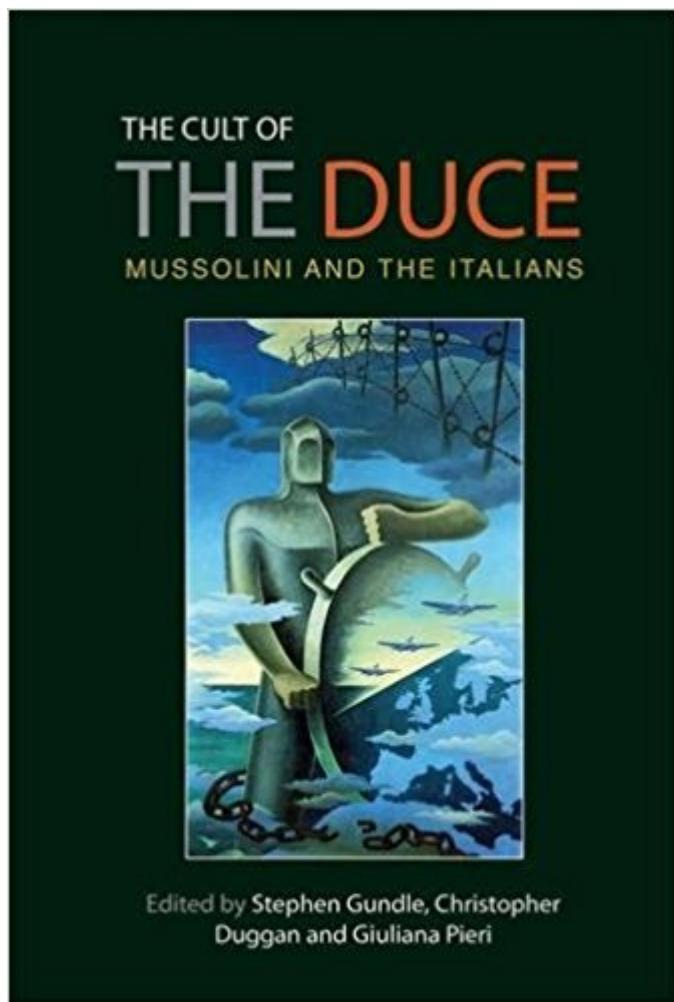


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The Cult Of The Duce: Mussolini And The Italians



Synopsis

The cult of the Duce is the first book to explore systematically the personality cult of Benito Mussolini. It examines practices that began before Mussolini's rise to power and which multiplied as Fascism consolidated its support among the Italian population. By approaching the subject from many different angles, including those of the visual arts and the media as well as social and political history, this book makes a decisive contribution to the understanding of Fascism and modern leadership. The conviction that Mussolini was an exceptional individual first became dogma among Fascists and then was communicated to the people at large. Intellectuals and artists helped fashion the idea of the Duce as a new Caesar while the modern media of press, photography, cinema and radio aggrandised his every public act. Mussolini's image was ubiquitous and varied; he adopted the guises of bourgeois politician, man of culture, sportsman, family man and warrior as he appealed to different audiences. The book explores in detail many manifestations of the cult and the way in which Italians experienced it. It also considers its controversial resonances in the postwar period. The founder of Fascism was the prototype dictator of the twentieth century. As such his cult is a crucial topic in the study of a century that produced many examples of dictators, some of them explicitly modelling themselves on Mussolini. Academics and students with interests in Italian and European history and politics will find the volume indispensable to an understanding of the modern era. Among the contributions is an Afterword by Mussolini's leading biographer, R.J.B. Bosworth.

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