

Ethnographic Views: the Parallel History of the “Missione Eritrea” (1905-1906) and the “Serie Eritrea” (1908-1909)

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Introduction

This essay delves into the interplay between ethnographic science, visuality, and colonialism in the first decades of the twentieth century in Italy. It does so by examining two different events that connected Italy and Eritrea, which was then considered Italy's ‘primigenial colony’. The first event analysed is a scientific mission initiated during the Asmara Congress in 1905, where photography played a significant role as a tool for visual documentation¹. The second event is the 1908-1909 cinematographic production of eight short documentaries dedicated to the geography and customs of the region².

Although grounded in established scientific and visual practices, both the mission and the film series reveal exceptional aspects in their approach to colonial representation. The *Missione Eritrea* marks the first significant intersection of scientific and political interests in the Horn of Africa from an Italian perspective, while the *Serie Eritrea* represents the earliest documented example of Italian films produced within a colonial context, predating the more extensive use of cinema in the first Libyan campaign³.

The colony as scientific field: the “Missione Eritrea” (1905-1906)

In early-twentieth-century Italy, the political climate was gradually reviving the momentum for colonial promotion and expansion following the abrupt interruption caused by the defeat at Adowa in 1896⁴. Political, scientific, and entertainment events – organised by various

institutions – flourished during these years to connect the idea of nationhood to colonial space. In this evolving scenario the new governor of Eritrea, Ferdinando Martini (1841-1928), played a crucial role⁵. As the colony's first non-military governor, his task was to redefine the Italian political project in Eritrea, diverting public attention from the heavy defeats at Dogali and Adowa. His support for the overseas enterprise strengthened the colony's image as a prominent site for extracting new primary, manufacturing, and economic resources. For this purpose, he promoted and launched a series of political, scientific, and cultural initiatives, engaging a network of stakeholders, communities, and experts⁶. The first Colonial Congress, held in Asmara in 1905, served as a significant symbolic event: it provided the first opportunity to bring the colonial community together to discuss national priorities in the management of African territories. During the Asmara Congress, the disciplines of ethnography and anthropology took centre stage: among the honorary presidents there was Enrico Hillyer Giglioli (1845-1909), while Lamberto Loria (1855-1913) was one of the vice-presidents⁷. Giglioli and Loria were two leading figures in the field of Italian ethnography, and they have both extensively used photography throughout their careers as a fundamental tool to analyse customs and people⁸.

Within such a favourable environment, between autumn 1905 and winter 1906 the *Missione Eritrea* took place, thanks to the joint efforts of two pivotal scientific and political bodies: the Istituto di Studi Superiori Pratici e di Perfezionamento in Florence and the Italian Ministry of Public Education. The Florentine academic institution was strongly connected to the Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia, which would receive the Eritrean artifacts gathered during the mission. The Italian Ministry of Public Education had already supported geographical expeditions outside the Italian borders⁹. The involvement of these organisations demonstrates the willingness to establish a stronger connection between the field of exploration and the education sector. Key to this mission was the development of new forms of applied anthropology in which research interests could merge with the colonial agenda of the State. Differently from previous military

explorations led by the Italian Navy or by the Società Geografica Italiana, which included a handful of scientists, the *Missione Eritrea* was a State-funded campaign especially targeting the Italian colony and envisaged as a scientific enterprise covering specific disciplines and dedicated to various areas of research. During the mission, Giotto Dainelli and Olinto Marinelli were in charge of geographical and geological research, while Aldobrandino Mochi and Lamberto Loria were the points of reference for anthropology and ethnography¹⁰.

The *Missione Eritrea* was linked to a set of guidelines, *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*¹¹, which mirrored the approach of the handbooks for travellers, a literary genre that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century throughout European learned communities as a tool for directing scientific endeavours. Following a widespread and transnational practice in positivist science¹², and drawing inspiration from Paul Broca's *Instructions* in France or the British *Notes and Queries*, the first Italian example was *Istruzioni scientifiche per viaggiatori* (edited by Arturo Issel in 1874-1875 and 1881), which covered various disciplines¹³. Remarkably, *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea* was the first text specifically devoted to the Italian colonial space. Although presented at the Asmara Congress in 1905¹⁴, *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea* was only published in 1907 by the Società Italiana di Antropologia, Etnologia e Psicologia Comparata in conjunction with the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali (a Florentine branch of the Società Africana d'Italia, founded in 1880 as Club Africano). The connections between these organisations again underscore the centrality of the Florentine scientific community and the intertwining of anthropology, geography, science, and politics, as the production of expert knowledge was closely tied to the need to control colonial territories¹⁵. At the head of the commission appointed to realise this editorial project was Paolo Mantegazza, with his pupil Aldobrandino Mochi serving as secretary. The commission also included the aforementioned Enrico Hillyer Giglioli and Lamberto Loria, along with other prominent members of the two societies such as Stephen Sommier, Ruffillo Perini, Giotto Dainelli, Ettore Regalia, Nello Beccari, Attilio Mori, and Olinto Marinelli.

Photographic practices in the “Missione Eritrea”

Photography played a crucial role in the management of the mission. As in many other Italian expeditions at that time, a professional photographer was not employed; instead, the photographic work was carried out directly by the scientific team. Differently from other Italian-published handbooks and instructions for travellers, *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea* included for the first time a dedicated section on “How to use the photographic camera”. This informative section was written by Lamberto Loria who, in addition to being an acclaimed ethnographer, was also a keen photographic practitioner. Loria had previously advocated in “*Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana*”¹⁶ for the use of travel photography as an objective tool that “saves the trouble of many columns of prose and faithfully reproduces the places, the inhabitants, the objects with greater evidence and perfection than the artist’s sketches, however skilful and fruitful he may be”¹⁷. Such discourses and rhetoric emphasise the reliability of the medium, and follow the paradigm of “mechanical objectivity”¹⁸, which considers photography a faithful device for reproducing reality. In *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, Loria further elaborated on this assumption but, instead of a sweeping promotion of the medium, he felt the need to specifically define the characteristics that guarantee the documentary value of images. In particular, he suggested accompanying photographs with a series of written notes to enhance their evidentiary potential and link them to their context of production. Loria proposed the use of captions as a mechanism to explicitly connect observation with photographs, anchoring the meaning to a specific experience situated in time and space¹⁹, and claimed that “it is [...] important to remember that every photograph is a real document, and therefore it is necessary to add precise indications regarding the places and objects it depicts, the date (and perhaps also the exact time) it was taken, the direction (if it is a landscape), etcetera”²⁰. This approach is reflected in a series of notebooks produced during the mission and specifically dedicated to negatives, where each shot is listed and numbered individually, with information on the date, place, and subject²¹ [Fig. 1]. Attention to context is also evident in the depth

of detail in the recommendations concerning photographic practice. According to Loria, the “use [of photography] is now too widespread to provide generic instructions about it”²², so the paragraph offers detailed insights into the technicalities and environmental conditions necessary for successful photographic practice in the Eritrean context. It includes information on how to handle the “three enemies: first, the transport entrusted to mules, camels, or the backs of the natives, with the related bumps, falls of crates along the slopes, etcetera; second, the insects (especially termites in Eritrea) that attack wood, paint, leather, etcetera; third, the humidity”²³. While negative films are recommended for the dry temperatures of the Eritrean highlands, glass slides are suggested for humid areas²⁴.

The care in the use of different types of cameras and photographic support materials to document the exploration activities is reflected in the final photographic outcome. Today, the photographic objects produced during the mission are preserved in the photo archive of the Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia in Florence and of the Società Geografica Italiana in Rome²⁵. The former holds prints from the mission, mounted on standard cardboard with written descriptions of the subjects, while the latter preserves over a thousand negatives, taken by the various members of the team, mainly Dainelli and Loria. Alongside the production of ‘type’ photography (predominantly requested by the advocate of anthropometric studies, Aldobrandino Mochi), there was a particular focus and interest on material culture. The photographic outputs that have been preserved, as well as the drawings and written reports, show a keen interest in the various forms of huts and houses related to specific populations, and their uses [Fig. 2]. Dwellings are often photographed using the 13x18 format, as recommended in *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, which further suggests: “For the study of dwellings and house clusters, use photography to reproduce their exteriors, assemblages, and furniture too large to be collected and sent to museums”²⁶. Moreover, the documentary use of photography was significantly facilitated by the development of film rolls and lightweight cameras, which had been disseminated since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Unlike previous pho-

tographic collections (where objects were often photographed in isolation for acquisition purposes and people were depicted in regulated studio-like settings and poses), these pictures also documented how tools and utensils were used or produced. These aspects are confirmed in the various reports associated with the mission, which frequently refer to the use of photography:

In the village, I see for the first time a woman cleaning cotton from the seeds. She does this with a fusiform iron rod with which she flattens the cotton on a stone: the pappus is twisted at the plateau and the seeds remain on the stone. The scene is discreetly captured with the Kodak; the two tools are immediately acquired²⁷.

Photography was therefore combined and integrated with different aspects of anthropology and collection-making²⁸, and allowed for a dynamic representation of cultural characteristics, gestures, and practices, highlighting the ability to capture and showcase the living aspects of a culture.

To fully understand the practice of photography, however, it is important to intertwine written and visual sources with an analysis of the materiality of the archival objects. A small and lightweight Kodak camera, using film rolls in the 8x8 format, was often employed to document specific environments and customs [Fig. 3]. When a subject was deemed particularly interesting or relevant to the expedition, 9x12 or 13x18 glass plates were then used to capture the scene again [Fig. 4]. The Kodak prints often show signs of errors and hasty decisions (evidenced by shadows or blurred subjects), while the glass plates, although capturing the subject almost identically, are free from these technical inaccuracies. Thus, a selection of scenes was initially captured with a Kodak camera for quick shooting and then re-photographed with a bulkier, higher-quality camera capable of producing better, more durable prints. The comparison proves that the change of support seems to be mainly related to choices regarding the destination and circulation of the images rather than the climatic conditions, as stated in *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*. The second set of images provides a cleaned-up version of a supposedly traditional and uncorrupted African space, erasing the shadows and faults that

reveal the presence of colonial actors within the scene, thereby obscuring the signs of coexistence and proximity experienced in the field. This dual approach contradicts the notion of photography as a spontaneous and immediate practice, instead revealing information about the inherent construction and the dimensions of the “contact zone”²⁹ and the “photographic encounter”³⁰ within the colonial space.

From the “Missione Eritrea” to the “Serie Eritrea” (1908-1909)

The visual documentation and appropriation carried out during the *Missione Eritrea* can be intriguingly compared with the *Serie Eritrea*, a series of short documentaries, or *film dal vero*, produced by Roberto Omegna in 1908-1909 for Arturo Ambrosio’s Turin-based production company Società Anonima Ambrosio. Although there is no direct evidence linking these two endeavours, examining them together reveals a shared social and cultural milieu. Both the mission and the film series operated within overlapping circles of influence, reflecting a broad dissemination of colonial imagery and knowledge. This intersection underscores how both the photographic and cinematic representations of Eritrea were embedded within the broader framework of Italian Liberal society, demonstrating the fluid circulation of colonial narratives and their integration into the cultural and political fabric of the time.

Before delving into the analysis of the films, it is therefore important to consider that the results of the *Missione Eritrea* reached beyond the scientific community, significantly impacting public and academic discourse through related publications and exhibitions. This is the case of the *Mostra Eritrea* at the 1906 Esposizione Internazionale di Milano³¹. Within the Padiglione degli Italiani all’Estero, three rooms – championed by Ferdinando Martini – were dedicated to the colony, highlighting its significance as a territory rich in commerce and resources. The first room showcased numerous photographs of types and landscapes produced by Alessandro Comini’s studio, while the second room featured the collection from the mission of Mochi, Loria, Dainelli, and Marinelli, displayed alongside agricultural products and sketches. Following a well-established tradition in Western eth-

nography, the exhibition also featured Eritrean individuals, such as the askaris, described by the same Dainelli and Marinelli as “living documents [...] placed there to guard the Section”³², and the “Eritrean village” that was supposed to offer, according to the official guide, a “reproduction of African life, with humans and animals”³³. The impact of the Milan exhibition was likely significant, potentially reaching figures such as Omegna and Ambrosio, based in the nearby city of Turin. This is especially notable given that, despite not specializing in colonial themes, three separate film-screening rooms at the Milan exhibition were showing short documentaries³⁴. Most significantly, the *Mostra Eritrea* highlights the link between colonialism, visual production, science, and performance, and the overall Milanese event shows how different forms of visual media (drawings, photography, cinema) were integrated and showcased together within the “exhibitory complex”³⁵.

As extensively examined, Omegna was a fervent advocate for the scientific application of the new medium of cinematography³⁶, while Società Anonima Ambrosio was a production company particularly focused on cinema’s potential as an educational tool³⁷. In the films of the *Serie Eritrea*, educational, national, and scientific interests intersect and overlap³⁸. Omegna had already made films in non-European territories and had a particular interest in the representation of natural and scientific phenomena³⁹. The very concept of *film dal vero* (i.e., “film taken straight from reality”), which emerged in opposition to fictional production, reflects the merging of visual documentation with truth, a concept that also connects to the discourse on photographic reliability analysed above in relation to the *Missione Eritrea*. The so-called *Serie Eritrea* includes eight films, each between five and ten minutes long: *Caccia al leopardo* (194 m.), *Come si viaggia in Africa* (110 m.), *A Massaua* (134 m.), *Da Massaua a Keren* (88 m.), *Funerale Abissino* (78 m.), *Matrimonio Abissino* (115 m.), *Usi e costumi Abissini* (136 m.), and *I nostri ascari* (74 m.)⁴⁰. As with much of silent cinema production, due to archival dispersion and the decay/loss of original footage, gathering information about these movies, their content and their production context is challenging. The most documented

and reviewed is *Caccia al leopardo*, for which promotional material is available at the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin, alongside fragments of the footage⁴¹. A copy of *Matrimonio Abissino* is preserved at the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome and is available online⁴². For the analysis of the other films, one must rely on their titles, which suggest recurring themes – such as safari, travel, traditional customs, and colonisation – mirroring the prevalent imagery surrounding the colony as depicted across various media⁴³. Italian audiences were encouraged to feel a closer connection to the colonial territories, experiencing them indirectly through the geographical depictions and presumably educational content of *Come si viaggia in Africa*, *A Massaua*, and *Da Massaua a Keren*. In contrast, the more ethnographic views of *Funerale Abissino*, *Matrimonio Abissino*, and *Usi e costumi Abissini* communicated a sense of separation and otherness to the Western viewers. *I nostri ascari* reinforced the myth of the Eritrean askaris as the loyal servants of the Italian colonial army, a notion conveyed through the possessive adjective “nostri”, meaning “our”. The exoticisation and control over the African space were vividly embodied in *Caccia al leopardo*, which reflects the imperial trope of the wild animal captured by the white hunter⁴⁴.

By comparing the films of the *Serie Eritrea* with the materials of the *Missione Eritrea*, it is possible to uncover significant links between them, and to highlight the crucial role of illustrated texts in shaping the colonial imagery through both discursive and visual practices. Between 1908 and 1910, geographer Giotto Dainelli published two volumes of letters in the richly illustrated “Serie viaggi” by the Istituto Italiano d’Arti Grafiche in Bergamo⁴⁵. Although these two books were meant to offer the first published account of the details of the mission, their epistolary and narrative structure aligns more closely with the genre of travel literature, filled with anecdotal passages and personal impressions. The volumes provide information about the organisation of the expedition, but also convey a sense of exotic adventure when recounting the events taking place during the Italian expedition in Eritrea. The initial chapters trace the crew’s journey from Asmara to Cheren, a route similar to the itinerary depicted in

the film. The reference to the askaris and their loyalty appears from the very beginning: “one must see how beautiful, soldierly, vigorous and likeable the askaris are: simple in their white uniform, red tarbusc and multicoloured band [...], they are proud to carry the musket at the service of a faraway land and a king whom they do not know, and never will”⁴⁶.

Another parallel aspect is the depiction of “the savagely warlike songs and dances of the askaris; the rich and strange fantasy costumes”⁴⁷, rendered by both texts and photographic reproductions but “impossible to describe the details”⁴⁸. The author emphasises “how difficult it is to give an idea even remotely corresponding to the truth”⁴⁹, pointing to the impossibility of conveying the scene’s details and richness, and suggesting that only direct observation could truly capture its full essence.

As analysed, in the *Missione Eritrea* the emphasis on cultural customs and the visual interplay between environment and human activities was central. Similarly, the ability to visually capture the dynamic interaction between natural and cultural elements proved crucial for advancing the role of cinema in geographical, ethnographic, and colonial contexts⁵⁰. Thus, it is particularly significant that Omegna incorporated ethnographic films into his series, recognising the cinematic medium as a more effective tool that could offer a dynamic and immersive representation. Notably, the focus on visually documenting ritual moments and social and family interactions aligns with the objectives outlined in *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*. These instructions include specific sections dedicated to “funeral rituals”, questions about dancing habits and circumstances⁵¹, and requests to “investigate how a man asks for a woman’s love, how she grants it, and whether the woman initiates the courtship”⁵² – all themes echoed in the film titles of the *Serie Eritrea*.

Additionally, Loria prepared a report on *Usi matrimoniali assaortini* that, although published only in 1936, was likely the subject of a lecture he delivered upon his return. This report details various phases of the matrimonial customs observed within the Eritrean population, such as the departure and arrival of the bride, the “fantasia” event in

the village, the night celebration, the bride being covered with a sack-like garment called “Camisc sciadir”⁵³, the groom waiting outside, and the bride’s escape with the “Arisaenta”⁵⁴. While Loria’s report focuses on the more specific area of Assaorta, the title of Omegna’s film, *Matrimonio Abissino*, refers to the broader context of Abyssinia⁵⁵. Despite this difference in scope, both works share similarities in their depiction of marriage customs. In the film, the camera captures the movement of individuals on horseback, camel, or in various dancing scenes predominantly using static shots. Moments similar to the ones described in Loria’s report are reflected in the sequence list of Omegna’s film: “Departure of the nuptial party”, “Arrival of the bride to the village”, “A warrior’s ‘fantasia’”, “The groom in front of the bride’s tucul”, “The bride, surrounded in veils, leaves with the groom’s best friend”, “The bride arrives at the best friend’s tucul, where she will stay for forty days”, “Nocturnal singing and dancing”.

However, it is important to acknowledge the distinction between the synthesis of cinematic language and the scientific approach found in Loria’s written report. In the film, the educational and entertaining purposes are more pronounced and, although each sequence title provides contextual information for the subsequent footage, the images primarily offer a spectacular overview rather than delivering in-depth knowledge. Despite the emphasis on documentary efforts, a high degree of performance was involved, undermining the supposed objectivity of the scenes represented⁵⁶. This is particularly clear in shots where the characters’ gestures seem deliberately aimed at the camera operator⁵⁷. The portrayal of the African landscape as an unspoiled, wild arena is disrupted by the presence of white settlers within the frame – including two soldiers, one on horseback, and a man wearing a colonial helmet⁵⁸. This juxtaposition reveals the socially and culturally constructed nature of the colonial space, as opposed to its perceived naturalness. It highlights the coexistence of different actors and alludes to the negotiations and encounters integral to the film’s production.

The circulation and success of the film series occurred both in and outside Italy. Indeed, *Caccia al leopardo* was awarded the gold med-

al at the cinematographic contest Primo Concorso Internazionale di Cinematografia, held in Milan in 1909⁵⁹. This contest, though presented as a global event, primarily served as a national showcase for Italy's advancements in the cinematographic field. It included various awards established by different institutions, and the gold medal was sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Public Education, which had already played a role in promoting the *Missione Eritrea*. This scenario underscores two interconnected aspects. Firstly, it shows the important role of cinema as an educational tool, highlighting the Ministry of Public Education's interest in leveraging film to promote national and colonial narratives. Secondly, it discloses the presence of a network connecting with ethnographic and photographic interests as demonstrated by the involvement in the contest commission of figures such as Leopoldo Pullè. Besides being a senator and undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Education, Pullè was an active member of the Florentine Società Italiana di Antropologia e di Etnologia and the Società Fotografica Italiana (both founded by Mantegazza), and a supporter of ethnographic photography⁶⁰, collaborating with figures like Loria and Mochi, prominent in the context of the *Missione Eritrea*.

Outside Italy, the *Serie Eritrea* was distributed in France, while some movies circulated also in Great Britain, Germany and the United States⁶¹. In the English review, *Matrimonio abissino* was celebrated for offering "vivid pictures of life in the Far East" and for showing "in all its wild barbarity the marriage customs in Abyssinia"⁶². Consistent with orientalist discourse, the review highlighted the opposition between progress and backwardness, praised the film as a powerful educational aid and stressed the film's realism, interest, and high photographic quality. The same positive review notes that the movie was distributed together with other international titles within the "*Cape to Cairo* series", reflecting the growing cinematic interest in exotic travelogues and recognising its adherence to an imperial aesthetic canon. In addition to political efforts and scientific explorations, cinema served to culturally and visually legitimize Italy's presence among the colonial powers, targeting an audience beyond national borders and aligning more closely with the leading European powers.

Conclusions: Africa dal vero

The *Missione Eritrea* and the *Serie Eritrea* represent two distinct visual media experiments conducted in Italy's first colony. The former emerged from the State's scientific agenda, while the latter was driven by the commercial efforts of a private company. Despite their different origins, a closer examination reveals several connections between them. Both projects aimed to produce documentary material with a strong emphasis on the reliability of the images. Their paratextual elements stressed the element of authenticity and the exceptionality of being *dal vero* ("taken straight from reality"), while the epistemological positivist framework in which they were embedded provided a basis for the credibility of the visual data. However, this article demonstrates that the boundary between fiction and non-fiction was not clear-cut. In both cases, the "conventional framing of ethnographic visualization"⁶³ can be unveiled, demonstrating how staging often served as a strategy to present specific elements of the Eritrean space to Italian viewers.

As analysed, photography, cinema, and ethnography were seen as tools capable of bringing distant, unfamiliar realities closer. In both the *Missione Eritrea* and the *Serie Eritrea*, the ethnographic gaze, influenced by textual and programmatic discourses circulating through official instructions and broader colonial narratives, played a crucial role in shaping their representations. The images produced did not merely document but actively constructed a vision of Eritrean life, filtered through Italian expectations and anxieties. While relying on stereotypical imagery, various visual technologies were adapted in both endeavours to substantiate colonial narratives with a scientific and documentary approach. At the same time, their dissemination through national and international exhibitions and contests reveals a network of practices where scientific appeal resurfaced and merged within the public sphere.

The parallel analysis of the two events and their shared context illustrates how both projects were embedded in a network of scientific, political, and popular discourses. The reappearance of figures and institutions highlights a recurring interplay among cinema, colonial

agendas, ethnography, and photography. The Italian Ministry of Public Education played a significant role in framing photography and cinema as scientific and educational tools that could enhance national understanding of the colonies. The transmedial focus of the article on the depiction of the Eritrean landscape and people reveals an ongoing interaction between scientific inquiry, building of colonial consensus and emerging modes of visual appropriation in early twentieth-century Italy.

Illustrations

Fig. 1

Catalogo delle pellicole 8x8 (Loria e Mochi), Missione Dainelli-Marinelli-Mochi-Loria in Eritrea 1905-1906 © Archivio Fotografico della Società Geografica Italiana, Roma.

Fig. 2

Lamberto Loria, *Eritrea*, Collection Prof. Loria, gelatin silver print, 165x120mm, inv. 937-938 © Sezione di Antropologia e Etnologia, Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze.

Fig. 3

Lamberto Loria, *Eritrea*, Collection Prof. Loria, gelatin silver print, 86x86mm, inv. 1031-1036 © Sezione di Antropologia e Etnologia, Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze.

Fig. 4

Lamberto Loria, *Hamptò. Donne che lavorano ad ultimare un vaso di terra*, Missione Dainelli-Marinelli-Mochi-Loria in Eritrea 1905-1906, digitization from glass negative, inv. 632/164 © Archivio Fotografico della Società Geografica Italiana, Roma.

Catalogo della pollastra (S. x. P.)				
N°	Località	Luogo	Prodotto	
1	25. 11. 19	San Giorgio	Carne di vacca (vacca) in una morta di 2 vacche, morti da 24 giorni	(18)
2	" "	Halai	Polpato e ragossi al vino	18
3	" "	Terah	Armento sulla griglia di una casa a L. P. P.	18
4	" "	San Giorgio	Una donna a L. P. P.	18
5	" "	Halai	Donna a L. P. P.	18
6	" "	San Giorgio	Donna a L. P. P.	18
7	" "	Halai	Donna a L. P. P.	18
8	" "	Halai	Donna a L. P. P.	18
9	" "	Halai	Donna a L. P. P.	18
10	" "	Halai	Donna a L. P. P.	18
11	" "	Halai	Donna a L. P. P.	18

Fig. 1

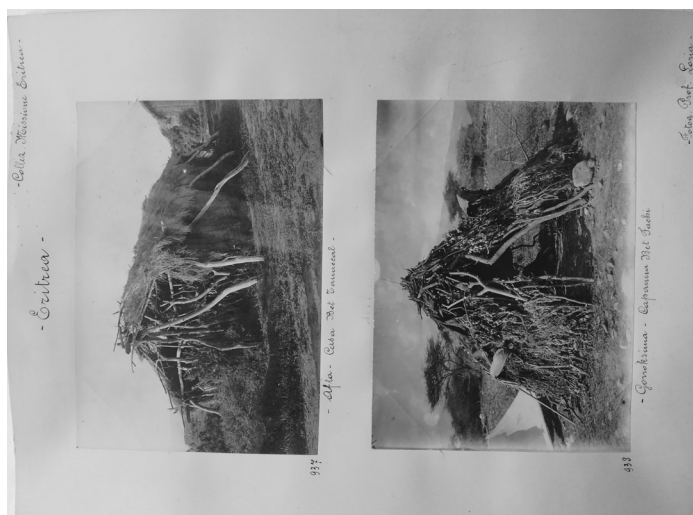


Fig. 2

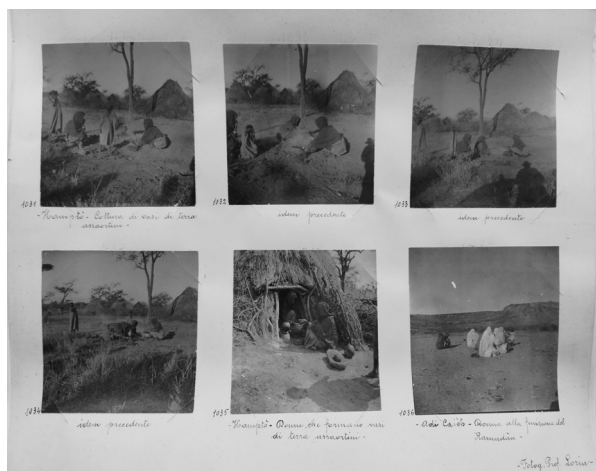


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

¹ On Italian colonial and ethnographic photography, see L. Goglia, *Colonialismo e fotografia: il caso italiano*, Messina, Sicania, 1989; B. Chiarelli, P. Chiozzi, C. Chiarelli, *Etnie: la scuola antropologica fiorentina e la fotografia tra '800 e '900*, Firenze, Alinari, 1996; A. Triulzi (ed.), *Fotografia e storia dell'Africa*, Roma, CISU, 1995; F. Faeta, A. Ricci, *Lo specchio infedele, Materiali per lo studio della fotografia etnografica in Italia*, Roma, MATP, 1997; S. Palma, *Fotografia di una colonia: l'Eritrea di Luigi Naretti (1885-1900)*, "Quaderni storici", Vol. 37, no. 1, 2002, pp. 83-148; M. Zaccaria, "Quelle splendide fotografie che riproducono tanti luoghi pittoreschi". *L'uso della fotografia nella propaganda coloniale italiana (1898-1914)*, in C. Fiamingo (a cura di), *Identità d'Africa fra arte e politica*, Roma, Aracne, 2008, pp. 147-173.

² For an in-depth analysis of Italian colonial cinema see the recent contribution by G. Mancosu, *Vedere l'Impero. L'istituto Luce e il colonialismo fascista*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis, 2022 and M. Zinni, *Visioni d'Africa: Cinema, politica, immaginari*, Roma, Donzelli, 2023.

³ See L. Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile. Cinema e fotografia durante la prima Campagna di Libia (1911-1913)*, in E. Menduni, L. Marmo (a cura di), *Fotografia e culture visuali del XXI secolo*, Roma, Trepress, 2018, pp. 323-344.

⁴ For an analysis of Italian colonialism in the Liberal era, see A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale. Vol. 1: Dall'Unità alla marcia su Roma*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1985; N. Labanca, *Oltremare: storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002; G. Finaldi, *A History of Italian Colonialism, 1860–1907: Europe's Last Empire*, London, Routledge, 2016.

⁵ See N. Labanca, *Ferdinando Martini in Eritrea, 1897-1907. Per il riesame di un mito del colonialismo italiano*, "Farestoria", 1991, pp. 26-42; A. Triulzi, *Ferdinando Martini: immagini fotografiche e immaginari coloniali*, "Farestoria", 1991, pp. 61-64; M. Zaccaria, *L'Eritrea in Mostra. Ferdinando Martini e le esposizioni coloniali, 1903-1906*, "Africa", a. LVII, n. 4, 2002, pp. 512-545.

⁶ See G. Monina, *Il consenso coloniale. Le società geografiche e l'Istituto coloniale italiano (1896-1914)*, Roma, Carocci, 2002.

⁷ See C. Rossetti (a cura di), *Atti Del Congresso Coloniale Italiano in Asmara*, Roma, Unione Cooperativa Editrice, 1906.

⁸ For an analysis of Giglioli's photographic practices see A. Ghezzi, *La Collezione di Enrico Hillyer Giglioli: un atlante fotografico antropologico*, "RSF. Rivista di studi di fotografia", no. 12, 2023, pp. 16-35. About Loria see P. De Simonis, F. Dimpflmeier (eds), *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significanti*, "Lares", Vol. 80, no. 1, 2014 and F. Dimpflmeier, S. Puccini, *Nelle mille patrie insulari: etnografia di Lamberto Loria nella Nuova Guinea britannica (1888-1897)*, Roma, MuCiv, 2018.

⁹ Other examples are the support to the Magenta circumnavigation (1865-1868) or the trip to Lapland by Paolo Mantegazza and Stephen Sommier (1879).

¹⁰ See G. Dore, “C’è l’Assaorta che ci aspetta...” *Geografi ed etnografi italiani tra i Sabo d’Eritrea*, “Ethnorêma”, vol. v, no. 5, 2009, pp. 11-28; E. Pacini, *Dal territorio eritreo al Museo. Gli scopi e le tecniche di collezione degli oggetti etnografici*, “Ethnorêma”, Vol. v, no. 5, 2009, pp. 29-50; Id., *Raccogliere, collezionare, esporre. Potere coloniale e viaggio scientifico nella formazione delle collezioni Sabo del MNAE*, in E. Rossi (a cura di), *Forme di antropologia: Il Museo Nazionale di Antropologia e Etnologia di Firenze*, Firenze, Edifir, 2014, pp. 99-132.

¹¹ See Società di studi geografici e coloniali and Società di antropologia etnologia e psicologia comparata, *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, Firenze, Tipografia Galileiana, 1907.

¹² On Instructions for travellers, especially in their connection to ethnography and anthropology, see S. Puccini, *Il corpo, la mente e le passioni: Istruzioni, guide e norme per la documentazione, l’osservazione e la ricerca sui popoli nell’etno-antropologia italiana del secondo Ottocento*, Roma, CISU, 1998. See also M. Bossi, C. Greppi (a cura di) *Viaggi e scienza: le istruzioni scientifiche per i viaggiatori nei secoli XVII-XIX*, Firenze, Olschki, 2005.

¹³ A. Issel, *Istruzioni scientifiche per viaggiatori*, Roma, Botta, 1881.

¹⁴ See Congresso coloniale italiano, *Vade-mecum compilato a cura del Comitato ordinatore*, Roma, Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1905.

¹⁵ See S. Puccini, *Conoscere per governare: a proposito di etnografia, politica, potere (e identità)*. “Lares”, Vol. 69, no. 2, 2003, pp. 513-520.

¹⁶ See L. Loria, *Cenni sulla fotografia nei viaggi di esplorazione*, “Bulettno della Società Fotografica Italiana”, a. XI, 1899, pp. 321-325; Id., *Relazione sulla proposta pubblicazione fotografica. Tipi, usi e costumi del popolo italiano*, “Bulettno della Società Fotografica Italiana”, a. XII, 1900, pp. 19-24.

¹⁷ L. Loria, *A Proposito di alcune negative tratte dalle Nuova Guinea Britannica*, “Bulettno della Società Fotografica Italiana”, no. 16, 1904, pp 284-287: 284. All translations are my own.

¹⁸ On “mechanical objectivity” see L. Daston and P. Galison, *Objectivity*, New York, Zone Books, 2007.

¹⁹ On photography and documentary value see Tiziana Serena, *Le parole dell’archivio fotografico*, “Rivista di estetica”, no. 50, 2012, pp. 163-177; G. Mitman, K. Wilder

(eds.) *Documenting the world: Film, Photography, and the Scientific Record*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2016; E. Sohier, O. Lugon, A. Lacoste, *Introduction: Les collections de photographies documentaires au tournant du XXème siècle*, "Transbordeur", n. 1, 2017, pp. 8-17.

²⁰ *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, cit., p. 13.

²¹ See *Catalogo delle negative di Giotto Dainelli* and *Catalogo delle pellicole 8x8 (Loria e Mochi)*, preserved in the Società Geografica Italiana, Fondo Giotto Dainelli, Missione Dainelli-Marinelli-Mochi-Loria in Eritrea 1905-1906.

²² *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, cit., p. 10.

²³ L. Loria, *Come si deve usare la macchina fotografica*, in *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, cit., p. 10.

²⁴ *Ivi*, p. 11.

²⁵ The photographs are digitized and can be browsed in the database of the photo archive of the Società Geografica Italiana using the string "Missione Dainelli-Marinelli-Mochi-Loria" in the subject line. url: <<http://www.archiviofotografico.societageografica.it/index.php?it/152/archivio-fotografie>> (accessed 30 August 2023).

²⁶ L. Loria et al., *Etnografia*, in *Istruzioni per lo studio della colonia Eritrea*, cit., pp. 143-144.

²⁷ S. Ciruzzi et al. (eds), "Missione Eritrea", 1905-1906 – *Diario di Aldobrandino Mochi*, "Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia", Vol. 132, 2002, p. 65.

²⁸ On this topic see E. Edwards, C. Morton (eds.), *Photographs, Museums, Collections: Between Art and Information*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015.

²⁹ See M.L. Pratt, *Arts of the Contact Zone*, "Profession", 1991, pp. 33-40 and Id., *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, 1991.

³⁰ See E. Edwards, *Anthropology and photography: A long history of knowledge and affect*, "Photographies" Vol. 8, no. 3, 2015, pp. 235-252.

³¹ See M. Zaccaria, *L'Eritrea in Mostra*, cit., pp. 512-545; C. Marin, "Esposizione Internazionale di Milano o Esposizione del Sempione". Milano, 28 aprile-11 novembre 1906, in G. Tomasella, *Esporre l'Italia coloniale. Interpretazioni dell'alterità*, Padova, Il Poligrafo, 2017, pp. 126-130.

³² G. Dainelli, O. Marinelli, *Risultati scientifici di un viaggio nella Colonia Eritrea*,

Firenze, Tipografia Galletti e Cocci, 1912, as quoted in G. Abbattista, *Umanità in mostra. Esposizioni etniche e invenzioni esotiche in Italia (1880-1940)*, Trieste, EUT, 2013, p. 348.

³³ *Guida-album di Milano e l'Esposizione 1906*, 237, as quoted in G. Abbattista, *Umanità in mostra*, cit., p. 345.

³⁴ See P. Redondi, *Luca Comerio, l'esposizione del Sempione e il cinema industriale*, in *Milano città delle scienze*, 2017, pp. 1-22.

³⁵ T. Bennet, *The exhibitionary complex*, in B. Ferguson, R. Greenberg, S. Nairne (eds), *Thinking about exhibitions*, London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 71-93.

³⁶ See V. Tosi, *Un pioniere del cinema scientifico: Roberto Omegna 1876-1948*, Roma, Istituto Luce, 1974; V. Tosi, *Il pioniere Roberto Omegna (1876-1948)*, "Bianco e Nero", Vol. XL, no. 3, 1979, pp. 3-68; S. Sperduto, *Roberto Omegna e l'Istituto Luce. Il cinema scientifico ed educativo dell'Italia fascista*, Roma, Herald, 2026.

³⁷ See C. Gianetto, *The Giant Ambrosio, the Italy most prolific silent film company*, in "Film History", Vol. 12, n. 3, 2000, pp. 240-249.

³⁸ See G.P. Brunetta, *Il cinema muto italiano. Da "La presa di Roma" a "Sole" 1905-1929*, Bari, Laterza, 2008.

³⁹ Just to limit to the production before 1909, see for example his journey to South America in 1906/1907; *Neuropatologia* (1908) produced in collaboration with Prof. Camillo Negro of the University of Turin; the footage documenting the aftermath of the Messina earthquake (1908).

⁴⁰ For the list see A. Bernardini, *Cinema muto italiano: i film dal vero 1895-1914*, Gemona, Cineteca del Friuli 2002, pp. 115-150 and M. Zinni, *Visioni d'Africa*, cit. See also See L.A. Vallarades, *Picturing Color in Italian Cinema*, University of California (PhD Thesis), 2015, pp. 6-16.

⁴¹ For an analysis of the *Serie Eritrea* and especially of *Caccia al Leopardo*, see G. Mancosu, *Vedere l'Impero*, cit., pp. 37-45.

⁴² See *Matrimonio abissino* 1909, <<https://vimeo.com/412691999>> (accessed 31 August 2023).

⁴³ See M. Zinni, *Visioni d'Africa*, cit. pp. 24-36; B. Falcucci, G. Mancosu, *Esotismo, colonialismo e transmedialità. Una riflessione storiografica e metodologica*, "Memoria e Ricerca", n. 1, 2024, pp. 5-16; C. Belmonte, L. Moure Cecchini, *Introduction: Critical issues in the study of visual and material culture of Italian colonialism*, "Modern Italy", Vol. 27, n. 4, 2022, pp. 327-350.

⁴⁴ See J. Ryan, 'Hunting with the camera': *photography, wildlife and colonialism in Africa*, in C. Philo, C. Wilbert (eds), *Animal spaces, beastly places*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 205-222; B. Falcucci, *Caccia grossa nell'impero. La costruzione transmediale dell'esotico animale*, "Memoria e Ricerca", Vol. 32, n. 1, 2024, pp. 93-114.

⁴⁵ G. Dainelli, *In Africa (lettere dall'Eritrea). Parte prima: Lungo l'Anseba e sull'altipiano abissino*, Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'arti grafiche, 1908 and Id., *In Africa (lettere dall'Eritrea). Parte seconda: Lungo le pendici dell'altipiano abissino e in Dancalia*, Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'arti grafiche, 1910.

⁴⁶ G. Dainelli, *In Africa* cit., 1908, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 30.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See S. Alovio, *La scuola dove si vede: Cinema ed educazione nell'Italia del primo Novecento. Con una antologia di testi d'epoca*, Torino, Kaplan, 2016, and S. Alovio, L. Mazzei, *Vedere lontano. Cinema ed educazione alla geografia nell'Italia degli anni Dieci*, "Cinergie", Vol. v, n. 10, 2016, pp. 27-43.

⁵¹ L. Loria *et al.*, *Etnografia*, cit., p. 170.

⁵² Ivi, p. 157.

⁵³ L. Loria, *Usi matrimoniali assaortini*, "Archivia per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia", Vol. LXVI, 1936, pp. 7-24, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Ivi, p. 14.

⁵⁵ Both Assaorta and Abyssinia are toponyms associated with Italy's colonial vocabulary. Assaorta refers to an area in Eritrea, while Abyssinia was the common term used to refer to present-day Ethiopia.

⁵⁶ On ethnographic cinema see F. Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2004; F. Marano, *Il film etnografico in Italia*, Bari, Edizioni di Pagina, 2007.

⁵⁷ [00:01:33] *Matrimonio abissino* 1909, <<https://vimeo.com/412691999>> (accessed 31 August 2023).

⁵⁸ [00:04:30] *Matrimonio abissino* 1909, <<https://vimeo.com/412691999>> (accessed

31 August 2023).

⁵⁹ M. Montericcio, *Il concorso cinematografico di Milano del 1909*, in R. De Berti and E. Mosconi (a cura di), *Il cinema delle origini a Milano, 1895-1920*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1994, pp. 423-429; G. Lasi, *La produzione cinematografica nel sistema economico-industriale italiano tra il 1908 e il 1914. Il caso della Milano Films*, Università di Bologna (PhD thesis), 2012.

⁶⁰ See C. Panerai, *Fotografia e Antropologia nel "Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana": una promessa disattesa*, "Archivio Fotografico Toscano", 1991, pp. 64-69; A. Mochi, *Per un 'Atlante Antropologico Dell'Italia'*, "Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia", n. 39, 1909, pp. 257-264; G. Fano, *Un'importante proposta*, "Bullettino Società Fotografica Italiana", n. 10, 1898, pp. 371-372.

⁶¹ All the eight movies were distributed in France. *Matrimonio abissino* circulated also in Great Britain and *Caccia al Leopardo* in Germany and USA. G. Mancosu, *Vedere l'Impero*, cit., pp. 39.

⁶² "The Bioscope", Londra, 16 dicembre 1909, p. 57. As quoted in A. Bernardini, *Cinema muto italiano*, cit., p. 135.

⁶³ F. Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye*, cit., p. 6.