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'It was like something that you have at home which becomes so familiar that you don't even pay attention to it': Memories of Mussolini and Fascism in Predappio, 1922–2010

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Despite the increasing scholarly attention dedicated to the study of reception and memory of Fascism, these issues have not yet been widely addressed from the standpoint of collective memories in specific local contexts. Through a combined use of oral history and micro-history, this study explores the identity and collective memory of Predappio, Mussolini's hometown. Predappio is an emblematic place on account of its 'public' role within the Italian nation as the town of the Duce and, since 1957, the site of neofascist pilgrimages. By looking at memories of people born under the regime from different political orientations, ranging from the right to the left, it concentrates on the local collective memory of Fascism, of Mussolini and of the ongoing post-war cult of the Duce. The article aims to demonstrate both the relevance of local mythologies and the increasing spread of a reconciliatory narrative of Fascism based on traditional values such as family and kinship.

Keywords: collective memory; possessive memory; transversal narrative; local mythology; family ties

Introduction

Since the end of the 1970s scholarly attention has been increasingly devoted to the issues of 'reception' and 'memory' of Fascism.[1] After De Felice's challenge to the Cold War orthodoxy of a regime based exclusively on propaganda and coercion (Santomassimo 2000), the development of 'history from below' (Foot 1998) and the growth of interest in subjectivity have encouraged debate on the complex and dialectical relationship between the people and the regime. Ground-breaking oral history research on the popular memory of Fascism has been produced,[2] in particular Luisa Passerini's (1987) work on the Turin working class, whose focus on subjectivity not only demonstrates the complex strategies of psychological and practical mediation that were adopted, symbolically and in everyday life, but also shows how the boundaries between the 'public' and 'private' spheres frequently became blurred.

In Italy, the political and cultural debates that have arisen from the mid-1990s as a result of the collapse of the so-called 'First Republic' and the ensuing challenge to established antifascist narratives have stimulated more systematic research (Ben Ghiat 1995). New insights have developed from the debates produced by Emilio Gentile's (1993) innovative theory of Fascism as 'political religion' and on the ideological role of 'faith' and emotions (Duggan 2012,

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xi–xxiii). Scholars interested in the role played by the 'aestheticisation of politics' have looked at mechanisms of consent-building through popular culture and cultural modernisation (Gundle 1998; Kim 2009, 332–333). Social historians looking to go beyond Gentile's focus on 'ideology' and 'intention' (Corner 2009), on the other hand, have focused on popular attitudes with a more 'pragmatic' approach (Corner 2002, 2010; Bosworth 2007, 2009). The increasing number of studies in these fields, most of which look at particular localities and social groups (Willson 2002, 1993; La Rovere 2008), have further stressed the role of individual agency and the importance of the 'cult of the Duce' (Fraddosio 1996; Gundle, Duggan, and Pieri, forthcoming), as well as the contradictory, uneven, and fragmented impact of the regime (Ferris 2012). Yet, the examination of popular reception in public and private sources remains highly problematic (Morgan 2004; Baldoli 2012), with some scholars calling for a 'return to subjectivity' (Kim 2009) as the only way to explore the complexity of the psychological and cultural relationship between the people and Fascism.

Since the mid-1990s new research has also delved into the memory and legacy of Fascism. In the wake of the recent wave of 'revisionism' and the crisis of the 'anti-fascist paradigm' (Luzzatto 2004; Del Boca 2009), historians have reflected on the political use of history and on the construction of 'a new consensus' (Crainz 2000) in which a trivialised version of the Fascist past has converged with the demonisation of the anti-fascist Resistance and, ultimately, with the public re-rehabilitation of Fascism. On the one hand, they have pointed out how the political use of history has for long time favoured the persistence of a 'divided memory' (Foot 2011)[3] and failed to produce collective forms of national 'reconciliation' (Germinario 1999; Storchi 2007; Cento Bull 2008). On the other, they have analysed the public agents and methods of propagation of a 'self-indulgent' narrative based on the long-lasting myth of 'good Italian' (Bidussa 1994; Rodogno 2002; Del Boca 2004; Rochat 2005, 2009; Labanca 2009) that, in recent years, has accompanied a political project of 'pacification' based on a relativisation of ethical values (Mammone 2006; Pivato 2007). But these debates have concentrated mostly on theoretical issues rather than on empirical research (Corner 2009), while research has mostly focused on 'public memory': memories – even conflictual – that have been produced by institutional or public agents, such as the media, and have confronted each other in the public sphere (Perra 2010, 17). However, as Confino (1997, 1394) has highlighted, this methodological approach has for a long time ignored the study of 'how the memory of the powerful ... was received by the people'. Memory, he argues, should be considered as a 'multiple product', where 'collective memories' of specific communities and groups are interwoven with public narratives as actors that, simultaneously, represent, receive and contest them.

This article aims to look at the 'reception' and 'collective memory' of Fascism by focusing through oral history on the case study of Predappio, Mussolini's hometown.[4] No systematic research on popular memory has been done since Passerini's 1987 groundbreaking work.[5] Nor have collective memories of specific communities been examined from the perspectives of the different social, political and cultural groups within them. By looking at the past from the standpoint of the present, memory, as Fincardi (2007) highlights, can provide valuable insights into the mindset of a historical period, while at the same time shedding light on the collective 'reception' of public discourses on Fascism in the age of 'revisionism'.

In this respect Predappio is a particularly interesting case-study for a series of reasons. First, because of its symbolic function within the 'cult of the Duce' during and after the fall of Fascism. Second, it is a town that was created[6] for propaganda purposes in the context of a pre-existing socio-cultural identity (the 'red Romagna') as a showcase for the myths surrounding the popular image of the Duce (Proli 1998; Gentile 2002, 127–132). In addition, Predappio is

located in a province where there was a strong Resistance movement (Proli 1999) and which since 1945 has had PCI and left-wing administrations.[7] Finally, as a site of neo-fascist pilgrimages since the return of Mussolini's body in 1957, Predappio has played a particularly significant role in the legacy of Fascism to the Republic and in the memorialisation of Mussolini and more generally of the Fascist regime (Baioni 1996; Luzzatto 2006; Franzinelli 2009). These considerations have made Predappio an intriguing crucible in which memories arising from a variety of political cultures have mingled and reacted, and intersected with a public image of the town imposed by the neofascist cult.

How do ordinary people who were born and were young under Fascism remember their lives in Mussolini's hometown? How have mythologies surrounding the town under fascism[8] and Predappio's changing public role in post-war Italy interacted with local memories of the regime? Have these 'public' mythologies also produced a local 'mythology' (i.e. narratives orally transmitted and presented as part of an exclusive local tradition) in the collective memory of Fascism? And, finally, is collective memory still irreconcilably 'divided',[9] or is it more complex and varied, as well as affected by the recent political and cultural forms of revisionism?

This study aims to address these issues by looking at local representations of Fascism, Mussolini, and the post-war 'cult of the Duce' through interviews carried out in 2008–2009 with some 30 elderly people of various political orientations. Interviewees were selected by the author according to criteria such as age, gender, political militancy, social and geographical origins, while memories were collected through digitally recorded one-to-one interviews. By highlighting the interplay between collective memory and changing public images of Mussolini and Fascism, it aims to illustrate the importance of the local dimension in the reception and memory of Fascism. It also seeks to demonstrate the increasing strength of another kind of memory, 'transversal' to political orientations, in which traditional myths such as that of 'the good Italian' merge with conciliatory 'Catholic values'[10] such as those of pietas, tolerance, forgiveness and the primacy of the family, within a de-fascistised – although subjectively complex – image of the regime.

Predappio: a 'special town'

Most *predappiesi* from the generation born under fascism have collected and preserved 'private archives' (i.e. articles, photographs, postcards) on the history of their town. This points to an intimate link in many people's minds between personal and collective identities. Most of these archives have merely a documentary scope. Yet, as the willingness of *predappiesi* to participate in video recording suggests,[11] they are at the same time part of a subjective negotiation of the 'public' role of their hometown within the legacy of Fascism. Not surprisingly, the relationship they indicate as existing between the town of the Duce and its inhabitants is complex and contradictory – a 'relationship of love and hatred', according to Piersante (born 1930, ex-Christian Democrat and now left-wing Catholic from an urban lower-middle class family) – with suggestions of simultaneous emotional attachment and disengagement.

Most interviews begin with a 'standard' narrative of the origins of the town. Stress is placed on the social consequences of the suppression of the old commune of Predappio (subsequently renamed Predappio Vecchia) and on the administrative reshaping of the province around the new Predappio, undertaken with the implicit aim of enriching the symbolic meanings of the 'Duce's province'.[12] Predappio Nuova[13] was constructed on the site of the former hamlet of Dovia: the house where Mussolini was born and the cemetery where his mother was buried became the focal points for the urban development of a town conceived and built as a site of pilgrimage for Mussolini's personal cult.

People from Predappio Alta – a socialist stronghold since the second half of the century – are generally described as forming 'a close-knit community', in contrast to the less cohesive 'artificial town' of new Predappio (Anna and Augusta, born 1930 and 1934, former Communist activists from a family of day-labourers). Two main themes emerge from accounts of the creation of Predappio, although their meanings differ according to political standpoints. First, a shared sense of the town's 'uniqueness'; second, the relationship between Predappio Alta's socialist culture and the spread of fascism. For people of Communist political orientation, the socialist culture denotes a 'fixed' anti-fascist identity (Passerini 1987, 23–25). As in the case of the Turin working class, the relationship between Fascism and the former socialist tradition is described as a form of 'double violence', physical and cultural (126). This is evident, for example, from the communist sisters Anna and Augusta, and from their brothers Gino (born 1922) and Antonio (born 1926), Communist partisans involved in the local Resistance. In their narratives, stress is placed on crimes committed by the Fascist squads, such as the killing in 1925 of the socialist mayor of the town Antonio Farnesi (a plaque to his memory was placed in the town hall after the end of the war), and also – and in particular – on forms of cultural repression in everyday life. For Germano (born 1921, Communist partisan from a socialist small-holder family from the surrounding countryside), this violence finds a measure of expiation through episodes of symbolic resistance (Fincardi 2007, 79–85) in the 'private' sphere:

> Predappio became forcibly Fascist, although there still were socialists who were Mussolini's former comrades. On May Day, and when [Mussolini] visited Predappio, they were subject to preventive arrest. It was a nightmare on May Day if anyone was caught wearing a red tie! ... It was forbidden to celebrate, even with the traditional *tortelli* [dumplings]. The fascists used to go and check if families were still celebrating. And these families would have someone guarding outside, so that if the Fascists came they could hide the food. There was this tradition of making *tortelli*, and it is still going on today. There had been all sort of violence before, during and after fascism: we were victims too. (Anna and Augusta)

> 'Q: What do you remember of your socialist grandfather?
>
> A: I remember that [under Fascism the old socialists] used to gather in my house because there was wine, everything! And as a child I used to listen to what they said. They said that Mussolini's father, the secretary of the PSI, the blacksmith, was a good man. My grandfather was a friend of his, and not even the blacksmith wanted to talk about Benito! ... He used to tell him: 'You are *crazy*, your father has done a lot for the Socialist party, and now you want to ruin it!' My grandfather and the old socialists would remember these things many times. I was three, four years old (it must have been in 1924–1925). They would discuss things at length and conclude: 'Ah, we are living in bad times!' (Germano)

In this latter account, the alleged comments of Alessandro to his son could only have been fictional, as Alessandro died in 1910, before Mussolini left the PSI. However, its significance lies exactly in its mythical and fictional nature: it indicates that the socialist counter-myth of Mussolini as 'crazy, violent, and traitor' (Gentile 2002, 118–122) had entered into oral tradition. Such testimonies are also consonant with a typical left-wing interpretation of fascism as an evil 'parenthesis' – the regime as 'slave of the bourgeoisie' in the words of Germano – that never enjoyed 'real' popular support (Zunnino 2003, 391–458). As far as this issue is concerned, however, there are generally very significant socio-cultural and political differences in memories between Predappio and the surrounding countryside. This is due to the fact that about 1500 workers from Milan and its hinterland moved into Predappio, attracted in particular by the establishment of a plant of the Caproni aircraft company in 1934 and more generally by the regime's broader socio-economic plans for the town. This resulted in an infusion of ideas that

had a strong impact on the former political culture, as the former Christian Democrat Piersante explains:

> In Predappio there were new people. I went to school in Bertinoro, which was in the other valley with villages such as Predappio Alta, Fiumana (which still has a strong Republican tradition), Meldola, Fusercoli, Santa Sofia – where [Leandro] Arpinati and [Nicola] Bombacci were born. And you could feel much deeper political feelings there.

In short, Predappio was much more exposed to the 'contamination of Fascism', as Germano put it, than the other rural areas of the province.[14] In the Communist narrative, therefore, Predappio's 'uniqueness' is accordingly a result of its 'artificial' character – a terminology used to invalidate a possible counter-identity that implicitly contradicts the Communist version of the relationship between the regime and the people.

But this version of the relationship between fascism, Predappio's socialist culture and the town's 'uniqueness' is a minority one. More prevalent is a generally shared narrative that has become part of a sort of 'local mythology' and which is reported by people of different political persuasions on both the right and the left (ex-MSI militants, ex-Christian Democrats, ex-Socialists and ex-Social Democrats). This narrative privileges a strong continuity between Mussolini and the local socialist culture through friendship and family ties, and is highlighted by reference to a shared use of dialect. As both Valdes (born 1924, from a socialist small-holder family), local Social Democratic leader, and Luigi (born 1934, from a lower-middle class family), ex-Socialist militant, highlight:

> Predappio Alta was all socialist! Mussolini came in 1924–1925 when there was a socialist meeting at Predappio Alta. He gave a speech and said, as a challenge: 'So, where are the old socialists?' The audience was made of his old friends and acquaintances. And someone shouted: 'Benito, we all are here with you!' ... This is because Mussolini and his father had organised important fights to obtain a threshing machine. So all the old socialists followed him – because they had faith in Mussolini and his father. (Valdes)

> My father was born in 1906 and his father and Mussolini were regulars at the Osteria del Moro [i.e. the socialist base in Dovia], and my dad was baptised by Mussolini and wrapped in the socialist red flag. He poured a glass of red wine on his head and said: 'I baptise you in the name of the proletariat!' ... My father was Mussolini's god-son. ' (Luigi)

These references to the socialist tradition may be a sign of the 'fuzziness' of Fascist ideology which was later to encourage distorted interpretations of what Fascism stood for (Eco 1995).

Yet these memories are also strikingly in line with one of the first constructions of the 'public memory' of fascism at the outbreak of the Cold War. Within the institutional silence of the Christian Democratic governments and the strong continuity of political and administrative personnel (Duggan 1995), 'moderate' magazines such as *Oggi* and *Gente* often produced a trivialised version of Mussolini's revolutionary past, using, for instance, revelations by family members, and in particular his widow Donna Rachele, about his private life (Baldissini 2008).[15] This encouraged an 'indulgent' representation of him as a 'benevolent' dictator and of Fascism as a 'mild dictatorship'. In these memories the narrative of Mussolini's socialist past is fused with the most crucial element of the Fascist myth of Predappio, namely that of the Duce as 'a man of his people', something repeatedly stressed in biographies,[16] postcards and tourist guides,[17] weekly reports on pilgrimages in local newspapers,[18] Luce Institute documentaries,[19] textbooks and publications for children.[20] These myths, in short, coalesce into a shared narrative in which 'continuity' not of a political but of a personal kind is highlighted. Ironically, even Communist memories report the tale of someone known as 'Maletta' – a socialist friend of Mussolini who could openly call him '*voltagabbana*' (traitor) without being arrested – which

implicitly confirms the widespread image that Predappio was 'unique' due to its family ties with the dictator.

In these politically 'transversal' narratives, the socialist discourse is not so much 'interrupted' (Gribaudi 1987) as distorted. In contrast to what occurs in Communist accounts, the socialist counter-myth of Mussolini is deprived of its original meaning and is subjected to a degree of trivialisation – as in the words jokingly addressed by his socialist friend to Mussolini – so as to convey a sense of privilege stemming from personal proximity to the dictator. This coincides with a common interpretation of the inter-war regime as – in the words of Valdes – 'a kind of Fascism, that at Predappio was grounded in the centrality of family and kinship ties rather than on political faith'. Yet, within this wide-ranging group of memories the situation is far more complex, especially in cases, such as those of Valdes and Piersante, where the underlying political stance is one of strong antifascism. This is shown by the desire – indicative, perhaps, of a complex subjective negotiation of earlier compromises with the regime – to establish a certain ideological distance by defining local Fascism in terms of kinship rather than of politics.

Everyday life in Predappio: Fascism and Mussolini

A third collective interpretation of Predappio's 'uniqueness' emerges from descriptions of everyday life under Fascism. This meaning is denied by those of Communist background, but is once again shared by people with right-wing sympathies and by the varied group of those with politically 'transversal' orientations. However, only in right-wing memories is it given an ideological inflection, as evidence of the national pride, efficiency and popularity produced by Fascism. In the majority group of 'transversal' memories, this third sense of 'uniqueness' has a merely material meaning. It highlights the social benefits and work opportunities that the new economic investments in Mussolini's hometown provided, in a rural area traditionally badly hit by the scourge of unemployment. As Dina (born 1924, from a local small-holder family, former Carponi employee and ex-Christian Democrat voter) and Piersante emphasise:

> Everyone had a job! With the [establishment of the] Caproni aircraft factory, 1500 people came to Predappio from all over Italy. This is because there were no white-collar workers here, only peasants. And these white collar workers from Milan made the town rich. Some families provided them with lunch, others kept them as lodgers. Whole families would be squeezed into one single room so that other rooms could be let, as there were no hotels here. Even the poorest people used to provide two or three people with lunch, and could earn money. (Dina)

> Predappio was my hometown. It was new. There was everything. There was the home of the *GIL* [Gioventù Italiana del Littorio]; we used to go to the cinema; there was the football pitch; there was everything! All things that people from other places did not have. I was one of the first boys to go to the primary school [i.e. the primary school established within the Santa Rosa church, run by the *Orsoline* nuns from 1927]. And later you could see what difference it made being at school. We villagers from Predappio, we already knew how to hold a pencil. The kids from the countryside, they didn't. (Piersante)

Interestingly, these memories describe everyday life under Fascism exclusively in non-political terms, with the focus on either material conditions or popular culture. Schools, cinema, football, popular festivals etc. are the constituent elements of a sense of 'uniqueness' linked to the practical and cultural advantages of belonging to the Duce's hometown.[21] This is particularly true in the case of female memory, where 'being from Predappio' is directly related to the leisure opportunities offered by work or ceremonies as a new form of emancipation and visibility in the public sphere (Willson 2009):

> Q: What do you remember of the years when Mussolini was in power?
>
> A: Ah, every memory is beautiful when you are twenty years old! Forget about politics. We were young women with jobs, and every time we went out people would say: 'Ah, you are from Predappio!' We were employed at the Caproni aircraft, where the singer [Ferruccio] Tagliavini came and gave us a concert. We were all in the front seats, and didn't have to pay. And then the *Carro dei Tespi* [popular theatre company] came to Predappio, and we were all there watching free.... You can imagine, being a young woman in your twenties, with all those young 'foreign' employees around! This was just a rural area, and then aircraft officers came along, wearing uniforms. And uniforms have always had a certain effect on young women! (Dina)

As mentioned above, not all the testimonies support the idea that welfare measures and populist cultural activities (Gundle 1998) were the main means through which Fascism achieved 'a form of acceptance of its domination' (Passerini 1987, 131). The accounts of Communists as well as of people living in the countryside outside Predappio highlight poverty, clientelistic discrimination and displays of everyday 'rebelliousness' against the demands of the regime, particularly on the part of women. Germano and the sisters Anna and Augusta, for example, recall mothers preventing their children from attending Fascist demonstrations and refusing to wear 'ridiculous' *Massaie Rurali* uniforms. When it comes to attitudes to the regime, most politically 'transversal' memories are also complicated by ambiguous (in suggesting contradictory views) uses of irony and references to youth. Almost every reported memory of this kind makes reference to youth, but not, as in right-wing memories, with the intention of highlighting the ideological fervour of the Fascist revolution (Baldissini 2008, 73–90); or, as in Communist memories, with the aim of underlining an ethical aspiration to 'social justice' that led to militant antifascism.[22] In the most depoliticised (and female) cases, such as that of Dina, 'youthfulness' constitutes the 'true' object of nostalgia and coexists with the 'good' image of the regime. In other cases, it is used instead as a metaphor for 'ingenuousness' and 'indoctrination' and is, therefore, implicitly employed as justification for the necessary and uncritical acceptance of the regime. In (male) memories, for example, school parades at the time of important rallies are described either as 'tedious' or as 'holidays' that allowed time off school. Accounts of Fascist pilgrimages to the town – that became a mass phenomenon once Predappio was furnished with the essential facilities from the later 1920s, with peaks of 15,000 pilgrims in one day in the second half of the 1930s – concentrate on the economic opportunities afforded, such as selling postcards, while simultaneously emphasising the large number of people involved (to convey a sense of Predappio's prestige at the time) and the 'organised' nature of the events. Memories also highlight comic or absurd aspects of official events. Piersante, for example, recalls the steps placed on the balcony of the town hall to allow the 'short' King to be visible to the crowd below during his visit in 1938. He also makes fun of the zeal of pilgrims who 'followed the cult' (thereby distancing himself from them):

> Visitors tried to avoid the warden's control and pick up some of the corn leaf stuffing from the mattress. They thought it was the bed Mussolini used to sleep on, while in fact it was all fake! So the mattresses had to be stuffed again from time to time to keep them in shape. This is the cult of personality. But we were not interested; we were interested in playing.

These memories are also interesting for the light they shed on the promotion of the Mussolini's cult among the masses, and the manner in which it combined political mobilisation with opportunities for recreation and travel (Serenelli, forthcoming). In the case of Predappio, however, politically 'transversal' memories tended to dismiss the ideological aspects of the cult.

As in common revisionist readings of the regime (Santomassimo 2000, 425), Valdes described – and trivialised – Fascism as a sort of '*operetta*, not an *opera*', with which ordinary

people made an accommodation for practical rather than ideological reasons. The situation is further complicated by the ideological heterogeneity of this group of memories. Valdes's acceptance of his past compromises with the regime, for example, is based on a left-wing interpretation of Fascism as being without mass support combined with a stereotypical view of Italians as people pragmatically adept at simply getting by. In the most depoliticised cases, such as that of Dina, the view is that 'all Italians' supported the regime 'of necessity' (Corner 2002, 325) given the lack of alternatives and the 'new' socio-economic advantages being provided.

Yet, the collective emphasis on the 'difference' between the *predappiesi* and the 'pilgrims who followed the cult' has another contradictory significance. It suggests that the local immunity from the cult of the Duce was not just due to youth and ideological detachment, but also to the fact of belonging to the Duce's hometown. The underlying idea, once again, is that of a unique proximity to Mussolini based on kinship and family ties. As Valdes explains: 'It was like something that you have at home which becomes so familiar that you don't even pay attention to it.'

This attitude is also evident in local descriptions of Mussolini. With the sole exception of Communist memories, recollections are unanimously 'possessive'.[23] They are built on an oral tradition (Querel 1954; Emiliani 1984) of everyday-life stories – again reported in dialect – about the intimate relationship between the local people and the future Duce:

> I have a photo with the three wet-nurses who raised Mussolini. One of them was my grandmother. We knew that Mussolini took this picture so he could take it with him to Palazzo Venezia.... My grandmother used to sit outside and knit with the other old women, and he would stop and say: 'Morning, Rosina!' He kept up a strong relationship with the old people he knew from his childhood. (Piersante)

These images of familiarity with Mussolini are in apparent contrast to the idea of the Duce as somebody of mythic character who would rarely be encountered directly. Mussolini is described as an all-seeing 'superman' who 'suddenly appears, slipping out of sight of his bodyguards' (Leo, born 1921, former *Bersagliere* officer and MSI [*Movimento Sociale Italiano*] secretary in the 1950s). Episodes such as a 'caress'[24] received, as a child, from him are always remembered as special. In general, Mussolini is represented as somebody who provided succour and support – for example distributing money to the poor and youth organisations – in keeping with the 'man of Providence' of popular mythology (Gentile 2002, 127–139). Only in Communist memories and the memories of those from the surrounding countryside is his 'humanity' and intimacy with the local population contradicted by references to his military 'ambitions' and 'dishonest' appropriation of public goods. But in general the emphasis on Mussolini's proximity to his own people – a central element in local propaganda under the regime itself – remains widely accepted.

Yet this sense of familiarity relates principally to Mussolini's relatives rather than to the Duce himself. Mussolini's relatives are in fact the only concrete figures in many of the narratives: his children – whom most remember having played with – his wife, Donna Rachele, and other members of his family involved in local administration. The latter, among whom, for example, was Mussolini's nephew, the local PNF secretary, provide the main targets for accusations of nepotism under the regime (Imbriani 1992). Donna Rachele, once a controversial figure (Emiliani 1984, 52), features prominently as an everyday-life acquaintance who in the years after the war exchanged jokes with people and evoked such feelings as affection and 'pity'. Dina, for example, refers to her as 'la *purell*' (the poor woman), as 'she was even denied a civil pension by the State'. The prominent role of Donna Rachele and Mussolini's relatives is also interesting in relation to the symbolic architecture of the cult of the Duce. Predappio's function

as a symbolic 'surrogate' of Mussolini's image (Passerini 1998, 210–212) could only operate in his absence: in practice Predappio formed a sort of 'personal feud' administered by his family and kin.

In summary, representations of everyday life, Fascism and Mussolini contain different strands of memory with complex and contradictory meanings. In Communist memories, and in the recollections of those from the surrounding countryside, images of Mussolini and Fascism are still unequivocally 'evil' (Passerini 1987, 126; Fincardi 2007), with irony being used as a double-edged weapon to convey a sense of absolute otherness and conceal shame at past compromises with the regime. By contrast, memories from ex-MSI militants are the only ones that give an ideological inflection to the sense of Predappio's 'uniqueness' and to the prosperity and privileged role the town enjoyed under the regime.

On the other hand, in the larger and variegated group of politically 'transversal' memories, ranging from moderate to socialist, this sense of privilege is associated with merely material aspects. But the dominant view of Predappio's uniqueness is the sense of 'proximity' with Mussolini through his family and relatives. This might be due in part to the small scale of the town, and the fact that personal links and everyday contacts often helped to soften political divisions. Yet it is also a distinctive trait of a local collective narrative, where the accent on the Duce's private life (and its familiarity to the local people) replaces the memory of political violence. The long-lasting myths of 'Mussolini *buonuomo*' and propaganda images such as 'a man of his people' seem to have merged with the ethical priority of 'family' and traditional Catholic values such as compassion and forgiveness (Levi 1997). A local 'possessive' memory has emerged where Mussolini, rather than as the Duce of Fascism, is described as a 'fellow countryman'.

Coping with the 'cult of the Duce': 1957 onwards

As Jedlowski (2001) highlights, memory is a 'process' influenced by 'external' historical changes. The 'indulgent image' of fascism in Italy has had a long gestation reaching back to the immediate post-war period (Baldissini 2008). Yet it would have struggled to find public expression in the context of a hegemonic Communist culture of the kind that prevailed in Predappio until some 20 years ago.[25] As Piersante testifies, since the 1980s narratives have been deeply influenced by the 'new' climate of public rehabilitation of Fascism:

> ****'s father was an old republican from **** and was the local petrol station's owner. When pilgrims stopped to ask where San Cassiano cemetery was, he used to send them to the Rocca San Casciano, miles and miles away! ... And now his son has been on television to say that his father was Mussolini's barber!! But it's not true!

Exploring Predappio's collective identity, therefore, requires putting the 'possessive memory' into perspective by looking at how it has been affected by Predappio's shifting role within the national landscape as the site of neo-fascist pilgrimages. How do the old *predappiesi* remember the different phases of the post-war cult of the Duce, with Predappio becoming first an object of national shame and to be forgotten (Baioni 1996), and then a site of public recognition (and commercialisation) of the 'other memory' of Fascism?

Despite some isolated cases as early as 1946,[26] the post-war cult of the Duce began with the return of Mussolini's body in 1957. As Piersante testifies, before this time it was almost impossible for 'those who still defined themselves as fascists' to attend commemorations – such as the mass for 'the soul of Benito Mussolini' held by his family in 1947:[27] the Resistance movement and the ensuing PCI hegemony in the province had been too strong (Proli 1999).[28]

The return of Mussolini's body in 1957, when the *predappiese* Adone Zoli was prime minister, took place on a hot day in the vacation month of August in an 'attempt to keep the event quiet' (Luzzatto 2006, 207). Accounts come mostly from ex-MSI militants, such as Sergio (born 1933), a relative of Donna Rachele, son of Mussolini's nephew and local secretary of the PNF. His recollection revolves mainly around details, such as the smell and other details about Mussolini's body, but also engages with journalistic reports such as that published in *Oggi* magazine.[29] In these circumstances, the victimised tones typical of right-wing memory (Tarchi 1995; Germinario 1999; Cento Bull 2009) are replaced by a sense of redemption of a 'besieged' identity centred on the symbolic role of Mussolini's body.

> At some point Rachele said: 'I want to see inside [the wooden box with Mussolini's body]!' So it was opened ... and there was such a smell! In *Oggi* magazine there was a picture of Rachele with a tissue and the heading below 'Donna Rachele cries'. But it was just the smell! ... At the end the [public officer] Agnesina said: 'Now he's yours. But you must bury him.' And I replied: 'No, now he's ours and we'll do what we want.' I knew that there were lots of people outside, and I wanted to display him in the shrine above the crypt.... Vittorio [Mussolini's son] asked me to check the issue of the shrine with the local administration [for at that time it did not belong to the Mussolini family but was a public famedio], but I took charge and said: 'We have him now and we do what we want.'

The right-wing emphasis on the presence of 'many people' is countered by Communist memories of a limited attendance and ironic speculation as to the real content of the wooden box (to diminish the body's symbolic value). Most of the narratives repeat in a light-hearted vein the words pronounced by the then Communist mayor – 'we didn't fear him when he was alive, we won't fear him now that he is dead' – to conceal a shared sense of defeat. Interestingly, memories from the politically 'transversal' group also tend to underplay the relevance of the event. Yet, while a sense of anxiety was implicit in the 'silence' with which the event was officially surrounded (Luzzatto 2006, 206–209), 'silence' in these memories is accompanied by a sense of private *pietas* and justice at the return to the family, in the words of the former Socialist, Luigi, of 'a dead body'.

With the beginning of nostalgic pilgrimages, Predappio became a source of national embarrassment and a site of 'dispute' between neo-fascists and left-wing groups. On the one hand, the Communist 'fathers of the Resistance' were adamant in their defence of Predappio's anti-fascist identity. On the other, former Fascist militants and those who were nostalgic for the regime regarded Predappio as the 'place' for the recognition of a self-identity that was otherwise clandestine and 'persecuted'. In the 1970s the situation was further complicated by the presence of the New Left (mainly *Lotta Continua* in the local area) and some younger neo-fascists from radical groups.[30] During this time Predappio was the object of bitter clashes between opposing groups, with roadblocks organised by Communists and former partisans and episodes such as a small bomb detonated in front of the tomb of the Duce in 1971.[31] Yet, only Communists and those on the right have retained clear recollections of them (and not those of politically 'transversal' orientations). The former underline the strength of the Communists, perhaps as a form of compensation for the 'defeat' that followed their loss of identity (Fincardi 2007), when, at the beginning of the 1980s, it first became clear even at the local level that anti-fascism was losing its status as fundamental national value. The Communist partisan Antonio, mayor of the town between 1970 and 1975, recalls:

> Fascists used to come from outside, and we used to stop them with roadblocks: there had been a strong partisan movement here, and the ex-partisans would come from Forlì and other local areas. When fascists came on special dates, it wasn't easy to keep public order. I was the mayor then, and I used to remind the neo-fascists that Predappio wasn't a boxing ring, and warned the local MSI that

> I held them responsible. So there were physical clashes: once they provocatively came to the local headquarters of the PCI with flags and clubs. When they realised that they were losing the fight, they said they'd wait for us at the *Rocca delle Caminate* [at Donna Rachele's restaurant]. We gathered in a big group, lots of cars, because it wasn't right that they came here to be provocative. And later the bar was destroyed.

Memories from the perspective of local administration (like the one above) are interesting for assessing official strategies for containing the public impact of the neo-fascist cult of the Duce (the shrine above Mussolini's tomb, for example, was sold in 1975 to Donna Rachele to solve the problem of its state ownership). Some of these memories have a slight tendency to minimise the scale of these political disputes, possibly with the implicit aim of suggesting that they had the situation under their control. The same tendency can be found among ex-MSI militants, perhaps because of their role in the local policing of the cult of the Duce, given the generational radicalism of the new right-wing groups. There is a striking difference, however, between Communist and right-wing memories on the one hand, and most of the politically 'transversal' memories on the other. As far as the latter are concerned, even ex-police officers like Marzio recall that 'nothing much ever happened in Predappio' (born 1930, former *Bersagliere* soldier from a peasant small-holder family, socialist sympathiser). This may perhaps be due to an implicit comparison being drawn with the terrorist violence in the major Italian cities in the 1970s (as well as to the 'difficult' memory, and silences, surrounding those years [Cento Bull and Giorgio 2006]). Yet, the emphasis on Predappio's 'traditional tranquillity' mirrors the institutional interdict of silence laid on the town after the Second World War. Memories instead concentrate on issues such as post-war poverty and the difficult economic recovery, or mundane public events such as the marriage of Sophia Loren's sister to Romano Mussolini in 1962.[32]

These differences between the various strands of Predappio's collective memory parallel reactions to the phase of the cult of the Duce after 1983.[33] Celebrations for the centenary of Mussolini's birth were held in Predappio and in other Italian towns with committees organised by Mussolini's offspring (Vittorio in particular). Predappio was filled with neo-fascists, both old and young, for the first time since the end of the war, more in a spirit now of nostalgia tourism than of ideological militancy (Franzinelli 2009). A postmark recording the event was even available at the local post office (although it had to be quickly withdrawn), and the first commercial objects appeared, such as a bottle of local *Sangiovese* wine with a Mussolini portrait and the label '*L'Innominato*' (the unnamed). Since then further developments have occurred. In 1998, at the same time as they were tackling the vexed question of the restoration of Fascist buildings of architectural value[34] (with the aim of establishing Predappio in the public imagination, as a cultural site rather than a site of neofascist cults),[35] the left-wing (PDS) administration authorised the opening of three souvenir shops. The aim, according to Ivo (born 1954), mayor of the town in 1994–1998, was to 'stop the illegal selling of gadgets' that since the early 1980s had developed in front of the San Cassiano cemetery;[36] but now the items on sale include not just flags, T-shirts, lighters, cups, statues and calendars and 'black wine', but also clubs and swastikas (Roghi and Tantillo 2011; Berard and Picas 2012) – which were 'made illegal' with a 2008 decree (Franzinelli 2009).[37] At the same time, the administrative programme to make Predappio a centre of 'historical debate' led to the creation of a permanent 'urban museum' of fascist architecture: this and other exhibitions on the fascist *ventennio* have been held in Mussolini's *casa natale* (the house where Mussolini was born) since its reopening in 1999.[38] Another kind of 'museum', however, is more appealing to a black tourism, which since the mid-1990s has registered a significant increase. In 2001 a 'Mussolinian' entrepreneur from Milan and friend of Romano Mussolini, Domenico Morosini, bought Mussolini's local residence

Villa Carpena and transformed it into a 'museum for historical knowledge' (Domenico, born 1942). The villa houses numerous relics, including a mirror with a mysterious profile of the Duce hidden in the glass, and offers guided tours by neo-fascist volunteers (Roghi and Tantillo 2011; Berard and Picas 2012).

In conjunction with a Lefebrian neo-fascist priest called Padre Tam (who has been suspended from administering sacraments), Morosini monopolised and transformed the features of Mussolini's cult. Celebrations of anniversaries, such as the March of Rome and Mussolini's birthday, are held on the nearest Sunday in order to allow the widest participation. Since 2004 a huge wooden cross is carried by hand in procession from Predappio's main square to the cemetery, where a collective recitation of the rosary is held and a sermon delivered by Padre Tam in front of the tomb of the Duce. The celebrations end with a Sunday lunch in the entrepreneur's own *trattoria*. The spiritual essence of the cult is symbolised by the wooden cross (which, according to Domenico, 'celebrates the roots of our own culture'), and receives explicit political content in the violent xenophobia and racism of Padre Tam's sermons. The type of neo-fascist attendance has seen a significant shift in recent years. A number of the older supporters of fascism have rejected these rituals as mere commercialisation and historical distortion, and they have been replaced by right-wing fringes 'disillusioned' by the AN (*Alleanza Nazionale*) leader Gianfranco Fini's 'betrayal'.[39] The younger generation of pilgrims ranges from general admirers, including families, to militants in myriad radical right-wing groups.[40]

The reaction of Predappio's older citizens is one of generally uniform dislike of these new forms of neo-fascist visibility and their 'loud exhibitionism'. This is not true, though, for some people of right-wing political orientation, such as the sisters Anna and Maria (born 1934 and 1935, secondary school teacher and civil servant), who regard this new neo-fascist presence as an act of 'justice and redemption' after 60 years of historical marginalisation by the hegemonic left-wing version of history, which they finally find rectified in Giampaolo Pansa's (2003) books. But most *Salò* veterans, such as the former *Bersagliere* officer and MSI secretary Leo, are annoyed by the display of 'uniforms and silly gadgets' by young people that 'don't have a clue about Fascism'. But the group that is most hostile to this neo-fascist exhibitionism and commercialisation is that with Communist traditions, who recall relatives who have been killed by Fascist violence and the 'martyrs' of the Resistance. Ex-partisans such as Germano, Antonio, his brother Gino and the sisters Anna and Augusta regard as 'outrageous' administrative initiatives such as the reopening of the *casa natale* as a site for historical exhibitions. Their anger is linked in large part to frustration at the 'loss' of the public defence of a collective (i.e. national) identity based on the values of anti-fascism. Finally, attitudes within the group of politically 'transversal' memories vary according to the different political orientations and degree of politicisation. Most are irritated by the 'uniforms and clubs' and the souvenir shops that give Predappio its 'new' external image, but only those with strong anti-fascist views, such as Piersante and Valdes, denounce this development in ethical terms. In all the other cases, the annoyance is directed at illicit or disruptive behaviour, such as disturbances of the town's peace. The neo-fascist cult of the Duce, as long as it is 'respectful', is accepted as a matter of 'tolerance' and regarded simply as an expression of different political ideas.

Conclusion

By concentrating on the collective memory of Mussolini's hometown, this article has demonstrated the relevance of a local dimension and its intersection with changing public discourses about Mussolini and Fascism. While collective memory has been heavily 'divided'

since 1945, with the Communist narrative differing markedly from others, a politically 'transversal' narrative has emerged, which has gained increasing influence in recent years and mirrored the shift in Predappio's symbolic role in relation to the national past.

Oral history analysis has shown that 'ambivalences' in popular memory of Fascism (Passerini 1987) increase when a variety of socio-political groups is taken into account. Only Communist narratives and those of peasant small-holders in the local countryside maintain an explicit sense of ideological divergence. In these cases the emphasis on repressive violence converges with local socialist traditions and with an image of Mussolini generated by left-wing counter-mythology. In memories of ex-MSI sympathisers and of some of the least politically engaged – generally from the urban middle and lower-middle classes – Fascist welfare and economic policies, and forms of cultural modernisation, serve to generate a positive image of the regime. Only in right-wing narratives, however, is this nostalgia ideological. Most of the politically 'transversal' memories from people of different political traditions and social backgrounds (ranging from peasant small-holders to urban lower-middle class elements) highlight forms of ideological detachment and focus on non-political elements (e.g. the local cinema, the football pitch, the local school, *OND* [Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro] opera concerts and dances on the occasion of Mussolini's birthday). These accounts would appear to confirm traditional Cold-War accounts of a 'superficial' relationship between Fascism and the people.

The subjective approach, however, has highlighted complex and contradictory aspects of popular attitudes to Fascism. These include not just the acceptance of certain aspects of the regime and the rejection of others, but also, and most notably, the lasting influence of cultural myths elaborated during and after the end of Fascism. In the dominant politically 'transversal' narrative, myths that have been long established in the public memory of Mussolini and Fascism, such as those of '*italiani brava gente*' and of '*Mussolini buonuomo*', have mingled with earlier images of Predappio to create a 'possessive memory' of Mussolini as a 'fellow countryman' and of a town that was 'unique' due to its personal ties with the dictator. Even in memories most inspired by an anti-fascist ideology, personal ties with the family of the Duce lie at the heart of an apparently detached – but ultimately 'de-fascistised' – vision of the regime. Once again Mussolini's image comes across as 'positive, ambivalent, mythical' (Passerini 1998, 3). In recent years, however, a significant shift has occurred within the local memory of Fascism, with growing acceptance of an 'indulgent' view of the regime – a view that has spread from the 'moderate' sector of the Italian population (Baldissini 2008) across the political spectrum.

What is, however, the deep meaning of Predappio's 'possessive memory' and sense of 'uniqueness' as Mussolini's hometown? Can it be considered a collective reaction to the 'shame' and 'silence' that fell on the town after the Second World War? Is it just a product of Predappio's 'mercenary attitude' (Valdes) towards the economic advantages of the Duce's cult? Or – as would seem to be the case – is it part of the increasingly prevalent image of Fascism and Mussolini that has arisen out of the crisis of the 'anti-fascist paradigm'? Historians reflecting on the public memory of Fascism have highlighted how a trivialised image of the dictatorship, reinforced by the complementary 'silence' of the main political forces during the Cold War and national stereotype of Italians as 'good people', has laid the basis for new political uses of history, with the demonisation, since the 1990s, of the anti-fascist Resistance and the public rehabilitation of Fascism. Within this framework, (self-)forgiveness, compassion, solidarity and victimhood are dominant values: ideals that are typical of a Catholic political model based on informal compromises among fragmented interests and on hierarchical social relationships (Levi 1997, 63). Predappio's politically 'transversal' memories have appeared as being strongly

informed by these cultural values, with an image of Mussolini as a 'protective' and merciful dictator and of social solidarity at the basis of a (locally) 'mild' dictatorship.

Out of this 'Catholic' political model, according to Levi, has grown a society with 'limited responsibility'. This is evident not just in social relations but also in the collective relationship with the national past. The ex-MSI militants and sympathisers may be the only ones fully to embrace the revisionist narrative as a form of 'redemption': for most of Predappio's old generation anti-fascism is still a political value with resonance. But the use of 'selective memory' (Ventresca 2006) to obscure the record of political violence and brutal civil crimes, and the replacement of the ideal of participative democracy with compromise and particularism, can only result in 'national reconciliation' of an alarming kind.

Notes

1. Reception here is defined, in Kate Ferris's (2012, 2) words, as the ways in which ordinary Italians 'received the messages – ideals, values and policies – which the regime intended to transmit to them'.
2. In particular Gribaudi (1987) and Passerini (1987).
3. This definition derives from most oral history works on the memory of the Resistance. For relevant bibliography see Storchi (2007); Willson (2004); Parisella (2000), 319.
4. This study has been carried out between within the AHRC project 'The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians, 1919–2005'.
5. Another relevant oral history study that dedicates a chapter to the memory of Fascism is Fincardi (2007). However, interviews were carried out in 1987–1989.
6. Predappio was built from scratch from 1923 as a site of pilgrimage on the place of the former village of Dovia, with the house where Mussolini was born on the one edge and the cemetery where his mother was buried on the other. This operation required an administrative reorganisation with the merging of territories such as the towns of Predappio and Fiumana, the former of socialist and the latter of republican tradition.
7. De Maria and Dogliani (2007).
8. On the genesis of the image of the Romagna region as '*Terra del duce*' and on Predappio's symbology as a showcase of Mussolini's popular origins and traditional family values see Proli (1998); Serenelli, (forthcoming).
9. Within the article the definition 'collective memory' refers to the Predappio community, with specific reference to the generation born under Fascism. When specified, it refers to particular groups within the larger local community, as in 'Communist memory'.
10. Cf. Foot, J. 2012. "Memory Wars in Italy: History and Methodology." Paper presented at the Modern Italian History Seminar 'Memory Wars in Italy, 1799–2012', London, 23–24 May 2012.
11. Some of the interviewees were re-interviewed in July 2009 for the realisation of a documentary (Roghi and Tantillo 2011). Video recording implies a wider 'public' exposure of interviewees than audio recording. On some methodological issues see Sipe (2009).
12. Together with the territory under the administration of the new commune of Predappio Nuova, the whole province of Forlì was re-shaped to include symbolic territories such as the Fumaiolo mountain with the springs of the Tevere river. This process went on in parallel with the cultural construction of the myth of the '*Terra del duce*' from 1923. See Dogliani (2003), 414.
13. The name 'Predappio Nuova' was given to the new town in order to distinguish it from the old Predappio, which was then renamed Predappio Vecchia. In 1927 'Predappio Nuova' was renamed 'Predappio' and 'Predappio Vecchia' 'Predappio Alta'.
14. On the local spread of Fascism see Proli (2007), and Pasetti (2006). See also Palla (1997).
15. See the collection of articles in Pensotti (1983). On these issues see also Franzinelli (2009).
16. See among the most popular Beltramelli (1923), Sarfatti (1927), and Mussolini ([1931] 1961). On the construction of the myth of Mussolini through his biographies see Passerini 1998.
17. On postcards see Balzani and Proli (2003). Among the tourist guides see Ente Provinciale Turismo (1934), Ceccarelli (1937), and Ufficio Propaganda Predappio (1940).
18. News on pilgrimages and donations was reported weekly in *Popolo di Romagna*, consulted from 1923 to 1943.

19. See in particular Archivio Istituto Nazionale LUCE, 1925. *Omaggio nazionale alla casa del Duce: cerimonia a Predappio* (in course of digitalisation); Emmer, L. 1941. La Sua Terra, D029201. A large number of LUCE documentaries and *cinegiornali* were produced on Predappio featuring pilgrimages and the edification process, including some Mussolini's visits. For a full list see http://www.archivioluce.com/archivio/ (consulted November 2012).
20. See for example *Libro della terza classe elementare*, 1934, cited in Passerini (1998), 212, and 'La casa del duce', *Corriere dei piccoli*, 43, 1934. Poster presented at the exhibition *Il fumetto di propaganda in Italia dalle origini al 1945*, Predappio, 12 July–12 October 2008.
21. See Dogliani (2009).
22. This is a common narrative among the local communist militants and former partisans, such as Anna's and Augusta's brothers Antonio (born 1926) and Gino (born 1922), who were initiated to clandestine Communist militancy by working-class comrades in the Caproni factory in 1940–1942. For similar narratives on the transmission of the socialist tradition see Fincardi (2007), 86–100.
23. On the concept of 'possessive memory' see Foot (2010), 104.
24. See the *Sentimenti* sent to the *Segreteria Particolare del Duce* from Predappio's schoolchildren in ACS (Archivio Centrale dello Stato), SPD (Segreteria Particolare del Duce), C.O. (Carteggio Ordinario), B. 264, F. 11807, 1–2.
25. See for example Emiliani (1984), where the author attempts to demonstrate his father's anti-fascism.
26. ASFo (Archivio di Stato Forlì), Prefettura, B. 442.F. 28 and F.'Ordine Pubblico'.
27. Ibid.
28. On this episode and on the mobilisation of local communists see Letter to the Minister of Interior, 28 Aprile 1947, ASFo, Prefettura, B. 442, F.'Ordine Pubblico'. As most of the local partisans testify, however, in the 'town of the *Duce*' it was initially difficult to establish Resistance and PCI (Italian Communist Party) cells.
29. See Luzzatto (2006), 208. Together with the *Oggi* magazine's issue, Sergio has preserved several unpublished photos that he refused to sell to the journalists as a matter of respect towards Donna Rachele.
30. On the new generational approaches to the memory of Fascism see respectively Forgacs (1999) for the New Left and Ferraresi (1995) for the neofascist groups. See also Tarchi (2003).
31. News about a bomb on the tomb of the Duce reached also the national press. See "Bomba alla tomba del duce" (*La Nazione*, December 13, 1971).
32. Magazine articles on mundane events concerning Mussolini's family are often preserved in private archives. In Marzio's collection, articles such as "Alessandra Mussolini sposa a Predappio" (*Oggi*, October 28, 1989) are kept together with other ones discussing the public role of the town and the phenomenon of black tourism, especially from 1989. This shows the interviewees' concern with, or at least interest in, the debate on the changing public role of their hometown.
33. See also Franzinelli (2009). This *cesura* in the dynamics of the post-war cult of the Duce is also marked in memories of most interviewees.
34. While debates on re-use of fascist building date back to the mid-1970s, concrete administrative initiatives were promoted at the beginning of the 1990s. The restoration of some of the main buildings within an interregional project of architectural re-evaluation of 'foundation towns' was finally realised in 2008. See Camera dei Deputati, *Proposta di legge no. 1611: Norme per la conservazione e il recupero del patrimonio monumentale di Predappio e della Rocca delle Caminate*, September 24, 1992; Donati, C. 2004. "Se il duce diventa un bene culturale." *Il Resto del Carlino*, July 1, and Rinieri, R. 2008. "Nascono le città di fondazione." *Corriere di Forlì e* Cesena, September 25.
35. Cf. 'Predappio deve diventare il paese della memoria e del confronto'. Intervista al sindaco Ivo Marcelli', 2004. *Il Resto del Carlino*, April 26.
36. Cf. 'Un insolito commercio a Predappio: saldi alla fiera del Duce', 1989. *Carlino estate*, July 23, in Marzio's private archive.
37. On attempts to regulate the illegal phenomenon of gadget selling see also "Gadget del Duce, multe e sequestri." *Romagna Corriere*, August 28, 2003 and Cappelli Q. "Stop alle parate e al bazar davanti alla cripta del Duce." *Resto del Carlino*, November 1, 2006.
38. On the re-opening of the *casa natale* see "Oltre 10 mila visitatori alla casa natale Mussolini." *Il Nostro Comune*, July 30, 1999.
39. Groups of pilgrims have been interviewed during their pilgrimages in these recurrences and in other ordinary days between October 2008 and July 2009. See also Roghi and Tantillo (2011).

40. Between 1994 and 2006 there were peaks of c.10,000 participants at each of these commemorations, with a slight decline in 2006 and 2008. Cf. Comune di Predappio, *Rassegna Stampa* (consulted for the years from 2002 to 2008). An increase in radicalism and number has been registered for the 90th anniversary of the March on Rome on 28 October 2012 (see http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/tag/predappio, accessed October 30, 2012).

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