

THE UNIONE MATEMATICA ITALIANA IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD. SCIENTIFIC, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

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The Italian Mathematical Union (UMI) celebrates its centenary this year. It was indeed set up in 1922 in accordance with a motion approved in Brussels in July 1919 by the International Research Council, which promoted the creation of national scientific committees. The national and international background of this event is very problematic in various respects. 1922 is the year of the March on Rome that brought the fascist party to power, and later on to a gradual transformation of the fascist government into a dictatorship. Furthermore, serious international tensions made the situation even more complex. In particular, in the aftermath of WWI the ex-Central Powers were excluded from the new scientific institutions the International Research Council (1919) and the International Mathematical Union (1920). The recent reorganization of the UMI Archives has made a lot of significant documents available to historians, who can now shed light on the backstage of the first twenty years of UMI's life.

We aim to outline UMI's history in the interwar period by considering three different aspects: autarky versus internationalism; pure mathematics versus applied mathematics; fascist policy versus circulation of people and mathematical ideas. We will focus on the (i) role of Volterra and Pincherle in the foundation of the UMI and certain initial difficulties; (ii) UMI's international relationships and especially Pincherle's involvement in the International Congresses of Mathematicians of Toronto (1924) and of Bologna (1928); (iii) UMI's relations with fascism and their consequences on its Bulletin. Our research is based on unpublished letters and documents contained in the UMI Archives.

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