

Preface and acknowledgements

This book is the fruit of a major research project which dates back to the 1990s, but which was predominantly undertaken between 2003 and 2010. The project was inspired by the relatively limited attention which historians of fascist Italy have given to the role of the regular police forces in running the dictatorship. Studies of fascist repression have more often focused on the activities and personnel of Mussolini's secret police organisations, such as the OVRA (*Opera Vigilanza e Repressione dell'Anti-fascismo*, tasked with uprooting clandestine anti-fascism), or have tended to consider the regime's police measures from the perspective of the victims. The early phase of the project was, therefore, concerned with examining how the regular forces of the Interior Ministry Police and *Carabinieri* (military police) controlled and interacted with Italian society during the dictatorship. After a preliminary survey of documentation of the Interior Ministry held at the Central State Archive in Rome, I undertook a detailed case study of the policing of Siena. My choice of the Tuscan town and province was motivated by the fact that, unlike most provincial archives, the Siena State Archive holds a full collection of documents of the Prefecture and *Questura* (provincial police headquarters) dating back to the fascist period. These sources also revealed a wealth of information relating to the internal hierarchies of the police forces, allowing me to go some way towards reconstructing day-to-day work inside Siena's police headquarters, as well as the lives and careers of officials and officers who served there. This inspired the second phase of the project, which is the main focus of the present volume. While continuing my work on Siena, I also started to examine the notable quantity of police literature (journals, newspapers, manuals, regulations, etc.) kept at the National Library in Florence. This enabled me to analyse Italian police culture in the context of Mussolini's 'fascistisation' of the Italian state. I then proceeded to embark on a more thorough investigation of the recruitment, training and working lives of members of the Interior

Ministry Police during the fascist years. For this purpose, I returned to the Central State Archive. My work in Rome focused on analysing the contents of a sample of personal files of police officials and employees whose careers spanned or overlapped with the period of the dictatorship. I also made use of a wide range of other documents which illustrated how the hierarchy and internal organisation of the Interior Ministry Police were managed during the dictatorship.

A large amount of the material in this volume is previously unpublished. Parts of the volume incorporate content from earlier articles and book chapters arising from the project, though these texts have not been directly reproduced. A preliminary survey of Mussolini's police appeared in 'Social Control in Fascist Italy: The Role of the Police', in C. Emsley, E. Johnson and P. Spierenburg (eds), *Social Control in Europe*. Vol. 2, 1800–2000 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), pp. 261–80. I am grateful to Palgrave Macmillan for allowing me to re-use material originally published in an overview of police personnel, 'Mussolini's Policemen, 1926–43', in G. Blaney, Jr (ed.), *Policing Interwar Europe. Continuity, Change and Crisis, 1918–40* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 112–35. Some of the content of the book was briefly summarised in 'Italian Policemen and Fascist Ideology', *The Italianist*, 31:1 (2011), 99–111 (www.maney.co.uk/journals/ita; www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/ita). Parts of Chapter 3 regarding the case-study of Siena originate from my article, 'Surveillance and Denunciation in Fascist Siena, 1927–1943', *European History Quarterly*, 38:2 (2008), 244–65 (SAGE Publications Ltd: www.sagepublications.com), and a paper given at the international conference, 'Gli spazi della polizia. Un'indagine sul definirsi degli oggetti di interesse poliziesco', held at Messina, in November 2006, which will appear in a forthcoming volume edited by Livio Antonielli (published by Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, Italy). The inspections of the fascist police, analysed in Chapter 4, are the subject of a short essay, '“A sufficienza, ma senza letizia”: The Performance of the Fascist Police in the Reports of the Public Security Inspectors', in G. Talbot and P. Williams (eds), *Essays in Italian Literature and History in Honour of Doug Thompson* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 125–32. Chapters 3 and 4 also make use of material from an earlier summary of the findings of my research in 'Des fervents de “L'État totalitaire” aux tenants du “quieto vivere”: le personnel policier dans l'Italie fasciste', in J.-M. Berlière, C. Denys, D. Kalifa and V. Milliot (eds), *Métiers de police. Être policier en Europe, XVIII^e–XX^e siècle* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), pp. 509–21. Parts of my analysis of the recruitment and careers of fascist policemen originally appeared

in ‘Ideology, Clientelism and the “Fascistisation” of the Italian State: Fascists in the Interior Ministry Police’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 14:3 (2009), 267–84 (tandfonline.com). Parts of [Chapters 6](#) and [7](#) were first published in ‘Surviving Fascism; Narrating Fascism; Transferring Fascism: A Preliminary Investigation of the Evolution of Italian Police Culture from the Dictatorship to the Republic’, *The Italianist*, 29:3 (2009), 464–84 (www.maney.co.uk/journals/ita; www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/ita).

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