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The ‘New Catholicity’ of Fascism

Ernesto Giménez Caballero, the Italian Intellectual Network, and the Volta Conference of 1932

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Abstract

This article highlights the intellectual trajectory of the Spanish writer Ernesto Gimenez Caballero (1899–1988) as mediator of fascist internationalism during the 1930s. Caballero, a writer and journalists, was known in Italy thanks to important friendships with leading intellectual, diplomatic and political figures of the Fascist regime. His theory of fascist universalism, presented at the Volta Conference of 1932, identified fascism as the true, unifying principle of Europe. He regarded fascism as ‘the new Catholicity’ of Europe. Inspired by ‘the thaumaturgic genius’ of Mussolini, Caballero pointed out that the center of this new Europe was Rome, which he considered had been reborn with the glories of the ancient times after a long period of uncertainty. The article will explore the key features of Caballero’s idea and their origins within his intellectual biography, stressing the role of personal and transnational networking in the construction of his vision.

Keywords

Italy – fascism – internationalism – networks – interwar period – Volta Conference (1932) – Ernesto Gimenez Caballero (1899–1988)

Introduction

On the morning of 17 November 1932, the president of the German Reichstag, Hermann Göring, officially opened the sixth session of the Volta Conference, a meeting jointly organized by the *Reale Accademia d'Italia* [Royal Academy of Italy] and the Alessandro Volta Foundation. Held in Rome from 14 to 20 November, this important conference, which had been organized as one of the events commemorating the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome of 1922, gathered dozens of the most prominent intellectuals and politicians from all over the continent.¹ The theme of the conference was 'Europe';² while its purpose was to explore the reasons for the longstanding crisis throughout the young twentieth century. As stated in the invitation card sent to the attendees: 'Europe is experiencing a historical crisis, not only with regard to its political and economic life, but also in its worldwide reputation and prestige'.³

Among the nine speakers of the session chaired by Göring was the Spanish writer and intellectual Ernesto Giménez Caballero (1899–1988), who spoke first. In his presentation, titled 'The new Catholicity of Europe', Giménez Caballero delivered for the first time in front of an international audience his idiosyncratic historical and philosophical interpretation of fascism. He argued it was an international phenomenon, one that had universal application as the political and spiritual solution to the challenges posed by the modern era.

In recent historiography, many scholars of interwar fascism have recognized the importance of the mobility of intellectuals in the making of the fascist *Zeitgeist* of the 1920s and 1930s.⁴ Gatherings and events such as the Volta Con-

1 Simona Giustibelli, 'L'Europa nella riflessione del convegno della Fondazione Volta: Roma, 16–20 novembre 1932,' *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 1 (2002): 181–233. Monica Cioli, 'Arte e scienza internazionale: Il "modernismo" fascista negli anni Venti,' *Scienza & Politica* 5 (2016): 131–154.

2 On the idea of Europe in the interwar period see Mark Hewitson and Matthew D'Auria, eds., *Europe in Crisis: Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917–1957* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Johannes Dalfinger and Dieter Pohl, eds., *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 2019).

3 Reale Accademia d'Italia—Fondazione Alessandro Volta, *Atti del convegno di scienze morali e storiche, 14–20 novembre 1932* (Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1933), 10–12.

4 Historiography is now various, see among the most important: Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, eds., *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2017);

ference aimed at bringing together intellectuals from different countries, and became key moments in the circulation, hybridization, and co-production of the 'fascist idea'. In an important article published in 2021, Aristotle Kallis discussed the inter- and transnational dynamics of interwar fascism from a mobility paradigm perspective. Kallis argues that the international circulation of fascism's generic ideological norms and political practices accommodated local interpretations, translations and various adaptations of the original models and messages. The emphasis on circulation, movements, and changes contests the idea of 'unidirectional flow of ideas radiating from a supposed originator or innovation source to allegedly second-order passive' variant of fascism.⁵ In this way, the notion of a 'center' from which the 'fascist idea' was transmitted as a continuum whole to peripheral audiences is surpassed in favor of a more dynamic space of cross-border ideological exchanges, entanglements and co-productions.⁶ Consequently, agents, mediators and public figures that inhabited this space represent key nodes of the transnational networks active in the interwar years. As Kallis wrote, they were not passive actors but active co-producers of agencies, strategies, and actions through 'creative translations' of contents, practices, norms and models. These actors shared common visions and perceived senses of the crisis of civilization, culture, nations, and politics. Moreover, they shared the idea of fascism as the ideological foundation of the new order to come after the crisis.⁷

Different case studies in the historiography now demonstrated the centrality of such intellectual networks of agents who spread ideas internationally, adapting and contextualizing messages which suit diverse national audiences.⁸ Thus, within this theoretical framework, the purpose of the article is to explore the case study of Giménez Caballero as a mediator of fascist internationalism. Following the initial works of Manuel Plana and Douglas Foard in the 1970s,

Ismael Saz, Zira Box, Toni Morant and Julián Sanz, eds., *Reactionary Nationalists, Fascists and Dictatorships in the Twentieth Century: Against Democracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Valeria Galimi and Annarita Gori, eds., *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism: Crossing Borders* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020); Aristotle Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-production of Interwar "Fascism": On the Dynamics of Ideational Mobility and Localization,' *European History Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2021): 189–213.

5 Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-production of Interwar "Fascism"', 193.

6 Bauerkämper and Rossoliński-Liebe, *Fascism without Borders*, 7–18.

7 Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-production of Interwar "Fascism".'

8 Galimi and Gori, *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism*, 1. See also the idea of the 'global lives' of the intellectuals: Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Isabelle Löhr, 'Lives beyond Borders, or: How to Trace Global Biographies, 1880–1950,' *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 23, no. 6 (2013).

Caballero has repeatedly drawn scholarly attention.⁹ In this article, I will focus on his transnational links with Italian Fascism and will argue that he remains a key figure to study in order to better understand the networks of international fascism and the mobility of fascist ideas during the interwar period. In particular, my aim is to show to what extent intellectual and personal preconditions, such as cross-border friendships and individual ties, mediated Caballero's genesis and conceptualization of universal fascism, as firstly presented in the fascist context of the Volta Conference 1932. This became a pivotal moment in the intellectual relationship between Caballero and Italian Fascist regime.

The 'Italian Encounter'

When Caballero delivered his speech in late 1932, he was a thirty-three year old writer and cultural organizer whose intellectual career was yet to be successful. Nonetheless, he had already been the subject of attention from the Italian Fascist regime, which by then had been in power for a decade. Born in 1899, Caballero completed his studies in philosophy and literature at the University of Madrid in 1919. After a short period in Strasbourg, working as a Spanish lecturer at the local university, in 1921 he joined the Spanish army in Morocco. He spent two years in rank, witnessing the first part of the Rif War (1921–1926), an event that, according to Nil Santiáñez, forged the Spanish 'fascist habitus' of the following years.¹⁰ It certainly had a profound effect on Caballero's worldview. Shortly after he returned, he condensed his experience in the 1923 book *Notas marruecas* [Moroccan notes], a bitter commentary on Spanish lack of leadership and a vibrant nationalistic argument against Western nations, who were accused of profiting from Spanish struggles and its decline as an imperialistic nation.¹¹ In the same year, his intellectual trajectory profited from Miguel Primo de Rivera's military coup of 13 September 1923. Within the new political climate,

9 Manuel Plana, 'Alle origini del fascismo spagnolo: Giménez Caballero e l'esempio italiano,' *Il Movimento di liberazione in Italia, rassegna bimestrale di studi e documenti* 111 (1973): 65–88; Douglas W. Foard, 'The Forgotten Falangist: Ernesto Gimenez Caballero,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 1 (1975): 3–18; Enrique Selva, *Ernesto Giménez Caballero: Entre la vanguardia y el fascismo* (Valencia, PreTextos: 2000); Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, 'Ernesto Giménez Caballero: Unidad Nacional y política de masas en un intelectual fascista,' *Historia y política* 24 (2010): 265–291; Andrew Anderson, *Ernesto Gimenez Caballero: The Vanguard Years (1921–1931)* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2011).

10 Nil Santiáñez, *Topographies of Fascism: Habitus, Space, and Writing in Twentieth-Century Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013): 62–116.

11 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Notas marruecas de un soldado* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1923).

Caballero managed to return to Strasbourg, and held the same position at the university as before. In Strasbourg, he familiarized himself with Italian political affairs for the first time through his relationship with Edith Sironi Negri, Caballero's wife-to-be and the sister of Strasbourg's Italian consul in the French town. She was the one who later introduced Giménez Caballero to fascist ideology and eventually to fascist cultural and political circles as well. Indeed, Caballero wrote that between 1920 and 1921 he thought poorly of Italy and Italians. In his words, Italians were 'poor Mediterranean devils . . . decadent and tawdry people'. Being a Latin 'represents an infamy, and the thoughts of Rome was almost a folly, a shame, an error'.¹² Mediterranean culture, for Giménez Caballero, represented a despicable 'barbaric and rural' spiritual manifestation when compared to what he called the *idoli* [idols] of civilization from Paris, London or Moscow. But thanks to the 'Italian encounter' with his wife and her circle of Italian community in Strasbourg, Giménez Caballero was able to overcome his initial rejection of such 'Mediterranean spirit'. Her eyes, he wrote, 'led me . . . simply towards Italy. They brought me back to my motherland in Rome'.¹³

The encounter with Edith Sironi was a capital moment for Giménez Caballero's political trajectory too. Without her, he would never have crossed paths with Italy, and never have discovered from the inside the modernity of Fascism. In his memoir, published in 1979, Caballero explained how his wife had been the means of his 'fatal mission' of becoming an 'evangelist' of the new Roman universality established by Mussolini.¹⁴

In 1925, the couple first visited Italy. Carlo Boselli, leading Italian Hispanist and close friend of Giménez Caballero, claimed that this visit to Rome in 1925 was the watershed moment in the Spanish writer's intellectual life. In a religious-like reference to this narrative, Boselli wrote that the direct experience of fascism was for Caballero a 'fascinating revelation that convert[ed] him into an enthusiast disciple'.¹⁵ Indeed, the revitalized Italian capital, transformed on the way to becoming the 'third Rome' and the center of a new (Roman) Fascist Empire, made quite an impression on the Spanish writer.¹⁶

Since 1922, Benito Mussolini had established the myth of Rome and Romanity not as a veneration of the past, but as a modernist narrative projected

12 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Roma risorta nel mondo* (Milano: Hoepli, 1938): 6–7.

13 Caballero, *Roma risorta nel mondo*, 7–8. This and all subsequent translations are mine.

14 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Memorias de un dictador* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1979): 64.

15 Caballero, *Roma risorta nel mondo*, VIII.

16 Aristotle Kallis, *The 'Third Rome', 1922–1943: The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014).

towards the future. A myth aimed to exalt Fascism as a manifestation of the 'Roman spirit' called upon to shape a new civilization.¹⁷ On 6 April 1922, Mussolini declared that Fascists, 'the children of Rome, did not want to go back to the origins nor move backward. From Rome, we want to permeate ourselves with an immortal spirit that is strength, that is right, that is wisdom. We want Italy to be worthy of this spirit so that it can become the leading nation of world history'.¹⁸ A few days later, on 21 April (the mythical day of the foundation of Rome) Mussolini consecrated the day of Fascism in a new fusion of the past, present, and future:

The Rome that we honor . . . is not a nostalgic contemplation of the past, but a hard preparation for the future. Rome is our starting point, our reference, our symbol, or, if you will, our myth. We dream of Roman Italy, which is wise, strong, disciplined, and imperial. Much of what was the immortal spirit of Rome is resurrected in Fascism: Roman is the fasci, Roman is our combat organization, Roman is our pride and our courage: *civis romanum sum*.¹⁹

As Douglas W. Foard argued, Giménez Caballero found in this Fascist political and historical mythology the very 'immortal spirit of Rome' that he was seeking. According to Foard, Giménez Caballero also saw in Romanity 'the political manifestation of the revolt of the Latin peoples against the cultural imperialism of their northern neighbors'.²⁰

Thanks to his wife's friendships and networks, the young Spanish polemicist had the chance to meet some of the most prominent Fascist intellectuals and artists, whose relationship he benefited from for more than a decade. Among them were the popular novelist and poet Massimo Bontempelli and

17 Jan Nelis, 'Back to the Future: Italian Fascist Representations of the Roman Past,' *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 3 (2014) 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00301001>; Jan Nelis, 'Constructing Fascist Identity: Benito Mussolini and the Myth of "Romanità",' *Classical World* 100, no. 4 (2007): 391–415; Jan Nelis, *From Ancient to Modern: The Myth of Romanità during the Ventennio Fascista: The Written Imprint of Mussolini's Cult of the 'Third Rome'* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). See also the recent special issue of *Fascism: Eleftheria Ioannidou, Giovanna Di Martino and Sara Troiani, eds., '(Re)Living Greece and Rome: Performances of Classical Antiquity under Fascism,' Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 12, no. 2 (2023): 107–331.

18 'Per l'inaugurazione del circolo rionale fascista,' *Il Popolo d'Italia*, April 7, 1922.

19 'Passato e avvenire,' *Il Popolo d'Italia*, July 5, 1922. See Manuela Bertone, 'Civis Romanus Sum: Romanità, latinità e Mediterraneo nel discorso italico di Benito Mussolini (1915–1922),' *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 95 (2017): 109–118.

20 Foard, 'The Forgotten Falangist,' 12.

Curzio Malaparte, the writer and journalist editor of the journal *La Conquista dello stato*. The most important was Giuseppe Bottai, the Undersecretary at the Ministry of Corporation and future holder of the Ministry and a key figure for Caballero's relationship with Italian Fascism.²¹ Bottai was an top member of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF), and he was among the foremost theorists of Fascist ideology, particularly corporatist theory, which was the aspect of the Fascist doctrine that most fascinated Caballero.²² A profitable collaboration emerged from this welding of Caballero's aspirations of intellectual success in Fascism's motherland and Bottai's eagerness to exploit a foreign journalist and supporter of international dimension of fascism. A collaboration enabled Caballero to become among the most notable promoters of the fascist transnational network.²³

La Gaceta Literaria, Ettore de Zuani and Giuseppe Bottai's Network

The collaboration between Bottai and Giménez Caballero was based on the latter's early successes as founder, editor-in-chief and publisher of the twice-a-week newspaper *La Gaceta literaria*, which firstly appeared in January 1927.²⁴ As recognized by several scholars, *La Gaceta literaria* had a significant impact on Spanish intellectual environments of the 1920s.²⁵ Inspired by other European literary gazettes such as *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, *La Fiera letteraria* and *Die litterarische Welt*, Caballero managed to publish modernist poets and writers from Surrealists movements. Diversification of the project soon came to include a publishing house, a literary award, and even a cinema club based in Madrid that was co-managed by a young Luis Buñuel.²⁶ According to Caballero,

21 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Memorias de un dictador* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1979), 64.

22 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Arte y Estado* (Madrid: Gráfica Universal, 1935).

23 Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy and the Global Neo-Fascist Network* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 25.

24 Victoriano Peña Sanchez, *Intelectuales y fascismo: Contribución al estudio de la cultura italiana del ventennio fascista y su repercusión en España* (PhD Diss., University of Granada, 1992), 280–391, <http://hdl.handle.net/10481/14276>.

25 Miguel Angel Hernando, *La Gaceta literaria (1927–1932): Biografía y valoración* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1974); Lucy Tandy and Maria Sferrazza, *Ernesto Giménez Caballero y 'La Gaceta literaria' (o la generación del 27)* (Madrid: Turner, 1977). Luis Moreno-Caballud, 'Las relaciones interartísticas de vanguardia ante lo político: Un estudio sobre "La Gaceta literaria" (1927–1932),' *Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos* 34, no. 3 (2010): 429–449.

26 Caballero, *Memorias de un dictador*, 54.

La Gaceta literaria was the forerunner of Vanguardism, and, as such, became home to some of the most significant young intellectuals in the country. Both the inspirers of communism and fascism in Spain came from the *La Gaceta literaria*'s community of editors, although the climate of 'spiritual unity', according to Caballero's memories, lasted only until De Rivera's regime crisis, 'as the youth became politicized'.²⁷

Despite its title, *La Gaceta literaria* was not intended to be merely a space for literary debates. Caballero wanted to link discussion on arts with political debates regarding modernity, seeking to address profound debates over the crisis of Europe—a crisis felt to be far more disruptive in arts, understood as the depiction of collective values and imaginaries, than elsewhere.²⁸ Yet, according to Caballero, Italian Fascism managed to fix this fracture with a corporatist organization of art and artists united as national forces. For this reason, *La Gaceta literaria* was keen to offer its audience perspectives on the fascist organization of arts.²⁹ Moreover, it also represented an important intellectual connection with Italian representatives in Spain. Particularly important for Caballero's trajectory was the friendship he started with Ettore de Zuani, a writer, teacher, literary scout, and translator who held the position of director of the Italian schools of Barcelona. Just two years older than Caballero, De Zuani was a veteran of the First World War who, seeking a more adventurous life, moved to Barcelona. While teaching and coordinating cultural offers for the Italian community in Catalonia, De Zuani collaborated with several Italian and Spanish newspapers, writing about Italian and Spanish literary affairs. It is not clear how Caballero and De Zuani met and whether it happened in Spain or in Italy. By the end of 1920s, they shared a network of friendships which included distinguished PNF members like Giuseppe Bottai and Cornelio di Marzio, as well as writers such as Carlo Boselli, Massimo Bontempelli and Curzio Malaparte.³⁰

Concerned about the role of the artist in modern political regimes, De Zuani's articles were published in the pages of *La Gaceta literaria*. In particular, De Zuani sought to explain the corporatist organization of art in the Italian

27 Ibid., 58.

28 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Arte y estado* (Madrid: Gráfica Universal, 1935).

29 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Julepe de Menta* (Madrid: Cuadernos Literarios, 1929), 101–104. On transnational corporatism see Antonio Costa Pinto, *Corporatism and Fascism: The Corporatist Wave in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2017).

30 Ruben Dominguez Mendez, *Mussolini y la exportación de la cultura italiana a España* (Madrid: Arco/Libros, 2012); Ruben Dominguez Mendez, 'Note sulla politica culturale del fascismo in Spagna (1922–1945)', *Diacronie: Studi di storia contemporanea* 12, no. 4 (2012); Simone Muraca, *Istituzioni, pratiche e agenti della diplomazia culturale fascista in Spagna e Portogallo (1936–1945)* (PhD diss., University of Padua, 2022): 125–159.

Fascist regime. He argued that during Fascism's early years a 'renaissance of the arts in Italy' had occurred, and that this was due to the imposition of political discipline, a *conditio sine qua non*, for any artistic freedom.

For us intellectuals, fascism is not just politics. It is faith, enthusiasm, passion. And we cannot forget it while we make literature. Pure writers not involved in politics, closed in their world of contemplation, do not belong to our time There is no point in saying that arts and literature live above time, in a sacred space. We live and make the arts of our times, of our civilization, of our revolution. No Italian artist today is senseless about fascism, this religion of our motherland.³¹

According to De Zuani, Fascism was a national religion that every committed artist and intellectual had to belong to. As will be demonstrated, this was an idea that Caballero subsequently incorporated into his theory of fascism as a political religion, a 'new Catholicity'.

Cabellero's connection with the Italian affairs were not limited to the fascist propaganda that he published in his magazine. Direct collaboration with Italy also occurred shortly after. As Manuel Plana pointed out, Giménez Caballero's profile perfectly fitted the fertile ideological space of fascist internationalism promoted by Bottai.³² Indeed, using Bottai's words, if fascism was the 'masterpiece of modern political work', it had to stand at the 'heart of modern Western civilization'. Hence, Italy's foreign policy was to be carried out not only 'in the chancelleries of embassies' but also 'into all centers of economic, intellectual, and artistic life' abroad, including: newspapers, salons, theaters, academies, industrial and commercial enterprises. The renaissance of European civilization could only occur through the 'fascist formula' of fascist doctrine and its 'spiritual' heritage, namely the legacy of the Roman Empire.³³

Furthermore, Giuseppe Bottai thought that Caballero could also embolden the weak correspondence from Spain that was published in the cultural magazine he directed, *Critica fascista*. The appointed correspondent, Carlo Boselli, a member of the same intellectual network as Caballero, was primarily interested in highlighting continuities and disruptions in political transformations from a comparative point of view. He often highlighted the weakness of the Spanish

31 Ettore de Zuani, 'Los escritores italianos y el fascismo,' *La Gaceta literaria*, March 15, 1928.

32 Manuel Plana, 'Alle origini del fascismo spagnolo: Giménez Caballero e l'esempio italiano,' *Il Movimento di liberazione in Italia: Rassegna bimestrale di studi e documenti* 111 (1973): 79–80.

33 Giuseppe Bottai, 'Fascismo articolo d'esportazione,' *Critica fascista*, no. 12 (1930).

nationalist movement, which was felt to have been determined by the country's neutrality during the First World War that resulted in a sense of isolation that had put 'national consciousness to sleep'.³⁴ Caballero could offer *Critica fascista* a new point of view.

Caballero's first article, titled 'Spagna e Italia: Circuito senza concorrenza' [Spain and Italy: Uncompetitive circuit], appeared in *Critica fascista* in July 1928. In specular continuity with the thesis expressed in *La Gaceta literaria* by De Zuani, Giménez Caballero argued that despite common belief, the relationship between Spain and Italy was far from solid. 'Italy does not know about Spain, and neither does Spain know Italy', he wrote. Although he felt that brilliant Spanish-studies scholars worked in Italy, he claimed 'general folks' were blind to Spanish problems or Spanish personalities, and it was as if Spain was 'a remote Australian corner and not a country only few kilometers away from Rome'.³⁵ Caballero complained about the fact that, in Spain, predominant impressions of Italy typically regarded it as nothing more than the historic birthplace of arts and architectural attractions, and that awareness of the 'new [Fascist] Italy' was missing. This was why young Spanish intellectuals were still 'in love with Paris, chasing Picasso', instead of looking in the direction of Rome. As founder and editor of *La Gaceta literaria*, Giménez Caballero's mission was to share the modernity of the fascist idea in Spain in order to intensify mutual 'Mediterranean friendship' in anticipation of the 'universal realities prepared by History'.³⁶

Many other articles followed the first, and thanks to collaboration with Bottai Caballero consolidated his position among Italian intellectual élites. Alongside De Zuani and the Italian authorities in Spain, he started to develop a project focused on founding an Italian institute of cultural exchange on the ashes the Spanish *Società Dante Alighieri* [Dante Alighieri Society] that had previously operated in Barcelona. The incubation of the idea took several months and eventually the project was abandoned due to the collapse of Primo de Rivera's regime in 1931.³⁷ Moreover, the advent of the Spanish Second Republic led to the decline of Giménez Caballero's fortune in his own country. His

34 Carlo Boselli, 'La Spagna, Primo de Rivera e il fascismo,' *Critica fascista*, no. 13 (1925): 243–248. It will be precisely the lack of a nationalist ideology and a coherent doctrine of State transformation that led De Rivera to a failure, according to what Boselli will write in February 1930 in *Critica fascista*, see Carlo Boselli, 'L'incerta situazione spagnola: Il tramonto di de Rivera,' *Critica fascista*, no. 4 (1930): 75–79.

35 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Spagna e Italia,' *Critica fascista*, no. 2 (1928): 126–127.

36 Caballero, 'Spagna e Italia,' 127.

37 Archivio Storico Società Dante Alighieri (ASSDA), Serie Comitati Esteri, b.253, f.353 (Madrid), sf Madrid 1934–1954.

newspaper *La Gaceta literaria* went into terminal decline; by 1931 Giménez Caballero was the editor, publisher and only member of staff.³⁸

In a figurative intellectual handover, the definitive closure of *La Gaceta literaria*, on 1 May 1932, coincided with the appearance of *Genio de España: Exaltaciones a una resurrección nacional y del mundo* [Genius of Spain: Exaltations to a national and world resurrection], which can be considered the first book of Caballero's 'fascist cycle'.³⁹ *Genio de España* set out a direct attack on those who allegedly wanted to 'bastardize' Spanish uniqueness, and was based on a sweeping vision of history that presupposed an ongoing battle between the cultural and societal characteristics of Eastern and Western civilizations. He argued that this dichotomy could only be reconciled through the universal, ecumenical and all-encompassing nature of fascism, whose 'destiny' (or perhaps Caballero's latest hope) would have been the reconstitution of the empire of Charles V, with Mussolini as its new Caesar.⁴⁰ The book did not directly tackle the problem of fascist internationalism as such, however the third part, dedicated to the resurrection of Spain from a fascist, avant-gardist perspective, broadly focused the universal discourse of fascism as a solution for modernity.⁴¹ Thanks to his involvement in fascist networks, Caballero was offered an opportunity to present his ideas shortly after the book's publication. His friendship with Giuseppe Bottai facilitated an official invitation to attend one of the most distinguished cultural events organized by the Italian regime in 1932: the Volta Conference. Who better than Caballero to articulate Europe's fascist fate, which he had just argued for in his latest publication?

The 'New Catholicity': The Lecture at the Volta Conference

Organized by the *Reale Accademia d'Italia*, the most important public cultural organization in Fascist Italy, the Volta Conference was a series of week-long gathering of intellectuals and academics from across Europe that took place in

38 Giménez Caballero and Ramiro Ledesma Ramos founded a new fascist newspaper titled *La Conquista del Estado*. It was a short polemic newspaper that lasted only few issues in the new political scenario of Azana's government.

39 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Genio de España: Exaltaciones a una resurrección nacional y del mundo* (Madrid: Ediciones de La Gaceta Literaria, 1932).

40 Foard, 'The Forgotten Falangist,' 12.

41 Santiáñez, *Topographies of Fascism*, 32–43. On the relationship between Fascism and Avant-garde see the classic essay by George L. Mosse, 'Fascism and the Avant Garde,' in George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), 137–156.

Rome. Each gathering discussed a specific theme. The organizational format was an academic conference, with panels and chairs, pre-circulated papers, voluntary comments, and responses from speakers. The first was held in 1931 and discussed the impact of nuclear physics on the natural sciences, while in 1932 it tackled the historical and political crisis of Europe.⁴²

In his presentation at the conference, the 1909 Nobel Prize winner Guglielmo Marconi, president of the *Reale Accademia d'Italia*, stated that addressing such matters was more urgent than ever. Europe was shocked by the aftermath of the First World War and the Great Economic Crisis. Therefore, the continent's intellectual (and political) leaders had to embrace critical contemporary issues to determine collective solutions. The first lines of the invitation cards sent to the attendees stated, 'Europe is going through a capital and historical crisis. Not only in its political and economic life, but in its values and world prestige too and this is now something universally felt'.⁴³ Nonetheless, as Marconi was keen to highlight, the struggles, the problems and the crisis of Europe did not represent its decline, 'but the beginning of a new phase of development'. Inevitably, the reference focused on the continent's new political *Zeitgeist*, whose star was Benito Mussolini. The conference itself, generously sponsored by the Italian government, was an instrument of propaganda aimed at bringing intellectuals from each country 'to the living and operative Italy, to Fascist Italy, to the Italy of Mussolini', as Marconi said in the opening remarks.⁴⁴

The international attendees of 1932 Volta meeting included diplomats such as Henry Bérenger, Joseph Avenol, and James Rennel Rodd; historians like Henry Brugmans and Christopher Dawson; writers such as Gonzague de Reynold and Stephan Zweig; the economists Werner Sombart and Alfred Weber; and representatives of the growing German Nazi party, the aforementioned Hermann Goering and Alfred Rosenberg. There were over a hundred speakers from twenty-two European nations, mostly academics and politicians.⁴⁵ Italy was the most represented nation with forty-two speakers, followed by France with fifteen and Germany with thirteen.

The Fascist government's intention to use high profile occasions as a platform for the regime's propaganda was far from hidden, and the Volta conference was no exception. Moreover, 1932 was the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome and the Fascist regime had also organized the ambitious *Mostra della*

42 Reale Accademia d'Italia—Fondazione Alessandro Volta, *Atti dei convegni 1, Convegno di Fisica Nucleare, Ottobre 1931—IX, Roma 1932* (Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1932).

43 Reale Accademia d'Italia, *Atti del convegno di scienze morali e storiche*, 10.

44 Ibid., 9.

45 Ibid., 712–718. Attendees' biographies are listed on pages 719–829.

rivoluzione fascista [Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution], which opened on 28 October 1932, just a few days before the conference itself. Among the duties of Volta's attendees that year was participation in a guided tour of the exhibition.⁴⁶

Giménez Caballero's lecture at Volta occurred in this context, during the sixth session of the conference that was chaired by Hermann Göring. In his presentation, titled 'The new Catholicity of Europe', Giménez Caballero started from the consideration that the word 'Europe' meant a 'barbaric and alien expression'. According to him, the concept of Europe had appeared in the European collective mentality only when 'Catholicity' started to fade, and this bore similarly to what had happened to Greek culture after the surge of Roman universality. The concept of Catholicity, instead of Catholicism, referred to the universal character of Catholic doctrine, a spiritual foundation of European values that were now questioned. According to Caballero the crisis that had opened in the aftermath of the First World War was a new 'middle age' for European civilization, both in terms of the collective as well as the individual. Nonetheless, the crisis itself contained the very seeds of this 'new Catholicity' of the twentieth century. What was it? Caballero defined it as a 'Roman and Catholic principle of universalism, attraction, integration', a shared, common and universal principle capable of healing Europe's moral wounds.

Communism, democracy and fascism represented the ideologies of three different *genio* [genius].⁴⁷ In a long and cryptic argumentation, influenced by the works of Nietzsche, Spengler and Keyserling, Caballero defined *genio* as 'etymologically a genetic, creative and vital immanent force', and 'the specific manifestation of Life and divinity in a determined space and time', something similar to the Roman protective spirit of a place (*genius loci*) and the Greek's guardian spirits (*daimon*). According to the Caballero, only three typologies of *genio* were possible: Eastern, Western, and Christian. The history of all humankind was an eternal fight between the Eastern and Western *genios*, with the exception of certain, specific moments of western history in which the two came together in communion and unity.⁴⁸

Eastern genius was described by Caballero as the cultural subordination of the population to consolidated authority (both religious and political) and divinity. 'East means this and nothing more: God is above man'. In the history of eastern theology, according to Caballero, divinity was always the master of

46 Giustibelli, 'L'Europa nella riflessione del convegno della Fondazione Volta,' 201.

47 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Nuova cattolicità dell'Europa,' in Reale Accademia d'Italia —Fondazione Alessandro Volta, *Atti del convegno di scienze morali e storiche*, 301.

48 Caballero, 'Nuova cattolicità dell'Europa,' 302.

human destiny: 'The individual self has no rights. It is useless. Massimalism. Bolshevism. Scientific Socialism (and Mongolic). Buddhism. Islamism. Eastern God. God above man. Genius of the East'.⁴⁹

Contrastingly, Western genius contained rebellion against power, the quest for independence, progress, civilization, and liberty. The Western essence was: 'independence and self, the effort for freedom before the divine. Indefinite progress. Liberty, humanity, progress: the essence of west . . . What is west? Let us try to mark all the fundamental traits of the west, beyond diversity and accidentally. West means this and nothing more: Man is above God. The independence of man from the Whole. The individual self, independent from the Whole'.⁵⁰

The symbol of the Western *genio* was the eagle. Since the time of the Ancient Greeks, the animal had depicted 'the bird of fire'. It was the symbol of political power as well as the symbol of the emperor such as Caesar, Darius the Great, Alexander, Charlemagne, Charles v, and Napoleon. Moreover, the eagle was a representation of science and progress: 'Faust, the Caesar of science. Prometheus of knowledge. Riding over the shadows, seeking for light, like an eagle'.⁵¹ In Caballero's cyclical vision of history and civilization, inspired by Nietzsche, after every peak of conquest there was a long period of obscurantism that followed, and after the First World War the Western *genio* had declined to a new middle age.⁵²

Thus, the empowerment of Western reasons reached its maximum before a long cycle of crisis. The industrialization process brought freedom but

the machine ate the man, like Prometheus's vulture. The freedom of 1789 arrived at Marx and the last consequence: Lenin. Lenin destroyed the political freedom of 89. Vulture of tales. Fate of the West. Nationalism, the political monad of the Renaissance, fulfills its destiny by creating small states. Monads within monads. So here we come to the present days of Prometheus. As it was in Greece. As it was in Rome. As it was after the Reformation. The decline of the West. Decadence. Twilight of the gods. Everything is relativity, phenomenology, atomism, uproar, life of dreams. Craving for independence from any concept of absolute, man ended up being the slave of emptiness. Where is the man? This is a dramatic condi-

49 Ibid., 306.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 307.

52 Ibid., 308.

tion for modern men. Men do not stand above God. Man stands, once again, godless and against God. Western fatality, like Prometheus and the Garden of Eden.⁵³

The downfall of the West was also proven by the joint effects of the crises of morality and economy. Caballero wrote that the 'astonished masses' wanted a purposeless, humanistic, culture and liberalism: 'They got drunk and sank in the alcohol of progress, the vilest of every European spirits. Socialism appeared as the bastard son of a mild bourgeoisie and proletarian cowardness. A false Christianity with false piety and without any charity or grace'.⁵⁴

Consequently, only the combination of the two *genios* revealed the spiritual and cultural way out through the third variant. The Christian *genio* of the rebirth represented and incarnated in fascism. A fusion of the previous two types of Eastern and Western *genio*, the Christian *genio* was the 'formula for human's universality'.⁵⁵ From the etymology of the word, Caballero argued that Christ represented the union of East and West: 'absolute (Eastern genius) and liberty (Western genius)'. The figure of Christ merged 'the western substance of free will, grace, force, personality, joy, human faith and heroic progress, with the eastern dependency from a Whole, a mass, a slave, a humble proletarian paradise'.⁵⁶

In the essay that Caballero presented before the Volta Conference's audience, Moscow, Geneve, and Rome (communism, democracy, and fascism, respectively) were the direct expressions of the three types of geniuses. If communism and democracy were unifying principles, the 'new Catholicity' could come only from the third *genio*, the messianism of Christ driven by the new Romanity of fascist ideology.⁵⁷ For Caballero, this was proved by the fact that only in the 'eternal Rome a new Caesar appeared to lead the way' out of the crisis. In Caballero's own words:

53 Ibid., 308–310.

54 Ibid., 314.

55 Ibid., 311.

56 Ibid.

57 The political usage of religion in fascist ideology and emergence of a highly influential international pro-fascist 'political Catholicism' is widely discussed in historiography. It's worth mention at least Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wohnout, eds., *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Jan Nelis, Anne Morelli and Danny Praet, eds., *Catholicism and Fascism in Europe 1918–1945* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2015).

Under these circumstances, a Marxist who took part in the European war arrived in Rome. His name is Mussolini. In Rome, he discovered the eternal salvation. Fascism was born. From the East; from the new Jerusalem known as Moscow. Passed by Athens like Saint Paul. Finally settled in Rome. Locally as first. Its appearance was simple, circumscribed, purely economical, and national. However, suddenly and surprisingly, for Mussolini himself, with a pure religious and overwhelming force, a miracle phenomenon occurred: a Roman world conquered the West. . . . With fascism, ancient *Orbis Romanus* is reborn.⁵⁸

This passage from Caballero's argument articulates the core fascist myth of cathartic rebirth, the spiritual palingenesis that will stem the decadence of modernity.⁵⁹ The 'pure religious and overwhelming force' of Mussolini opposed the forces of the past. In accordance with Caballero's theoretical argument, Fascism was explained as a perfect example of the combination between the Eastern and Western *genio*. 'No pure western capitalism nor eastern proletarianism. Capital and work united a superior unity: the state and religious unity'.⁶⁰ Fascism, Giménez Caballero concluded, was the 'unique Universe of the World'. Moreover, 'a new Catholicity opens up in front of the world. If Fascist Rome will know how to lead, may it lead. If it may fall, shall be Spain—once again—the savior of Rome. And with Rome, the whole world!'⁶¹ With Mussolini, described as 'a hero, a human raised in combat, leader of falangist masses, troops and militia', power was no longer in the hand of a 'Jewish banker', nor was it with 'some bourgeoisie, or comical Kaiser, or a republican president dressed in white tie'.⁶²

It must be stressed that even though a leading Nazi, Göring, chaired the session, Caballero did not avoid referring to Adolf Hitler as the 'comical Kaiser'. One year before Hitler's seizure of power in Germany, Caballero already regarded Nazism as a threat to his idea of international Roman-centered fascism. Neither capitalism nor communism could limit the progress of Roman

58 Caballero, 'Nuova cattolicità dell'Europa,' 314–315.

59 As firstly noticed by Roger Griffin, this concept is a definitional component of fascist ideology. See Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 33–36. The topic is discussed broadly in many classic books of fascist studies: Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*; Emilio Gentile, *Contro Cesare: Cristianesimo e totalitarismo nell'epoca dei fascismi* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2010).

60 Caballero, 'Nuova cattolicità dell'Europa,' 316.

61 *Ibid.*, 317.

62 *Ibid.*, 315.

fascist development, but Hitler's 'pagan form of fascism' could. Although these considerations were not thoroughly developed during Volta Conference's presentation, a straightforward attack on Nazism was included in his 1932 book, *Genio de España*. Using Caballero's symbolic images, the Roman cross and swastika were destined to take divergent paths after the initial confluence against liberalism and communism. Fascism and Nazism, according to Caballero, 'are destined to fight the eternal struggle of Austria against Italy, Luther against the Vicar of Christ, the Emperor against Rome'.⁶³ In this sense, Fascism, which was founded upon the heritage of Roman Christianity and the universal principle of 'Catholicity', had to assert its ontological primacy. The Roman-Catholic transnational fascism was a non-negotiable unique model, whilst its 'pagan' German-based version was a threat rather than a mimetic variant of the same 'fascist universality'.⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, Caballero's passionate essay drew much attention among fascist intellectual circles attending the Volta. The day after the speech, many Italian newspapers wrote passionate summaries about it. *Corriere della sera* stated that Ernesto Giménez Caballero's 'new Catholicity' expressed the 'magic secret of Fascism', while *Il Messaggero* or *La Stampa* put his 'Roman genius' front page.⁶⁵

The public credit gained by Caballero consolidated his status as an influential intellectual on universal fascism in Italy. Indeed, in the months following the Volta Conference collaboration with Italian newspapers, journals, and cultural organizations grew exponentially. While between 1928 and 1932 Caballero had published only few articles in Bottai's *Critica fascista*, from 1933 to 1937 the number grew to approximately twenty. He also took over a personal correspondence section called 'Lettera della Spagna' [Letter from Spain], a regular feature that lasted until July 1937.⁶⁶ He also became contributor to the review

63 Caballero, *Genio de España*, 142.

64 For an account of the tense relationship between Fascism and Nazism during the first part of the 1930s see Renzo de Felice, *Mussolini e Hitler: I rapporti segreti 1922–1933* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2013), 141–244.

65 'I sereni dibattiti romani sulla civiltà moderna,' *Corriere della sera*, November 18, 1932, 5; 'Influenza del genio di Roma e della dottrina fascista,' *Il Messaggero*, November 18, 1932, 1; 'L'Italia fascista e la nuova coscienza europea,' *La Stampa*, November 18, 1932, 1.

66 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna,' *Critica fascista*, no. 8 (1933): 152–153; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna,' *Critica fascista*, no. 13 (1933); Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Analisi della Repubblica spagnola,' *Critica fascista*, no. 15 (1933): 294–298; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna,' *Critica fascista*, no. 19 (1933): 372–373; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna,' *Critica fascista*, no. 24 (1933): 479–480; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna: Sconfitta del socialismo,' *Critica fascista*, no. 8 (1934): 157; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna: Il fanatismo

Gerarchia, the monthly magazine founded by Mussolini in 1922.⁶⁷ Other newspapers followed, particularly those oriented toward fascist internationalism, such as *Il Meridiano di Roma*, in which De Zuani was a key editor, and *Antieuropa*, a newspaper directed by one of the leaders of 'fascist universality', Asviero Graveli.⁶⁸ Moreover, as the concept of 'Romanity' acquired centrality in fascist ideology, discourse, and public imaginary,⁶⁹ in 1935 the Italian government awarded Caballero with the literary award 'Premio San Remo' for the best essay on contemporary Italy, and opened the way to the publication of a selection of Caballero's works by Milan-based publishing house Hoepli.⁷⁰ The recognition gained by Caballero led Italian officials in Spain to restart discussion over the possible creation of an Italo-Spanish cultural committee, of which Caballero would become the appointed director. This would have prepared the ground for an Italian cultural institute to be established in Spain the following years.⁷¹ Although these discussion never moved toward a realised project, they show the new level of engagement that developed between Giménez Caballero and fascist representatives and officials in both Italy and Spain. This closeness was also evidenced by his nomination as Spanish delegate at the Fascist International Congress, held in the Swiss location of Montreux in 1934, organized by the *Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma* [CAUR; Action Committees for the Universality of Rome], an international gathering of the most important fascist movements and parties.⁷²

spagnuolo,' *Critica fascista*, no. 19 (1934): 373–374; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera spagnola da Roma: Da Madrid all'Urbe,' *Critica fascista*, no. 1 (1936): 13–15; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna: Una situazione drammatica,' *Critica fascista*, no. 9 (1936): 141–142; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Lettera dalla Spagna: Il significato della guerra civile,' *Critica fascista*, no. 17 (1937): 300–301.

67 Ernesto Giménez Caballero 'Tre fasi del generale Franco,' *Gerarchia*, no. 3 (1937): 151–155; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Il vero volto di Franco,' *Gerarchia*, no. 10 (1937): 676–686; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'La pace sia con Miguel de Unamuno, ora che il meglio del suo spirito è ricongiunto alla grandezza della Spagna,' *Quadrivio*, no. 12 (1937); Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Franco visto da un falangista,' *Quadrivio*, no. 13 (1937).

68 Marco Cuzzi, *Antieuropa: Il fascismo universale di Mussolini* (Milan: M&B, 2006). Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'El dictador o fábula de los reyes naturales,' *Antieuropa*, no. 5–9 (1933): 237–241; Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'España y el racismo,' *Antieuropa*, no. 10–12 (1933): 1–3.

69 Ismael Saz Campos, *Mussolini contra la 11 República* (Valencia: Alfons El Magnànim, 1986), 98.

70 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Roma risorta nel mondo* (Milano: Hoepli, 1938). The work was composed by a selection of chapters from Caballero's previous essays *Circuito imperial* (1929), *Genio de España* (1932), *La nueva catolicidad* (1933), *Arte y estado* (1935).

71 Archivio Storico Società Dante Alighieri, Serie Comitati Esteri, b.253, f.353 (Madrid), sf Madrid 1934–1954.

72 Marco Cuzzi, *L'Internazionale delle camicie nere: I CAUR 1933–1939* (Milan: Mursia, 2005), 135.

Conclusions

The origins of Caballero's 'new Catholicity' and Romanity-centered narrative relied on the Italian connections that he developed following the start of his relationship with Edith Sironi. The avant-gardist ideas of the young Caballero engaged with Italian Fascism through Sironi's personal (and familiar) friendships in diplomacy, politics and culture. The fascist network Caballero obtained citizenship in and that shaped his ideas allowed him to gain consideration from top-level Italian officials and intellectuals involved in fascist internationalist discourses.

Caballero's intellectual trajectory between the end of the 1920s and early 1930s also highlights the paradox of the longstanding conflict between the international dimension of fascism universality on one side, and the specificities of the national contexts on the other. A paradox that shed light on how radical fascists in the interwar period were nationalists with an aspiration to bring together contemporary movements striving for national rejuvenation. This connection was not only fueled by profound, albeit often imitative, similarities in the political styles embraced by fascists but also, more fundamentally, by a collective hostility towards the social groups perceived as adversaries of the nation. While the specific nature of these foes varied across countries, there was a shared disdain for liberal democracy and communism. Moreover, there was a mutual acknowledgment of a global crisis within the world system and a collective awareness of the impending challenges to the future viability of human civilization. The Volta Conference perfectly represented a moment of ideological appropriation of the crisis by transnational fascist movements. From their perspective, fascists offered a revolutionary solution, presenting an alternative vision of modernity and progress. And in this sense Caballero's early theoretical approach to universal fascism brought together the 'national' and the 'international' elements in his 'New Catholicity' of fascist revolution. However, he also anticipated that another conflict would arise among fascist internationalism: the clash between the Rome-based trans-Catholic fascism and the mimetic variants of universal 'pagan' Nazism.⁷³ Indeed, only few months after Caballero's speech, Hitler's rise to power in Germany shifted the geopolitical and ideological center of gravity of transnational fascism movement from Italy to Germany, and from Italian Fascism to National Socialism.⁷⁴ The consolidat-

73 Cuzzi, *L'Internazionale delle camicie nere*, 353.

74 Aristotle Kallis, 'Transnational Fascism: The Fascist New Order, Violence, and Creative Destruction,' in *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, eds. Arnd Bauerkämper and

ing importance of Nazism pushed aside the idea of a Fascist universality based upon 'Romanity' and therefore Caballero's fame.⁷⁵ Mussolini himself developed greater distance from an Italian-lead international fascism. He stated in October 1937 that 'every Nation will have its own fascism, a fascism adapted to the local situation, peculiar to a determined people. There is not and there will never be a standard fascism for export.'⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Ernesto Giménez Caballero had to face turbulent times in Spain as well, as his refusal to claim Falangism as a spontaneous movement that was ideologically independent from Italian fascism represented a point of rupture with Spanish fascists.⁷⁷

In conclusion, if it is true that the history of interwar fascism was the result of the gradual and cumulative contributions of numerous engaged agents who relied on each other's efforts, intertwined in a much broader interactions and interconnections than previously believed, then the case of Caballero seems to be a particularly interesting example of the importance of the network in this co-production of the fascist ideas. Aristotle Kallis described it as 'the dynamic relationship between external norms and active (re-)interpretation by diverse contemporary local agents'.⁷⁸ And even though Caballero's significance diminished towards the end of the decade, his ascent within the Italian Fascist realm remains highly noteworthy in illustrating how right-wing intellectual trajectories operated in interwar period.

Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 46–47. Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 31–93.

75 Cuzzi, *L'Internazionale delle camicie nere*, 296–388.

76 Benito Mussolini, 'Europa e fascismo,' in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, eds. Edoardo and Duilio Susmel, vol. 29 (Florence: La fenice, 1959), 1.

77 Emmet J. Hughes, *Report from Spain* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), 22; Foard, 'The Forgotten Falangist,' 3–18; Stanley G. Payne, *Falange: History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 7–8.

78 Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-production of Interwar "Fascism"', 201.