

# DISSONANT HERITAGE: DECODING THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF RATIONALIST ARCHITECTURE IN FASCIST ITALY

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Modernist architecture in fascist Italy, unlike in the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, was not perceived as unworthy. Quite the contrary, rationalist architecture became a part of state propaganda. According to Marco De Michelis, Mussolini was aware of the great potential hidden in the connection between modernism and imperial monumentality. At the same time, the issue of ethic values of architecture was discussed. In 1931 Pietro Maria Bardi openly admitted: “Fascist architecture and fascist town planning are in need of moral intervention. Everything in the way of architecture should be rigorously supervised and screened and strict judgement should be made in the name of the idea of moralization in Italy envisioned by Mussolini”.

Mussolini’s architectural policy was a complex phenomenon. Marcello Piacentini’s buildings in Rome were monumental architecture of power. Whereas, on the other hand, rationalist architects designed much smaller, modern buildings across the entire Italy (for example, Homes for Mother and Child or post offices). Although modernist buildings did not have many details with symbolic meaning, they clearly fulfilled the program of the Fascist Party. Richard Ettl called them “the secular churches of the Fascist state”. Nowadays, the architecture of the fascist era appears to become a dissonant heritage. Its specific architectural code impacts on the process of preservation and/or destruction. Although these buildings frequently have a high artistic value, the historical aspects weigh on their present state.

KEYWORDS: modernist architecture, Italy, fascism, dissonant heritage.

John Ruskin in the middle in the nineteenth century as well as totalitarian leaders in the twentieth century were convinced of the exceptional political significance of architecture and its potential in propaganda. Its impact was noticed by both democratically elected people’s representatives and totalitarian leaders. Benito Mussolini, among others, was one of those who were convinced of

the extraordinary significance of architecture in the life of a country and society, and he expressly called architecture “the biggest of all arts”<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Emil Ludwig, *Rozmowy z Mussolinim*, Warszawa: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze Rój, 1934, p. 196.



1. Palazzo del Governo in Bologna,  
photo by Blazej Ciarkowski

Valdžios rūmai Bolonijoje

The Italian dictator perceived the art of shaping space as one of the tools of shaping citizens. Particular buildings as well as entire urban projects were supposed to become the stage for a fascist political spectacle. Unlike in Hitler's Germany and Stalinist Russia, fascist aesthetics was heterogeneous by nature. It combined traditional and avant-garde elements. It was simultaneously elitist and egalitarian<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, it is impossible to negate the connections between Italian pre-war modernism and fascism. At present, this difficult relation triggers numerous research questions. How should the

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Affron, Mark Antliff, *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 17.

architecture of those times be understood? How to build a specific narrative around it? How to preserve the values embedded in particular buildings having in mind the problematic contents they hold?

## MODERNISM AND FASCISM

“We are made for tasks,” – this is how Mussolini defined one of the objectives of the activity of the fascist party PNF (Partito Nazionale Fascista – National Fascist Party)<sup>3</sup>. It was a quick, complex modernization of Italy. Fascists took over the doctrine or architectural activism from Italian futurists<sup>4</sup>; however, it was a common characteristic of all avant-garde movements. “The closer the work is adjusted to the times in which we live [...], the more [the minds – note B.C.] will be modern, the more modernism they will have”, wrote Polish avant-garde artists in the 1920s<sup>5</sup>. Modernism was supposed to be the solution for current problems; it was to lay the foundation for the bright future in modernity. “Modernism is the current moment”, wrote Szymon Syrkus in 1926<sup>6</sup>. His words are surprisingly in line with the above quote by Mussolini.

We should reject a somewhat ingenuous conviction that rationalists began to play with the regime primarily for the sake of good art. On the contrary, Giuseppe Terragni, Adalberto Libera, or Giovanni Michelucci were loyal members of the fascist party. Filip Bruno even believes that it was the representatives of rationalism rather than conservative designers who were sincerely devoted to the fascist ideology<sup>7</sup>.

Avant-garde architects and politicians were additionally united by the common goals. Ernesto Rogers alleged

<sup>3</sup> Filip Burno, *Spektakl i modernizacja. Miasta włoskie w okresie faszystwu 1922–1945*, Warszawa: Fundacja Kultura Miejsca, 2016, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> Jakub Wujek, *Mity i utopie architektury XX wieku*, Warszawa: Arkady, 1986, p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Filip Burno, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

that if modernism was a revolutionary movement, fascism was the revolution, and a fascist country's architecture should be modernist by nature in a way<sup>8</sup>. In 1931, calling for the moral renewal of Italian architecture, Pietro Maria Bardi addressed the Duce directly: "Fascist architecture and fascist town planning are in need of moral intervention. Everything in the way of architecture should be rigorously supervised and screened and strict judgement should be made in the name of the idea of moralization in Italy envisioned by Mussolini"<sup>9</sup>. Such statements as the following one, taken from *Report on Architecture*, appeared simultaneously: "The young ones appeal to Mussolini to rectify the sorry state of architecture today. The young ones expect M. to respond to their appeal... For M. is always right".

#### MODERNITY AND TRADITION

Mutual relations of the avant-garde architects and fascist authorities were a complex phenomenon subject to the specifics of the construction politics of the country under the reign of Mussolini. When analyzing the relations between modernism and totalitarianism, Piotr Juszkiewicz alleges that "totalitarian regimes did not reject any formula of artistic language a priori as they were interested in its utility"<sup>10</sup>. Thus the avant-garde trends represented by the rationalists from Gruppo 7 coexisted with the conservative "Roman school" gathered around Professor Marcelo Piacentini. The dualist nature of the addressed themes was also distinct – from monumental architecture of power (for example, university buildings in Rome or EU) to small-scale projects, "social" in nature

<sup>8</sup> Dennis Doordan, "The Political Content in Italian Architecture during the Fascist Era", in: *Art Journal*, 2, 1983, p. 127.

<sup>9</sup> Pietro Maria Bardi, *Petizione a Mussolini per l'architettura*, "L'Ambrosiano" 14.02.1931, after: Marco De Michelis, "Fascist Architecture in Italy", in: *Back from Utopia. The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, ed. Hubert-Jan Henket, Hilde Hanyen, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002, pp. 88–89.

<sup>10</sup> Piotr Juszkiewicz, *Cień modernizmu*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2013, p. 11.



2. Casa del Fascio in Ravenna,  
photo by Blazej Ciarkowski

#### *Casa del Fascio* Ravenoje

(such as Casa della Madre e del Bambino – Homes for Mother and Child scattered around the entire Apennine Peninsula)<sup>11</sup>.

The Duce, however, urged architects "not to be afraid of being brave"<sup>12</sup> and never took a clear position in matters of aesthetics. "Fascist art should be traditional and modern at the same time", he said<sup>13</sup>. He willingly referred to Vitruvian architectural values which were supposed to be symbols of the country's durability, stressing the importance of their usefulness (*utilitas*) and firmness (*firmitas*).

The affirmation of the past caused modernism as an architectural movement to come closer to fascism on the basis of objection to illumination which, in its turn,

<sup>11</sup> Krzysztof Nawratek, *Ideologie w przestrzeni Próby demistyfikacji*, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, pp. 53–54.

<sup>12</sup> Filip Burno, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

activated mythological thinking, alleged Mark Antliff<sup>14</sup>. Even though the modern movement was dominated by rationalism, its creators were also familiar with the symbolic approach and creative reaching for tradition. It is sufficient to mention the achievements of Le Corbusier, which were undeniably influenced by the architecture of ancient Greece and the Apollonian myth representing the dual nature of the world. Mentioning Le Corbusier is not accidental at this point. Antliff stresses that in the 1920s his urban concepts were met with positive reactions among the French fascists who praised Plan Voisin<sup>15</sup>. The designer himself, however, saw the possibility of putting to life his wide-ranging plans in the authoritarian regime<sup>16</sup>.

Fascism was “both a rupture and a return, at once a reassumption of a historical legacy and the transcendence of that very legacy”<sup>17</sup>. Both Diane Ghirardo and Richard Ettl stressed the relations between rationalism and fascist ideology which oscillated between modernity and traditionalism. Like Mussolini, avant-garde artists “straddled modernity and tradition” as Ghirardo claims and finds echoes of the Roman Palazzo Farnese in the plan of Casa del Fascio in Como designed by Terragni<sup>18</sup>. Even if we omit historical connotations suggested by Ghirardo, it is difficult not to notice the ideological

meaning of Terragni’s building. Limiting it to a mere example of rationalism in architecture and a local perception of the idea of the modern movement (which H.-U. Khan attempted to do, among others<sup>19</sup>) while completely leaving out the political meaning of the work is erroneous. A glazed building with a visible structure of reinforced concrete is a literal manifestation of the words of Mussolini who described the fascist country as a “glass house”. The transparent headquarters of the PNF in Como symbolized the transparency of the state structures visible to the citizens<sup>20</sup>.

#### ARCHITECTURE AND THE PROGRAM OF MODERNIZATION OF ITALY

Architecture was an extraordinarily important part of the project of modernization of Italy. Mussolini said: “You shall give houses, schools, gardens and sports grounds to the working fascist people”. The task of the designers, both avant-garde and conservative, was to put those postulates in practice.

Analysis of selected centres from a single Italian province, Emilia-Romania, shows how far fascist construction politics changed the landscape of cities and towns. At the same time, it allows to evaluate the state of preservation of the objects and diverse conservation strategies as well as the interpretation of the difficult legacy of Mussolini’s era. The Emilia-Romania province itself occupied a special place in the fascist mythology. This is where Roman patricians took shelter from barbarian hoards during the migration period<sup>21</sup>. This is also where the Duce was born in July 1883.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism. The Mobilization of Myth, Art and Culture in France 1909–1939*, Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Antliff, *La Cite Francaise: Georges Valois, Le Corbusier and Fascist Theories of Urbanism*, p. 135–137.

<sup>16</sup> Emilio Gentile, “The Conquest of Modernity: From Modernist Nationalism to Fascism”, in: *Modernism/Modernity*, 3, 1994, pp. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey T. Schnapp, “Epic Demonstrations: Fascist Modernity and the 1932 Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution”, in: *Fascism, Aesthetics and Culture*, ed. Richard J. Golsan, Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Diane Ghirardo, “Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist Role in Regime Building”, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 2, 1980, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> Hasan-Uddin Khan, *International Style. Modernist Architecture from 1925 to 1965*, Koln: Taschen, 2009, pp. 42–44.

<sup>20</sup> Trevor Garnham, *Architecture Re-assembled. The Use (and Abuse) of History*, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 140.

<sup>21</sup> Monika Milewska, *Bogowie u władzy: od Aleksandra Wielkiego do Kim Dzong Ila: antropologiczne studium mitów boskiego władcy*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2012.

One of the permanent elements of the image of the new world drawn by Mussolini was the local headquarters of the fascist party. More Casas del Fascio were built in metropolises and small towns. Despite the fact that their forms and scales were different depending on the project author and the spatial context in which the building was erected, all of them invariably played the dominant role.

In the centre of Predappio, Mussolini's hometown, opposite the parish church, a large Casa del Fascio building, designed by Arnaldo Fuzzi, was constructed in 1934–1937. The building combines modernist and classical elements in a way that is characteristic of Italian projects of the 1930s. A simple two-storey block with rounded corners has a clearly accentuated entrance portico and its elevation is enlivened by deep cavities that function as a travesty of a classical colonnade. The entire edifice is topped by a simple-formed tower which clearly dominates the surroundings. It is a reference to the Italian proto renaissance, a period that became the source of inspiration for both fascist politicians and architects. Casa del Fascio in Ravenna, although considerably more modest than its equivalent in Predappio, had a similar role to play in the urban area. The building was constructed in the second half of the 1930s according to the project of Emanuele Mongiovi. It was situated in the corner of one of the city squares. The corner was marked by a tall simple tower that dominated the surrounding space. At its bottom, which was traditional (see Casa del Fascio in Lissone), a site dedicated to the memory of the fallen fascists was located. Above it, there was a tribune that projected into the square. The current fate of the mentioned projects seems significant. Casa del Fascio in Predappio, in spite of its seemingly attractive location, was abandoned for many years. In 2007–2009, it was included in the ATRIUM (Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Managements) program and today constitutes one of the elements of the architectural route of the monuments of totalitarian regimes in southern and south-eastern Europe as a representative example of the fascist "house of society". The building in Ravenna was partially destroyed in 1944. During the restoration, the



3. Elementary school "Alda Costa" in Ferrara, photo by Blazej Ciarkowski

*Alda Costa* pradžios mokykla Feraroje

"fascist tower" was left out, whereas the object itself was converted into an apartment building.

#### SECULAR CHURCHES OF FASCIST ITALY

The construction of a strong country that cares for the memory of its heroes manifested itself not only in the erected statues and martyriums devoted to the fallen fascists. In the entire Italy, houses for war veterans, such as the monumental edifice *Palazzo dei mutilati e invalidi di guerra* designed by Matteo Focacii in Ravenna, were built. A simple block with a monumental façade combines the elements of early renaissance architecture with rationalistic simplicity. Grey travertine and red brick demonstrate the durability of the building, the country

4. Post office in Ferrara,  
photo by Blazej Ciarkowski

Paštas Feraroje



that erected it, and the values that govern it. Today, Palazzo is an office building; however, it still emanates an ominous solemnity emphasized by the imagined swords surrounded by wreaths or fasces.

In this way, through architecture, Mussolini laid the ideological foundations of fascist Italy. However, what was going to convert it into a power worthy of the name of the “Second Roman Empire” was the modern infrastructure. The goal of the authorities was to lead Italy towards modernity through the expansion of the railway system, post offices and telegraphs, as well as the development of the educational system. We should remember that it is at the end of the nineteenth century that the modernization works began; however, it was not until the 1920s and 1930s that they undeniably reached their momentum. Not only the newly erected infrastructural objects testified to Italy’s civilizational leap. Painting and sculptural decorations filled public spaces glorifying the construction of the “new Italy”. An example of the artistic tribute to modernization are the decorations of the arcades that lead to the interior of Palazzo del Governo in Bologna, which, to this day, is the headquarters of the municipal council. They are decorated with reliefs

depicting the areas of life that are important for a fascist country, including those that were especially significant for Mussolini’s politics of modernization, achievements of modern technology, and means of transport. At the same time, next to them, we can see full-bodied legion eagles that stress the continuity of the imperialistic tradition.

Richard Ettlín called the post office buildings erected in the 1920s and 1930s “the secular churches of the Fascist state”<sup>22</sup>. Fascist authorities repeatedly talked about “post palaces” (Palazzo postale). The nomenclature itself demonstrated the importance of this branch of infrastructure for the construction of the modern country. The edifices of the National Insurance Institute (INA – Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni) were also called palaces. Both institutions constructed monumental solemn buildings often inspired by historical styles. In Ferrara both palaces were located relatively close to each other, along a wide road leading to the historical city centre, which was constructed in the 1920s. Palazzo Postale, designed by Angilo Mazzoni, is a direct reference

<sup>22</sup> Richard Ettlín, “Italian Rationalism”, in: *Progressive Architecture*, 1983, no. 7, p. 87.

to the renaissance architecture of the city. A glamorous corner with a monumental deep-seated portico faced with marble is an exceptionally strong highlight in its surroundings. At a certain distance from the main entrance, the block becomes more expressive. The walls are made of brick, which creates a contrast to the bright colour of the stone details. The artistic décor in its majority conveys a story of the development of Italy, prosperity (the cornucopia motif), and the history of Ferrara itself. The authors of the Palazzo I.N.A. (Cipriani, Forlati, Machin), unlike Mazzoni, avoided direct quotes from the history of architecture. Their project from 1934 is an example of architecture that combines the achievements of the modern movement and traditional inspirations. Instead of renaissance details, the designers used massive blocks, combinations of materials (marble and red brick), and chiaroscuro (deep arcades on the ground floor). They also renounced artistic elements, such as sculptures, reliefs, or paintings.

#### PROBLEMATIC HISTORY AND THE PRESENT

It should be stressed that while the post office building or the insurance institute were given the forms of contemporary palaces, buildings constructed for academic purposes were mostly avant-garde in style. Schools were supposed to be the forges where new generations of young fascists were to be moulded (Mussolini himself doubted that the “old Italians” were fit to become fascists<sup>23</sup>). New buildings were designed as the machines of this transformation. De Sanctis even wrote that a school must be first of all productive<sup>24</sup>. This “industrial” rhetoric as such was already close to productivist ideas of the modern movement in architecture!

Modern buildings fit into the functionalist ideology understood as the adjustment of architecture to concrete needs of the user. This is where the picturesque branch-

<sup>23</sup> Filip Burno, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>24</sup> Francesco Cassata, *Building the New Man. Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twentieth-Century Italy*, Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2011, p. 129.



5. Edifice of the National Insurance Institute (INA) in Ferrara, photo by Blazej Ciarkowski

Nacionalinio draudimo instituto (INA)  
pastatas Feraroje

ing out of the school buildings in Ravenna, Bologna, or Ferrara, which house classrooms, gymnasiums and common rooms, has its origin. At the same time, artistic décor introduced elements of propaganda as it glorified the fascist country and convinced students of their duty to serve the nation. The soaring clock tower of the elementary school “Alda Costa” in Ferrara (architect Carlo Savonuzzi, 1932–1933) seems to express the exceptional significance of the building itself. The neighbouring conservatorium (architect Carlo Savonuzzi, 1935–1939) is decorated with sculptures depicting muses and music geniuses. The building of liceo scientifico in Bologna looks even more interesting. The dynamic rounded corner of the brick building resembles projects constructed



6. Colonia di Federazione di Fascista di Novara in Riccione, photo by Blazej Ciarkowski

Novaros fašizmo federācijas kolonija Ričionėje

in the streamline style. A white marble bas-relief that makes a clear contrast with a red elevation, can be seen over one of the entrances. It depicts three naked young men with hands raised in a fascist salute. The political meaning of the work seems obvious; however, the school's students can still admire the stone figures.

Mussolini and his companions believed that adequate social actions would lead to the rational enhancement of the race. Through work, education, sport, and organized leisure, they created a kind of “positive eugenics”<sup>25</sup>. For this purpose, fascist authorities built a series of centres for children from poor families on the Adriatic Sea. Their program featured a cult of the physical fitness typical of the interwar period, and a conviction whose origins go back to the second half of the nineteenth century that sunbathing and bathing in the sea have miraculous effects. They were also supposed to be places where the personalities of young Italians were to be shaped. Both party officials and architects were aware of that. Mario Labo, who can be regarded as the main supporter of the colonies, wrote: “Everything from the design [...] of the width and types of doors and

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

windows to the form of the banisters, from floor cement, colours, and material – everything together [...] will create the artistic form and a visual image that children will always connect with the memories from the colonies”<sup>26</sup>. This “image” was supposed to shape the taste and aesthetic sense of the young generation and, something Labo did not mention, strengthen the connections between society and the fascist party.

When designing the colonies, architects were given an opportunity to create society from scratch, society whose functional organization and form would be aimed to co-create “the new man”. An extraordinary diversity in the looks of the buildings, which in their great majority surprise with bold construction and architectural solutions, can be attributed to that fact.

With the end of Mussolini's power came the gradual decline in the operation of the colonies. Even though some of them were still functioning, the lack of political patronage resulted in a growing abandonment of buildings. Architecture, which according to the concept of Adolf Behne, was a part of the functionalist movement, however perfectly adjusted to its purpose, turned out to be rigid and practically incapable of accommodating new functions. The analysis performed by Filippo Boschi in 2011 clearly demonstrated the scale of the problem. The majority of the objects scattered along the Adriatic coast were dilapidated while scarce attempts to restore them often failed.

The Colonia di Federazione di Fascista di Novara in Riccione was to be transformed into a modern hotel. The works began in 2010; however, when the unnecessary elements were removed and the structure was reinforced, the works were halted. The neighbouring buildings of the Colonia “Decima Legio” were also to become a recreational centre, but the intent remained in the stage of initial concept. Gradually falling into ruin, the Colonia “Amos Maramotti” was partially used as storage space. The lack of actions aimed to protect these objects of great artistic value may give rise to many questions.

<sup>26</sup> After Fulvio Irace, “Building for the New Era: Health Services in the 30s”, in: *Domus*, 3, 1985, p. 4.

Visual appeal and excellent location should make them attractive both for the city authorities that are in charge, and potential investors. Meanwhile, apart from the Colonia “Dalmine” in Riccione which functions as a hotel, no decision on their restoration has been made.

The reasons behind this lack of interest may be found in the above-mentioned “rigid” functional organization as well as a problem of proper evaluation of their historical and social value. The monumental concept of the Colonia “Constanzo Ciano” in Cervia is an example that corroborates both hypotheses. The modernist juggernaut designed by Mario Loretto triggers strong associations with the architecture of totalitarian regimes. At the same time, enormous spaces of the then glazed terraces and the scale of the whole project make it very difficult to develop a new functional program for the dilapidated building. What faced even bigger obstacles was Boschi’s attempt to create guidelines for the protection of the colonies, which should include not only isolated objects but also the entire project spreading along dozens of kilometres on the Adriatic coast.

The sports stadium in Bologna appears to be another interesting example of a new narrative introduced into post-fascist architecture. The building was erected in 1929 and designed by Giulio Ulisse Arata. It was originally named Stadio Litorale<sup>27</sup>. After the war, the stadium was modernized – new stands were added. At the same time, some meaningful changes concerning the symbolic aspects occurred. However, by the main entrance one can easily see Mussolini’s Roman eagle, accompanied by a bronze plate dedicated to the memory of Arpad Weisz. Weisz was a Hungarian Jew, a successful coach of the Bologna Football Club in the 1930s who led the team to multiple championship titles. Forced to abandon Italy in 1940 due to his Jewish origin, he was murdered in the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. The memory of the victim of totalitarianism in the building which was supposed to become one of the monuments of fascist regime creates a complex, multi-threaded narrative.

<sup>27</sup> Today, the stadium in Bologna is named after Renato Dell’Ara, a legendary president of Bologna FC.

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The issue of valorization and maintenance of the heritage of the totalitarian regimes appears to be a complex phenomenon. It can be clearly seen from the analysis of the state of preservation of fascist architecture in Italy. More than once, the high artistic value of the objects stands in opposition to their social value. Their historical value cannot be easily decoded, as they are monuments of the regime and testimonies of our dissonant past at the same time. The strategy based on a separation of political and formal aspects relieves us of moral dilemmas. However, it simplifies the image of the architecture. The buildings which are taken out of the historical context of the époque lose their documentary value. The lack of ready-made formulas and easy solutions should induce us to reflect on the relations between monument preservation and individual and collective memory. These factors appear to be crucial in the process of decoding the dissonant heritage of totalitarian states.

Received 2016 09 20

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## DISONANTINIS PAVELDAS: IŠKODUOJANT FAŠISTINĖS ITALIJOS RACIONALIZMO ARCHITEKTŪROS ISTORINĮ NARATYVĄ

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REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: modernistinė architektūra, Italija, fašizmas, disonantinis paveldas.

### SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami pavyzdžiai atskleidžia įvairias fašizmo laikotarpio objektų konservavimo strategijas ir koncepcijas. Ypatingas dėmesys atkreipiamas į elementus, kurie, nors būdami tiesiogiai susiję su totalitarizmu (pvz., Mokslo licėjaus statulos ar Valdžios rūmai Bolonijoje), funkcionuoja šiuolaikinėje viešojoje erdvėje kaip praėjusios epochos ženklai. Tai leidžia išsaugoti tam tikrą istorinį tęstinumą. Tuo pat metu vienas iš sprendimo būdų yra pagerbti sistemos aukų atminimą (plaketė Arpadui Weiszui atminti Bolonijos stadione).

Istorijos ir pasirinkto fašistinio laikotarpio Italijos architektūros fragmento dabartinės būklės analizė parodo, kaip sudėtinga konservuoti materialinį totalitarinių režimų paveldą bei nustatyti jo vertę. Daugeliu atvejų didelė objekto meninė vertė yra visiškai priešinga jo socialinei vertei. Istorinė vertė negali būti vertinama vienareikšmiškai, nes tokios architektūros pastatai yra paminklai režimui ir dokumentai, liudijantys sudėtingą praeitį. Strategija atskirti politinius ir formalius aspektus, nors ir išlaisvina mus iš etinių dilemų, neišvengiamai baigiasi aptariamą architektūrą apribojimu. Atskirta nuo istorinio konteksto, sąlygojusio jos sukūrimą, ji praranda savo dokumentinę vertę. Paruoštų atsakymų ir sprendimų trūkumas turėtų paskatinti geriau suvokti santykį tarp architektūrinio paveldo išsaugojimo ir individualios bei kolektyvinės atminties, kuris yra labai svarbus aptariant „sudėtingą praeities paveldą“.

Siekiant apsaugoti totalitarinių režimų architektūrą ir įtraukti ją į šiuolaikinį naratyvą, pirmausia reikia ją teisingai interpretuoti, o norint tinkamai įvertinti jos meninę, istorinę ir socialinę vertę, reikia iškoduoti reikšmę, slypinčią konkrečiose detalėse ir objektuose.