuality was not always applied in practice. Individuals who led a double life, yet formally adhered to the standards of respectability, were able to elude the encroachment of politics and repressive actions in their lives. Homosexuality, in fact, was tolerated as long as it remained within the private sphere. Public reputation had to be safeguarded at all costs by concealing 'unusual' sexual inclinations within increasingly restricted milieu. Society was able to protect itself from the germ of pederasty by denying the existence of homosexuality, or by making it invisible. The analysis of this thorny relationship between public and private reveals the impact of the Fascist totalitarian experiment on customs and daily life, as well as the difficulties encountered by the regime in implementing its anthropological revolution of the Italian people.

A search through school and police records from the late 1920s and early 1930s would disclose his personal files, and a folder of documents with his name on it. A long shadow has fallen over those years. Recalling them, they were years characterised in part by sudden moral severity. Civil servants reacted by filling the personal files of individuals with reports, notes and investigation results. These files were located in various

administrative offices; some were held at police headquarters. Precedents could be established, and specific names and dates could be found by researching the documents from those years and by reading the confiscated meeting minutes and notes kept by a retired municipal administrator who can no longer be contacted, but the results of the research would not give more foundation to this story.¹

This is how Piero Chiara begins his novel *Il balordo* (1967), which tells the story of an ordinary citizen sentenced to police confinement² during the time of the Italian Fascist dictatorship because he was suspected of being homosexual. Unfortunately, almost exactly as Chiara states, historians seem to have themselves repressed the issue. In fact, very little research has been conducted on the Fascist regime's repression of homosexuals.³ Up until recently, references regarding the condition of homosexuals could only be found in novels and films, but the cinematic and literary treatment of the subject has not always given a complete and convincing picture of the relationship between Fascism and homosexuality. In the period immediately following the war when 'civil war' wounds⁴ were still open, and during later years when the demonised view of Fascism had begun to decline, literature and cinema often used homosexuality as a metaphor for the cruelty, perversion and corruption of dictatorial regimes. Fascists (and Nazis) are pictured as grotesque executioners addicted to all types of vice and vile behaviour, and as ruthless homosexual gaolers. A few of the most well-known examples that can be mentioned are: Roberto Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (1945), Luchino Visconti's *La caduta degli Dei* (1969), Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò e le cento venti giornate di Sodoma* (1975), Bernardo Bertolucci's *Novecento* (1976) and Vasco Pratolini's *Cronache di poveri amati* (1945).⁵ Paradoxically, however, the same negative stereotype used by the Fascists to portray homosexuality was transferred from the persecuted to the persecutor. The pathological view of 'pederasts', seen as dangerous degenerates, sick and perverse individuals, was maintained. Through the comparison between Fascists and homosexuals, the latter were transformed from victims to executioners, because the black-shirted or brown-shirted torturer had inevitably to be seen as abnormal from a sexual point of view as well. However, this image risks concealing and overlooking the true reality of the persecution that totalitarian regimes ferociously practiced against pederasts.⁶

Giorgio Bassani first turned around this distorted picture in his book *Gli occhiali d'oro* (1958), in which he recreates the climate of distrust and isolation towards a homosexual who commits suicide because of his failed attempt to 'live like everyone else'. Twenty years later the film director Ettore Scola recounts the segregation of two other 'different' characters, a man and a woman, in *Una giornata particolare* (1977). She is consigned to the role of wife, mother and housewife. He is a homosexual who was fired from his position as an EIAR radio announcer because his voice was not masculine enough, and confined in Carbonia because of his 'depraved tendencies'.

The delay in dealing with homosexual issues in academic circles can also be attributed to the reluctance of historians to draw on research from other academic fields, and the long domination of political history in the research of Fascism. Only recently has the topic been addressed systematically. In fact, the recently published *Dictionary of Fascism* includes an entry on 'Homosexuality',⁷ and new research has appeared next to initial pioneering works that, even though incomplete and occasionally inaccurate, deserve praise for having raised the issue and opened the doors to history that has been buried for too long.⁸ What is more, the study of these topics can be useful when dealing with some historiographic problems linked to the interpretation of Fascism: its totalitarian characteristics and its relationship with modernity, the pervasiveness of the model of virility that was imposed by the regime, the breadth of the totalitarian plan, the successes and the failures of the anthropological revolution of the Italians, the mechanisms used to create a masculine identity that conformed to its ideological premises, the relationship between traditional morality and the new Fascist morality, the level of racist intolerance, the mechanisms and strategies used to repress deviant behaviour, and the degree of political interference in private life.

The attempt to bring about an anthropological revolution that was capable of remoulding the nation and radically changing Italians was advanced by the Fascists with manic focus. It was also rooted in severe repression of any behaviour that did not conform to the norms established by higher authority. As early as 1923, Mussolini expressed this Fascist trait very clearly. 'When consensus fails, there is force. For all government measures, even the harshest, citizens will face this dilemma: either accept them in the spirit of patriotism, or submit to them.'⁹

The repressive system worked at full capacity alongside the 'consensus factory'.¹⁰ Their dual objective was to silence and force obedience on non-Fascists, while using or threatening violence to 'Fascistise' them. The integral politicisation of life, including the direct intrusion of the government in its citizens' private lives, was aimed at changing thought processes, moods, actions, lifestyles and – with regards to virility, emotional and sexual behaviours – to make them conform to directives established by the regime. The creation of the 'new Fascist man' who was strong and virile, included the use of mechanisms that were both coercive and persuasive. The total physical and moral health of citizens that Mussolini believed was 'a fundamental condition for a people to exist and make progress' necessitated upon authority the task of 'persisting, without pause and without hesitation, in moralising efforts', and guarding carefully so that 'the germs of corruption do not ruin and annihilate vital energies'.¹¹ In other words, where education and persuasion failed in their efforts to make Italians virile, fascism should intervene with coercion.

As was mentioned previously, the virile and bellicose values associated with the Fascist period represented the 'essence of political participation', and brought about the development in the mass media of 'new myths and manifestations of aggressiveness and virile vigour' whose purpose was to affirm 'the characteristics of a typical Fascist male in the public eye'.¹² For its part, the regime exalted physical education and youthfulness, and the iconographic imagery and public exposure of the *Duce's* body to represent its own model of virility and political culture.¹³ Propaganda tended to disseminate the image of an aggressive, authoritarian and martial masculinity, and portrayed homosexuality in ridiculous caricature.¹⁴ Whoever veered from this ideal of the strong and virile citizen-soldier by portraying a negative counterpart was to be corrected and isolated.¹⁵ 'The ideal of regenerated masculinity' proposed by Fascism was, in fact, closely linked to the creation of a new national character and to the fight against moral, racial and physical degeneration caused by 'deviant' and undisciplined sexuality.¹⁶ Pedagogical efforts, too, aimed at the heroic resurrection of the new Italian, were meant to build an impregnable wall against the spreading of foreign ways that tended to blend genders by gradually feminising males and emasculating females.¹⁷

Giuseppe Maggiore, a prominent jurist of the times, dogmatically affirmed:

Fascism is male. It loves danger, dislikes gossip, scorns courting because of its natural tendency to roughness, strikes when necessary. It is made of hard stone, not of the sweet consistency of candied fruits which hide inside – like the female – a hard pit that can break your teeth. That is all that is needed to determine its gender ... Fascism, in a word, evokes virility against any effeminacy and weakness of spirit. But it is also against the 'Petrarchism' of poetry, the mysticism of religion, the democratisation and the liberalism of politics, against dandy-ism of custom and free-handedness in education. Can one be more masculine than this?¹⁸

Virility, the pride and prerogative of the Italian race – 'a virile race of armed dominators and lovers, men made to rule, males made for sexual domination'¹⁹ – was forever linked to the warrior image. The Fascist man lived in a state of perpetual war, and the essence of virility derived from courage and heroism. The job of the new 'bellicose morality which incarnated the new ethical being, whether it be individual, or class, or people, or race' was to recreate the vitality and the warrior spirit of ancient Rome, after centuries of servitude and renunciation.²⁰

The idea of masculinity put forth by Fascism focused on the exaltation of virility and a rigid separation of gender, which relegated women to a subservient status and attributed to men masculine and aggressive characteristics, permeated the culture and became part of the standardised normative mental framework. The boundaries of sexual behaviour and sexual identity were distinctly drawn, and as a consequence tolerance towards those who did not conform to the image imposed by the regime decreased. This rigid definition of norms and behavioural models inevitably tended to expand the category of deviant behaviour and reinforced repressive action against those who refused to follow, or corroded the values expressed by the ideology which were not seen in relative terms but as absolute, unalterable imperatives. The purpose of 'total institutions'²¹ (from gaols to asylums, from confinement to correctional facilities) was to remove abnormal individuals from society and reform them. They were forced into confinement because of their sexual, religious, political or racial diversity.

This desire totally to transform individuals, which necessitated intrusion into the personal sphere – both public and private, physical and mental – was one of the basic characteristics of the 'totalitarian'

dimension of Fascism. The birth of the 'ethical state', where the moral and the political intermingled, led to increased social control of sexuality and more severe punishments for sexual behaviour that deviated from the 'normal'. As a result, to avoid the spreading of negative examples to the larger body, any violation of the established rules of virility lead to expulsion from society. The homosexual was thus considered a dangerous disturbance to national order: he brought into question the fundamental values of the new Fascist morality; he damaged national pride by committing acts that were considered perverse; he risked corrupting those who came near; he endangered the future of the nation by shirking the duty to procreate which was the foundation of national power; he undermined the country's internal unity by mixing sexual roles. Highly noticeable actions against individuals who brought into question Fascist virility with their 'filthy vice', however, held the risk of producing a negative effect, because they gave visibility to a social ill that damaged national honour and pride. Consequently, the repressive measures that were used varied according to circumstance and offenders were condemned through censorship, prison or isolation, exclusion or in the negation of homosexuality. To use one of Marcuse's categories, that which was defined as Italian Fascism's 'repressive tolerance'²² towards homosexuals was in fact an effort aimed at striking out at sexual 'anomalies', without publicising the operations that were carried out to do so.

Therefore, it is not easy to recreate the repressive activities of a totalitarian regime whose approach was to punish all behaviour that did not conform to norms and to stigmatise all attitudes that differed from 'normal' moral conduct, but which was careful to disseminate a self-image that was reassuring and caring. The most appropriate method for not attracting too much attention to repressive activities was police confinement. It was quite effective in covering the legal gap created by not including homosexual relationships among the crimes in the penal code. In fact, the proposal to introduce an article (Article 528) against homosexual relationships into the *Codice Rocco* was repealed because:

- (a) Providing for this crime is not at all necessary because, to Italy's pride and fortune, this dreadful practice is not widespread enough among us to merit the intervention of the law;
- (b) In similar cases, the more severe sanctions used to punish rape, corruption of minors and indecency can be applied.²³

More timely methods could be used to overcome this immoral conduct, because 'it is well known that regarding the habitual and professional practitioners of this vice (who are truly rare), both foreign and exploited by foreigners, the police currently applies their own immediate security measures, including detention, most effectively'.²⁴ In other words, police methods sufficed to distance prostitutes and incorrigible homosexuals from the population, while the 'healthy' sector of society remained ignorant of this 'abominable' practice. When Rocco himself summarised the bureaucratic proceedings leading to the elimination of Article 528 from the code he emphasised the 'almost general hostility' that the innovative proposal aroused given that, 'fortunately', the 'foul vice' was not practiced widely enough in Italy to require a specific norm.²⁵ In other words, virility, one of the main anthropological characteristics of Italians, could not be refuted, even by an insignificant number of exceptions.

Studies on the police confinement of homosexuals have thus described one of the more widely used methods used by the regime to exclude individuals who were considered 'dangerous for the integrity of descendants' from civil cohabitation. The extent of homosexual repression, from a quantitative point of view as well begins to emerge from this research. However, a complete study of the phenomenon that spans the entire Fascist period has still not been undertaken.

Such a study would allow us to identify continuity or the introduction of a new approach with the transformation from a liberal to a fascist state, and to understand the connection between political and ideological changes that came about during the reign of the dictator.²⁶ In fact, these studies, which link actions against pederasts to racial laws, limit the persecution of homosexuals to the three years from 1936 to 1939, during which time Italy attempted to imitate Nazi Germany in this respect.²⁷ The issue is actually more complex because the repression of homosexuals, including police confinement, has a long tradition that precedes the rise of Fascism. One can agree that there was a sharp rise in repressive operations in coincidence with racial laws even if, in my opinion, the intensification is connected more to the attempt to give a virile and bellicose face to imperial Italy and to the regime's turn towards totalitarianism that occurred at that time, rather than to the introduction of the new concept of race.²⁸ The passage of the racial laws in 1938 were, in fact, a fundamental moment in the development of anti-Semitism, but discrimination towards homosexuals certainly did not originate at the time since it was written

into the new model of man that was part of Fascism since its origins. Given these arguments, Giovanni Dell'Orto's view, which contends that homosexuality became a political issue in 1938, when 'the extension of the policy in defence of the race to include homosexuals caused the change in classification from common confinees (*confinati comuni*) to political confinees (*confinati politici*) for approximately 80 homosexuals',²⁹ is not convincing. If this were the case, it would not explain why homosexuals who were considered to be in political confinement from 1936 to 1939 all of a sudden were again recorded in files as common confinees in 1940, because in 1940 racism had certainly not disappeared. Even more incomprehensible is the fact that in 1939 there are cases of pederasts recorded in the lists of common confinees. What clearly emerges from the archival evidence is that those who were confined for homosexuality were always considered common confinees, and that even when they were included among political confinees this was not due to the racial laws. The inclusion of 88 homosexuals among political confinees depends for the most part on the round-up that took place in Catania in 1939, which sent 46 homosexuals to the Tremiti Islands.³⁰ Second, the category of political confinees (who were treated better) included individuals who often had no other legal precedents, who held higher social status or held more important public roles, priests, people with recommendations, and individuals who in addition to being accused of pederasty were also accused of inappropriate political behaviour such as criticising the regime or deriding the pride of the nation or the race. The main reason, however, is even easier to comprehend if one considers that, after 1937, the Tremiti Islands became a colony populated exclusively by political confinees, and that, regardless of the reason for sentencing, whoever was sent to the Adriatic islands was catalogued as sentenced to political confinement.

In spite of the fact that homosexual repression did not begin under Fascism, and did not constitute a specifically Fascist prerogative since repression existed in democratic countries such as France, England, the Weimar Republic and the United States,³¹ it is still important to analyse the specific methods applied during the dictatorship to reconstruct the motivations, strategies and extent of the phenomenon. First, it must be said that, with respect to the past, Fascism's heightened emphasis on virility and increased attention to health and strength of the race led it to undertake more severe and capillary actions against homosexuals. However, ideological changes were not accompanied by

new repressive tools and techniques. Repression was applied more broadly and was more invasive under the Fascist regime due to greater social control and a tougher police force, but it was still based on the strategy of concealment. In fact, the decision not to introduce specific measures against homosexuals into the penal codes kept Fascist actions on traditional tracks, and even clouded the new moral significance that the regime intended to attribute to the struggle against homosexuality. Homophobia was nurtured by longstanding prejudice and values that preceded the dictatorship, just as in practice the custom of overlooking and hiding the problem prevailed.³² However, the suffocation of all reference to homosexuality did not prevent the development of a silent persecution that served to uphold the martial and virile image of the regime, while at the same time the silence worked against those who did not conform. Pederasty was not such a widespread 'ill' that public action was required to overcome it. What counted was to 'act with forceful measures to attack and cauterise the ill at its core',³³ by distancing the 'more obstinate' homosexuals from civil society and removing them to some forgotten island. The substantial change in homosexual repression under Fascism was not due so much to the political aspect of the problem, since in most cases pederasty was not considered synonymous with anti-Fascism.³⁴ It was more because it was formally identified as a true deviant form. In fact, the specific instructions for controlling homosexuals required that all local police headquarters (*questure*) identify and make a list of all pederasts in the province in order to impress upon them the threat of confinement. The prefecture had immediately to create a file entitled 'Repression of Pederasty', which recorded investigative actions and the list of persons who were confined for that reason. So, within the Fascist ideological framework the new methods of repression against homosexuals became more severe and more invasive, and more people were affected by them than had been previously.

The increased harshness can also be explained in part by the strong influence on the police force of a rigid schema that attributed the cause of homosexuality, and criminality in general, to the physical make-up of an individual. Salvatore Ottolenghi, a faithful assistant of Lombroso who directed the scientific police academy (*Scuola di polizia scientifica*) from 1902 until 1928, developed the framework that was closely linked to criminological positivism. It held that pederasty indicated a natural and innate inclination to crime caused by 'habits of laziness, robbery, drunkenness, and felony'.³⁵ The Lombrosian parallels

between prostitutes and delinquents were extended to homosexuals, who because of their criminal tendencies were to be watched closely. Consequently, Ottolenghi immediately gave clear instructions about how the police should react to these potential criminals.³⁶ Trainees at the scientific police academy were instructed in handling pederasty cases by learning how to speak with a high voice, mimic and exhibit effeminate behaviours.³⁷ The table below indicates that among the detainees in the Regina Coeli prison there were many who were accused of extortion, indecency or corruption of a minor. After being studied, analysed and measured at the scientific police academy they were categorised as ‘homosexual delinquents’.

The biographical files of the criminals had to record all sexual behaviours, because they revealed a criminal personality. The section dealing with psychological characteristics had a line item for sensuality, and officers chose from among various options: noticeable, average, aberrant (pederasty: active, passive, passionate, professional), violent, lecherous.³⁸ Those who were confined also had a biographical file containing photographs, fingerprints, physical and functional measurements and so on. Possible sexual deviations were noted in the ‘psychological aptitudes’. The descriptions of passive pederasts included behavioural and physiognomic traits used to draw up a final moral assessment that was highly influenced by stereotypical views of homosexuals. Pederasts were always portrayed as perverse individuals, corrupted, with unstable personalities, fickle, liars, lethargic, poor workers, lacking in morals, seriousness and decency, with no sense of shame. They had tendencies to commit immoral acts and acts that damaged racial integrity, with feminine behaviours, voice and displaying ‘womanly attitudes’. The passive pederast, according to the Police Commissioner from Catania, found a good example in Antonio P., ‘typical pederast given his ingrained depravity, his physical features and his behaviour’; ‘he does not hide his feminine tendencies and, in fact, likes to be called using the nickname “Ninetta”, he boasts of

TABLE 1
SCUOLA DI POLIZIA SCIENTIFICA: CASE FILES OF HOMOSEXUALS 1927–39
BOLLETTINO DELLA SCUOLA SUPERIORE DI POLIZIA E DEI SERVIZI TECNICI
ANNESI

1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	Total
18	17	57	87	92	42	69	116	92	76	86	124	153	1,029

having many lovers with whom he has intercourse in secluded places, and at times is discovered in lascivious and revolting acts'.³⁹ However, not all of the aforementioned characteristics had to be met to be included in this category. For example, Giuseppe L.P., 'with a bony face and inset eyes, large nostrils and big lips, has the appearance of a perfect sensual type. He could be a fortunate man were it not for his voice which reveals abnormalities, and for his lifestyle which proves he is a sexual pervert'.⁴⁰

The masculine model that focused on virility and the rigid separation of genders, and that portrayed men in military and aggressive attitudes, prompted repressive actions towards passive, or 'female', pederasts who had feminine movements and played the role of the woman. It did not sanction active pederasts whose behaviour was considered normal and in line with the cliché of the dominant man who conquers and possesses. Sexuality had to conform to the established roles: the dominant active role of the male, and the subordinate passive role of the female. More than homosexuality, what bothered the authorities were the absence of virility, passivity and the effeminacy of individuals. In fact, to prove that the accused were passive pederasts some police commissioners made use of a rectal examination to provide 'objective' proof of anal penetration.

Thus, most of the confined homosexuals were persons who openly exhibited their sexual inclinations either because they were prostitutes, or because 'having been infected with the passive pederast illness, they had lost all sense of decency' and they tended to 'make their depravation known publicly'.⁴¹ They were poor people, of low social status with a history of hardship and difficulty, often illiterate, employed in menial, often occasional labour (many tailors and waiters, barbers, cobblers and agricultural labourers, including five priests). They were not married and had little interest in politics. Repressive actions against presumed pederasts were relatively sporadic. Police confinement was, in fact, an extreme solution. Warnings (*diffida*) and *ammonizione* were preferred because they were methods that intimidated and forced individuals to be more careful and discreet.⁴² However, custody arrests were frequent, including questioning at police headquarters and days of incarceration before being put on record and released with the ever-looming fear of future round-ups and more severe punishments. Confinement was thus a warning to 'all those who practice, even with more reserve, pederast activities and to all those young people who are

heading down the road of depravation'.⁴³ In fact, there was great fear of a 'virus' capable of 'perverting young, sexually normal boys and consequent damage to the integrity of the race and morality'.⁴⁴ The police commissioner of Palermo explicitly declared that,

the 'foul vice' of pederasty is the sad result of the degeneracy of the sexual instinct that disgraces the nobility of the human race and represents a real social danger because of the harmful influence it may have on young minds and on the integrity, even the physical integrity, of the race.⁴⁵

Repressive actions against homosexuals can be seen in some specific events. One regards a waiter in Catania whose nickname was '*Sciuparo*' (Waster) who was continually stopped by the police. The unfortunate man was sentenced to confinement for the first time in 1934 after building up a criminal record, and after many arrests for 'security and morality'. He was considered an active and passive pederast who 'makes no mystery of his inclination, gives no signs of mending his ways and persists in his foul activities'. The police felt that since 'for 30 years he has sown the seeds of one of the most revolting forms of degeneracy that afflicts society – pederasty', he deserved the most severe sentence. *Sciuparo* was released after a few months for reasons of health and given two years warning, but he was confined again in 1939. 'Banished by the family, scorned and shunned by society' he fell to the 'vice' again with his old friends and joined 'a happy brigand of pederasts with whom he enjoys himself; when he doesn't find a male willing to submit to his dirty sick desires, he is willing to play the part of the man'.⁴⁶

Another case is Domenico R., a young sales assistant at a Salerno lottery counter who was sentenced to five years of confinement for passive pederasty. According to the police he was 'fully aware of his filthy inclinations but instead of trying to change he allows himself be dominated by it and nourishes it in all ways. He is not ashamed to exhibit obscene and lascivious behaviours in public which make his perverted tendencies even more obvious'. Because of his sexual orientation, his membership application to the Fascist Party was refused, and he was deemed 'very dangerous to the moral health of the race'. Domenico R. firmly denied the accusations, and even criticised the idea that homosexual activity was a risk to national health. Even while under confinement the young sales clerk complained about the loss of his job, and pointed out the contradiction in the regime's desire to

reform those afflicted by pederasty and the decision to isolate them all on an island reserved solely for them.⁴⁷

Police reports always included harsh judgements against pederasts, opinions that the majority of the population probably would have easily agreed with. Often, in this climate of widespread hostility towards homosexuals, people's complaints lead the police to apply harsh repressive measures. In the case of Giuseppe B., another young man from Salerno, it was the frequent complaints received by law enforcement agencies that prompted his confinement. His 'sexual perversion' led him to 'wander day and night, walking and moving like a female, made up with lipstick and clothing that attracted the attention of passers-by who for the most part were nauseated'.⁴⁸

The experiences of individuals who received *diffede* and *ammonizioni* were suspect and those sent to political confinement have not yet been supported by an in-depth study of other, more subtle techniques used by the regime in its battle against homosexuality. Satire, slander and control by the parish priest, the doctor, the police commissioner, relatives and neighbours were all methods of social repression used to isolate those who were considered social misfits. Other methods of persecution such as prison and lunatic asylums, in which Fascists locked up homosexuals to free society from the 'ill of pederasty', have not been researched. The analysis of court proceedings against those who violated the canon of virility would help to understand how homosexuals were dealt with. Criminal research allows us to outline the official view of what was considered sexually acceptable, and to understand how society perceived 'normal' sexuality. In courtrooms, the meaning attributed to virility was clarified in detail when deviants were sentenced and correct sexual conduct was described. Trials established the 'boundaries of Eros'⁴⁹ and drew a clear line between approved and illicit, normal and abnormal, habitual and transgressive sex. Therefore, by criminalising homosexuality, sexual behaviour was subject to legal control, the heterosexual order was safeguarded, and masculinity was subject to discipline. Court sentences created a link to the widely held culture and beliefs because in addition to protecting an injured entitlement, they reinforced the image of the virile man that homosexuals threatened. In this way, they gave visibility to the unwritten code of masculinity. Magistrates and medical doctors were useful in silencing those who questioned the separation of genders and in defining the boundaries of masculinity. Homosexuals who were put on trial were judged more for their improper conduct than

for breaking the law. Sexual activities that strayed from 'normality', and whose purpose was not procreation, were repressed and punished because they harmed respectability and the dominant canon of manliness. It is no accident that the courts clearly expressed their hostility towards homosexuals by emitting sentences that often went beyond the confines of law, and turned into pure moral condemnations. They were, in truth, judging behaviours which, even if they did not clearly break the law, were reprehensible because they hurt ethical norms. In a sentence against two men accused of indecency 'for having committed an unnameable obscene act in a public vehicle', a judge absolved them with uncertainty, but described the trial as 'extremely serious from a moral standpoint'.⁵⁰ Thus judicial action prescribed the code for male behaviour while it defended rights. Magistrates did not only judge actions, they also considered the morality of the accused, and their sentence could also depend on their social status and their degree of respectability. The case of the army captain Corrado M. is significant. He was accused of obscene acts when caught behaving suspiciously in a movie theatre with a young man who was worlds away from him 'in age and social class'. The soldier was absolved in full, despite the large amount of evidence against him: the boy confirmed the nature of the relationship between himself and the captain in the report written by the *carabiniere* who had surprised the couple in the balcony of a Roman cinema, and Corrado M. had run away when he was stopped. In spite of this evidence, the judge excluded that the captain could be guilty because he had all the characteristics of a virile man and exemplified the dominant masculine model. He had

the best of references, not only in performing his noble role as an officer in the army, but also regarding his *moral qualities* he is described as an *honest, correct and well-adjusted gentleman*. And since what is said about him bodes well for the boy, too, whom we have declared *normal* in his sexuality in the appraisal on record, the Court absolves them of having committed the act they are accused of. Decided in Rome at the hearing of 10 December 1934.⁵¹

The concluding words of the sentence demonstrates how, yet again, the comparison between 'gentlemen and scoundrels'⁵² was used to establish male identity and to defend what was considered normal manly behaviour. Trial proceedings also illustrate how pervasive

repressive operations were, and the strong impact of the regime's conditioning on the police force. Fascist ideology encouraged the efforts of local authorities by providing the ideal motivation to act upon their homophobic predisposition. In spite of the relatively light sentences, the regime carried out an actual war on homosexual prostitution. Plain-clothed police agents were ordered to patrol the areas around public urinals, where they allowed unsuspecting prostitutes to approach them only to handcuff and arrest them, or put them on record and release them.⁵³

Occasionally those accused of the 'vile practice of sodomy' declared themselves innocent on the grounds of incompetence, to avoid imprisonment. They attempted to prove that the behaviour they were accused of depended on external factors over which they had no control. The boundary between sin and crime, vice and illness was ephemeral enough to leave this possibility open to the offender. However, it also gave judges leeway since, depending on the case, a homosexual could be regarded as a deviant and confined, judged as a criminal and imprisoned, or deemed morally insane and sent to an asylum. The 'medical treatment of perverse pleasure'⁵⁴ that began in the 1800s had given rise to the study of sexual inversion, which came to be considered an actual psychopathic form. Consequently, asylums were considered the most appropriate institutions for homosexuals since they met the dual requirement of reclusion and therapy, treatment and social protection. Institutionalisation was seen as an approach that provided rigid social control of deviants, improved public health and morality and benefited the health and well-being of the population. Psychiatric treatment of all deviations was a tool that allowed firm control over those with non-conforming behaviour. An individual's mental health, as well as the degree of danger they posed were the parameters used to decide whether reclusion in an asylum was appropriate. Mental institutions thus provided support structures to the police force for the removal of unwanted individuals and disturbers of order from society.⁵⁵ Michel Foucault argues that the beginning of abnormality actually depends highly on the treatment of deviant behaviour and on the need rationally to explain exceptions, which were no longer seen as eccentricities but as forms of mental illness.⁵⁶ Continual attempts to define and classify sexual perversions are a result of the need to understand all those behaviours that diverge from what is normal and average. Psychiatry thus took on a social and moral role in addition to its medical application. Socially it assisted in

controlling and isolating deviance. Morally it established guidelines for proper conduct by drawing clear lines between health and sickness, and between normal and pathological behaviour.⁵⁷ The treatment of homosexuals served as a pseudo-scientific justification for policies that were intended to advance the population, by waging battle all individuals who jeopardised the nation's demographic expansion.

Fascist repression of homosexuals thus provides elements that are useful in defining the masculine canon the regime wanted to spread. Persecution focused almost exclusively on the effeminate, transvestites and prostitutes. From the Fascist point of view, homosexuality was not centred on an individual's sexual orientation. Paradoxically the homosexual, defined as a person attracted to someone of the same sex, was relatively ignored. There were no specific books, discourse or measures taken regarding homosexuality *per se* because only the absence of virility was a problem. A sedentary middle-class man, an English dandy or an elegant refined Parisian represented negative symbols of manhood more than a brawny *squadrista* who was attracted to young boys. Even if they were not homosexual, effeminate men were more despised and ridiculed because they represented the opposite of the new Fascist man who had to be self-assured, strong and tough. Largely, Fascism did not punish homosexuals but rather men who had feminine ways, and in this way it adhered without reserve to the representation of women as inferior to men. In fact, as has been mentioned, active pederasts and manly homosexuals were tolerated or at least were not persecuted, while passive pederasts were targets of repressive actions because they played the female role. Political policy viewed homosexuals as a mere secondary threat, because they limited population growth. Much more serious was the problem generated by those who, regardless of their sexual identity, spread a negative image through their womanly behaviour, thereby jeopardising the model of respectability and manhood that Fascism projected. Separation of gender identity was to be strictly regulated to mark clearly the difference between man and woman. The regime's position in this matter can be seen by Mussolini's own lax view regarding the continual insinuations that Domenico Bagnasco, a Member of Parliament, was homosexual. In Turin there was a widespread and insistent rumour that this wounded and decorated combatant, who was a nationalist and president of the Turin Cooperative Alliance, was a 'sexual degenerate' and that his moral conduct caused his removal as the secretary of trade unions. The *Duce* hastily

dismissed the gossip because, 'given Bagnasco's profile, masculine features and full beard, the rumour could have no basis in truth'.⁵⁸

This type of accusation also sheds light on how homosexuality could be a useful weapon in any political battle. These types of insinuations were, in fact, not that rare. Since free political expression was stifled within the National Fascist Party (PNF), the use of slander spread rapidly.⁵⁹ Criticism of liberal-democratic politics, which was paralysed by the contrast between political parties and movements, had not eliminated rivalries among party leaders who used other means in their conflicts. Since their rivalries could not be manifested openly, they used anonymous letters, secret documents and concealed plots to disguise longstanding factional differences. According to Salvatore Lupo,

Changes of the guard in local PNF federations were more often than not motivated by thefts, sexual scandals and at times unbelievable accusations. They reflected Fascism's distaste for the old politics, for the virus that at any time could re-emerge in Roman *palazzi* and in the thousand folds of Italian provinces. It could happen even though the regime had established solid foundations, even within the PNF, even among the most faithful Black Shirts.⁶⁰

In other words, the political battle was transformed from a public debate on programmes, points of view and values into a series of below-the-table accusations regarding private lives. Confrontation between political ideas was replaced by conflicts over moral conduct.⁶¹ Portraying one's rival in the opposite light of a perfect Fascist official (*gerarcha*) was a useful aid in winning a dispute, undermining a rival, or discrediting a potential opponent. Comparing physical-sensory characteristics with moral qualities served to, 'mythologise the political world by giving it physical features'.⁶² It was believed that somatic disfiguration could provide tangible evidence of an opponent's inferiority.

Within this framework, homosexuality became an important political weapon to be used in personal rivalries for positions of command against anyone who deviated from the male image prescribed by the regime. Merits or demerits could actually depend on degrees of virility: those who had not fought in the First World War, those who led a dissolute life, those who were single or whose wives betrayed them could be disciplined and, above all, became potential targets for

anyone who wanted to injure them. The values attributed to Fascist masculinity such as youthfulness, virility, athleticism and military prowess provided the basis for judging a person's political credibility. For example, being considered a 'pederast' could mean immediate expulsion from the Party with all its ensuing consequences. This happened to Maurizio B., who was confined in 1935 by the provincial commission of Novara as a result of the conflict with those who accused him of being a homosexual. Based on this slander he was demoted from army captain to private and placed on unlimited leave. He then lost his job as an employee for a company that managed large hotels. The impact on his political career was just as devastating. In spite of the fact that he had participated in the March on Rome, he was first dismissed and then expelled from within the Fascist ranks, then expelled from the veterans association. He was continually persecuted by both the political secretary of Stresa and by the local Fascist authorities. He was publicly attacked and scorned, without work, went hungry and for a period was forced to live in a barn. He filed appeals, reports and anonymous documents to avenge those who had ruined his life, but he was only accused of trying to foment more disagreement in the Party and to discredit its institutions. Since he was 'also clearly a social threat because of his untreatable sexual perversions' he was sentenced to five years' political confinement.⁶³

Michele Crisafulli Mondio, the federal secretary from Messina, also had to pay the consequences resulting from a mound of accusations against him. He had become aware of the effects resulting from base insinuations that were spread 'through libel, anonymous reports, a typewritten memoir' and 'rumour started from a core group of slanderers then spread by volunteer agents'.⁶⁴ According to his political rivals he practiced nepotism, was a mason, a draft dodger, corrupted and a corruptor, had Mafia associations and was involved in contract fixing and fraud. He was morally loathsome and, what was more, was 'demoralised and perverted'. In Taormina he had participated in homosexual orgies.⁶⁵ The use of slander and the formulation of conspiracies, methods whose objective was to end an official's political career, were easier to use because it was so difficult for the accused to prove their innocence. From the highest levels of the party, as in the case of Augusto Turati, down to lower levels, as in the case of the mayor of the small town of Sgurgola,⁶⁶ the accusation of homosexuality was often used to settle political rivalries. In some circumstances, even Mussolini made use of a dossier and anonymous tipoffs that

were scrupulously compiled thanks to information received by the Political Police aimed at removing a Party leader or making him more malleable.⁶⁷

In this climate filled with slander and suspicion, private conduct tended to become a visible sign of ideological 'faith', while conformity to Fascist morals was an indispensable prerequisite for consolidating the sense of belonging to the party and the image of the militant. Public image and outward behaviour was important to the party: citizens were to be the living expression of the Fascist struggle to create a new man who was radically different from the past. Similar to monastic and military institutions, one's lifestyle assumed a fundamental importance; it was a clear sign of adherence to a common ideal. After the birth of a new Fascist state and body of law, it was also necessary to codify a *vade mecum* of Fascist style and ethics,⁶⁸

because if, when applying the new law in the realm of public life we all know what is lawful and what is not, we also need to know what the state allows and what it does not allow in private life, in relations between men; in other words, when conscience is called on and character is defined. We are still missing a real rule, a guideline that tells us WHAT IS FASCIST AND WHAT IS NOT.⁶⁹

Within the totalitarian framework of the Party-church, commandments, catechisms, Decalogues, rules and behavioural guidelines were responsible for defining the duties of the Fascist to create the distinct sign of a true believer in the ideology.⁷⁰ According to Achille Starace, an untiring supporter of the need for citizens to conform to 'a new style under Mussolini's rule', form had to shape habits and customs. Not by chance, whoever continued to speak Italian using '*lei*' instead of '*voi*' as a pronoun deserved disciplinary action because of insubordination and a lack of Fascist faith.⁷¹ This lifestyle, seen as a '*total* guideline' capable of 'shaping all individual and collective behaviour', allowed the religion of Mussolini to spread through the masses so it became their way of thinking and civil ethic.⁷² Niccolò Zapponi notes that as a result 'among the most impalpable but also the most instinctive reasons for the success of Fascism was a relatively widespread willingness to believe that salvation lay, in fact, in style'.⁷³ The result, was that a new public and political importance was given to strictly private things such as age, sexual orientation and marital status. Even conferring preferential political appointments to young people, to ex-combatants and

to married individuals with children, was based strictly on the Fascist ideology of youth, virility and militarism. Within this framework of increased invasion of private life, for example, a law introduced in 1934 forbade mayors to be celibate, in keeping with the general Fascist policy of population growth.⁷⁴ This moral precept was so restrictive that prefects were asked to verify the truthfulness of engagements and marriage vows that were quickly posted by mayors afraid of being dismissed. Thus the best way of assuring that conduct would not jeopardise one's political career was to send marriage documents directly to the authorities, or to tell the *Duce* directly about a wedding.⁷⁵ Party interference in private life could also be seen in requests for expulsion for whomever 'neglects his own family or conducts a disorderly life', or 'permits or facilitates the infiltration of dangerous and poisonous germs into family life' which 'offends the moral principals of one of the fundamental institutions of Fascist society'.⁷⁶

In spite of signs of intolerance provoked by this continuous intrusion, the intent of which was to bring about the complete politicisation of existence, the scope of 'Fascist morality' expanded into the most routine aspects of personal life. As Carlo Scorza, secretary of the *Fasci Giovanili di combattimento* and later secretary of the PNF, reiterated in 1929, it was useless to complain about expulsion motivated by 'disorderly private life' because

the Party enters everywhere and purging its ranks is a constant necessity ... Fascism represents a way of life more than a political principle. It is a system of ideals more than a new, however powerful and ingenious, economic idea ... Yes, gentlemen, the Party also penetrates private life. He who mistreats his own family, or neglects it, or lives a disorderly life, offends the moral principles of a fundamental institution of Fascist society; he depresses and disintegrates the unifying spirit; he enables the infiltration of very dangerous poisonous germs ... To belong to the Fascist Party is a mark of great distinction, of true nobility. It is a rank, the first rank of the civilian hierarchy of Italian people. It is essential, therefore, to be proud of it.⁷⁷

To create the 'new man', the 'old man' had to be reformed by changing his habits, customs and character.⁷⁸ This objective was part of the Fascist plan since the 1920s even though, as Emilio Gentile observed, beginning in the 1930s the regime started to increase its effort to reaffirm the

supremacy of politics over every other aspect of individual and collective life, through the shifting of the private to the public sphere, to organise society in a totalitarian way, subordinating it to the control of a single party and integrating it with a State that was conceived and structured as a dominant and absolute value.⁷⁹

Mussolini expressed this objective as early as 1932 when he described the Fascist goal to transform private as well as public behaviour: 'our way of eating, dressing, working, sleeping and our entire daily lives must be reformed'.⁸⁰

With the conquest of the empire and the beginning of a racial policy it became even more urgent to give back 'to all Italians that virile, military, energetic and constructive style that had been typical of the Italian race throughout time'.⁸¹ The anthropological revolution became an indispensable aspect of the regime's success, because as Mussolini wrote in 1938:

With the creation of the Empire, Fascism has to strengthen the renewal of the Italian way of life. It must penetrate individuals' private lives, it must shape the Italians of the Empire both physically and morally; Italians who deserve the Empire, who are aware of how their world has changed ... In all sectors of public and private life we must instil a new style, a new pride, a new discipline, a new Fascist sense of virility that is bold, martial and sporting.⁸²

This palingenetic vision of politics was a fundamental characteristic of the totalitarian vision. The pretext it provided to permeate every aspect of public and collective life had repercussions on the sexual sphere of people's lives.⁸³ With the acceleration of the totalitarian experiment the boundaries between private and public life became thinner. Even the domestic space was invaded.⁸⁴ 'Transparency' was a central theme in the auto-representation of the party. Mussolini maintained that it must be 'a glass house into which everyone can and must look'. This called for the highest degree of rectitude and, consequently, capillary control over sexual morality in order to construct male and female identity and the maternity and paternity of the new Fascists in accordance with the values expressed by the ideology.⁸⁵ They accomplished this transparency through implicit and explicit censorship of every reference to shameful and immoral behaviour such as, in fact, homosexuality. However, confronting the problem did not

mean raising useless and damaging scandals. This was particularly true with regards to the horrible vice of pederasty, which was repressed only when it became publicly visible and resulted in effeminate or anti-social behaviour. Even though totalitarian logic tended to enlarge the public sphere more and more, and almost completely invaded the private one, the project of creating a new man did not foresee explicit action against homosexuality. There were numerous obstacles preventing the realisation of this project: the bourgeois canon of respectability was a barrier against the public invasion of the private; while the idea of privacy and discretion clashed with the pretext of having complete control over peoples' lives.

Although Fascism officially preached austerity and sexual moderation, reality was often radically different and transgressions were quite frequent. The extreme puritanical principles articulated by the regime often were disregarded when they came up against deeply engrained habits, and often it was necessary to close an eye towards the regime's more influential figures. Public morality could be distanced from the private, and the intransigent principles were not always applied in practice. For example, even though the family, monogamy and procreation within matrimony were extolled, extra-marital escapades were tolerated. Mussolini's relationship with Claretta Petacci was public knowledge and was considered a human side of the *Duce*, a weakness of the flesh regarded as natural for such a virile character, and a totally legitimate exception to the rule for a person who sat above norms and moral laws. Similarly, prostitution was legal, or rather, to use terms that conveyed the correct public image, prostitutes were controlled and brothels were authorised. Prostitutes were publicly condemned but they were accepted for they provided a useful social service.⁸⁶

Since Fascism gave absolute priority to political order, it turned a blind eye to the non-orthodox behaviour of some important party leaders. Accusations of homosexuality were so discretionary that the practice was allowed for officials with crucial roles within the Fascist state. Those who were able to lead an apparently upright life style could easily avoid problems related to their 'different' sexual orientation. The case of two members holding positions at the top of the Fascist hierarchy are exemplary. The Chief of Police, Carmine Senise, and the director of theatre censorship, Leopoldo Zurlo, lived together and were linked since childhood by a bond that went beyond friendship. Senise himself defined Zurlo as 'more than a brother', and spoke

of his modest and discreet cohabitation with his 'fraternal and inseparable friend'.⁸⁷ Eugen Dollman provides more explicitly allusive testimony regarding their relationship. This careful observer of the homosexual world described Bocchini's successor as Chief of Police in this way:

Senise gradually lost the enormous political influence of his predecessor ... there remained no trace of Bocchini's social atmosphere. Unlike in the past, conversations now revolved around the events surrounding the numerous Neapolitan family of Don Carmine, an unrepentant bachelor surrounded by many male and female relatives ... During that period the luxurious automobiles of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were kept in the garage covered in dust. Their doors did not open to let out a senator who, under the starry Roman sky, wanted to enjoy the evening breeze on the Pincio with a woman friend who sparkled with jewels. More modestly, in the same place, every afternoon you could see two rather old men, dressed in black, who gazed out over the eternal panorama. You quickly recognised them as Carmine Senise and his inseparable friend Zurlo, who for decades shared a modest house with the Chief of Police.⁸⁸

Dollmann had high regard for Bocchini's management of the police force, but he also felt that he personified the 'authentic Italian gourmand'.⁸⁹ He represented Senise with a touch of bitterness and describes him as a lover of opera, who

sat down each evening at the Costanzi not in the company of a beautiful woman, but with the director of Italian censorship. He, too, could be seen at the Pincio, but in a much different atmosphere than that created by Bocchini with his *bellissima*. They walked back and forth, apparently focused on their exercise, but no one suspected that under the sparkle of the Roman stars they were plotting the fall of the *Duce* and the end of the hated Germans.⁹⁰

Insinuations regarding the nature of the bond between Senise and Zurlo were constant. Gossip turned into open accusations, especially in 1943, when suspicions regarding the Chief of Police's loyalty to the regime increased, and when the catastrophic end to the war and the fall of Fascism were becoming increasingly evident. The intelligence service within the *Segreteria Particolare del Duce* had been created by

Mussolini and Buffarini-Guidi in February 1943 to gather information, and maintain control over political figures.⁹¹ It reported that Zurlo was ‘the object of many sarcastic comments’ because he was thought to be homosexual and thus his cohabitation with the police chief was rather suspicious.⁹² Even the many anonymous letters received regarding Senise denounced his ‘immoral’ private conduct and suspected pederasty with Zurlo.⁹³ One of them, for example, ended with these harsh words:

the current Chief of Police is also very rotten morally. He is a pederast and for many years has been living with his Excellency Zurlo, who acts as his girlfriend. He also had intimate relations with Zurlo’s sister. He also has homosexual relationships with some young police officers and has used this to become rich, powerful and feared by everyone. If he finds out someone has become aware of the situation he destroys them. Do you think this is enough to expel him as he deserves, or do you want to wait for him to bury the *Duce*?⁹⁴

In spite of the many insinuations against these two important, unmarried, cohabitating officials, no measures were taken against them. It was more important to retain functionaries who were useful to the regime, than to uphold the totalitarian aspiration to transform Italians into a virile people. Suspicions of a presumed homosexual relationship between the director of theatre censorship and the Chief of Police came up against their political untouchability, confirming once again that Fascist moral precepts could be overlooked depending on a person’s social standing or political role.

The Zurlo–Senise episode also reveals the ambivalence between the need to uphold respectability and the totalitarian drive for the creation of a new man. The Fascist model for manhood did not just include the condemnation of homosexuality; it also refuted the respectable, conformist middle class that was in line with prevailing Catholic morality in Italy. The bourgeoisie, which defended the private sphere from politics, risked the pursuit of an individualism that resulted in a lack of daring and heroism, and even feminine tendencies. Not coincidentally, only the most ardent supporters of the new man, and those who were most critical towards bourgeois morality, openly condemned homosexuality. At the same time, however, respectability was considered an indispensable mechanism moulding collective behaviour to the regime’s directives. The friction between bourgeois

mentality and totalitarian aspirations to achieve a real anthropological revolution was present for the entire Fascist period. The struggle between safeguarding traditional morals and creating new values was constant. George Mosse – in spite of the fact that he considered fascism an ideal bourgeois revolution and reduced the fascist idea of masculinity to an image applicable to the entire Western world, and thus did not stress the difference between the Italian *squadrista* or the ideal SS and a middle-aged man, ‘the straight-edged Englishman, the all-American boy’⁹⁵ – underscored how the Fascist and National Socialist definition of masculinity, based on activism, heroism and militarism, created unavoidable friction with bourgeois respectability. Mosse wrote,

The tension between the ideal of masculinity and family life was common to all forms of Fascism: on the one hand the pact among men that was thought to determine the destiny of the State, and on the other the virtues of bourgeois family life that Fascism vowed to defend.⁹⁶

Emilio Gentile correctly observed that Fascism sought to replace ‘middle-class respectability’ with ‘respectability in uniform’ that was based on courage, strength and virility. At the same time it tried in every possible way to balance tradition and modernity by extolling the values of the past while proposing new moral principles.⁹⁷ Solving the challenges of modernity meant confronting its negative aspects, including homosexuality. Fascism was not an anti-modern movement, but modernisation had to integrate with the ethics on which the Fascist state rested. Fear of disorder and uncontrollable change motivated the defence of some aspects of traditional values. Regulating the sexual life of citizens was thus fundamental. Fascist attitudes toward private life and morality were, therefore, ambivalent. It used a combination of tradition and innovation, with restorative elements tied to Catholic doctrine and elements of renewal typical of a totalitarian state.

In any case, notwithstanding this ambivalence and the constancy of homophobia, the Fascist aspiration for complete individual subservience to the demands of the regime, and its attempt to mould even citizens’ sexual conduct to ideology, hindered the emancipation of homosexuals and of attitudes of tolerance and the integration of diversity. This delay in the appreciation of freedom was still felt in Republican Italy, and conditioned sexual morality even then. Homosexuals themselves were forced, for such a long time, to avoid being

isolated that they refuted their own sexual inclinations, or conformed to the super-virile model imposed by Fascism. They continue to face the effects of this attitude, and today the idea of manhood still resembles the warlike and athletic image widely held during the Fascist period.

NOTES

1. P. Chiara, *Il balordo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1967), p.9.
2. The term 'police confinement' is used throughout this article in reference to the Fascist practice of removing individuals from society by exiling them in a remote village or area of Italy, usually in the south. The term 'internal exile' has also been used to describe this practice.
3. During the Fascist period, pederast was the term most commonly used to describe homosexuality. In fact, in his memoirs of the 1930s Carlo Coccioli writes, 'I do not exclude that the first term heard regarding my status was "pederast"', C. Coccioli, *Tutta la verità* (Milan: Rusconi, 1995), p.194.
4. See C. Pavone, *Una guerra civile: Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991).
5. Regarding homosexuality in film, see P. Bertelli, *Cinema e diversità. 1895–1987: storia di svantaggio sul telo bianco. Mascheramento mercificazione, autenticità* (Reggio Emilia: Notor, 1994); D. Fernandez, *Il ratto di Ganimede: La presenza omosessuale nell'arte e nella società* (Milan: Bompiani, 2002), pp.318–40; V. Russo, *Lo schermo velato: L'omosessualità nel cinema* (Genoa: Costa and Nolan, 1984); and idem, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987).
6. I am indebted to Luca Prono for sharing his forthcoming article, *Città aperta o cultura chiusa? The homosexualization of fascism in the perverted cultural memory of the Italian Left*, in which he analyses, at times overly controversially and anachronistically, the 'homosexualization' of fascism in some neo-realist texts and in Carlo Lizzani's film *Celluloide* (1996).
7. See P. Dogliani, 'Omossessualità', in V. De Grazia and S. Luzzato (eds.), *Dizionario del fascismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003), Vol.II, pp.264–5.
8. See M. Duberman, M. Vicinus and G. Chauncey Jr., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Meridian, 1989). Regarding developments of the history of male homosexuality based on research published in English during the 1970s and some fundamental themes in this new area of research, see J. D'Emelio, 'La storia gay: un nuovo settore di ricerca', *Rivista di storia contemporanea* XX/1 (January 1991), pp.88–105. Also see the same author in *The World Turned: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).
9. B. Mussolini, *Spirito della rivoluzione fascista*, edited by G.S. Spinetti (Milan: Hoepli, 1937), p.70.
10. See P.C. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso: Fascismo e mass media* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1975).
11. Circular entitled *Per la moralità e la sicurezza pubblica*, no.12985.2/18138, sent from Mussolini on 30 October 1928 to the prefects of the nation, and in copy to the General Command of the CC.RR. (*Carabinieri*) Army, in 'Moralità pubblica', Envelope 225, versamento 1, *Gabinetto Prefettura*, Archivio Storico di Milano. In the circular Mussolini invited the police force to proceed in their energetic efforts to defend morality by checking the feverish 'search for new forms of pleasure', forbidding pornographic publications, repressing neo-Malthusian tendencies, limiting alcohol and drug use, fighting prostitution, vagrancy, money lending and gambling.

12. L. Ellena, 'Mascolinità e immaginario nazionale nel cinema italiano degli anni Trenta', in S. Bellassai and M. Malatesta (eds.), *Genere e mascolinità: uno sguardo storico* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2001), p.249.
13. Regarding the link between sport and masculinity, see J.A. Mangan, 'Making European Masculinities: Sport, Europe, Gender', *European Sports History Review*, Vol.2, (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000). On the representation of the youthfulness like image of the ideal Fascist, see L. Malvano, 'Il mito della giovinezza attraverso l'immagine: il fascismo italiano', in G. Levi and J.C. Schmitt (eds.), *Storia dei giovani: L'età contemporanea* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1994), pp.311–48. A useful though not completely convincing analysis of Italian fascist cultural iconography and its use in publicity as a tool to consolidate gender identity can be found in K. Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes: Italian Advertising under Fascism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). Regarding the use of the body of the *Duce* as a model for the ideal man and best example of fascist virility, see M. Isnenghi, 'Il corpo del duce', in idem, *L'Italia del fascio* (Florence: Giunti, 1996), pp.405–19; S. Luzzato, *Il corpo del duce: Un cadavere tra immaginazione, storia e memoria* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998); G. Di Genova (ed.), *L'uomo della provvidenza: iconografia del Duce 1923–1945* (Bologna: Bora, 1997); and G. Gori, 'Model of Masculinity: Mussolini, the "New Italian" of the Fascist Era', *International Journal of History of Sport* (December 1999), pp.27–61.
14. Regarding Fascism's conception of masculinity, see B. Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). On the aggressive and warlike image of the Fascist, see M. Isnenghi, 'Il volto truce dell'"Italiano Nuovo"', in *Immagini e retorica di Regime* (Milan: Motta Editore, 2001), pp.17–20. Regarding the stereotypical portrayal of homosexuality in the press, see D. Petrosino, 'Traditori della stripe: Il razzismo contro gli omosessuali nella stampa del fascismo', in A. Burgio and L. Casali (eds.), *Studi sul razzismo italiano* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), pp.89–107; and D. Petrosino, 'Come si costruisce uno stereotipo: La rappresentazione degli omosessuali ne "L'Italiano" di Leo Longanesi (1926–1929)', in Circolo Pink (ed.), *Le ragioni di un silenzio: La persecuzione degli omosessuali durante il nazismo e il fascismo* (Verona: Ombre Corte, 2002), pp.49–63.
15. See G.L. Mosse, *L'immagine dell'uomo: Lo stereotipo maschile nell'epoca moderna* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997); English publication, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
16. G.L. Mosse, *Sessualità e nazionalismo: mentalità borghese e rispettabilità* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1984); English publication, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985). Mosse felt that even before Fascism the transformation resulting from social change and the emergence of the mass industrial society brought about the need to redefine the male role, and to identify a link between virility and nation that was able rigidly to set boundaries between that which was considered normal and that which represented degeneration.
17. See G.M. De Marinis, *Resurrezione Eroica. L'Italiano Nuovo* (Naples: Pironti, 1929).
18. G. Maggiore, 'Maschilità del fascismo', in idem, *Un regime e un'epoca* (Milan: Treves, 1929), pp.139, 141.
19. M. Carli, 'Sfemminilizzare la mondanità', in idem, *Antisnobismo* (Milan: Morreale, 1929), p.101.
20. E. Galvano, 'Natura e morale', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 26 September 1934.
21. E. Goffman, *Asylums. Le istituzioni totali. La condizione sociale dei malati di mente e di altri internati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1968); English publication, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961).
22. G. Dall'Orto, 'La "tolleranza repressiva" dell'omosessualità: Quando un atteggiamento legale diviene tradizione', in Arci-gay nazionale (ed.), *Omosessuali e Stato, Quaderni di critica omosessuale*, no.3 (Bologna: Il Cassero, 1988), pp.37–57. In my opinion, it may be misleading to use the term 'tolerance' in the Fascist context because, even though the

- term is linked to repression, it risks making Fascist silence and denial appear as a form of acceptance of diversity.
23. Giovanni Appiani, the president of the ministerial commission charged with providing an opinion in the initial project for a new penal code, thus summarised the main reasons to not include Article 528 in the final text of the Rocco Code.
 24. *Lavori preparatori del codice penale e del codice di procedura penale*, vol.IV, part IV, Atti della commissione ministeriale incaricata di dare parere sul progetto preliminare di un nuovo codice penale, Verbali delle sedute della commissione e relazione riassuntiva dei lavori della commissione (Rome: Tipografia delle Mantellate, 1929), p.377.
 25. See *ibid.*, vol.V, part II, Progetto definitivo di un nuovo codice penale con la relazione del guardasigilli on. Alfredo Rocco, Relazione sui libri II e III del Progetto, pp.314–15.
 26. Probably, for exactly this reason and because archive files are incomplete, some inaccuracies have been written with regards to homosexual repression. The prevailing thesis of Giovanni Dall’Orto and Gianfranco Goretti, who were among the first to study the issue, attribute homosexual persecution to Fascist racial policies by linking it directly to the 1938 racial laws. In more recent studies of Patrizia Dogliani as well, the ‘persecution of homosexuals by the Fascist regime’ is linked to ‘their general racial and sexual phobia’. Dogliani herself finds this interpretation unconvincing because, as she states, ‘the nature of the crime and thus its punishability remained imprecise’, both because ‘in Italy the journal *La Difesa della Razza* never directly addresses the issue during the most heated years of racial propaganda’, P. Dogliani, *L’Italia fascista 1922–1940* (Milan: Sansoni, 1999), pp.282–3. The author refers to the work of Goretti and Dall’Orto in a completely uncritical way.
 27. For example Dall’Orto maintains that ‘Italian Facism’s explicit racial policy against homosexuals lasted three years, from 1936 to 1939’, and ‘occurred obviously to imitate Nazi Germany’, G. Dall’Orto, ‘Omossessualità e razziamo fascista’, in D. Bidussa (ed.), *La menzogna della razza: documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell’antisemitismo fascista* (Bologna: Grafis, 1994), p.139. The author reiterates this thesis in ‘Il paradosso del razzismo fascista verso l’omossessualità’, in A. Burgio (ed.), *Nel nome della razza: Il razzismo nella storia d’Italia 1870–1945* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), pp.515–28.
 28. Regarding changes in the lives of private citizens resulting from the attempt to transform the Italians into a nation of soldiers, ready to fight for the greatness and territorial expansion of the Fascist empire, see M.G. Knox, ‘Conquest, Foreign and Domestic, in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany’, *Journal of Modern History* 56/1 (March 1984), pp.1–57. Regarding the link between war escalation and the increase in homosexual repression, see M. Ebner, ‘The Persecution of Homosexual Men under Fascism 1926–1943’, in P. Wilson (ed.), *Gender, Family, and Sexuality: The Private Sphere in Italy, 1860–1945* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), pp. 139–156. For more detailed considerations regarding homosexual repression in Fascist Italy, see L. Benadusi, ‘Gli omossessuali al confino’, *Rivista storica dell’anarchismo* 11/1 (January–June 2004), pp. 25–42.
 29. Dall’Orto, ‘Omossessualità e razziamo fascista’ (note 27), p.139. Gianfranco Goretti, who considers the racial laws of 1938 and the use of internal political confinement for pederasts to be the turning point of homosexual repression in Fascist Italy, holds the same opinion, G. Goretti, ‘Il periodo fascista e gli omossessuali: il confino di polizia’, in Pink (note 14), p.64.
 30. Pederasts from Catania were confined with various sentences. Those condemned under the ordinance of 2 February 1939 and sent to Favignana, Lampedusa and Ustica were also formally considered common confinees. They were registered as political confinees only after their transfer to the Tremiti. In March 1939, in fact, the chief of police had decided to locate all the pederasts from Catania at San Domino, instructing that ‘the entire file regarding the repression Pederasts in Catania should be moved to Political Confinees. The same holds for the personal files of Catania pederasts.’ The confinees related to the ordinance of 11 April 1939 and 8 May 1939 were sent directly to San Domino and were considered political confinees, see File ‘Catania’, ‘Affari per provincia

- relativi ai confinati comuni 1937–1939', Envelope 24, *Confino Comune*, Divisione Polizia Amministrativa e Sociale, Direzione Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza [PS], Ministero degli Interni [MI], Archivio Centrale dello Stato [ACS].
31. See F. Tamagne, *Histoire de l'homosexualité en Europe* (Paris: Seuil, 2000); English publication, *A History of Homosexuality: Europe Between the Wars* (New York: Algora, 2003). Regarding the United States, see G. Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1810–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).
 32. Regarding the evolution of anti-homosexual prejudice, see P. Pedote and G. Lo Presti, *Omofobia. Il pregiudizio anti-omosessuale dalla Bibbia ai giorni nostri* (Viterbo: Stampa Alternativa, 2003).
 33. With these words the Catania police commissioner justified, 'in the silence of the law', the measures taken by the police 'in the interest of the public good and the health of the race' against the homosexuals of the province.
 34. A supporter of the link between pederasty and communism and the existence of a 'five-year homosexual plan for the corruption of youth' and military espionage is the writer Curzio Malaparte, see C. Malaparte, *La pelle* (Milan: Mondadori, 1996 [1949]), pp.123–44; English publication, *The Skin* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997); and idem, *Mamma marcia* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1959).
 35. L. Salerno (ed.), *Enciclopedia di polizia* (Milan: Bocca, 1938), p.701. Giuseppe Falco, who succeeded Ottolenghi as the director of the scientific police academy, also had no doubts regarding 'homosexuality, or sexual inversion, or Uranism'. It represented 'the motive for crimes or acts that, even if they are not a crime, disturb public order and go against modesty and public morality', G. Falco, *La sessuologia nel codice penale italiano* (Milan: Spem, 1935), pp.125–6.
 36. See S. Ottolenghi, *La classificazione morale dei detenuti e Caratteri psicologici di tre pseudo-ermafroditi* (Atti società Med. Leg. year IV).
 37. See Falco (note 35), p.131.
 38. S. Ottolenghi, 'La nuova "Cartella Biografica dei Pregiudicati" adottata dall'amministrazione di P.S.', *Atti della società romana di antropologia*, vol.XI, file I (Rome: 1905). See also idem, *La cartella biografica Federzoni per i pregiudicati* (Zacchia: 1926); idem, *Applicazione delle misure di sicurezza* (Zacchia: 1928); idem, *Trattato di polizia scientifica: Identificazione psichica e biografica e investigazioni giudiziarie*, vol.2 (Milan: Società Libreria, 1932), p.324 ff.; and idem, *Nozioni per la compilazione della Cartella Biografica del pregiudicato* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1932). See also G. Falco, 'Evoluzione della "cartella biografica" e pericolosità', *Bollettino della Scuola Superiore di Polizia e dei servizi tecnici ammessi*, nos.14–15 (1924–25). Ottolenghi's framework was used without major changes by his trainees as well, regarding it see G. Tamburro, *Il diritto di polizia* (Rome: Sormani, 1940), p.351. Regarding Fascism's assessment of Ottolenghi's methods for the scientific police, see S. Ottolenghi, 'Polizia e fascismo', *Bollettino della Scuola Superiore di Polizia e dei servizi tecnici ammessi*, file 18 (1928), pp.160–7.
 39. File 'Antonio P.', Envelope 772, Fascicoli Personali *Ufficio Confino Politico* [UCP], Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, PS, MI, ACS.
 40. File 'Giuseppe L.P.', Envelope 576, *UCP*, ACS. This welder from Catania, who 'contrary to natural tendencies, threw himself into the arms of the goddess of desire and was caught in the act of pederasty', was sent to political confinement 'to prevent the spread of sexual degeneration'.
 41. File 'Salvatore F.', Envelope 391, *UCP*, ACS. The police were constantly concerned with avoiding any scandal caused by the free expression of 'perverse' behaviour'. In the case of an confined resident of Catania, the police justified their decision with, 'he has intercourse with persons of the same sex and is scandalous when he publicly flaunts his behaviour by the way he walks, gesticulates and makes himself up. He is a moral danger. We recommend the maximum sentence for police confinement', File 'Emanuele B.', Envelope 128, *UCP*, ACS.

42. The restricted use of confinement compared with other police measures is clearly evident in the Florentine case of 61 'pederasts' sentenced by the provincial commission between 1936 and 1939. Eleven were condemned to political confinement, 34 were booked with *ammonezzioni*, and 16 were simply given warnings (*diffidati*).
43. File 'Giuseppe Z.', Envelope 1084, UCP, ACS.
44. File 'Domenico R.', Envelope 865, UCP, ACS.
45. File 'Matteo A.', Envelope 9, UCP, ACS. The prefect, too, felt that pederasty 'undermined the moral fibre of the young and harmed physical integrity by encouraging libertine and depraved activity that contrasted with the regime's general directions on instructing the young'.
46. File 'Giovanni C.', Envelope 285, UCP, ACS. The police commissioner also emphasised in his report this juxtaposition of male and female, that is, the active and the passive as criteria for identifying homosexuality. In his opinion, in fact, 'in the society of pederasts' when *Sciuparo* 'does not play the female role, adapts and acts as the male'.
47. File 'Domenico R.', Envelope 878, UCP, ACS.
48. File 'Giuseppe B.', Envelope 90, UCP, ACS. Regarding his testimony and his life in exile, see G. Dall'Orto, 'Ci furono dei "femminella" che piangevano quando venimmo via dalle Tremiti! Intervista a un omosessuale confinato nel periodo fascista', *Babilonia*, no.50 (1987), pp.26–8.
49. G. Ruggiero, *I confini dell'eros: Crimini sessuali e sessualità nella Venezia del Rinascimento* (Venice: Marsilio, 1988).
50. Sentence no.4419 of 17 December 1934, no.609/34 appello registro generale, Sentenze Penali, Archivio di Stato di Roma [ASR].
51. Sentence no.4279 of 10 December 1934, no.672/1934 appello registro generale, Sentenze Penali, ASR.
52. A. McLaren, *Gentiluomini e canaglie: L'identità maschile tra Ottocento e Novecento* (Rome: Carocci, 1999); English publication, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries 1870–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1997), a useful example of how sources from the court were used for researching the history of masculinity.
53. When judging two homosexuals who were caught performing immoral acts in public urinals, the Cassation Court had established that such acts were without doubt an offence to public decency and that urinals were considered public places. The sentence of five months' imprisonment was confirmed, but sentence was suspended, sentence no.3533 of 25 October 1934, no.191/1934 appello registro generale, Sentenze Penali, ASR.
54. See M. Foucault, *La volontà di sapere* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999); English publication, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).
55. Regarding the use of the asylum as an institution for social control and segregation location, see M. Foucault, *Storia della follia* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1980); English publication, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988); K. Dörner, *Il borghese e il folle: Storia sociale della psichiatria* (Bari: Laterza, 1969); English publication, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981); and M. Cagossi, 'Tra Dörner e Foucault: storia sociale e critico-strutturalismo della psichiatria', *Archivio di psicologia neurologia e psichiatria XXXVIII* (1977), pp.409–17.
56. See M. Foucault, *Gli anormali. Corso al Collège de France 1974–1975* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2000); English publication, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975* (New York, Picador, 2003).
57. See G. Canguilhem, *Il normale e il patologico* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998); English publication, *The Normal and the Pathological* (New York: Zone Books, 1989).
58. File 'Bagnasco Domenico onorevole', Envelope 60, Fascicoli Personali *Divisione Polizia Politica* [DPP], PS, MI, ACS. Agents of the political police, however, continued to portray him using stereotypes of homosexuals. The honourable Bagnasco had, in fact, 'an illness that makes a man feel female stimulations! ... So he only goes with ... those who act on him ... according to his taste ... for passivity!!' (*ibid.*, Turin agent, 22 March

- 1930). Regarding the political career and the *Duce's* benevolence towards this 'ever-faithful follower', see also 'Bagnasco On. Domenico', file 209.128, Envelope 690, Carteggio Ordinario [CO], *Segreteria Particolare del Duce* [SPD], ACS.
59. This is how Mussolini exalted the monolithic aspect of the Party: 'Fascismo does not allow heterodoxy ... Fascism has always won because it has nipped trends, movements and even simple differences in the bud. Its coalition is a monolith', B. Mussolini, 'Viat-ico per il 1926', *Gerarchia* (January 1926).
 60. S. Lupo, *Il fascismo: La politica in un regime totalitario* (Rome: Donzelli, 2000), p.24. In Lupo's opinion the continual expulsions and readmissions to the Fascist Party progressively increased the use of 'political dossiers'. The permanent conflict among Fascist ranks had an impact on political life from the core to outlying regions and 'ideo-logical discussions between radicals and moderates regarding early or current Fascism, on the true or falsified merits before the March, gradually give way to moral discussions regarding the public, private, or even sexual sphere. That which is easiest, quicker and in the end more in keeping with an ideology that was deeply imbued with anti-politics' (*ibid.*, p.325).
 61. Regarding the importance of this indissoluble connection between public and private in local political conflict, see V. Cappelli, *Il ceto politico locale tra le due guerre mondiali: nuove fonti d'archivio* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1986). For the Sicilian context, see S. Lupo, 'L'utopia totalitaria del fascismo (1918–1942)', in M. Aymard and G. Giarrizzo (eds.), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi: la Sicilia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), pp.371–482. For the province of Frosinone, see T. Baris, 'Tra centro e periferia. Politica e società durante il Fascismo in una provincia nuova: Frosinone 1920–1940', unpublished doctoral thesis (in particular the chapter with the temporary title 'Gli esposti anonimi tra conflittualità locale ed auto-rappresentazione del Regime').
 62. E.H. Gombrich, *A cavallo di un manico di scopa: Saggi di teoria dell'arte* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), p.210; English publication, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse: And Other Essays on the Theory of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
 63. File 'Maurizio B.', Envelope 127, UCP, ACS.
 64. M. Crisafulli Mondio, 'Variazioni', *La Gazzetta: Eco della Sicilia e della Calabria*, 31 June 1927.
 65. File 'Crisafulli Mondio on. Michele', Envelope 346, DPP, ACS. In 1929, after an investigation that establish some irregularities, Crisafulli Mondio was expelled from the Party and forced to take refuge in Spain to avoid imprisonment, File 'Crisafulli Mondio on. Michele', Envelope 82, Carteggio Riservato [CR], SPD, ACS.
 66. In May 1937 the mayor of Sgurgola was the victim of an anonymous letter addressed to the Internal Ministry which accused him of transforming the workers' club into a pool hall and place where young and old practiced pederasty. The letter requested that and end be put to the 'despicable round table' through the immediate replacement of the unworthy mayor who had 'preached free love since 1926', File 'Movimento sovversivo antifascista – Frosinone', Envelope 5, PS, C2A 1937, ACS.
 67. According to Cesare Rossi, 'Mussolini always liked the intrigue of espionage and plotting damage to others, and he was extremely lenient towards his own informants. Of course thanks to his fundamentally biased temperament, he drew the dagger of justice against informants of opponents ... Given his tendencies towards low-grade informants it is easy to imagine his desire to meddle in the affairs of police in the basement kitchen whenever he could', C. Rossi, *Trentatré vicende mussoliniane* (Milan: Meschina, 1958), pp.278–9. Regarding Mussolini's surveillance of Fascist officials with the purpose of neutralising them, keeping them in check and being aware of how to attack at them, if necessary, see also R. De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista: L'organizzazione dello Stato fascista 1925–1929* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), p.349.
 68. See A. Gravelli (ed.), *Vademecum dello stile fascista, dai fogli di disposizione del Segretario del Partito* (Rome: Nuova Europa, 1939); and L. Longanesi, *Vademecum del perfetto fascista* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1926).

69. M. Carli, *Codice della vita fascista* (Rome: Istituto Editoriale del Littorio, 1927), p.5.
70. See E. Quaresima, *I doveri del fascista: Precetti di Mussolini* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1940 [1933]); and P. Bolzon, *Comandamenti* (Milan: Paravia, 1930). Regarding Fascist decalogues and catechisms used as tools to create the axioms of a new ethic, see C. Galeotti, *Mussolini ha sempre ragione: I decaloghi del fascismo* (Milan: Garzanti, 2000); and idem, *Crede, obbedire, combattere: I catechismi del fascismo* (Rome: Stampa alternativa, 1999).
71. *La forma che incide decisamente sul costume*, foglio di disposizione no.1339-bis of 19 August 1939.
72. The purpose of this lifestyle was to support the internalisation of the Fascist religion, while at the same time belief in the ideology would transform Italian habits and customs. Augusto Turati wrote, 'this faith will profoundly affect the spirit of the Italian people. It will provide a new way of life', PNF, *La dottrina fascista* (Rome: 1929).
73. Zapponi rightly points out how this 'Fascist style' that was increasingly invasive also tended to turn into oppressive formalism and to 'straighten and iron with starch discredited middle-class virtues, the threatening and eccentric original ethic', N. Zapponi, 'Stili di vita fascisti: l'arte di sopravvivere', in G. Aliberti (ed.), *L'economia domestica (secc. XIX-XX)* (Pisa and Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1995), pp.169-84.
74. On Fascist demographic policies, see C. Ipsen, *La demografia totalitaria: Il problema della popolazione nell'Italia fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); English publication, *Dictating Demography: The Problem of Population in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
75. A paradigmatic example of the need to demonstrate one's scrupulous observance of Fascist dictates even in private can be seen in a letter sent to Mussolini by Arturo Rocchi, the federal secretary of the province of Frosinone, on the occasion of his own marriage. He tells the *Duce* of his wedding, in conformance with orders received, and links his public role with his new marital status. The complete text of the letter is, '*Duce!* Pleased to obey your order, I am married. From the serene joy my new family gives me, I will draw more incitement for the difficult and wonderful job that I perform everyday in your immortal name', letter from Arturo Rocchi, PNF federal secretary, to Head of the Council Benito Mussolini, 28 November 1941, File 'Arturo Rocchi', Envelope 1290, CO, SPD, ACS.
76. 'Noterelle di moralità fascista: Delle espulsioni', *Il popolo di Romagna*, 15 December 1928.
77. C. Scorza, 'Della moralità fascista', *Costruire* VII/I (January 1929), pp.8-9. The same anti-Fascists denounced the Fascist presumption to control Italians' conscience. For example in 1923 Giovanni Amendola wrote in *Il Mondo*, 'A party can strive to dominate public life, but it must not cross the boundary of private conscience in which all individuals find refuge. Otherwise Fascism has not aimed only at governing Italy, but in monopolising control of Italian consciences'. Luigi Sturzo also emphasised this concept in a 1938 article entitled 'La politica nella teologia morale': 'The essential characteristic of totalitarianism is that it becomes impossible for the citizen to remain outside of the system once it has been established, because totalitarian politics penetrates all aspects of life: family, culture, religion, economics, outside activities'. Both quotes are from E. Gentile, *Le religioni della politica: Fra democrazia e totalitarismi* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2001), pp.51, 151.
78. Fascism's goal was to bring about an anthropological revolution of the Italian people to change public and private life and to create, 'a type of man, a new man, an complete man: the same in the family, in society, in the state', S. Gatto, 'Della cultura fascista', *Bibliografia fascista* (May 1926), quoted in E. Gentile, *Il culto del littorio: La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1996), p.187; English publication, *The Sacralisation of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). Regarding the Fascist plan to reform the Italians, see L. La

- Rovere, 'Rifare gli italiani: l'esperimento di creazione dell'"uomo nuovo" nel regime fascista', in *Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche*, no.9 (Brescia: La Scuola, 2002), pp.51-77.
79. E. Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo: Il partito e lo Stato nel regime fascista* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1995), p.130. Gentile often reaffirms that one of the main goals of totalitarianism was to transform all aspects of people's lives. Fascism thus constantly followed 'the ambition to modernise by way of a totalitarian revolution that was total in the same way *avant garde* spiritual revolutions were. Its intention was to invest all aspects of individual and collective life including customs and character, to reform the nation and create the "new Italian", and thus to create a new civilisation', idem, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista 1918-1925* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), p.43.
80. Quoted in A. Cillario, *Parola di Benito* (Milan: Mondadori, 1992), p.13.
81. PNF, *Il secondo libro del fascista* (Rome: 1940), p.49.
82. B. Mussolini, 'Eventi di portata storica. Ora la Rivoluzione deve incidere profondamente sul "costume". Il popolo ha l'orgoglio di sapersi mobilitato permanentemente per le opere di pace e quelle di guerra', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 10 June 1938. As Gentile correctly observes, this obsession to change custom, 'besides involving some indisputably ridiculous aspects', also had 'complex motives that could be explained by the importance Fascism attributed to liturgy in the creation of the new man'. In fact, this style was considered 'religion translated into custom, that was living testimony to its ethic, order and ascetism', Gentile, *Il culto del littorio* (note 78), pp.182-4.
83. Regarding the palingenetic vision as an essential element of Fascism, see R. Griffin, 'Il nucleo palingeneticco dell'ideologia del "fascismo generico"', in A. Campi (ed.), *Che cosa è il fascismo? Interpretazioni e prospettive di ricerca* (Rome: Ideazione 2003), pp.97-122.
84. Regarding the progressive diminishing of the boundary between public and private, see M. Salvati, *L'inutile salotto: L'abitazione piccolo-borghese nell'Italia fascista* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1993). Regarding how the separation between the public and the private sphere had not been yet established in the liberal period, see D. Rizzo, 'L'impossibile private: Fama e pubblico scandalo in età liberale', *Quaderni storici*, no.112, File 1 (April 2003), pp.215-42.
85. For a more extensive discussion of this concept, see C. Saraceno, 'Costruzione della maternità e della paternità', in A. Del Boca, M. Legnani and M.G. Rossi (eds.), *Il regime fascista: Storia e storiografia* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1995), pp.475-97; and L. Passerini, 'Costruzione del femminile e del maschile dicotomia sociale e androginia simbolica', in *ibid.*, pp.498-506.
86. For more regarding prostitution under Fascism, see G. Fusco, *Quando l'Italia tollerava* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1995); and G.M. Padiglione, *Camerati, in camera! Storia seria ma divertente delle case chiuse sotto il fascismo* (Milan: Mursia, 2003).
87. C. Senise, *Quando ero capo della polizia 1940-1943* (Rome: Ruffolo, 1946): 'In the evening I went to piazza del Carmine to have a beer with my friend Zurlo' (p.48). 'After I had replaced Chierice as Chief of Police, I always stayed home and received no one. If I took a walk with my inseparable friend Zurlo, I would always go to country roads on the outskirts of the city, or maybe in Villa Borghese, where I was sure to not meet anyone' (*ibid.*, p.189). 'I did not have my own home. I was a guest, as I am now, in the modest home of my friend and "brother" Zurlo' (*ibid.*, p.193).
88. E. Dollmann, *Roma nazista 1937-1943* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2002), p.59.
89. 'A refined epicure, connoisseur and expert observer of female beauty, Bocchini was an authentic Italian gourmand, to be envied even by the French', E. Dollmann, *Un libero schiavo* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1968), p.120.
90. *Ibid.*, p.141.
91. Not much information is available regarding this intelligence network called 'Service 6 X' or 'yellow danger' (from the colour of the copy paper used). We do know that it was at the service of the Presidency of the Italian Cabinet and had been formed in 1943

- when, in a critical period during which the fate of Fascism was felt to be at risk, doubts regarding the loyalty of the police force gave rise to a parallel spy network. Mussolini was quite involved in his personal intelligence service, which provided competing fiduciary reports to those of the political police. See M. Canali, *Le spie del regime* [forthcoming]. It is interesting to note that the '6 X' was managed by the journalist Vittorio Foschini, who was accused of 'participating in a supper of degenerates' and who was 'an amoral passive pederast', intelligence from Milan, 13 March 1933, File 'Foschini Vittorio', Envelope 521, DPP, ACS.
92. Intelligence report dated 19 February 1943, 'Senise Carmine', File 29, Sub-folder 1, Envelope 7, CR, SPD, RSI, ACS.
 93. An anonymous letter sent to Galeazzo Ciano informed him of Senise's negative comments about him and updated him that 'Senise and Zurlo are suspected of being homosexuals', 'Anonimi contro personalità', File 21, 'Contro il Gr. Uff. Senise e il Gr. Uff. Zurlo', Sub-folder 42, Envelope 5, Gabinetto, *Ministero della Cultura Popolare*, ACS.
 94. Letter sent to Rachele Mussolini on 8 February 1943, 'Senise Carmine', File 29, Sub-folder 1, Envelope 7, CR, SPD, RSI, ACS.
 95. Mosse, *L'immagine dell'uomo* (note 15), p.233. Mosse had already noted 'little apparent difference between the virile behaviour and posture of the new man and Mussolini, the Aryan German, the straight-edged Englishman and the all-American boy', Mosse, 'Estetica fascista e società alcune considerazioni', in Del Boca, Legnani and Rossi (note 85), p.110.
 96. *Ibid.* p.112. Mosse felt that although the Fascist and National Socialist definition of masculinity was based on an activism, heroism and militarism that produced constant friction with middle-class respectability, it was possible to find a balance between the two by reconciling accepted ethics with new totalitarian designs. 'Fascism's new man was, ultimately, not that new', Mosse, *L'immagine dell'uomo* (note 15), pp.219, 233.
 97. See E. Gentile, 'L'"uomo nuovo" del fascismo: Riflessioni su un esperimento totalitario di rivoluzione antropologica', in *idem, Storia e interpretazione del fascismo* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2002), pp.235–64. In my opinion, however, Gentile does not completely clarify the reasons for the failure of this experiment in anthropological revolution. He does not lay enough emphasis on the difficulties the regime was up against, due in part to this deeply rooted middle-class respectability, in its attempt to create 'a collective organised man' who served the nation in his public and private life.