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Policemen and ‘women of ill repute’: a study of male sexual attitudes and behaviour in fascist Italy¹

Abstract

Based on an analysis of personnel documents of the Italian Interior Ministry Police, the article investigates the sexual attitudes of police personnel during the Mussolinian dictatorship and the manner in which their commanders dealt with ‘misconduct’ related to this (particularly liaisons with/exploitation of prostitutes, and other extra-marital relationships). This is considered in the contexts of both the fascist regime’s attempt to ‘moralize’ Italian society in correspondence to its demographic campaign, a task largely entrusted to the police themselves, and the hierarchical regulation of the sexual conduct of policemen which pre-dated Mussolini’s rise to power. The article also examines the impact of the sexual mentality and behaviour of representatives of an authoritarian state on the communities they policed. Though the sexual ‘misconduct’ of police personnel appeared to reflect the sexual culture nurtured by fascism (particularly the *squadristo* movement), the article questions this, given similarities in attitudes and behaviour registered during the Liberal period. Such an analysis is also undertaken with a view to reflecting upon the sexual practices of Italian males in general during the fascist period.

Key words: police; fascist dictatorship; *squadristo*; sexuality; masculinity; prostitution; oppression of women

Introduction

In a report dated 6 January 1929, Public Security Inspector General Giuseppe Cocchia complained that the northern Italian police headquarters (*Questura*) of Novara (Piedmont)

had become a centre for the trafficking of 'women of every kind'. The Inspector General exclaimed that 'never before have I confronted such a sad and regrettable situation as a result of which I am continually inclined to ask myself if, by chance, those whose names will repeatedly be indicated [in the report] as culpable, have completely forgotten their role as citizens and officials of the State!' Addressed to the Chief of the fascist police, Arturo Bocchini, Cocchia went on to describe a scenario in which several police officials received sexual favours in exchange for the expeditious issuing of permits and licences. Moreover, some of the women involved had been allowed to influence the daily running of affairs in the police headquarters.

Cocchia's report focused on the Chief of Police (*Questore*) G.M. and Commissioner E.T.-L., who were accused of using the former's service car 'for trips almost on a daily basis to the best places in the province, not for work but almost always for pleasure, to purchase goods, and to entertain themselves with women'. M. had allegedly made monthly claims amounting to around 1,000 Lire, and T.-L. had likewise applied for reimbursement of between 800 and 900 Lire, to pay for these trips, under the guise of special political investigations. Consequently, colleagues at the *Questura* were denied service vehicles and funding required for urgent policing activities. Cocchia's statement in the report that the honour of members of the families of police officials had also been discredited as a result of such goings-on almost certainly referred to allegations that the wife of a trainee deputy commissioner employed at the police headquarters was involved.² The inspection of the Novara police led to the sacking of T.-L. and forced retirement of M.³

The above report refers to one of many episodes during the fascist period of hierarchical intervention to deal with sexual 'misdemeanours' committed by police personnel, ranging from involvement in extra marital relationships to the exploitation of prostitution. Such disciplinary intervention should partly be interpreted in the context of the

history of sexuality in fascist Italy, notably the regime's battle to channel male sexual energies into marriage and procreation, but equally the ambivalence surrounding fascist notions of virility, as a result of which it was not easy to harness and control male sexuality. It should also be considered in the context of the longer history of an institution which, well before Mussolini's rise to power, had addressed the sexual 'misconduct' of its employees within a broader social frame characterised by contradictory norms regarding acceptable male behaviour.

This article uses the relatively understudied personnel documents of the Interior Ministry Police (*Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza*), mainly from the Central State Archive in Rome, to analyze the sexual behavior of policemen and their commanders' attempts to regulate it during the fascist dictatorship within the contexts described above. The inspection and investigation reports, personnel files, and other institutional correspondence contained in the collection allow the undertaking of a gendered reconstruction of the policing profession and environment under a political regime which stressed strictly differentiated male and female roles. They also provide insight into how beliefs and theories about gender and sexuality underpinning police work determined the interaction of policemen with the public. In this regard, the article also investigates how the sexual conduct of representatives of an authoritarian state affected the communities they controlled, illustrating how the enhanced powers of police officers and officials actually encouraged many to engage in sexual 'misconduct' in defiance of the regime's official policies which they had been entrusted to enforce. While partly focusing on the nature of relationships between policemen and prostitutes, a matter of particular concern to Public Security inspectors, my analysis extends to an examination of extra-marital encounters more generally. It considers the manner in which the police authorities managed such relationships

and dealt with controversy or conflict arising from them, often in the context of communities governed by rigid codes of sexual conduct and family honour.

Throughout, the article addresses levels of continuity between fascist Italy and the preceding Liberal State, in the context in which Mussolini's policies in the spheres of gender and sexuality largely represented a reinforcement of pre-existing ideas and norms. The extent to which sexual attitudes among police personnel were the product of the broader sexual culture generated by the rise of fascism, as opposed to an enduring culture rooted in the Liberal period, is investigated.

Given the episodes and attitudes which they record, a reading of the archive documents enhances our understanding of the impact of fascism upon sexual customs and practices in Italian society as a whole, enabling us to capture the tensions and contradictions existing within fascism around ideal forms of sexual conduct. On these grounds, as well as reconstructing sexual lives within the institutionalized context of the Italian police, this article aims to contribute to a more general understanding of male sexual attitudes and behaviour during the dictatorship. A considerable amount of research on sexuality and masculinity in fascist Italy has focused on policy, gender discourse, and the construction of gendered images and stereotypes, notably that of the 'new' fascist man.⁴ Pioneering work has been conducted on the repression of sexually-related 'crimes', especially male homosexuality.⁵ There has been less detailed investigation of male heterosexual behaviour and its regulation, though research on the phenomenon of *squadrisimo* has analysed the sexual ethos and habits of first-hour fascists,⁶ and some work has also been undertaken on the link between fascism and sexual violence committed in the Italian colonies and in occupied territories during the Second World War.⁷ This article, therefore, seeks to make use of the available documentation in order to shed more light on male sexual practice during the *ventennio*, with

a particular view to identifying how far it was influenced and regulated in the context of the regime's sexual policies and discourse.

The sexual behaviour of policemen and its regulation in Liberal and fascist Italy

Returning to Giuseppe Cocchia's investigation of the police at Novara in 1929, we may partly consider the disciplinary procedures which resulted from the sexual 'misconduct' of *Questore* G.M. and Commissioner E.T.-L., in the context of a wider reform of the Italian police which the fascist government undertook during the mid-late 1920s. From the new regime's perspective, the Interior Ministry Police, entrusted above all other police institutions with responsibility for internal security and protection of the person of Mussolini, needed to be manned by efficient and disciplined personnel.⁸

Hierarchical regulation of the sexual behaviour of police personnel should also be considered in the broader context of fascism's sexual disciplining of society, a job largely entrusted to the police. While the Liberal police had been tasked with the regulation of prostitution and the enforcement of high moral standards in Italian society, after Mussolini's rise to power this was to be intensified, reflecting the regime's desire to reinforce gender divisions and uphold the institution of marriage in fulfilment of its demographic campaign and race policies. This fitted a broader scenario in which 'moral order' was to be considered the best guarantee of 'public order',⁹ but also corresponded to a new model of masculinity, epitomized in the charismatic leadership of Mussolini, which responded to fears about the emasculating effects of female emancipation.¹⁰ This model officially stressed that male virility should be demonstrated through marriage and by 'seeding numerous offspring'.¹¹ Following the Concordat between the fascist government and the Vatican (1929), the regime's demographic and moral campaigns benefitted from the support of the Catholic

Church, which stressed the values of family and motherhood and helped to reinforce state policy against birth control.¹²

However, internal investigations and inspections revealed that the police were not always capable or even willing to enforce the regime's sexual policies and that this reflected sexual 'indiscipline' among personnel themselves. An investigation of the Genoa police, conducted in the summer of 1927, again by Inspector General Cocchia, revealed serious failings in the regulation of prostitution, which, he argued, was rampant, particularly on the outskirts of the city. He partly attributed this to the malfunctioning of the flying squad (*squadra mobile*), and to the fact that its director, Chief Commissioner V.G. (who was subsequently transferred away from Genoa), was hardly the morally upright individual to whom the task of leadership in such a sphere should be entrusted. G. was known to frequent women of 'ill repute' and reportedly combined his position and highhanded manner to force one G.T., the owner of a *casa per artiste*,¹³ whom Cocchia scornfully referred to as a 'whore' (*bagascia*), into a relationship with him. The report also expressed incredulity that another, middle-ranking, officer of the Genoa police, though reputed to be 'an exploiter of women, heavy-handed and unscrupulous', had been assigned to the flying squad, thus allowing him to resume his 'unspeakable undertakings'.¹⁴

Cocchia's concerns should be considered in the context of fascist measures to intensify the repression of clandestine prostitution, as stipulated by the Public Security Law of 1926, as well as the institution of obligatory health checks for (legal) prostitutes and their management within state-run brothels.¹⁵ Yet, how far Cocchia was solely driven by fascist policy or interpreted what he witnessed through the ideological prism of fascism is questionable. Like all Public Security Inspectors during the fascist years, Cocchia, who was born in 1874, had entered the force and undergone professional training during the Liberal period.¹⁶ If he was guided by any theory at all, Cocchia's understanding and treatment of

prostitution was more likely to have been the product of the positivist school of the criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, which proclaimed the majority of prostitutes as physiologically determined and comparable to ‘born criminals’.¹⁷ As Gibson argues, from the early twentieth century police officials charged with the surveillance of prostitution were schooled in positivist ideas,¹⁸ which saw female deviance as tending to manifest itself in sexual excess and defined normal women as ‘decidedly inferior in biology, intelligence, and morality to their male counterparts’.¹⁹

It should be stressed that the ‘illicit’ activities which Cocchia discovered at the Genoa and Novara police headquarters did not mark a clear break in continuity from those revealed in the Liberal police. To cite two examples: in 1913 the commander of the police at Piacenza was the subject of public scandal owing to his ‘libertine’ habits: he was not considered favourably since he dedicated his energies to womanising, as revealed by a local newspaper after two ‘loose’ women (*donne di facili costumi*) had visited him in his office. This allegedly compromised his ability to control prostitution.²⁰ In 1906, in a more serious episode, an investigation of the police service at Cremona was sparked following anonymous allegations reported in a local newspaper about irregular behaviour in the control of local prostitution. The allegations focused on Public Security Delegate V.C., the official running the police ‘morals squad’. C. was accused of being sentimentally involved with prostitutes, of using his position to induce several of them to have sex with him, and of playing part in an illegal prostitution racket.²¹ In the ensuing report the investigator claimed that the accusation of C.’s involvement in clandestine prostitution was false and denied that C. had exercised any force over prostitutes. However, the report left little doubt that these women regularly visited C.’s office where sexual intercourse took place. C.’s behaviour was seen as jeopardizing the efficiency of the morals squad which he directed. While the consequences of the investigation are unclear, the report indicated C.’s ‘superficial and weak character, his

devotion to women, with a preference for prostitutes (...) his lack of scruples and tendency to commit indelicate acts which compromise the decorum of his office and his personal respectability as a public official'.²²

The report on C. indicates a cultural acceptance of prostitution as an outlet for male sexual needs (provided that more permanent liaisons did not ensue); the investigator tended to accept C.'s version of events, namely that he had been forced to go to prostitutes, owing to his wife's illness, but had always paid them, and had never developed long-term relationships with any of them. The report also illustrates an inherent tendency among Liberal state officials to see prostitutes more as criminals than as victims, exemplified by use of the terms *donne di mal affare* ('criminal women'), and *donne di facili costumi* ('loose women'). The report more generally gave to intend that the investigator considered the testimonies of several of the prostitutes involved as unreliable. The case is also suggestive of the power which individual police officials were able to wield over prostitutes.

Beyond the effects of positivist training, the attitudes of inspectors and, indeed, the sexual behaviour of the policemen they investigated should also be considered in the broader context of traditional Italian sexual mores which were ambivalent in regard to male behaviour and bolstered by misogynist Catholic teachings. Parallel to the post-unification civil code, which 'enshrined a double standard of adultery, making it much easier for a husband to prosecute his wife than the other way around',²³ the Church had taught that male adultery was not to be considered a betrayal of wives, while 'Christian marriage protected women from becoming "vile instruments of animal passion"'.²⁴ If the Church officially considered prostitution as a form of moral disorder, 'many Catholics were willing to accept regulated prostitution as the lesser evil necessary to prevent the exuberant male sex drive from becoming a danger for "honest" women'.²⁵ In a similar vein, priests of the lower clergy were tolerant towards the male need for sexual satisfaction with prostitutes, despite the Church's

formal espousal of the legal prohibition of prostitution.²⁶ It is likely that these ambivalent messages encouraged some men of the law to disregard formal regulations about their sexual conduct in the belief that any ‘misdeeds’ would be tolerated. In this regard, it is telling that in the Cremona case it required a leak to the local press to bring C.’s behaviour to the attention of the police hierarchy in Rome, suggesting that his immediate commanders may have tolerated it.

As the above examples suggest, the link between police regulation of prostitution and sexual ‘indiscipline’/abuse characterising the fascist years had its foundations in Liberal Italy. The use of police headquarters as centres for sexual exchange emerges during both periods, as does the power exercised over prostitutes for personal advantage, but equally the lack of sympathy shown towards prostitutes, even when they were the possible victims of abuse. Suggesting continuity in the police hierarchy’s treatment of sexual ‘infractions’, regulations for their punishment did not change dramatically after 1922. Under both regimes, the discovery that a lower-ranking guard was involved in a ‘scandalous relationship’ (*tresca scandalosa*), for example, could result in various forms of detention in the hope of curtailing it, but repeated behaviour of this kind (*tresche scandalose abituali*) could lead to expulsion from the force.²⁷ With the exception of the period of the mid – late 1920s, there is little suggestion that punishments became harsher or more frequent under Mussolini’s rule, though a more detailed survey would help to clarify this. During both the Liberal and fascist periods, punitive transfers appear to have been the most common consequence of the discovery of sexual ‘misdeeds’.²⁸ Under fascism, this partly reflected a lack of resources to improve the quality of the regular police forces, as a result of which transfers – as opposed to recruitment of higher-quality personnel - were often the only possible solution for cases of indiscipline.²⁹

Many of the relationships emerging in the available documentation appear to be founded on sex obtained by force, indicating a notable element of aggressiveness and

highhandedness on the part of the policemen concerned. Documentation for both the Liberal and fascist periods reveals that police personnel on occasion faced accusations of indecent acts (*atti osceni*) and rape (*violenza carnale*); the latter juridical term was also used to define sexual relations with girls under the age of consent,³⁰ of which cases emerge, too, though any legal proceedings which ensued tended to end in acquittal, possibly reflecting a broader scenario in which treatment for rape was generally lenient, particularly under the fascist dictatorship.³¹ This was the outcome of the trial in 1939 of a deputy police commissioner stationed at Trapani, in Sicily. He had been accused, among other things, of engaging in sexual relations with a prostitute under the age of consent, facilitating the prostitution of under-age girls, and forcing a woman into the trade. In spite of the judicial acquittal, on the grounds of lack of evidence and ‘no case to answer for’ (*fatto non sussiste*), it was several months before the commissioner was professionally rehabilitated.³²

The fact that on occasion sexual relationships between policemen and prostitutes were not restricted to a few encounters, as exemplified by use of the term *amante* (lover), deserves some analysis here. How far there were elements of love and affection in longer-term relationships between policemen and prostitutes is not always clear. In the case of V.G. (Genoa, 1927), discussed earlier, this appears not to be the case, if we believe the inspection report, which suggests the strong element of compulsion behind the relationship: G’s ‘lover’ was ‘recompensed’ by free cinema tickets and G. paid the hotel bill for sexual encounters ‘when he does not go to her house in Via Cappuccine’.³³ In some cases, these relationships may have been the product of limitations on sentimental life caused by institutional regulations. Prohibition of marriage for lower-ranking Public Security guards (*agenti di Pubblica Sicurezza*) who had not reached the age of twenty-eight and completed ten years’ service in state institutions, reflected the intended military character of the police and, arguably, concerns that the discipline of married guards would be adversely affected by

family distractions.³⁴ This is significant in consideration of the fact that the involvement of lower-ranking personnel in 'illicit' relationships may partly have been a consequence of such restrictions. The case of V.C. (Cremona, 1906), described above, also involved accusations by a city guard (*guardia di città*)³⁵ that the Delegate had 'seduced through threats' his own 'lover', the prostitute A.C.³⁶ Although it has not been possible to ascertain whether this lower-ranking officer faced marriage restrictions, we may speculate that officers who did may have tried to find sentimental as well as sexual gratification with prostitutes, especially when it was likely that 'respectable' women would not be willing to enter into stable relationships with them if there was no prospect of marriage in the near future.

Extra-marital relationships revealed in the documentation were not restricted to involvement with prostitutes. The broader social and cultural scenario characterised by tacit acceptance of discreet male involvement in extra-marital affairs (including the keeping of mistresses) should be considered here. Significant in this regard is the case of the *Questore* of Mantova, R.G., whose 'notorious' intimate relationship with one P.B. emerged in an inspection in September 1925. When questioned about this, G., who was married, responded: 'I know this lady and given my family situation and my position, I cannot tend to my needs in the way that any other citizen can, but have to act with discretion, as all those in my situation do. I consider this lady as belonging to me, like a relative, whom I have here and would have anywhere'.³⁷ The response illustrates G.'s presumption that he was entitled to maintain a mistress, reflecting social acceptance of adultery, if committed with discretion. However, G.'s forced retirement the following month may have been determined by public knowledge of the relationship (in spite of his claims to have acted discreetly) during a period in which the young fascist regime attempted to morally 'normalize' Italian society; it may equally have reflected his age of fifty-nine and fascism's desire for rejuvenation of the police service.³⁸

Policemen and the sexual culture of *squadrisimo*

If more frequent inspections and investigations during the mid-late 1920s may reflect the concern of the fascist authorities to enforce moral rectitude within the state and bring a 'new' culture of professional diligence into institutions inherited from the Liberal period, there is evidence that sexual 'disorder' in the policing environment increased as a result of the disruptive influence of fascist movements. This resulted from the persistence in local fascist circles of the culture of a more sexually promiscuous virility from the days of the truncheon-bearing squad movement. In this regard, during the years leading up to the March on Rome Blackshirts demonstrated their masculinity not only through violence; they often ended their punitive expeditions against enemy strongholds with group visits to a brothel.³⁹ Beyond regular visits to brothels, there were cases in which *squadristi* lived in brothels or were pimps.⁴⁰ This surviving sexual culture undoubtedly undermined the success of the regime's sexual 'normalization' policies.

In this regard, Cocchia's investigation of the Milan police headquarters in July 1928 brought to light failings in the control of prostitution, which he partly attributed to the unhealthy hold which the local Fascist Party Federation had over the force. Cocchia noted how the regime's regulatory measures had been jeopardised in Milan because of the intervention of the local Party, who had connections with individuals in the *Questura*, some of whom were themselves involved in clandestine prostitution. In October 1927, for example, the police of the district of Porta Vittoria had discovered that a hotel in Piazzale Romano was being used for prostitution. The owner paid the cashier of the Cesare Battisti Fascist Society 1,000 Lire to ensure that procedures to close the hotel were blocked. Consequently, when the district police pressed for closure to be enforced, the central police headquarters was hesitant to act. When the hotel was eventually closed, the owner paid the

Cesare Battisti Society a further 3,000 Lire, as a result of which it was immediately re-opened.⁴¹

Beyond the sphere of prostitution, it is likely that the rise of fascism gave policemen greater personal empowerment in their relationships with women. The report on the inspection of the police headquarters at Novara in January 1929, presented in the introductory paragraph of the article, illustrates how, beyond the internal indiscipline and professional disruption caused by sexual ‘misconduct’, representatives of an authoritarian state were able to take sexual advantage of members of the female public they encountered during the course of their duties. The report refers to the episode of a communist, G.U., whom one of the main protagonists in the report, Commissioner T.-L., had arrested for subversive activity. The report reads that: ‘Once U. was in T.-L.’s hands, first he subjected him to torture and beatings’. Then, ‘changing register, he started to treat him humanely, allowing repeated visits from his family; this was all because T.-L. had set eyes on the young and intelligent daughter of the prisoner.’ The report goes on to explain how T.-L. tried to seduce the girl by promising help for her father.⁴² The increase in formal police powers which came with the creation of a new Public Security Law in 1926 may partly explain this behaviour. This legislation deprived citizens of legal protection against the arbitrary behaviour of the police.⁴³ The fact that T.-L., who had joined the fascist movement in 1921, evidently enjoyed the support of the Party Federal Secretary during his final posting at Novara, may also have convinced him that he was protected against disciplinary intervention by his commanders.⁴⁴

Apart from the sense of impunity which new police powers and personal alliances with fascists may have encouraged, can we identify a shared sexual culture among police personnel and their fascist associates? Similar forms of sexual behaviour are evident in the accusations which *squadristi* faced during the late 1920s and 1930s of ‘being sexually promiscuous, seducing married women, frequenting “ladies of ill fame” or even running

brothels' as part of the fascist regime's campaign to bring the fascist movement under control.⁴⁵ The above-cited cases of collaboration between police officials and fascists in the running of illegal prostitution and the 'trafficking' of women for the sexual entertainment of police personnel appear to be connected to the sexual culture of the earlier fascist movement, which continued to influence local fascism well into the 1920s. In several cases I have examined, policemen accused of sexual excesses, E.T.-L. and V.G. among them, had supported the fascist movement before the March on Rome. However, it is not easy to ascertain whether these experiences helped to mould their sexual attitudes. In regard to G., alongside the allegations of sexual 'misconduct' he faced in 1927 in Milan, we know that he was accused of benefitting from the protection of the extremist fascist Prefect, Temistocle Testa, while stationed between 1938 and 1943 at the port of Fiume, and that during his posting there he allegedly attempted to seduce Jewish women facing persecution.⁴⁶ This might indicate a kind of predatory attitude fostered by fascist culture in relation to 'enemy' citizens, though such displays were not limited to those who had experienced the early movement.⁴⁷

In the case of T.-L., the decision to sack him may partly be attributed to 'immoral' conduct throughout his career, particularly his relationships with 'women of ill repute', which once led to accusations of rape - though the charges were subsequently dropped. Documents in his file suggest that the fascist movement appreciated his support in their battles against communism before the March on Rome, but, bolstering the image of an undisciplined character, they also illustrate how his ideological ties with local fascist associations led to conflicts of interest, prompting requests for his transfer on two occasions.⁴⁸ We may speculate that T.-L.'s experience of *squadristo* might have reinforced an existing propensity towards sexual promiscuity, and/or that his support of fascism was partly born from shared sexual values and concepts of masculinity and virility. In practice, however, the personnel

files of police officials rarely reveal detailed evidence against which such hypotheses can be tested.

In the absence of more detailed documentation, it appears that where *squadristo* influenced sexual attitudes among police personnel, it often did little more than encourage pre-existing habits. The type of sexual ‘misconduct’ emerging from investigations in the 1920s is in many respects reminiscent of episodes which took place during the Liberal period, though, arguably, it manifested itself in more extreme forms as a result of an enhanced sense of power and unaccountability. The documentation available nevertheless suggests that the rise of fascism helped to accentuate sexual ‘indiscipline’, at least for as long as local fascist organisations were able to wield influence over the police. Such an ‘unhealthy’ ascendancy was the cause of a more general state of indiscipline among Public Security personnel, which not only concerned sex. A report of July 1925 on the police of Campobasso in the southern region of Molise documents, for example, how its commander had faced a punitive transfer after it was revealed that under his leadership the force had been subjected to the interference of the Fascists. Moreover, police personnel, with their commander at the helm, had regularly participated in banquets in the company of leaders of the Fascist Party and Militia. These invariably degenerated into spectacles of drunken revelry, which created a negative impression among the public. While the report makes no reference to sexual ‘misconduct’ on the part of the police officials involved, it is significant that it named two Militia officers considered to exercise a bad influence over the running of the Campobasso police who had previously been noted for misconduct on the premises of brothels.⁴⁹

From the second half of the 1920s onwards, transfers and dismissals appear to have gone some way towards restoring sexual ‘order’ to the police, in line with the ability of the regime to exercise more centralised control over Party Federations in the provinces. Under Mussolini, the sexual lives of police personnel were, theoretically, also affected by measures

to discourage celibacy among male adults in general. As early as December 1926, unmarried men were forced to pay a bachelor tax. After 1937, success in state careers partly depended upon whether the employee was married and the number of children he had.⁵⁰ The regime also intervened to relax traditional restrictions on marriage for lower-ranking Public Security guards. In 1936, the minimum number of years' service for being eligible to marry was reduced from ten to eight, before being dropped altogether in 1939, while the following year the minimum age was reduced to twenty-five.⁵¹

It is not clear how far these new regulations contributed to a 'normalization' of sexual behaviour among police personnel, especially when it is evident that marriage did not necessarily deter policemen from getting involved in extra-marital liaisons. In any case, the conditions of the profession had never been highly conducive to stable marriage, and these did not change under the dictatorship. The quality of life of married police personnel and their families continued to be affected by fairly frequent transfers, which added to the practical and economic difficulties they faced, particularly when they were posted to northern Italian provinces, where the cost of living was high, or to isolated parts of the country. Moreover, evidence from inspections and investigations during the 1930s suggests that if the 'excesses' of the 1920s were less likely to be repeated, heightened police powers continued to allow cases of abuse in the regulation of prostitution, while inspectors remained concerned about the detrimental effects which sexual 'indiscipline' could have on the police service.

An investigation in Liguria carried out in September 1936 epitomizes such concerns. It brought to light the habits of a high-ranking police official, Chief Commissioner E.J stationed in the town of Oneglia. Describing J. as 'work-lazy, professionally mediocre, and an impenitent womaniser who molests married and unmarried women both in his office and outside it', the investigation report provided by Inspector Epifanio Pennetta noted that J.'s office 'is continually frequented by "women of ill repute" (*donnine*) who remain there at

length'. He was discourteous to members of the public unless they were attractive females, and allegedly on one occasion a lady slapped him when he made improper advances towards her in his office. He had also 'morally compromised' his landlady's daughter, the widow of a military officer. Such behaviour made J. unpopular among his colleagues; they were often prevented from conferring with him on service matters, given his occupation with female visitors to the police headquarters.⁵² While such an episode was hardly new to the Italian police, it provides an example of disregard of hierarchical directives and institutional indiscipline at the height of an authoritarian dictatorship thanks to the behaviour of individuals occupying positions of responsibility. In this case, it would appear that such conduct had affected the running of the police headquarters for several years - J. had occupied the post since December 1933 - before it came to the attention of the inspector, suggesting lack of initiative or authority on the part of J.'s commander in Imperia. This episode also raises questions about the ability of the fascist regime to enforce sexual 'normalization' in Italian society, even after the unruly influence of *squadrisimo* had been reduced, given the key responsibility of the police authorities in this task.

Sexuality and police-community relations

As several of the cases cited above have illustrated, in both Liberal and fascist Italy the interference of the police authorities in the sexual behaviour of their men in part reflected a desire to safeguard their public image. Beyond the obvious imperative to uphold the decorum of a state institution, this was particularly important in the Italian policing context, since communities traditionally mistrusted representatives of the law; this was partly a consequence of the high proportion of officers and officials occupying posts distant from their region of origin, who had little contact with the local populace and did not necessarily understand their dialect.

The following case illustrates how the fascist police dealt with grievances arising from the involvement of their personnel in extra-marital affairs, and provides some indication of how far the 'victims' could obtain redress, allowing deeper reflection upon the interface between communities and the fascist state in matters of sex. In the summer of 1934, an affair between a married police employee, A.P., and a 24-year-old unmarried girl came to the attention of the Siena police authority after the girl's brother and uncle confronted P., leading to a physical assault against him. Evidence from the case suggests that the police were concerned to reach an agreement with the family to avoid further scandal. The ensuing report claimed that during the course of an interview at the police headquarters the girl's family expressed the desire that P. (who lived in the same apartment building as the girl) be transferred away from Siena. How sympathetic the police officials dealing with this case were towards the 'offended' family is questionable. Reflecting a cultural tendency to blame women for 'trouble' arising from extra-marital relationships, they presented the girl as being primarily responsible for the affair; P.'s commander alleged that her family 'was not among the most upright', though it is not clear from the documentation what this meant. Moreover, following questioning, the girl, it was reported, had admitted to having accepted P.'s advances in spite of being aware that he was married with children; however, we cannot know the circumstances in which such an admission was made and how accurately the girl's version of facts was interpreted.⁵³

We should consider both the manner in which the girl's family took action against the police and the attitude of the police authorities in dealing with the case in the broader context of the traditional social and sexual subjugation of women which was bolstered after Mussolini came to power. As De Grazia notes, 'the dictatorship sustained and sometimes even reinforced numerous legal measures that treated women as chattels of male and family honour'.⁵⁴ Consequently, women faced higher penalties than men for committing adultery,

which could result in their being sent to prison.⁵⁵ The police officers dealing with the case may have felt that the girl's conduct had offended the honour of the family of their colleague, as much as (or more than) his conduct had offended the honour of her family. The fact that she had knowingly had sex with a married man may have appealed to their sense of what constituted improper female behaviour, nurtured by criminal anthropological writings which associated female sexual 'excess' with 'deviance', thus reducing any powers of negotiation which the 'offended' family possessed. Undoubtedly, the fascist police had the authority to determine the outcome of incidents such as this. Yet, reflecting fascism's reinforcement of family honour, it is telling that within the context of the fascist police state, citizens were not necessarily afraid to confront (even physically) those policemen whom they considered responsible for dishonouring their families, and that the local police authorities imposed transfers in order to go some way towards settling disputes of this nature. P. left Siena in August 1934.⁵⁶

During the period of the dictatorship, the police hierarchy, in assessing the public scrutiny to which their men were subjected at the community level, appears to have been particularly sensitive to fascism's reinforcement of gender distinctions. In July 1941, after an inspection of the police headquarters at Macerata (Marches), a police employee was recommended for transfer on the following grounds:

The office employee G.M. (...) works considerably well, but is loquacious, affected and not particularly sincere. He behaves normally at work. In his private life he is considered a ladies' man, because he is inclined to court every girl he meets, even if he does not know her well, without, however, showing any serious intention of marrying her. His young age and his effeminate manner, in contrast to such a sturdy person, have created doubts in the minds of many as to whether he is normal in regard to his sexual functions. Therefore, in

consideration of the fact that Macerata is a small town where everything is noted and commented upon in varying ways by large numbers of idlers, I propose M.'s transfer to another headquarters, subject to the agreement of the *Questore* himself.⁵⁷

The inspector's recommendation for M.'s transfer appears to be motivated above all by the community's reaction to M., rather than institutional concerns about his sexuality. In the report, the inspector paid notable attention to M's behaviour and mannerisms, and to the local community's reaction, which, however, he implied was excessive (given the part played by a 'large numbers of idlers'). The inspection evidently did not find any proof of M. being involved in homosexual activity and did not recommend that his sexuality be investigated further. Yet, the inspector's willingness to have M. transferred arguably reflects conformity to a political regime which wanted to impose a particular model of masculinity and which intended to repress appearances or open displays of behaviour which contradicted this model. In this regard, the inspector's sensitiveness to how the public contrasted M.'s robust physique with his 'effeminate' manner is particularly telling.⁵⁸

The inspector's treatment of M. in the above case might appear lenient, given the regime's oppression of homosexuals and stigmatization of displays of effeminacy. More generally, the results of the survey of police officials and officers conducted for this research suggest that sexual 'misconduct' or 'abnormality' among police personnel was less likely to be tolerated if it jeopardized law and order measures (such as control over prostitution) or 'offended' the public, thereby bringing the institution and, by extension, the fascist regime, into disrepute. In such instances, higher-ranking police officials were no less immune to punishment than lower-ranking personnel, as some of the cases analysed earlier demonstrate.

When police personnel engaged in 'irregular' sexual habits more discretely, they may have been spared disciplinary measures. In this regard, it is significant that two high-ranking

officials of the fascist police, Carmine Senise, Chief of the Confidential and General Affairs Division, subsequently Deputy Chief of Police, who, following the death of Bocchini, would become Chief of Police at the end of 1940, and Leopoldo Zurlo, responsible for theatrical censorship, managed to survive most of the fascist period, in spite of strong suspicions within the police and beyond of a homosexual relationship between them. Though, as Benadusi notes, they were both unmarried, lived together, and thus represented the opposite of the fascist male stereotype, their exemplary behaviour in public undoubtedly helped to safeguard them against persecution. However, more than anything else, it was their usefulness to the fascist cause, as well as Senise's personal power within the regime, which determined their survival.⁵⁹

Conclusion

During the fascist *ventennio*, the sexual habits of police personnel and the manner in which their commanders dealt with 'misconduct' related to this, as analysed in this article, undoubtedly reflected the longer-term institutional and broader social understandings of sexuality and gender which existed in Liberal Italy and which fascism partly reinforced. Crucially, in the cultural scenario described above, one of the recurrent issues which police commanders had to address during both periods were the sexual 'temptations' offered by prostitution to members of an empowered institution entrusted with its monitoring. While the Italian police authorities had intervened to control the sexual 'misconduct' of their personnel during the Liberal period, there are signs of an intensification of these measures after Mussolini came to power, particularly during the early years of the dictatorship. This partly reflected the heightened responsibilities given to the police in the enforcement of sexual 'order' in Italian society, in response to the regime's demographic imperative.

Sadly, the sources available do not indicate how directly the management of sexuality in the police was dictated by the fascist government, other than when it imposed changes through legislative measures (for example, on celibacy and marriage). Nor have directives from the Chief of Police to Inspectors or *Questori* relating to the regulation of the sexual behaviour of personnel been identified. The extent to which the police fully identified with fascist theories about sexuality in the regulation of their own ranks and in their control over society at large is equally questionable, given fascism's rather haphazard penetration of the policing hierarchy.⁶⁰ On account of their seniority, as case of Giuseppe Cocchia illustrates, the inspectors entrusted with the job of monitoring and regulating the police were usually non-political career figures who were trained and culturally formed during the Liberal period. Nevertheless, it is likely that fascist ideas on female behaviour, prostitution, and homosexuality appealed to the prejudices of police officers and officials.⁶¹ If we exclude the regime's intervention to reverse marriage restrictions, fascist demographic and sexual policies seem to have been largely in harmony with norms which had traditionally governed the attempted internal regulation of sexual behaviour in the police.

Measures to morally 'clean up' the police during the mid-late 1920s were also, arguably, partly the consequence of an increase in sexual 'disorder' brought about by the unruly influence of the fascist movement and Party federations over the police, which the reports of Public Security inspectors reveal. Coinciding with an intensification of police powers which came with the creation of the dictatorship, this inhibited the fascist regime's attempt to control prostitution more rigorously. Once the influence of unruly sectors of the fascist movement had been curbed, however, episodes of sexual 'misconduct' continued. Though these do not appear to have been as frequent or acute as the cases registered in the 1920s, they featured fairly regularly in the reports of inspections and investigations. If they were not dealt with more rigorously, this can be attributed to both lack of resources and

perhaps even a cultural tolerance of such behaviour within some local police commands. The fascist regime's lack of success in 'moralizing' Italian society, at least in regard to heterosexual relationships, may partly be attributed to sexual 'indiscipline' and double standards within the police themselves, as exemplified by cases of subversion of fascism's efforts to control prostitution. The evidence examined in this article suggests that rather than representing the authority of the fascist state, the authoritarian nature of the fascist police not infrequently manifested itself in the increased personal power which individual police officers and officials were able to wield in their relationships with prostitutes, and women more generally. Without intending to minimize the oppressive nature of the fascist police state, especially in its treatment of political dissent, this study does raise questions about the effectiveness of the daily exercise of authoritarian power as a means of socially enforcing fascist policy and ideology.

If the actions of individual police officials might have inhibited the regime's efforts to 'moralize' Italian society, their sexual 'misconduct' arguably reflected the behaviour of many fascists, too. This partly stemmed from an ambivalent fascist model of virility, which previous studies of fascist sexuality have addressed. Opposed ideas represented by the earlier futurist and nationalist movements converged into fascism, the former considering virility as 'an instinctive impulse (...) towards erotic fulfilment and towards the free expression of sexuality', outside the restrictive bounds of marriage and love, the latter interpreting virility as an ability to control one's instincts and passions, with sex being channelled towards procreation within marriage.⁶² The futurist concept was evidently played out in the earlier activities of the fascist squads, and it continued to exist as a cultural undercurrent once the established fascist regime officially strived to sexually discipline men. In this context, tighter regulation of prostitution by the Fascists, whilst part of a 'moralization' campaign, also reflected a reinforcement of pre-existing notions that male sexual urges were stronger than

those of 'healthy' women. Correspondingly, male visits to brothels were condoned, owing to a 'natural' inability to repress sexual desire, as was the sexual initiation of young men before marriage.⁶³ Outside official pronouncements on the new moral order which fascism was imposing, male extra-marital adventures were tacitly admired, as exemplified by the amorous exploits of Mussolini and his *gerarchi*. During the course of his career, the Chief of Police Bocchini was himself involved in a number of affairs.⁶⁴ In such a scenario, the violation of formal rules about male sexual conduct was more likely to be tolerated, making the job of those Public Security inspectors intent upon sexually disciplining the police all the more difficult.

In spite of the scenario described above, the sexual 'misdeeds' registered in the fascist police do not display an obvious break in continuity with the past, though further research would establish this more definitively. Several episodes registered in the fascist police show similarities to the sexual habits of 'first-hour fascists', particularly promiscuous contact with prostitutes and the exploitation of their business. Yet, it is not easy to ascertain how directly policemen identified with the sexual culture of *squadristo*, or how far such a culture influenced them. At face value, there is little that appears specifically 'fascist' about their behaviour. This would confirm the pre-dominant argument in the historiography that fascism above all accentuated pre-existing sexual tendencies among men.⁶⁵ However, it is also likely that during both periods such tendencies were accentuated in an organization like the police in which long-term relationships with women were difficult (owing to marriage restrictions and frequent postings) and in which personnel were often brought into regular contact with prostitutes and more generally empowered over other citizens. In this regard, how representative police personnel were of Italian males as a whole is questionable, given the particular institutional context in which they acted. It would be interesting to see what emerges from a study, focused on the 1930s and early 1940s, of males who were more

directly regimented by the regime, such as members of organizations affiliated to the Fascist Party.

Finally, fascism's sexual subordination of women emerges clearly in the documentation consulted for this study. Moreover, the abuse which a dictatorial regime was able to inflict upon its female subjects is exemplified by the behaviour of male state officials who enjoyed a sense of personal empowerment over women, though, again, here we should not overstress a break in continuity with the Liberal police. In regard to this, beyond the 'misdemeanours' committed, the documentation consulted tells us much about the gendered discourse characterising fascist police institutions. As some of the episodes cited in the article illustrate, the police authorities voiced concerns regarding cases where their men exploited prostitutes. There are also signs that, in the context of the regime's official bolstering of traditional sexual norms, they were prepared to give some consideration to families whose honour had been offended by the behaviour of officers and officials, though this was probably governed above all by their desire to safeguard the reputation of the force. Yet, as several of the inspection and investigation reports reveal, there is little evidence of compassion on the part of the authorities for the women themselves, who were often interpreted as causing trouble in their relations with men or not taken seriously when they were the victims of abuse. Within the confines of the police, such discourse does not appear largely different from that of the Liberal state, suggesting once again the dominance of sexual culture from the past.

¹ The present article develops an earlier analysis of police sexual behaviour and its control which appeared in my monograph *Mussolini's Policemen. Behaviour, Ideology and Institutional Culture in Representation and Practice* (Manchester 2012), notably Chapter 4. The research which contributed to this article was partly financed by two British Academy

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² Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Rome), Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Personale di Pubblica Sicurezza, Affari Generali, versamento 1963 (hereafter ACS, DP-AG, year), b. 170, f. Novara, Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza to Capo Polizia, 6 January 1929.

³ Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Rome), Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Personale di Pubblica Sicurezza, Fascicoli Personale Fuori Servizio, versamento 1949 (hereafter ACS, DP-FPFS, year), b. 358 ter; ACS, DP-FPFS, 1957, b. 19 bis.

⁴ See, for example, Bruno P. F. Wanrooij, *Storia del pudore. La questione sessuale in Italia, 1860-1940* (Venice 1990); Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities. Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis 1996); George Mosse, *The Image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York 1996), Chapter 8; Sandro Bellassai, *L'invenzione della virilità. Politica e immaginario maschile nell'Italia contemporanea* (Rome 2011).

⁵ See Michael Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy* (New York 2011); 'The Persecution of Homosexual Men under Fascism', in Perry Willson (ed.), *Gender, Family and Sexuality. The Private Sphere in Italy 1860-1945* (Basingstoke 2004), 139-56; Lorenzo Benadusi, *Il nemico dell'uomo nuovo. L'omosessualità nell'esperimento totalitario fascista* (Milan 2005).

⁶ See Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde. Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadristum und in der deutschen SA* (Cologne 2002), 660-95; Matteo Millan, 'The

Institutionalisation of *Squadristo*: Disciplining Paramilitary Violence in the Italian Fascist Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 22.4 (2013): 551-73 (563-5).

⁷ See, for example, Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 'Unmaking the Fascist Man: Masculinity, Film and the Transition from Dictatorship', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 10.3 (2005): 336-65 (346-8); Bellassai, *op. cit.*, 89-95.

⁸ For an analysis of reforms to the police after the rise of fascism, see Dunnage, *Mussolini's Policemen*, Chapter 2.

⁹ Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women. Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley, CA 1992), 42-3.

¹⁰ Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe. A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge 2011), 61.

¹¹ De Grazia, *op. cit.*, 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 35, 56.

¹³ The term *casa per artiste* – literally '(female) artists' house' – most probably indicated a 'higher' class of prostitution or a means of concealing prostitution under the guise of professions such as dancers and actresses.

¹⁴ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 167, f. Inchiesta Ispettore Generale Cav. Uff. Cocchia a carico del personale della Questura di Genova (Agosto 1927), Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza to Capo Polizia, 28 August 1927. Other documents in the file reveal disciplinary proceedings against G. following the investigation.

¹⁵ De Grazia, *op. cit.*, 44-5. Marking a return to the strict regulation of prostitutes implemented by the 1860 Cavour Law at the time of national unification, these measures were motivated by fear of not only moral breakdown in Italian society but also the spread of

syphilis. For a detailed analysis, see Mary Gibson, *Born to Crime. Cesare Lombroso and the Origins of Biological Criminology* (Westport 2002), 223-8.

¹⁶ For Cocchia's personal file, see ACS, DP-FPFS, 1957, b. 118 bis.

¹⁷ Bruno Wanrooij, 'Josephine Butler and Regulated Prostitution in Italy', *Women's History Review*, 17:2 (2008), 153-71 (160).

¹⁸ Mary Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy, 1860-1915* (Columbus 1999), 118-26.

¹⁹ Gibson, *Born to Crime*, Chapter 2 'The Female Offender', quotation from p. 62.

²⁰ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 161 bis, f. Inchiesta Tringali sull'ufficio di PS di Piacenza (1913).

Relazione, pp. 42-3

²¹ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 158, f. Relazione Bondi sull'Ufficio provinciale di PS di Cremona, 1 dicembre 2006.

²² Ibid.

²³ Mark Seymour, 'Keystone of the Patriarchal Family? Indissoluble Marriage, Masculinity and Divorce in Liberal Italy', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 10: 3 (2005), 297-313 (301).

²⁴ Ibid., 303.

²⁵ Wanrooij, 'Josephine Butler and Regulated Prostitution in Italy', 163.

²⁶ Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy*, 74.

²⁷ See *Testo Unico del Regolamento pel Corpo delle Guardie di Città* (Rome 1914), esp. articles 195 and 199; Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, *Regolamento per il Corpo degli Agenti di PS, 1931* (Rome 1931), esp. articles 235 and 245.

²⁸ For examples of how the Liberal state dealt with these infractions, see Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy*, 117-18.

²⁹ See Dunnage, *Mussolini's Policemen*, Chapter 4.

³⁰ Article 331 of the 1889 criminal code; article 519 of the 1930 criminal code.

³¹ According to De Grazia (op. cit., 90), under Mussolini rape 'was prosecuted as a crime of honour, and men who seduced minors went unpunished, provided the malefactor either restored family honour (meaning the honour of the father or brothers) by marrying the girl or could demonstrate that the minor had already been "corrupted"'.

³² ACS, DP-FPFS, 1957, b. 322. Typically, the official's personal file does not contain detailed information about the verdict reached at the trial.

³³ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 167, f. Inchiesta Ispettore Generale Cav. Uff. Cocchia a carico del personale della Questura di Genova (Agosto 1927), Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza to Capo Polizia, 28 August 1927.

³⁴ Once they had reached the minimum age and service period, guards still needed to apply for permission to marry from the Public Security authorities.

³⁵ Between 1890 and 1919, the Interior Ministry police force was denominated City Guard (*Guardie di Città*).

³⁶ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 158, f. Relazione Bondi sull'Ufficio provinciale di PS di Cremona, 1 dicembre 1906.

³⁷ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 166, f. Relazione d'inchiesta comm. Ispettore Gen. PS comm. Luigi Poli a carico dei funzionari di Mantova G., R. Questore, M., R. e D.'A., D. Commissari.

³⁸ ACS, DP-FPFS, 1949, b. 271 bis.

³⁹ Benadusi, op. cit., 31.

⁴⁰ Reichardt, op. cit., 678.

⁴¹ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 169, f. Relazione d'inchiesta eseguita dall'Ispettore Generale di PS comm. Cocchia a carico del questore di Milano, Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza to Capo Polizia, 26 July 1928.

⁴² ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 170, f. Novara, Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza to Capo Polizia, 6 January 1929.

⁴³ Paola Carucci, 'Arturo Bocchini', in Ferdinando Cordova (ed.), *Uomini e volti del fascismo* (Rome 1980), 63-103 (72). For an analysis of the Public Security Law of 1926, see Jonathan Dunnage, 'Social Control in Fascist Italy: The Role of the Police', in Clive Emsley, Eric Johnson and Pieter Spierenburg (eds), *Social Control in Europe, Vol. 2: 1800-2000* (Columbus 2004), 261-80 (262-5).

⁴⁴ For details of T.-L.'s career see his personal file: ACS, DP-FPFS, 1957, b. 19 bis.

⁴⁵ Millan, op. cit., 563-4.

⁴⁶ ACS, DP-FPFS, 1973, b. 116 bis.

⁴⁷ In this regard, Ben Ghiat (op. cit., 346-7), notes that fascism encouraged Italian men to 'try their hand at tactics of violence and humiliation that dated from the squadrist years'. In the scenario of the military occupation of the Balkans during the Second World War, this included rape and the forcing of young girls into prostitution.

⁴⁸ ACS, DP-FPFS, 1957, b. 19 bis.

⁴⁹ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 166, f. Relazione d’Inchiesta Ispettore Generale comm. Giuseppe Console sul personale della Questura di Campobasso, Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza to Capo Polizia, 12 July 1925.

⁵⁰ De Grazia, op. cit., 43.

⁵¹ See Decree-laws 450 of 9 March 1936, 385 of 8 February 1939 and 866 of 13 June 1940. For a more detailed analysis of how the police regulated the right to marry of lower-ranking personnel, see Dunnage, *Mussolini’s Policemen*, 120-22.

⁵² ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 174, Relazione d’inchiesta eseguita dall’Ispettore Generale di PS Epifanio Pennetta sui funzionari addetti alla R. Questura di Imperia (Sett. 1936).

⁵³ Archivio di Stato di Siena, Questura, filza 92 (1934), Cat. B.1.b, Funzionari e impiegati di PS trasferiti.

⁵⁴ De Grazia, op. cit., 89.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

⁵⁶ Archivio di Stato di Siena, Questura, filza 92 (1934), Cat. B.1.b, Funzionari e impiegati di PS trasferiti.

⁵⁷ ACS, DP-AG, 1963, b. 178, f. Macerata Questura, 610 Ispettore Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza della Zona to Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Forze Armate di Polizia and Divisione Personale di Pubblica Sicurezza, 16 July 1941.

⁵⁸ The repression of male homosexuals and effeminate men is discussed in Ebner, ‘The Persecution of Homosexual Men under Fascism’, and Benadusi, op. cit. For the repression of transvestism, see Laura Schettini, *Il gioco delle parti. Travestimenti e paure sociali tra Otto e Novecento* (Milan 2011), esp. 191-221. G.M. is the only case which the author of this

article has encountered (from a considerable sample of inspection/investigation reports and personal files) of the fascist police addressing the sexual orientation of an employee.

⁵⁹ Benadusi, *op. cit.*, 285-88. According to Benadusi (286), insinuations against Senise and Zurlo turned into accusations of homosexual behaviour from 1943, when the Chief of Police was suspected of betraying the fascist regime.

⁶⁰ See Dunnage, *Mussolini's Policemen*, Chapter 2.

⁶¹ Ebner ('The Persecution of Homosexual Men under Fascism', p 151), notes, for example, that, with regard to homosexuality, the police 'corroborated the regime's ideology and programme with their own prejudices and views on homosexual criminality.'

⁶² Benadusi, *op. cit.*, 24-34.

⁶³ Wanrooij, *Storia del pudore*, 117-18.

⁶⁴ Italo G. Savella, 'Mussolini's "Fouché": Arturo Bocchini, the Fascist OVRA, and the Italian Police Tradition' (Ph.D dissertation, University of Rochester, New York, 1996), 205 and n. 6. For public knowledge of Mussolini's affairs, see De Grazia, *op. cit.*, 43.

⁶⁵ In this regard, Bellassai (*op. cit.*, Chapters 1-3), illustrates how virilism (and the aggressive sexual oppression of women which this nurtured), though turned into a cult by the Fascists, had its origins in the late nineteenth century.