

*Ines Donati, 'La Capitana': the making of a female Fascist martyr*

The aim of my project at the British School at Rome as Rome Fellow was to research the life of the only identified female *squadrista*, Ines Donati, and the Fascist regime's use of her image in order to construct a female Fascist martyr. Donati was involved with the organized groups of extreme nationalists and Fascists from 1919 to 1922, during the embryonic stage of the Fascist movement, and was one of its most fervent supporters until her death in 1924. For almost ten years she was largely forgotten, only to be then commemorated in the 1930s as a model of Fascist womanhood. With this project I wanted to research a biography of an undoubtedly fascinating, but almost unknown, figure, whose story is notable in itself, and which increases our understanding of the unstable and violent period in Italian history immediately following World War I and of the Fascists' use of commemoration in promoting the legitimacy of the Fascist state. I sought to use her life and the beatification of it by the Fascist regime in the decade following her death as a way to illustrate the shifting position of women in Fascist Italy, as well as the changing use of the concept of virility by the Fascists. I also wanted to lay down an historically accurate but also insightful analysis of her life and posthumous career, so that scholars do not continue to cite her story according to Fascist propaganda.

I was able to achieve my research goals of exhausting the archival material in the time available, mostly in Rome but also in San Severino Marche (Donati's home town) and Florence. My research, however, took longer than expected due to recent state funding cuts that affected many of the archives, and which made my work much slower than when I was doing research for my Ph.D. several years ago. I managed to spend considerable time looking through a range of newspapers and books from the Fascist period relevant to Donati. Although I did not manage to submit a journal article during the nine-month period as hoped, I did write a solid draft of it, and am now editing it and incorporating feedback I received while at the School before submitting it to a journal. I also was able to begin writing a book based on this project, and am currently continuing to work on this draft.

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ROME SCHOLARSHIPS

*Sanctuaries in southern Italy and Sicily in the face of Roman expansion*

Interaction with the gods and their shrines was, inevitably, an important aspect of the Romans' encounters with the Greek world and their conquest of it. My research offers an overview of the phenomenon of Roman contacts with Greek cults and sanctuaries during the Republican period. It exposes the interplay between Rome's multifaceted hegemony, on the one hand, and the enduring strength of Greek religious traditions on the other. Whilst my doctoral thesis