



## National Museums in Italy: A Matter of Multifaceted Identity

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### Summary

The report examines four case studies exemplifying the history of Italy's national museums: the Galleria degli Uffizi of Florence; the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Naples; the Museo Preistorico ed Etnografico "L. Pigorini" of Rome; and the Galleria d'Arte Moderna – GNAM (with the adjoining Museo delle Arti del XXI secolo – MAXXI) of Rome. Their creation and development relate to diverse moments in history and to particular geographical contexts. The first two were founded before national unification, respectively in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and in the Reign of Naples. They were opened to the public already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in order to celebrate the glory and power of their sovereign. The latter were instead inaugurated a few decades after the birth of the Reign of Italy (1861-1946), when the necessity to strengthen the role of its new capital – Rome – fostered the creation of new museums devoted to 'novel' assets such as technology, prehistory, and modern art. These new museums represented a novelty in the existing museographic panorama, mainly focused on archaeology as well as ancient and Renaissance art.

The four case studies exemplify the issues which marked the development of Italy's museums: the complex relationship between local and national identity; the difficult construction of a state system of heritage protection; the weakness of the state in building a sense of shared belonging from above; the fragility of museums as institutions with their own capacities for initiative and autonomy. This report faces these issues by focusing on the creation of the new state in 1861 and on the organization of a system of national protection characterised by a severe shortage of means and resources and, in general, by unawareness of the social and cultural value of Italy's heritage. The scant capacity of planning of the national ruling classes in the cultural sector was aggravated by the wide resistance against the processes of nation-building which became particularly evident with the sale of ecclesiastical estates (1866). This phenomenon induced not only the growth of the national museums but also, and especially, the founding of a large number of civic museums. Between these two types of museum and between the identitarian processes they promoted, a competition arose, in relation to the idea of nation they respectively propounded.

The complexity of the museum issue became even more evident at the beginning of the new century, when the creation of new government bodies for protection of the national heritage weakened the museum system, depriving it of scientific and managerial autonomy. The needs of the open-air heritage outweighed those of the museums, which thus became of secondary importance. Neglect of the country's museums grew worse under fascism (1922-1943). Rather than museums, fairs and temporary exhibitions were better means for the regime to advance cultural policies with a view to building consensus. And there were also the archaeological sites, in Rome as in the African colonies, which could be used to celebrate *Romanità*, and to affirm an imperialism whose most powerful symbol was antiquity. Museographical experiments were

nevertheless undertaken during the 1930s; but overall the museums were pushed into the background by cultural policies based on public spectacle.

With the birth of the Republic, new democratic perspectives superseded the nationalistic and imperialist contents of Fascism's cultural policies. The museums, and national heritage more generally, were conceived as instruments to foster the collective growth of society. But the principles enshrined in the Constitution were not fulfilled, mainly because, from the 1950s onwards, the national heritage was confronted by unbridled modernization. In the 1960s a new consciousness began to form in civil society. It gave rise to initiatives, campaigns, and movements that shook the immobilism with which the country's heritage and museums were treated. It was, however, in the following thirty years that substantial changes came about in the sector, which as regards museums, significantly improved from the end of the 1990s. It was then that the museums gained scientific and managerial autonomy and once again became institutions of importance to the life of society. This substantial regulatory change, however, was not accompanied by a broader reflection on the role of the cultural heritage in contemporary society. As recent debates have shown, the notion of national heritage continues to be associated with that of a fixed and immovable national identity, anchored to a vague past of greatness which has little to do with society's real mechanisms and dynamics.

### Summary table, Italy

| Name                         | Inaugurated    | Initiated      | Actors | Ownership | Type                        | Values                      | Temporal reach          | Style<br>Location  |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Uffizi                       | 1860/61        | 1860/61        | State  | State     | Art                         | Universal values            | 1581-2000               | Central cluster<br>Existing building.  |
| Museo archeologico di Napoli | 1860           | 1860           | State  | State     | Archaeology                 | Territorial representations | 1734-2000               | Central cluster<br>Existing building.  |
| Pigorini                     | 1875           | 1876           | State  | State     | Prehistory /<br>Ethnography | Territorial representations | 1875-2000               | Rationalist Fascist style.<br>Architectural power cluster.                       |
| GNAM + MAXXI                 | 1883 +<br>2010 | 1881 +<br>1997 | State  | State     | Art                         | Universal values            | 1881-2000 1998-<br>2010 | Neoclassical style<br>Central cluster,<br>Postmodern style<br>Solitary location. |

## Introduction

The collective imagery often conceives of Italy as an open-air museum, a unique space in which art and history are manifest in the fabric of the country's cities and landscapes – and a territory which, though highly diversified, is uniformly rich in historical evidence. This wealth gave rise to the precocious birth in Italy of the museum as an institution for the display and conservation of objects, and to which specific social and collective value has been accorded ever since the 1700s. It has also been the reason for cultural policies which, as we shall see, have over time promoted different and often conflicting meanings and values. The complexity of Italy's cultural heritage, and of the museums that form part of it, derives in fact from deeply embedded local identities which, even after the creation of the Italian nation-state, maintained their strength and appeal. The local/national relationship is therefore of fundamental importance when studying the Italian case, which precisely because of this aspect provides useful insights into the meaning of the concept of 'nation' and calls into question that of 'national museum'.

This report aims first at outlining the most significant features of cultural policies that used museums to express narratives variable in time and space. It also intends to shed light on the difficulties, conflicts, and ambiguities besetting these policies in a country where rich and composite local identities were deeply rooted. The museums, explored in what follows, are of ancient origin because in Italy it was especially on the legacy from the pre-Unitarian heritage that the idea of the national museum developed over time. Moreover the museums explored are solely artistic and historical ones, because science played a minor aggregative role from the identity point of view. In regard to these museums, I will emphasise their role in different historical periods, by connecting their creation and development to the projects, ideas and ambitions which society had towards them. A state of weakness will then emerge for national museums, which suffered from the state's lack of structural projects, and the existence of a huge heritage outside the museums, towards which limited resources and means were directed over the long period.

The meaning and evolution, over time, of the national narrative in museums will be explored in light of four specific cases: the Galleria degli Uffizi of Florence; the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Naples; the Museo Preistorico ed Etnografico "L. Pigorini" of Rome and the Galleria d'Arte Moderna – GNAM (with the Museo delle Arti del XXI secolo – MAXXI) of Rome. These museums are exemplary cases for study because their creation and development relate to different moments of history and distinct geographical contexts. As the paramount space of art and its universal values, the Galleria degli Uffizi represents a useful point of departure for examination of the close connection between the local and national in Italy. The Galleria was founded at the end of the 1500s, and it long symbolized the power of a dynasty (the Medici), their state (the Grand Duchy of Tuscany), and their city (Florence). With the creation of the Kingdom of Italy (1861), the Uffizi was transformed into a national gallery, with its territorial rootedness maintained intact. Initially, it was the symbol of Florence as the capital of Italy; thereafter, when Rome became the capital of the Kingdom (1870), it was one of the instruments used by the city that was in search of a cultural vocation to be exploited in economic and touristic terms. The local/national relationship was also crucial in the subsequent period, confirming territorial rootedness as a central feature of the history of Italian national museums.

This feature is also apparent in the case of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Naples. Also created before Unification, the museum was conceived as a grandiose cultural complex for a city that the Bourbons aspired to turn into a centre of art and culture. After Unification, the museum became the symbol of an ex-capital that reacted to the inception of the new state with hostility. It represented the pride of a city ‘downgraded’ with the birth of the Kingdom. This factor was of central importance in the history of Naples, and it returned to the fore in the 1990s, when an innovative municipal policy turned the arts into means to generate a ‘Neapolitan renaissance’.

The histories of the Museo “L. Pigorini” and the GNAM are very different. Both of them were created by the state in Rome after Unification (respectively in 1875 and 1883), and they were given a manifold ‘mission’: to strengthen the role of the new capital and give it equal status with the other European capitals; represent the origin and diversified nature of the nation and its position on the scale of civilization (the Museo Pigorini); close the distance that separated Italy from other nations; and redeem modern art from the dominance of ancient and Renaissance art (GNAM). While the Museo Pigorini developed especially in the early 1900s, the GNAM expanded after the Second World War and in more recent years, since it was flanked by the MAXXI (2010). Besides their post-unification creation by the state, the two museums share the feature of having had directors who conditioned their histories and determined their success (Pigorini and Palma Bucarelli). Both exemplify further ways in which the concept of nation was employed to represent and transmit a sense of shared belonging.

## **National museums and cultural policy in Italy**

### **Museums and galleries in the pre-Unification States (1700-1861)**

The great Italian national collections originated from those of the numerous dynastic families which, from the fifteenth century onwards, collected objects with evident celebratory and status-related intent. As the means to affirm power or social elevation, these private collections reflected a desire to possess the wonders created by man and nature in a single space (Olmi 1983). The magnificent Renaissance collections – for example the Galleria degli Uffizi of Florence – had an explicit political purpose: that of legitimating the role of powerful personages and sovereigns who used art and historical evidence to represent their grandeur (Brown 1995). Already in the 1600s these collections were rendered visible by the decision of their owners to exhibit objects to a public of cultured and selected visitors. In the next century, they received further visibility from an Enlightenment whose cardinal principles were reason and education (Pomian 2007). The purpose of this display was to gain consensus by publicizing collections and making them accessible in museums. Collections underwent substantial reorganization for the purposes of order and rationality. In the meantime, they were publicized by guidebooks, catalogues, and inventories intended not only for the travellers on the Grand Tour who traversed the peninsula, but also for local elites, which became aware of the heritage possessed by their cities (Paul, Marchesano 2000).

This greater awareness was accompanied by the need to protect the collections, preserving them against dispersion and enhancing them. Protection of the historical-artistic heritage was a matter of particular importance in some regional states of the peninsula, where the abundance of material induced the promulgation of measures from the eighteenth century onwards (Emiliani

1978). In the Papal State, the French looting of Rome and Quatremère de Quincy's subsequent denunciation of the pillage led to ordinances and prohibitions to combat the phenomenon of dispersion and to safeguard the great collections' integrity. Reprising principles already expressed in the sixteenth century, two edicts were issued in the first decades of the 1800s – the *Editto Doria Pamphilij* (1802) and the *Editto Pacca* (1820) – which, besides banning the export of art works and archaeological finds, affirmed the public and collective value of Italy's artistic heritage, and its function as an instrument of civil education (Curzi 2004). Besides norms and rules to protect that heritage, in the Pontifical State there also arose a conception of the museum as a crucial instrument not just for conservation but also for the preservation and promotion of collective values. The Museo Capitolino, for instance, dated back to 1471, when it was founded to exhibit statues donated to the people of Rome by Pope Sixtus IV (*Musei Capitolini* 2007). Inaugurated by Pope Clement XII and opened to the public in 1734, the museum was an institution important for both the Papal State, whose history and memory it conveyed, and the culture of conservation – in whose development it performed a role of prime importance. More generally, the development of a culture of heritage protection heightened pan-European interest in the 'Eternal City' long studied, explored, and loved by the scholars, artists and travellers who recognized its role as the capital of antiquity (Garms, Garms 1982; Giardina, Vauchez 2000). Their presence and activity contributed to Rome's development and to its transformation into a powerful pole of attraction.

Private collections assumed an early social and collective value also in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where the grandiose collections of the Bourbons were opened to the public during the eighteenth century. Also, the Kingdom promulgated protective laws in the 1700s, when the discoveries of Herculaneum and Pompeii and excavation campaigns in Campania, Sicily, and Magna Graecia prompted legislation to prevent the export or dispersal of items (D'Alconzo 1999). The ascent to the throne of Carlo III di Borbone in 1734 fostered various cultural initiatives that flanked those of a dynamic urban intellectual class. There ensued the creation of various royal museums in Naples: in 1759, the Villa Reale di Capodimonte, which housed the Pinacoteca Regia and royal collections from Rome; in 1750, the Museo Ercolense of Portici; in 1777 the Museo Borbonico – the transfer to which of the region's main collections made it the Kingdom's central museum. Also instituted at the Museo Borbonico was a superintendency to supervise excavations in the region and to safeguard discoveries. Like the Museo Capitolino, the Museo Borbonico was distinguished by a close relationship with its setting: it conserved and exhibited material from the Vesuvian towns and from southern Italy more generally.

However, the proliferation of initiatives and the legislative originality of the Pontifical State and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were not matched by the other regional states, although these already possessed numerous public museums in the early nineteenth century. Also in those regions, collections celebrated the glory of the respective sovereign or the state, while art works and historical endowments emphasised the longevity and richness of their lineage and history (Bencivenni et al. 1987). In Tuscany, for example, although uninterested in legislating on the matter, Pietro Leopoldo took action to promote the Florentine art heritage, towards which he was able to direct attention and approval. He promoted the idea of an artistic heritage represented as 'Italian' even before the nation-state came into being. Elsewhere, for instance in Lombardo-Veneto, the absence of protective laws did not diminish the value of museums

founded soon after the great academies of fine arts, like the Gallerie di Venezia or the Accademia di Brera (Milan), which combined conservation with education and thus provided fertile ground for the growth of knowledge and historical-artistic abilities. More complex is the case of the Piedmont of the House of Savoy (or Regno di Sardegna), which did not have specific legislation on the protection of either monuments or the artistic heritage in general. From 1861 onwards, this lack of legislation produced a situation in many respects paradoxical. As we shall see, the small Piedmontese state, which had led the process of Unification fighting against Austria and gradually annexing the other states of the peninsula, found itself exercising direction and control in areas with stricter regulations on conservation. Whence derived, the resistance of local traditions to the decisions taken by the new state in creating the national system of heritage protection (Troilo 2005, 28).

In all the cases described, museums – also the universal ones – expressed the identity of a city or region founded on art and history and fostered by sovereigns, shared by local elites, and respected by the visitors who came to Italy to study or purchase works of art. The fruit of dynastic collections embedded in their local contexts, these museums constituted an incomparable patrimony with which, from 1861 onwards, the newly-founded Kingdom of Italy was obliged to take into account.

### **1861. Unification: the legacy from the past and projects for the future**

The Kingdom of Italy (1861) was created by dismantling the regional states and constructing a single state under the direct control of the Savoy dynasty of Piedmont. In a few years, the administrative system of the Regno di Sardegna, its electoral law, its Constitutional Charter were extended to the newly born Italy. The new state, governed by a ruling class coming mainly from the north of the country, immediately exhibited elitarian characters, which were scantily functional to the promotion of a collective participation in the public sphere (Soldani, Turi 1993). This latter was rendered even more complex by the profound social, political and cultural fragmentation of the country, and by the resistance which in some areas matured against the nation-building, perceived as a “piedmontization” process (Dickie 1999). In order to avert the risk that the recently achieved unity might disintegrate, the state acceded to numerous demands advanced by its heterogeneous periphery determined to defend specific and deeply rooted social and cultural orders. Attempts “to make Italians” by means of a cultural policy designed to build a shared sense of ‘us’ were flanked – and often opposed – by local concerns to emphasise civic identities evoked by the histories and memories of cities and regions (Porciani 1997). This local/national relationship inevitably impacted on the cultural policies undertaken by the state and municipal authorities, and it defined the value and meaning of numerous museums of new and ancient foundation.

In 1861, the new Italian state inherited the rich legacy of collections and art galleries that had developed over the centuries in the country’s regions. Their material and symbolic management was impeded by a paucity of resources in the public exchequers. The costs of unification and nation-building, in fact, had depleted the funds available to the government, which found it difficult to organize an adequate system of heritage protection (Troilo 2005). This inadequacy was exacerbated by scant awareness among the new Italy’s ruling class of the value of its cultural heritage, which was for long used merely to celebrate rhetorically the greatness of the Italian

artistic tradition (Emiliani 1973). In this context, the Kingdom's main museums became *de facto* national, in the sense of being public and state-owned. This technical-administrative change probably had symbolic significance only in the case of Naples, where the Museo Borbonico was renamed a 'Museo Nazionale' by General Garibaldi (De Caro 2003). Elsewhere, the state took over the existing institutes as a complex inheritance already imbued with its own meanings, and which had to be redefined within a country in need of a powerful and legitimating master narrative. For some collections, the Uffizi for example, the theme of the uniqueness of the Italian art museum was resumed, together with the civic value of a collection that continued to impress upon Florence its image as the "Athens of Italy" (Cerasi 2000). For other collections – and these were the most numerous – the bond with the city in which they had grown continued to be a decisive factor in the elaboration of images and rhetoric. The weight of the past therefore marked the value of the great Italian museums, whose civic or dynastic origins continued to determine their meanings.

The richness of the already-existing heritage, the difficulty of nation-building, and severe financial shortages frustrated the endeavour of creating a central national museum in Italy equivalent to those of other European countries. However, some 'national experiments' in this regard were undertaken soon after unification, when it was decided to found a number of national museums *ex novo*. The Museo Industriale Italiano, for example, was founded in 1862 in Turin, and the Regio Museo Artistico Industriale in Rome in 1873 (ICI 1980). Both were intended to foster a modern industrial culture able to steer the country's economic future. These museums soon went into decline, however, and they were converted into collections of art and industry intended to boost an artisanship anchored in the humanistic tradition. This decision to concentrate on the technical-scientific dimension highlights the divide between the new Kingdom's capacities and those of the peninsula's ancient dynasties, whose museums fit awkwardly within the context of the new nation-state. The existence of often-incomparable artistic and historical collections seemingly rendered competition by the state impossible. This awareness soon led to other projects for national museums with specific celebratory purposes.

In 1875, the Museo Preistorico ed Etnografico "Luigi Pigorini" was founded in Rome as part of an ambitious conservation project: the creation of a cultural centre in the ancient *palazzo* of the Collegio Romano, which was to house the new national museum and the new Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele II" (Cerchiai 2003). The intention was to celebrate the birth of the Italian state by renewing the prestige of its capital. Used for this purpose was a 'minor' heritage – prehistoric and ethnographic – which made it possible to incorporate into the identity discourse the question of the origins of the national community and the forms that it had assumed over time (Guidi 1996). In those same years the Museo del Risorgimento was conceived in Turin to celebrate the role of the House of Savoy in national unification (*Il Museo Nazionale* 1911). The museum – which was opened to the public only in the next century – re-enacted the Risorgimento with the purpose of reconciling differences and conflicts. A few years later, in 1881, the Galleria Nazionale per l'Arte Moderna was founded in Rome with the intention of promoting modern art, a heritage given little value, and in many respects overwhelmed by the ample artistic legacy inherited from the past (Pinto 2005). The fate of the Galleria long remained uncertain because of the state's ambiguous and often ineffective action in regard to the new national museums. Conceived as devices with which to celebrate the nation and to promote a sense of

shared belonging, these museums often languished as spaces effectively functional to their purposes.

Despite the weakness of the state's initiatives, it was evident that the national ruling classes wanted to focus above all on Rome, acquired in 1870 with the defeat of the Pope and made the Kingdom's new capital in the same year. The choice of Rome, the ancient capital of the Church and Christianity, rather than Florence, assumed notable symbolic significance (Brice 2007). The state, in fact, entered into competition with the traditional symbolic power of the Church, developing new architectural and monumental forms, secular and patriotic, and conceiving museographical solutions centred not so much on classicism or art as on hitherto undervalued cultural assets. However, these solutions were, as said, constrained by the country's economic and political difficulties, which often caused them to fail.

There was also another reason for the weakness of the initiatives undertaken at the central level: the urgent priority of establishing a system to conserve Italy's rich 'open-air' heritage. The museum question, in fact, could not be separated from that of the remains, monuments, and ruins ubiquitous in the country. These had to be protected by a system that was still entirely to be constructed. In the years immediately following national unification, discussion on the form that this system should take was marked by the fear that it might threaten the cardinal principle of liberalism: the freedom of private enterprise, which might be restricted by a set of protective laws, rules, and procedures (Fusar Poli 2006). This fear prejudiced the debate on the collective benefit deriving from the national heritage, so that a protective law (Legge Rosadi) was only promulgated in 1909 (Balzani 2003). Until that date, the heritage was safeguarded by laws inherited from the ancient states which forbade the export of objects, punished illegal sales and purchases and organized regional protection agencies. Once again evident was the continuity with a past that furnished instruments with which to regulate the present. These instruments were also used to manage one of most important events of the immediate post-unitary period: the sale of ecclesiastic estates (*Liquidazione dell'asse ecclesiastico*) and the consequent devolution to the state of a large amount of the Catholic Church's historical-artistic assets.

### **From the sale of the ecclesiastical estates to the construction of the heritage protection system**

The devolution of ecclesiastical assets began in 1866 – although in some areas of Italy decrees for the suppression of religious orders and transfer of their property to the state had already been issued in 1861. An enormous amount of ornaments (paintings, sculptures, books, and so on) were confiscated by the public authorities, which thus had rapidly to make arrangements for their storage. This property transfer expanded the already-existing national museums. In Naples, for example, the Museo Nazionale was enriched with numerous objects. In Florence, some of the paintings confiscated were transferred to the Uffizi, while other objects were exhibited in a new national museum, the Museo Nazionale del Bargello. But the transfer of property had other effects as well: it led to the creation of numerous civic museums, which received the items acquired from monasteries, convents and churches in their areas (Gioli 1997). At the same time, the devolution wrought a profound cultural change: goods belonging to the Church moved to secular settings, where their meanings were recast. No longer liturgical and devotional, they became key components of a secular and patriotic discourse based on celebration of the

fatherland and its glories. The political cleavage between State and Church – provoked by the latter’s refusal to recognize the new-born Kingdom of Italy (of which the Pope declared himself a “prisoner”) – augmented this practice, transforming works of art into symbols of different and conflicting powers (Troilo 2005). The museum became the place in which this transformation came about, determining a secularization of protection that in Italy assumed more specific significance than elsewhere. It in fact evoked the cessation of the State of the Church, to the advantage of a state entity that used the cultural heritage to produce a new civic and secular religion: the religion of the Italian fatherland.

As said, this phenomenon benefited not only the national museums but also, and especially, the local ones, which mobilized themselves to press for the transfer of the devolved ecclesiastical property to their exhibition halls (Troilo 2005). This demand, however, ran counter to the government’s intention to create large collections to accommodate the confiscated material; an intention that provoked the municipal administrations into asserting their right to protect objects traditionally cherished on their territories. This claim arose partly from animosity against the imposition of rules by a predominantly Piedmontese ruling class which had never reflected upon the cultural heritage or taken specific action in its regard. Whence derived the idea that conservative traditions long established in many parts of the country were being disrespected. It also reflected alarm at the nation-building process, which was redefining the administrative system and radically changing the role of the cities and the urban hierarchies. Defending the municipal identity consequently became crucial for the local ruling classes, which used the cultural heritage as an important bargaining counter in their negotiations with the state. The need to build consensus for the new institutions of the Kingdom and to avoid identitarian conflicts induced the state to accede to local demands and, in the case of the objects confiscated from the Church, to assign a large part of them to the civic museums. The consequence was construction of a nation-wide system of protection and the network of museums that exists today. The local institutions and communities were able to use the objects allocated to them as symbols of their identities, and to resist every attempt by the state to ‘Piedmontize’ them. This aspect had crucial repercussions on the formation of identity policies in this period. The civic museums, in fact, represented local belonging as the basis for national belonging (Troilo 2005). They narrated the nation through local art and history, and nationhood was imparted through the particular histories of individual territories. This nation competed with that evoked by the state and its projects for nationalization, and it furnished special terrain for processes of identification. Shaped on this basis were territorial identities and the relationships between the museums and the places in which they were situated.

In the first decades of its life, therefore, the unitary state had various matters to deal with. It had to manage the museums inherited from previous centuries; to introduce museums of a new type; to handle the demands advanced by numerous peripheral bodies; and to establish a system for protection of the country’s rich ‘open-air’ heritage. This last aspect became, in many respects, of central importance. Before enacting an organic law on protection, the state set about organizing administrative structures able to apply and supervise protective measures throughout the country (Bencivenni et al. 1987). Instituted in 1875, for example, was the *Direzione Generale degli Scavi e dei Musei del Regno*, headed by Giuseppe Fiorelli, the powerful director of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Naples. The *Direzione* administered provincial heritage protection

commissions based at the main museums of the country's various regions. Introduced, again in 1875, were entry charges to public museums with the purpose of improving their finances. Three years later, a *Regolamento per il Servizio nei Musei Pubblici del Regno* was promulgated in order to set standards for the services provided by public museums. In this phase of organizing the heritage protection system, therefore, the museums enjoyed considerable status, which was increased by the sale of ecclesiastical assets and by initiatives intended to enhance their scientific and managerial roles. However, with the subsequent development of a centralized administrative system concerned especially with protection, the museums began to lose their specificity and increasingly became spaces devoted solely to the conservation of collections (Jalla 2003). This weakening of their role became more evident in the first decade of the 1900s with the introduction of the *Soprintendenze*, regional agencies tasked with managing heritage protection. These institutions absorbed museum functions, while the museums themselves lost to some extent their scientific and cultural significance. Also, because of the law finally enacted in 1909, the museums were gradually deprived of autonomy in their own management, and in the organization of cultural initiatives. Their principal functions thus became the conservation, inventorization, and display of exhibits.

### **Towards the end of the century: old ad new approaches to museums and heritage**

In the fifty years following the birth of the state, the museums lost managerial and legal power as their needs were superseded by those of the monuments, remains and ruins with which the national territory was richly endowed. This heritage was the focus of efforts by the state and the public protection agencies, which, however, suffered from a chronic shortage of resources. Yet the weakening of the museums did not entirely impede the birth of new national collections under pressure by scientific and cultural elites, local and national. In the 1880s, for example, the archaeological museum of Cividale del Friuli, founded before unification by the Austrian government, was transformed into a national museum because of the importance of the finds excavated in the small town near Udine. In 1889, the Museo Nazionale Etrusco of Villa Giulia was opened in Rome with the purpose of documenting the Etruscan civilization of Lazio. In these and other cases, the museum served to display the historical-artistic wealth of the nation and, at the same time, its specificity in terms of culture and territorial identity. This specificity was obviously also emphasised by initiatives directly undertaken by local institutions, which often created extremely significant museum installations. This was the case of Milan, where in 1893 the municipality purchased the stately Castello Sforzesco, which housed the civic museum, the Museo del Risorgimento Nazionale, and the Museo di Archeologia e d'Arte. And of Trieste, where in 1872 the municipality installed the notable legacy bequeathed by Count Revoltella in a building constructed for him by the German architect Frierich Hitzig. And of Rome, where in 1889 the Museo Nazionale Romano was created to display the Roman archaeological collections of the Museo Kircheriano and the numerous finds then being unearthed in the city by the urban construction work made necessary by Rome's transformation into Italy's capital. In these cases, too, art and history were valued by local elites concerned to promote territorial identities and become their political and cultural representatives. The museum thus became a means to distinguish and convey values primarily to do with a locality's social dimension.

Diverse interests therefore centred on the historical-artistic heritage, while identity policies of various kinds exploited its symbolic and representative potential. In the early years of the 1900s, the museum/territory bond was reaffirmed by a cultural policy addressed mainly to the rising middle classes (Varni 2002). The latter were interested in phenomena typical of the then nascent mass culture (tourism, leisure activities, the growth of publishing) that bred entirely new desires and needs. The demand for knowledge of the territory and its historical-artistic ‘beauties’ was met by national-educational actions intended to facilitate the ‘appropriation’ of Italy’s heritage and values by increasingly larger sections of the population (Troilo 2005). These were catered to by publications (tourist guides, photographs, postcards, and large-circulation magazines like *L’Italia artistica*) and institutions (the Touring Club Italiano), which ‘democratized’ enjoyment of the country’s historical-artistic heritage and the places where it was conserved. The museums, together with the so-called “*città d’arte e di storia*”, received increasing numbers of visitors; not only experts and researchers but also members of a class interested in new forms of learning and socialization. This class particularly attracted the attention of the fascist regime, which during the 1920s devised a propaganda machine intended to acquire the population’s support and to steer its demands and needs (Ben-Ghiat 2001). Under fascism, the role of the museum declined even further, to the advantage of cultural initiatives – shows and exhibitions – marked by what has been termed ‘spectacularization’.

### **The fascist regime: from museums to mass demonstrations**

The fascist regime took power in Italy in 1922, after the “March on Rome” had spelled the end of the liberal-democrat national system. In the space of a few years, the “Fascist Revolution” led to overthrow of the political and institutional system, the cessation of individual freedoms, the regimentation of civil society, and state control of the country’s economic and productive system (Dogliani 2008). The new totalitarian state created its own myths and symbols centred on the bellicose and imperialist nation shrewdly evoked by public rituals and celebrations. From the cultural point of view, Fascism developed the use of new media – like the cinema – and organized mass demonstrations intended to increase public support for the regime’s project of national regeneration, which was to be fulfilled through creation of the ‘New Man’ (Gentile 2009). To this end, action was taken to inculcate the values of nationalism/imperialism by means of examples celebrating the nation’s past and present glories (Russo 1999). Fairs, exhibitions, and shows were organized throughout the country with the purpose of emphasising the existence of a strong community bound together by a common national destiny. Among the most successful of these events were the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (1932), the Giotto celebrations held in Florence (1937), the *Mostra su Leonardo* in Milan (1939), and the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* organized in the capital in 1937. Ephemeral but potent, these events were spectacular devices effectively able to build consensus and better able than museums to transmit messages to large crowds (Huber 2011). The museums succumbed to this new phenomenon, given their inadequacy in furnishing images, rhetoric, and narratives that satisfied the needs of propaganda and the policy of consensus.

The ‘inadequacy’ of museums, moreover, had already been instrumentally denounced by voices raised at the turn of the century in support of the conquest of modernity and the demise of tradition. Intellectuals well-known at national level, like Marinetti and the futurists, and minor

local intellectuals striving to gain visibility, mounted a campaign to affirm the reasons of the future against a concern with the past dismissed as traditionalist and conservative (Gentile 2009; Troilo 2005). They derided museums, libraries, and archives as dead institutions, devoid of value, useless and to be replaced. Modernity, read as creative destruction, as progress predicated on the myth of speed, marked their ideology, weakening the image of the museum and turning it into a 'fossil' of history. This image fostered fascism's "obsessive practice of display" (Huber 2011) which used spectacle to emblazon the nation's vision of the future and its creative power.

Nevertheless during the 1930s, national shows and expositions provided occasions to conduct a number of museological experiments. *The Mostra Augustea della Romanità* – whose celebratory purpose recalled that of the 1911 Exposition for the nation's fiftieth anniversary – was held one year after proclamation of the Fascist Empire, and it marked the birth of the Museo della Civiltà Romana (although this was not inaugurated until the post-war period, in 1955). Also transferred to this museum were objects conserved in the Museo dell'Impero Romano (inaugurated in 1929), which also housed an archive and a centre of Roman studies. As the ideological 'cement' of the regime, the myth of Rome welded together the glories of the present and the past under the banner of an imperialism whose most important conquests were achieved in the 1930s (Gentile 2009). But once again, rather than museums, use was made of other spaces to evoke and communicate the fascist symbology of *Romanità*. Principal among them were the archaeological and monumental sites recovered and enhanced in Rome and certain colonies. In the capital, important archaeological campaigns were launched in the 1920s to bring the traces of ancient imperial power back to light. The opening of Via dei Fori Imperiali, the restoration of the archaeological area of the Colosseum, and the excavation of the Teatro Marcello, were some of the most important initiatives undertaken by the regime, which with its "destructive pickaxe" redesigned broad areas of the city and undertook large-scale urban redevelopment (Gentile 2007, Vidotto 2001). Simultaneously, excavation campaigns were begun in the colonies, especially the African ones, in order to legitimate fascist colonization and to make explicit the "epic of return" to lands once part of the Roman Empire (Munzi 2001). Libya became a country in which archaeological finds and ruins represented the discourse of the empire in powerfully effective manner. Here, colonial museums were also founded (for instance in Tripoli and Benghazi) in order to preserve materials unearthed by the excavations. But these museums were little enhanced and they soon went into decline, while the most important finds were sent to Italy and displayed in its main archaeological museums. These exhibits assimilated the theme of *Romanità* into that of *Mediterraneità*: Rome thus represented the centre of a cultural and symbolic universe that spanned the entire Mediterranean basin and furnished legitimation for the regime and its role in Europe (Rodogno 2003).

### **From fascism to the republic: transformation and continuity**

With the collapse of the fascist regime, the end of the Second World War, and the birth of the Republic, Italy's museums and its cultural heritage as a whole were radically rethought in an attempt to erase the fascist rhetoric and its totalitarian and imperialist vision. This attempt was first expressed by the new Constitution of 1948. Reversing the principles that had defined the cultures of conservation under fascism, the Constitution envisaged heritage protection as a means to enrich the individual and to foster the cultural growth of society as a whole. The nation's

cultural heritage was now construed in democratic terms, so that it became a free collective good. But although the role and function of heritage protection were clearly stated, those of the museums were left decidedly marginal, in a historical and political context marked by the difficulties of post-war reconstruction (Jalla 2003). In this climate, continuity with the past was established from both the normative and operational points of view. For example, inherited from fascism was the law on the “Protection of Items of Artistic and Historical Interest” (1939). Although on the one hand this law declared museums “inalienable property of the State”, on the other it defined them, not as autonomous bodies, but as regulated by provisions concerning, for example, private property or the protection of assets in general (Vaccaro Giancotti 1998). Thus reaffirmed was the absence of a museum’s self-governance – with the consequence that it was still fragile in its functions and social role.

Republican Italy therefore began with reaffirmation of the principle that museums were spaces devoted above all to the conservation of collections. They were conceived as institutions lacking a strong project and collective perspectives and with no managerial autonomy from the *Soprintendenze* and other central agencies (Paolucci 1996).

With these premises, museums continued to perform a role preordained for them. Only seldom were important novelties apparent: for instance, the museological innovations wrought by certain architects (Carlo Scarpa, Franco Albini, and Ezio Bruno de Felice) who were involved in both the refurbishment and restoration of some national museums (for instance, the Galleria Nazionale e Museo di Capodimonte of Naples or the Sicilian Galleria Nazionale) (Huber 1997); or in the experiments conducted by Palma Bucarelli, director of Rome’s Galleria di Arte Moderna, which she transformed into an avant-garde museum (Margozzi 2009). More generally, the weight of the past – in terms of the structural and architectural forms of museums as well as their role and function – obstructed change, which was restricted to reorganization of the central and peripheral administration of heritage protection. However, the 1960s saw animated debate on museums and the cultural heritage driven by the strong pressure for innovation exerted by a civil society mindful of the damage that economic growth had caused to the country’s heritage (Romanelli et al. 1980). Since the 1950s, in fact, Italy had undergone the rapid industrialization of some of its areas, the impoverishment of others, and processes which soon transformed the economic and social system (Lanaro 1997). Demographic growth, increased consumption, unregulated urbanization and building speculation negatively affected the same preservation of heritage regarded as the ‘sacrificial victim’ of untrammelled modernization. Private associations like *Italia Nostra* were created for the purpose, on the one hand, of inducing the state to assume a more active role in protecting the historical, cultural and natural heritage, and on the other, to heighten public awareness of ongoing changes in the country (Della Seta 2000). These associations became important participants in the debate on heritage protection, in years when the national press also conducted strident campaigns for action to be taken on the country’s heritage. Thanks to the work of journalists and intellectuals known to the general public, greater awareness of the problems besetting heritage spread through Italy – and some areas in particular (Cederna 1965; Idem, 1975). Also the issue of the museums came on to the public agenda through the efforts of activist researchers and scholars (Bianchi Bandinelli 1974).

This renewed interest in heritage protection and museums induced Parliament to set up a commission to investigate the governmental administrative agencies and carry out a census of

Italy's cultural assets. The Franceschini Commission (1964) – which introduced the notion of 'cultural goods' – denounced the parlous state of the country's heritage and suggested ways to reform the protection system (*Per la salvezza* 1967). As regards museums, the Commission's report recommended that they be made more efficient and given greater autonomy – especially in the case of the largest museums, which were subject to damaging and suffocating control. Notwithstanding the wide debate sparked by the report, however, no substantial change took place in the sector during the years that followed. In 1975, the *Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali* was instituted in a context of strong continuity with the past, and in which only the creation of the regional administrations (1970) created space for innovation (Emiliani 1974). Devolved to the regions, in fact, were powers to legislate on local museums and libraries. Despite wide differences among regional initiatives, this devolution was of prime importance, for it finally invested museums with the legal form of cultural institutes and public services. Furthermore, this important process of regionalization was hampered by the persistence of a certain confusion in the national law, and by a series of regulatory contradictions which for long remained unresolved.

### **New developments: from the 1980s to 2000**

In the 1980s, the efforts of cultural anthropologists and demands by civil society for greater participation in cultural processes produced changes in the national and local museums (Russoli 1981). Whereas these had hitherto served the purpose of promoting scientific-academic culture – as elitist spaces whose use was the prerogative of the select few – they once again concerned themselves with the public's education and leisure. Museums began to address the questions of how to communicate their collections, of accessibility, and of relations with the public. This gradual transformation was encouraged by a series of legislative provisions that sought to give museums the role of promoting specific policies (Bobbio 1992). These changes were part of a progressive shift in the relationship between the state and local administrations brought about by the devolution of powers to regional governments. With regard to cultural heritage management, various competences were transferred from the centre to the periphery, the purpose being to decentralize powers and functions. Reorganization of the *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali* (1988) and the consolidated text of the law on cultural goods (*Testo unico dei beni culturali*, 1999) then gave rise to a reorganization of the sector still today partly in progress (Cappelli 2002). Further reform of the *Ministero* in the 2000s has led to the creation of new advisory bodies and has granted autonomy to museums. As a consequence, at least on paper, museums have regained their managerial independence and their scientific role.

However, these changes came about without any real debate on the role of cultural heritage in contemporary society, and without any real discussion of its function and significance. The shortcomings of this approach became clear in the early 2000s, when the then centre-right government headed by Silvio Berlusconi created bodies for the selection and alienation of the state's monumental heritage. The measures enacted were strongly contested by intellectuals, politicians and important sections of civil society, which mobilized to thwart what appeared to be a 'clearance sale' of the country's heritage (Settis 2002). The threatened sell-off to private agents of monuments, objects, and archaeological sites also prompted mobilization at international level, with the subsequent revision by the government of some of the provisions envisaged. Certain of the issues debated in those years revealed the limitations and ambiguities of an idea of the cultural

heritage deeply-rooted in the country. Defence of its public and collective value hinged, in fact, on a notion of national identity largely taken for granted and resistant to the cultural demands of a society undergoing profound change. The risks connected with the new state policies, the threats raised by the secessionist parties in the government coalition, and the traditional approach to legislative and regulatory management of the cultural heritage and museums, left little space for more incisive reflection on the relationship between the national heritage and national identity. The latter was represented as closed, abstract, rhetorically grounded on nineteenth-century values, and unable to cope with visions and perceptions arising from different senses of belongings. From this point of view, the debate was a missed opportunity and did little to interrogate the role of the cultural heritage in contemporary society.

Also vague and superficial was the discussion aroused in the same years by the proposal to build a new – and unique of its kind – Museo della nazione (Museum of the nation). Strongly urged in 2002 by the President of the Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, the project was intended to promote solidarity and social cohesion in an extremely fragmented political context, where secessionist propaganda in northern Italy was undermining the idea itself of national unity. In response to this propaganda, the project was intended to recover values from a national and patriotic tradition mainly rooted in nineteenth-century patriotism. But the project soon failed, thereby demonstrating the impossibility to represent a common past and memory and to carry forward an idea that was entirely uncoupled from the social reality. The museum of the nation never came into being. The debate on its creation became a pointless exchange of rhetorical proclamations, while still today the issue of cultural heritage is used for nationalistic purposes disconnected from ongoing social processes.

In sum, the Italian national museums and the Italian cultural heritage continue to reiterate practices and narratives of identity that are extremely vague and conservative. They refer to a tradition and idea of a glorious past that have never been debated. This situation is exacerbated by the extreme paucity of the resources allocated by the state to the culture sector. Italy continues to be a country that, despite the richness of its cultural heritage, invests derisory sums in the sector: the expenditure forecast for the year 2010 amounted to 0.21% of the government budget (Carandini 2010). This figure, together with the short-sightedness of the national ruling class, means that culture is a sector rich with potential but constantly neglected. Consequently, also the state of Italy's museums is one of restrictions and obstacles that will be difficult to remove in the future.

## **Case studies in chronological order**

### **The Galleria degli Uffizi of Florence: between universalism and localism**

The Galleria degli Uffizi is one of the most visited galleries in Italy and among the best known in the world for its art collections. It was founded and developed by the patronage of the de Medici family, whose members gave rise in the sixteenth century to a state – the Grand Duchy of Tuscany – able to act on the international political stage. The Galleria was founded in 1581, when Grand-Duke Francesco I began to transfer items from his family collections to the *palazzo* commissioned by Cosimo I de Medici on a design by Vasari. The Palazzo degli Uffizi had in fact been conceived to house the magistracies and the offices of state, but upon order of the Grand-

Duke its second floor was turned into a museum. The collection had a clear celebratory purpose: its universal nature extolled and legitimated the sovereign, affirming his supremacy (Berti 1979). It was made 'usable' by a provision of 1591 that made the gallery visitable upon request. Throughout the next century, the collection was increased and enriched with bequests from various members of the family, such as Vittoria della Quercia, the consort of Ferdinando II who bequeathed to the *Galleria* paintings by Raphael, Barocci and Titian. The gallery came increasingly to represent the state and the man who personified it with a pedagogical intent that evoked the power of the dynasty and its representatives (Olmi 1983). The latter created further collections during the 1600s, such as the new Galleria Palatina at Palazzo Pitti (1620), whose purpose however, was more aesthetic than systematic and public.

The growth of the Uffizi was nourished in those years by a cultural policy which attracted artists and scholars to Florence, and which attributed strong symbolic value to works of art. The bond with the city became central over time, as the collection assumed increasing identity value for Florence and its elite (Petrioli Tofani 2001). In 1737, the last surviving member of the de Medici family strengthened this bond by bequeathing all the gallery's collections to Francesco di Lorena, the future Grand-Duke of Tuscany, on the condition that they must never leave the city of Florence. This pact of historic importance prevented transfer of the collections or their alienation for dynastic-political reasons. During the 1700s, the Gallery underwent substantial changes in both its structure and composition (Finelli, Tomasello 1999). Inspired by Enlightenment and rationalist principles, Pietro Leopoldo began to break up the collection, dividing it among various institutes of conservation according to their purpose. Numerous items were transferred to the Museo di Fisica e Storia Naturale and the Accademia di Belle Arti, while the Armeria de Medici was alienated. New Etruscan collections were instead acquired, mainly from private collectors in various Tuscan towns, thus enhancing the Gallery's capacity to represent the region's past.

These changes were followed by other changes relative to the display of items in accordance with principles of order and systematicity. This rearrangement was accompanied by the introduction of "didactic apparatuses" (such as descriptions and biographical notices), while the demand for information led to the publication of inventories and catalogues (Barocchi 1982). Commissioned in 1748 was a detailed technical drawing of the entire Uffizi Gallery. Moreover, publication began of the numerous volumes of *Museum Florentinum* sponsored by a society of noblemen. In 1779, the first director of the Uffizi, Giuseppe Bencivenni Pelli, published the *Saggio storico delle Gallerie di Firenze*, the first history of a museum – while in 1782, the antiquarian Luigi Lanzi brought out *La Real Galleria di Firenze accresciuta e riordinata per comando di S.A.R. L'Arciduca Granduca di Toscana*. This popularization served to increase knowledge about the contents of the Uffizi, which now possessed more than 1100 paintings exhibited in a sequence of rooms, and a scientifically ordered Etruscan museum. The Galleria, opened to the public in 1769, was described as "a complete museum adorned throughout its extent; where magnificence competes with elegance, the people's history with the history of art, the best of ancient artifacts with the best of modern ones; where, so to speak, every stone bears the name of an illustrious writer; where every addition warrants similar honour; where those initiated into the mysteries of antiquarianism and good taste find so much nourishment, and those who are not initiated find much ease in becoming so" (Lanzi 1982, 211-212).

During the 1800s, the Uffizi's specialization continued as the Museo Egiziano and the modern art section were transferred to Palazzo Pitti. In 1852 the state archives were moved to the Uffizi. This imposed severe restrictions on the future development of the collection, which became increasingly perceived as representative of "Italian art", rich, manifold, expressed in a variety of forms but nevertheless unitary (Barocchi, Ragionieri 1983). This was a forceful image that accompanied that of the "literary nation" that had seemingly existed before the birth of the nation-state. When the latter came into being in 1861, the Galleria degli Uffizi became state property, whilst its nature as a national museum was reinforced in 1865 when Florence was chosen as the new capital of Italy. Legitimated symbolically and culturally as an artistic city of paramount importance, Florence prepared itself to perform this new role – but then abruptly lost it in 1870 when the capital was moved to Rome (Brice 2007). During the few years in which Florence performed this new function, its art collections expanded substantially. Also, because of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, the city's artistic heritage grew even richer. The Uffizi became the centre of a system of museums of new and ancient foundation, while its collections were further dismembered under a policy of strict specialization. Many items were in fact moved to the new Museo Nazionale del Bargello created in 1865, to the Museo Archeologico Nazionale inaugurated in 1870, to the Museo di San Marco, and to collections at Palazzo Pitti (Gotti 1872). At the same time, the Corridoio Vasariano, which linked the Uffizi to Palazzo Pitti, was opened; the Teatro Mediceo – inside the Gallery – was converted into the chamber of the Senate; and the Uffizi Gallery's furnishings were enriched. Until 1870, therefore, the city fully acquitted its role as Italy's capital.

The transfer of the capital of the Kingdom to Rome dealt a severe blow to the city élite and its relationship with the national ruling class. Florence's search for a new role induced the allocation of all its resources to construction of a new cultural vocation for the city that was to be spent also for economic and touristic purposes (Cerasi 2000). From 1870 onwards, the municipality's cultural policies sought to promote Florence's image as the "Athens of Italy", doing so through the development of art craftsmanship, cultural associationism, and museum tourism. With this image, the city affirmed its contribution to the country's artistic greatness and created an alternative to a destiny so abruptly terminated. The theme of local identity founded on the urban historical-artistic tradition also promoted social cohesion, while Florence's museums, principal among them the Uffizi, became identitarian spaces of fundamental importance.

With the new century, the fate of the Uffizi came to coincide with those of the great Italian collections, now deprived of an autonomous scientific function and engaged mainly in the conservation and the inventory of objects. Consequently, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Gallery was equipped with further facilities, such as a library, a photographic archive and a laboratory for tapestry restoration, which ensured better protection of its works. These works were rearranged so that "Florentine artistic genius" and its contribution to the formation of a "national artistic genius" could be displayed even more prominently. Venetian and Florentine painters of the 1400s provided the masterpieces of the collection, while the works of Giotto were transferred to the Uffizi from the Accademia in order to recreate the "essential sequence of Italian pictorial history". Caravaggio and his works were added to these artists in 1922 (Giglioli 1932). But from the celebrations of the nation's fiftieth anniversary until proclamation of the Fascist Empire, other spaces, this time temporary, were used to involve an

increasing number of people in the state's cultural policies. Florence's artistic uniqueness was reaffirmed in this period by a series of exhibitions, such as the *Mostra del Ritratto Italiano* (1911), the *Mostra di Pittura Italiana del '600 e '700* (1922), and the *Mostra Giottesca* (1937), which attracted hordes of visitors either drawn by the fame of the city or driven to do so by the regime's consensus machine. Whatever the case may be, Florence indicated the local route to national and universal glory. In those same years, the Florentine School occupied the first rooms in the gallery's layout, which were followed by those exhibiting the other regional schools.

The Uffizi suffered severe damage during the Second World War, and the restoration work was accompanied by further reorganization of its exhibits, which were no longer ordered into schools but instead chronologically. The "localistic" interpretation of the displayed works was therefore replaced by a perspective more responding to the scientific knowledge of the time. During the 1950s, the idea was conceived of creating the "Grandi Uffizi" through the transfer of the state archives and occupation of the entire building by the art gallery (Berti 1979). Also introduced in this period was a policy of greater openness to the public and greater investment in public education. The Gallery responded to the requirements of civil society, whose demand to participate in the production of culture it acknowledged. After the flooding of Florence in 1966, which devastated the city, the Uffizi underwent further rearrangement intended to solve the problems of the shortage of space and the growth in the number of visitors – which reached peaks of some 11,000 visits a day between 1969 and 1979. Florence thus established itself as a paramount destination for mass tourism, both Italian and foreign, while the Uffizi became one of the most visited galleries in Italy and the world. Besides this openness to the outside, and again in continuity with the past, the Galleria degli Uffizi today maintains a close bond with its city, towards which it addresses large-scale policies of popularization and education aimed, for instance, at schools. The bond with the territory is therefore still central for a museum that in the collective imagination represents the fulcrum of Italian art, of the "national artistic genius" and of the "universal spirit".

### **The Museo archeologico of Naples: the "universal treasure" and the history of the region**

The Museo Archeologico of Naples is one of the most important Italian national museums, especially because of its Graeco-Roman collections. The Museo was created on the behest of Carlo III di Borbone, who ascended to the throne of Naples in 1734. A member of one of best-known families of collectors at the time – the Farnese – Carlo arrived in Naples with a vision of urban modernization and cultural promotion which induced him to take action in the field of art and archaeology. Like other sovereigns of the time, the Infant of Spain saw both the fields of art and archaeology as means to celebrate himself and his dynasty (De Caro 2003). He pursued his project in the dynamic context of eighteenth-century Naples, where intellectuals and researchers animated the city's cultural life with styles and ideas imported from other European capitals (*Da Palazzo degli Studi* 1977). It was in this setting that Carlo conceived the creation of a Museo Farnesiano to house his family's rich and centuries-old collections in Rome and Parma. The idea of transferring works of art, books, and archaeological finds to Naples coincided with the intent to make the city into a great centre of art. It was on these bases that the foundations of the Villa Reale di Capodimonte were laid, and a first museum was inaugurated there in 1759. In this museum, art works from the Pinacoteca Reale and items brought from Rome were gathered.

Their transfer was completed by Carlo's son, Ferdinando IV, who between 1786 and 1787 had the Farnese collections transported from Rome contrary to the wishes of the Pope and in breach of the protective legislation of the Pontifical State. Naples thus became the place in which the sovereign concentrated his riches.

Ferdinando was not only interested in works of art but also the region's antiquities. The prodigious finds unearthed at Herculaneum and Pompeii after 1738 prompted further excavations in the area, and in 1750 the creation of the Museo Ercolanense in Portici. Ferdinando's wealth induced him to conceive a new structure to house the objects from both Capodimonte and Portici. Space was found at the Palazzo degli Studi, the seventeenth-century premises of the university, from which the Jesuits had been ejected in 1767. Ferdinando's idea was of grandiose scope: to convert the Palazzo into a museum flanked by a library, the Società Reale Borbonica, the Accademia di Pittura, Scultura e Architettura, the Laboratorio di Pietre Dure, and the Stamperia Reale. The entire complex was to have a public vocation that reflected the cultural values of the time. The transformation of the building was long and difficult, however, also because of political events that forced the king's flight to Palermo and the transfer to Sicily of numerous works retrieved from the French. But in 1801 the "Reale Biblioteca di Napoli" was opened to the public, and the transfer of materials began from Capodimonte and Portici. With the king's definitive return in 1816, the Real Museo Borbonico was inaugurated as a freehold property extraneous to ownership by the crown.

In those years, the Museum performed a role of prime importance in protecting the Kingdom's historical-artistic heritage. On the museum depended, in fact, the entire administrative structure created by the Bourbons to supervise excavations in the region, to prevent dispersion of the finds, and to conduct surveys (D'Alconzo 1999). The museum was therefore the hub of a powerful centralized system able to direct archaeological activity by virtue of the presence of advanced legislation on the matter; a system unparalleled in Italy except in the Papal States. In this context, the museum expanded, and its nature and importance started to be systematically publicized. Its "universal treasure" was described for the first time by an eighteen-volume Catalogue compiled in 1823 (*Real Museo* 1823). This clearly expressed a conception of the museum as a "temple" made special by the remains from Pompeii and Herculaneum and by the possibility to celebrate the sovereign's glory through them. Erected at the museum's entrance was a marble statue, executed by Canova, of King Ferdinando posing as the sovereign protector of the arts. Together with this statue, a tablet was installed to celebrate Ferdinando's commitment to "the glory of the country" and to "the convenience of scholars". The museum grew considerably in the following years, also thanks to the work of a Commission created in 1848 by the constitutional government to study innovations to its interior design and the excavations in progress in the Kingdom (Gargiulo 1864).

By 1860, therefore, the Museo Borbonico had developed a specific physiognomy. In that year, with the arrival of Garibaldi, it was transformed into a national museum owned by the state. The new title had an important political significance, since it marked a transfer of power that was particularly complex for the former Bourbon Kingdom. The great political, economic and social distance between the country's north and south immediately proved to be of dramatic proportions – so much so that it produced conflicts and resistances which threatened the unity of the country itself (Dickie 1999; Moe 2002). In this context of severe tensions, the museum

constituted a symbol of the power of the ancient state, and of the pride of a vast region which had lost its political and administrative autonomy to become part of a new national structure. From the point of view of heritage protection, this change was also somewhat paradoxical, because the former Bourbon Kingdom, with its advanced laws on the conservation and exploitation of testimonials to art and history, now found itself being governed by a state (the Piedmont of the House of Savoy) devoid of any legal and cultural experience on such matters (Troilo 2005). This discrepancy provoked widespread antagonism against the supremacy of the small Piedmontese state, which had arrogated to itself the role of creating the new Kingdom of Italy.

Yet the Museo Borbonico immediately proved to perform a function of great importance. It maintained control over the heritage protection system throughout the southern regions, also through the efforts of its new-appointed director Giuseppe Fiorelli. Thanks to Fiorelli, the future director of the most important component of the national protection system – the *Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti* created in 1875 – the museum was reorganized from 1863 onwards, and an inventory and a periodical Bulletin were published. The museum was also given the task of organize the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in southern Italy – to the great benefit of its collections.

Moreover, it became an important centre for the development of new scientific and archaeological initiatives (Fiorelli 1873). This function was augmented by hiving off some of the museum's institutes (the *Accademie*), which were congesting its activities. The museum now fully represented the artistic wealth of the region and, hence, that of the entire nation as well. Its art collections also evoked the values of universalism, which augmented the significance of the museum outside Italy. As the 1864 guide boasted, “quite rightly our Museum is held by all to be the richest, the most complete, the best, and the first among those many that exist in the principal cities of civilized Europe” (*Cenni storici* 1864, 12). Implicit in the celebration of the museum was also that of Naples, the former capital of the Bourbon state deprived of so much of its power by the new political order. Thus the museum's ties with its territory were constantly affirmed in an endeavour to demonstrate the region's unparalleled wealth (Migliozzi 1882).

In the early 1900s, the innovations made to the museum's installations aroused strong criticisms in the national press. The director, Giulio De Petra, was dismissed for a purchasing policy regarded as mistaken (1900), while in 1903 the refurbishment undertaken by Ettore Pais was condemned on the grounds that it was excessively modernist (De Petra 1901; Pais 1903). Numerous intellectuals took part in the debate provoked by Pais's actions, creating a national controversy in which personal interests and conflicts internally to the museum sector combined with more properly scientific opinions (Ciaceri 1903). The dispute centred on the break-up of the collections and the creation of exhibition areas gathering the works of greatest aesthetic-philological merit: indeed, again in 1903, the ministry set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the state of the museum. The commission exonerated Pais, thus giving free rein to reorganization of the museum's spaces, concentration into a single area of the picture-gallery, and rearrangement of the archaeological exhibits (*Relazione* 1917).

During the fascist period, the history of the museum replicated that of the other numerous great collections, marginalised by new cultural politics and by the success of other forms of communication and consensus-management. The main development in those years was

reorganization of the Pompeii materials, which were entirely rearranged by director Maiuri with clear popularizing intent (De Caro 2003). Moreover, in 1925 the Biblioteca Nazionale was transferred to the Palazzo Reale and work began on reinforcing the foundations, which lasted until 1937 (Maiuri 1936). During the Second World War, Naples suffered severe bombardment, and numerous works were transferred to Rome and kept at the Vatican Museums; others were stolen by the Nazis and subsequently recovered. The museum did not re-open until 1945, despite the presence on its premises of various offices of the allied forces. The 1950s saw a further major transformation of the museum when the picture-gallery was transferred to Capodimonte in 1957 (De Franciscis 1963). The museum was now entirely archaeological. Since its objects directly referred to the history of the territory, the bond between the museum and the territory was definitely evident. A specific policy of openness to the public was then adopted in response to the greater demand for participation that arose at the end of the 1970s (Pozzi 1986). In those decades, attempts were made to recontextualize exhibits and to reconstruct the histories of the museum's various collections, at the same time leaving space for new acquisitions from archaeological excavations. Pompeii remained the centre of interest because of its symbolic value in a complex social, political and economic context like that of Naples.

During the 1980s, the function of the Museo Archeologico as the region's central museum was partly diminished by the opening of numerous local museums, towards which it sought to perform a linking function through a regional museum network (Pozzi 1986). The central importance of Naples was then forcefully reaffirmed by a cultural policy, which from the next decade onwards, sought to combat the image of the city as decadent and in crisis. Damaged by the 1980 earthquake, lacerated by the subsequent economic, political and social crisis, and suffocated by organized crime, Naples became a proving ground for a centre-left policy to relaunch the city through art and culture in general. During government under the Bassolino mayorship, the urban renewal of the historic city centre, the modernization of numerous infrastructures, and the revitalization of the city, produced the image of a "Neapolitan Renaissance" in which museums, exhibitions, and urban artwork enhanced a sense of local identity (Dines 2004). In those years, the archaeological museum played an active part in this endeavour by hosting important art exhibitions (also of foreign artists), and opening up to the public with new initiatives. Although the enthusiasm later subsided, the museum continued to push for innovation, although its efforts were hampered by a severe shortage of resources.

### **The Museo Preistorico Etnografico "L. Pigorini" of Rome: the remote roots of the nation**

The Regio Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Etnografico of Rome was one of the new museums created by the Italian state in the first decades after Unification. It was founded in 1875 on the initiative of the Minister of Education, Ruggero Bonghi, and the archaeologist Luigi Pigorini. The institute was conceived as part of a broader project to create a cultural complex in Rome which would comprise the new museum and the nascent Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele II" in the ancient *palazzo* of the Collegio Romano, the erstwhile site of the seventeenth-century Kircherian collection (Fugazzola Delpino, Mangani 2003). Creation of the new complex responded to the need to celebrate the new capital of the Kingdom and to give it equal status with the great European capitals. The project consequently had a strong nationalistic intent, because on the one hand it ratified the State's definitive defeat of the Church and the consequent

incorporation of Rome into the Kingdom of Italy, and on the other, celebrated the new capital by endowing it with a museum unique in the country. It renewed the national museum panorama, valuing not so much the artistic and classical heritage, on which the attention of the ruling class in Rome had long concentrated, as a 'novel' and hitherto undervalued heritage. Consequently, the cultural policies of the new state were at odds with that of the Church insofar as they addressed secular and patriotic interests.

From the cultural point of view, the creation of the museum responded to other exigencies as well. The first was to conduct historical investigation of Italy's territory, characterized as it was by differences and disparities that profoundly affected the life of the country. As Pigorini wrote to Bonghi in 1875, "it is extremely important to know what of the primitive ages lies concealed in the various areas of the Kingdom, the purpose being to conduct those comparisons which alone can show the similarities and differences among the arts and customs of peoples which, prior to the historical age, held Italy from one end to the other" (Fugazzola Delpino, Mangani 2003, 321-322). This requirement was fully met by the museum, whose collections also comprised exhibits representing 'primitive' peoples still living in various parts of the world. The remotest past of Italy was thus compared to the 'barbaric' present of distant places, in a discourse on civilization that framed the evolution of peoples within an ideal Eurocentric and ethnocentric system. From a social point of view, the museum catered to the need for legitimation expressed by the new national ruling class (Guidi 1996). Consisting mainly of a middle class of northern origin, this found its ideal roots in a reading of prehistory – the so-called 'Pigorini theory' – according to which in remote times the peninsula had achieved cultural unity thanks to a civilization which extended from the north towards the south, creating new forms of settlement and giving rise to Latin civilization itself. Ideally, this process of unification overlapped with the present, representing powerful and effective continuity between the remote past and present events.

The museum was inaugurated on 14 March 1876, the birthday of both King Vittorio Emanuele II and Prince Umberto, who presided over the ceremony. The opening was accompanied by great controversy provoked both by the incompleteness of the installations and by the juxtaposition of the prehistoric and ethnographic collections (Acanfora M.O. 1976). A certain disquiet was also expressed in regard to the power assumed by Pigorini, who put himself forward as a leading expert on archaeology. However, the development of the museum was rapid, also thanks to the efforts of the director, Giuseppe Fiorelli, who worked directly on gathering exhibits, soliciting other collections in the Kingdom to provide them, and applying pressure on local institutions to furnish items from their collections (Lerario, M.G. 2005). His actions exhibited an endeavour to develop national science, a desire to enrich Rome with a museum different from those with which it was already abundantly endowed, and an intent to establish continuities between the nation's remotest past and its present. Fiorelli accordingly urged the local museums to participate in the project for the museum of prehistory and ethnography. This would have given them prestige, as well as representing the nation's cultural diversity.

During the 1880s, the life of the museum was dominated by the activism of Pigorini, who succeeded in turning it into a centre for the planning of palethnological research and excavations in the country (Lerario 2005). From within the museum, Pigorini supervised archaeological investigations throughout Italy, while at the same time organizing courses for university students, who attended lectures on palethnology in the museum's rooms. The museum also sponsored

publication of the *Bullettino di Paletnologia Italiana*, thereby becoming a centre of study and scientific popularization of importance throughout Europe. The expansion of the museum's functions made it necessary to occupy increasing amounts of space, to the detriment of the adjoining Museo Kircheriano, which was gradually ousted from its original premises to make room for extensions to the Pigorini collection. The museum increasingly became an institution for the education of the general public. Conceived by Pigorini as "an open book, with the clearest statement of the chapters into which it is divided" (Pigorini 1884), the museum produced explanatory panels and leaflets to foster learning of its values based on an idea of progress and unity in regard to the nation and its position on the scale of civilization. In 1895, Italy, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania were arranged in a sequence of 70 rooms acquired at the spacious Collegio Romano.

In the early decades of the twentieth century the Museum achieved its greatest success in Italy and abroad as its collections were expanded also by large private bequests. Many of the most important ethnographic and prehistoric collections in the country were transferred to the museum, which became a point of reference for scholars both Italian and foreign (Fugazzola Delpino, Mangani 2003). It was, however, in those same years that debate internal to ethnography began to undermine the cultural bases of the museum, which were further weakened by resolutions passed at the first *Congresso di Etnografia Italiana* held in 1911. The increasing distinction between palethnology and ethno-anthropology began to have repercussions on the museum's cultural project, which became problematic in subsequent decades.

When Pigorini died in 1925, his name was included in the museum's title. With the demise of the charismatic function of its founder, the museum was taken over by the *Soprintendenza alle Antichità* of Rome and thereafter went into considerable decline (Fugazzola Delpino, Mangani 2003). The autonomy that it had enjoyed under Pigorini was removed – as happened to the other great museums of the Kingdom, which were brought under the control of the *Soprintendenze*. This situation was exacerbated by the scant interest shown by the fascist regime in prehistory and ethnography, both of which it considered of little importance compared with the celebratory and propagandistic potential of classical archaeology. This "indifference" of the regime was denounced by the new director, Piero Barocelli, who in 1938 described the state of neglect in which the collections had fallen (Fugazzola Delpino, Mangani 2003). The museum lacked funds, resources, and staff, and its collections seemed bound to deteriorate further. It was Barocelli himself who, together with other scholars, published the first guide to the museum with a view to its recovery (Barocelli, Boccassino, Cerelli 1937). In 1940, appeals to rescue the "central museum of Italian prehistory" led to conversion of the Museo Pigorini into the offices of the *Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Roma V*, and to its relaunching in national-imperialist terms (Barocelli 1939). The museum's collections now had to represent the origins of the Italian race and Italy's destiny in the world.

The ambiguous role attributed to the museum by fascism was reversed after the fall of the regime, when the nationalistic and imperialist myth gave way to new political and cultural ideals. During the 1940s the museum was enriched mainly with objects from excavations on the outskirts of Rome and in Lazio, which led to the opening of a new section: the Museo della Preistoria and Protostoria Laziale (1962) (Sestieri 1975). This museum was installed at the new Palazzo delle Scienze, at the EUR complex in Rome, where it was joined by the historical

collection of the Collegio Romano between 1975 and 1977. The new location of the Museo Pigorini in the district designed by the fascist regime for the 1942 *Esposizione Universale di Roma* (which was never held), severed the museum's traditional bond with the city. At the EUR, an extra-urban area to the south of Rome, the Pigorini Museum was flanked with other institutions (the Museo della Civiltà Romana, the Museo dell'Alto Medio Evo, the Museo Nazionale delle Arti e delle Tradizioni Popolari) in an attempt to enhance the cultural value of a marginalized city hinterland. In its new premises, the museum became a 'special institute' denominated the *Soprintendenza Speciale al Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Etnografico "Luigi Pigorini"*.

After the 1980s, the museum had to come to terms with its complex nature and with the crisis of identity provoked by the death of its founder. The central importance of Pigorini in the conception and development of the museum had in fact complicated the distinction between the institution's history and its collection, and only with great difficulty was it able to relaunch its social function, renewing its installations and rethinking its communication duties towards the public. Today, the museum seeks to make its collections more accessible by means of initiatives designed to foster both museographical research and educational activities.

### **The Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (GNAM) and the Museo delle Arti del XXI secolo (MAXXI): from the nation to the contemporary avant-garde**

The GNAM and the MAXXI are anomalies in the Italian museum system, given that only in recent decades has contemporary art received explicit attention from the state and its conservative agencies. The two museums have very different origins and histories, in that they were created more than a century apart. The GNAM was inaugurated in 1883 at the new Palazzo delle Esposizioni built in the centre of Rome on a design by the architect Piacentini. The museum was above all the result of efforts by the Minister of Education Baccelli, and it was intended to serve two purposes: to endow Italy with a place dedicated to modern art, and to enhance Rome with a museum which promoted a form of art of little interest in the country (Bucarelli 1951). In 1881 these two aims had led to the organization in Rome of a highly successful international exhibition of modern art. Other exhibitions of the same kind had been mounted in the past in other Italian cities, but the success achieved in 1881 induced the state to purchase the works shown at the exhibition, and to create a gallery in which to collect works by living or recently deceased artists.

The initial enthusiasm for the project dwindled with time, however, owing to the state's financial difficulties and to the scant interest of Italians in modern art. But at the *Congresso Artistico Internazionale* organized in Rome on the occasion of the 1911 Exposition, the GNAM's development became an issue of central importance. The need to expand the gallery was asserted by intellectuals and politicians, who proclaimed it necessary "to restore to Italy one of its intellectual provinces, modern art, and to render it fertile, prosperous, and worthy of a future" (*Atti del congresso* 1911, 47). This project to establish continuities between art of the past and the present was framed in a discourse on national regeneration which conjugated tradition and modernity, and which envisaged a new role for Italy, with its 'redemption' through history and art.

In 1915 the GNAM was transferred from the centre of Rome to Valle Giulia, situated in a green-belt district that had been urbanized on the occasion of the 1911 Exposition. Although the

transfer was widely contested as a downgrading of the gallery, the monumental building designed by the architect Bazzani provided space in which it could develop (Marini Clarelli 2009). With the transfer, the works acquired over time were sorted and sifted by the director Ugo Fleres. The arrangement chosen by Fleres followed a geographical criterion whereby works were divided into regional schools and exhibited so as to represent the diversity of Italian modern art (Pinto 2005). But because of the institutional and managerial weakness of the country's museums, Flores had very limited powers in the purchase of new works, a task which was undertaken by a committee appointed by the ministry. The growing number of exhibits, however, prompted a decision to extend the GNAM's premises, but the work begun in 1915 was completed only in subsequent decades.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the layout of the GNAM was reorganized by its new director, Roberto Papini, who focused above all on contemporaneity, eliminating the distinction by regional schools and resuming a historical criterion that divided the exhibits between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Pinto 2005). Topicality came to dominate in the gallery, conceived as a "chapter of history pulsating with life in the consciousness of the old and young", as a place in which to affirm "a continuity of history and creative energy" through art (Papini, in Pinto 2005). The themes of fascist creativeness, of twentieth-century modernity, of experimentation with new art forms, were forcefully asserted in the furnishings of the rooms, in which living Italian artists were celebrated above all. Foreign works of art, in fact, were transferred to Galleria Internazionale di Arte Moderna of Venice, while in 1934 an entire area of the GNAM was reserved for a *Mostra permanente della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Permanent Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution). The actuality of the artistic present became the actuality of the fascist project, while the gallery came to embody the values of a "regenerated" nation. Thus, from an external point of view, the GNAM presented the image of a break with the country's artistic tradition centred on a "burdensome" past that "crushed" contemporaneity. As the poet and art critic Mauclair wrote in 1932, it was this weight that bore down on Italian artists: "just as Italy, which in sixty years has become a great and dynamic power, no longer accepts the judgement which dismisses it as a nation of hoteliers and guides living on unearned income from its landscape and marvellous artistic heritage, so artists suffer the fate unfortunately reserved for the children of the great" (Pinto 2005, 14). The GNAM was a new space that offered artists opportunities to express their talents and to enrich the country's artistic history.

With the end of the Second World War and the appointment of Palma Bucarelli as director, the GNAM began to take shape as a museum with a specific mission driven by three main factors: the growth of a new public awareness of contemporary art; the promotion of Italian and especially international contemporary art; and transformation of the museum into a space democratically accessible to all. The innovatory project was already apparent in an exhibition organized in 1945 by Bucarelli on contemporary Italian art; a exhibition strongly desired at a time when American armed forces were still in Rome, and when Italian art was being used as a means to redeem the country from its recent fascist political and cultural past. As Bucarelli wrote to the ministry, the exhibition should stand "as testimony to the state's interest in matters of art, to the cultural function of the Italian institutes of art even in these difficult times; and above all to the value of the most recent art, so that foreign guests do not believe (...) that Italian art ended with Caravaggio" (Margozzi 2009, 22). 1945 marked the launching of an entirely new cultural policy

for the GNAM that rejected museological and cultural models from the past to the benefit of “living” art and international culture.

From the 1950s onwards, exchanges and donations enriched the GNAM with a notable number of works executed by young Italian and foreign artists (Marini Clarelli 2009). But the gallery was the constant target of criticism, especially by left-wing politicians, who attacked the choices of the director, her management of the museum’s spaces, and her purchasing policy centred on abstract art (Ferrario 2010). In a strongly misogynous context, Bucarelli adopted a strategy of self-identification with the gallery that had great media and cultural impact. The GNAM organized exhibitions of Italian contemporary art in foreign countries, while the leading international artists of the time exhibited their works at the gallery. At the same time, the GNAM pursued – for the first time – a vibrant educational programme (Camerlingo 2009). Lectures, evening opening hours, thematic exhibitions, prizes for young artists, musical and theatrical performances attracted an increasingly large public to the museum, which shortly became a lively and dynamic institution. In 1968 a sculpture garden based on the American model was created in the GNAM’s grounds.

After 1975, the year of Bucarelli’s retirement, the GNAM encountered numerous difficulties caused by cuts in funding for purchases, the ambiguities produced by regulations issued by the newly-created Ministry of Cultural Heritage, and the progressive curtailment of its exhibition spaces (Marini Clarelli 2009). Its revival began at the end of 1990s thanks to a new cultural policy aimed at the promotion of contemporary art. It was decided to construct a new centre as the enlargement/continuation of the GNAM and devote it to twenty-first century art (Mattiolo 2009). The creation of the MAXXI (National Museum of 21st-Century Art), designed by Zaha Hadid, was favoured by enactment of a law instituting a *Piano dell’Arte Contemporanea* and a *Direzione Generale per l’Architettura e l’Arte Contemporanea* at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (2001). After years of work, the MAXXI was inaugurated in 2010 with the purpose of enhancing coordination among similar museums at national level and interchange between research and museum practice.

The new-born MAXXI has been conceived to be a forum for the production of art in opposition to the conception of the Italian museum as a “museum unto itself”. It has accordingly developed spaces for experimental art, an archive, a book and media library, and an institute of advanced studies, while it acquires exhibits by commissioning them directly. In the words of its current director, the MAXXI interprets the idea of a national museum in the sense of an institution which “presents and promotes practitioners who conduct significant research in the world of art: whether they are emerging artists or ones not yet established, whether they are internationally recognized as representative of Italy or whether they are great artists whose work and memory should be conserved” (Mattiolo 2009, 35). At the same time the MAXXI encourages the interweaving among the arts, promoting experimental work in music, theatre and dance. Therefore, despite the controversy provoked by the architectural choices made in its construction, the new museum reflects a widespread need for “contemporaneity” which hitherto has found scant space to express itself and develop.

## Conclusion

As schematically described and as the case studies have shown, the impact of state developments on the cultural sector was complex and diversified, because it reflected the difficulties, ambiguities and contradictions of a composite process of growth. Whilst in the first fifty years of the nation-state it was mainly the country's nationalization which concerned cultural policies sometimes inconsistent but nevertheless intended to conciliate the demands raised by the Kingdom's heterogeneous periphery, under Fascism it was the regime's endeavour to impose its totalitarian ideology which generated nationalist and imperialist policies. Conversely, the policies of the republican period were characterized by marked democratization and by their capacity increasingly to reflect, albeit very slowly, the changes taking place in society. But these policies lacked a coherent vision of the role and function of museums often marginal in a sector where the country's open-air heritage absorbed most of the resources available. In this sense, the museums did not succeed in playing a driving role in the processes of state-making, even if they performed an important linkage between the centre and the periphery. They in fact guaranteed that the demands from the periphery were transmitted to the centre, in a perspective of respect of the identity of the place and the local community. Accordingly, perhaps the distinctive features of the Italian national museums was, and in part still is, their appeal to a nation expressed mainly through the history and culture of the territory, of which they were and continue to be important symbolic and cultural references.

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## Annex table, Italy

| Name                                    | Inaugurated | Initiated | Actors | Ownership | Type                       | Values                              | Temporal reach | Style Location  |
|---|-------------|-----------|--------|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Uffizi                                  | 1860/61     | 1860/61   | State  | State     | Art                        | Universal values                    | 1581-2000      | Existing building/central cluster                     |
| Museo archeologico, Napoli              | 1860        | 1860      | State  | State     | Archaeology                | Territorial representations         | 1734-2000      | Existing building/central cluster                     |
| Museo Industriale Italiano, Torino      | 1862        | 1862      | State  | State     | Technology                 | Technological and scientific values |                | No more extant  |
| Museo del Bargello                      | 1865        | 1865      | State  | State     | Art                        | Universal values                    |                | Existing Medieval building/central cluster            |
| Museo archeologico nazionale, Firenze   | 1870        | 1870      | State  | State     | Archaeology                | Territorial representations         |                | Existing building/central cluster                     |
| Regio Museo Artistico Industriale, Roma | 1873        | 1873      | State  | State     | Technology                 | Technological and Scientific values |                | No more extant  |
| Pigorini                                | 1875        | 1876      | State  | State     | Prehistory/<br>Ethnography | Territorial representations         | 1875-2000      | Rationalist Fascist style/Architectural power cluster |

|   |             |            |       |       |             |                    |                        |   |
|---|-------------|------------|-------|-------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|---|
| Museo del Risogimento                   | 1908        | 1878       | State | State | Culture     | National values    |                        | Existing building/central cluster                                       |
| GNAM + MAXXI                            | 1883 + 2010 | 1881+ 1997 | State | State | Art         | Universal values   | 1881-2000<br>1998-2010 | Neoclassical style/central cluster + Postmodern style/solitary location |
| Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia | 1889        | 1889       | State | Sate  | Archaeology | Territorial values |                        | Existing building/central cluster                                       |
| Museo Nazionale Romano                  | 1890        | 1889       | State | State | Archaeology | Territorial vaues  |                        | 4 different existing buildings/central cluster                          |
| Museo della civiltà romana              | 1955        | 1911       | State | State | Archaeology | Territorial values |                        | Rationalist Fascist style/Architectural power cluster                   |