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Architects, Exhibitions, and the Politics of Culture in Fascist Italy

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Fascist cultural policy advocated the political engagement of artists and architects through the medium of their artistic production. In its three versions over a ten-year period, the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista revealed shifts in the political emphases of the regime and in the aesthetic proclivities of architects, but, at the same time, the Mostra affords an uncanny index of the affinity modernist architects perceived with the Fascist party.

IN THE 1920S AND 1930S YOUNG ITALIAN architects seeking to enter the world of professional practice found exhibitions to be ideal venues for their talents. With rare exceptions, the many different exhibitions sponsored by the Italian government turned out to be occasions for Rationalists to test their design talent before a wide audience and, indeed, put their design skill at the service of the Fascist state.[1] This raises questions about how to understand the relationship of design and architecture to Fascist cultural policy.

As problematic as the issue is to us now, the question of what constituted a Fascist culture was, if anything, more pressing during the two decades of fascist rule. Beginning in 1925, with a national congress on Fascist culture and the subsequent foundation of the Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista (INCF), the question was posed not as some decorative appendage to Fascism, but as lying at the heart of its political enterprise. By culture, a Fascist party (PNF) handbook of 1936 explained, was understood the entire "complex of spiritual activities of the Nation." Knowledge, the handbook continued, "is not an individual mode of being, but of acting."[2] Quite specifically, the PNF rejected aristocratic and bourgeois notions in which culture was seen as an ornament for the intellect, or as private contemplation or enrichment with the goal of selfish pleasure, in favor of an idea of culture as the full, informed manifestation of social, spiritual, and historical action within a nation. The link between culture and action was an essential corollary of a political philosophy that privileged action over doctrine, the nation over smaller communities, and that triumphantly asserted indifference to a consistent political philosophy.

The Fascist appeals to intellectuals and artists to abandon the idealist view of intellectual and artistic endeavors as autonomous from social and political conditions and to discard the outdated premises of democratic individualism in favor of the wider community, have a familiar ring. And for good reason. The idea that intellectuals, artists and architects should be politically engaged with their art was a strong current not only in right-wing Italy but also elsewhere as well.

During the 1920s and 1930s, from his various prison cells, communist intellectual Antonio Gramsci was advancing a remarkably similar program for what he called organic intellectuals. Gramsci saw the traditional, idealist intellectuals as serving the interests of the ruling class by helping to maintain its hegemony through their intellectual labor. The so-called spontaneous consent of the masses to the dominant group came about through intellectuals exercising both the function of social hegemony and (because Gramsci saw the class of intellectuals enormously enlarged in contemporary times) also that of direct coercive control when indirect methods failed. Gramsci's alternative entailed achieving a new unity between intellectuals and the masses, and of the masses with culture, by means of active intervention and engagement in real social, political and production processes.[3] For Gramsci, human beings are always in a state of becoming and are constantly changing in response to relations with others; while not denying individuality, he emphasized the active role of intellectuals and artists in the collective. To be sure, organic intellectuals would be allied with the working class in opposition to the ruling class in Gramsci's scheme, and, unlike the Fascists, he disdained both nationalism and the notion of a necessary spiritual transcendence. But he did see organic intellectuals as intimately connected with the processes of production and with technology. Architects seem particularly appropriate in this respect, for, like Gramsci's urban intellectuals, they carried out plans devised by higher-ups, and their fortunes were intimately connected to those of industry.

Fascist exhibitions such as the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista (MdR) offered an opportunity for designers to engage the masses in political issues through the medium of their art.[4] Since rupturing the idealist tradition for intellectuals and artists was as much on the agenda of the left as that of the right, it should come as no surprise that many talented architects aligned with the Fascist right. Not only did the PNF appear in the political vanguard as the most significant modernizing force in recent Italian history, but also it was in power and the source of a growing number of commissions.

In 1925, just what Fascist culture might be remained unclear, and over the succeeding seventeen years, it underwent considerable variation. What follows is a brief outline of three versions of the 1932 MdR and its links with other exhibitions and the larger historical context, and some concluding considerations on the relationship between architecture and politics in Italy during the 1930s. My intention is to examine some aspects of Fascist culture and its transformations over time through an overview of this important exhibition and two others, the Mostra Augustea della Romanità and E'42 (EUR).

Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, 1932–1934

Mussolini received proposals for an exhibition to celebrate Fascism as early as 1928, but

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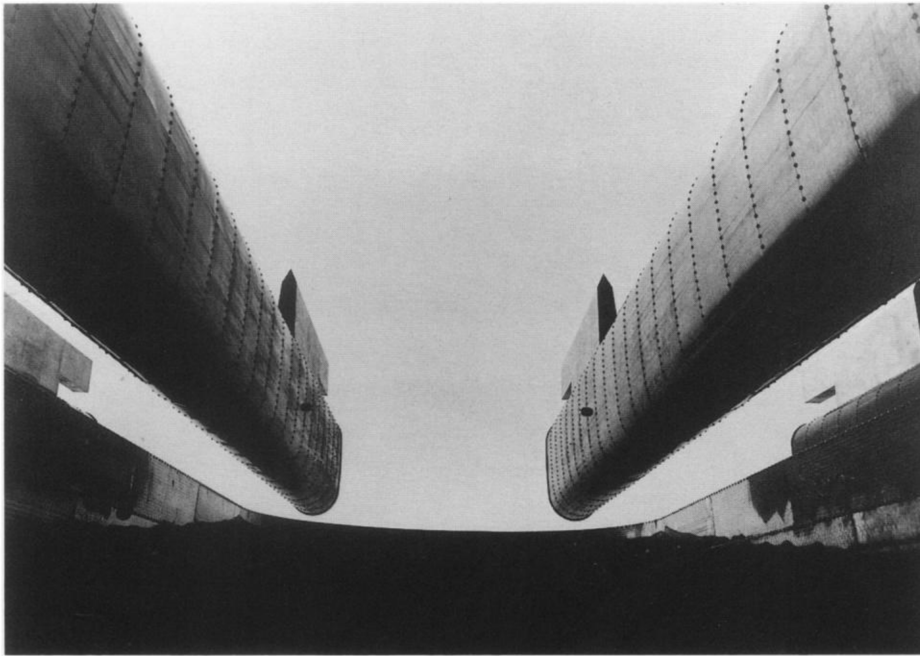

1. Adalberto Libera and Mario De Renzi, Facade for the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista. Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1932 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato).

the MdR in its final form began to take shape only in early 1931, with a scheduled opening on 29 October 1932—ten years after the Fascists marched on Rome and Mussolini was appointed prime minister.[5] A measure of the importance accorded the MdR was that in a time of major economic crisis, the PNF committed over 2.25 million lire to its realization.[6] And if budget were not enough to demonstrate PNF officials' perceptions of the significance of the MdR, the meticulous records of attendance figures, newspaper coverage, celebrity visits, and photographs confirmed its special status. Despite the economic crisis—which in any event was international—Fascism had achieved internal popularity and external respect, and the cult of Mussolini as the leader who had galvanized the nation onto a path of modernization had already begun to take shape. The MdR squarely fixed Mussolini's place in the rise of Fascism and Fascism's role in the developing history of the nation.

The MdR entailed three major endeavors: a facelift of the nineteenth-century umbertine Palazzo delle Esposizioni designed by Pio Piacentini on via Nazionale; the organization of interior rooms and graphics; and the documentation and display of relevant historical material. For the event, the entire Palazzo was concealed beneath a temporary structure designed by Adalberto Libera and Mario De Renzi (Figure 1). Luigi Freddi, one of the organizers of the exhibition, remarked that since the Fascist revolution marked a break with the past and the onset of a new era, it demanded representation in new and modern forms—and this, he informed readers, was precisely Mussolini's desire.[7] Libera and De Renzi placed a massive red square in the center of the facade, flanked by gray wings and interrupted by four twenty-five-meter fasci fabricated of riveted sheets of oxidized copper. The fasci, originally imperial Roman symbols of judicial power, had been adopted by the Fascists as their party symbol. The two red and white Xs flanking the fasci are roman numerals for the decennale, or ten-year anniversary, of Fascism. Although the historical and architectural details of the neoclassical palazzo were suppressed by the sleek modern facade, the organizing principles—classical spatial organization and monumentality—remained intact in the new facade. The triple entrance—two tall, rectangular openings flanking a larger, barrel-vaulted entrance in the center—typologically referred to the triumphal arch and emphasized the classicizing aspects of the structure. To the delight of organizers, this explosive work of modern architecture violated the pristine classicism of the old Palazzo, and in 1932 the new facade could be promoted by the PNF as the "sole example of the most up-to-date art and aesthetic which responds to our breathless, dynamic, free-floating and feverish epoch."[8] The fusion of an audaciously modern style to a fundamentally classicizing armature—in part demanded by the nature of the structure beneath—is nonetheless an uncanny index of modern architecture as it was interpreted in Rome.[9] Briefly, modern architecture was not understood as something to be imitated and imported from elsewhere, but to be developed on Italian soil in accord with the exigencies of Fascism and with Italian traditions, but also appropriately modern as an expression of Fascism.

Once inside the MdR, the visitor experienced a carefully calibrated sequence of events. The barrel-vaulted entrance terminated at a massive triple X, leading to a long corridor lined with guidebooks; and then a right turn led into the first room, where one began a counterclockwise passage through fifteen perimeter exhibition rooms organized historically and covering the years 1914–1922. Each room contained a display of historical material for the particular year as well as a graphic representation of that year's

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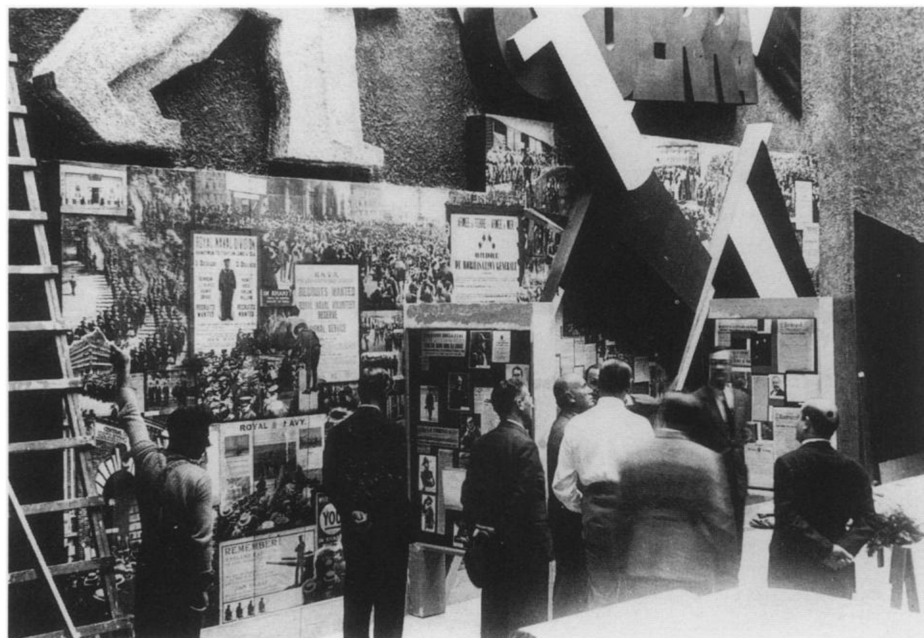
events designed by such young architects and painters as Mario Sironi, Marcello Nizzoli, Giuseppe Terragni, Enrico Prampolini, and Achille Funi. The plan of the Palazzo reveals two major features: the visitor's progress through the exhibit was carefully choreographed, and also the designers systematically ruptured the staid rooms of the neoclassical Palazzo. They used a range of graphic techniques, from photomontage to oversized words to rupturing, penetrating, and jutting out walls, ceilings, and floors and exploding them into the space of the rooms. Mesmerized by the avant-garde design, commentators have tended to linger on the aesthetic features of the exhibit at the expense of any discussion of content. Far from being empty aesthetic gestures, these formal moves had direct and specific political meanings rendered explicit by the graphics and images that jutted out from them and that ineluctably linked modernizing political and aesthetic agendas (Figure 2). For example, in the Sala P by Sironi, one wall sports only one gigantic image: a short Roman sword, with the words "Italia" and "Dux" engraved on it, severing a red chain, an image inspired by Mussolini's militant words: "Fascism unsheaths its knife in order to cut the numerous Gordian knots that ensnare and imbue Italian life."[10]



2. Mussolini's visit to Room A, Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista Rome, 1932 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato).

Terragni also evoked the atmosphere of 1922 in his Sala O, where the walls surged out toward the visitors in a burst of new volumes. Every space was full; panels sliced through the room diagonally, with Mussolini's profile rendered in metal; the phrase "Paradiso bolscevico" served as a caption for a photograph of starving children; a photomosaic represented agricultural and industrial labor; and, finally, he offered an image of "Italy at work trapped against the wall by an enormous steel spiderweb: strikes."[11] Thus, the strikes that erupted between 1919 and 1922, and that so alarmed the bourgeoisie that they welcomed Fascist promises of a return to order, were characterized as having blocked labor and retarded production and, by implication, progress. In addition, certain phrases were rendered in oversized letters: Disciplina Assoluta; Inquadramento delle Forze Corporative; Chi dice GERARCHIA dice DISCIPLINA; Chi dice gerarchia dice Scale di Valori Umani, and so forth. Such images and phrases suggesting the enforcement of draconian social control were not forced on Terragni and the other designers; instead they freely chose them as motifs for the rooms.

But for all of the powerful immediacy and breathtaking spatial derring-do of the upper sections of the rooms, they surmounted banal glass museum display cases organized by historians, which also recounted the history of Fascism's march to power, but in the most tediously documentary fashion, with the meticulous arrangement of newspaper articles, bloody clothes, letters, photographs, and other memorabilia. That history, of course, had been modified to cast everything Fascist in the best light, and everything else in the worst. The same history was conveyed in both parts of the display, but the walls presented it as audacious, revolutionary, larger than life, and within the grasp of everyone. The artists' contributions provided the conceptual framework within which the lives, sacrifices, and events minutely documented in the glass cases could be understood. And this, finally, was the artists' assignment: to provoke viewers to see and think differently, to clarify what the flux of events tended to muddy, to highlight the important issues as armatures upon which everything else could hang. The bold avant-garde graphic and architectural languages—filling the room and the eye—were essential to this task. They allowed Fascist culture to be allied with revolutionary cultural movements, they shocked viewers with their explosive novelty (at least in Italy), and they usurped potential competing interpretations of the events recounted by the sheer force of their presence.

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The four central rooms, R through U, were axially aligned and followed the Beaux-Arts layout of the Palazzo, a sequence of rooms that close and open laterally until the final chamber, room U. From the agitated sequences evoking the passage of historical time pressing through the first fifteen rooms, here the mood—and aesthetic—shifted to monumental, grounded, imposing, and stable. The figure of Mussolini, the Duce, elusively present in various forms in the earlier rooms, came into full prominence in this sequence, linking him indissolubly with the nation and with the fallen Fascists honored in the interior sacrarium. Here, in a hushed and darkened atmosphere, visitors terminated their journey though the historical trajectory of Fascism and into its hallowed inner sanctum, where the ultimate sacrifice—of life itself—was celebrated in a setting designed by Libera. The five rooms on the second floor honoring the activities of Fascists overseas, the library, and the three rooms on Fascist accomplishments were in every sense anticlimactic, documenting the steady, solid advance of Fascism as regime, a revolutionary vanguard stabilized into an institution. The energies set in motion by the revolution, the exhibition suggested, found their fulfillment in this spiritual transcendence and spirit of sacrifice. While the revolution had been completed, the move to a new phase needed to be accompanied by the same militant vigilance, every ready to defend Fascism's gains.

Phase Two and the Mostra Augustea, 1937

The MdR was such a phenomenal success that the anticipated closure after six months was delayed, first until October 1933 and then until October 1934. In conjunction with a later exhibit in 1937, the Mostra Augustea, much of the MdR was reassembled and displayed again, but this time in the National Gallery of Modern Art in Valle Giulia, far from the city center. The celebration of the bimillennium of the birth of Augustus Caesar at the same time as the second version of the MdR locked Fascism into the same interpretive key as the era of Augustus—indeed, the inauguration was moved up to coincide with the opening of the Mostra Augustea, 23 September 1937. The president of the new MdR was once again Dino Alfieri, but, instead of Libera, architect Cesare Bazzani was summoned to design a new facade for the lateral elevation of the Galleria (Figure 3). The MdR was updated to include material on the major events that had occurred since the closing in 1934, especially the conquest of Ethiopia, or, as the Fascists were fond of describing it, the recovery of the long-lost ancient African empire. The most important point to note about the reappearance of the exhibition in 1937 is that here the fantastic and exciting graphics yielded to the documentary impulse of those museum cases in the first MdR: documentation and historical detailing now triumphed over the revolutionary impulse so fundamental to the first exhibition.[12] Since the PNF now envisioned transforming the exhibit into a permanent exhibition of Fascism, and therefore the goals of the exhibit were more narrowly documentary, the exciting graphics of the first MdR seemed less appropriate. But in any case, the new version made extensive use of photographs, photomontage, and outsized graphics in many of the rooms (Figure 4).

While in the first MdR the source of Fascism was Fascism itself, its own mystical history and its own energies and participants, now the PNF looked farther back, to the glories of ancient Rome, forging historical links and asserting its legitimacy as a worthy successor to the ancient glories. Hence, the significance of celebrating the triumphs of Augustus in the same locale that had earlier hosted the MdR on via Nazionale. The facade designed by Alfredo Scalpelli reveals the

3. Cesare Bazzani, Facade for the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, Second Version. Galleria di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, 1937–43 (after CTI, *Roma* 1943).

4. Exhibit on the Spanish Civil War, Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, Rome, 1937–43 (after CTI, *Roma* 1943).

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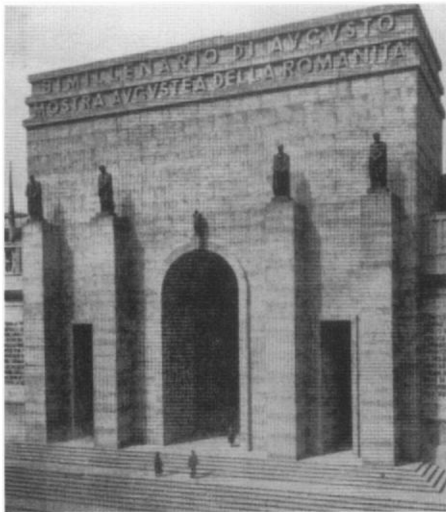

5. Alfredo Scalpelli, Facade for the Mostra Augustea della Romanità. Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1937 (Catalog of the *Mostra Augustea delle Romanità*, Table I).

6. Exhibition Room of Roman Baths and Aqueducts, Mostra Augustea della Romanità. Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1937 (Catalog of the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità*, Table CII).

7. R.M. Apollonj, Room of Romanità and Fascism, Mostra Augustea della Romanità. Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1937 (Catalog of the *Mostra Augustea delle Romanità*, Table LXXVI).

change in most explicit form: once again the Palazzo delle Esposizioni was masked by a temporary structure in the semblance of a Roman triumphal arch, with a high barrel-vaulted entrance (Figure 5). Libera's brash, chromatic triumph—in which the bold imagery complemented the temporary materials—gave way to faux stone and a literal representation of the antique triumphal arch. For the Mostra Augustea, no bold colors or graphics enlivened the laconic vaults, in part because the subject of the exhibition—the celebration of a venerable, historical figure—seemed to call for something altogether more serious. Inside, the displays of Roman busts, obelisks, maps, reconstructions of Roman structures, and technologies could not have been more remote from the bloody shirts, newspapers, and memorabilia displayed in the MdR. For this occasion, the rooms were outfitted in an entirely different fashion: vaulted spaces, sedate display cases, and luminous white walls provided the perfect sober backdrop for the exploration of the age of Augustus[15] (Figure 6). But this was not because the architects who worked on the exhibit were less committed to modern architecture: among the architects involved in the Mostra Augustea were such enthusiastic modernists as Ludovico Quaroni, Vincenzo Monaco, and Francesco Fariello. The challenge of the exhibition differed markedly from that of the earlier one, and so, too, did the strategy: now the monumental and classicizing features of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni could be exploited in order to emphasize the dignity of the past Empire—and, of course, of the new one declared by Mussolini following the conquest of Ethiopia (Figure 7).

For many scholars, the kind of shift apparent in this exhibition was emblematic of broader changes in the regime, in particular, the increasing bureaucraticization and the consequent dulling of the revolutionary impulse. As is often the case, matters were far more complex, and other events give the lie to simplistic characterizations. In 1937, the same year that the Mostra Augustea opened, the PNF mounted another grand exhibit, this time in the area of the Circus Maximus, to celebrate Fascist summer colonies and assistance to youngsters (Mostra delle Colonie Estive e dell'Assistenza all'Infanzia) (Figure 8). Among those called to design the exhibit were other architects of a decidedly modernist cast, including Adalberto Libera, Mario De Renzi, and Giovanni Guerrini. In an area little more than a depression in the earth, these designers built audaciously modernist temporary pavilions to celebrate one of Fascism's most significant areas of cultural education. Although their pavilions might seem to be at odds with the aesthetic of the Augustea, in fact, they simply represented a different task.[14] Festive recollections of summers spent at the seaside or in the mountains and a celebration of the possibilities Fascism offered to youngsters did not call for serious, museumlike documentation, but rather something fresher, crisper, and more audacious: precisely what the designers offered. A year later, the same ancient site housed a group of pavilions celebrating Fascist afterwork organizations (Dopolavoro), and, in keeping with the leisure theme, the design was as sleek and modernist as the Mostra Augustea had been austere and classicizing.

Esposizione Universale di Roma

The final version of the exhibition opened in 1942, at the height of World War II. Like the 1937 exhibit, this international exhibition also included a version of the 1932 MdR, although with a vastly expanded documentation intended to cover the full twenty years of Fascism. By now the intention had become to develop a new Center of Fascist Studies, to include both a library and a complete archive of the history of the Fascist

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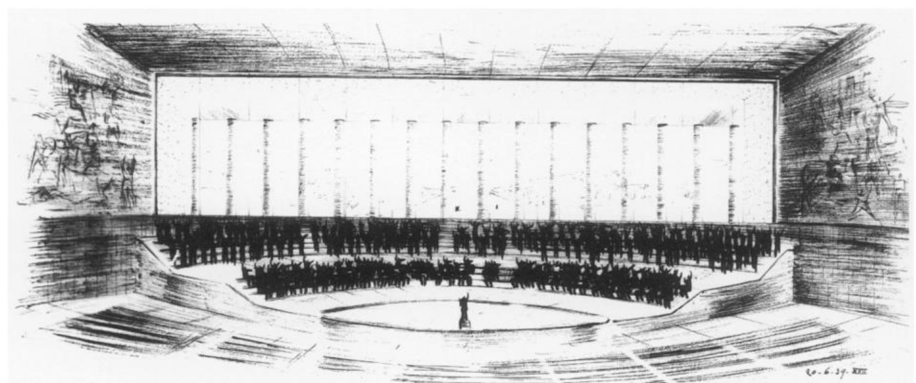
party in Italy. However, the fortunes of war dictated a more sober presentation in the same location in Valle Giulia rather than in permanent headquarters in E'42, the new exhibition center and satellite city center to the south of Rome. The relationship of this exhibit to its predecessors was clear in some of the new sections added: a room dedicated to doctrine, another to artifacts recovered during the campaigns in Africa, and yet another against Jews and Communists, who were blamed for the war.[15] The MdR was intended to find a permanent seat in E'42 alongside several other exhibitions, including the Mostra Augustea, housed in buildings designed by some of Italy's finest architects. Esposizione Universale di Roma (or E'42, Esposizione 42, or EUR) was a vast undertaking, too complicated and important to be able to cover fully here, but a few preliminary observations can aid an understanding of Fascist culture.[16] Unlike most expositions, this one, defined as universal, rather than international, emphasizing the grand sweep of Fascist ambitions, was designed at the outset to be permanent.[17] Once the exhibition itself concluded, the intention was to leave a number of the Italian exhibits—Augustea, MdR, popular culture, and others—as permanent museums, while the remaining buildings would serve as a new, classically planned city center along the road leading from downtown Rome to the sea. Competition rules for the buildings urged architects to appeal to traditional Italian architectural sources in their designs, and the juries, who included modernist aficionados, duly selected designs not primarily inspired by the Modern movement, but more indebted to local, particularly Roman traditions. Much of the criticism leveled at EUR focuses upon the colonnades, the monumentality, the axiality, the extensive use of travertine, and the resistance to Modern movement planning schemes. But, despite the scale, the urban design, with its controlled vistas and focus on major monu-

8. Exhibition of Summer Camps and Infant Assistant Programs, Circus Maximus, Rome, 1937 (Collection of the author).



9. Adalberto Libera, Sketch for the Palazzo dei Congressi at EUR, 1937 (Collection of the author).

10. Adalberto Libera, Palazzo dei Congressi, front elevation. Rome, 1939 (Collection of the author).

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11. Giovanni Guerrini, Ernesto La Padula, and Mario Romano, architects. Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, EUR, 1938 (Ferruccio Trabalzi).

12. Mussolini examining the Table of Horrors, a collage of the most retrograde architecture as defined by the Rationalists. Rome, 1931 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato).

ments, is impressive and conceptually clear—and this was an urban center designed to be impressive to foreign visitors who would travel both in automobiles and on foot; indeed, it was specifically designed to accommodate automobiles. The via del Mare bisected the site, serving as a grand entrance to Rome from the sea and as a fittingly grand departure en route to the Mediterranean, and was traversed by cross axes that terminated at major representative buildings. Viale della Civiltà Italiana, for example, was closed at one end by the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (known as the Colosseo Quadrato, or squared colosseum, to Romans) and at the other by Adalberto Libera's Palazzo dei Congressi (Figures 9 and 10). Only one other cross axis was completed as planned—viale Europa, a tree-lined boulevard anchored on one end by the Archives and the other by the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul.

EUR, as we see it today, is not the version originally planned. When the first proposal came from Piacentini and Giuseppe Pagano, Luigi Vietti, Luigi Piccinato, and Ettore Rossi, it included a broad avenue lined by series of glazed, steel skyscrapers more reminiscent of similar proposals from Ludwig Hilberseimer a decade earlier than anything that finally appeared. In 1937 Mussolini not only approved this audaciously modernist design, with its glass towers soaring thirty-five stories above the road, but he also repeatedly reaffirmed his approval of the design over the next months.[18] Consultants such as Federico Pinna Berchet also argued that the architectural aesthetic of the exhibit should not be inspired by classicism and Roman prototypes but rather by modern and up-to-date, even futuristic, models to fulfill the needs of the exposition appropriately.[19] More importantly, on the other hand, Vittorio Cini, commissioner general of EUR, strenuously argued for an architectural aesthetic inspired not just by a "classical and monumental feeling" of the sort that had persisted through various artistic expressions for centuries, but for a specifically Roman, *Italian* expression.[20] Here, as elsewhere in the polemical climate of Fascist Italy, aesthetics and urban design were hotly disputed. In the end, arguably as the shortages imposed by the sanctions of the League of Nations began to be felt, restrictions on the use of steel and glass in building were enacted, and this early proposal, far from being dismissed for being too modernist, had to be abandoned because it could not be realized with the materials then available in Italy.[21]

Architects responded with designs that attempted to embrace the best of the old methods of construction without producing sterile imitations of antique structures. Gino Pollini and Luigi Figini designed a complex for the Armed Forces (now including the Central State Archives) as a modern propylea, with two massive colonnaded wings raised on high plinths, flanking a central structure, also colonnaded, with a rotunda and enormous interiors, vast hallways, and high ceilings. The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as built (designed by Giovanni Guerrini, Ernesto La Padula, and Mario Romano), is also set on a high base, with sweeping staircases and sculptural groups at the corner of the podium (Figure 11). Although the complex has been long scorned for its obvious appeals to the Colosseum and for its unabashed monumentality, we should not forget that the many other competition entries for this building, including those by such stalwart Rationalists as Banfi, Belgioioso, Peressutti and Rogers, Luciano Baldessari, and Ernesto Saliva, all proposed similarly steep staircases, high bases, and monumental elevations. And throughout the competition entries for all the buildings at EUR, the columns and monumental structures previously scorned by modernist architects appeared with regularity. Far from selling out, it must be remembered that in 1937 it was not clear in which direction the vanguard in architecture would lie; for good

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reason, many believed that the German models of the Hitler era represented the wave of the future.

Historians have had difficulty dealing with this aspect of Fascist culture. How, they have asked, could Rationalist architects have allowed themselves to be coopted by a corrupt totalitarian regime? The picture was neater when postwar critics could agree with Bruno Zevi that the young Rationalist architects had been corrupted by the regime[22] (Figure 12). Instead, it is obvious that far more complex issues were at work. To return to the problem posed at the outset, it is clear that most of the young architects were Fascists and shared many of the ideas characteristic of Fascism; in particular, they shared a preoccupation with developing a Fascist architecture that would take its place as an element of Fascist culture, at once Fascist, modern, and Italian. The aesthetic adopted would not be borrowed from some other country or tradition, but rather developed on home soil. As I argued twelve years ago, by contrast with several other countries, the advent of Fascism preempted the Modern movement in Italy as a vigorous, modern, rejuvenating impulse, and, therefore, it was Fascism that provided the framework for the evolving discourse on modernity in architecture.[23] In contemporary thinking on the subject, just as Fascist doctrine evolved endlessly, so could culture and aesthetics. Only the most narrow-minded conceived of culture as a static entity to be determined and then defended eternally. While the Rationalists believed that evolution meant variations within modernism, a dynamic vision of culture would certainly embrace the kind of adaptation and compromise between classicism and modernism so evident at EUR. Most of the architectural polemics during the 1930s specifically addressed the question of how much compromise between Modernism and Italian traditions was acceptable, because larger questions about Fascism simply were not on the agenda. Disputes raged over the directions that cultural and aesthetic transformations would take, but not about the primacy of Fascism as the armature upon which Italian culture and politics were to hang—at least not until well into the war.

With the fall of Mussolini in July 1943, all of the questions about culture and Fascism were thrown open again, and the MdR itself was dismantled and put into storage; parts were eventually sent on to the new, short-lived Republic of Salo, which Mussolini founded in northern Italy.

Notes

1. Little material has appeared in English on the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista or on other exhibitions during the Fascist period in Italy. The accompanying articles by Jeffrey Schnapp and Libero Andreotti contain up-to-date bibliographies on the MdR. The only notable addition to recent material is the complete inventory of the MdR archives at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, compiled by Gigliola Fioravanti, *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Rome: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, 1990). My research for this article was supported in part by a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome 1987–88 as a Fellow in Post-Classical Humanistic Studies.

2. Partito Nazionale Fascista, *La cultura fascista* (Rome: Poligrafo dello Stato, 1936), p. 9.

3. The material in this section on Gramsci derives from his prison notebooks in the Italian edition: Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, 6 vols., introduction by Luciano Gruppi (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1977). In the first volume of this series, *Il materialismo storico*, Gramsci writes: "Diciamo dunque che l'uomo è un processo e precisamente è il processo dei suoi atti...occorre concepire l'uomo come una serie di rapporti attivi" (pp. 32–33).

4. Most of Gramsci's writings about intellectuals are contained in the second volume of the above series, *Gli intellettuali*. Some of this, in turn, has been translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1979). In this English version, see esp. pp. 3–23.

5. "Il Duce impartisce le direttive per la Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista," *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 30 Apr. 1932.

6. "Mostra decennale del Fascismo: Schema di bilancio," Archivio Centrale dello Stato, PNF Direttorio, Busta 273, "Alfieri."

7. Partito Nazionale Fascista, *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista*, ed. Dino Alfieri and Luigi Freddi (Rome: PNF, 1932), p. 65.

8. PNF, *Mostra*, p. 64. The catalog conveniently overlooked Giuseppe Terragni's Novocomum in Como, already two years old at the time.

9. See Diane Ghirardo, "From Reality to Myth: Architecture and Politics in Fascist Rome," *Modulus* 22 (1992), forthcoming.

10. PNF, *Mostra*, p. 195. Little discussion of the MdR has appeared in English, and, where it has, authors address largely aesthetic issues: Dennis Doordan, *Building Modern Italy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989), pp. 131–34; Thomas Schumacher, *Surface and Symbol: Giuseppe Terragni and the Architecture of Italian Rationalism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), pp. 172–73. I have discussed the political implications of the designs of Terragni for the exhibit in Diane Ghirardo, "Politik und Architektur im Faschistischen Italien," in *Giuseppe Terragni 1904–1943. Moderne und Faschismus in Italien*, ed. S. Germer and A. Preiss (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1991), pp. 39–55, esp. pp. 51–54.

11. PNF, *Mostra*, p. 185.

12. Jeffrey Schnapp has remarked in his article in this issue that the attempt in the MdR to bring Fascism's origins back to life in the end constituted a burial of them, and the MdR, with all of its revolutionary artistic fervor, was the swan song of those early revolutionary energies in the Fascist party. To be sure, those revolutionary energies also lay behind much of the domestic violence instigated by the PNF, so perhaps the dulling of the revolutionary impulse was not altogether negative. As part of the documentary impulse, for example, whole runs of newspapers were included in the second edition of the MdR. For complete photographic documentation of the exhibit, see ACS, PNF, Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, "Servizio fotografico della mostra."

13. The Mostra Augustea was organized by Professor Giulio Quirino Giglioli, with the displays under the direction of architect Italo Gismondi, and it opened on 23 Sept. 1937, exactly 2,000 years after the birth of Augustus (23 Sept. 63 BCE).

14. The exhibition was extensively documented in *Architettura* (June 1937) and in *Casabella* 116 (Aug. 1937).

15. Some of the graphic material for this exhibit can be found in ACS, MdR, Materiali per l'allestimento della mostra, III edizione, Buste 88–96.

16. Although in recent years several studies have appeared on EUR, the most significant is the two-

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volume study prepared by the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in conjunction with a major exhibition of drawings, models, competition entries, and photographic documentation of EUR: Tullio Gregory and Achille Tartaro, *E42. Utopia e Scenario del Regime*, 2 vols. (Venice: Marsilio, 1987).

17. One of the ensembles that the head designer, Marcello Piacentini, sketched and studied in the context of studies for EUR was the Trocadero in Paris and its relation to the Champs de Mars. Some of this material can be found in the Piacentini Archives in Florence, at the University of Florence. See Mario Lupano, "Piacentini's Part: E'42, from conception to the building phase," *Lotus International* 67 (1991): 127–41, esp. 128.

18. The design was documented in *Architettura* (Apr. 1937) and *Casabella* (June 1937).

19. See Pinna Berchet's report to Mussolini of 7 Mar. 1938, in ACS, Segretario Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Ordinario 1922–1943, Fasc. 509832/1.

20. A draft of Cini's memo outlining this and other arguments is located in ACS, EUR, Segretaria Generale, Fasc. 8, "Rapporto Generale."

21. In an article published after this paper was written, Riccardo Mariani noted that when this proposal was advanced, Italy lacked companies that manufactured prefabricated casings or double glazing, and, after building restrictions were imposed, the EUR plan, which depended heavily upon steel, glass, and reinforced concrete, had to be completely redone. Riccardo Mariani, "The Planning of E'42: The First Phase," *Lotus International* 67 (1991): 91–104.

22. Bruno Zevi is simply one of the most obvious examples of this position. See his *Storia dell'architettura moderna*, 2d ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), pp. 167ff. For more recent articulations of similar arguments, see Giorgio Ciucci, "Italian Architects During the Fascist Period: Classicism Between Neoclassicism and Rationalism," *Harvard Architecture Review* 6 (1987): 76–87; see also Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*.

23. See Diane Ghirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalists' Role in Regime Building," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39 (May 1980): 109–27, esp. 117. Ciucci, Doordan, Schumacher, and most other commentators have also now adopted this as a fundamental interpretive framework for understanding the relationship between Rationalism and Fascism. Ciucci, *Gli architetti e il fascismo*, xviii–xix; Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, p. 130; Schumacher, *Surface and Symbol*, p. 23.

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