

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SWASTIKA AND THE FASCIO LITTORIO:
CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ITALY AND GERMANY IN
THE INTERWAR PERIOD, 1919-1938

20-21 October 2022
Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici, Rome
Fondazione Luigi Einaudi onlus, Turin

On the 100th anniversary of the “March on Rome”, the *Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici* and the *Fondazione Luigi Einaudi* jointly promote a one-and-a-half-day conference to shed new light on the dense web of cultural relationships between Italy and Germany in the interwar period, 1919-1938.

The idea stems from a well-known essay dating to the late 1980s, in which Jens Petersen interpreted the *Kulturabkommen*, signed on 23 November 1938, as one of the fundamental preliminary steps towards the so-called *Stahlpakt* that Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were to sign in May of the following year¹.

Although the largely ancillary nature of that agreement cannot be denied, it is nevertheless interesting to note that, on that specific occasion, both regimes aspired to legitimise their projects for the radical renewal of the international order based on an alleged cultural and ideological harmony. However, this does not alter the fact that, in the context of an alliance that was soon to assume highly competitive connotations, each of them did not hesitate to openly claim its own cultural primacy.

On such basis, the conference intends to investigate reciprocal influences, exchanges and cultural confrontations between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, looking at their evolution before 1938 and contextualising their genesis in the complex re-establishment of relations that began in the early 1920s.

The conference will be divided into three sessions, respectively devoted to: a) the various PERSONALITIES – from Robert Michels and Giuseppe Bottai to Werner von der Schulenburg and Erwin von Beckerath – who played a leading role in the Italian-German

dialogue in the 1920s and 1930s; b) the INSTITUTIONS – from the Petrarca Haus in Cologne to the Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici in Rome – that promoted cultural exchanges between Italy and Germany; c) the major POLITICAL-CULTURAL ISSUES – from those posed by the *Konservative Revolution* to those raised by fascist corporatism – around which the confrontation between the two countries was animated.

The organisers are inviting original papers that encourage discussion and, at the same time, provide an in-depth analysis of the cultural relationship between Italy and Germany.

Scientific Committee: Elisa D’Annibale (Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici), Federico Trocini (Fondazione Luigi Einaudi onlus), Brunello Mantelli (University of Calabria), Elisabeth Galvan (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

Other Institutional Sponsors: Villa Vigoni - German-Italian Centre for the European Dialogue and To-Europe Centro Studi sull’Europa (TO-EU) del Dipartimento di Culture, Politica e Società dell’Università degli Studi di Torino

How to participate:

The conference will take place on 20-21 October 2022 and will be hosted by the Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici in Rome (Villa Sciarra). There are no registration fees for this conference.

Scholars (not only historians, but also political scientists, sociologists etc.) interested in participating are invited to submit a paper (20 minutes) by sending a 300-words abstract with a title and a short biography by Sunday **29 May 2022** to Elisa D’Annibale (dannibale@studigermanici.it) and Federico Trocini (federico.trocini@fondazioneinaudi.it). The outcome of the selection process will be announced by 15 June. The working languages of the conference are Italian, German and English. A good knowledge of at least two other languages, in addition to one’s own, is appreciated. In the event of emergencies related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference may be held online.

¹ J. PETERSEN, *Vorspiel zu „Stahlpakt“ und Kriegsallianz: das deutsch-italienische Kulturabkommen vom 23. November 1938*, in «Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte», Jg. 36, H. 1, 1988, pp. 41-77.