

martyrs. In the Vatican archives I read witness testimony gathered from places as diverse as Nagasaki, Goa and Zaragoza. For my original martyrs of Gorkum project this wider set of sources helped me to identify factors that set the Dutch martyrs apart, and to realize what their beatification actually was: an attempt to regulate and control a cult that had grown too big to be stamped out. That insight, plus visits to a host of other church archives — including those of the Inquisition — offers the beginning of an answer to the question with which I started: the thirst for new saints was, in fact, a dangerous thing. By resuming saint-making the papacy unleashed forces that it struggled to control.

These are questions that I hope to explore as part of a larger research project in conjunction with the British School. Whatever the outcome of those future external grant applications, I am very grateful to the BSR for its generosity. My Balsdon Fellowship proved to be an exceptionally enriching experience not just for my research, but also for me.

JAN MACHIELSEN

(School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University)

Machielsenj@cardiff.ac.uk

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000193

Visual cultures of landscape in the Fascist imaginary

During my fellowship, I began a major project on how art and visual culture informed the politicization of the Italian landscape during the period of Fascist rule (1922–43). From the claiming of the mountain landscapes that had been nationalized by World War I, to the discourse of internal colonialism that framed land reclamation projects, and the projection of overseas imperial ambitions onto the country's extensive coastline, Italy's land mass was appropriated by Fascism in both concrete and symbolic terms. To investigate the function of landscape for Fascism, my research focuses on works of art and visual culture, which were central to the regime's new model of image politics. In bringing landscape into dialogue with art and visual culture, my aim is to create new knowledge about the role of both nature and images in Fascism's political project, and thus to ask new questions about the nature of Italian Fascism itself.

To examine the proliferation of visual media under Fascism, my research analyses a wide range of visual objects, from picture postcards and illustrated magazines to mosaics and mural paintings. By considering the public and the monumental alongside the intimate and the everyday, my research explores the extent to which visual media shaped and staged Fascist conceptions of the Italian landscape. As such, my three months at the BSR were focused on identifying and studying primary visual sources across this range of objects. In Rome, I consulted period magazines and tourist literature in library and archive collections, as well as works of landscape art *in situ* and in museums. With the support of research funding from the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies at the University of Nottingham, I was able to undertake a series of short research trips from Rome to Florence, Milan, Palermo, Rovereto, Trento and Venice. These allowed me to visit site-specific works and to study at first hand a very wide range of landscape art in temporary exhibitions and museum collections.

Alongside the study of primary visual sources, the fellowship allowed me to undertake bibliographic research to develop the interpretive framework of my project. I consider key features of the Italian landscape and their representation in light of Fascist discourses of regionalism, nationalism and environmental determinism, which associated people with place in the service of racial politics. Aerial perspectives on the landscape are read as markers of the cultural fascination with aviation, as well as its increased military uses. The politicization of the mountains is considered through the creation of national parks and the promotion of alpine sports. Fascism's privileging of productive nature is studied through the championing of both traditional and modern forms of cultivation. The association of water with cleansing and control is examined in structural and social engineering projects, from the building of aqueducts to the holding of children's summer camps by rivers and lakes. Coastal landscapes are seen as spaces where new concepts of leisure merged with ideas of imperial expansionism modelled on the ancient Roman past. Framing the project as a whole is the overarching discourse of reclamation, which came to define the regime's attitudes to nature, culture and race.

The research undertaken during my tenure as Balsdon Fellow has revealed the extent to which representations of the Italian landscape appeared in the visual media of the Fascist era. It has also established the importance of art and visual culture in mediating the regime's discourses of people and place. These findings have both confirmed the original aims of my project and demonstrated the need for further research to realize its full potential. I have been awarded a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship to complete the research for this project and the writing of the monograph that will result from it. My time at the BSR has been instrumental in advancing this project and will continue to shape my research for years to come.

LARA PUCCI

(Department of Cultural, Media and Visual Studies, University of Nottingham)

lara.pucci@nottingham.ac.uk

HUGH LAST FELLOWSHIP

doi: 10.1017/S006824622300020X

The Roman imperial sententia and the transmission of thought from antiquity to the Renaissance

The practice of declamation in the first century AD was defined by its epigrammatic style: a reliance (some would say over-reliance) on pointed, punchy one-liner conclusions to every expression of an idea. These were called *sententiae* and they shaped rhetorical expression from declamation and oratory to historiography and epic. Earlier scholarship has seized on the negative comments from ancient sources and has seen in the *sententia* a symptom of decline, where speakers strive for extremes of style and distort the sense of what they say. But more recently scholars have reevaluated declamation as a form of speaking which mediates important issues of power, authority, identity and justice. In this light, the *sententia* deserves reassessment as a way of packaging and disseminating thought.

In early imperial Rome, *sententiae* were valued as attractive, glittering expressions which encouraged the audience of declamation to gather them in personal collections of