

A Racist and Anti-Semitic *Romanità*: The Racial Laws of 1938 and the Institute of Roman Studies

Donatello Aramini*

Abstract. This article offers a close reading of the initiatives following the racial laws promoted by the Institute of Roman Studies, an institution operating in synergy with the political culture and imperial ambitions of the fascist regime by supporting and influencing its rhetoric of *romanità* and the use of symbols and myths of the “Third Rome”. Refusing the interpretation of racial laws as a temporary phase of Italian history completely alien to the country’s cultural context, the article underlines how 1938 fits into and can be reinserted into the general interpretation of the Institute of Roman Studies’ initiatives. Furthermore, it analyses the consequences of the racial legislation on the staff and collaborators employed by the Institute. The author shows that the racial laws represent an additional element of the attempt of some distinguished intellectuals to find a synthesis between the sacralisation of politics and the politicisation of religion through the myth of Rome. Spreading and trying to strengthen the national-roman version of racism, the author underlines that the Institute of Roman Studies was in the first line to shaping an interpretation that, influenced by the Catholic anti-modern thought, was no more moderate or less responsible for the persecution of the Jews than other more revolutionary positions inside the fascism. In fact, this interpretation made the concept of the Italian race even more acceptable in public opinion, strengthening and rooting it in the history and greatness of Italian civilisation throughout the centuries. Finally, the article stresses that the racial laws were a crucial moment of shaping the fascist anthropological revolution, totally supported by an Institute fully engaged in the middle of the battle for the nationalization of the masses fought by the regime and the Catholic Church between the wars

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1. The issue

“Dear friend,

I have the honour to confirm receipt of your circular letter, sent on the 6th day of this month, protocol number 35, subject: “The defence of the race”.

The Institute of Roman Studies – within the limits of its work – will not fail to offer a modest contribution, through various manifestations of its work, to studies regarding the problems of race, based on the directive with which you have explained that the origin of Italian racism, while beginning from the biological, is essentially of a spiritual substance and must be prioritised to safeguard the invaluable intellectual and moral patrimony of Rome that is rooted in our people.

All the more happy I am to personally comply with this directive, as in founding the journal *Roma* sixteen years ago and the Institute of Roman Studies thirteen years ago, I have devoted myself to contributing to the defence of the invaluable intellectual and moral patrimony of Rome that is the root of our people and Western civilisation.

Please accept my most devoted respect”.

With these words¹, Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, founder and, from 1935 onward, president for life of the Institute of Roman Studies, replied to Minister of National Education Giuseppe Bottai’s circular letter dated August 6, 1938, sent to all cultural institutions following the July 14 publication of *Il fascismo e i problemi della razza*, later known as the *Manifesto of Race*, in the newspaper *Il Giornale d’Italia*

* *Sapienza University of Rome*, Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, 00185, Rome, Italy, e-mail <donatello.aramini@uniroma1.it>.

¹ The letter is in Historic Archive of National Institute of Roman Studies (henceforth abbreviated as ASINSR), Affari Generali, b. 52, f. 30.

(Toscano M., 2003a, p. 175-184). In the circular letter, Bottai not only announced the beginning of the concrete phase of racism in Italy, but he also stressed that racism had been at the centre of fascist policy since power was seized, first merely quantitatively through demographic-boosting efforts and later qualitatively. In the same circular letter, Bottai underlined that Italian racism, contrary to what had been declared in the *Manifesto*, was not to be understood in a mere biological sense, but – first and foremost – as a spiritual matter. In light of this clarification, he invited Galassi Paluzzi “to put the racist question at the forefront” of the Institute’s work, “to enrich its features, its applications and its aims”².

Galassi Paluzzi’s response arrived ten days after the ministry’s circular letter, a rather unusual timeframe considering his typical diligence in responding to requests from the politicians, particularly from Bottai. In his letter, Galassi Paluzzi revealed an air of caution. Instead of outright agreeing to focus the Institute’s studies on the racial question, he explained that it would work to provide a “modest” contribution to the race problem. He then underlined the deeply spiritual nature – or rather, cultural nature – of Italian racism, that allowed for racial elements to be linked to Italy’s “intellectual and moral heritage”. As I will try to show, this last aspect is crucial, considering that the *Manifesto*’s publication aroused much criticism around the country and in the Italian cultural world (albeit with different positions: De Felice R., 1961, 1993, p. 309-338; Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 210-221; Matard-Bonucci A., 2008, p. 265-289; Israel G., 2008; Galimi V., 2018, p. 19-26).

On July 29, a week prior to the letter, Bottai had indeed stressed to the Minister of Popular Culture Dino Alfieri and to Nicola Pende the urgent need to “get ideas back on track” and “blend the idea of ‘race’ with the idea of ‘Rome’”. On August 5, following a meeting with Alfieri, the minister of national education noticed that the purely determinist and materialist explanation of race was being slowly balanced by “the historic concept of civilization” (Bottai G., 1982, p. 128-129). Thus, in August 1938, the Institute of Roman Studies began its involvement in the new political and cultural direction of fascism: racism had crept through open the doors to Borromini’s Oratory of St. Philip Neri, the headquarters of Galassi Paluzzi’s institution³.

As has been well documented (Toscano M., 2003a, p. 208-243; Id., 2003b; Dell’Era T., 2007; Id., 2008; Pavan I., 2010; Rigano G., 2010; Toscano M., 2010; Id., 2015), over the last thirty years, historians have dismantled the myth of the “good Italian”, providing a thorough review of the belief that fascism was merely a semi-racist or half-heartedly racist regime. Studies have also proven it is inaccurate to blame Italy’s 1938 racial decree to the country’s alliance with Nazi Germany. There is still much debate on the importance of 1938 in fascist ideology and policy. While some argue it was a turning point (De Felice R., 1961, 1993; De Felice R., 1981, 1996; Toscano M. 2000; Id., 2003a; Id. 2003b; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008; Germinario F., 2009; Israel G., 2010), others consider it as a mere radicalization of a process that began when Mussolini seized power (Sarfatti M., 1994; Id., 2000; Bidussa D., 1992; Id., 1994a; Id., 1994b; Burgio A., 1999; Collotti E., 2003; Fabre G., 2005). Nevertheless, researches has highlighted that racist and antisemitic legislation was the result of Italian initiative, the effects of which were just as brutal as those under National Socialism. Starting with a brilliant essay from Mauro Raspanti (1994), studies have gone on to shine light on the particulars of Italian racism, tied not only to biological factors (as with Nazism, as shown by George L. Mosse, 1978), but to esoteric, spiritual and cultural elements, which intermingled with biological issues, resulting in a constant sway in the racial politics of fascism (on these different interpretations, Dell’Era T., 2016a)⁴. Starting in the 1990s, numerous studies have corroborated and supported this

² *Ibidem*.

³ Following a long process, only in 1941 the Institute of Roman Studies managed to change headquarters by obtaining the rooms of St. Alexis Institute for the Blind on the Aventine hill, receiving in the same occasion the Royal title (Visser R., 1994).

⁴ This is not the place where analysing the different interpretations on the meaning of 1938. On it, see the aforementioned work of Dell’Era. On De Felice’s work, starting from 1981 his interpretation was in my opinion widely revised, thanks to Mosse and Emilio Gentile’s researches. Their influence brought De Felice to underline the existence

interpretation, which also benefits from wider international debate on the nature of fascist ideology (in particular: Griffin R., 1993; Gentile E. 1993; Payne S.G., 1995; Gentile E., 2001; Griffin R., 2007a; Id., 2008; Griffin R, Mallet R., Tortorice J., 2008; Costa Pinto A., 2011; Costa Pinto A., Kallis A., 2014), following in the tracks of pioneering works (particularly Israel G. and Nastasi P. 1998; Maiocchi R., 1999), to highlight the participation, the spread and the dimensions of persecution under Mussolini's Italy (albeit of different opinions: Finzi R., 1997; Fabre G., 1998; Capristo A., 2002; Dell'Era T., 2004; Mantovani C., 2004; Capristo A., 2006; Cassata F., 2006; Galimi V., Procacci G., 2009; Turi G., 2010; Capristo A., 2011a; Ead. 2011b). Emerging from this thorough research is a clear picture, proving (sometimes to the point of reversing the image of the "good Italian" to its polar opposite) the severity of racism in Italy in legal terms, its depth, spread and rooting, as well as the total and disinterested involvement of the intellectual world. In turn, the involvement of intellectuals has been the subject of a series of studies, starting from the 1970s, on the relationship between culture and fascist political power. Nevertheless, as has been recently stated (Iori L., 2019, p. 362) there remains a "glaring historiographic gap" regarding the field of classical antiquity, where "there is no comprehensive work on the impact of racial policies, neither in a quantitative or qualitative perspective, in a field so crucial to the regime's propaganda".

Based on these considerations, our question is what role the Institute of Roman Studies and its initiatives played. For decades, the historiography has long regarded the Institute with diverging views, with researches aimed at demonstrating either that it was not involved in the regime's propaganda (Romanelli P., Morra O., 1972; Brezzi P., 1992) or the institution's total synergy with fascist political culture (Cagnetta M., 1979; Canfora L., 1980, p. 78, 93-103; Cagnetta M., 1990a). However, in recent years, thanks to a new understanding of fascist *romanità* (Cofrancesco D., 1980; Cagnetta M., 1990b; Visser R., 1992; Scriba F., 1995; Stone M., 1999; Giardina A., Vauchez A., 2000, p. 212-296; Belardelli G., 2005, p. 206-236; Painter B.W., 2005; Gentile E., 2007; Kallis A., 2011; Id., 2014; Salvatori P., 2014; Tarquini A., 2017) a more nuanced approach has spread, aiming to depict the Institute as close to the regime but not part of it, whose function was to shape a modern myth of Rome in a Catholic-fascist perspective, and its "modernistic manipulation" (La Penna A., 1999; Vittoria A., 2002; Nelis J., 2011; Id., 2012; Arthurs J., 2012; Nelis J., 2017; Müller C., 2017). Other scholars, furthermore, have focused on the Institute's failed attempt to find an ideological synthesis that, through the myth of Rome, could merge Catholicism and fascism, by *fascistising* the former and Catholicizing the latter (Aramini D., 2015; Id., 2016).

Until the eightieth anniversary of the racial laws, questions on racism and antisemitism were surprisingly missing from studies on the Institute (it is only mentioned in La Penna A., 1999, p. 620-622, who states that racism was neither condemned nor supported in its initiatives). This amnesia went as far as removing the Institute's most propagandistic publications from its catalogue⁵. The issue can be found in some recent works that establish a connection between its involvement in fascist racial politics and the imperial exaltation of Ancient Rome resulting from the Ethiopian conquest (Aramini D., 2015, p. 202-203). To fill an evident gap, finally, some publications (Silverio E., 2014a; Id., 2014b; Ghilardi M., 2018; Id., 2020) have focused on the topic from a merely narrative viewpoint, underling a sort of independence from the regime's ideology due to the clerical and moderate nature of the Institute. Keeping in mind these thirty years of historiographical achievements on the connections, tensions, ambivalence, contradictions and continuities of 1938 with fascism's general policies and its totalitarian mission to shape an anthropological revolution of Italians, this essay presents a different interpretation. It does not consider the racial laws as a temporary phase of Italian history that is completely alien to the country's cultural context, but aims to show how 1938 fits into and can be reinserted into the general interpretation of the Institute of Roman Studies' initiatives.

and the central role of an original racism and antisemitism deeply tied to the anti-bourgeois totalitarian revolution fascism aimed at giving shape.

⁵ An updated version of the catalog is available at the Institute website: www.studiromani.it/catalogo.html (January 20, 2020).

2. Rome as a European *Communis Patria*

The Institute of Roman Studies was founded in 1925 by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi⁶. His cultural background was marked by that singular political and cultural climate of “various nationalism”, common in Italy in the early twentieth century, which had led intellectuals to view themselves as civic and political players, and to consider themselves – in the words of George L. Mosse – the harbingers of a new age and the last custodians of societal values. They believed these values had to be spread among the masses, transcending the reality of decadent, materialistic and alienating liberal bourgeois society, in order to rediscover the mystical sense of the nation’s spiritual unity (Mosse G.L., 1970, p. 145-146). These intellectuals formed and promoted a vision of life, a worldview, that would bring about a “conservative revolution” in order to lay the foundation for a new modernity, the antithesis of the Enlightenment and bourgeois modernity (Sternhell Z., 2007). A connoisseur of *romanità*, active member of the Fides Romana group and a collaborator at *Corriere d’Italia*, which was close to the clerical-fascist positions of the *Rassegna Nazionale* (on them: Sorrentino D., 1980 and 1993; Baragli M., 2018, p. 257-407), Galassi Paluzzi came from a self-taught educational background and had been profoundly influenced by this world view that, after his conversion to Catholicism just before the outbreak of World War I, was imbued with anti-modern Catholic political thought and the myth of medieval Christianity (see: Miccoli G, 1985, p. 21-92; Menozzi D., 1993, p. 14-71). He developed his thoughts following World War I, focusing on the myth of *romanità*. In his opinion, the history of Rome had to be rescued from the ivory tower of academic and mono-disciplinary studies in order to share it with a wider audience who needed to be educated on the universal values of their civilisation (Coccia B., 2000, p. 9-10; Vittoria A., 2002, p. 514-516).

Thanks to the support of prominent political and cultural figures⁷, the Institute of Roman Studies became one of the most prestigious institutions in fascist Italy. According to its Charter, its aim was to promote new studies that would awaken Italians’ “historical sense of the role Rome had in the unfolding of civilisation across the world”⁸. The Institute aimed at developing and spreading the myth of *romanità* while finding a synthesis among different points of view, in addition to collaborating with prominent scholars, politicians, architects and urban planners, in order to undermine the foreign monopoly on Roman studies and hand over the reins to “Romans of the new Italy” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1926a, p. 180). This made the Institute one of the most interesting examples of the progressive osmosis between academic culture and fascist politics. According to Galassi Paluzzi, the Institute should be a place for the best scholars to connect, “to no longer ignore each other – as happened in the past – and achieve an understanding that allows them to organically study the various problems that concern the City without duplicate efforts and wasting energy in vain” (*ibidem*, p. 178). His goal was thus to promote the history and the cultural originality of Ancient Rome and Christian Rome, considering the latter the true heir of the former in terms of politics, art, culture and spirituality⁹. In a broader sense, his underlying intention was to demonstrate that the supremacy and universal function of Rome over the centuries was the consequence of the fusion of two elements: the Cross and the Eagle. The fusion of the Rome of Caesar and the Rome of Peter was the Eternal City’s source of its primacy, a primacy of *culture* and *civilisation* that needed to be rediscovered, redeemed and defended against the continuous assaults of modernity and of anti-Roman ideologies such as the Reformation, German criticism and the Protestant spirit that destroyed Christian unity. Since the French Revolution,

⁶ See C. Galassi Paluzzi’s letter to P. Fedele, March 21, 1925, in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 1, f. 2.

⁷ It is worth briefly mentioning: the presidents Pietro Fedele, Luigi Federzoni and Vittorio Scialoja; the members of the Steering Committee Emilio Bodrero, Giuseppe Ceccarelli, Carlo Cecchelli, Pietro De Francisci, Giulio Quirino Giglioli, Gustavo Giovannoni, Egilberto Martire, Roberto Paribeni, Pio Paschini, Pietro Tacchi Venturi and, since 1937, Giuseppe Bottai.

⁸ ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 1, f. 1.

⁹ On this topic, see the single issues of the journal *Roma*.

such anti-Roman ideologies had caused the evils of Western society: individualism, positivism, liberalism, Social Democracy and communism (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1927).

According to Galassi Paluzzi, *romanità* meant:

“Order, discipline, balance, hierarchy; *romanità* means an ordered love for the universal, because the purpose of the Roman spirit, of the Latin soul, is the world as a single field of apostolate in which to lead in or restore order. Leading in or restoring Legislation, the Law, that is, social order; leading in or spreading Faith, the Gospel, that is the human and divine means of re-establishing the Eternal order” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1926b, p. 519).

For Galassi Paluzzi this was a personal and essential mission, since – as he affirmed at the First National Congress of Roman Studies – the study and knowledge of Roman and Latin civilisation would lead to the understanding of the “inner source” and the “life-giving sap of our national civilisation (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1928).

The racist and antisemitic campaign arose in the midst of the celebration of the two-thousandth anniversary of Augustus’ birth (on this: Aramini D., 2020). Prior to the campaign, the issue had been totally absent from the Institute’s general initiatives which were far from the image Mussolini gave in his famous speech given on October 25, 1938, to the National Council of the Fascist Party, during which he defined Ancient Romans as “racists beyond belief” and emphasised the continuity of the Italian race over the centuries (Giardina A., Vauchez A., 2000, p. 262-263). The Institute’s image of Ancient Rome was actually closer to Mussolini’s claims in 1924 and in 1936, after conquering Ethiopia: Rome was a model of assimilation and fusion of peoples (*ibidem*). The first issue of the monthly *Roma*, indeed, demonstrated how the myth of Rome had to be interpreted by quoting the hymn to Rome written by the late imperial poet Rutilius Namatianus after the sack of Alaric: “For nations far apart thou hast made a single fatherland; under thy dominion captivity hath meant profit even for those who knew not justice: and by offering to the vanquished a share in thine own justice, thou hast made a city of what was erstwhile a world”¹⁰. These verses were central to underlining the “eternal renewal” of Rome, the Eternal City, that shaped all of Western civilization, absorbing different cultures and remodelling them with its own indelible sign (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1923).

Close to the signing of the Lateran Treaty, during the celebration of the two-thousandth anniversary of Virgil’s birth, the Institute further spread the image of the political empire as an “instrument of Providence to create and maintain the order and the law of the universe” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1931). It was exalted Virgil’s rural and bucolic side, his ideals of patriotism, labour, and family, as well as Horace, known for his lauding of Rome’s originality and power throughout the world (Mancuso U., 1935). The fascist conquering of Ethiopia was proof of Italy’s constant imperial destiny, that, from Ancient times, through the influence of Christianity, had always tended to civilise and evangelise other civilizations (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1936; Various authors, 1937; on the role of classical antiquities studies in defining the concept of the fascist empire: Cagnetta M., 1979). Rome, in short, was the immortal *Communis Patria* of European peoples and the Institute of Roman Studies, in seeking to collaborate with foreign scholars and institutes, intended to re-establish Rome’s centrality and to serve the higher purpose of new understanding between peoples (Visser R., 1994).

These ambitions found both outlets and resonance at the national and international levels during the Augustus’ celebrations between 1937 and 1938. Through continuous parallels between policies under the first Roman emperor and Mussolini, was shaped an image of Augustus as a “revolutionary restorer”, a defender of traditional values, a peacemaker of the Empire; as he who had put an end to Rome’s warring politics and favoured the Romanisation and civilisation of all territories through peace, paving the path for Christianity (Aramini D., 2016, p. 51-54; Aramini D., 2020). These aspects were so crucial to the Institute that they became the central theme of the V National Congress of

¹⁰ See the website https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Rutilius_Namatianus/text*.html (July 13, 2020).

Roman Studies, dedicated to the role of the Roman Empire in the history of civilisation. Held at the height of the Augustan celebrations in April 1938, mere weeks before the regime's turn to racism and antisemitism, the Congress painted a picture of the Roman empire focusing on absorption, fusion and peace (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1938b). The speeches were based on the empire's work to unify various populations, both spiritually and politically, without forced "denationalisations", but by creating a truly "universal" civilisation (Cardinali G., 1938). Roman law, considered a combination of Roman norms and provincial customs, was testament to such "attraction" and "fusion" (Riccobono S., 1938. Also: Giglioli G.Q., 1938; Giovannoni G., 1938). The conference also highlighted how Christianity allowed Rome to become "truly eternal and universal", merging Roman civil universalism with Christian religious universalism (Barbera M., 1938). Furthermore, the Church, despite the dismembering of Roman state, made it possible to maintain "a continuation of the idea, of the tradition, of the conscience, of the survival of imperial Rome" through "the progressive civilisation of barbaric peoples". The Church's determining role was particularly evident with the Lombards, defined as the "roughest" of all the barbarians, who, quickly "were also enveloped and attracted" by the charm of Rome, and "welcomed" its religion "leaving behind the heresy they brought with them from the east" (Calisse C., 1938). This last element was an evident reference to Nazi Germany, which, like its ancestors, should have been absorbed and led by the Catholic and Fascist Rome.

All of the Institute's conferences, lectures and publications aimed at showing how and to what extent Rome had uniformed Europe over the course of centuries. Series of publications launched between 1937 and 1939, such as *Orme di Roma*, *Le grandi strade del mondo romano* (which even included volumes on Eastern Europe, Anatolia, Africa and Asia), *Il limes romano*, *Roma e le province*, *Roma mater* and *Italia romana* proved the role that Rome played over the centuries, not as a mere ruler who subjugated peoples by force, but as a melting pot of different cultures and traditions, all planted and nourished in a Latin garden, exclusively rooted in the Italian peninsula. Figures like Augustus, who placed Italy at the centre of the empire, Constantine, and Popes Leo and Gregory the Great symbolised this process of assimilation (on the diffusion of these myths, see: Moro R. 2004; Guasco A., 2013; Moro R., 2020, p. 186-201, 240-328). Such a direction could only clash with Germany's positions, including both recent Nazi viewpoints and traditional German culture, which was more inclined to exalt Ancient Greece over Rome, and – according to Mommsenian heritage – Caesar over Augustus (Aramini D., 2018; Id., 2020). Germans were also inclined to define themselves as the opposite of all that was Latin, a tendency shared by Italians. In fact, with very few exceptions, for centuries, Italian culture deemed Germanic people the antithesis of Latin culture, to the point of remarking on the presence of two nations and two peoples on the Italian peninsula. This contrast between Latins and Germans was further fuelled during the nineteenth century following the development and increasing importance of national identities (Roberto U., 2018, p. 227-302). Even on the origin of peoples, albeit indirectly, German theories differed from those prevalent in Italy and especially from the political culture of "various nationalism" that spurred the Institute of Roman Studies (on Nazism and classical antiquity: Losemann V., 1999; Chapoutot J., 2017). On the peninsula, in fact, Luigi Pigorini's studies on the Indo-European origins of civilisation and Italian population were overcome by Giuseppe Sergi's theories, who underlined the existence of an even more Ancient – and previously civilised – Mediterranean people that only later came in contact and fused with the Indo-European people coming from the north. This ethnic diversity was then transcended by Latin culture, the bearer of civilisation, that ensured cultural uniformity across the Italian nation over the centuries (De Francesco A., 2013, p. 159-213). Such theories were adopted by fascism (*ibidem*, p. 184-188) that funded vast archaeological researches to dismantle the interpretation that Aryans had founded European civilisation (especially the Nazi radical version) as well as to prove the superiority of Italian Mediterranean culture, as underlined by Sergio Sergi's imperial anthropology (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 149-155). In doing so, the regime fully intended

to legitimise its political aspirations to dominate the Mediterranean and to the leadership in Europe (all elements fully supported by the initiatives organized by Galassi Paluzzi¹¹).

Such opinions were widespread throughout the country, as demonstrated by the sharp contrasts during the Volta Conference in 1932 (Various authors, 1933a; De Felice R., 1974 p. 410-411) which were also related to an opposition publicly supported and encouraged by Mussolini himself to Nazi racist theories. In 1933 and 1934 (De Felice R., 1961, p. 115-126; Id., 1974, p. 408-506; Moro 2020, p. 206-230) this opposition was influenced by the international fascism positions (Ledeen M.A., 1972; De Felice R., 1974, p. 307-310 and 408-441) and by the centrality of Roman law, considered by the fascist political religion as the greatest gift that Ancient Rome had ever bestowed upon humanity and a model of shaping a new totalitarian State (Gentile E., 1993, p. 146-147 and 152-154). Here too, the contrasts origins were based on German nationalist tendency, deeply rooted in legal scholars ideals, to consider the culture and the law as a direct product of blood and soil (*blut und boden*). According to this philosophy, Roman law represented the tool to tyrannise people and annihilate their traditions and national feelings. Through their studies, Germanists ended up re-evaluating the Germanic customary traditional law, attempting to prove its centrality on modern law and, consequently, drastically downplaying the legacy of Rome. The Nazi Party also supported this interpretation. During the Congress of National Socialist Legal Scholars held in Monaco in 1934, indeed, there was no space for the voluntary or human aspects that characterised Ancient Rome, according to Italian legal tradition (De Napoli O., 2009, p. 103-110). Italian Romanists considered Rome a productive synthesis that found its most effective compendium in Rutilius Namatianus's aforementioned verses.

The Institute of Roman Studies not only supported this synthesising view of Rome between different peoples and cultures, but, as clearly demonstrated by the previously mentioned V National Congress, added another element that further alienated the Germanists: the key role of Catholicism. Previously, in 1928, Pietro De Francisci had linked pagan Rome's universalism with that of Christianity in the Institute's monthly journal, considering both founding elements of all of modern civilisation's spiritual patrimony. In his view, Roman-Christian legal tradition, thanks above all to Justinian's work, was still alive and present in all of the civilised world: "all modern legislation, both in form and spirit – he argued –, derives from Roman law; the influence is not limited to legal institutions, it is part of all of our methods, our thoughts, our intuition, and our legal education: therefore, alongside Christianity and Greek artistic tradition, it is a foundation of modern civilisation (De Francisci P., 1928). A few years later, *Roma* published an article by legal scholar Carlo Calisse, who denied the existence of a sharp break between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Through his research, Calisse proved the influence of Roman law and, subsequently, of canon law on Lombard law (on Calisse: Rebuffa G., 1973). From this basis, he believed that the foundation of Italian law – and, consequently, the legal systems of all of civilised European countries – could be traced back to the merging of Roman law and canon law through Justinian mediation and the creation of common pontifical law (Calisse C., 1931). These positions were also supported by Giuseppe Ermini (see: Mombelli M., 1993). Indeed, in another volume edited by the Institute of Roman Studies, Ermini argued that:

"The process of legal renewal that began with new Christian concepts while the empire was still alive, of which there are clear traces in the fourth and fifth centuries Roman Law and even more in Justinian's Code, continued and strengthened in the Middle Ages to fully developed with the Christian society of the twelfth and following centuries, when the authority of the Church, universal and common to the peoples as that of the empire, definitively imposed its principles in the Law, as well as its own law alongside Roman law, to regulate the life of men" (Ermini G., 1934a, p. 57; Ermini G., 1934b).

¹¹ There are no published studies on the international role of the Institute of Roman Studies. Just a few references are in Visser R., 1994, who however analyses just the organizational issues. A cultural view has been attempted in a paper I held at the International Conference *Crossing Borders: Intellectuals of the Right and Politics in Europe and Latin America. Transnational Perspectives* (Lisbon, University of Lisbon, November 17-18, 2016). This paper, entitled "The Myth of Rome. Politics and Culture at the Institute of Roman Studies (1925-1944)", will be soon published.

These positions, which tended to downplay (but not entirely exclude) barbaric elements while stressing how Christianity had received the legacy of Imperial Rome, clearly emerged during the International Congress of Roman Law organised by Galassi Paluzzi, held in April of 1933 in both Rome and Bologna, to celebrate Justinian's work in honour of the fourteenth centennial of the publication of the Digest. During the congress, the German and Italian positions openly clashed, with the former intent on reaffirming the profound Greek, Eastern and Hellenistic influences on both Roman law and the Justinian's Code, while undermining the importance of the Code and Christian thought over the centuries. The Italian scholars, on the other hand, led by Pier Silvio Leicht and under the influence of the new political and cultural relationship between the regime and the Church in the name of the myth of Catholic Italy (Ceci L., 2013, p. 158-211; Moro R., 2020, p. 254-261), insisted on the profound Christian influence which gave Roman law a more "human" aspect, allowing it to become a nearly universal code in the West (Leicht P.S., 1935). It was Salvatore Riccobono who harshly criticise the anti-Roman theories. Starting from the assumption that the history of law was the most important part of the civil history of a people, as the law regulates all the life of a nation and society, and that religion had always played a key role in the public and private lives of Ancient citizens, Riccobono showed that Christianity had grown in importance from the third century onward. One of the Institute's first collaborators and an expert in legal history, Riccobono underlined the influence of Christian ethics on all aspects of ancient life. Consequently, once it became the most dominant element people's lives, its principles began to permeate both public and private law. Thus, the Justinian's Digest became the most outstanding product of Latin genius, proving the universality and eternal persistence of Roman law (Riccobono S., 1935).

The distance from Nazi culture, and from an interpretation according to which Catholicism was nothing more than a product of Judaism (Chapoutot J., 2017, e-book: from position 6435 to position 7304), became even more crucial due to the subsequent political implications. In the midst of the crisis of the West, attributing more or less importance to Rome (both Ancient and Christian) or to Celtic and Germanic people in the development of European culture over the millennia, strengthened or weakened Italy's and Germany's aspirations as leaders of a new civilisation and a new world order. Nevertheless, and despite the aforementioned aversion to the German criticism, Italian's opposition to Nazi views did not represent an unsurpassable issue. Indeed, as soon as the political climate changed after the conquest of Ethiopia, with the Italian rapprochement to Hitler's regime and with the signing of the Axis, the president of the Institute – torn between personal positions, directives of a totalitarian regime and the need for increased funding to survive and to impose its positions within the Fascist ideology – revealed his pragmatism to mending differences and trying to find a common ground for non-convergent ideas. For example, following the publication of *Mit Brennender Sorge* encyclical (Miccoli G., 2000, p. 150-163; Sale G., 2004, p. 127-150; Fattorini E., 2007, p. 77-88, 104-140; Bouthillon F., Levant M., 2016; Moro R., 2020, p. 386-411) he decided to publish in 1937 a review of the four years earlier published book *Romanesimo e Germanesimo. La crisi dell'Occidente* (Bendiscioli M., Moenius G., Herwegen I., Wust P., 1933). The book was written by a Catholic scholar like Mario Bendiscioli (Torchiani F., 2016), among the first to criticise Nazism as a form of neo-paganism (Bendiscioli M., 1937; Moro R., 2020, p. 236-237, 396-397). According to the reviewer, the book was still extremely relevant to the political situation as it revealed the rift that divided Germany in two. The chasm, coinciding exactly with the former border of the Roman empire, attested to the importance of Romanisation (both Ancient and Christian) that had occurred in the south of Germany, and the danger emanating from the north of the country. In this way, Galassi Paluzzi didn't condemn German or Nazi thought as a whole, but merely in part. Only the Protestant north – alongside the threat of Bolshevik Russia – fuelled the risk of a "European civilisation depleted of its Catholic soul" (Incisa della Rocchetta G., 1937).

In 1937, Galassi Paluzzi made two more attempts at smoothing out differences. The first entailed urging Senator Emilio Bodrero, a former nationalist, undersecretary of the Ministry of Public

Education from 1926 to 1928 and full professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Padua, where he had also acted as *rettore* (Rigobello A., 1969), to “mitigate, given today’s different relationship with Germany, the attack on Germany on page 19 of your manuscript, although it is well justified”¹². Two years earlier, in 1935, during the celebrations for the two-thousandth anniversary of Horace’s birth, Bodrero explicitly denounced the “poor folly of Arianism” and “Germany’s current comical and pitiful theories”¹³. This second phrase was not published (Bodrero E., 1938, p. 32-33)¹⁴. Just a few weeks before, a similar request to revise a manuscript was addressed to the Apostolic Nuncio to Italy Francesco Borgongini Duca. According to the president of the Institute of Roman Studies, the sentences that needed to be revised regarded a tendency to oppose Imperial Rome and Christian Rome, and to interpret – as the nuncio did – the first as an empire that was “limited to only one ethnic group” and “held up by a swarm of spears”¹⁵. In responding to Galassi Paluzzi, who quoted Rutilius Namatianus, the nuncio reiterated the difference between the two Romes and the novelty of the Christian conception of “a close brotherhood of all human beings in Christ the Redeemer”. Contrary to Roman imperialism, where “everything outside of Rome is barbaric and must be subjugated by force”, in Catholicism – he explained – “there is no Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, servant or free man”, but there are only men “that must be converted with charity and kindness”¹⁶.

Based on this general cultural position and as a consequence of viewing Rome as a *Communis Patria*, both modern political antisemitism and religious antisemitism were of secondary importance to the Institute of Roman Studies. In fact, the hostility towards Jews was based on Catholic anti-modernism – of which anti-Judaism was an integral but not exclusive component. While anti-Judaism was not an absolute priority for Catholic anti-modernism as it was for secular antisemitism, it was nevertheless tied to a complex and sometimes ambiguous ideological and political vision that deemed Jews as one among the principle enemies of the Church, a leading but not primary force in the fight against Christian Rome (Moro R., 2002, p. 35-75; Id., 2003c). Evidence of this can be found in one of Galassi Paluzzi’s few comments on antisemitic controversies in Italy between the two wars. In 1927, as director of *Roma*, Galassi Paluzzi mentioned the Jewish problem in his commentary on the controversy between *La Tribuna*, a Roman daily newspaper that inherited Italian nationalist tradition, directed by Roberto Forges Davanzati, and the Jewish-Zionist weekly *Israel*. The controversy, following articles in the weekly *Roma Fascista*, directed by another ex-nationalist, Umberto Guglielmotti, brought to the forefront a series of anti-Jewish stereotypes from a clearly nationalist and clerical perspective, tied closely to anti-Zionist views that questioned the patriotism of Italian Jews due to their belonging to a universal and anti-national international community (on this: Toscano M., 2003a, p. 155-174). Responding to the affirmations of Francesco Coppola, who believed the Jewish world and Jewish thought represented the cornerstones and sources of anti-Romanity, Galassi Paluzzi specified that, in his opinion, the real danger did not derive from the “genius of the Jewish race” or from Judaism itself. Rather, it was modern day Jews that were dangerous because they denied the foundations of Jewish religious thought, and in doing so, promoted and supported “the truest anti-Roman movement: Protestant individualism” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1927, p. 439). In line with the tendency of Catholicism, between the 1920s and 1930s, to be more anti-Protestant than anti-Semitic, following the spread of the new neo-pagan heresies such as nationalist statolatry (Moro R., 1998; Zanini P., 2019), Galassi Paluzzi believed that the Reformation and German criticism had shaped anti-Roman sentiment, which did not have Jewish roots, despite what the ex-nationalist director of

¹² Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Emilio Bodrero, letter of November 25, 1937, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 53, f. 14, sf. Bodrero Emilio.

¹³ See the typescript in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 23, f. 11, sf. Bodrero Emilio.

¹⁴ Emilio Bodrero to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 29, 1937, Pubblicazioni, b. 53, f. 14, sf. Bodrero Emilio.

¹⁵ Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Francesco Borgongini Duca, letter of June 1, 1937, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 37, f. 34.

¹⁶ Francesco Borgongini Duca to Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, letter of June 8, 1937, *ibidem*. The Nuncio did not revise the manuscript: Borgongini Duca F. (1937), p. 9-18 and in *L'Osservatore romano*, March 2-3, 1936.

the monthly *Politica* claimed. Tracing the teleological path of anti-Roman thought from Protestantism to Communism passing through the individualism, rationalism, the French Revolution, liberalism, positivism, historic materialism and social democracy – all products of Luther’s Reformation – Galassi Paluzzi was able to attribute the guilt of Western anarchist and anti-hierarchical decadence to the German monk’s theses. On the contrary, hierarchy, order and unity, all key elements of the *romanità* and rooted in the concept of family, were also part of the Jewish mentality. Therefore, it was Jews – not Judaism – that posed a threat, but much less so than Protestantism. If the Judaism threat lay merely in material aspects (the love of gold, for example) and in their resentment of Christians, Protestant culture was entirely antithetical to the Roman mentality, further aggravated by the warrior spirit of the “Germanic race”, its noble spirit and its imperialistic capabilities, characteristics that did not apply even minimally to the “degenerate Jewish race damned by God”. Galassi Paluzzi stressed once again that the true enemy lay in the north, and that “the Jewish danger, although extremely serious and sentimentally repelling, seems less serious and profound than the danger of Germanic criticism” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1927, p. 437-444).

Alongside these positions, *Roma* also allowed space for different, less lenient opinions on Judaism. In 1927, the journal also published an article by Luigi Huetter in which he underlined the danger posed by Judaism due to its deep hatred for Christianity as well as the fact that Judaism was more than just the Jewish religion, as Galassi Paluzzi seemed to state in his article. According to Huetter, Judaism was also a series of “sectarian superfetations and doctrines” that arose within the diaspora, naming “banking-utilitarian and nationalist” Zionism as one of the most evident examples (Huetter L., 1927). Even more clear cut is commentary from Tomaso Santacroce, deputy director of *Roma Fascista* and author of the articles that sparked the controversy. In his opinion, the Jewish religion did not stem from the Western civilisation that blossomed from Rome. It was a product of the East, and thus Asian, sectarian, subversive to hierarchy and authority, equally threatening of Protestantism. According to Santacroce, Judaism and the Talmud were a “totalitarian code”, a “typical aversion to the Roman-Catholic order of the state, of family and of morals”. Judaism, he continued, injected “fatalism and the predestination of the elects: an Eastern disease that introduced the disheartening anti-social infection of *determinism* and *materialism* into the German mentality”. In making such statements, Santacroce took up the antisemitic accusations of nationalist tradition that he himself belonged to: that 1789 and the much-despised French Revolution was not the mere fruit of the descendants of Huguenots, Calvinists and Jansenists, but, above all, of freemason intellectual Jews, of the plutocrats in London and Amsterdam, the ancestors of socialist internationalism (Santacroce T., 1927).

3. The scholars involved: a precise ideological choice

Despite these debates, it wasn’t until 1938 that the Jewish question truly became an issue for the Institute of Roman Studies. A few weeks prior to Bottai’s letter, Carlo Cecchelli urged his friend Galassi Paluzzi to hurry to address the racial topic that blew up following the publication of the *Manifesto of Race*. An editorialist for the *Corriere della Sera* and a scholar of Christian archaeology, Cecchelli was a typical exponent of a Catholic and nationalist fascism which attempted to present the Italian race in a way that was compatible with religion. Cecchelli tended to merge biological attributes to history, making the idea of Rome a key factor in the ethnic cohesion of the Italian people. According to this view – which led to the secularisation of religion-based anti-Judaism – the Jew, although not considered an inferior race, was seen as a key exponent of Asian civilisation, deemed the secular mortal enemy of the West forged by Rome (Cecchelli C., 1939a; Moro R., 2003a, p. 310-313). Towards the end of July 1938, Cecchelli suggested that Galassi Paluzzi organise a series of radio shows¹⁷. The president of the Institute of Roman Studies immediately expressed his interest.

¹⁷ C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Cecchelli, letter of July 25, 1938, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, b. 28, f. 7, sf. Radioscene 1938.

The series of three lectures were to be broadcasted on the national radio (*EIAR*) and accompanied by music and acting scenes of the Roman past, set on the Forum and the Palatine and Capitoline Hills. The “highly political goal of the initiative” was obvious, as Cecchelli himself explained. The shows were strictly related to “the current racial politics” that had to be interpreted “basing on the idea of *romanità*”¹⁸.

While Cecchelli’s plans never came to light, the Institute of Roman Studies nevertheless began preparing to follow through on Bottai’s request. Thus, toward the end of September, after receiving information on the initiatives being organised by the Royal Academy of Italy¹⁹, Galassi Paluzzi proceeded to discuss organising a conference series²⁰. Between the months of October and November, the invitations were sent to Pericle Ducati, Roberto Paribeni, Aristide Calderini, Giulio Quirino Giglioli, Carlo Cecchelli, Guido Manacorda, Emilio Bodrero, Giacomo Devoto, Salvatore Riccobono, Gustavo Giovannoni, Ugo Rellini, Nicola Pende and Galassi Paluzzi himself. Immediately accepting were Bodrero, Cecchelli, Devoto, Ducati, Riccobono and Giovannoni. Nicola Pende, invited to analyse “the problem of race for the human type called Roman-Italic”²¹, declined due to previous work engagements²², as did Giglioli²³. Ugo Rellini also declined the invitation, underlining that he had already expressed his ideas in an article that would have been published in *La difesa della razza* (Rellini U., 1940), in which he highlighted the use of palethnology to demonstrate the attributes and cultural persistence that define Italians, as opposed to “the idea of numerous invasions, which is still dominant”²⁴. Cardinali too decided not to participate in the conference, claiming it was not “currently opportune” to dedicate even more space to his positions²⁵. Equally interesting are Manacorda’s and Paribeni’s refusals. The latter stated he was “absolutely” against speaking about race for the Ancient Roman world unless Galassi Paluzzi aimed at divulging concepts that were “entirely nonconformist”²⁶. A professor of German literature at the University of Florence, Manacorda was close to the *Frontespizio* journal, a group that promoted the convergence of fascism and Catholicism led by Giovanni Papini and Piero Bargellini (Garzarelli B., 2007). As early as 1934, when the political climate was completely different, Manacorda issued a harsh attack of German racism and Alfred Rosenberg’s myth of Aryan civilisation. In *Frontespizio*, where Papini would reveal the religious and anti-Catholic nature of Nazism (Papini G., 1934), Manacorda wrote against arbitrariness and anti-scientific positions that – in substituting the well-documented history with the hypothetic and controversial prehistory – would end up crediting all of global civilisation – from Hellenism to Ancient Rome, from the Renaissance up to fascism – to the race that came from the north. He also believed that such theories, which deemed Catholicism as the mortal enemy of Aryan and Western civilisation, were a tragedy as they became a real “gospel” followed by a “large crowd of German spirits” (Manacorda G., 1934). Nazism, in fact, was not as much a pagan statolatry but a true new religion, and the outcome of the “eternal conflict” between “paganism and Christianity, Apollo (or Dionysus) and Christ, romanticism and classicism, Germanicness [*Germanentum*] and Romanness, racism and universality, idealism and realism” (Manacorda G., 1933, p. 5-6; Moro R.,

¹⁸ C. Cecchelli to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of July 26, 1938, *ibidem*.

¹⁹ In a note of September 21, 1938, Galassi Paluzzi was made aware that the Royal Academy of Italy had organized a special committee on studying the role and presence of Judaism in Italy, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 1 “Preliminari”.

²⁰ By examining the National Institute of Roman Studies archive, both the decision to organize a cycle of lectures and the names of invited scholars was made by Galassi Paluzzi who did not convene a Steering Committee meeting (the first meeting following the racial politics was held on March 28, 1939).

²¹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to N. Pende, letter of November 7, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 5 “Conferenze non avvenute”.

²² N. Pende to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 17, 1938, *ibidem*.

²³ G.Q. Giglioli to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 28, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁴ U. Rellini to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 7, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁵ G. Cardinali to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 23, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁶ This was Paribeni’s replied: “I absolutely declines speaking about race. Or I could say things entirely nonconformist”, R. Paribeni to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of October 22, 1938, in *ibidem*.

2020, p. 209-210). Four years later, Manacorda declined the Institute's invitation to hold a lecture entitled *Il Rinascimento come rifioritura imperiale della razza italica*, in which according to Galassi Paluzzi he had to show "the great reblooming of typical Roman characteristics of spiritual expansion, reaffirming itself once more by virtue of the Italian race" in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries²⁷. Unfortunately, Manacorda's response has not been found in Galassi Paluzzi's correspondence, and the reason he gave for declining remain unknown. Nevertheless, his refusal must have been quite explicit, as the president of the Institute did not reextend his invitation²⁸.

The scholars invited to participate, largely longstanding collaborators of the Institute (Ducati, Riccobono, Cecchelli, Giglioli and Paribeni), some of which were even members of the Steering Committee (Calderini, Giovannoni and Bodrero), showed the will to maintain the Institute's line. However, by inviting Manacorda, and even more so Rellini and Pende, Galassi Paluzzi revealed an evident ideological choice: he took side against the strictly biological racism. Rellini was one of the strongest adherents to Sergi's theories on the existence of a culturally evolved Mediterranean civilisation prior to the Indo-Europeans (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 135-155; De Francesco A., 2012, p. 186; Cultraro M., 2016). Pende, on the other hand, was one of the most prominent exponents of national and Roman-spiritualistic racism, totally antithetical to the Nazi position. His thesis focused on the idea that races were the result of a biological, spiritual and sociological mixture. In his opinion, Rome and its civilization had generated a synthesis of the dissimilar populations living in the Italian peninsula and had shaped a human type, the Roman-Italic, that had remained unvaried throughout the centuries. This model of man was original and completely different from others, not only due to its physical characteristics but for its innate and unchanged spiritual qualities (Israel G., 2010, p. 233-253; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 70-73).

By methodically choosing its conference speakers, the Institute of Roman Studies aimed at promoting a spiritualistic idea of race, defined by the concepts of descent, civilisation and culture. On March 28, 1939, when informed of the initiatives carried out since the summer of 1938, the Institute's Steering Committee posed no objections. Only Bodrero reaffirmed the will to maintain elevated research standards for all future Institute's initiatives²⁹.

4. Consequences of the racial laws

Starting in August 1938, the Institute of Roman Studies had to follow the rules and regulations outlined in the racial legislation. The circular letter number 11836 on the census of Jewish people employed in academies and educational institutes, sent on August 19, 1938, by the Ministry of National Education, requested that each member of the Institute complete a questionnaire on their race. The decree number 1390 of September 5, 1939, on "measures to defend the race in fascist schools" ordered that members of the Jewish race were expelled from all schools, institutions and academies at the beginning of the school year, October 16 (on the laws: Sarfatti M., 2000, p. 150-217; Capristo A., 2002, p. 16-22; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 25-40). In September, during the last days of Augustan celebrations, Galassi Paluzzi sent the Ministry of National Education a long list of invited guests at the upcoming conference in order to be informed on the names of scholars "belonging to the Jewish race" scheduled to participate³⁰. Due to the tight time frame, the ministry

²⁷ C. Galassi Paluzzi to G. Manacorda, letter of October 13, 1938, *ibidem*

²⁸ C. Galassi Paluzzi to G. Manacorda, letter of November 2, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁹ ASINSR, Verbali Giunta Direttiva, vol. V, meeting of March 28, 1939. At the meeting there were: Galassi Paluzzi, Bodrero, Bottai, Ceccarelli, Cecchelli, Giglioli, Millosevich, Paribeni, Tacchi Venturi, Tomassetti. There were absent: Federzoni, Fedele, Venturi, Giovannoni, Guasco.

³⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to Marino Lazzari, General Director of Antiquities and Fine Arts, letter of September, 7 1938, in ASINSR, Congressi, b. 220 Convegno Augusteo, f. 58 Preliminari, sf. Ministero Educazione Nazionale. The same day, the letter was sent to Edoardo Scardamaglia, General Director of Academies and Libraies and to Giuseppe Giustini, General Director of High Education.

responded that it was unable to satisfy the request³¹ and authorised the president of the Institute to allow all invited scholars to participate, as, officially, they were invited before the laws went into effect³².

On October 4, 1938, Galassi Paluzzi replied to the census, indicating that he was not a member of the Jewish race. Furthermore, on line E, where respondents were required to indicate the date of their family conversion from the Jewish religion to another faith, he pointed out with a certain presumption: “In 1127 A.D., one of my ancestors, as stated in an epigraph, donated goods to a church in Nocera. From 1500 onwards, I have parchments documenting related to my family. I don’t know anything before 1127 A.D., but I believe this should be sufficient” (quoted in Capristo A., 2002, p. 28). Two months later, on December 22, he wrote to the Ministry of National Education’s General Directorate of Academies and Libraries ensuring that no members of the Steering Committee local sections of the Institute were Jewish. In Rome offices, there had been only one Jewish employee, Aldo Neppi Modona, who – as Galassi Paluzzi stated – would have stopped working at the Institute within the three-month limit required by the Decree No. 1779 of November 15, 1938 (*ibidem*, p. 148). Hired by the Institute on September 16, 1935, Neppi Modona worked at the central file cabinet on Rome bibliography until September 16, 1936, and from January 1, 1937, until March 3, 1939, he acted as head of the publication office³³. Sources regarding racist persecution in the archive of the National Institute of Roman Studies are scarce and fragmented. Nor does Galassi Paluzzi’s personal archive contain any mention of the 1938 laws. The Institute furthermore was ruled just by the Steering Committee and by the president. It did not have official members, but collaborators who were invited to participate in conferences, lectures and publications. A total of three scholars were expelled from the Institute: the aforementioned Neppi Modona, as well as Professors Gino Segré and Giorgio Falco (Capristo A., 2002, p. 147-148). An emeritus professor of Roman law at the University of Turin as well as a member of the board of the Institute of Roman Studies in Turin, Segré was also a member of the Lyncean Academy, the Turin Academy of Sciences and a collaborator of the Italian Encyclopaedia. Born in the province of Mantua on June 21, 1864, he would die in Turin on July 31, 1942 (*ibidem*, p. 336). Giorgio Falco, born in Turin in 1888, was full professor of medieval history at the University of Turin when racial persecution began (he was replaced by Francesco Cognasso). Converting to Catholicism in 1939, Falco continued his studies privately, mostly in Rome, thanks to his friendship with Arturo Carlo Jemolo, managing to escape from the raids during Nazi occupation of Rome by taking shelter in the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Wall. In the second post-war period, Falco took up teaching once more, first in Genoa where he taught medieval and modern history and then back in Turin, where in 1949 he became member of the Lyncean Academy (Arnaldi G., 1994). Aldo Neppi Modona was born in Florence in 1895 where he graduated in 1919. An archaeologist, he was among the founders of the International Institute for Etruscan Studies in 1932. In 1927, the same year he began his collaboration with Galassi Paluzzi³⁴, he taught courses in Ancient Greece and Rome at the University of Pisa. When the persecution of Jews began, he was also a teacher in Greek and Latin literature in Florence at “Michelangelo” High School for Classical Studies and, in 1937, he obtained the *libera docenza* at the University of Rome³⁵. In the post-war, Neppi Modona went back to teaching and, in 1957, became a full professor of Ancient Greek and Roman Antiquities at the University of Genoa, where he remained until he retired in 1970. Secretary of the editorial

³¹ M. Lazzari to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of September 19, 1938, *ibidem*.

³² See Galassi Paluzzi’s note of September 22, 1938, *ibidem*. A list of invited Jews at the Conference included the names of: Luigi Crema, Doro Levi, Mario Attilio Levi, Fernando Liuzzi, Arnaldo Momigliano, Lucia Morpurgo, Alda Spinazzola Levi (ASINSR, Congressi conferenze e mostre, b. 220, f. 58).

³³ See the statement required by Neppi Modona and written by Galassi Paluzzi in ASINSR, *Personale cessato* (published in Ghilardi M., 2018, p. 230) and the correspondence among them in Archivio contemporaneo “Alessandro Bonsanti”, Gabinetto G.P. Vieusseux, Firenze (henceforth abbreviated as ACGV), Fondo Aldo Neppi Modona.

³⁴ In Neppi Modona Archive the first letter with Galassi Paluzzi is dated on October 26, 1927. In the letter he was invited to participate at the I National Congress of Roman Studies, in ACGV, Fondo Neppi Modona.

³⁵ I owe this information to Tommaso Dell’Era that I thank.

board for the journal *Studi etruschi* starting in 1952, he became co-editor in chief in 1955 and, in 1978, he was nominated vice president of the Institute for Etruscan and Italic Studies, with Massimo Pallottino as a president (Maetzke G., 1985; Capristo A., 2002, 307-308; Iori L., 2020, p. 237-240; Ghilardi M., 2020, p. 58-59).

In addition to the three official expulsions, as one can easily imagine, the 1938 racial laws also affected some of the Institute of Roman Studies' most distinguished collaborators, who were completely excluded and marginalised from one day to the next. Not a single Jew continued their collaboration with the Institute after 1938, neither officially or under a pseudonym (as was the case for Mario Attilio Levi at Ispi, cf. Bellomo M., Mecella L., 2020). Among such scholars, it is worth mentioning the geographer Roberto Almagià (Caraci Luzzana I., 1988). Born in Florence in 1884, in 1915 he succeeded his *maestro* Giuseppe Della Vedova at the University of Rome. The undiscussed leader of Italian geography for half of a century (Perrone A., 2016), Almagià was editor in chief of *Rivista geografica italiana* during fascism. At the census of 1938, he proudly declared his family's ancient belonging to the Jewish race, as well as their equally longstanding presence in Italy (Capristo A., 2002, p. 48). The geographer first collaborated with the Institute of Roman Studies in 1933 (Almagià R., 1933), taking part some years later in the Augustan celebrations organized by the Institute in both 1937 and 1938. On February 24, 1937, during a series of lectures entitled *La figura e l'opera di Augusto*, Almagià held a talk published in early 1938 (Almagià R., 1938)³⁶.

Even more indicative of little weight the Institute gave to the race problem prior to 1938, as well as Galassi Paluzzi's political opportunism, is the behaviour towards one of the most distinguished Italian classical studies scholars of the twentieth century, Arnaldo Momigliano (just for an introduction on Momigliano, see: Polverini L., 2006b; Di Donato R., 2011; Lizzi Testa R., 2013). A student of Gaetano De Sanctis and professor of Roman history at the University of Turin, Momigliano began collaborating with the Institute at a young age, thanks to a recommendation from bibliographer and Italian Encyclopaedia collaborator Giannetto Avanzi. In 1934, Avanzi asked Galassi Paluzzi to allow Momigliano to participate at the IV National Congress of Roman Studies to be held in October 1935³⁷. As has been recently argued (Ghilardi M., 2020), Momigliano gained Galassi Paluzzi confidence with his paper (Momigliano A., 1938) and was invited by the president to participate at the Institute's series of lectures entitled *Africa romana*, also held in 1935 (Momigliano A., 1935). Two years later, in 1937, Galassi Paluzzi turned to the historian once more, this time asking his opinion on a book comparing Mussolini to Augustus that he received from an elementary school teacher in Belluno³⁸. A few months later, in August 1937, Galassi Paluzzi manifested his esteem for Momigliano by asking him to examine the list of scholars invited to the Augustan Conference scheduled for September 1938, concluding the bimillennial celebrations³⁹. Galassi Paluzzi also invited De Sanctis' former student to the V National Congress of Roman Studies to be held in May 1938 to present a paper on the Romanisation of the Hellenistic Orient⁴⁰. Lastly, in the autumn of 1937, Momigliano participated in an initiative honouring Augustus by presenting a paper that would be published immediately in the Institute's *Quaderni Augustei* series by September 23, 1938, the last day of the celebrations. Deadline for the manuscript: July 1938⁴¹.

³⁶ See *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 5, 8, February 22, 1937, p. 5 e 7.

³⁷ See Avanzi's note for Galassi Paluzzi in ASINSR, Conferenze Congressi Mostre, b. 89, f. 15.

³⁸ Momigliano considered the book (entitled *Augusto Fondatore dell'Impero romano – Il Duce Fondatore dell'Impero Italiano*) not scientific and, consequently, advised to not publish it (see the correspondence with the author in ASINSR, Conferenze Congressi Mostre, b. 210, f. 10)

³⁹ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letters of August 4 and October 3, 1937, in ASINSR, Congressi, conferenze e mostre, b. 223, f. 70.

⁴⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of August 10, 1937, in ASINSR, Congressi conferenze e mostre, b. 129, f. 25.

⁴¹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of October 26, 1937, in ASINSR, CCM, b. 129, f. 25.

On February 8, 1938, Momigliano held a lecture entitled *Gli ordinamenti militari augustei e le loro conseguenze nella storia dell'Oriente ellenico*⁴², and on August 10, a few days past the deadline, he sent his typescript⁴³. Momigliano's paper thus arrived at the Institute after the racist and antisemitic fascist policy was put in place. Despite the aforementioned esteem for the scholar and his increasing involvement in the Institute's cultural life, the typescript was not published⁴⁴, and, upon the historian's request, returned to the author in 1939⁴⁵ (it will be published many years later: Momigliano A., 1992a). Not only Momigliano was a member of the Jewish race, but his interpretation conflicted with the fascist-approved image of Augustus' Rome (Mazza M., 2015; Id., 2017; Aramini D., 2020). Instead of presenting the Roman empire as a sort of expansion of Italy towards other peoples, Momigliano argued a progressive merging and integration of Roman and provincial elements, leading to a gradual substitution of the Italic aristocracy by members of the local bourgeoisie. Curiously, pointing out the issue to Galassi Paluzzi was Neppi Modona⁴⁶. Nevertheless, contrary to a recent interpretation (Ghilardi M., 2018, p. 195-196), I don't believe Momigliano's paper was refused caused his divergence with the regime's vision. First of all, Galassi Paluzzi never opposed the publication of works that conflicted with the nationalist, Catholic and fascist direction that shaped the Institute's initiatives. Take for example Julius Evola's paper presented at the III National Congress of Roman Studies (Evola J., 1934), or Borgongini Duca's aforementioned work, or the series of lectures entitled *Roma onde Cristo è romano*, which painted a militant picture of the Holy See's role, emphasising a timeless leadership of the Catholic Church in opposition to the short-lived and transient laic political institutions and ideologies (on this: Aramini D., 2015, p. 195-197). Secondly, the interpretation of Augustus spread by the Institute was not that of an imperial dictator or a Rome that subjugated other cultures, but a bearer of civilisation who synthesised Latin culture with provincial traditions, as made evident in the V National Congress of Roman Studies (*ibidem*, 2020). Momigliano's views were not perfectly in line with those of the Institute, but nor they were antithetical. Lastly, in 1935, the president of the Institute had already expressed his doubts on Momigliano's analysis regarding the Hellenistic influence over the Roman world. He however merely asked the author to revise some parts of his writings, to avoid misunderstanding or a possible interpretation of "Rome as a Hellenistic state"⁴⁷. On this occasion, following Momigliano's flat out refusal to make changes to his thesis⁴⁸, Galassi Paluzzi did not pose any further resistance and published the piece as it was in *Africa romana*⁴⁹. Yet, despite such regular collaboration and confidence, Momigliano's relationship with the Institute of Roman Studies ended abruptly in the summer of 1938. Such a behaviour can only be explained by the racial laws and the re-emergence of a never disappeared anti-Jewish religious mentality. In ceasing to collaborate with Momigliano, Galassi Paluzzi demonstrated the indifferent opportunism or detachment of the cultural world (as well as of Italian society as a whole) facing the racial laws. Although his invitation to the Augustan Conference still stood, on September 16, 1938, Momigliano wrote to his mentor, De Sanctis: "I am still invited to the Augustus' celebrations: it is evident that I will not attend" (quoted in Polverini L., 2006a, p. 21). These words revealed the first steps of a painful separation caused by fascist radical ideologisation of the nation (on the intertwining between idea of the nation and fascist racism, particularly illuminating is: Gentile E., 1997, p. 172-177. On the relationship between Italian Jews and the nation, see: Toscano M., 2003a, p. 186-187, 247-251; Schwarz G., 2004, p. 101-108).

⁴² See *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 6, 6, February 7, 1938, p. 7.

⁴³ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of August 10, 1938, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 1.

⁴⁴ In a note of September 3, 1938, Galassi Paluzzi argued: "do not publish" (in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 2).

⁴⁵ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of March 7, 1939, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 1.

⁴⁶ See the note for the President, August 20, 1938, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 2.

⁴⁷ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of June 7, 1935, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 58, f. 7.

⁴⁸ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of June 28, 1935, *ibidem*.

⁴⁹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of July 8, 1935, *ibidem*.

5. A Roman and nationalist racism

On January 16, 1939, began the cycle of lectures on *La civiltà di Roma e i problemi della razza* (Rome's civilisation and the race problems). Galassi Paluzzi expected to immediately publish the papers⁵⁰. In the same days, another cycle of lectures was held on Rome and Judaism by Monsignor Giuseppe Ricciotti⁵¹, abbot general at the Order of St. Augustine Lateran Regular Canons and professor of Jewish Studies at the Universities of Rome and Bari. Openly critical of racist antisemitism since 1935 (Nicolotti A., 2017), Ricciotti stressed in the prestigious *Nuova Antologia* that, as he showed in his exegesis studies, tearing down all of Judaism would also destroy a significant part of Christianity (Ricciotti G., 1935, p. 473-474). As previously discussed, Galassi Paluzzi's goal was to reaffirm the primacy of Italian genius, a cultural and civic primacy derived from Rome "cohesive and organisational" actions⁵², that not only remained unchanged over the centuries, but had also shaped all of Western civilisation. This genius was not influenced by foreign invasions and ended up by permeating the cultures with whom Italians came in contact along their way⁵³.

Carlo Cecchelli was the first scholar invited to talk. He held a paper entitled *Roma segnacolo di reazione della razza alle invasioni barbariche*. According to Galassi Paluzzi, the paper aimed at emphasising "how in Rome and in the civilisation it created, the Italian descent, or if you prefer, the Italian race found the chronometric place, as a mathematician would say, to resist and victoriously react to Barbaric invasions, reaffirming the originality of the race"⁵⁴. Upon publication, the title of the paper was significantly modified, as were all others, substituting the word race with descent, less connected to a biological understanding and, with an evident ideological meaning, more open to a cultural interpretation. The archaeologist focused his thesis on the eternal primacy of Rome. Recognised by the Church as a divine creation, Rome was rooted in a cultural idea of descent that – Cecchelli affirmed – added "all the prestige of a secular tradition" to the biological concept of race. Christianity – he continued – conferred Italians a timeless spiritual superiority (Cecchelli C., 1939b, p. 8). Despite the Barbaric invasions and the destruction of its political institutions, the spirit of the Roman race "maintained its primacy among the peoples, managing in several cases to amalgamate them" and to absorb Barbaric elements within its "civilisation" thanks to the predominant cultural role played by St. Peter's successors (*ibidem*, p. 8 and 12-22). Cecchelli focused on cultural elements and showed that, being well defended by popes such as Leo the Great and Gregory the Great, and thanks to the evangelising role of the Church, Rome was able to imbue other populations with its culture. In the clash between the Barbarians and the Byzantines, Cecchelli believed that all of the Middle Ages testified the continuation and the expansion of the idea of Rome, which effectively became an eternal spirit and "pivot around which all of Western civilisation revolves" (*ibidem*, p. 31-32). The thirteenth century and the birth of the age of Municipalities showed the reaffirmation of descent unity and strength and the coming of its rebirth under the sign of eternal Rome, more than just the capital of Latium – as Dante Alighieri underlined in his Latin epistles – but a common symbol of civilisation for all Italians (*ibidem*, p. 38).

Giacomo Devoto was the second scholar to lecture at the cycle on the race (Prosdocimi A.L., 1991; Mastrelli C.A., Parenti A., 1999). Distinguished linguistic, full professor of glottology at the

⁵⁰ The lectures held were 7 but only 5 were published in 1939 and 1940.

⁵¹ Unfortunately, there is no trace of this cycle of lectures in the Institute Archive. They were held on January 25, and February 3 and 6, 1939. A few references are in some notes sent to the newspapers (in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 4) and in the weekly scheduled program published in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, issues number: 7, 4, January 23, 1939, p. 7; 7, 5, January 30, 1939, p. 7; 7, 6, February 6, 1939, p. 7.

⁵² C. Galassi Paluzzi to P. Ducati, letter of November 11, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3.

⁵³ See the program scheduled and written by Galassi Paluzzi in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 1.

⁵⁴ C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Cecchelli, letter of October 13, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3.

University of Florence, he began collaborating with the Institute of Roman Studies in 1934 by suggesting to Galassi Paluzzi a volume on the history of Latin language for the Institute's upcoming *Storia di Roma* series (Ghilardi M., 2017, p. 131-141). On October 13, 1938, Devoto immediately accepted an invitation to present a paper on *La lingua di Roma espressione del genio della razza*, requesting however that the title be changed to *La lingua di Roma espressione della stirpe romano-italica*⁵⁵. The conference was held as planned on January 25, 1939,⁵⁶ but the paper was never published. The author didn't send the definitive typescript, submitting only a summary. The quarrels, tensions and misunderstandings with the Institute regarding the book on Latin language (Ghilardi M., 2017, p. 131-144) and Devoto's impression that the conference on race focused on themes and conclusions that had been published in the meantime on the *Storia di Roma* (Devoto G., 1939), brought him to abandon the project⁵⁷. During his speech, Devoto began with the assumption that the language of a people is not an immutable element, but the result of a slow historic process, a "labour" of "struggles, of efforts, successes and defeats". It was the "consequence of cultural facts". By focusing on the concepts of history and culture, Devoto painted a picture of a slow process that led Latin to become the language of the Italian people. Making their way to the peninsula in very distant periods, Latin and Italic dialects, both Indo-European in origin, were radically different from one another, Devoto argued. The former, instead of blending with the latter, fiercely resisted and overlapped the local languages as Rome expanded. As citizenship was granted, the dialects lost their "*raison d'être*" and gradually disappeared, without the use of violent suppression. "No Italic word" – Devoto explained – "no Italic morphological element" entered into "the Latin sphere". First the empire, and later the Church, definitively established the morphological system that became the root of Italian linguistic tradition, as well as expanding it and preventing foreign elements from being incorporated, as had been successfully and previously avoided with the Italic dialects⁵⁸.

On February 27, 1939, it was architect and urban planner Gustavo Giovannoni's turn to present a paper (Zucconi G., 2001)⁵⁹. He was invited by Galassi Paluzzi on October 13, 1938, to illustrate how architecture became one of the greatest symbols of the "peculiar and artistic genius of Roman civilisation and of Italy" in a paper entitled *L'architettura come volontà costruttiva del genio romano e italico*⁶⁰. Avoiding the use of the word *race* once again, the title was perfectly in line with the objective of the conference series: to highlight the consistent originality of Italian civilisation, a national civilisation with a universal calling that shaped the entire Western world, and its unfaltering continuity over the millennia. Giovannoni began by stressing that architecture was the most evident testimony of Italian genius continuity, as it was able to meld with or incorporate any style and give birth to new and original artistic forms each time, not only to express the nation's conscience but to mark its place in the world, as proof of its universal essence. He then criticised the positions that attempted to diminish Italic culture, deeming it a mere copy of the Greeks and then the Byzantines, going so far as to consider the Renaissance as a cultural current streaming from beyond the Alps. In his view, it was architecture that revealed "the characteristics of an exemplary continuity", "the greatest permanent element that is race". Architecture had "incorporated foreign influences", that "momentarily" had caused its "numbing or enslavement", yet "it came back more Italian than ever" every time (Giovannoni G., 1939, p. 4). Thus, from Ancient Rome to the Romanesque-Gothic period, from the Renaissance to the religious art of the Counterreformation and Neoclassicism, this continuous assimilation process created a style that became universal – Giovannoni argued –,

⁵⁵ See the letters between Galassi Paluzzi and Devoto of October 13, 1938, in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b.94, f. 39.

⁵⁶ See the news in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 4, January 23, 1939, p. 7.

⁵⁷ G. Devoto to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of June 19, 1939, in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39 and G. Devoto to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 13, 1939, in ASISNR, Pubblicazioni, b. 390, f. 459.

⁵⁸ A summary of Devoto's lecture is in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 93, f. 39, sf. 3.

⁵⁹ The news of the lecture is in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 9, February 27, 1939, p. 7.

⁶⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to G. Giovannoni, letter of October 13, 1938, in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3. Giovannoni accepted on November 12, 1938 (*ibidem*).

evidence of Italians' constant imperial mission (*ibidem*, p. 7, 10, 15-17). During the twentieth century – the urban planner concluded –, faced with the popularity of Art Nouveau, a “vulgar”, international and “imported” movement, “racial consciousness” was once again reawakened through fascism, which reaffirmed “the eternal soul of our descent”, “to give the world, alongside mechanical civilisation, a civilisation of the spirit” (*ibidem*, p. 20-21).

A few days later, Bodrero spoke on the Renaissance, a theme originally assigned to Manacorda⁶¹. Bodrero immediately accepted the invitation, but not before changing the title of the paper, removing the word *race* and replacing it with the decidedly more neutral *people*. Bodrero presented his paper on March 1, 1939⁶². Taking up a more political tone than the other speakers (possibly explaining why the paper was never published), he lashed out against the tendency to deny the Italian origin of the Renaissance and its originality, a sign – he explained – of a global offensive against everything that was Italian, Roman, Latin or Catholic (Bodrero E., 1939, p. 265-266). Passing through the analysis of Renaissance, Bodrero concluded by indirectly criticising biological racist theories, pointing to the “German offensive” in favouring the Greek world to Rome and to theses supporting the northern origins of all European peoples, Mediterraneans included, as the root of the attack directed at the centrality of the Italian nation (*ibidem*, p. 269). These anti-Roman theses, in his opinion, were not capable of taking into consideration how and to what extent the Renaissance spurred the re-emergence of the universality that, already present during the Roman empire, was taken up by the Church and directed at a constant research of the “spiritual unity of mankind” (*ibidem*, p. 271). Fifteenth century Italy had therefore recreated “the ideal-type of the European man” in a world that had been parcelled off into several states, by not only demonstrating once and for all the “exemplary virtue of the Italian people” but its propensity to empire and universality, as well as its ability to successfully diffuse its model of civilisation around the world (*ibidem*, p. 272-273). It was their “historic destiny” – Bodrero concluded –, felt throughout the centuries as a mission that fascism had now brought to the forefront (*ibidem*, p. 275).

The last three scholars truly got to the root of the argument, fully embodying the intended spirit and ideological direction of the initiatives on race. On March 27 and 29, 1939, archaeologist Pericle Ducati, former local leader of the nationalist party *Associazione nazionalista italiana* and full professor at the University of Bologna, where he was also director of the Civic Museum and president of the Institute of Roman Studies local section (Parise N., 1992), presented two papers. The first, rejected by Rellini, on the origins of the Italic descent in the pre-Roman age, and the second, rejected by Paribeni, Cardinali and Giglioli, on *Il concetto di stirpe e civiltà di Roma antica*⁶³. Closely linked, as pointed out by Galassi Paluzzi himself, the two papers had to prove the key and progressive role of “the cohesive and organisational imperial strength of Rome” in giving rise to “that world which could also be called Italian descent”⁶⁴. By using the terms *descent* and *civilisation* on one side and the image of Italic descent as a world where many come together as one (showing once again Rutilius Namatianus' influence), the words once more pointed towards Galassi Paluzzi's emphasis on a spiritualistic racism based on history, traditions, culture, institutions and thought. Ducati accepted the advice. Following Rellini's studies, he presented Italy as the fruit of continuous waves of invasions from different descents. The current Italian descent could trace its origins to the Mediterranean race that arrived from northern Africa and sparked cultural transformation from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic Age. Waves of Slavs, Phoenicians, Greeks and Etruscans followed, all from the Mediterranean, except the Phoenicians who were incapable of fusion due to their Semitic origins and remained “a separate race”. Last to arrive on the peninsula were Indo-European populations from the

⁶¹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to E. Bodrero, letter of November 7, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3.

⁶² See: *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 9, February 27, 1939, p. 7.

⁶³ The two lectures news is in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 11, March 26, 1939, p. 7.

⁶⁴ C. Galassi Paluzzi to P. Ducati, letter of November 11, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3. Ducati accepted and sent his reply on December 3, 1939, *ibidem*.

north who gave rise to the Latin descent (Ducati P., 1940, p. 3-14). This mixture – Ducati stressed – soon began to amalgamate and take root on the peninsula until it became “a single race with homogeneous characteristics that go beyond the material and physical to the spiritual level, namely the most important attribute in history”. Italy thus was shaped “by the fusion of the two great lines of descendants, the Mediterranean and the Indo-Europeans” (*ibidem*, p. 14-15). If, with his first talk, Ducati left little opportunity for misunderstanding or argument and revealed clear elements of antisemitic racism in his judgement of the Phoenicians, he made his positions even clearer in the second paper. Not only Italy, but Rome itself was the fruit of “two distinct descents” the Indo-European Latins and the Mediterranean Sabines. Rome and Italy progressively became a single thing “not as much for physical reasons but, above, all, for the spiritual element” (*ibidem*, p. 17-19). According to Ducati, at the heart of the Italian nation and the development of a Roman and Italian race was the Roman concept of “citizenship” (*ibidem*, p. 20). It determined the “immense superiority of Rome” that “gave rise to a superior form of humanity” and made *romanità* a wealth in which “all barbaric people” could take part. Its strength lay not in the race, but in the concept of the citizen, with both rights and duties (*ibidem*, p. 20-21). As the empire gradually expanded, the concept of Roman civilisation, in which “spiritual qualities predominate over physical characteristics when in contact with other people”, was gradually refined. The physical does not matter but were spiritual factors that shaped the “Roman descent” and the “Italian descent” (*ibidem*, p. 22). Refusing Hellenic cosmopolitanism that obliterates the nation, Rome’s universality spread around the world “principles of civil life” according to which “even the freed slave [...] became a Roman citizen and a relative of his previous master” (*ibidem*, p. 26). These elements spread further over the centuries thanks to Christian universalism (*ibidem*, p. 27). Ducati concluded by attacking the editorial line of *La difesa della razza* that viewed the extension of citizenship implemented by the edict of Caracalla in 212 A.D. as the beginning of the barbarisation of the Italic race (Foro P., 2003). He also criticised pro-Nazi scholars such as Giulio Cogni (Gillette A., 2002, p. 59-64; Dell’Era T., 2010; Id., 2015; Id., 2016b; Id., 2016c; Id., 2017; Id., 2018a). According to Ducati, Italian nation was the product of a fusion of different ethnicities not influenced in any way by the subsequent invasions of the Goths and Lombards from the north or the Arabs from the south. Furthermore, despite the existence of a variety of languages and dialects (perhaps another attack on the racist German tradition that linked the concepts of language, people, soil and blood. See: Mosse G.L., 1964; Id., 1978) Rome boasted a “singular historic, civil, linguistic and religious patrimony” dating back much more than two thousand years (Ducati P., 1940, p. 28).

The last conference in the cycle on race was held on April 26, 1939⁶⁵, delving deeper into the concepts expressed by Ducati with Salvatore Riccobono⁶⁶ giving a talk on the Roman law entitled *Il diritto romano come misura del genio della razza*⁶⁷. The legal scholar’s interpretation on the centrality of Roman law in shaping modern law – without any Oriental or Barbaric influence – had been presented in a number of previous Institute initiatives. A full professor of Roman law at the University of Rome, member of the Lyncean Academy and the Royal Academy of Italy (Varvaro M., 2016), Riccobono retraced the evolution of Roman law (here too the word *race* disappeared from the paper’s title, substituted by *genius*) and exalted its ability to adapt to the passage of time and to changing political and social contexts. Roman law was subjected to constant, intelligent adaptation that was “in contact with life”, keeping “faith in tradition” as well as in Ancient customs intact (Riccobono S., 1941, p. 3, 13, 31). This was widely demonstrated, according to the scholar, by Augustus, a perfect

⁶⁵ The definitive program sent to the newspapers (“Conferenze sulla romanità e la razza all’Istituto di Studi Romani”, *Il Tevere*, December 24, 1938), mentioned another closing lecture held by the President Galassi Paluzzi on *Il fascismo come affermazione romana della razza*. This speech, however, was not held. Both in the Institute Archive and in the private Galassi Paluzzi’s papers there are no traces related to why it was not held and on the issues he would have been dealt with.

⁶⁶ Invited by Galassi Paluzzi on October 13, 1938, Riccobono replied accepting the proposal on the same day (see the correspondence among them in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Rassegna d’informazioni dell’Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 15, April 24, 1939, p. 7.

ideal-type of the descent, who – through the Principate – adapted the experiences of the past to the conditions of the vast empire (*ibidem*, p. 34-36). Riccobono aimed at showing that the secret of Roman and Italian creativity and culture lay precisely in its respect for its cultural and intellectual traditions passed down by history. This attempt, to be read closely with his speech at the V National Congress of Roman Studies, was part of a larger effort led by the president of the National Institute of Fascist Culture Pietro De Francisci and by Carlo Costamagna to find a way to overcome the deep dichotomy between race and *romanità* that had always pervaded Romanist studies. In 1937, this dichotomy pushed legal scholar Alfredo De Marsico to declare the Nazi concept of race as the antithesis of the Roman and fascist concept of descent. Speaking to the Chamber of Deputies, in fact, De Marsico explained that the German legal system was based on the confluence between race, nation and people. Rome, on the contrary, rejected this view as it was a “melting pot [...] of all races that, melded together by the flame and the ideals of law, became a single descent”⁶⁸. Even in March 1939, immediately following the II Conference of the Italian-German Juridical Collaboration Committee in Vienna, and just a month before Riccobono’s speech, Costamagna insisted on the voluntary features in both Roman and Italian legal traditions, implying that the concept of descent derived not only from spiritual but above all from political factors, and thus more from the strength of the empire, creator of public and state law (Costamagna C., 1939. On the Conference and the relationship between legal scholars and racism see: Pavan I., 2006; Ead., 2008; De Napoli O., 2009, p. 103-133 and 213-231; Falconieri S., 2014).

The dichotomy between race and *romanità* that characterised Romanist studies in Italy had always been shared, as previously mentioned, by the Institute of Roman Studies. Nevertheless, the racial laws required the Institute to change its interpretation, just as it was gaining momentum during the Augustan celebrations held in 1937-1938. Galassi Paluzzi attempted to frame the Italian race concept with its cultural traditions. Italy was the victim of countless invasions, culturally dominated by Ancient Rome, universal to the point of extending citizenship to all of its citizens and to nominate emperors from every part of the empire, even Africa. With the collapse of its imperial political institutions, Rome lay its fate in the hands of a new Rome, the Christian Rome, even more universal than before, having spread the message of Christ all across the world⁶⁹. According to the scholars close to the Institute, the only way to make Italian racism credible was to dilute it in an idea of a nation and civilisation, a universal civilisation that, thanks to the two Romes, shaped Europe and the West, now increasingly crisis-ridden precisely because it had abandoned the Roman model of civilisation, having been lured away by the sirens of anti-Roman streams that joined forces since the sixteenth century in an all-out attack on *romanità*. Europe could only be saved, in their minds, by rediscovering Roman civilisation lead by the Italian descent, considered the preserver of a whole history that – thanks to the fascist regime – came back to the forefront, as Galassi Paluzzi stated to Hungarian historian Joseph Balogh years earlier⁷⁰.

The cycle on race was thereby perfectly in line with the interpretation taking shape at the General Directorate for Demography and Race led by Giacomo Acerbo and in the journal *Razza e civiltà*, both deeply influenced by Pende and Sabato Visco’s theories (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 274-286; Gillette A., 2002, p. 104-129). Among the different versions of racism vying for supremacy in fascist Italy, this was the furthest from the Nazism. National-Roman racism was indeed founded on more ambiguous concepts, such as descent and civilisation, which made it more appealing for both the intellectual world and part of the Catholic circles, as Pende himself confided to Mussolini (Israel G.,

⁶⁸ Chamber of Deputies, Proceedings of the Italian Parliament, XXIX legislature, Debates, meeting of March 19, 1937, Tipografia della Camera dei deputati, Roma, 1937, p. 3474.

⁶⁹ Father Pietro Tacchi Venturi argued these positions on a lecture held in 1937 at the Institute (P. Tacchi Venturi, “Roma propagatrice del Cristianesimo”, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 38, f. 37 and in *L’Osservatore Romano*, March 15-16, 1937). During the cycle on race was taking place, cardinal Domenico Jorio stressed similar conclusions in “La romanità dei concili ecumenici”, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 39, f. 44.

⁷⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to J. Balogh, letter of October 4, 1933, in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 22, f. 98

Nastasi P., 1998, p. 221) and as emerged in an article of Father Antonio Messineo on the Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica* (Messineo A., 1939. On Catholics and antisemitic racism: Miccoli G., 1988; Moro R., 1988b, 1999; Sale G., 2009, p. 83-176; De Cesaris V., 2010; Fattorini E., 2010; Rigano G., 2012; Ceci L., 2013, p. 212-261; Dell’Era T., 2018b; Id., 2018c; Valbousquet N., 2019). This idea of racism was close to the nationalist tradition and anchored its meaning on history, on the slow taking shape of a civilisation and on the notion of Italian nation, namely a nation formed well before the Middle Ages (as had been showed by another appreciated scholar like Arrigo Solmi, 1933).

In this interpretation, the idea of race not only became synonymous with nation, as noted by Father Messineo in reviewing (and accepting) Acerbo’s positions but, distancing from what German culture had always underlined (namely that the Italian race was formed as a result of Barbarian invasions) and under the influence of Massimo Pallottino’s researches on the Etruscans, at the same time the existence of an Italian race (or nation) was traced back to the pre-Roman era and considered unchanging over the centuries under the constant influence of Roman civilisation. According to this view, fascism once again imposed the traditional idea of Italian race and nation to the centre of national life. Therefore, antisemitism became rather a problem of race but, as in nationalist tradition (De Felice R., 1961, p. 43-57, 61-64; Michaelis M., 1962) and in Paolo Orano’s book *Gli ebrei in Italia* published in 1937 (De Felice R., 1961, p. 212-213; Sarfatti M., 2000, p. 136-141; Germinario F., 2009, p. 36-38), it became a clear political choice against a people who represented a antithetical model of civilisation (Matard-Bonucci A.M., 2008, p. 170-173, 233-237; Israel G., 2010, p. 233-253; De Francesco A., 2013, p. 192-211. On modern antisemitism: Poliakov L., 1978; Mosse G.L., 1978, p. 124-182; Germinario F., 2010). Significant was the reference to the emperor Tiberius’ longstanding tolerance of the Jews in an article published on the Institute’s journal by the classical studies scholar Emanuele Ciaceri (Ciaceri E., 1940, p. 81).

At any rate, just as racism proved not to be an insurmountable obstacle for the Institute of Roman Studies, Italy’s alliance with Nazi Germany was also widely accepted in the end. In a speech written by Galassi Paluzzi on the occasion of the Berlin International Conference of Archaeology in August 1939, the president of the Institute praised the work of both the Duce and the Führer as well as the constructive contribution of their two peoples, considered architects of modern Europe and Western civilization, who would lead “European and Western civilization to salvation and strengthening” with their alliance⁷¹. He was not worried about “too great of an affirmation of Germany” or the fears of appearing to be a cumbersome ally. In his view, this was “folly” or “madness”, when compared to the “certain dangers” posed by Anglo-French overweening power⁷². This point of view was certainly not free from friction or criticism, which were particularly evident when priests or representatives of the Vatican Curia participated in the Institute’s initiatives (Aramini D., 2015, p. 203-205). A few months prior to Father Messineo’s criticism of the myth of the nation in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (Moro R., 2020, p. 511-517), in January 1939 at the Institute of Roman Studies Jesuit Father Mario Barbera explicitly condemned radical nationalism (on these aspects: Moro R., 2003b, p. 604-611, 614; J. Nelis, 2011, p. 267-269), focusing on the fact that Christian Rome’s universal imperialism was not a “destructive uniformity of various national characters and cultures, but a brotherhood of souls in a higher common doctrine” that preserves “superior unity in diversity”⁷³. In the same year, additional distinguished figures from the Church, such as Monsignor Alfredo Ottaviani, reiterated the ecclesiastical magisterium of living in a common brotherhood. On the same occasion, the monsignor took up threatening tones when reaffirming the supreme authority of the pontiff, who, over the centuries, made even the most powerful monarchs quiver (Ottaviani A., 1939. See also: Fumasoni Biondi P., 1940; Salotti C., 1940).

⁷¹ The paper is in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 15, f. 54.

⁷² C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Capomazza, letter of May 21, 1940, in Private Archive of Carlo Galassi Paluzzi (henceforth abbreviated as ACGP), Corrispondenza, f. Camilla Capomazza.

⁷³ Mario Barbera, “Il P. Roberto De Nobili araldo di Roma nell’India”, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, Pubblicazioni, b. 309, f. 4.

6. What type of new order?

While the alliance with Nazi Germany was not an insurmountable obstacle for Galassi Paluzzi, the outbreak of the war in his opinion was merely another piece of a bigger plan “that transcends us”. The Institute thus needed to carry on being a “militia” marching “in the battlefield that has been assigned to us so that the ancient and eternal truths of the Rome of the Caesars, of Christian Rome, and of Savoyard and Fascist Rome will triumph in the new world order” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1941a). To achieve these goals, he decided to set up a series of propaganda initiatives, such as the *Mare Nostrum*⁷⁴ publication series or the new cycle of lectures entitled *Roma e il Mediterraneo* (Pellati F., 1942; Mustilli D., 1942; Romanelli P., 1943)⁷⁵. These initiatives contained a clear reference to the past in presenting the then-current war as a sort of fourth Punic War in which England played the role of a modern Carthage⁷⁶. The recurrence of antisemitic themes, prejudices and stereotypes was also evident, though less blatantly. In an unpublished work on the historical origins of Syria and Palestine, written by archaeologist Ernesto Vergara Caffarelli (then-*assistente ordinario* of archaeology and art history at Sapienza University in Rome⁷⁷), the author – in analysing the historical events of the region – seized the opportunity to underscore “the unshakeable individualistic spirit of the population and therefore the obstinate particularism of the region” that in pre-Roman times had prevented the creation of a unitary state entity and made it difficult for Rome to pacify the area due to the “fanatical hatred of the Jews towards all forms of Roman or Western civilisation in general”. The author concluded that it was only thanks to Rome’s use of force that it was able to put an end to the region’s secular anarchy and lead it to the “extraordinary prosperity” that continued until the Arab conquest⁷⁸.

Alongside the speeches given primarily by prelates, that increasingly underscored the active and combative role of the Church (unburying the myth of the crusades: Jorio, D., 1941) and condemned forms of exaggerated nationalism while reaffirming the universal nature of Catholicism (Cordovani M., 1942), the Institute once again reflected on the roots of Italian descent. The first volume of the cycle of lectures *L’Italia dalla preistoria alla romanizzazione* was published in 1941. Unlike two years earlier, this time Galassi Paluzzi managed to involve Ugo Rellini, who began his paper on Latium by underscoring that he’d had to fight a tenacious struggle over the years “against certain Italians who are still indoctrinated from beyond the Alps” (Rellini U.A., 1941, p. 33). He reiterated that he did not agree with the theories on the Aryan race or the idea of a sudden mass invasion of the Aryans from the north. In his opinion, just small groups had, over several centuries, descended to the south and interacted and blended with the local populations. Following a slow amalgamation of local and Indo-European populations – Rellini argued –, the “different peoples of Europe” had come to exist in a way they were all closely related to each other (*ibidem*, p. 27-28). Italy and Latium were no exception. Rellini – citing the speech that Giacomo Acerbo gave on January 27, 1940, at the Institute of Fascist Culture in Florence whereby the national-racist position had become concrete (Acerbo G., 1940) – emphasised that the Roman descent was based on the combination of three

⁷⁴ The books were published by the Institute on Roman Studies. They were entitled: [Eugenio Giovannetti], *Quel che la Francia deve e non ha dato a Roma e all’Italia*; [Pietro Romanelli], *Africa romana e Tunisia italiana*; [Aristide Calderini], *Roma e l’Egitto, l’Italia e l’Egitto moderno*; [Roberto Paribeni], *Roma ed Ellade, Italia e Grecia*.

⁷⁵ According to the supposed program, the other lectures were: G.Q. Giglioli, *Orme di Roma in Corsica* and F. Chabod, *La funzione e l’idea di Roma nel mondo mediterraneo durante il Medio Evo* (Chabod declined the proposal: see the letter he sent to Galassi Paluzzi on November 30, 1941, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 236, f. 1, sf. 2).

⁷⁶ See the typescript *I moderni cartaginesi*, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 68, f. 9.

⁷⁷ In the post-war period Vergara Caffarelli was director at the Antiquities Office of South Etruria and, from 1951 to 1961 (the year of his death), director of Antiquities Office in Tripolitania. Some brief biographical notes on him are in Munzi M., 2004, p. 21-31.

⁷⁸ The sources at the Institute Archive do not explain why the book was not published. In the folder there is just the signed typescript and a business card: E. Vergara Caffarelli, *La Siria e la Palestina dagli albori della storia all’invasione araba*, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 304, f. 4.

elements: Sabine-Mediterranean, Villanovan-Terramare-Indo-European, and Etruscan-Oriental. It was thanks to this union that the foundations of Rome's interaction with the other Italic peoples had been laid and that took shape a bilateral process of unification of different cultures (Rellini U.A., 1941, p. 32).

Ducati's position on Emilia was equally significant. Drawing upon research by Edoardo Brizio and Giuseppe Sergi, he revised Pigorini's theory on the strictly Terramare-Indo-European origins of the inhabitants of Emilia and the Latins (Ducati P., 1942, p. 4-5, 14-16). In alluding clichés concerning the industriousness and organizational skills of the peoples of the north alongside their lack of a sense of aesthetics and art, Ducati asserted that an important driver for the development of the Emilian Terramare civilisation had been its encounter with populations further south. For him, the populations from south and their artefacts, customs and rituals had significantly contributed to emancipating the Terramare inhabitants from the more primitive and poorer aspects of their culture (*ibidem*, p. 16-27). The archaeologist thus ended up completely toppling Aryan theories, deeming Mediterranean civilisation greater than Indo-European one, just like Sergi did. Emilia, and therefore Italy, were the expression of a deep blend of various descents that had been definitively amalgamated by Roman civilisation.

“Ancient Mediterranean and Indo-European descents – Ducati stated at the end of his work – were permeated with the *romanità*; a *romanità* that was the embodiment of a people, where precisely those Mediterranean and Indo-European elements had been blended together in a crucible on the sacred hills of Rome. Bologna, Rome's beloved, not only was pre-eminent in those times that had paved the way for the laborious ascent of *romanità*, but also grasped onto the torch of *romanità* upon its rebirth and made it shine vividly” (Ducati, 1942, p 28).

All other lectures drew upon these positions, applying them to other Italian regions. Perhaps not by chance, the papers regarding not only Latium but also the northern regions of the peninsula were immediately published. These were the regions where – according to German-oriented thinking and theories influenced by Pigorini's research – the greatest numbers of people had descended from the north. Istrian archaeologist Piero Sticotti – providing additional grounds not only for positions that exalted the pre-eminence of Italic descent in Italy compared to the Aryan descent but also historically legitimising the fascist aspirations regarding Dalmatia – aimed at demonstrating that the populations of Carnia had Illyrian and not Celtic origins. Namely, that they had come from early Romanised south-eastern areas and then remained deeply Roman until recent times (Sticotti P., 1942, especially p. 10). For Ernesto Curotto – linguist and professor at the University of Genoa – despite their Aryan origin Ligurians' “primitive and rough customs” became civilised thanks to the “beneficial influence of *romanità*” and to “mixing with Latin blood”, which allowed them to gradually merge with Rome (Curotto E., 1942, especially p. 10 and 18). Archaeologist Aristide Calderini, full professor of Ancient Greek and Roman antiquities at Cattolica University in Milan, drew upon scholars who had come before him and underscored the ethnic blend that characterised the area of Lombardy that was all but uniform in the Aryan sense (Calderini's essay was published at the end of the war: Calderini A., 1945, p. 18-27).

The lectures and the volumes demonstrated how – in addition to attempting to reconcile *romanità* and Germanicness in the name of their complementary nature in the struggle against atheistic modernity⁷⁹ in order to create a new Europe in which the two regimes could fulfil a specific, distinct and complementary function⁸⁰ – the Institute of Roman Studies did not intend to give up on insisting on a fusion between Latins and Germans based on the pre-eminence and profound contiguity of

⁷⁹ These words were used by Romeo Mezzanotte in a lecture where he analysed the figure of German Saint Clemente Maria Hofbauer, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, Pubblicazioni, b. 309, f. 9.

⁸⁰ As stated by Mario Appellius in “Roma nella Nuova Europa”, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, Pubblicazioni, b. 412, f. 1.

Ancient and Christian Rome. This aspect, in some cases, was vulnerable to different interpretations as well as to criticisms of the Nazi ally, as occurred during the lectures on *Romanità e Germanesimo* not by chance held by Guido Manacorda⁸¹. Drawing upon his studies that had been published a few years earlier, the scholar openly spoke of the antithesis between the Roman-Christian and Germanic civilisations. Germanic civilisation was, in fact, imbued with “pantheism” and “primitivistic-irrational connections” in which the exaltation of the race revealed “a sort of fear, that inadequacy of those who feel that they get lost in expansion because they lack a universal vocation and because they feel that, by detaching themselves from their blood and soil, they lose the landmarks”. These words – which were quoted in the journal *La vita italiana*, edited by Giovanni Preziosi, who on several occasions criticised national-Roman racism (Preziosi G., 1940a; Id., 1940b; Id., 1941) – prompted Julius Evola (under the pseudonym Arthos) to step in and harshly criticise Manacorda’s words. In Evola’s opinion, Manacorda’s ultimate goal was to reduce *romanità* to a mere synonym of Catholicism while completely neglecting to underline the Nordic-Aryan roots of Rome that were hostile to the religion of Christ and his Semitic apostle Paul (Arthos, 1941). Evola’s essay, and to a greater extent the growing clout with Mussolini and within fascism of his ideas on race as an ancestral myth to carry out a new revolution (for more on Evola’s ideas, see Raspanti M., 1994, p. 81-86; Gillette A., 2002, p. 154-175; Cassata F., 2003; Germinario F., 2009, p. 99-110; Staudenmaier P., 2020), triggered a rapid-fire debate in *Roma*. In what has been called the “small war between racists” (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 210-230; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 253-262; Gillette A., 2002, p. 130-153), Galassi Paluzzi aimed at opposing Interlandi’s biologicistic-based position (Raspanti M., 1994, p. 74-78; Cassata F., 2008) and most of all Evola’s esoteric, pagan and anti-Catholic spiritualism (Evola J., 1939; Id., 1941; Id., 1942; Arthos, 1942). After the biological parenthesis of the *Manifesto* in 1938, what gave a push to the initiatives organised by Galassi Paluzzi was the awareness that, since the end of 1938, within the fascist regime, Acerbo’s views and national-Roman racism had seemed to gain the upper hand, as seen by the publication of Acerbo’s essay with an introduction by Pavolini, Minister of Popular Culture. This view was given further clout by the decision to set up a commission at the General Directorate for Demography and Race with the task of drafting a new official manifesto on Italian racism, which was completed in April 1942 (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 225-230; De Francesco A., 2013, p. 201; the manifesto is published in De Felice R., 1961, p. 600-601). However, as the war raged on, Evola’s view gained clout among young generation, among the most intransigent fascists, and with Mussolini himself (Raspanti M., 1994, p. 83-84; Israel G., 2010, p. 255-256). This, along with the increasing consciousness in conservative and Catholic circles of the nature of fascism as a political religion alternative to traditional religion (Gentile E., 2010, p. 382-432; Moro R., 2020, p. 386-458 et seq.), pushed the president to strengthen the Institute’s systematic ideological direction. On racism, took shape a convergence between Acerbo’s view – who in his book explicitly referenced the verses of poet Rutilius Namatianus (Acerbo G., 1940, p. 27-28) –, Pende and the Jesuits of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, who were profoundly against biological determinism and Evola’s paganism (Barbera M., 1943; Moro R., 2020, p. 517-520. Moro R., 2003a, p. 303-314 is fundamental; see also Ipsen C., 1996; Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 221; Taradel R., Raggi B., 2000, p. 98-123; Ipsen C., 2003; Valbousquet N., 2018).

What the president of the Institute and his collaborators increasingly attempted to do – unrealistically but tellingly – was to create ideological pressure to bring the regime and the *duce* back on the path of the restorative nationalist and Catholic revolution (Aramini D., 2016, p. 55-58). Galassi Paluzzi lashed out against Evola’s and others’ “neo-pagan” attempts to distance Ancient Rome from the Christian Church because they considered Christianity a Semitic religion and, therefore, a driver of the decline of the Roman Empire. Galassi Paluzzi believed that attempts to “debase Catholicism” in the meantime “debased *romanità* and Italianness” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1941b) and that it was

⁸¹ Just a few references are in Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, “L’attività dell’Istituto di Studi Romani durante l’anno accademico 1940-41”, in ASINSR, Verbali Giunta Direttiva, vol. VI, meeting of June 18, 1942.

necessary to set racism once and for all “on truly scientific and historical grounds” (*ibidem*, 1941c). “Evoking prehistoric or protohistoric myths” and “hoping in the return of rites and beliefs of primitive tribes”, in his opinion, ultimately disseminated “a semi-philosophical, and essentially anti-historical fantasy” that risked losing sight of “the true political and social aims of racism” (*ibidem*, 1942a). Historically thinking – he continued –, after two thousand years of Christianity, it was impossible to back the survival of paganism and even less so to support the opposition between the Rome of the Caesars and Christian Rome or between Christianity and the empire (*ibidem*, 1942b). He believed it equally mistaken to claim that the Nordic peoples were superior to Mediterraneans. Galassi Paluzzi, with a touch of irony, posed the question as to why the Nordic peoples, “who are allegedly the prototype of civilisation”, had remained silent and watched “while the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans created still-unsurpassed forms of civilisation”. Against all “whims” and “fantasies”, he pointed out that history alone is capable of deciding which peoples are superior or inferior. And, historically, it was evident that “the southern and Mediterranean peoples had created the highest forms of civilisation; and we must equally believe over history that, while these southern and Mediterranean peoples created the great things they created, the Nordic peoples, on the other hand, were mere savages” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1942c). In short, the Nazis ended up being considered as the new barbarians who – while necessary because they were oriented towards destroying the modern decaying and corrupt civilisation – would have been later civilised another time by the Christians (Moro R., 2020, p. 496).

According to this view, Christianity continued to play a key role in the Institute’s ideological path. It was described as the new sun that rises from the sunset of Ancient world and the only force capable of overcoming and defeating the barbarians’ goals, as stated in Ottorino Bertolini (Bertolini O., 1941, p. 223-224, 274-284, 700-701) and Roberto Paribeni’s books on *Storia di Roma* series (Paribeni R., 1941, p. 3-4, 177-183, 261-262, 293-306, 327-352). Father Mariano Cordovani, often harshly critical of fascism, even went so far as to reiterate that Rome had not Italianised the Church at all. Instead, the Master of Sacred Palace and theologian at the Vatican Secretariat of State, at a conference held on January 30, 1942 at the Institute, underscored that Christianity had made *romanità* truly universal, and thus *romanità* could not be turned into a form of nationalism (Cordovani M., 1942). Ultimately, the spread of Pius XII’s myth as a *defensor civitatis* (Aramini D., 2015, p. 209-210; regarding Pius XII: Ceci L., 2013, p. 300-322) was part of a general cultural context that continued to spread an ideological *koinè* (Moro R., 2020, p. 540–546) and a racist myth in line with the study published in 1942 by Vincenzo Mazzei (Mazzei V., 1942).

A young legal scholar born in 1913 and *assistente ordinario* of public law at the University of Rome, Mazzei was not one of Galassi Paluzzi’s collaborators. Yet in his study, he proposed an interpretation close to the Institute’s position. He considered Italians to be Mediterranean populations and the result of the encounters of numerous peoples that had been merged together by Rome and whose identity had remained unchanged over the centuries. In his work, antisemitism was not a determining factor as much as a political gauge of the more general defence of race. Mazzei therefore did not agree with the biological inferiority of the Semitic world and underscored how the key crux of fascist ideology was the nation, not race, as instead was in National Socialism (Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 234-235; De Francesco A., 2013, p. 203-211). In his studies, Mazzei drew upon the research of a young Etruscan scholar, Massimo Pallottino, who was very close to Giglioli. During the war, Pallottino was a collaborator of the journal *Roma* and set himself apart thanks to his theses on the Etruscans. His work drew upon the trend – in part already present in the works of Neppi Modona and Ducati – that re-evaluated Etruscan culture’s contribution to the creation of Italian civilisation. Pallottino gave shape to a sort of revolution in the study of pre-Roman populations, setting aside the issue of the origin of peoples and insisting on the slow and complex process of a civilisation’s creation as being the result of contact between different cultures (Delpino F., 2014. *On Etruscology between the two wars*: Haack M.L., Miller M., 2016).

7. Racism as a synthesis of diverse cultures

With this way of looking at the past, antisemitism ultimately became a political element that was necessary for the more general rebirth of Roman civilisation, which the Jews had been excluded from in Ancient, medieval and modern times. It was a religious antisemitism that featured aspects of modern and laic antisemitism and that was linked to anti-Zionism, anti-modernism and the anti-Enlightenment (Moro R., 1988b; Id., 2002, p. 35–102). In this outlook, the Jews were an enemy of Rome, but not *the* enemy, as instead the apocalyptic and redemptive Nazi version portrayed them (Mosse G.L., 1978; Fiedländer S., 1997). The ultimate enemy had always been the anti-Roman German culture – namely the heretical, anti-Catholic and pagan Protestantism embodied in the modern thought (see: Moro R., 1998). In the second post-war, these considerations were the heart of Galassi Paluzzi's defence facing the purge trial instituted by the Council of State. After being removed from his position in August 1944⁸², he wrote a letter to Monsignor Celso Costantini (one of the Institute's collaborators and who became official officer of the Holy See at the Institute of Roman Studies), asking that Pius XII and Cardinal Montini intercede for him, considering the close relations that "his" Institute had with the Roman curia and the flattering opinions that he had received over the years (and that he attached to the letter). After all, before being published, the series of essays on race had been approved by the Jesuits (as was the case with many of the Institute's publications). Father Pietro Tacchi Venturi – who was often consulted on the essays before they were sent to print – was also a member of the Steering Committee, while it was Father Mario Barbera in 1939 who had approved the publications on race⁸³. Cecchelli's paper, for example, combined in his opinion "solid and immense culture" with a "correct historical criterion and specific sense of romanità and Christianity"⁸⁴. Just like Bodrero's, whose only flaw, according to Barbera, was of considering the school as a political institution aimed at training citizens in the interest of the state. This point of view, while reflecting the scholar's affinity with nationalism, for the Jesuit was a result of Hegelian theory of the state as a divinity (and perhaps this was why the president of the Institute decided not to publish it)⁸⁵. After the war, "regarding the Jewish problem", Galassi Paluzzi therefore stated that he had never expressed opinions that went "beyond what the Church itself taught and practiced for centuries in creating the ghettos" and had "always maintained and affirmed that it was absurd to consider the problems of race from a zoological point of view, as if it were a question of breeding horses and not a strictly spiritual and cultural matter"⁸⁶.

In any case, the Ministry of the Interior constantly received – from the Rome headquarters and provincial offices – the names of individuals with a Jewish surname so that the ministry could certify the moral and political respectability as well as the race of the names indicated and therefore allow or prohibit access to and participation in the Institute's initiatives. This was in line with the directives of the political institutions, but Galassi Paluzzi's scrupulousness, consistency and precision showed demonstrated his faith in fascist ideology, a faith shared by the rest of the country (Osti Guerrazzi A., 2005; Levis Sullam S., 2016; Galimi V., 2018)⁸⁷. Faced with fascism's divine mission on Earth as an ally of the Church (Griffin R., 2007b, p. 222-224), racist and antisemitic politics were necessary and perhaps even indispensable political choices. They were a result of the regime's redefinition of the

⁸² Galassi Paluzzi was removed on August 17, 1944, and replaced with Quinto Tosatti, very close to the Christian Democratic Party. The Steering Committee resigned immediately after Rome had been freed with a statement presented by Ceccarelli and Tacchi Venturi, and approved by all the other members: Bodrero, Cardinali, Cecchelli, Giovannoni, Guasco, Paribeni, Tomassetti (ASINSR, Verbali Giunta Direttiva, vol. V, meeting of June 19, 1944).

⁸³ See: ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 304, f. 2.

⁸⁴ M. Barbera to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of March 17, 1939, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 304, f. 2.

⁸⁵ M. Barbera to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter, no date but probably dated Spring 1939, *ibidem*.

⁸⁶ C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Costantini, letter of June 14, 1948, in ACGP, Perché si sappia, Pacco IV, f. S.E. Costantini.

⁸⁷ The last list sent to the Rome Police Headquarters held at the Institute Archive is dated on July 3 1944. All the lists are in ASISNR, Affari generali, b. 164, ff. 59, 60 e b. 171, f. 88.

idea of nation ever since it had seized power (Gentile E., 1997, p. 149-211; Germinario F., 2009). This redefinition led to a complete shift away from the ideals of inclusively and openness typical of the *Risorgimento* and of the liberal state, towards a vision of an exclusive, intolerant and totalitarian nation. This approach, as De Felice wrote, lacked respect for anything and everything that was different from itself and was a harbinger of the tragedy the Jews would face (De Felice R., 1961, p. 462).

Based on these considerations, the national-Roman racist view spread by the initiatives of the Institute of Roman Studies was no more moderate or less responsible for the persecution of the Jews than other more revolutionary positions inside the fascism. In fact, this interpretation made the concept of the Italian race even more acceptable in public opinion, strengthening and rooting it in the history and greatness of Italian civilisation throughout the centuries. Although Galassi Paluzzi and the scholars close to the Institute were not fully convinced of the existence of a Jewish conspiracy, as instead in Preziosi's thinking, and although they were sceptical of Evola's neo-pagan view and the apocalyptic vision of reality that characterised much of Nazism, they nevertheless accepted racism without hesitation, proving once more that evil is no banal, but it is normal (Mosse G.L., 1977, p. 72-73). In a word, attempting to shape a stable idea of nation by synthesising different fascist moods, the Institute found itself in a "sort of formal embrace" (Moro R., 2005, p. 67). It was crushed in the middle "of an ambitious attempt of totalitarian transformation of Italian Catholicism to which the Church responded with an equally ambitious effort to catholicise the nation" (Moro R., 2008, p. 424. On the relationship between the Church and totalitarianisms, see also Chamedes G., 2019, p. 121-234). By analysing racism and antisemitism, the Institute of Roman Studies represents a place where one can observe the encounter, the clash, the fusion, the tensions, and the deep and mutual influences of two typically modern phenomena produced by mass politics: the sacralisation of politics and the politicisation and ideologisation of religion (Moro R., 1988a; Id., 2015). Any attempt at dialogue and unity were impossible because the protagonists themselves were irreconcilable. Tensions therefore remained and, except for short periods, the Institute ultimately ended up being more of a sounding board than a unifier of the ideological divergences between fascism and Catholicism.

Last but not least, a concluding remark on Carlo Galassi Paluzzi. His loyalty to the fascist directives and to spreading racism in the country cannot be interpreted exclusively as a complete obedience to a totalitarian regime. Racism and antisemitism had deeper roots, linked to his deeply anti-democratic mentality. It was this anti-democratic mentality and his hostility towards anything and everything related to modernity and liberalism that pushed him to follow the regime until up to approve the alliance with Nazism. The latter ended up to be considered a fundamental instrument for shaping a new Europe, as it was rooted upon anti-democratic attitudes and upon a lack of respect for anything was dissimilar to its own view, just like the fascism. Galassi Paluzzi – like the fascist intellectuals who went out of their way to attempt to give a scientific foundation to Italian racism – sacrificed the Italian Jews without so much as a moment's hesitation. The Institute of Roman Studies, which was a completely fascist institution where was frequent to attend a lecture with scholars wearing the fascist uniform, where its president boasted that he had created the Institute in conjunction with the march on Rome, trying for years to include fascist symbolism in its emblem (consisting of an imperial eagle and a Latin cross), could not wash its hands of the burden of racist politics merely because it pursued a national concept of race or because it was Catholic. Instead, as I hope to have showed in this work, the Institute's close relationship with Catholicism implies a greater moral responsibility. In a word, it was certainly jointly responsible for the fascist policies on race and the persecution of the Jews in Italy.

After Rome had been freed by the allies, the new era of the Institute was inaugurated with a lecture by philosopher and Minister of Public Education Guido De Ruggiero, an antifascist and one of the founders of the Italian Action Party (De Felice R., 1991). De Ruggiero opened a new series of lectures entitled *Riesame critico del concetto di romanità*. In addition to lashing out against the fascism myth of Rome, he stressed the need for shaping a new universal idea of Rome, able to respect universalism

and cosmopolitanism, which were the cornerstones of the Ancient empire and of Christian thought. The new myth of Rome had to involve and unite, as in the past, all of the European peoples arisen on Roman empire ashes in a new synthesis, in a “message of mutual understanding and collaboration” (De Ruggiero G., 1945). De Ruggiero’s words echoed Benedetto Croce’s book *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*. Published in 1932, while nationalism appeared to be triumphantly unstoppable, he had caught sight of a hint of a new consciousness that drew upon liberal thinking and Mazzini and Cavour’s concept of Italian *Risorgimento*. This was a new light similar to that of “seventy years ago, a Neapolitan of the old kingdom or a Piedmontese of the subalpine kingdom became an Italian without becoming false to his earlier quality but raising it and resolving it into this new quality, so the French and the Germans and the Italians and all the others will rise themselves into Europeans and their thought will be directed towards Europe and their hearts will beat for her as they once did for their smaller countries, not forgotten now but lover all the better” (Croce B., 1933, p. 360). The myth of eternal Rome had to shape the dream of a new united, democratic and liberal Europe, able once and for all of locking away the horrors, intolerance and extremism that had characterised the first half of the twentieth century (Gentile E., 1997, p. 271-290). That road – which had yet to be travelled – would be slow, tortuous and ambivalent⁸⁸, as Croce himself showed. According to him, the Jews indeed had to erase any form of diversity, division or tradition that he believed to be responsible for the persecution over the past centuries⁸⁹.

However, at the Institute of Roman Studies the series of lectures on the new concept of *romanità* showed interpretations not even in line with De Ruggiero’s liberal and historicist thinking. The ideal of Italy as a Latin and Catholic nation was exalted⁹⁰, in the hope of finding new political spaces giving shape to a new sense of national identity and bringing out a new cultural and political leading role for Italy. In a Europe under the dark clouds of the Cold War, crushed by the two secular enemies like Asian bolshevism and Protestant liberalism, the necessity was to re-impose the civilising centrality of Rome, or better of Christian Rome (see Acanfora P., 2013, p. 19–33). Mass politics once again required the need of myths (Mosse G.L., 1988, p. 395–421).

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⁸⁸ On the role and initiatives of the Institute of Roman Studies in the post-war period there are no researches. At a very quick and first look, however, in the immediate post-war years only Galassi Paluzzi was removed (he repeatedly tried to come back to the guide of the Institute, see: APCGP, Perché si sappia, Pacco II). The other scholars, instead, continued their collaboration, spreading an interpretative trend on the myth of Rome, which was above all focused on the exaltation of a Christian Rome that completed and enhanced the imperial role of ancient Rome.

⁸⁹ On Croce’s position, and Momigliano’s reply, see: Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 24.

⁹⁰ C. Salotti, *L’anima di Roma*, in ASISR, Corsi superiori di studi romani, b. 188, f. 22; I. Giordani, *S. Paolo a Roma*, *ibidem*; La XIX annata degli «Studi Romani», *L’Osservatore Romano*, December 20, 1944.

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Staff considered of Jewish race fired from the Institute

1. Aldo Neppi Modona, head of the Publications Office, Rome headquarters. He was born in Florence on October 20, 1895, where he graduated in 1919. In 1925, he contributed to creating the Permanent Committee for Etruria and became *libero docente* in classical antiquities at the University of Pisa. In 1928, he received a postgraduate fellowship at the Historical and Archaeological Institute of Rhodes. In 1932, he was one of the founders of the International Institute of Etruscan Studies. Starting from September 16, 1935, he was employed at the Institute of Roman Studies in Rome in the central file cabinet of Rome bibliography until September 16, 1936. From January 1, 1937, to March 3, 1939, he was head of the publications office. When the persecution of the Jews began, he was a Greek and Latin teacher at Michelangelo High School for Classical Studies in Florence. In 1937, he obtained the *libera docenza* in classical antiquities at the University of Rome. After the war, he was reinstated as High School teacher and, after a long legal battle in revising some State recruitment procedures where he was excluded for racial reasons, in 1957 he obtained a position as full professor of Ancient Greek and Roman antiquities at the University of Genoa, Department of Humanities. Here, he also continued teaching Etruscology and Italian archaeology until his retirement in 1970. In 1952, he was chief of the editorial board of the academic journal *Studi Etruschi*, becoming co-editor in chief in 1955. In 1978, during Massimo Pallotino's presidency, he was appointed as vice president of the Institute of Etruscan and Italic Studies. He died in Florence on May 25, 1985.

2. Gino Segré, emeritus professor of Roman law at the University of Turin; member of the Steering Committee, Turin section.

3. Giorgio Falco, full professor of History of Middle Ages at the University of Turin.