

Marco E. L. Guidi

Università di Pisa

marco.guidi@unipi.it

Rosario Patalano

Università di Napoli "Federico II"

rosario.patalano@unina.it

Abstract

**“Breaking down the Ivory Tower”:
economic culture in Italian academies during the Fascist regime**

On the level of high culture, Fascist Italy gathered the complex and rich legacy produced by pre-unification political division which had favored the development of deeply differentiated local intellectual traditions. A richness and a variety that for the regime certainly constituted an obstacle for the process of integral *Fascistisation* of the Italian society, to which universities, academies and various institutes of high culture could not escape. This contribution aims to outline the role of economists in the field of high culture institutions, in the areas of autonomy still granted by the dictatorship in the process of construction of the totalitarian state and the consent machine. The goal is to understand if in the shadow of the protection provided by the academic Ivory Towers and in the closed up of exclusive intellectual forums, economists maintained an attitude of Nicodemitic ambiguity, or instead they brought to the fore issues of consensus and propaganda or, on the contrary, they were critical of the fascist regime, even implicitly. The role of economists in the high culture institutions during the Fascist regime has been largely overlooked by historiography, even the most careful: this paper attempts to fill such lacuna. The analysis focuses mainly on the most eminent economists, members of the Accademia de' Lincei, also considering their position in local academies.