

Speaking from the Walls: Militarism, Education, and *Romanità* in Rome's Città Universitaria (1932–35)

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All the world concerns itself with Rome. How ridiculous are those who expect to separate human civilization from the history of Rome, as if it were possible to wipe out thirty centuries of history, and what a history!

—Benito Mussolini, “Roma e il mondo”

During the Italian Fascist period, classical culture was co-opted by the Fascist Party's propaganda system as one of the tools of fabricating consent. This co-optation was expressed through the overarching theme of *Romanità* that lay at the heart of Italian Fascism's sense of its own purpose. The Città Universitaria (or University City), built in Rome in the mid-1930s, illustrates this system through its architecture, planning, and use of Latin epigraphy (Figure 1). The Città acts as an overall reification of the broader sociopolitical construct of militarism and education that characterized the Italian Fascist period.

Romanità acted in varying degrees throughout the regime's temporal arc as a powerful force behind Fascist doctrine's will to power and empire.¹ From the sociopolitical and cultural perspective this phenomenon is well known; from the artistic and architectural viewpoint, *Romanità* as a style or how it was expressed in the work of individual architects and artists has also been amply addressed.² However, there have been few case studies exploring actual manifestations of

Romanità at the level of interior, architectural, and urban space, their relationship with in situ art, and how these were inextricably tied with issues of identity, ritual, and tradition. This article weaves the sociopolitical, cultural, and architectural frameworks together through the study of epigraphy as a form of *architecture parlante* and as a carefully constructed presence within orchestrated urban and interior space.³ Coined to describe the works of French idealist architects of the Enlightenment period, the term *architecture parlante* refers to the practice of expressing or symbolizing architectural function through form and use of epigraphy. This practice was particularly favored under Fascism, which established a framework for buildings and their incorporated artworks to speak to the public with a very defined and peremptory voice, not unlike an omnipresent Mussolini, whose voice would otherwise reach the Italian people daily through public spectacles and rallies, radio broadcasts, and newsreels. Epigraphy completed the spatial experience of architecture in its urban context to help construct the collective memory of past, present, and future citizens.

The epigraphy of Italian Fascism was carved in a stark sans serif font through which buildings and letterforms became inextricably linked, stressing both aesthetic and ideological values. This font, known as *bastone*, was a modern form of lettering widely used in the areas of typography, graphic design, and journals in the modern and avant-garde circles of northern Europe. This type of lettering lent itself to monumental inscription, as its simplicity and squareness allowed for maximum shadows that contrasted with the stark marble and travertine of the building façades and was easily read obliquely, especially from below.⁴

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Figure 1 Città Universitaria, Rome, aerial view, 1935 ("Città Universitaria," special issue, *Architettura* 14 [1935], courtesy of American Academy Library, Rome).

As the paleographer Armando Petrucci has pointed out, the regime's urban policy was dictated by ceremonial-monumental concerns that opened up new vistas and large architectural surfaces to the public gaze: "What could have been more natural than to fill these empty spaces with writing, with ceremonial and celebrative inscriptions visible at a great distance and durable in time thanks to the use of monumental writing?"⁵ Inscriptions on buildings, therefore, played a significant role in impressing the regime's assumptions and aspirations indelibly on the public. The walls and façades of civic spaces boasted a variety of inscriptions in imitation of the plethora of public lettering adorning the walls of imperial Roman buildings.⁶ Epigraphy as an element of *architecture parlante* therefore constituted a significant channel of communication. While art played an important role in educating the masses in the myth and rhetoric of Fascism, inscriptions (whether in Italian or Latin) were tailored to expected audiences, with those at the Città Universitaria chosen to operate on an elite level to educate and mold Fascism's new ruling class.⁷

Established public institutions—most notably law courts, educational buildings, and war memorials—were the common (and logical) loci for this practice. Marcello Piacentini, Benito Mussolini's preferred architect, was responsible for a large number of these. His earlier designs for Bergamo (1916) and Messina (1923) used epigraphy in this vein (Figure 2), as did his later design for the Milan law court (1931–41), which strongly recalls the central building of the Città Universitaria, the Rectory, in its use of stripped classical elements and stern monumentality (Figure 3).⁸ In prominent positions on each of the façades, the classical words of Cicero and Horace appear alongside a classicized maxim propounded by Hegel, reiterating the role of law as a civilizing force for society. In the case of the war memorials, their function was also commemorative and celebratory. For example, the Victory Monument in Bolzano (1926–28) showcases an inscription



Figure 2 Marcello Piacentini, Palazzo Giustizia, Milan, lateral façade, 1931–41 (photo by Flavia Marcello).

that, like those of the Città Universitaria, conflates the military with the educational under the broad umbrella of a civilizing mission.⁹ Piacentini's Casa Madre dei

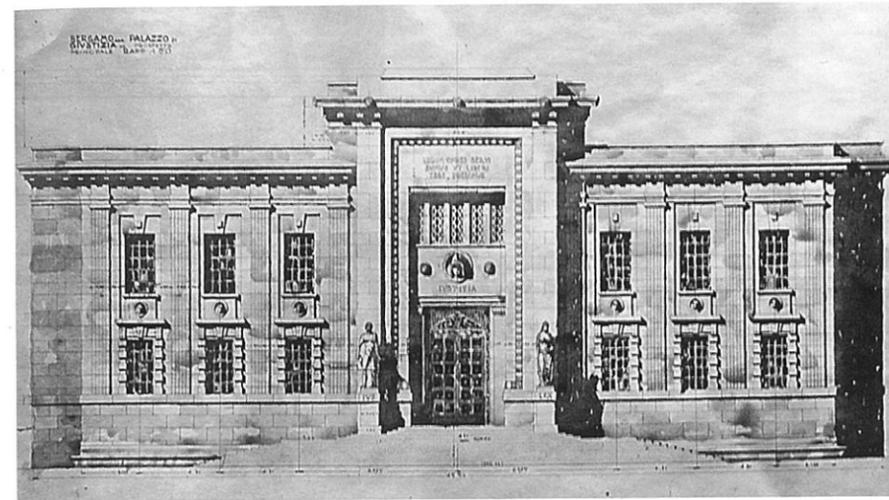


Figure 3 Marcello Piacentini, Palazzo Giustizia, Bergamo, watercolor image showing that the inscription had been determined during the design phase and was independent of the aims of Fascist propaganda, 1916–22 (Piacentini Archive, Florence).

Mutilati—headquarters of the National Association of War Wounded (ANMIG)—in Rome (1928–38) eschewed the classical world in favor of short Latin mottoes either derived from heraldry or composed by the president of ANMIG, Carlo Delcroix, to accentuate the concept of sacrifice and glory in war (Figure 4).¹⁰ The parapet of the Headquarters of the Military Police in Lecce edged the sky with the founding principle of the regime's economic policy. Schools such as the Giulio Cesare and Virgilio Lyceums, both in Rome, also included edifying phrases for the good of the children, with different quotes by Mussolini on separate, gender-specific entrances while Latin was reserved for the Aula Magna (Great Hall).¹¹

Epigraphy took on a more urgent role for new institutional types established to support and represent the new Fascist society. Inscriptions invoked the recitation of slogans, catechisms, and poetry as an integral feature of Italian (and Fascist) education.¹² These new institutions included the Case del Fascio (local party headquarters) and the various social institutions, like the Case Balilla (Fascist youth organizations) and *dopolavoro* (after-work circles), that looked after the needs of (and constructed identities for) a range of different social groups (see Figure 4).¹³ Inscriptions on these buildings tended to be in Italian, as these were buildings for the less educated classes. For the most part, they featured well-known slogans and quotations from speeches by Mussolini that had been disseminated via radio broadcasts and newsreels. Even "run of the mill" apartment buildings (especially those funded by the state) were decorated with homely yet paternalistic verses from the works of contemporary poets.¹⁴

Exhibitions also used epigraphy to convey Fascist political messages. The *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* of 1937–38 was replete with both contemporary and ancient epigraphy throughout the Palazzo delle Esposizioni's many rooms and

on its temporary façade designed by Alfredo Scalpelli (Figure 5).¹⁵ The ill-fated Rome Expo of 1942, the so-called Olympics of Civilization, intended to bring this practice before an international audience. It was also evidenced on the exposition's most iconic buildings, the Palazzo degli Uffici (1938) and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (1939), more commonly known as the Square Colosseum. Both featured inscriptions quoting well-known Mussolini speeches, referring to the glorified future of the Fascist empire and the unique qualities of the Italian race, respectively (Figure 6).¹⁶ The original plan was to have the Square Colosseum display extracts from Augustus's *Res gestae*. Ample space was instead found in the plinth of Vittorio Morpurgo's recently completed pavilion designed to house the reconstructed Ara Pacis. The buildings that formed the northern border of the new piazza surrounding the mausoleum were inscribed with Mussolini's own words, which gained power through association with his forebear Augustus, while Livy's words on the humble origins of Rome were paraphrased in the mosaic decoration above.¹⁷

The epigraphy for Rome's Città Universitaria emphasized two aspects of the regime's consent-building process: militarism and education. Marcello Piacentini designed the Città's overall plan with the aim of creating a city of classical Fascist culture within the eternal city of tradition. This occurred in parallel with the establishment of the Vatican State in 1929 and the creation of other "cities," such as Cinecittà (Gino Peressutti, 1937–43) and the City of Sport, or Foro Mussolini (Enrico Del Debbio, 1928–38) (see Figure 1). The Città's artworks, architectural expression, and urban layout were tied together with a curated set of inscriptions that made the Città a powerful communicator of the classical tradition as well as a foundation for a militaristic drive, a unified education system, and a total Fascist culture.

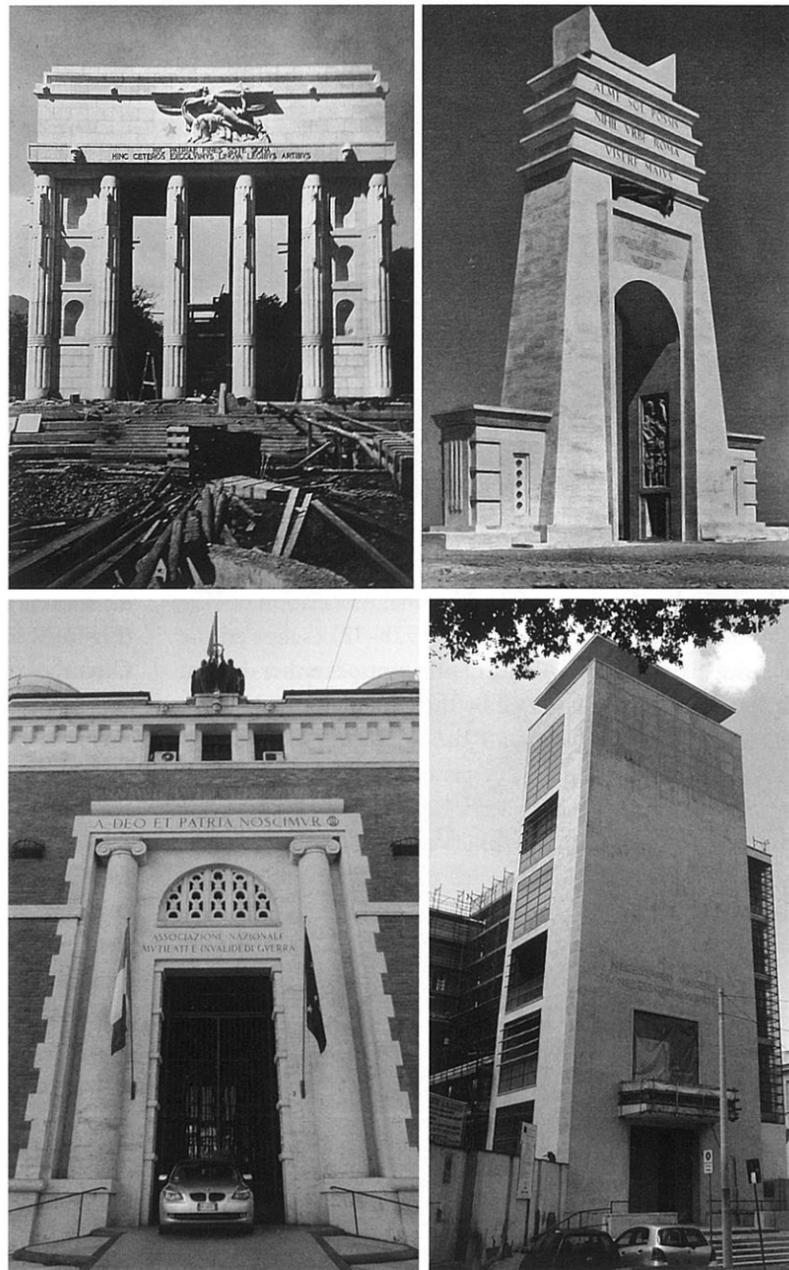


Figure 4 Buildings showing different contexts for epigraphy (clockwise from top left): Marcello Piacentini, Victory Monument, Bolzano, ca. 1926–28; Florestano di Fausto, Arco dei Fileni Via Litoranea, Libya; Luigi Moretti, Casa della Gil, Trastevere, Rome, 1933; Marcello Piacentini, Casa Madre dei Mutilati, Rome, 1928–38 (images from Piacentini Archive, Florence, *L'illustrazione italiana*, Mar. 1937; photos by Ian Woodcock and Flavia Marcello).

The task of “curating” appropriate moralizing tags for the Città Universitaria was given to Vincenzo Ussani, professor of Latin literature at La Sapienza from 1927 to 1940.¹⁸ To coincide with his appointment, Ussani published a magisterial review of Latin literature dedicated to his students, past and present, in which he stressed the link between ancient Rome and modern Italy. Ussani’s choice of theme is best explained in his own words:

The very idea of Rome has, without doubt, operated as the most potent of stimuli on the imagination of the ancients. That

very idea has traveled across the centuries and has fused itself for us with the Christian idea of Roman Catholicism; it has woven itself indissolubly into the hopes of national resurgence [*Risorgimento*] and throbs once more every hour within our noble dreams and (why not?) within our designs for political and cultural greatness.¹⁹

Ussani’s vision of a universal *Romanitas*, encompassing all historical periods, would be encapsulated and endorsed in the pithy Latin quotations that he selected, adapted, or indeed composed to adorn walls of the new university buildings.

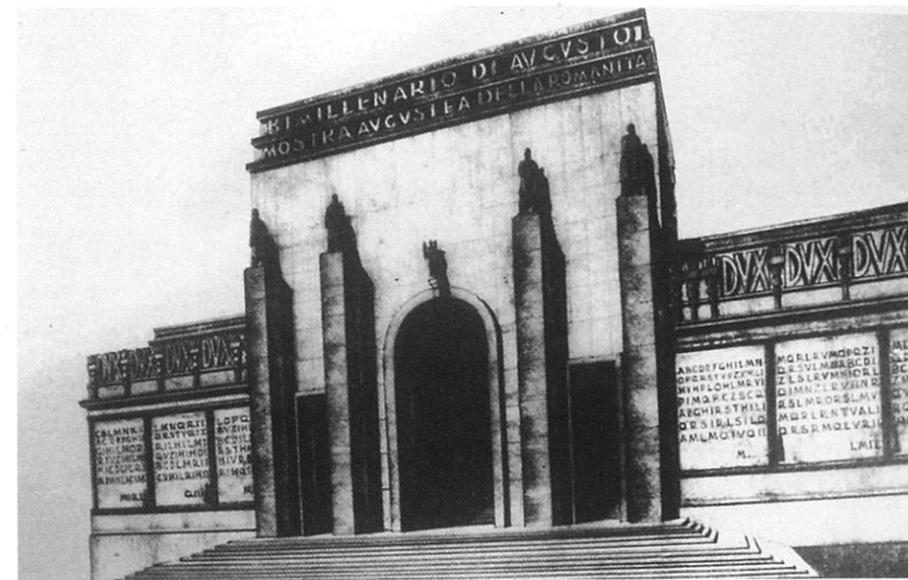


Figure 5 Alfredo Scalpelli, façade of *Mostra Augustea della Romanità*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, initial sketch showing the locations of inscriptions in the overall design, 1937–38 (G. Q. Giglioli, “La mostra Augustea della Romanità,” *Architettura* 17, no. 11 [1938], courtesy of American Academy Library, Rome).

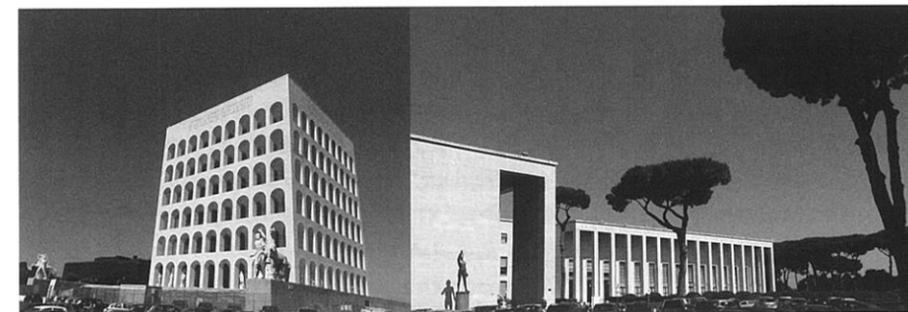


Figure 6 Giovanni Guerrini, Bruno La Padula, and Mario Romano, Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Rome, 1939 (left); Gaetano Minnucci, Palazzo degli Uffici, Rome, 1939 (right) (photos by Flavia Marcello).

The Città Universitaria, Rome, 1935

The Città Universitaria is a significant chapter both in Marcello Piacentini’s career and in the history of modern Italian architecture. Piacentini proudly proclaimed that Il Duce himself “assigned the limits and the characteristics of the overall theme to me: to erect the headquarters of the most important center of studies in the Mediterranean, and with it to express the highest and most modern possibilities of Italian building techniques.”²⁰ Piacentini had a long and fruitful architectural career both before and after the Fascist period. Son of prominent nineteenth-century classicist Pio Piacentini, he began to gain influence in the mid-1920s when he presented an urban project to Mussolini titled *La Grande Roma*. Although that project was never executed, it prompted Il Duce to entrust Piacentini personally with the overall design for Rome’s new university and to call upon the best young architects from around the country (Gio Ponti, Giuseppe Pagano, and Giovanni Michelucci) to collaborate in the creation of the individual buildings.²¹

The overt use of classical design principles in the master plan and main buildings of the Città Universitaria also needs

to be placed within Piacentini’s own explorations of civic monumentality. Close ties to the classical spirit, which Piacentini defined as “universal, antipersonal, and of the state,” had always been fundamentally Italian.²² Piacentini was an active participant in debates about architecture’s role as “art of the state.” He advocated for the “arch and column” as the official language of Fascist architecture and championed the cultural validity of traditional classicism, its role in defining “Italian-ness” and “Roman-ness,” and how architecture could adequately express these notions.²³ Because Piacentini principally designed institutional buildings, his approach has been equated with civic monumentality and the severe classicism that this typology necessarily required (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). This is why he is regularly categorized as a monumental classicist even though he had frequent contact with members of the younger generation of architects, as both students and collaborators, and placed a high value on modern systems and techniques of material and construction. While designing the Città Universitaria he sent his former student Gaetano Minnucci to northern Europe to research and document

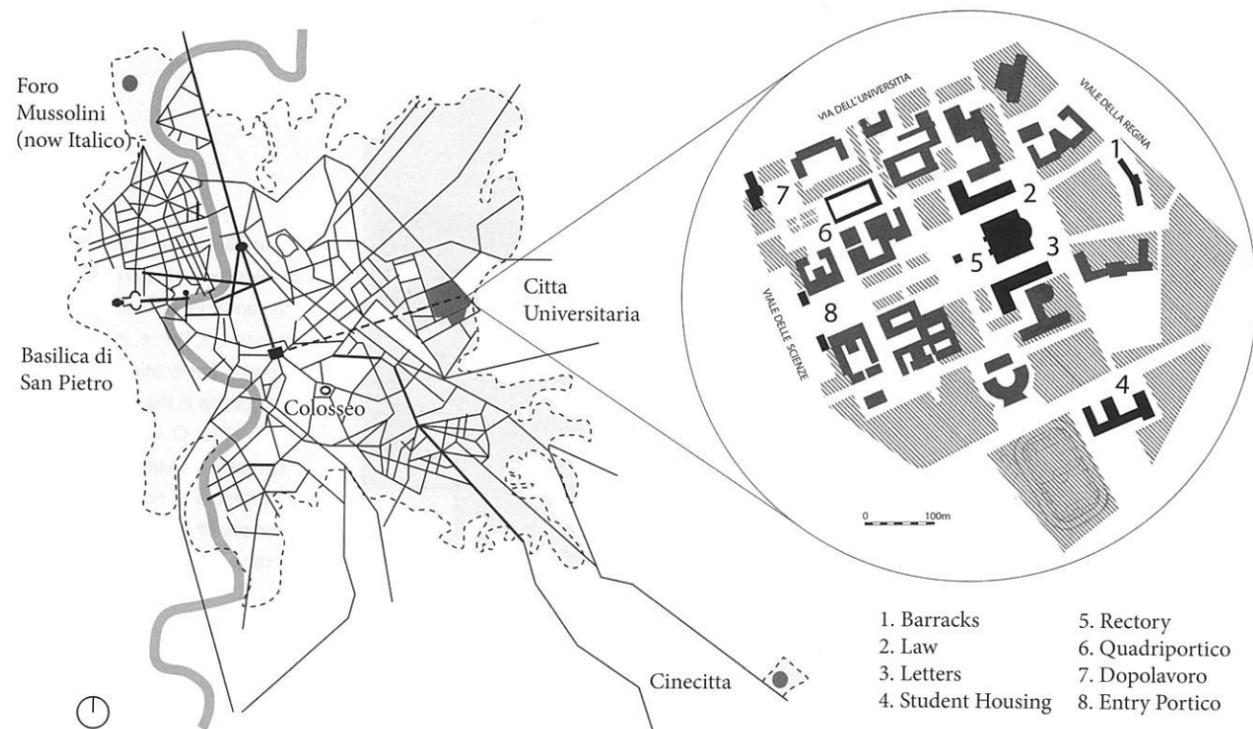


Figure 7 Marcello Piacentini, master plan of Città Universitaria, Rome, map showing the locations of the new “cities” and the axis between the Rectory and Palazzo Venezia, 1932 (image by Brandon Gardiner).

the latest in university design and construction and material techniques.²⁴

The need for a new university campus had been expressed since the late 1880s.²⁵ A site for the new Studium Urbis (University of Rome) was chosen just north of Termini station—close to the first-century *Castra Praetoria*, home of the ancient Praetorian Guard—both for its proximity to the existing teaching hospital and as part of a wider plan to transform this area into a cultural precinct and consolidate Rome’s position as “the center of the nation’s intellectual, civil, and political life.”²⁶ Built in the period 1932–35, it was hailed as the arrival of a new and great Mediterranean classicism that successfully incorporated the most innovative building techniques and materials with selected aspects of ancient culture. The master plan of the campus expressed, according to Piacentini, “the spirit of ancient civilization in modern forms” and brought together the Greek agora, the spaces of a Roman/Christian basilica, and Rome’s Renaissance piazzas (Figure 7).²⁷ Each building was designed by a different architect and was placed hierarchically in deference to the Rectory with a formal and stylistic unity that represented the unity of the Fascist nation (see Figure 1).²⁸

The creation of the Città Universitaria is a significant event in the history of modern Italian architecture and exemplifies the fraught and complex relationship between

traditional classicism and modern aesthetics. How did Italian architects of the 1930s address this relationship, and how did the new university fit into this very active period in Rome’s urban transformation? At the time, new garden suburbs had just been completed at Garbatella and Monte Sacro, railway lines to Ostia were being built, and the new 1931 master plan for Rome had just been approved. The city center was being “modernized” in the Haussmann style on one hand, and the ancient past was being resurrected as a theatrical backdrop for the Fascist “culture of consent” with excavations and reconstructions on the other. As noted above, plans were also afoot for an international exposition to be held in 1942 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Fascist rise to power. All these initiatives tended toward the realization of a Third Rome of Fascism, after the First Rome of the Caesars and the Second Rome of the popes. Since *Romanità* risked becoming either dehistoricized and abstract or the exclusive province of high culture, the city itself—and the buildings and urban spaces that composed it—was called to act as both a reification of *Romanità* and a uniting force.

The first half of the 1930s is also considered the halcyon period of Italian rationalism, which had been “chosen” as the official aesthetic of the regime.²⁹ Mussolini himself often defined the briefs, became involved with design processes, met with architects, made regular visits to construction sites,

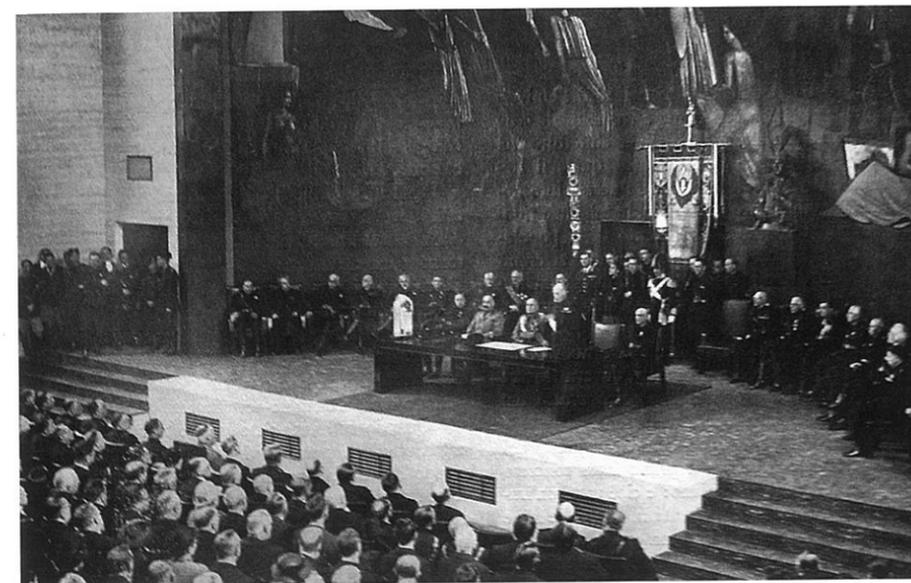


Figure 8 Marcello Piacentini, Aula Magna, Città Universitaria, Rome, inauguration with Benito Mussolini, King Victor Emanuel, Rector Pietro de Francisci, and Minister of Education Cesare de Vecchi on the Tribuna degli Oratori against the backdrop of Mario Sironi’s *Italy among the Arts and Sciences*, fresco, 1935 (“Città Universitaria,” special issue, *Architettura* 14 [1935], courtesy of American Academy Library, Rome).

and was present at inaugurations for the major public works projects of this period.³⁰ Examples of this period can be seen in exhibitions (such as the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista*, 1932–34); influential journals (such as *Casabella*); the results of national architectural competitions (such as the Florence Railway Station); new post offices, party headquarters, and Fascist youth houses all over the country; and entirely new towns (such as Sabaudia, 1934). Even the younger generation of architects, such as Gruppo 7 and Giuseppe Pagano, expressed attitudes similar to those of their more traditionalist colleagues Gio Ponti and Piacentini regarding a possible harmony between the classical tradition and modern aesthetics.

From the inception of the new university complex in 1932, the political symbolism of the project was uppermost in Mussolini’s mind. He wanted it to represent the harmonic collaboration of architects from different parts of the country, to express the unitary nature of the Fascist state. Although Piacentini acted as leader, the idea that the complex would be a group project was Mussolini’s. He intended to prove that Italy was not a country torn apart by disputes between modernists and traditionalists—as the second exhibition of the *Movimento Italiano per l’Architettura Razionale* in Rome seemed to indicate—but rather was a country capable of marching forth, united, on a path set by its leader.³¹ By the time of the university’s completion three years later, the Ethiopian campaign was in full flow and the building complex was co-opted to interweave militarism firmly with education. Studium Urbis was “a training ground, a bulwark, a fortress which—when joined—ensured Victory.”³² While inaugurating the university, Mussolini, wearing the uniform of the commander general of the army, reminded King Victor Emanuel, Rector Pietro de Francisci, and

Minister of Education Cesare de Vecchi of the indissoluble links between militarism and education and of the inevitable conflation of the conquest of empire and education into the single mission of civilization (Figure 8).³³ In addition, Piacentini (and his team) had succeeded in transforming Mussolini’s will into “marble and stone.”³⁴ The Città Universitaria thus became both physical manifestation and signifier of this nexus through a carefully orchestrated spectacle that saw the king, the recently anointed “emperor” of Ethiopia, presented with an honorary degree. Newspapers made much of the fact that on the day of the university’s inauguration, Italian soldiers (many of whom were also students) marched bravely forth to bring civilization to Ethiopia.³⁵ On 2 November 1935 the headline of *Il Giornale d’Italia* read, “The King reminds the world that Italy defends . . . the nation’s need [to maintain] its way of life, its security, and its future with a reminder of Rome’s ancient mission of civilization.”³⁶

Monumental inscriptions from selected and approved classical authors, prominently placed on key university buildings, provided a backdrop both for this ceremonial occasion and for the daily lives of the students moving from class to class. The inscriptions were placed at key axial points related to entry and exit across the campus to maximize exposure to students, and they were reserved for the elements that Mussolini wanted to be the most monumental: arts, law, and political science.³⁷ The Entry Portico, by Arnaldo Foschini, a slightly younger, yet more conservative, architect who had taught with Piacentini at the *scuola superiore*, was placed in a direct axial relationship with the university’s key building, the Rectory by Piacentini (Figure 9). This axis, when continued through the urban fabric of Rome, landed directly on Mussolini’s balcony at the Palazzo



Figure 9 Marcello Piacentini, monumental entrance, Rectorio, Città Universitaria, Rome, 1932–35. To the right of the Rectorio: Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, by Gaetano Rapisardi; Institute of Mathematics, by Gio Ponti; Minerva statue, by Arturo Martini, 1932–35 (photo by Flavia Marcello).

Venezia (see Figure 7). This symbolic gesture by Piacentini acknowledged the task bestowed upon him by Il Duce and at the same time pointed to the relationship between the ruler of the Italian state (Mussolini) and the ruler of the university (the rector).³⁸ The Faculties of Arts and Law, by Piacentini's student Gaetano Rapisardi, were the other two buildings chosen for monumental lettering. They flanked the Rectorio, thus metaphorically acting as buttresses, in the same way that literature and the law upheld Augustus's *Pax Romana*.

To convey the importance of education in forming the new generation of Fascists, Ussani selected quotations principally from Cicero, with one each from his other two authors of choice: Horace and Lucan. Although Cicero had been critical of Julius Caesar, his reputation remained high during the Fascist period for his staunch defense of traditional Roman mores in the great speeches against Verres and Catiline, both of which are filled with eminently quotable maxims. Augustus's poet laureate, Horace, was an obvious choice.³⁹ Lucan, whose epic on the civil war was a searing critique of Caesar, was probably chosen because Ussani had published a number of translations of his works as well as a monograph on the poet.⁴⁰ Slight changes and adaptations were made to the Latin so that the phrasing would

work as part of the façade composition and so that the inscriptions could be read clearly from the buildings themselves.⁴¹

Entry Portico

The main access to the Città Universitaria is along a wide avenue and into a vast piazza where students, professors, and visitors are presented with an immense trabeated portico of stripped-down rectangular columns (Figure 10). Faced in Rome's most identifiable materials, travertine and brick, the portico conveys through its scale a sense of momentous entry and marks the organizing axis that leads down the main avenue toward the Rectorio's own entry portico, whose parapet proclaims, "Studium Urbis" (University of Rome) (Figure 9). Foschini combined both city gate and triumphal arch to provide a monumental entrance into the new university as a city within a city. Before crossing the threshold, students would be greeted by the Entry Portico's imposing Latin quotation composed by Ussani and modeled on the inscriptions found on the triumphal arches of Constantine and Septimius Severus:

VICTORIO EMMANVELE III REGNANTE BENITO
MVSSOLINI REM ITALICAM MODERANTE / VETVS



Figure 10 Arnaldo Foschini, Entry Portico, Città Universitaria, Rome, 1932–35 (photo by Flavia Marcello).

VRBIS STVDIVM IN HANC SEDEM ROMANA
MAGNIFICENTIA DIGNAM TRANSLATVM EST

[During the reign of Victor Emmanuel III and when Benito Mussolini was governing the Italian state / the old university was moved into this site worthy of Roman magnificence]⁴²

For those citizens continuing on their way across the piazza the inscription communicated the site's importance and aligned it with the extant civic works of the ancient emperors. On the inside face, another inscription reminded those exiting of the role of the Muses in nurturing youth and bringing culture to humankind. It is taken almost verbatim from Cicero's speech in defense of the poet Archias:

HAEC SEDES MVVIS SACRA MVSAE ADOLESCENTIAM
ALVNT SENECTVTEM OBLECTANT SECVNDAS
RES ORNANT ADVERSIS PERFVGIVM / PRAEBENT
VIRTVTES OMNES VTILITATESQVE PROCREANT
HOMINES INFORMANT AD HVMANITATEM

[This site is sacred to the Muses. The muses nourish youth, delight old age, decorate prosperity, provide a refuge in adversity, / produce all the virtues and advantages and mold men to humanity]⁴³

In one of Cicero's most impassioned tributes to the benefits of literature, and poetry in particular, the focus is on the value of education with the use of *informo* in the sense of "to instruct" or "to educate." Its convenient alternative meaning, "to shape" or "to mold," also references the instruction and education of youth through military-style discipline and education, to ensure the future of the Fascist regime.

Rectorio

The central administration building, or Rectorio, marks a point of culmination on the university's main organizing axis (see Figures 7 and 9). It makes a literal and architectural statement of the authoritative nature of the rector as the head of the university and in a wider sense of education itself. Arturo Martini's large bronze statue of Minerva, purposely located at the crossing of the university's main axes, expresses the duality of education (and the wisdom it necessarily imparts) and militarism through Minerva's raised arms brandishing spear and shield (Figure 11). Unlike Mars, the Roman god of war, Minerva, the goddess of war, wisdom, and civic virtues, fought to maintain law and order. This interpretation was later applied to Italy's "civilizing" mission in Ethiopia. One of Piacentini's early sketches shows how he considered the inscription, the bas-relief, and the statue as integral to his unified conception of architecture within urban space (Figure 12).

The Rectorio's inscription was carefully composed of two quotations, also taken from Cicero, stretched across the building's 120-meter parapet (Figure 13). It encapsulates the university's overall aims and further emphasizes the militarism-education nexus:

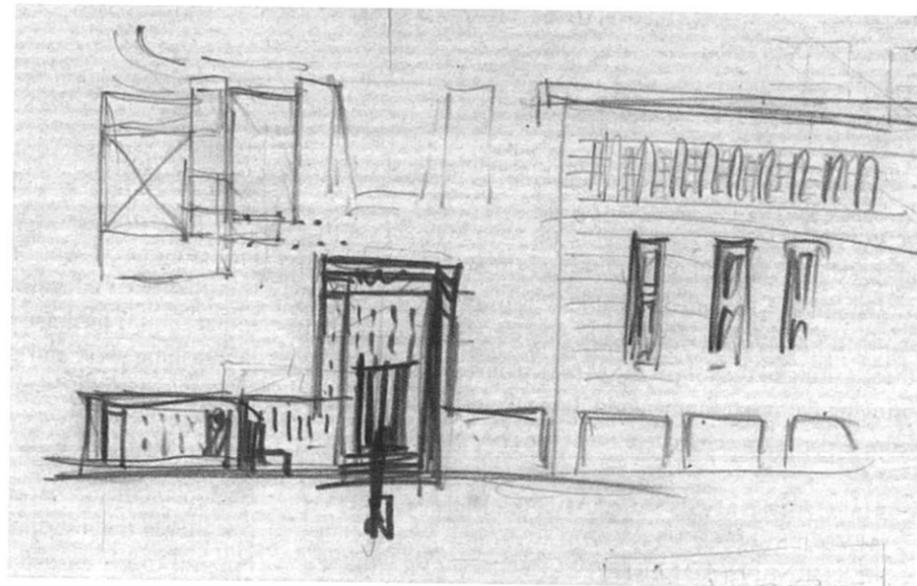
IN PRIMIS HOMINIS EST PROPRIA VERI INQVISITIO
ATQVE INVESTIGATIO / STVDIVM VRBIS / DOCTRINA
EADEM VIDETVR ET RECTE FACIENDI ET BENE
DICENDI MAGISTRA

[To search for the truth and seek it out is the first duty of mankind / The University of Rome / Education, by the same route, is seen to be the instructress of both behaving correctly and speaking well]⁴⁴



Figure 11 Arturo Martini, Minerva statue, Città Universitaria, Rome, 1935 (photo by Flavia Marcello).

Figure 12 Marcello Piacentini, Rectory, Città Universitaria, Rome, preparatory sketch showing the original idea for a library tower, position of the Dioscuri bas-relief, inscription at the summit of the tower, and statue of Minerva in the foreground, 1932–35 (Piacentini Archive, Florence).



Taken from Cicero's *De officiis* and *De oratore*, respectively, these lines, interspersed with the ancient name of the university (Studium Urbis), have been ingeniously combined by Ussani to form a complete motto or credo to dictate a mode of conduct for the ideal student and, by implication, for the ideal citizen. This is similar to other party slogans derived from Mussolini's speeches, which were familiar also from the façades of the Fascist institutions, such as "È necessario vincere, è più necessario combattere" (It is necessary to win, it is more necessary to fight), "Credere Obbedire Combattere" (Believe Obey Fight), and "Tutto nello Stato, Niente al di fuori dello Stato, Nulla contro lo Stato" (Everything in the State, Nothing outside the State, Nothing against the State).

The section of *De officiis* from which the previously mentioned inscription was taken concerns itself with how nature has differentiated mankind from the beasts by the gift of reason, providing man with the capacity for social organization, inducing in him love for his offspring, enabling him to form public assemblies, and giving him the desire to actively seek comfort for himself and his family. After highlighting the importance of truth, Cicero continues by praising those minds that are well molded by teachers who provide the appropriate rules for pursuing the common good. In the chapter of *De oratore* Cicero notes how the philosophers were masters of both life and speaking well.

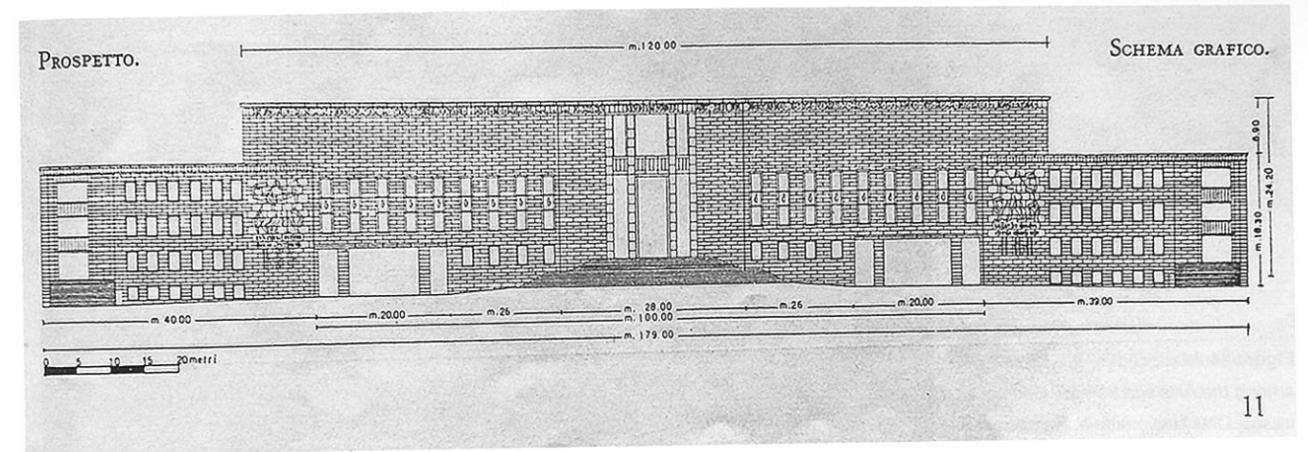


Figure 13 Marcello Piacentini, Rectory, Città Universitaria, Rome, elevation as built, showing the inscription along the parapet, 1932–35 (Piacentini Archive, Florence).

The plain rear façade in brick features a couplet from Horace's *Odes* (4.4), perhaps one of the most politically charged of all his poems. Horace celebrates national pride, lauds youthful militaristic vigor in the service of the state, and refers directly to Augustus's education program through a "right/correct" culture to strengthen the spirit:

DOCTRINA VIM PROMOVET INSITAM / RECTIQVE
CVLTVS PECTORA ROBORANT

[Education promotes an innate vigor / and morals give physical strength to the spirit]⁴⁵

The context of the original verses would have been recognized by students, professors, and citizens alike, since Horace's *Odes* were much in evidence during this period. His *Carmen saeculare* were nominated as Italy's first national anthem in 1926, and his visibility only increased in the lead-up to his anniversary celebrations in 1936 when the air force issued a special series of postage stamps with images of new jets, each accompanied by a Horatian tag.⁴⁶ A shortened version of the same quotation was also used on Florestano di Fausto's Libyan Arch (see Figure 4). The lines used at the Città Universitaria link education to Roman morality, which Horace contrasts with barbarian (or "foreign"—that is, Ethiopian) degeneracy. For Mussolini, to speak of an imperial Italy was not necessarily to allude to territorial conquest; rather, it was to promote an attitude or a norm of conduct that he described as virile, resolute, and combative.⁴⁷ First, this norm aligns with the attitude and tone of the Horatian text; second, it highlights the connection between physical and spiritual strength that is at the heart of militarism and education. Strength of mind/spirit and body thus became what Laura Malvano has defined as the "obliging vectors of national mythology." These two types of strength were considered equally powerful because

any youth who possessed them would guarantee the "vigor of the Race" and fulfill the "fatal" aspiration to greatness.⁴⁸

Ussani would have meant the Latin term *doctrina* as "education," but to a less erudite audience there would have been a closer connection to the Italian word *dottrina* (doctrine). This allowed an association with the doctrine of Fascism, thus giving the inscription multiple levels of reading, where *doctrina* could be understood as referring to the act of teaching (as occurred within the university buildings themselves), the knowledge imparted by this act, and, most important, the habit incurred by all meanings of *doctrina* combined.

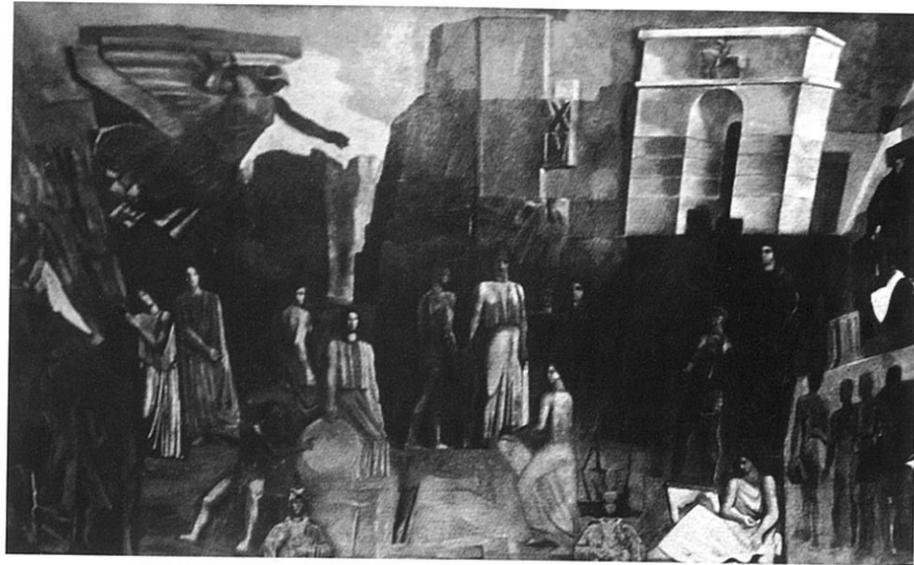
The inscriptions continue in the interior of the Aula Magna (Great Hall) above the Tribuna degli Oratori, or main stage, with an elegiac couplet composed by Ussani based on the oratorical treatises of Cicero and Quintilian:

DOCTRINAE STUDIUM VITAM PRODUCIT ET
AUGET / IMMORTALIS ERIS SI SAPIAS JUVENIS

[Studies and instruction prolong and improve life / Through education, O youth, you will be immortal]⁴⁹

This couplet also functions as the title for a large-scale fresco by former futurist and dedicated Fascist Mario Sironi, whose close relationship with Piacentini and high standing with Mussolini were deciding factors in his winning the commission. Artist and architect had worked well together in the past on the stained glass decoration of the Palazzo delle Corporazioni and would continue with successful collaborations on the Casa Madre dei Mutilati in Rome, the Italian Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Expo, and the Palazzo Giustizia in Milan. Sironi advocated the social role of art, promoting the education of the masses through a return to ancient practices, in particular mural painting.⁵⁰ He believed that it is every artist's duty to sublimate any individual stylistic or

Figure 14 Mario Sironi, *Italy among the Arts and Sciences*, fresco, Città Universitaria, Rome, 1932–35 (“Città Universitaria,” special issue, *Architettura* 14 [1935], courtesy of American Academy Library, Rome).



experimental tendency into a collective, unified expression. This was in line with Piacentini’s own convictions regarding architecture; when addressing his students soon after the university’s inauguration, Piacentini impressed upon them the subordinate relationship of individual expression to the spiritual interests of the Fascist state. The success of the university complex’s unitary style was also lauded by the critic Roberto Papini and by Giuseppe Pagano in *Casabella*, who were always the first to speak out against the dangers of being too classical.⁵¹

Although painted at the back of the stage, Sironi’s mural dominates the space of the Aula Magna. Charged by Piacentini with the “the arduous task of illustrating Fascism,” Sironi chose as his subject “Italy among the arts and sciences” and presented a scene that, like other works of this period, was classical in spirit and formally rigorous in its expression of utopian social order.⁵² In the fresco, Italia (Italy) is portrayed as a young, robed female figure holding a sword, and Vittoria (Victory) flies overhead (Figure 14). Together they emphasize the youth of the Italian Fascist nation born of the “revolution” and allude to a great past where the myth of the Italic race was forged.⁵³ Italy presides over a group of allegorical figures representing the arts and sciences, disciplines that were, of course, also being taught at the university. Education is thus expressed in the sense of *doctrina*, as *artes et scientia*, while militarism comes forth with the flight of Victory overhead and a stylized triumphal arch, “indestructible and eternal symbol of triumphant Latinism,” looming in the background.⁵⁴

Faculties of Law and Political Science and Arts and Philosophy

The Faculties of Law and Political Science and Arts and Philosophy appear to be, together with the Rector, a single,

dominating unit, although they are in fact three separate buildings. Their inscriptions act as “captions” for two bas-reliefs by Corrado Vigni depicting athletic youths leading horses (Figure 15). Bas-reliefs and mosaics enjoyed a revival similar to mural painting in this period, as ancient art forms integrated with architecture to perform decorative, educational, and civic functions.⁵⁵ The reliefs represent the twin demigods Castor and Pollux, known as the Dioscuri (sons of Jupiter). The Dioscuri were readily recognizable figures in Rome’s urban spaces, with their temple in the Forum and two sets of colossal statues that stood at the entrance to the Capitol and on the Piazza del Quirinale (Figure 16). They were also featured in a fresco for the main hall of the university’s After-Work Circle and Lictor’s Club (Figure 17).⁵⁶ Just as the twins achieved immortality in reward for their military exploits, here reference is made to the immortality to be achieved through knowledge, thus echoing the message of Ussani’s couplet in the Great Hall. The parallels being drawn between the young demigods going to war and the young scholar-soldiers presenting arms to Mussolini are evident in the voice-over of an Istituto Luce newsreel that reported on the university’s inauguration ceremony: “Lined up on the grand stair of the Rector, a company of young volunteers to West Africa present arms to Il Duce, who proceeds to inaugurate the Great Hall.”⁵⁷ The twins’ continuing significance as representations of Fascist culture was later demonstrated by Publio Morbiducci’s colossal statues of Castor and Pollux, standing as virile and dynamic examples of manhood with their rearing steeds, representing Italian civilization as a whole at the proposed Rome World Expo of 1942 (see Figure 16).⁵⁸

Vigni represented the demigods as lithe and athletic ephebes, thus capitalizing on the purely symbolic dimension of youth that was integral both to Fascism and to fallen soldiers.



Figure 15 Corrado Vigni, bas-reliefs depicting Castor and Pollux, respectively, on the Faculty of Law (left) and the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (right), Città Universitaria, Rome, 1932–35 (photo by Flavia Marcello).

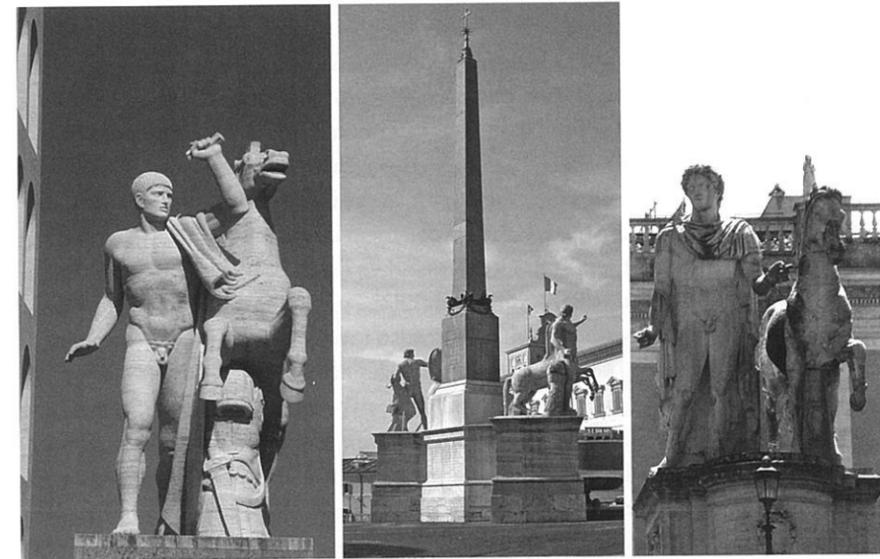


Figure 16 Dioscuri in (left to right) the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, the Quirinale, and the Campidoglio (photos by Flavia Marcello and RomaObeliscoQuirinale, licensed public domain through Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org>).

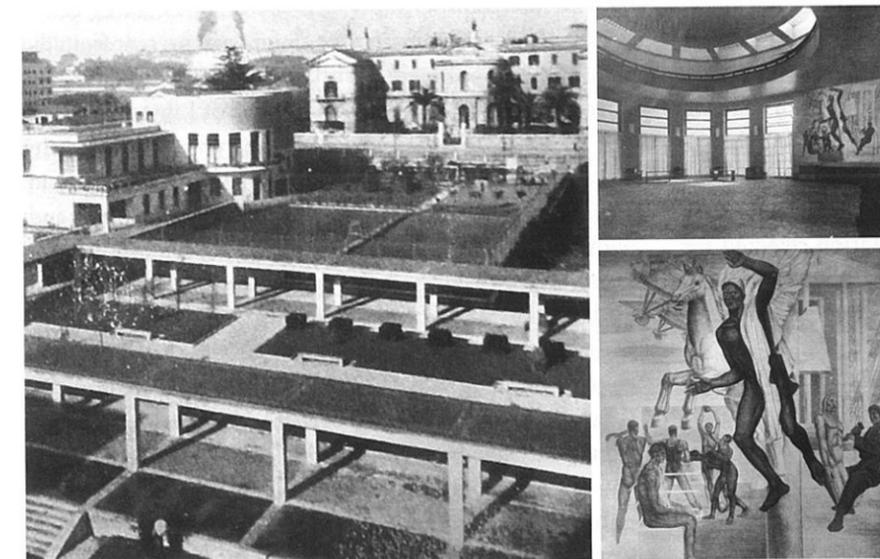


Figure 17 Eugenio Montuori, commemorative quadripartito, 1932–35, with Gaetano Minnucci’s *Dopolavoro Universitario* and *Circolo del Littorio* in the background, both 1932–35. Inset: interior views showing fresco by Giulio Rosso (“Città Universitaria,” special issue, *Architettura* 14 [1935], courtesy of American Academy Library, Rome).

The naked youth communicated concepts of vital energies and eternal qualities. Statuary and bas-reliefs of this kind were used throughout Italy's urban spaces—such as Piacentini's Piazza della Vittoria in Brescia and in front of the Palazzo degli Uffici in EUR—as universally accessible symbolic images whose rhetoric merged with that of the architecture to ensure the communication of the Fascist message. Speed, efficiency, and physical bearing were all qualities that could be understood to represent the young, modern, and dynamic Fascist state and the university students who embodied its future. Castor and Pollux could thus transcend their status as distant mythological figures and become part of living social reality.⁵⁹ The young men stride forth toward a glorious future/battle, spurred on by the inscriptions below them, just as their “heirs”—the dynamic young Fascists who populated the campus and lined up on the stairs to watch their leader—stride past.⁶⁰

The use of these two figures from the classical world essentially presents arts and philosophy as the twin of law and political science. To the left of the Rectory is Castor (see Figure 15) on the Faculty of Law and Political Science and below him, in large, easily read letters, the voice of Cicero proclaims:

IVSTITIA OMNIVM EST DOMINA / ET REGINA
VIRTVTVM

[Justice is the sovereign / mistress of all the virtues]⁶¹

Adapted from Cicero's *De officiis* (3.28), this passage addresses the fundamental principles of human society and is concerned with the conflict between the right and the expedient, where justice, or acting justly or correctly, emerges victorious. Justice as an idea was not limited to the administration of law or to the idea of just behavior. Mariella Cagnetta argues that the idea of *iustitia* runs like a red thread through both Roman and Fascist rhetoric on empire. Military forces were deployed in the service of justice, empire was referred to as *dominio della giustizia*, and the order of Rome's civilizing imperialism centered on the rule of law.⁶²

Youth and immortality were linked to the myth of Rome's eternal empire and the continuity of the Latin/Roman race in perpetuity, ideas echoed in the quotation selected for Pollux on the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (see Figure 15). Taken from Lucan's epic on the civil war, it is a reflection on the ability of poetry to bestow immortality:

SACER ET MAGNVS VATVM / LABOR OMNIA FATO
ERIPIT

[The divine and great labor of poets / snatches everything from death]⁶³

The context of the original lines is again important as Lucan continues with “and gives life to mortals. . . future generations shall read me and about you . . . and no lapse of time shall condemn us to oblivion.”⁶⁴ Lucan's exclamation comes immediately after Caesar's visit to the ruined and desolate site of Troy, which has been saved from oblivion by Homer. Here Lucan contrasts the immortality of verse with the inevitable decay of architecture and the built environment, yet his words are displayed on a piece of Fascist architecture whose aim was to achieve eternity and permanence. In the original context, Lucan's sentiments, while lauding mental endeavor, provided a timely caveat against empire building. In the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy inscription, the lines have been truncated to mean exactly the opposite.

The Città Universitaria in Context: Militarism, Education, and *Romanità*

Militarism and education were at the foundation of Rome's new university, imbuing its overall character and spirit. Militarism had been present as an element of Fascist culture since the days of its inception, together with the founding of the *Fasci di combattimento* in 1919. The roots of Fascism's militaristic culture lay in the interventionist campaigns leading up to Italy's involvement in World War I and even earlier, in links to futurism and its credo of war as the only cure for the ills of the world and the militarism and patriotism that go with it.⁶⁵ Militarism also formed an essential component of a new phase of secular religion with myths, rites, and symbols adapted from the past with the double aim of governing human beings and regenerating them into a new (Fascist) humanity.⁶⁶ This militaristic aspect, which drew on classical themes, was present in the speeches of Mussolini from the early 1920s, reaching its peak during the military campaigns in Africa.⁶⁷

The nationalistic/imperialist rhetoric promoting Italy's “destiny” to reclaim its ancient empire was present from the time of the Risorgimento, with Crispi's first attempt to conquer Ethiopia in 1896, to the annexation of Libya in 1911–12 and the East African campaigns of the mid-1930s.⁶⁸ Empire was embedded within the first official definition of Fascism. It was not simply territorial, it was political, economic, and, above all, spiritual.⁶⁹ Mussolini's famous “Empire” speech, pronounced from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia on 9 May 1936, is replete with references that parallel the acts of the “young, robust Italian generations” who had created “an empire of civilization and humanity in the ‘Roman tradition.’”⁷⁰ Cagnetta explains that Fascist rhetoric around such expansionist tendencies was predicated largely on the inherently antidemocratic notion of *impero*, which was legitimated by political ideals rather than driven by economic needs.⁷¹ Further, it indicated a teleological interpretation of a

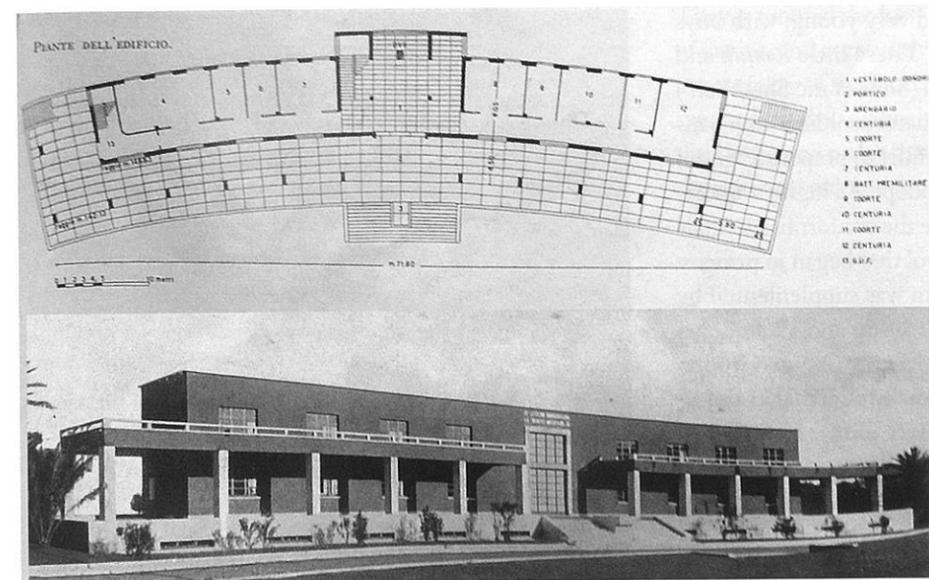


Figure 18 Gaetano Minnucci, barracks for the university militia, Città Universitaria, Rome, plan and exterior, 1932–35 (“Città Universitaria,” special issue, *Architettura* 14 [1935], courtesy of American Academy Library, Rome).

civilizing mission, a spiritual force, and the power of an idea. The Fascist concept of empire was built on the same foundations as that of the first emperor Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE). Internal peace (*Pax Romana*), security, and rule of law (*ordine giuridico*), together with ideals of discipline, duty, and sacrifice, were valued by both the ancient Roman and contemporary Fascist peoples, who were unified under a solid and singular *imperium*. In “conquering” Ethiopia, Italy was merely fulfilling the destiny of an *imperium sine fine* that echoed Jupiter's prophecy from Virgil's nationalistic epic the *Aeneid*.⁷² The inauguration of the Città Universitaria fortuitously coincided with the Ethiopian campaign (1935–36), allowing the new complex to be co-opted as a “fortress of arms and the spirit” to complete the education of Fascism's future generations. This event added yet another symbolic layer to the Città's collective epigraphy.

Militarism was expressed architecturally in two smaller buildings that we have not yet discussed: Eugenio Montuori's commemorative quadriportico, which featured a monument dedicated to fallen students (see Figure 17), and the barracks for the university militia by Gaetano Minnucci (Figure 18). The militia barracks (now demolished), not included in the original plan for the university complex, were situated just north of the Rectory on the other side of a large, open space intended to be used for rallies, military exercises, and other large-scale ceremonial activities (see Figure 7). The ground floor featured an *arengario* (speaker's platform), and the long, low wings of the buildings were lightly curved and stuccoed in what would most likely have been a Pompeian red; they sat on a solid travertine base encased by wide colonnade elements that also acted as balconies for the upper level.⁷³ The quadriportico (now partly reused as a kindergarten) was situated next to the university's *dopolavoro*

(see Figures 7 and 17) and consisted of a large, open, recreational space for both professors and students.⁷⁴ It featured a monument to fallen students from World War I—relocated from the courtyard of the original Sapienza behind Piazza Navona—by Amleto Cataldi, a Roman sculptor who specialized in nationalistic and celebratory public art. Realized in 1920, the monument depicts a virile male youth holding high the Roman sword, symbol of *civiltà e diritto* (civilization and law), while a female figure, Gloria (Victory or Glory), supports his arm with one hand and holds a laurel crown in the other (Figure 19). Conceived in the pre-Fascist era in nationalistic terms, such monuments in universities accentuated these institutions' role in promoting a unified national identity.⁷⁵ The military atmosphere of the university was further accentuated with a planned Ministry of Aeronautics, which was later built directly across the road. Roberto Marino created an austere and imposing 60-meter-wide façade composed of “off-the-shelf” classical elements and crowned by an eagle that recalled the imperial insignia of the ancients while its wings were stylized to resemble those of a modern airplane—that great metaphor of modernity.

Beyond the association of Il Duce with Augustus's foundation of Greek and Latin libraries on the Palatine, the act of creating the university itself represented the combined promotion of education and militarism to produce a new generation. Education and militarism would assist Italy in fulfilling its imperial destiny. Thus a specifically Roman-Italian-Fascist culture and civilization could be diffused within a totalitarian social construct that did not allow, as Rector Pietro de Francisci stated, dissociation between thought and action, between scientific and artistic creation, between individual and collective.⁷⁶

Militaristic conditioning started very young, with boys between six and eight months old. These little *Romuli* and *Remi* were called the *Figli della Lupa* (Sons of the She-Wolf) and were dressed improbably in miniature soldiers' uniforms complete with toy bayonets in the effort to prepare a "grand network of fighters."⁷⁷ Universities adopted a highly authoritarian structure in order to continue the conformist mentality and exercise of ideological control that began in primary school.⁷⁸ The university curriculum was supplemented by courses at the Scuola di Mistica Fascista, and all students were required to join the Fascist University Group (Gruppo Universitari Fascisti, or GUF), an intellectual training ground for grooming potential party elites. Founded in 1920, along with the *Fasci di combattimento*, the GUF was the very embodiment of the meeting point between militarism and education. This principle is encapsulated in the organization's motto, *Libro e moschetto* (Book and musket); in assigning this motto, Mussolini synthesized in just two words the "moral, civil, and warlike program for the youth of the universities."⁷⁹ The GUF organized political, cultural, and sporting activities; members wore black shirts and promoted the Fascist cause through extracurricular activities such as radio broadcasts, experimental films, and student newspapers.

The communicative force of epigraphy as employed at the Città Universitaria is an excellent example of the regime's political use of *Romanità*, evident from the inception of Fascist cultural policy with the adoption of the fasces of ancient Roman magisterial power as symbol of the party itself. *Romanità* manifested itself throughout Fascist society in myriad ways: "sword and sandals" movie epics filled the silver screens, the "unhygienic and bourgeois" handshake was exchanged for the Roman salute, the Fascist calendar established 1922 as Year I, and Latin inscriptions and images of eagles and she-wolves became part of the urban landscape and were used as graphic devices on everything from postage stamps to schoolbooks. Mussolini even emulated the stance and mannerism of ancient statues when speaking to the public from his *arengario*.⁸⁰ The power of this typology of image lay in its potential to overlay the present regime with the heroic and monumental patina of a privileged past. The Fascist myth of *Romanità* could thus validate the present through a connection to a great moment in history projected into the future by contemporary Italians as heirs of the ancient race.⁸¹ This did not mean a return to the past, which was presented in a filtered and simplified form as an example for the future and had always been at the heart of Mussolini's concern.⁸² The purpose of remembering the past was to regenerate the present in order to secure the future.⁸³ This cross-temporal concept of *Romanità* underpinned the regime's social and economic policies, and its codified forms found further expression in the declaration of 21 April



Figure 19 Amleto Cataldi, monument to fallen students from World War I, 1921 (Arturo Lancellotti, "Il monumento agli studenti caduti in guerra di Amleto Cataldi," *Emporium* 54, no. 319 [1921], 64).

(the birthday of Rome) as a national holiday and in the cycle of celebrations held to mark the 2,000-year anniversaries of the births of Virgil (1930), Horace (1936), and Augustus (1937). These sparked widespread national fervor, and Italian citizens were bombarded with academic conferences and publications, radio transmissions, newspaper articles, and even editions of stamps acting as constant reminders of their imperial heritage.

As Ussani's choice of authors shows, the Fascist government seized on Horace in particular. The author of the "so-called Roman Odes" (3.1–6) and the *Carmen saeculare* was hailed as the poet of *Romanità trionfante* (triumphant Roman-ness), while the golden age of Augustus's *Pax Romana* provided the foundation for the future glory of the Fascist empire.⁸⁴ Horace's themes were found to be consistent with the regime's policies: the family as an institution and marriage blessed with children; the fertility of the earth, country life, and agriculture; equal distribution of goods; and

education and training of youth, especially military training to defend both peace and the state. Horatian motifs were also taken to the African colonies, as in the prominent inscriptions on the monumental travertine arch designed by Florestano di Fausto and located on the Via Litoranea in Libya (the new Fascist colony of Tripolitania) (see Figure 4). As we have seen with the inscriptions for the Città Universitaria, Horace's decorous phrasing, when divorced from its original context, takes on an entirely new meaning.

Conclusion

The artworks, architectural expression, and urban layout of Rome's Città Universitaria were tied together with a curated set of inscriptions that made the university complex a powerful communicator of the classical tradition as a foundation for a militaristic campaign, a unified education system, and a total Fascist culture. This culture stood at the nexus of militarism and education under the overarching themes of *Romanità* and the eternal spirit of youth. The Città Universitaria stands as testimony to the link between a historical past and a lived present that aimed to transform students and prepare them for a glorious future.

The somber, processional organization of the university's individual buildings strongly evoked the spatial formalism and ceremonial nature of ancient Roman civic space, while the university complex, complete with its own city gates, was read as a City of Learning, "sacred to the Muses" within the eternal city of Rome. The buildings' commonality of relative heights and harmonic use of both traditional and new materials within varying degrees of classicism put forth an image of unified purpose and aesthetic. The university's wide and ordered urban spaces, defined by the formal language of the architecture, were destined for both formal rallies and day-to-day movement, uses that could transform them into an arena or a stage from which didactic inscriptions were broadcast.

In addition, the choices of statues, frescoes, and bas-reliefs reflected the militarism-education relationship. Cataldi's Gloria, Martini's Minerva, and Sironi's Italia all share attributes and make strong cross-references to Vittoria. Cataldi's resurgent youth and Vigni's Dioscuri are dynamic and virile men, well formed in both mind and spirit. Furthermore, each of the purpose-made works is closely linked with an inscription that serves both didactic and referential functions.

Finally, the conscious application of Latin inscription unified the civic space, architecture, and art in reinforcing the notion that Roman history was both eternal and contemporary, as if, in Mussolini's words, "Caesar was stabbed just yesterday."⁸⁵ Carefully selected, adapted, and placed in significant positions on the building façades, the inscriptions became an integral element of the university experience.

They promoted the formation of mind and body, the exercise of justice, and correct civic and moral behavior to ensure the immortality of the Fascist regime. Together the inscriptions synthesized the sociocultural and political climate of Italy in the 1930s, and today they serve as a reminder of a time when the classical spirit echoed throughout all levels of Italian society.

Notes

1. Romke Visser, "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the *Romanità*," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, no. 1 (Jan. 1992), 5–22.
2. Tim Benton, "Rome Reclaims Its Empire: Architecture," in *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators*, ed. Dawn Ades et al. (London: Southbank Centre, 1995), 120–29; J. Welge, "Fascism Triumphs: On the Architectural Translation of Rome," in *Donatello among the Blackshirts: History and Modernity in the Visual Culture of Fascist Italy*, ed. Claudia Lazzaro and Roger J. Crum (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005). For an overview of the period, see Richard A. Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890–1940* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).
3. Very little has been written on this subject apart from Tim Benton, "Epigraphy and Fascism," in *The Afterlife of Inscriptions: Reusing, Rediscovering, Reinventing and Revitalizing Ancient Inscriptions*, ed. Alison Cooley (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2000), 163–92; a chapter in Armando Petrucci, *Public Lettering: Script, Power, and Culture*, trans. L. Lappin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), originally published as Armando Petrucci, *La scrittura: Ideologia e rappresentazione* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980); Antonino Nastasi, "Le iscrizioni latine dei palazzi di Roma capitale e la tradizione paremiografica greca," *Res Publica Litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition* 23–24, nos. 13–14 (2011), 185–97; and a Fascist-era book by Francesco Ferraironi, *Iscrizioni ornamentali su edifici e monumenti di Roma* (Rome: Industria Tipografica Romana, 1937).
4. Petrucci, *Public Lettering*, 104–8; Benton, "Epigraphy and Fascism," 167.
5. Petrucci, *Public Lettering*, 107.
6. *Ibid.*, 108–9; Benton, "Epigraphy and Fascism," 186–87.
7. On the importance of art in promoting Fascism, see Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del Littorio: La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista* (Bari: Laterza, 1993), 180–81.
8. Mario Lupano, *Marcello Piacentini* (Bari: Laterza, 1991), 70–71.
9. The quote reads, "HIC PATRIAE FINES SISTE SIGNA. HINC CETEROS EXCOLUIMUS LINGUA LEGIBUS ARTIBUS," which can be translated as "Halt! This is the border of the fatherland. Beyond this point we have civilized all others with our language, our laws, and our arts." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Latin are by Paul Gwynne and all translations from the Italian are by Flavia Marcello.
10. Ralph-Miklas Dobler, "Die Verarbeitung des Ersten Weltkrieges in der künstlerischen Ausstattung der Casa Madre dei Mutilati in Rom (1925–1938)," *Politische Ikonographie* 3 (2010), 9, <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/kunsttexte/2010-3/dobler-ralph-miklas-1/PDF/dobler.pdf> (accessed 26 July 2014).
11. Cesare Valle, "Regio Liceo Ginnasio Giulio Cesare a Roma," *Architettura* 16, no. 8 (Aug. 1937), 455–63.
12. Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 52.
13. See Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organisation of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
14. One such poet was Giovanni Bertacchi, whose work was known for its expression of social ideals. Quotations from Bertacchi were chosen for worker housing built in the Roman suburb of Montesacro by the Istituto

di Case Popolari. An inscription on one building on Via Gargano reads, "Dalle case ben fatte e ben tenute / Esce come da giovane sorgiva / Un senso di freschezza e salute" (From houses that are well made and well kept / There comes like a fresh spring of water / A sense of freshness and good health). Giovanni Bertacchi, "Il curato quel giorno predicò," in *Liriche umane* (Milan: Libreria Editrice Nazionale, 1903), 33, <https://archive.org/stream/liricheumane00bert#page/n5/mode/2up> (accessed 23 July 2014).

15. On the epigraphy at the exhibition, see Flavia Marcello, "Mussolini and the Idealisation of Empire: The Augustan Exhibition of Romanità," *Modern Italy* 16, no. 3 (Aug. 2011), 223–47. For an overview of Latin inscription on residential architecture in Rome, see Nastasi, "Le iscrizioni latine." Giglioli later chose the theme of the glory of Rome from its foundation to the Christian era in texts by Livy, Cicero, Pliny, Aelius Aristides, Tertullian, and Augustine.

16. The colonnade of the Palazzo degli Uffici reads, "LA TERZA ROMA SI DILATERÀ SOPRA ALTRI COLLI LUNGO LE RIVE DEL FIUME SACRO SINO ALLE SPIAGGE DEL TIRRENO" (The third Rome will spread over other hills along the banks of the sacred river as far as the beaches of the Tyrrhenian Sea). This quotation is extracted from Mussolini's famous "Nuova Roma" speech, delivered at the Campidoglio on 31 December 1925. Benito Mussolini, "La nuova Roma," in *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. 22, *Dall'attentato Zaniboni al discorso dell'Ascensione 5 novembre 1925–26 maggio 1927*, ed. Duilio Susmel and Edoardo Susmel (Florence: La Fenice, 1957), 48. The parapet of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana reads, "UN POPOLO DI POETI DI ARTISTI DI EROI / DI SANTI DI PENSATORI DI SCIENZATI / DI NAVIGATORI DI TRASMIGRATORI" (A nation of poets of artists of heroes / of saints of thinkers of scientists / of navigators of migrants); this inscription is derived from Mussolini's speech declaring war on Ethiopia. Benton, "Epigraphy and Fascism," 187.

17. "HIS AB EXIGUIS INITIIS PROfecta ROMA" (From these humble beginnings Rome set forth). Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.1. The Fascist-era Latin echoes Mussolini's famous "Terza Roma" speech; it reads, "HVNC LOCVM VBI AVGVSTI MANES VOLITANT PER AVRAS / POSTQVAM IMPERATORIS MAVSOLEVM EX SAECOLORVM TENEBRIS / EST EXTRACTVM ARAEQVE PACIS DISEICTA MEMBRA REfecta / MVSSOLINI DVX VETERIBVS AVGVSTVS DELETIS SPLENDIDIORIBVS / HIIS AEDIFICIIS AEDIBVS AD HVMANITATIS MORES APTIS / ORNANDVM CENSVIT ANNO MDCCCCXL A F R XVIII" (The emperor's mausoleum having been withdrawn from the darkness of centuries and the scattered fragments of the Ara Pacis reassembled, Mussolini, "Il Duce," decreed that the ancient warren of alleys should be erased and that this place, where the shade of Augustus flits in the breezes, should be embellished with finer streets, houses, and buildings suited to the manners of human beings, in the year 1940, eighteenth after the revival of the fasces). Translation from Tyler Lansford, *The Latin Inscriptions of Rome: A Walking Guide* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 346–47.

18. Mussolini knew Latin and used a number of Latin proverbs and citations in his speeches. Jan Nelis, "Constructing Fascist Identity: Mussolini and the Myth of Romanità," *Classical World* 100, no. 4 (Summer 2007), 397.

19. Vincenzo Ussani, *Storia della letteratura latina nelle età Repubblicana e Augustea* (Milan: Vallardi, 1929), ix.

20. Marcello Piacentini, "Metodi e caratteristiche," in "Città Universitaria," special issue, *Architettura* 14 (1935), 2.

21. Ibid.; Loredana Compagnin and Maria Luisa Mazzola, "La nascita delle scuole superiori di architettura in Italia," in *Il razionalismo e l'architettura in Italia durante il Fascismo*, ed. Silvia Danesi and Luciano Patetta (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1976), 194–96.

22. Marcello Piacentini, "Architettura Romana nel mondo," *Augustea* 23–24 (Dec. 1942), 791–96, cited in Paolo Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto: Propaganda e paesaggio urbano nell'Italia fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 2008), 268.

23. Giorgio Ciucci, *Gli architetti e il Fascismo: Architettura e Città, 1922–1944* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989), 130–36.

24. Stefania Mornatti, "La sperimentazione nella costruzione della Città Universitaria di Roma," *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 84–85 (1994–95), 110.

25. For a thorough overview of the Città Universitaria's history, along with selected documents from the Archivio Centrale di Stato, see Valter Vannelli, *Economia dell'architettura in Italia fascista* (Rome: Edizioni Kappa, 1981), 361–73; Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto*, 189–200.

26. Italo Insolera, *Roma moderna: Un secolo di storia urbanistica* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), 44.

27. Piacentini, "Metodi e caratteristiche," 4.

28. Ibid.

29. Ciucci, *Gli architetti e il Fascismo*, 108–28.

30. Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto*, 26–28.

31. Ibid., 191.

32. Benito Mussolini, "Studium Urbis," in *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. 27, *Dall'inaugurazione della Provincia di Littoria alla proclamazione dell'impero 19 dicembre 1934–9 maggio 1936*, ed. Duilio Susmel and Edoardo Susmel (Florence: La Fenice, 1957), 177–78.

33. Brian R. Sullivan, "De Vecchi, Cesare Maria," in *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, ed. Philip V. Cannistraro (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 167–68.

34. Mussolini's inaugural speech, reported in "S. E. l'Arch. Marcello Piacentini preside della Facoltà di architettura dell'Università di Roma," *Architettura*, supplemento sindacale, 2 (15 Feb. 1936), 13–14, cited in Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto*, 195.

35. Andrea Nemiz, *Stadium Urbis: Roma Novembre 1935, Il Duce inaugura a la Città Universitaria laurea "honoris causa" al re* (Rome: Litografia Covi, 1985), 3–6.

36. "Il sovrano ricorda al mondo," *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 2 Nov. 1935.

37. Benito Mussolini to Balbino Giuliano (minister of education), 18 Feb. 1932, cited in Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto*, 187.

38. Flavia Marcello, "Rationalism v. Romanità: The Role of the Architect in the Creation of the Ideal Fascist City" (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2003), 166.

39. George Strodach, "Pietas: Horace and Augustan Nationalism," *Classical Weekly*, 23 Mar. 1936, 137–44.

40. For example, see Vincenzo Ussani, *Intorno alla novissima edizione di Lucano* (Florence: Successori Seeber, 1908); Lucan, *Il poema di M. Anneo Lucan*, trans. Vincenzo Ussani (Turin: Loescher, n.d.).

41. Luciano Gamberale, "Le scuole di filologia greca e latina," in *Le grandi scuole della facoltà* (Rome: Università Degli Studi di Roma, Abilgraf, 1994).

42. This text was modified after World War II to eliminate the names of Mussolini and the king, and the fasces were replaced by the symbol of the university: putti with wings of fire, adapted from the inside of the cupola of the church of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza by Francesco Borromini. Nemiz, *Stadium Urbis*, 15–17; Gamberale, "Le scuole di filologia greca e latina," 52. It now reads, "VETVS STVDIVM VRBIS QVOD PER TOT HOMINVM SAECVLA MAGNA GLORIA FLORVIT/ANNO MDCCCCXXXV IN HANC SEDEM ROMANA/MAGNIFICENTIA DIGNAM TRANSLATVM EST" (The old university, which flourished with great glory through so many centuries of mankind, in 1935 was moved into this place worthy of Roman magnificence).

43. This inscription was "collaged" from Cicero, *Pro Archia*, 16, "Haec studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solacium praebent," and 4, "ab eis artibus quibus aetas puerilis ad humanitatem informari solet." The expression "virtutem . . . procreavit" is taken from Cicero, *Pro Milone*, 101. Leopoldo Gamberale, "Iscrizioni in latino nella Città Universitaria," <http://w3.uniroma1.it/filgrl/misc/inscrSap.htm> (accessed 25 Nov. 2011).

44. The original text reads, "In primisque hominis est propria veri inquisitio atque investigation." Cicero, *De officiis* 1.13. The section from *De oratore* 3.57 is verbatim. Gamberale, "Iscrizioni in latino."

45. In the commentary to his edition of the *Odes* and *Epodes*, Ussani confirms the meaning of *doctrina* as "education." Cicero, *Pro Archia*, 15. This same idea is seen in Cicero's belief that character can be perfected through education. Gamberale, "Iscrizioni in latino."

46. The stamps read, "Expertus vacuum Daedalus aera pinnis non homini datis" (Skilled Daedalus flew through the void on wings never before given to man); the quote is from Horace, *Carmen saeculare* 1.3.34–35.

47. Nelis, "Constructing Fascist Identity," 404.

48. Laura Malvano, "The Myth of Youth in Images: Italian Fascism," trans. Carol A. Volk, in *History of Young People in the West*, vol. 2, ed. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 241; Mariella Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero fascista* (Bari: Dedalo, 1979), 58.

49. Neither Gamberale nor we have found a single classical source for this text. "Doctrinae studium" may have been based on Cicero's use of the term to mean "theoretical studies," as in *Pro Sexto Roscio* 46; in *Epistulae ad familiares* 6.6.3; and in *De republica* 1.14. Gamberale, "Iscrizioni in latino." Given the inscription's placement above a tribune for orators, we would like to suggest that Ussani found the concepts of *doctrina* and *studium* together in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* 7.10 and merged that with the phrase "vitam producit" found in Cicero's oratorical treatise *Brutus* (*De claris oratoribus*) 60, which surveys Roman oratory and tells the story of Cicero's own training in the practice.

50. Emily Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 158–62, 176, 184.

51. Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto*, 194–95.

52. Braun, *Mario Sironi*, 44–67; Mark Antliff, "Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (Mar. 2002), 152–53; Nemiz, *Stadium Urbis*, 10.

53. Malvano, "Myth of Youth in Images," 245–46.

54. Braun, *Mario Sironi*, 178; see pl. XIV for a color sketch of the mural. For complete plans, sections, and black-and-white photographs of the Rectory, the Great Hall (Aula Magna) with Sironi's mural, and the Library, see Marcello Piacentini, "Edificio del Rettorato, Aula Magna e Biblioteca," in "Città Universitaria," special issue, *Architettura* 14 (1935), 8–24. The quote about the triumphal arch is from a speech Mussolini delivered to the citizens of Fiume on 21 April 1921.

55. Gentile, *Il culto del Littorio*, 180–81; Mario Sironi, "Manifesto della pittura murale," <http://www.francocenerelli.com/antologia/sironi.htm> (accessed 3 Feb. 2012).

56. "Città Universitaria," special issue, *Architettura* 14 (1935), 73–75.

57. "Mussolini inaugura la Città Universitaria. Una compagnia di studenti volontari per l'Africa Orientale presenta le armi a Mussolini. Viene inaugurato anche il monumento alla memoria degli studenti romani caduti in guerra," *Giornale Luce*, Istituto Luce Cinecittà, 6 Nov. 1935, B0776, <http://www.archivioluce.com> (accessed 5 June 2014).

58. Castor and Pollux also play an important role in Rome's foundation myths. Their temple in the Forum was dedicated as a result of the victory over the Tarquins and their Latin allies at the Battle of Lake Regillus (495 BCE), where they were supposed to have led the cavalry charge. During the fighting they miraculously appeared, calmly watering their horses, in the Forum by the Temple of Vesta to announce the Roman victory. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.6. The statues of the brothers at the Campidoglio are (much-restored) Roman works that were found in the sixteenth century in the Ghetto, where there was once a temple dedicated to them. The colossal statues of the brothers with their horses on the Quirinal are Roman copies of Greek originals that were found nearby in the Baths of Constantine and placed on the Quirinal by Domenico Fontana for Pope Sixtus V (1585–90).

59. Malvano, "Myth of Youth in Images," 233–38, 243.

60. Similar imagery was used in the Ostiense Railway Station, designed by Roberto Narducci, which was built for the 1938 visit to Rome by Adolf Hitler; an example is the station's bas-relief by Francesco Nagni depicting Bellepheron holding the reins of Pegasus. For an overview of images of Fascist youth, such as those in the Piazza della Vittoria in Brescia and the most famous example, the sixty statues of athletes used to crown the Stadio dei Marmi at the Foro Mussolini (now Foro Italico), by Enrico del Debbio, see ibid.

61. Ussani has shortened Cicero's original sentence: "Quae vacent iustitia: haec enim una virtus omnium est domina et regina virtutum."

62. Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero fascista*, 39–40, 54–55, 81.

63. Lucan, *Bellum civile*, 9.980. In order for the quote to work well on the building façade, Ussani modified the metrics. The original lines read, "O sacer et magnus vatum labor, omnia fato / eripis, et populis donas mortalibus aevum." Gamberale, "Iscrizioni in latino."

64. Gordon Willis Williams, *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 233–34.

65. Filippo Marinetti, "The Futurist Manifesto," trans. James Joll, <http://cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/T4PM/futurist-manifesto.html> (accessed 18 May 2012).

66. Gentile, *Il culto del Littorio*, 27.

67. Nelis, "Constructing Fascist Identity," 399–400.

68. Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero fascista*, 15–21, 36–37.

69. Giovanni Gentile, "Fascismo," in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Milan: Istituto Giovanni Treccani, 1929).

70. Benito Mussolini, "La proclamazione dell'impero," in *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. 26, *Dal patto a quattro all'inaugurazione della Provincia di Littoria 8 giugno 1933–18 dicembre 1934*, ed. Duilio Susmel and Edoardo Susmel (Florence: La Fenice, 1958), 268–69.

71. Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero fascista*, 9–11, 15; Laura Malvano, *Fascismo e politica dell'immagine* (Turin: Einaudi 1988), 151–52.

72. Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.268–76.

73. No color documentation of the building exists, but judging from the tonality present in the black-and-white photos, the contemporary use of Pompeian red in similar buildings in Rome (notably Enrico del Debbio's Accademia dello Sport at the Foro Mussolini), and Piacentini's overall description of the buildings, it is fairly safe to assume that the barracks were stuccoed in "Rome's typical brownish red." Piacentini, "Metodi e caratteristiche," 6.

74. Ibid.; "Città Universitaria," special issue, *Architettura* 14 (1935), 76–77.

75. Felicità Cifarelli, "Cataldi, Amleto," in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 22, ed. Giovanni Treccani (Milan: Istituto Giovanni Treccani, 1979); Federica Tammarazio, "Innoxia corpora: Il corpo del soldato nei monumenti celebrativi di Michele Guerrisi tra il 1918 e il 1923," *Crepuscoli Dottorali* 2, no. 3 (2012), 19–21.

76. Piero de Francisci, "Università del tempo fascista," in "Città Universitaria," special issue, *Architettura* 14 (1935), 1; Renzo De Felice, *Intervista sul Fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1997), 50–55.

77. Gian Franco Venè, *Mille lire al mese: Vita quotidiana della famiglia nell'Italia fascista* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), 61–95; Malvano, "Myth of Youth in Images," 252–55; Giovanni Firmian, ed., *In camicia nera dalla culla* (Legnano: Landoni, 1978).

78. Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero fascista*; Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919–1929* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 412.

79. Manlio Morgagni, *Rivista illustrata del popolo d'Italia*, cited in Nemiz, *Stadium Urbis*, 8.

80. Specifically, he imitated the life-size bronze statue known as the *Arringatore* (Etruscan, third or fourth century BCE, Museo

Archeologico, Florence); the statue represents an orator with outstretched right arm.

81. Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Bari: Laterza, 2007), viii.

82. Nelis, "Constructing Fascist Identity," 409.

83. Roger Griffin, "I Am No Longer Human. I Am a Titan. A God! The Fascist Quest to Regenerate Time," *Electronic Seminars in History*,

Nov. 1988, <http://www.history.ac.uk/resources/e-seminars/griffin-paper> (accessed 11 June 2012).

84. See Vincenzo Boni et al., eds., *Postera crescam laude: Orazio nell'età moderna* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1993).

85. Nelis, "Constructing Fascist Identity," 396.