Mia Fuller

Moderns Abroad

Architecture, cities and Italian imperialism

Architext

Moderns Abroad

Moderns Abroad analyzes the theory and practice of Italian architecture and urbanism in modern-era colonies in North Africa, East Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean. Introducing the history of Italian imperialism and the expectations that shaped it, the book analyzes Italian architects' theories of modernism with respect to Italy as well as its colonies; and describes how Italian administrators and planners developed Tripoli, Addis Ababa and settlements for migrant farmers in Libya and Ethiopia.

In addition to introducing the history of Italian colonialism (1869–1943), the book discusses the symbolic geographies governing Italians' approaches to the colonies: Italian colonizers worked from different assumptions regarding Mediterranean and sub-Saharan African populations, assuming the former to be more akin to themselves, and the latter less so. Colonial governments initially took no interest in how Italians' buildings represented the colonial power, but by the late 1920s architects began to theorize colonial design, and these different assumptions about the local populations and their level of "civilization" influenced their design theories. Similarly, in the mid-1930s, planners and administrators began to develop strict ideologies of racial segregation in colonial cities, particularly in East Africa. The final chapters of this book bring these theories into juxtaposition with what was actually built in the colonial settings, illustrating how wide the gaps between theory and practice were.

Moderns Abroad is the first book to present an overview of Italian colonial architecture and city planning. In chronicling Italian architects' attempts to define a distinctly Italian colonial architecture that would set Italy apart from Britain and France, it provides a uniquely comparative study of Italian colonialism and architecture that will be of interest to specialists in modern architecture, colonial studies, and Italian studies alike.

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Moderns Abroad

Architecture, cities and Italian imperialism

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2007
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Fuller, Mia, 1958–
Moderns abroad : architecture, cities and Italian imperialism / Mia Fuller.
p. cm. – (Architext series)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Architecture, Colonial—20th century. 2. Architecture, Italian—20th century. 3. Fascism and architecture—Italy. 4. Italy—Colonies—History—20th century. I. Title. II. Series.
NA207.5.F85 2006
720.945'0904—dc22

200612528

ISBN 0–203–96886–7 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN10: 0-415-19463-6 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0-203-96886-7 (ebk)
ISBN13: 978-0-415-19463-1 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-203-96886-4 (ebk)

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Acknowledgments

This project would have been impossible without the generous support of a number of funders and institutions. I traveled to Rhodes, Libya, and Ethiopia thanks to grants from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the American Institute of Maghrib Studies, and the American Philosophical Society. A Fellowship from the Wolfsonian Foundation allowed me to explore its extraordinary collections. For research in Italy, I am grateful to the École Française de Rome, the Cesare Barbieri Research Fund, and once again, the American Philosophical Society. I am especially thankful to the American Academy in Rome, not only for awarding me a precious full year of support, but for providing a unique environment of intellectual exchange that has extended well beyond that year in residency. Because parts of this book are modified versions of my doctoral dissertation, I also wish to thank the funders that made that earlier effort feasible: the National Science Foundation; the Graduate Division as well as the Center for African Studies at the University of California, Berkeley; Stanford University's Center for European Studies; and the Council for European Studies.

Conducting the research presented here would have been equally impossible without the forbearance of the staff in several archives and libraries. In Rome, I wish to thank the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, the Biblioteca della Camera dei Deputati, the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, the Biblioteca di Storia Moderna e Contemporanea, the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica, the Biblioteca di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, the Biblioteca Centrale di Architettura, and the British School. The Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare in Florence kindly let me loose in its photographic archive, and has allowed me to reprint some items in its collection here. The Wolfsonian Foundation branch in Genoa has been especially hospitable during my visits there. I owe a great debt to the Libyan Studies Centre in Tripoli (i.e. Markaz Jihad al-Libiyin lil-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyah) and its director, Dr Muhammad Jerary. In Tunis, I am also thankful for the use of libraries at the Centre d'Études Maghrébines à Tunis and the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain.

Throughout the writing of the book, the work of the Interlibrary Loan staff at Rice University and the University of California, Berkeley was indispensable and much appreciated. At Berkeley, my colleagues and students have extended support of many kinds. I tested the first three chapters of the book on students in my seminar on Italian colonialism and am glad to have had their comments; in particular, I thank Steven Doctors for his feedback on Chapter 3. Above all, I was exceedingly fortunate to have had Stephanie Hom Cary as a research assistant at several stages, and Mrinalini Rajagopalan as well. Both have been treasured interlocutors, and I am grateful for their wise editorial suggestions.

Brien K. Garnand designed the maps in Chapter 1 and helped prepare the images for publication; I thank him for these labors and for his loving companionship. My closest relatives – Blair Fuller, Nina de Voogd Fuller, Diana Burgess Fuller, Anthony Fuller and Joanna Di Paolo, Whitney Fuller, Sage Cowles and John Cowles, and Jill Fox – have awaited the book's publication with curiosity tempered by kind patience. A number of friends, colleagues, and mentors offered extensive logistical support as well as discussion of the book itself. I remain very grateful for their immediate assistance, but also for their faith in the project and its author: Nezar AlSayyad, W. R. Dull, James D. Faubion, Enrico Mattiello, Justin McGuinness Cathie O'Brien Twaddle and Don Twaddle, Susan Ossman, Julie Peteet, Susan Slyomovics, Stefania Tuzi, and Dirk Vandewalle. Others gave liberally of their expertise or resources: Sean S. Anderson, Anna Baldinetti, Caterina Borelli, Ilaria Brancatisano, Giorgio Ciucci, Jean-Louis Cohen, Susan Crile, Angelo Del Boca, Liz Hasse, Robert Ilbert, Nora Lafi, Karl Longstreth, Tyler Monroe, Jessica Otey and Steve Poulos.

For commenting on the manuscript more times than ought to be required of series editors, I am thankful to Anthony D. King and Thomas Markus. Elizabeth Leake closely read a number of drafts and, with characteristic elegance and wit, alleviated the agony of revisions. Others who selflessly volunteered to give editorial advice are Catherine Brice, Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, and Laura Wittman. To all of these I am much indebted for their help in improving the text. For more diffuse but equally significant friendship and conversation, I also want to thank Doug Argue, Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Federico Cresti, Greig Crysler, Ornella Folinea, Joe Helms and Pamela Sinclair, Marcia Inhorn and Kirk Hooks, Carl Ipsen, Cynthia Ipsen, Ruth Iyob, Vincent Jolivet, Mary Margaret Jones, Karla Mallette, Linda Pellecchia, Lee Ann Sandefer and Ted Lyman, David Stone, Krystyna von Henneberg, and Richard Wittman. In addition, I welcome this opportunity to express my warm gratitude for their enduring mentorship to my past teachers Paul Rabinow, Allan Pred, Alan Dundes, Ira Lapidus, Irving Goldman, Robert F. Tannenbaum, and Ilja Wachs. Last but by no means least, I wish to acknowledge the people I interviewed, starting with Anna Maria Cicogna, a daughter of Libya's Governor Volpi. Several interviewees in Tripoli, Addis Ababa, and Asmara prefer not to be named; therefore I thank them all anonymously, and trust that they will recognize their influence here. No matter how intangible in the text that follows, their knowledge and personal recollections were crucial to my understanding of Italy's colonial cities and how I have depicted them.

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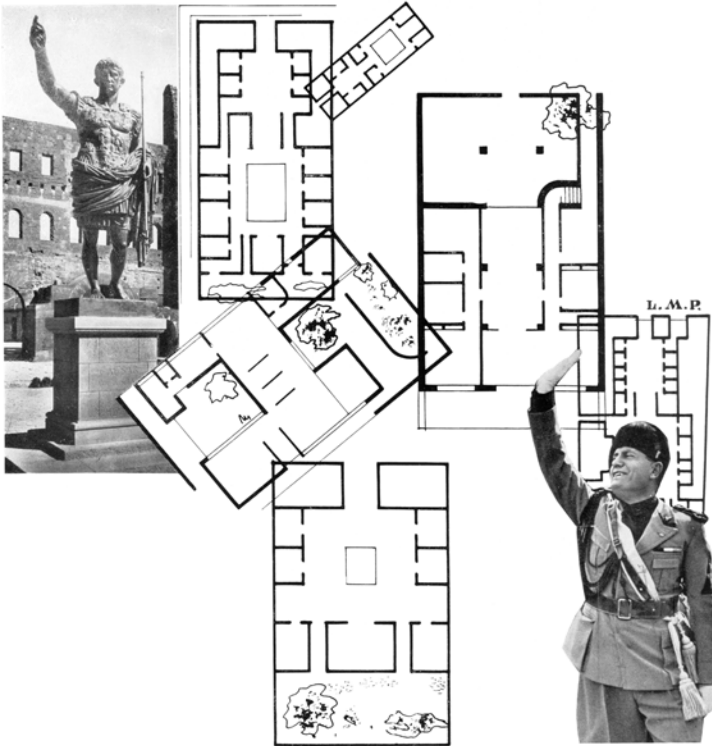
Introduction

> Since the beginning of time, civilization and architecture have walked hand in hand.[1]
>
> Ferdinando Reggiori, Architect, 1936

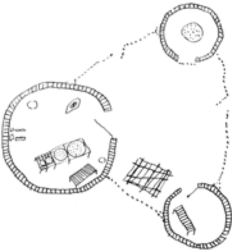
> Nothing is fundamental . . . [T]he foundations of power in a society or the self-institution of a society, etc. . . . are not fundamental phenomena. There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another.[2]
>
> Michel Foucault, 1984

In 1936, the prominent Italian architecture review *Domus* published an editorial entitled "Civiltà" (civilization), featuring the image in Intro.1. Italian troops had invaded Ethiopia in 1935, and the League of Nations had consequently imposed sanctions against Italy. In reaction to the sanctions, the Fascist government and other Italian institutions flooded Italy with propaganda justifying Italian aggression and colonization in Ethiopia, usually on the basis that Italy was "civilized" and Ethiopia was not. This particular editorial made this point in an idiom of architectural superiority and inferiority, arguing that the force of Imperial Roman architectural forms had endured into the present, and that modern Italian architects were rediscovering their simplicity and grandeur – all the more proudly because of the shortage of building materials caused by the economic sanctions; and all the more gloriously because the very "coalition of peoples which [ancient] Rome had rescued from primitivity [i.e. the League of Nations] . . . intends to humiliate Roman civilization vis-à-vis the ultimate barbarians [i.e. the Ethiopians]."[3] This stated identification of modern Italy with the ancient Roman Empire was one of the most frequently invoked tropes in the course of the Italian colonial enterprise, from its beginnings in the 1870s until its dissolution in the early 1940s. On the other hand, the editorial never named the Ethiopians. They were only alluded to as "barbarians," and only once: the rest of the two-page editorial strictly concerned Italy and its struggle against other European nations. This

ROMA 754 A.C.-1935 D.C.



BARBARI 1935



Intro.1
An editorial image of 1936 titled “Civiltà” (“Civilization”) illustrating the claim that Italians’ civilization made them superior to Ethiopian “barbarians.”

elision of the non-Italian populations involved in Italian colonialism was another of its constant tropes: Italians, not the colonized, were central to Italians' colonial perceptions and plans.

In addition to the image's manifest content, it is worth spelling out the specific visual terms in which the editorialists couched their claims. They crowned their composition with the dates of the founding of Rome (754 BC – *ante Cristo*, or "before Christ") and the recent invasion of Ethiopia (AD 1935 – *dopo Cristo*, "after Christ"). Aligned in this way, each of these dates represented the birth of civilization and Empire, and the initiation of a great (Roman and Italian) history. Moving downward, we see the erect, saluting postures of Mussolini and Caesar juxtaposed with the squatting positions of the unspecified Ethiopians, who are beneath them, unsurprisingly, at the bottom of the page. It was a staple of modern European colonialist imagery to associate verticality and erect stances with higher degrees of evolution, and proximity to the ground with barbarism. But besides those familiar associations, here we also find clues to two other assumptions about *civiltà*, premises so unquestioned – so obvious to the editorialists – that they could be sure of their audience's comprehension.

First, archaeology, in the form of ancient Roman house plans, is presented as evidence of civilization. Archaeological remains were understood by Italian nationalists to be visible, undeniable traces of a long, august history, the kind of history that features a Caesar. One of the premises at work here is the equation, "civilization = archaeology"; the second premise is "civilization = architecture." Recognizably Roman house floor plans, rectilinear and symmetrical, with atria (the conventional inner courtyards encountered upon entering from the street), link Caesar to Mussolini, and the Roman Empire to the Fascist Empire. Thus the archaeological ruins in which such floor plans were discovered also imbued Mussolini and the Fascist Empire with a degree of "civilization" that was (according to the authors of the editorial) only attainable for direct heirs of Caesar and the Roman Empire. Second, the image identifies civilization with a particular kind of housing. The floor plans depicted are almost entirely rectilinear, and they are typical of *architecture* (as opposed to mere, haphazard structures), which, these editorialists and their audience would have agreed, comprises both design and some use of planned symmetry.

Finally, the plans show both ancient domestic architecture (which was, in this instance, all rectilinear) and modern domestic architecture (represented by the less symmetrical, partly curvilinear, plans). The single irregular floor plan, in contrast to the Roman and Italian plans, depicts the Ethiopians as barbaric and unevolving. The juxtaposition of Roman/Italian and Ethiopian floor plans, and the association of Italians with both ancient and modern architecture – i.e. both visible history and visible modernity – provided the most extreme symbolic distance between Italians and the ahistorical, anarchitectural barbarism that was attributed here to Ethiopians.

By 1936, the premises illustrated in this editorial had been touted so repeatedly in Italian colonialist rhetoric that they epitomized the common views

architects and bureaucrats held of the politics of Italy's architecture in its colonies. Yet while these common views had reached a level of uniformity by 1936, they characterize only the last phase of Italian colonial-architectural history, in which architects' views were most straightforward, racist, and in tune with Fascist politics. This book recounts the development of Italians' views of architecture in the colonies from the late 1800s – when Italy was a recently unified state and was acquiring small land areas in East Africa – to the end of the 1930s, when Fascist Italy ruled over Eritrea, Somalia, Libya, the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean Sea, Ethiopia, and Albania; in other words, it tells the story of how architects reached their consensus of 1936. Initially, neither government officials nor architects had expressed any interest in colonial buildings. Instead, architects began to identify 'colonial architecture' as problematic only in the 1920s. Early military rule in most of the colonies seized before Fascist rule began in 1922 (Eritrea, Libya, the Dodecanese Islands) was eventually replaced by civil servant-run governments that were dependent on either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of the Colonies, which later became the Ministry of Italian Africa (Somalia was first controlled by a chartered company, then came under direct government rule). Italian buildings in both phases of the early colonial period were sometimes mentioned in ministerial correspondence as a potential source of local embarrassment if they were in poor repair; before the 1910s, however, they were not the topic of proactive interest on the part of either government or architects. It was only in conjunction with the increasing imbrication of archaeologists' and nationalists' interests in the 1910s, the emergence of new architectural institutions in the 1920s, and politicians' uncomfortable awareness of high-profile colonial architecture and plans in the French and British overseas territories, that architecture in the colonies became such an agreed-upon arena for political self-depiction.

ITALIAN COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING IN COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

While this book describes how architecture in the Italian colonies was seen differently across a long historical arc, it is also fundamentally comparative, charting the organizing concepts of Italian colonial architecture as they applied to different regions and cultures in North Africa, East Africa, and the Mediterranean. My focus on organizing concepts brings me to read architects' published texts and bureaucrats' memoranda more closely than I do particular buildings or particular cities. What follows, then, is not strictly a work of architectural history; it is a historical anthropology of Italian nationalism and imperialism as these were embodied in physical constructions and in the debates and plans that led up to these constructions. In such a reading, constructions, plans, and debates all yield legible maps to a set of historically situated Italian cultural descriptions, in which Others figured in various imagined contrasts to Italians, and Italian social theory about Italian-ness was writ large and in three dimensions.

In delineating the progression of Italian colonial architecture and city planning sequentially and comparatively, the book yields a typology of approaches, which varied according to the historical moment; the particular designers and administrators involved; and most of all, according to how these men (for they were always men) perceived each colonial region on a scale of "civilization." Noting the range of Italian architectural responses to the colonies brings us to two focal problems, which were the linchpins of all architects' and planners' discussions. In the domain of architectural design, the key question architects had to address was the degree to which their designs should (or should not) reflect, or even incorporate, traits of local vernacular or monumental architecture. With respect to city planning, the question was similar – how far to separate indigenous and European populations? – although the practical ramifications were less symbolic and more significant in altering the conduct of daily life.

This book builds on a widely comparative scholarship. It also differs from it in a number of ways. First, I ground the entire sequence of architectural attitudes and events in a symbolic-geographic analysis of how Italians viewed their colonies, at government and popular levels. What did they take for granted about each region, and what did they seek there? Understanding the particular prisms through which Italians viewed distant colonial settings helps in comprehending the range of architectural options that they perceived. Second, in addition to comparing Italian views of buildings in the colonies before and after "colonial architecture" became an intellectual and political problem, I show how "Mediterranean architecture" – a category often taken for granted today – was borrowed from other European modernists, appropriated by Italian architects, and harnessed to particularly effective rhetorical ends in the context of colonial architecture, where calling the local vernacular "Mediterranean" often served to claim that local vernacular as "already" Italian. Another unusual thing about this book is that it distinguishes between colonial-architectural theories and practices, illuminating in a number of instances how little impact architects had on what was ultimately built.

Even though very little is known about Italian colonial architecture outside of Italian architectural-historical circles, the history of design and planning in the Italian colonies has a great deal in common with comparable (and better-known) histories in British and French colonialism. The question of whether to create a symbolic distance from the colonized by transplanting European designs wholesale, or to include local ornamental or structural aspects, was crucial in all modern colonial architectural thought.[4] Similarly, practical and political aspects of planning colonial cities – to build anew in an uninhabited place? to take over the pre-existing cities? to build alongside the pre-existing cities? – preoccupied administrators and architects in all the modern colonies. Even so, the Italian case refines and challenges some of the scholarly landscape on these issues. Showing that "colonial architecture" was not a given, but instead a set of problems Italian architects and government members invented at a particular moment, shows that the entire field of endeavor was a context-specific and slightly contrived one

in all colonial situations. Meanwhile, Italian approaches to urban organization and plans took place in three movements, overlapping but distinct: beginning with building "modern" quarters alongside old walled cities; then developing satellite villages meant to be "oases" for Italians in rural Libya; and finally, moving to an apartheid ideal in East Africa's colonial cities. Seeing the linkages between these three approaches makes the analysis of colonial planning more varied than many scholars have acknowledged it to be, as it shows how planners built up their technical arsenal, attempting three different paths to reach the same end: Italian superiority and control made and enforced through the built environment.

These commonalities with other European colonizers aside, the Italian case has strong particularities, ones that made the burden of national self-construction through colonial expansion especially weighty. The overall project of national self-construction in the colonial context was conditioned by Italian perceptions that the Italian nation state, and its standing among its European peers, was weak. National unification had been very recent: political unification was declared in 1861, and it was only entirely translated into a territorial reality when government forces wrested Rome from papal control in 1870. The lack of a more intrinsic Italian unity caused much political anxiety among the intelligentsia, not only in the late nineteenth century, but under Fascism as well. Cultural, moral, linguistic unities, and the seemingly chimeric pursuit of a more substantial national identity were all at stake in debates regarding Italy's future. Far from worrying about such lofty ideals, however, many Italians were poor and unemployed, and a great number of the poor emigrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many who stayed behind, "backward" by standards of modern progress and public health, subverted the state's agendas by their mere existence, threatening in the undeniable truth that they embodied about Italy and its lack of modernity; between the wars, they became the clients of a rapidly enveloping welfare system. Whether during the Liberal or the Fascist era, efforts to modernize Italy were driven by the state's growing confrontation with nationwide poverty, cholera epidemics, sanitation problems, illiteracy, and social instability. They were also fueled by the anxiety that, unless Italy could be modernized technically, economically, and socially by Italians, the nation was at risk of falling once again under foreign control, i.e. of being colonized – at the very least, economically and culturally. Italian expansionism must be seen against this background: each of the colonial enterprises was promoted as a reinforcement to national identity and unity, implying that colonial possessions would act as a bulwark against disintegration and a possible loss of autonomy. For Italy, perhaps even more than for other modern European colonial powers, the colonial project was integral to the struggle for greater modernity and state legitimacy.

If Italian colonial projects were extensions of a larger project of national self-construction, by the 1920s, government and architects agreed that architecture in the colonies was part of what made this Italy-under-construction visible, and that it could and should be shaped purposefully. They used it to formulate a number of three-dimensional styles in which the Italian national community was

to be imagined (*à la* Anderson) by Italians and also by the rest of the world. For these men, prestigious buildings underscored the Italian nation's presence on the world stage, its power to colonize, and the state unity required to concentrate that power. The perceived modernity, soundness, and dignity of colonial buildings – their ability to *fare bella figura*, or to emanate a certain kind of impressive aura – was intended to reflect positively on Italy's own modernity, soundness and dignity. On the ground, all of the Italian colonial governments were initially ill-prepared to rule, and efforts to organize the colonies administratively were too often poorly coordinated, leading to unexpected difficulties and aggressively stifled local ridicule. Impressive buildings, monuments, and broad avenues, in contrast, lent Italian rule an air of solidity, independent of that rule's unreliable effectiveness. Thanks to concerted uses of architecture and city planning – and with more than a hint that planners hoped making it *look* so might therefore make it *be* so – colonial life could at least seem to be in order.

THREE COLONIAL-URBANISTIC MODES

In 1929, a young architect, Carlo Enrico Rava, published an essay on Tripoli, the Libyan capital, which had been under Italian occupation since 1911. He argued for a modernist sensibility in Italian buildings, one in which forms would be adapted to the local climate and topography. In doing so, he positioned himself against two other kinds of builders in Tripoli. One set of builders had for some time been copying French and British usages, in colonies and at home, of concocted "neo-Moorish" styles, or else borrowing indiscriminately from contemporaneous buildings in Italy. The other set of builders, in a most unadventurous, but explicitly nationalist vein, based designs on faithful imitations of Roman Imperial models. In Rava's opinion, none of these works lived up to Tripoli's potential of becoming a renowned example of fashionable, European-made tropical design along the lines of resort cities in the West Indies and California (where he singled out Pasadena for particular praise); and he deplored the wasted opportunity for Italians to "make their mark" internationally in the domain of prestige architecture. Most strikingly, unlike many of his peers, Rava did not denigrate the local vernacular; instead, he called for an Italian colonial architecture that would be European but also respond to – and even enhance – the pre-existing city's buildings, its public spaces, and its outlying oases.

By contrast, after Cesare Maria de Vecchi di Val Cismon became the Italian governor of Rhodes in 1936, he had the luxurious *Grande Albergo delle rose* (Hotel of the Roses) "purified" of all its outer ornamentation (Intro.2 and Intro.3).[5] The hotel was Italian-built and only a few years old, but the Governor objected to its delicate, curvilinear details. These had been intended as specific allusions to local medieval and Venetian (i.e. European) motifs, but to his eyes they were inappropriately "Oriental." Instead, De Vecchi wanted the hotel, which showed an especially public, commercial face of the Fascist regime and its development of the Dodecanese Islands, to register as both imposing and

entirely Italian; otherwise, Italy might appear insufficiently superior to other nations, as well as insufficiently modern. When he was done stripping it, the hotel was indeed so typical of mid-1930s Italian architecture that it looks (still today, with the help of recent renovations funded by the Playboy Club) like any one of the legion of government-commissioned buildings in Italy, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Libya in the late 1930s.

I describe these episodes to illustrate the ambivalent stances taken by Italians vis-à-vis local syncretisms in their buildings and decorative elements, and by implication, to the cultures, societies, histories, and civilizations of the colonized populations. Rava, in 1929, envisioned much of Tripoli intact, and at the same time, he envisioned it as an integral part of the larger, planned Italian city. His vision included the local architecture, albeit within an overarching Italian framework, while it also excluded either direct imitation or syncretism on the part of Italian architects. Seven years later, Governor De Vecchi's mission, instead, was to eliminate any echo of the local from Italian buildings. Much of what follows concerns the tension between these two reactions on the part of architects and officials alike: one, the inclination to recognize local architecture as valid, perhaps instructive, and even to find commonalities between Italian vernacular practices and local ones; and the other, the urge to depict Italy, through its buildings, as a society and culture unto itself, a culture that dominated others but was itself unaltered by contact with them.

The three urbanistic modes deployed by Italians were as follows: the colonial (dual) city (which left the pre-existing city standing while making it obsolete); the isolated *borgo* (for the settlement of Italians far from cities and *indigeni*, or "natives"); and the imperial city (in which the natives were displaced from the heart of the city into new "quarters" and the pre-existing city was appropriated).

Intro.2
Rhodes: the Hotel of the Roses (Grande Albergo delle rose), with its original ornamentation (1927, Architects Michele Platania and Florestano di Fausto).

Intro.3
Rhodes: the Hotel of the Roses (Grande Albergo delle rose), as it was left after the ornamentation was stripped in 1938.

Rather than discussing all the colonial cities and villages built by Italians (an impossible task in any case), or closely studying major planned sites in one colony or another, I delineate the key approaches that Italians developed, and analyze why, where, and when each one was applied. Juxtaposing the three approaches in this way shows that there is more than one kind of "colonial city," indeed, that there are more than two. In this respect, this book departs from most analyses of colonial city planning, which have emphasized segregation along racial lines and failed to notice other kinds of segregation (such as that between old and new in Tripoli). It therefore broadens our view of the range of operations, subtextual premises, and political circumstances that led colonial planners to give colonial cities their particular shapes, instead of reducing all of these determinants to a simplistic, formulaic "colonial city" or "dual city."

In Italian architectural publications of the period, Tripoli, new *borghi*, and Addis Ababa were invariably the most documented (and, of course, praised) sites of colonial construction. Many other colonial cities were equally built-up under Italian occupation, and some of those, such as Rhodes or Asmara, might even be considered greater successes from an architectural standpoint. However, for reasons I turn to in Chapter 2, they were hardly comparable grist for the relentless mill of Fascist aggrandizement. It is precisely the focus on these showcases of Italian architecture in the colonies that concerns me here. While this book is principally about different patterns used by Italians in their colonial built environment, it is also about the belief, unquestioningly shared by all the protagonists involved, that building design and city plans could directly add to (or subtract from) Italy's international prestige. The designers, governors, and civil servants described in these pages all took seriously the notion that architecture in the colonial domain "stood for" Italy and described it, as both a nation and a state,

in one way or another. They also assumed that their audiences took this notion equally seriously, and would see Italy in a new light through its colonial constructions. From this point of view, government-sponsored, architect-designed architecture in the colonies was part of a larger exercise, both governmental and imaginary, in national self-construction.

The colonial (dual) city was typified by Tripoli, where the separation of new quarters from old, and the preservation of aesthetic appeal, were greater articles of faith for Italian administrators than the segregation of peoples. Plans for Tripoli were designed to alter the old city as little as possible. New quarters were gradually built, but Europeans often lived in the old city, and the new quarters were not altogether off-limits to Arab residents. Only very late in the Italian occupation, in the late 1930s, did concerns about "racial" segregation make their way into the government's stated priorities in Tripoli, and even then, these concerns were stated a great deal more than they were applied. This pattern, which Italian colonial rulers followed almost exclusively in Mediterranean settings, followed from the perception that the city contained archaeological remains, and thus a palpable, valuable history. Colonial Tripoli's major growth years, during its first decade under Fascist rule (the 1920s), coincided with the period of new architectural institutions' emergence in Italy. Therefore Tripoli, Italy's most cherished colonial possession at the time, was the setting for a detailed search, entailing increasingly heated professional debates following Rava's 1929 article, for the correct representation of Italy through its colonial architecture.

The second colonial-urbanistic mode I discuss, rather than an approach to a city already in existence, is a planning formula that was developed and used in many sites: it is the 1930s model of new *borghi*, villages and townships built in the colonies (as they were in Italy) for the sponsored resettlement of farmers. Colonists were expected to develop underpopulated regions of Italy and the colonial territories for agricultural exploitation. The classic, most thoroughly studied examples are the "New Towns" of Italy and the quite similar villages that were built in Libya in hopes of settling large numbers of Italian colonists. Never identical, even the smallest *borghi* nonetheless always contained key components of state and church offices around a central square, thereby maintaining the recognizable map of much of Italian spatial and social life, and providing local contacts between the colonists and the institutions governing their lives. To these, I compare a few other colonial planning types which differed in form, but which provide us with further knowledge of what Italian colonial planners in the 1930s believed about Italian society and the social universe of the colonized: native housing clusters on East African plantations, and a handful of Libyan *borghi* built for the colonized along the same lines as the ones for Italians. By definition, these were isolated and thus isolating: only Italians, or only Libyans or Somalis or Ethiopians, occupied them, and the fact that they were built in areas that Italian colonizers saw as uninhabited obviated any need to make decisions about the pre-colonial built environment, or about the politics of cohabitation of Italians and others.

The third approach was fully developed in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital occupied in 1936. Here, racial segregation dominated city plans from the start. In the mid-1930s, city planning per se had become the new trend for ambitious Italian architects, particularly those working in the colonies. Ethiopia was the first colony to be occupied under Fascism, and the fanfare accompanying the Italian victory surpassed any previous Italian clamor over its colonies: Mussolini declared that Italy was now an Empire, and imposed a new, and newly domineering, quest for prestige of the Italian nation and the Italian "race." Discussions of individual colonial buildings' aesthetic value were less urgent than before, while segregation, of technical and symbolic kinds, was most pressing. Rather than questions about how best to represent Italy through its colonial buildings, here planners addressed (without necessarily solving) problems of how best to dominate the local populations, to organize European society and behavior through zoning, to control the movements of both European and local populations, and above all, to limit the degree and kind of contacts between Europeans and locals. This type of city plan, in comparison to Tripoli's, was meant to be more universally applicable, with only few adjustments to the constraints of particular sites. Its formulaic approach incorporated some aspects of the *borghi*, such as the essential set of basic elements included (e.g. the *Municipio*, or city hall, the Church, etc.), the forms of these elements, and the spatial relations between them. With its disregard for local history and its mandate to remove local populations from the center of town and replace their houses and businesses with a strictly Italian, monumental civic center, this plan required much less local knowledge and time to be set in motion than Tripoli's did. Other cities in Italian East Africa, notably Asmara and Mogadishu, both under Italian occupation since the late nineteenth century, had developed as roughly dual cities although, interestingly, they had done so in the absence of any segregation laws or a state-sponsored rhetoric of Italian superiority. These cities, along with many Ethiopian ones, were quickly refurbished in the late 1930s along the lines of the Addis Ababa type.

ITALIAN COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING IN CHRONOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The protagonists of this book are architects, engineers, agricultural developers, members of military and civilian colonial governments, and members of government in the metropole. They generally agreed on basic principles, and relatively little of what follows is a tale of genuine dissent. The only truly spirited debates emerged among architects, in the years when they attempted to reconcile colonial discourse to architectural rhetoric (1929–1936). The usefulness of architecture to totalitarian regimes has been noted elsewhere; in Italy, architecture of this period was thriving and diverse, and the more glamorous architects became known beyond their profession through such fashionable publications as *Domus*, *Architettura (ed Arti Decorative)*, and *La Casa Bella*. In the course of striving to

make themselves indispensable to the regime, some of the more ambitious architects also vehemently promoted the importance of colonial buildings, and with it, their own rather dashing role in shaping the overseas territories. It should also not be forgotten that outside of the public eye, architects continued to take on private commissions and build in a variety of styles, before and after 1936. In official arenas, however, architecture after 1936 was increasingly governmentalized, politicized, rhetoricized, and uniform. In the colonies, this meant that city planners adopted the government's new program of racial segregation in a single movement, and their texts (even more than their designs) became virtually indistinguishable from one another.

It is perhaps worth underscoring further how much the Fascist government and architects made use of each other after the Fascist takeover in 1922. It is hardly accidental that Fascist rule and new Italian architectural approaches arose at the same time, given the economic, social, governmental, ideological, and artistic trends that swept the West in the interwar period. But their contemporaneity should not be taken as an indication that one made the other, or particularly that Fascism somehow determined architectural designs of the time. Rather, the agendas of the two groups were compatible: the regime placed grandiose emphasis on its buildings, roads, public works, and monuments, and architects aimed to expand the reach of their profession into as many domains as possible. Architects vying for government commissions were more limited by the government's increasing rigidity in the late 1930s, as were members of all the professions. However, architects and government took full advantage of each other at an especially ambitious and promising time; architects did not submit blindly to government whims. In the long run, the two groups were collaborators in giving shape to a certain vision of the new Italy and its colonies, and in flattering each other in the public sphere.

For the same reasons of chronological coincidence, it might appear that Italian colonial architecture was all Fascist. Indeed, under Mussolini the state coffers were tapped much more outrageously for colonial development than they had been before, and the impulse to illustrate Italian grandeur in colonial settings was ever less tempered by parliamentary opposition or other dissenting voices. Much more new construction was carried out in the Fascist period than under earlier governments, especially when the government implemented its late-1930s program to reclaim all the colonial administrations and make the colonial cities' appearances consonant with current Fascist ideals. What is more, the absorption of colonial architecture into the Fascist government's sphere of interest was paralleled by a shift away from private development in the colonies, further increasing the proportion of building carried out by colonial governments. Prior to the 1930s, a large part of the urban fabric of the major colonial cities – Asmara, Mogadishu, Rhodes, Benghazi, and Tripoli – aside from military areas, was built by private landowners and developers, with the encouragement of the state, which attempted (without much success) to limit its own direct investments in the new territories. Tripoli exemplifies the course of private capital

in colonial speculation especially well: rapid migration to the capital and a severe housing shortage combined to cause rapid inflation in property values, which the government tried unsuccessfully to stem. But with the growing grip of government over both colonial rule and the public representation of Italy, less and less colonial building was initiated privately. Urban development in cities old and new was increasingly government-supervised, by means of military or parastatal organizations. With this control, and the cooperation of architects no longer in mutual disagreement, came ever more uniform colonial architecture and city plans. This was especially true in East Africa, which became the terrain of ever-accelerating development in the early 1930s, when Italians staged the invasion of Ethiopia from Eritrea and Somalia. On the whole, the colonies took on increasingly similar architectural appearances in the course of the *Ventennio* (the two-decade period of Fascist rule), even though not all buildings there were government-commissioned. Still, there never was a single, plainly identifiable "Fascist style," and the colonies exhibited a broad variety of architectural approaches, each of them employed in response to a multiplicity of factors.

A further note on the chronology I have described so far. My purpose in this book is to scrutinize shifts and compromises in the Italian sensibilities that determined Italian colonial building policies, and these shifts are best described sequentially. However, in the three types of plan I have isolated, I am not proposing a sequence of development in any sense of the term, nor paradigms of the kind that are subject to Kuhnian shifts. None of the approaches delineated here superseded the ones used previously, and no approach was used to the complete exclusion of the others. Inevitably, what had come before influenced what came later, as when planners in Addis Ababa wished not to repeat what they saw as the early mistakes made in the Libyan cities, or when some of the parameters used repeatedly in the *borghi* resurfaced within the later plans for East African cities. But no unchanging lines of fragmentation within the profession or neat chronological periods, should be derived from this – on the contrary, what becomes clearer with close examination is the temporal overlap of Italians' architectural approaches to the colonies. To return to the anecdotal examples of Rava and De Vecchi: as I described their stances earlier, one might think that their respective stances were dictated by time. In such a reading, Rava would have been tolerant of local difference in 1929 in a way that, given professional and political pressures, neither he nor De Vecchi could be as of 1936. But this was not so: Rava's views on design in Tripoli had not changed essentially by 1936 (although as we shall see, he did modify the rhetoric in which he framed those views, making it more "Fascistically correct"), and De Vecchi would likely have responded the same way to the Dodecanese, or any other colonial setting, in 1929 as he did in the late 1930s.

Thus even though I describe a sequence of architectural approaches, I also wish to emphasize the coexistence of these approaches within the kit of colonial architects and the various factors that affected their specific use of each one. *When* plans were devised was one factor: the concepts in which architectural

discussion of the colonies was phrased changed over time, as architects gained in local knowledge and familiarity with the difficulties of colonial planning; and government concerns shifted as well. *Who* had the power to define the guidelines governing plans affected the kind of approach taken to any particular colonial site, depending on whether the men in charge were domineering in De Vecchi's manner, or sophisticated critics like Rava and his colleagues in Tripoli. An equally crucial factor was *where*: Italian colonialists' prejudices regarding the relative *civiltà* of particular colonial settings steered them in their choices between the segregation of old and new (as in Tripoli) and that between races (as in Addis Ababa).

From the 1910s on, the major guideline in Italian colonial city plans was the historic value they did or did not attribute to their settings: as described above, for Italian colonialists historic value and *civiltà* were inextricably linked. Italians altered the cities shaped by past European and/or Islamic occupation (including Rhodes) only minimally, preferring to build new quarters alongside them. These cities typically had defensive fortifications, which evoked the pasts of once-great military powers. Medieval Italian cities, too, were usually surrounded by such walls, and we can surmise that this made the walls more worthy of preservation in Italian planners' eyes. In East Africa, on the other hand, Italians usually insisted that their pre-existing surroundings had no historic or artistic merit. Most cities there were aggressively re-shaped, from the center out. Instead of leaving the old parts of cities in place, Italian colonizers replaced the old with the new, while implementing policies of racial segregation. Often, they even called the pre-existing cities 'new' in their texts, without acknowledging their prior occupation or constructions. In the *borghi*, meanwhile, designers had no need to address pre-existing cities or the validity of local cultures. What shaped designs there, instead, were climate, local security concerns, and the labor situation in each colony: in East Africa, Italian development depended more often on the constant employment of native laborers, who sometimes lived on the settlers' grounds; this led to plans for variably segregated, small-scale coexistence. In the *borghi* architects' responses to specific colonial cultures we can detect an occasional tendency to echo local vernacular traits in the *borghi* houses, as when the circular *tukul* shape of East Africa was incorporated in plantations (Figure 5.16). But the most telling indicator of Italians' attitudes towards the different regions in which they built was the design of planned settlements for colonized populations: plans for new East African "indigenous quarters" were the most dehumanizing, while some of the plans for Libyan-inhabited *borghi* displayed a partial inclination to classify Arabs as "civilized".

ITALIANS, COLONIALISM, AND THE COLONIZED POPULATIONS

There can be no doubt that how Italians construed differences among local populations, and between those populations and themselves, influenced decisions they made about colonial architecture and city planning. Does this mean that

Italian designers thought in terms of their buildings' impact on colonized populations? Only partly. Depending on their settings, sometimes Italian colonial buildings were especially meant to be seen by members of powerful nations, European ones in particular; sometimes, by colonized populations; but always, by Italians. The idea of making an impression on more powerful nations, which were thought to look down on Italy, was strongest in the late-1920s and early-1930s rhetoric that defined architecture and plans for Tripoli. The impact of monumental Italian buildings on "the native mentality" did not surface as a goal in architects' texts until the mid- to late-1930s, when they framed their work in Addis Ababa and comparable cities in an idiom of Italian "prestige" and "superiority." But the solipsism of Italians using colonial architecture to tell themselves (and other Italians) a certain kind of story about Italians, their magnificent past, and their glorious future was an essential part of the mission of Italian colonial architects throughout the period of their ascendancy.

This solipsism was not limited to the colonies' architecture. All Italian colonial undertakings were in part driven by a minority of ambitious Italians who aimed, among other things, to solidify the Italian nation: these men attempted to act on Italy itself by acting in its colonies. Of course, colonialists also had more varied motives, and often less grand ones. But whether they were nationalistically motivated or designed for personal gain, Italian colonial projects were invariably self-referential. The same can be said of all colonial enterprises, and it has been; by definition, "colonizing . . . is fundamentally reflexive."[6] Even among self-interested national colonial projects, however, the Italian case is distinguished by the poignant circularity of its rhetoricians' emphasis on the idea of "regaining" former provinces of the Roman Empire, and thereby, of "living up to" that Empire's legacy. Italian statesmen struggled to "catch up" with northern Europeans, but their thinking on colonial matters was also dominated by Italy's own august past, with which they also had to "catch up." The French and the British, the colonialist role models to whom Italian colonialists most often compared themselves, could not claim direct descent from a great Empire. Indeed, as the authors of "Civiltà" made clear, for Italian nationalists the only historical entitlement those nations had to be imperialistic – i.e. their advanced civilization – they owed to the fact that in antiquity they had been conquered, and made "civilized" once and for all, by Romans.

To say that Italian colonialists were perhaps a trifle more self-absorbed than other European colonialists may seem hair-splitting, and only elusively relevant. Undoubtedly all the colonial powers were largely indifferent to their impact on the peoples whose lands they occupied. At the very least, their functionaries did not acknowledge, nor, probably, did they fully grasp, the mixed nature or the extent of that impact, even as they imported and exported raw materials, developed local industries and trade, abused local workers, dismantled economic and political networks, built roads and bridges, started schools, and established public health programs. Italians did these things too, and many of them certainly meant well enough some of the time, just as other colonialists did. But in

comparison to other colonial rulers (the French and the British in particular), Italians were less curious about local populations. Their ethnographic programs were only launched quite late; their attempts at indirect rule were generally unsuccessful. When they arrived in each of the colonies, administrators had not studied the local languages, and often knew next to nothing about local ethnicities, religions, or political institutions. There was no specific training for colonial civil servants. Eventually familiar ideas of the "civilizing mission" made their way into Italian colonial rhetoric, but with the tone of a vague afterthought; they only became important tropes in the arduous justifications of the invasion of Ethiopia. The idea of modernizing and developing the colonies "for their own good" motivated many (arguably disingenous or naïve) agents of modern colonialism, or at least gave them an excuse; but it appears relatively infrequently as an explicit motivation for Italian colonialists. Let us note again how the authors of "Civiltà" focused on the drama being played out between the Italian nation and other European ones, and treated Ethiopians as mere bystanders to this drama. Despite their inclusion in the editorial's image, Ethiopians were neither subjects nor objects in the accompanying text. In just this way, local Others were often disproportionately small in the Italian colonial imaginary, reduced to the stature of figures in dioramic backgrounds against which Italians took action.

Paradoxically, this lack of focus on the colonized peoples had a corollary aspect that was often positive in the everyday: a relatively laissez-faire approach to the conduct of colonial life, especially regarding interracial contacts and "promiscuity." French and British governments spent more energy than Italian ones on documenting and classifying local cultures, usually in aid of programs aiming to change them or to harness inevitable changes in them to their own advantage. Italians, on the other hand, were consistently described (by French and British observers, among others) as insouciantly consorting, in all senses of the term, with natives. Diplomats and journalists alike commented on the relative lack of social, physical, and sexual distance between Italians of all classes (including members of the military, government bureaucrats, and bourgeois) and the natives; on the cheerful spirit with which Italian merchants greeted local clients in their stores; and on what seems to have shocked them most, the willingness of Italian farmers and manual laborers to work alongside native workers. In the early 1930s, Italian colonial governments began to pay lip service to the growing notion of limiting the free exchange between Italians and natives; but members of these same governments were known to disregard their own official positions. Until the mid-1930s, countless reports indicate that Italian civilians ignored any inhibiting rules as well. Fascist colonial governments of the late 1930s adhered to the new policy of segregation and subjugation, but many civilian Italians disapproved of these policies, and continued to live as before, ignoring the new laws.

The harmful effects of everyday Italian occupation in the colonies have the same oddly impersonal, non-deliberate air about them as do the less pernicious ones. Not being especially focused on the locals for most of the colonial period,

Italian colonizers seem often to have been blithely, at times horrifyingly, unaware of their impact even in the process of undermining economic structures, or expropriating land without anticipating the devastation that would result (as they did in the early 1890s in Eritrea, prompting uprisings, and eventually, war with Ethiopia).

In describing everyday Italian rule as relatively nonchalant vis-à-vis colonized populations, I am not referring to, nor do I intend to dismiss, the well-documented instances of extreme and systematic brutality perpetrated by the military in particular periods and targeting specific groups, instances which stand in stark contrast to the more benign, self-absorbed Italian civilians' behavior toward local Others. The campaign waged against the Bedouin of eastern Libya from 1923 to 1932 has been described as the bloodiest of the colonial wars. Tens of thousands died, along with their livestock, in Italian concentration camps. Countless more died in massacres and hangings, in airplane-launched bombing raids, or because Italian forces had sealed their wells with cement. In Ethiopia, Italian planes dropped poison gases in the first global instance of chemical warfare. After an attempt in Addis Ababa on the life of Viceroy Graziani (who had overseen the war on the Bedouin in eastern Libya) in 1937, Italians – military and civilian – set out on a rampage, slaughtering all the Ethiopians they could find. Other abuses included bloody suppressions in Eritrea and the Dodecanese Islands, and the use of forced labor in Somalia.

While these atrocities merit detailed and sustained study, here I am in search of the more mundane effects of everyday rule and everyday contact. These effects were more ambiguous than those of military action: even as the above-mentioned abuses took place, some among the colonized inevitably benefited from, and supported, the Italian presence. Italian occupation brought long-term change: Italians imported much more into the colonies than they extracted (consistently incurring a negative balance sheet for the state), installed extensive bureaucratic infrastructures, and developed roads and communications, all of which forever altered colonial and postcolonial socioeconomic geographies. And yet, although Italian colonial rule had a substantial, complex impact and long-term ramifications, it must be kept in mind how little this impact matched Italian intentions. Some plans only succeeded in part, or oversucceeded, or backfired altogether; in some cases, the effects of colonial rule simply outgrew the extent of Italians' colonial imaginary space, involving Italians in chains of consequences beyond their wildest dreams (or nightmares). In any event, the effects of Italian occupation were far from identical with the conscious intentions and stratagems on the part of Italian colonizers. They did formulate specific goals regarding colonized populations, and consciously sought to control some of their activities; the architectural discussions described below, for example, partly addressed issues of cultural difference. But the documents and publications that remain of Italian colonial rule speak much more of Italian colonial imaginings – what was envisioned, at particular times, for particular places, within the limits of Italian understandings of those places – than of the larger effects, witting or unwitting,

of Italian actions. Indeed, quite often, what was envisioned was falsely claimed to have been realized already, as glorious yet unverifiable claims could only serve the government's purposes by encouraging more Italians to invest and settle in the colonies.

APPROACH

My readings of Italian colonial documents and of Italian colonial buildings and city plans inevitably reveal more about these Italian imaginings than about the effects of Italian occupation. Tensions between Italian aspirations and local realities are part of each case I present in this book; however, my central focus is on the organizing concepts of Italian colonial architecture, rather than on the local impact in each case. Underlying these architectural concepts was the fact that Italian colonialists' main objective was not so much to benefit or harm colonized populations or their lands as it was to fortify the new Italy that was also under construction. Italian colonial programs were intended to affect Italians much more than any of the colonial Others. A consistent thread runs through architectural texts of the period, linking the improvement of Italian colonists' lives (and, implicitly, their national sentiment and political amenability) with the modernization of their built environment. Even aesthetically, building programs sometimes had a didactic tone, aiming to remind Italians to see themselves as modern, or superior.

In preparing this book, I aimed to gain as multi-dimensional a view of each planning approach as possible, and therefore used a great variety of materials. In addition to government documents held in Italian state archives, I studied architects' publications, agricultural journals, colonial legislation, colonial propaganda, photographic collections, colonists' newsletters, and personal memoirs. The scope of my research rarely included what was built by private citizens outside the purview of government and the architectural profession. Many houses and apartment buildings were privately built, especially before 1936. However, they are impossible to document properly, both because so many have been demolished and because the relevant municipal archives are not accessible at present, and whether these archives contain satisfactory documentation is still unknown. But because I am most concerned with the concerted effort to create a national self-image, such materials are not essential to this study, much as they might have provided useful comparisons.

I have said that in this book I am not *primarily* seeking to grasp the local effects of Italian colonialism, but I traveled nonetheless to most of the former Italian colonies during my research. It was crucial that I identify discrepancies between the colonial plans and how colonial quarters and cities developed on the ground, and that I see for myself how much was built, what sorts of buildings were built where, and the neighborhoods that were made or shaped during the Italian era – much of which is invisible from documents and publications alone. As part of this "archaeological" project, I went with colonial maps, plans,

and texts in hand, to Tripoli and the Dodecanese Islands (especially Rhodes, Kos, and Leros); to *borghi* in Libya, Italy, Rhodes, and Ethiopia; to Addis Ababa, Gondar, Dire Dawa, Harar, and Jima, all in Ethiopia; and to Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. Therefore, the chapters that follow are not derived solely from Italian projections on paper. Instead, they are also strongly informed by my walking acquaintance with each of the places I have listed. This walking acquaintance in each place has only strengthened my sense that shared local perceptions of the history of any built environment are the largest, most widely shared "container" of urban culture and a city's internal relations. Considering that Italian colonialism in the modern era has been more or less forgotten, or at least ignored, by so many, it was especially valuable for me to witness first hand the enduring signs of colonialism, alongside the equal, if not greater, strength of modifications that have been made since the colonial era; and the sense of local and national selfhood that has been unhindered by the presence of such loud statements of the colonizers' national self.

I begin, in Chapter 1, by outlining the history of Italian colonialism. In Chapter 2, I discuss the ambitions and images that propelled it, along with the meanings Italians placed on various places and populations. In Chapter 3 I describe early colonial buildings (before they became elements in the more meaning-laden colonial *architecture*, in the 1920s), and in Chapter 4 I summarize the development of a reinvigorated and newly cohesive modern architectural profession in Italy. Architects' debates and rhetoric concerning colonial architecture and urbanism are the subjects of Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapters 7 through 9 I analyze the three Italian approaches to colonial architecture and planning in context: Tripoli, the colonial *borghi*, and Addis Ababa.

Part I

Contexts

Chapter 1: History

1869–1943

> Italian colonialism was an entirely political phenomenon . . . [it] produced prestige, but never power.[1]
>
> Giorgio Rochat, 1992

> Imperialism,[2] as practiced by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europeans, was haphazard, careless, and poorly directed. The good and bad effects were more the result of accident than of calculation. Few administrators were well-trained to cope with modernity; few were even interested in it.[3]
>
> Raymond Betts, 1985

The progress of the arts during the Fascist period – when Italian architects theorized colonial architecture and Italians built a great deal in the colonies – is easily recapitulated. The years between the early 1920s and the mid-1930s were characterized by relative artistic freedom, experimentation, and open debate. The period that followed was marked, instead, by increasing artistic and architectural uniformity, subservience to the government's totalitarianism, and a dying-out of artistic debates. Similarly, the trajectory of Italian colonial architecture follows a simple timeline: prior to the 1920s – i.e. for the first decades of Italian colonial expansion – architecture played hardly any part in Italians' views of the colonies. They did not discuss how they should represent themselves there through their buildings, or the worth of local architectures. In the second half of the 1920s, architects began to write about "colonial architecture" as a new object to be defined and to be shaped actively, in response to national and colonial agendas. By the first half of the 1930s, colonial architecture had a significant place in architectural journals, conferences, and exhibitions. But after the mid-1930s – as with the other arts in the late Fascist period – debates on colonial architecture died down, and the practice of colonial architecture and city planning fell under a blanket of unquestioning uniformity. In Chapters 3 through 5,

I describe these three periods as the pre-architecturalist, the architecturalist, and the uniformalist.

Before analyzing the gradual application of Italian architectural debates to colonial settings, however, I provide a brief history of Italian colonialism in this chapter and analyze the symbolic underpinnings of Italian colonialist ventures in the next. The twists and turns of Italian colonial-architectural discourses and practices accompanied those of politicians' positions and popular images of the colonial exotic; thus these first two chapters set the stage and provide the context for my analyses of Italian colonial architecture, as they did for the architects themselves. In this brief sketch, I highlight five thresholds; crucial moments of directional change in Italian imperialism: 1881, 1896, 1911, 1922, and 1936.[4]

The Italian acquisition of Red Sea territories, beginning in 1869, was desultory until France's 1881 occupation of Tunisia – which Italians had expected to colonize – provoked them to pursue colonialism more aggressively. Fifteen years later, the crushing 1896 defeat of Italian troops at Adwa (Ethiopia) brought Italian colonial ambitions to a temporary halt (Figure 1.1). Beginning in 1911, Italy's occupation of Tripoli assuaged some of the disappointment over the "loss" of neighboring Tunisia, and inaugurated a new era of Italian colonial optimism (Figure 1.2). The Fascist takeover of the Italian government in 1922 brought more systematic aggression to the colonies, and increasing uniformity in colonial administration. Finally, the occupation of Ethiopia in 1936 (acclaimed as a long-awaited revenge for the losses at Adwa) heralded a new imperialist stance on the part of Italians, reflected in newly prominent notions of racial superiority and plans for residential and social segregation between Italians and Africans (Figure 1.3).

THE BEGINNINGS OF ITALIAN COLONIALISM: FROM ASEB TO ADWA, 1869–1896

Italian colonialism began with a single capital investment. In 1869, the inaugural year of the Suez Canal and a mere eight years after Italian national unification, the Rubattino shipping company independently purchased rights over a six-kilometer stretch of land at the Red Sea port of Aseb from local sultans.[5] The company's agent, Giuseppe Sapeto, hoped to draw the Italian government into a colonial role. By the late 1930s, the government would be the principal economic support for all of the Italian colonies (not one of which would ever become self-sufficient);[6] but in these early years, the government hesitated to invest, and turned repeatedly to privately owned companies for the exploration, financing, and management of colonial territories. A decade passed before Sapeto persuaded the state to endorse his colonial acquisition, and a few more years passed before the government sent military forces to occupy Aseb in 1882 – the year after French troops took hold of Tunis, and the same year British forces occupied Egypt.

Italian expansionists had felt that Tunisia, once it was wrested from Ottoman control, was due to Italy more or less by rights because of its geographical proximity to Italy, and because a large Italian population lived there.

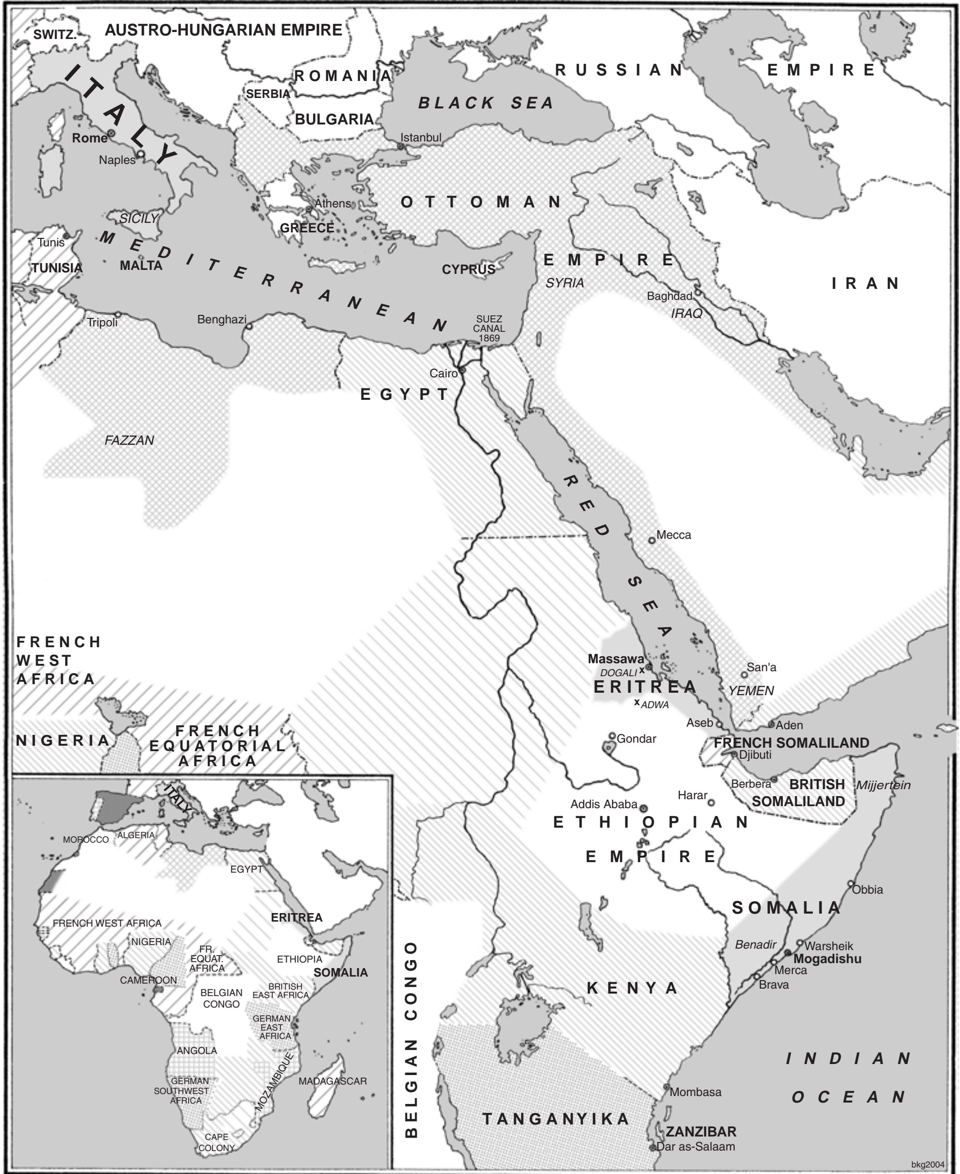


Figure 1.1
Italian colonial holdings, 1897.

Figure 1.2
Italian colonial holdings, 1913.

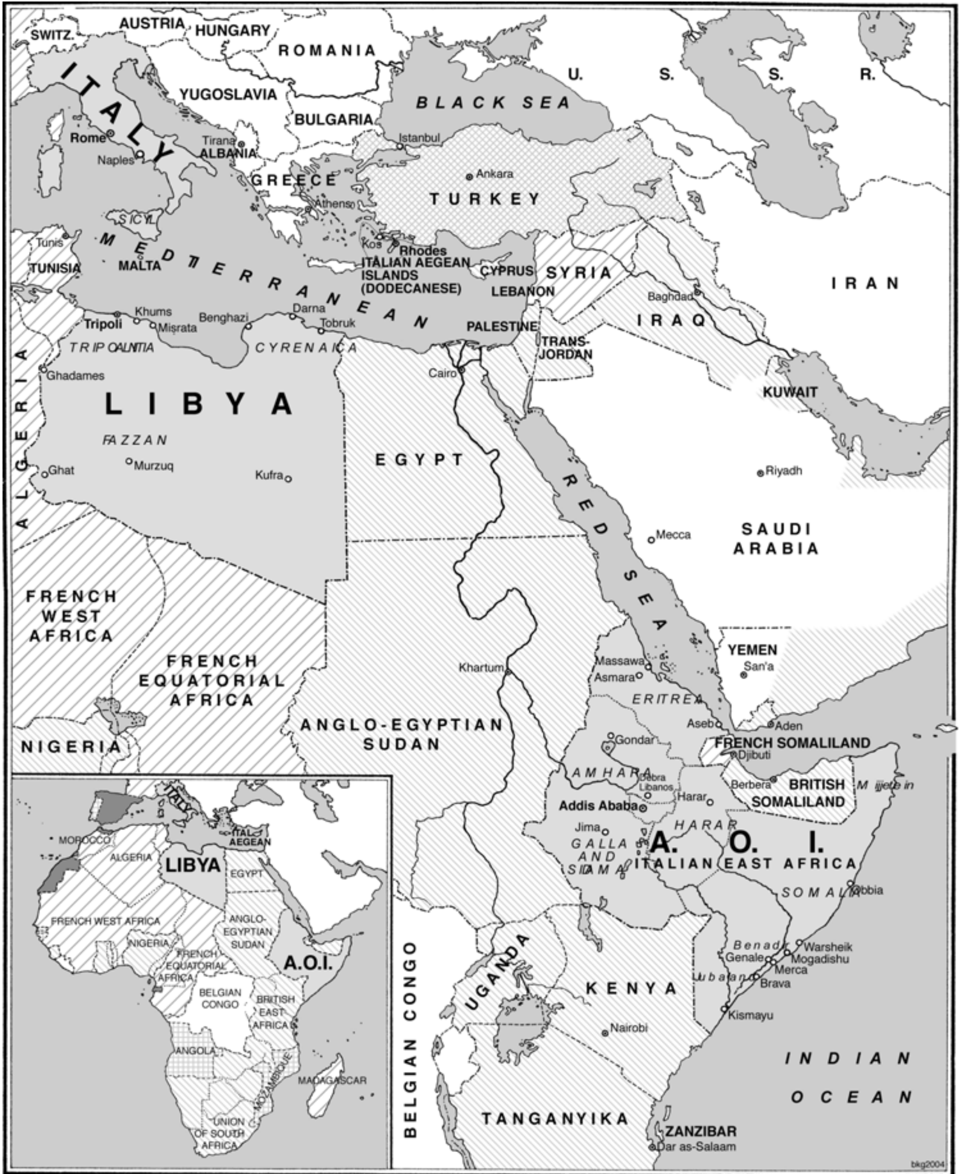


Figure 1.3
Italian colonial holdings, 1936.

Informally, some Italians held that it was already part of Italy: "in reality, Tunisia is a small, African Sicily."[7] Colony-minded Italians had tacitly assumed that this expectation would be respected by other European nations, and saw the French government as having betrayed them. Combined with the ongoing British expansion, the French protectorate over Tunisia gave Italian politicians a new sense of urgency and drove them to advocate their cause with greater vigor than before. The government quickly followed its occupation of Aseb with the declaration that it was an Italian protectorate. Official government support of Italy's colonial options continued to develop through the 1880s until 1896, based in part on information gained from growing numbers of scientific expeditions by explorers and geographic societies. The state was interested in two regions, albeit unequally: primarily the Mediterranean, and secondarily the Red Sea and Indian Ocean coasts on the Horn of Africa.

In 1885, the government occupied the Egyptian-controlled Massawa, another Red Sea port, with the support of the British, and declared it a protectorate as well. Its strategy was to gain control along the coast and check the progress of other European powers in the Red Sea; in addition, it hoped to move troops into Ethiopia (also called Abyssinia[8]). Ethiopia, then under the rule of Emperor Yohannes IV (1831–1889), was itself in a process of rapid territorial expansion, which would continue under Emperor Menelik II from 1889 to 1913. Ethiopian forces staved off Italian encroachments for the time being, most notably by defeating roughly 500 Italian soldiers in 1887 at Dogali, in the lowlands near the Red Sea. Later that year, Francesco Crispi, one of the most important statesmen of Liberal Italy, became both Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and his administration continued to support expansion along the Red Sea. In 1889, Menelik II and an Italian representative signed a treaty allowing further Italian occupation of the Red Sea coast, and Italian forces went on to occupy the nearby highlands. In 1890 the government consolidated its Red Sea possessions into Italy's first colony; Crispi named it "Eritrea" because the name evoked the classical Greek term for the Red Sea.

Italian involvement in the Benadir region of southern Somalia also began in the 1880s. In 1885, the Sultan of Zanzibar and the Italian explorer Antonio Cecchi, acting on behalf of his government, forged a commercial agreement giving Italians access to the coastal cities (Brava, Merca, Mogadishu, and Warsheik). The Sultans of Obbia and Mijjertein controlled the northern part of the Indian Ocean coast, and the Italian government negotiated protectorate arrangements with each of them four years later, in late 1888 and 1889. It then occupied the Benadir in 1891, by placing *askari* (native soldiers – from Eritrea, in this case) in the coast's first permanent Italian military establishment.[9] Hoping for indirect rule, the government delegated local administration to an Italian merchant, Vincenzo Filonardi, in 1893, in return for the commercial concession and a subsidy.

In Eritrea, in contrast, Italian politicians hoped to settle great numbers of Italians on farmland through programs of "demographic colonization"; in

theory, this would stem some of the tide of Italian emigration to the Americas and elsewhere, as well as urban growth in the metropole, by attracting Italian manpower to the new territory.[10] The government always intended Eritrea to be a settlement colony, and indirect rule was never attempted there.[11] Vast areas of the highlands were expropriated for settlements but, by 1894, local resistance to these expropriations crystallized in an uprising led by the chieftain Bahta Hagos; Italian occupying forces responded by destroying villages, massacring inhabitants, and deporting prisoners to Italy. Italian troops also moved further into the Ethiopian highlands, eventually entering the battle of Adwa – the second of our chronological thresholds – in which they were crushed by the Ethiopians in March 1896. European troops had been defeated by African ones before, but this was the worst such defeat to date. (Estimates vary, but Italian and *askari* casualties probably totaled between 4,000 and 7,000.) Italian aspirations to expansion crumbled under the ridicule of what many Italians perceived as the most ignominious loss imaginable. Up to this point, Crispi had been the most resilient politician in Italy since the country's political unification, but the loss of face from Adwa was so irreparable that it brought down his last government.

AFTER ITALY'S DEFEAT AT ADWA

In the wake of this national disaster, politicians were reluctant to pursue Italian expansion any further. In late 1896, the government signed a treaty with the Emperor abandoning any designs on Ethiopia. Eritrea was assigned its first civilian governor, Ferdinando Martini, in 1897, when the colony was commonly judged to be a failure due to its poor agricultural results and high cost. Over the decade he served as governor, Martini changed this perception by establishing stable relations with Ethiopia and re-directing Italian goals away from agricultural development by and for Italians toward agricultural exploitation for export.[12] The improvement of the Italians' status in Eritrea paralleled a general upswing in Italian affairs after the turn of the century. Under a series of administrations (mostly dominated by Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti), the economy benefited from new industrial growth, Italian politicians displayed new confidence in Italy as a nation, and Italian entrepreneurs renewed their imperialist appetites.[13] One manifestation of this was the Italian government's acquisition in 1900 of a commercial area in China, at Tianjin (near Beijing), alongside other European concessions.[14]

This new prosperity and ambition were also reflected in the government's response to problems brewing in southern Somalia.[15] The state's contract with Filonardi, the merchant in charge, ended in 1896. Still intending to work through a chartered company, but on slightly different terms, in 1898 the government handed the concession over to the Benadir Company (*Società Anonima Commerciale del Benadir*). In 1905, however, largely due to accusations that the Company was too tolerant of local slaveholding practices, the government took over and shifted to semi-direct rule over its newly proclaimed second colony,

Southern Italian Somalia, under a combination of Italian residents and local chiefs. In 1908, the colony was enlarged through the incorporation of the northern protectorates, and it was renamed Italian Somalia.

TRIPOLI AND THE DODECANESE, 1911–1912

The next major threshold in Italian colonialism after Adwa was the conquest of Tripoli and other coastal cities of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (Tobruk, Darna, Benghazi, and Khums), beginning in 1911.[16] In one respect, this was an event of world-historical significance, as it marked the first military use of air power: Italian planes dropped four bombs on camps outside of Tripoli on 1 November 1911.[17] This successful aggression against the dwindling Ottoman Empire brought Italians' colonialist enthusiasm (and propagandistic exaggeration) to its highest level yet. The creation of a Ministry of the Colonies followed in 1912, superseding the Colonial Office that had operated within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1890.[18] Italian administrators enthusiastically touted the North African territory as ideal for the settlement of Italian farmers from southern Italy and neighboring Tunisia, emphasizing that it was both closer to Italy and more familiar than was East Africa. Eventually, the major cities of Tripoli and Benghazi would become the first sites of architects' new interest in colonial architecture. Although "Libya" did not yet exist formally, and would not until 1934, Italians had begun calling the area between Tunisia and Egypt by that name – revived from the texts of classical geographers, as "Eritrea" had been – as early as 1903.[19]

Officially speaking, Italians acquired Tripoli and its attached territories swiftly: in late 1912, the Ottoman Empire surrendered Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, along with the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean Sea, which Italian forces had occupied earlier in the year.[20] But this initial ease turned out to be illusory: Italians had just become engaged in two decades of struggle for control, particularly in Cyrenaica. Ottoman rule in North Africa had not much affected daily life, especially outside the cities and, in effect, the entire country remained to be conquered before Italians could establish themselves as the colonial power. For instance, Italian military progress was halted by clashes just outside Tripoli, at Shari' al-Shatt and Sidi al Messri, almost immediately after the initial occupation. In 1913 and 1914, Italian troops occupied all of Tripolitania, but only briefly: by August 1915, Arab fighters had pushed them back, so that Italians held only Tripoli and Khums.

Italians' inability to bring their conquest of Libya to a close was compounded by their confusing policies vis-à-vis local notables, who were sometimes led to expect a strong role in administration, and sometimes dismissed. In a transparent bid to ensure greater popularity for themselves than Ottoman administrators had enjoyed, Italians reduced locals' taxes and voided conscription rules immediately upon their arrival.[21] But shocking reprisals followed the losses at Shari' al-Shatt,[22] and despite a generally conciliatory tone, the Italian government took hostages, deporting Tripolitanians to confinement in Italy.[23] From

1914 until the early 1920s, self-rule was officially granted to Tripolitanians;[24] but Italian authorities did not respect it consistently.

In Cyrenaica, local political power was mostly concentrated in the hands of one group, the Sanusi religious brotherhood, and resistance to foreign domination was most tenacious there.[25] The Ottoman rulers had been unable to dominate the order, and had given it official recognition instead. In 1917, Italian delegates achieved a truce with the Sanusi leadership. As in Tripolitania, the Italian Parliament accorded Cyrenaica limited self-rule in 1919. Treaties signed in 1915, 1917, and 1920 recognized the autonomy of the Sanusi and granted Cyrenaica a Parliament in 1920, but Italians did not fully respect the accords, continuing to send military reinforcements. The Parliament met five times before it was abolished in 1923.

In general, the administration of each of the colonies on the eve of the Fascist era was caught between government pressure to promote expansion on the one hand, and the limitations caused by ambivalent government support, budget constraints, and precarious military control on the other. Italian gains in southern Somalia had continued until 1914, and the colony was considered stable. Although the government had never pictured it as a potential settlement colony, some land concessions had been made to Italian farmers and developers. The single most ambitious state-sponsored enterprise there before 1922 had been the foundation in 1920 of the Italo-Somali Agricultural Company, or SAIS (*Società Agricola Italo-Somala*), which was intended to develop the colony's potential trade in bananas, cotton, and sugar, with Italian capital and native labor (some of it forced).[26] Eritrea, meanwhile, was the most developed of the Italian colonies, but not through government initiatives: a small merchant bourgeoisie of Greeks, Italians, Jews, and Indians had taken shape there since the 1890s, drawing its wealth and stability from trade, small industry (in flour, pasta, soap, and cement), and farms. And in the Dodecanese Islands, despite extensive archaeological and conservation work conducted from 1912 on,[27] Italians gave little thought to state-sponsored development until 1923, when the Treaty of Lausanne signed with Turkey acknowledged Italian control there and in Libya.

THE COLONIES UNDER FASCISM

Just before the beginning of the Fascist era[28] – our fourth threshold, and the last one before the conquest of Ethiopia in 1936 – Venetian industrialist Giuseppe Volpi became Governor of Tripolitania. Although he arrived under the auspices of a Liberal-era government, he initiated policy changes that were well-attuned to the new directions the government would soon pursue.[29] When Volpi came in 1921, Italians had not yet seized full control of Tripolitania outside of its cities. In early 1922, he initiated a series of brutal campaigns that brought about the apparent pacification of Tripolitania by early 1923. In a departure from previous Italian "native policy," he also devised an ostensibly legal means of taking land for Italian settlement. His policies on expropriation, imposed in 1922 and 1923,

decreed that all uncultivated areas belonged to the public domain, placing the burden of claiming compensation for their own lands on the local population, who had to produce written proof of ownership. As a result, the government was able to award vast tracts of land to individual and corporate concessionaires and thereby attract new capital investments to the colony.[30]

The shift in colonial policies toward greater domination was visible at the local level shortly after Mussolini's rise to power. Fascist rule changed the way in which Italy's colonial business was conducted, both within the Ministry in Rome and in each colony. The government committed substantial financial and military resources to reaching Italy's goals in Africa and the Mediterranean Basin, exceeding any previous state expenditures by far – which was all the more feasible because open debate ceased to play a part in government decisions during the Fascist era. By the mid-1920s, the state also began seeking new opportunities for expansion. Mussolini called for the acquisition of more territory in the Mediterranean Basin[31] – in a striking change of position since his vehement protests against Italian attacks on Libya in 1911[32] – and in the early 1930s, he began formulating plans to attack Ethiopia.

Crucial to the regime's effort to dominate Libya was General Rodolfo Graziani (commonly referred to as "the butcher of Libya") who, like Volpi, came to Tripolitania in 1921. He left in 1934, having assumed command of Tripolitanian troops in 1928; served under Volpi's successor, Governor of Tripolitania Emilio De Bono (1925–1928) and Governor of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica Pietro Badoglio (1928–1933); and been vice-governor of Cyrenaica since 1930. He had also become very famous, both for his successes against the rebels in Cyrenaica and for the atrocities committed in order to achieve those successes.[33]

Tripolitania was under approximate Italian control by 1923, when new efforts to consolidate rule there were launched; these efforts reached their conclusion in 1930, by which time Italians had penetrated all the way into the Fazzan, in the south.[34] Also in 1923, Italians scrapped their treaties with the Sanusi, and began a protracted war in Cyrenaica – with the help of Eritrean *askari* and Somali *dubat* (native soldiers) – lasting until 1932. Beginning in 1923 also, asphyxiating and vesicant (mustard gas) bombs were dropped from airplanes, possibly for the first time in the history of Africa.[35] Bedouin and their livestock were confined to concentration camps; prisoners were once again deported to incarceration in Italy; cement was poured down communal wells on which Cyrenaicans depended for survival; and a barbed-wire fence hundreds of kilometers long isolated the Sanusi from allies and supplies to the east.[36] The war ended shortly after the rebel leader 'Umar al-Mukhtar was captured and hanged in 1931.[37] Italian forces immediately seized the plateaux of Cyrenaica. After 1932, the Cyrenaicans who had survived the Italian campaign were outsiders in their own home, allowed only to inhabit the fringes of their former homeland and to work for Italians on the latter's new farms.

In 1923 affairs in Somalia also underwent changes brought by a new governor, Cesare Maria De Vecchi, who was the first high-ranking Fascist to be

assigned colonial command. When he arrived, approximately one-third of the colony was under active Italian rule. He gained control of Kismayu and Jubaland (in the south) by 1925. He then began military operations in the north and, by 1927, the whole of Somalia was under Italian occupation (not including British Somaliland, on the Red Sea). Although Somalia was still financially problematic, it was a relatively settled, organized colony by 1928, when civilian governor Guido Corni replaced De Vecchi.

In comparison to Somalia and Libya, the new Fascist regime had less immediate effect on Eritrea and the Dodecanese. Both were stable, with governments that were mostly focused on developing infrastructures, commerce, and trade. Rather than moving to increase control over local populations, the Eritrean government created a new land law in 1926, allowing Italians large concessions of land in the lowlands, but protecting the highlands for Eritrean agriculturalists – in essence, returning their lands to them. In the Dodecanese, under the Governorship of diplomat Mario Lago, the 1920s saw construction, the development of a tourist destination, archaeological and museum projects, and the creation of technical and institutional infrastructures on a par with those in the metropole.[38]

In the years immediately preceding the Italian assault on Ethiopia, Eritrea entered a period of intense activity and growth as the military began to prepare for invasion, and the Italian population of Asmara exceeded the local one for the first time; Somalia was also used as a staging-ground for the coming war. Both Somalia and Eritrea now hosted *askari* from Libya. The Dodecanese Islands remained stable and continued to follow the course set by Governor Lago, until De Vecchi (who had already served in Somalia) replaced him in 1936. Libya, meanwhile, was in a period of new administrative coherence and ambition, especially after the arrival of Governor General Italo Balbo in 1934.[39] The colony was reshaped along new lines separating north from south. The four provinces of what was now officially "Libya" (Tripoli and Miṣrata, i.e. Tripolitania; and Benghazi and Darna, i.e. Cyrenaica) were governed increasingly like Italy itself, with a rapidly growing bureaucracy; the southern Libyan territory (Kufra, the Fazzan, and Jufra) remained under military command. Balbo oversaw both north and south, and answered only to Rome.

THE WAR ON ETHIOPIA

Meanwhile, Ethiopia, still under imperial rule, had been following its own path toward modern statehood. In 1931, its most important bank was nationalized, the first national constitution was drafted, and the first Parliament was held. Even before his coronation as Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930,[40] *ras* Tafari Makonnen had focused on modernization, the abolition of slavery, Ethiopia's entry into the League of Nations in 1923, and a grand tour of Europe in 1924.[41] Italy's 1935 attack on Ethiopia, a fellow member of the League of Nations and a sovereign state that had never been conquered by Europeans, seemed excessive by the standards of other imperialist nations, above all in its use of chemical

weapons.[42] The British media in particular campaigned vociferously against Italy, and the League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy's international trade.[43] Nonetheless, Italian ground troops continued their advance from Somalia and Eritrea into 1936. Haile Selassie left Addis Ababa on 5 May, shortly before they reached the city. Four days later, Mussolini announced: "Italy finally has its Empire . . . [T]he title of Emperor of Ethiopia is assumed, for himself and for his successors, by the King of Italy."[44] It is worth noting that despite the regime's fanfare about its colonial successes, the conquest of Ethiopia – the fifth and last threshold of this abbreviated history – was the only colonial acquisition made under Fascism at that point; meanwhile, the four colonies that Italy had claimed during the Liberal era (Eritrea, Somalia, Libya, and the Dodecanese Islands) were "re-made" by Fascist rule, in terms of administrative, native, and urban policies. More specifically, after 1936 the earlier colonial territories were retro-fitted architecturally, developing new imperial, imposing appearances.

The acquisition of Ethiopia, which like Eritrea and Libya was envisaged as a vast settlement colony, prompted far-reaching changes in Italian colonial administration.[45] The purpose of these changes was to increase bureaucratic centralization and ensure direct control on the part of the government in Rome (usually in the person of Mussolini himself). Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia were joined under the umbrella of *AOI* (*Africa Orientale Italiana*, or Italian East Africa), and subdivided into six governorships: Eritrea, Amhara, Harar, Galla and Sidama, Somalia, and Addis Ababa (the new capital). A Viceroy oversaw the six governors, and answered directly to the Minister of Colonies. The Ministry itself was modified after the conquest of Ethiopia, becoming the Ministry of Italian Africa in 1937. Two weeks after Empire was declared, Graziani – notorious from his service in Libya – became Viceroy. The hideous brutality of Graziani's rule was thus condoned, even mandated, by his superiors. Mussolini was in constant communication with the Italian forces and administration in *AOI*, and authorized or ordered chemical bombings personally. At the same time, Graziani's signature methods in Ethiopia were consistent with his record in Libya. After an attempt on his life in early 1937, thousands of Ethiopians were slaughtered in Addis Ababa over the course of several days. Thereafter, Graziani designated concentration camps in Somalia and Eritrea to hold deportees.[46]

One new method of oppression was the liquidation of monasteries. There had been no assault on religious authorities per se in Libya, where the government made great efforts not to antagonize Muslims (other than the Sanusi). In the Dodecanese, on the other hand, Orthodox authorities had already been under severe Italian pressure, suffering incarceration and expulsions.[47] In Ethiopia, such attacks were vicious and sustained, involving outright massacres, most notoriously at the Debra Libanos monastery. Another important difference in the Italians' approach to Ethiopia was their targeting of the aristocracy and educated elites; elsewhere, these classes had not been under particular attack but were rather co-opted, or at least paid lip service. These oppressions continued after a member of the royal family, the Duca d'Aosta, took over Graziani's post in 1938.

CONSEQUENCES OF EMPIRE

The government attempted to reach more deeply into domains of social life in the late 1930s, aiming increasingly to control the movements and intimate lives of Europeans and African in *AOI*. In a foretaste of the "racial laws" affecting Italy's Jews in 1938, interracial sexual relations, marriage, and the paternal acknowledgment of interracial children became illegal in *AOI* in 1937;[48] subsequently, similar efforts were made to impose ethnic segregation in Libya. There had been racist practices previously, of course; but the legalization of these practices – and especially the imposition of them on Italians – was new. The vast differences between the colonial settings, combined with most Italians' lack of interest in the new racist policies, made it impossible to implement them thoroughly. For example, applying segregationist laws appears to have been easier to impose in Benghazi (where Italians had long been hostile to Arabs, and the two groups had always occupied mutually distant parts of the city) than in Asmara (where a relatively routine coexistence was already well-established).

Bombastic aspects of Italian colonial rule also intensified in the late 1930s, in tune with the rhetoric and pageantry of the Fascist regime's increasing totalitarianism.[49] Balbo choreographed events in Libya that epitomized the spectacular aspects of Fascist rule: car races, air shows, and other gala events, such as those celebrating Mussolini's visit in 1937, were typical of his Governorship. On a somewhat smaller scale, De Vecchi's governorship in Rhodes is largely remembered for his misplaced flair for the gestures of Empire, such as dictating that all bystanders had to salute whenever he drove by.[50]

THE LAST STAGES OF ITALIAN COLONIAL EXPANSION

In the few years before Italy entered World War II in June 1940, two further developments altered the geography of its Empire. First, just as three Algerian *départements* had been absorbed into metropolitan France in 1881, Libya's four coastal provinces became an integral part of Italian territory in January 1939; rather than a colony, they were now Italy's nineteenth regional district. The advantages of this change for Italy were two: to ensure for itself a vast reservoir of Libyan military conscripts, and to help suppress any future independence movements.

The other major event was Italy's takeover of Albania in 1939. Italian troops had already occupied Albania in 1914, only to lose ground and depart in 1920.[51] In the late 1920s, Italian industry had established a foothold there, but the country did not become a colonial target until Galeazzo Ciano, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (and Mussolini's son-in-law), traveled to the capital, Tirana, in 1937 and decided to pursue annexation aggressively. Ciano gave two reasons: Italy needed Albania as a settlement colony; and Albania would serve as a line of defense against a possible German presence in the Balkans. Even though puppet governments were attempted rather than direct Italian rule, at a ceremonial level

the conquest of Albania was as significant as that of Ethiopia: in the terms of Fascist propaganda, King Zog "offered the crown of Albania, in the form of a personal union," to King Victor Emmanuel III, who then bore the title of "King of Italy and Albania, and Emperor of Ethiopia".[52] Following the pattern established in Libya and Ethiopia, land was seized for eventual development into new settlement areas for Italian farmers.[53]

This final act of Italian imperialism brought the number of Italian territories to six, not including the Tianjin concession (Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Libya, the Dodecanese Islands possession, and Albania). But the Empire was short-lived. Eritrea and Somalia came under British Military Administration control in 1941, and Haile Selassie regained his Ethiopian throne. In the Mediterranean, German forces took over Albania directly after Mussolini's fall in 1943, after which Albanian leaders officially dissolved the "union" with Italy; the Germans withdrew in 1944, leaving the country in the hands of the Communist National Liberation Front. The Tianjin concession was re-integrated into Chinese territory by the end of World War II. In 1946, Albania became a Stalinist republic under dictator Enver Hoxha. German forces also took over the Dodecanese Islands in 1943 and fought the Allies there until 1945, when the British Military Administration took control. Finally, Italians surrendered Libya to the Allied forces in 1943.

The Italian government lobbied hard to retain the colonies, but it lost them all in the Paris Treaty of 1947. One rapid outcome of the Treaty was that the Dodecanese Islands became part of Greece in 1948. The futures of the remaining colonies (Eritrea, Somalia, Libya) were debated at some length, not only because of Italy's efforts to retain them, but also because in each case there were other interests at stake. Haile Selassie hoped to add Eritrea and Somalia to his Empire; and the French government resisted the idea of an independent Libya, fearing that it would make it harder for France to control its own Maghribi territories of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.[54] In the end, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in 1950, only to be annexed by the Emperor in 1962; Italy was given Somalia in trusteeship for ten years (1950–1960), after which Somalia became independent; and Libya became an independent monarchy in 1951, with a Sanusi, Idris, on the throne. The Ministry of Italian Africa was eliminated in 1953.

ITALIAN COLONIALISM IN RETROSPECT

To be sure, the history of Italian colonialism bears some comparison to histories of other European colonialisms. But despite Italians' many efforts to "catch up" (with France and Britain in particular), theirs is a distinctive case which cannot always be understood by referring to other European colonial histories. Italy entered very late into the era of modern European colonialism. Its colonial policies might well have continued in the increasingly oppressive direction they had been taking, but Italy's defeat in World War II makes this a moot point. For the purposes of this book, it is important to keep in mind that we will never know how, or to what extent, the rural settlements would have developed in the long

run, or what the future of policies of urban segregation would have been. In reading planners' texts of the late 1930s, we must remain aware of the gap between what they discussed – imminent segregation – and what existed. In fact, such policies were not *yet* implemented at the time. Without question, the final years of Italian colonialism reflected Fascist priorities more and more clearly: all of the colonies went through a number of near-identical transitions from civilian to Fascist-controlled administration (having previously gone from military to civilian administration), and officially, all of the colonial cities were supposed to be segregated. But we can only guess whether this means that Italian urban practices would have aligned fully with segregationist ideas under a long Fascist government.

In any case, the result of Italian colonial efforts is a sorry tally. The most grievous accounting concerns the lives lost in Italian colonial wars and atrocities. Hundreds of thousands of Eritreans, Somalis, Libyans, Greeks, Ethiopians, Albanians, and Italians died under arms. Populations in the colonies lost properties and families; they were deported; they were dehumanized. Only a very few had their life opportunities expanded, or profited in terms of wealth or well-being; these were almost inevitably members of the urban elites and merchant classes – the same groups who, among Italians, benefited most from the colonial enterprises. Italians who did not belong to these classes – the ones who most needed to profit from the colonies – died in the colonial wars, and paid for the development of the colonies with their taxes and their labor. To add insult to injury, the public works and housing in the metropole were usually less technologically up-to-date than what was built in Italy's prestige colonial showcases.

Many historians have cited the following reasons why Italians pursued an Empire so recklessly: national prestige, internal national cohesion, national self-defense against greater powers, and economic exploitation. National prestige cannot be measured, of course, but Italian propaganda did emphasize this motivation for colonial expansion, and while it hardly seems a sufficient explanation unto itself, it was undoubtedly one factor propelling Italy's ever-greater colonial investments. The Italian colonial wars on Libya and Ethiopia did garner noticeable popular support for a time (based, in both cases, on distorted press reports), but this support did not last long enough to bring about any enduring changes in sentiments of national unity; nonetheless, it is possible that some people in the government believed that colonialism would fortify Italians' proverbially weak national sentiment.[55] National self-defense was also on the minds of Italian politicians, as they dreaded being marginalized entirely from the geopolitical and economic latitudes afforded by colonial holdings in the Red and Mediterranean Seas. Furthermore, the memory of Italy's long occupation by foreigners in the centuries preceding national unification, along with its relative weakness on the world stage, kept Italian politicians anxious about any possibility of being absorbed by more powerful neighbors.

The feasibility of economic exploitation, finally, depended on which economic and social sectors of Italian and colonized societies were involved.

The colonies were not lucrative for the Italian state, certainly. A handful of Italian capitalists, merchants, and developers increased their personal fortunes; and a few of the Italian agricultural settlers profited as well. But taking a long view, from 1869 to the "retro-fitting" that took place after 1936, one thing stands out above all: the sectors that grew the most were the military and the government bureaucracy. The preferred image of the colonies portrayed a promised land full of Italian farmers, but most of the Italian civilians who moved to the colonies moved to the cities, and they either plied the very same civil service or mercantile trades they had in Italian cities or else worked as day laborers.[56]

As for the rural settlements – always the central official pretext for Italian colonial wars, and undoubtedly the earnest vision of some Italian pro-colonialists – they could not significantly reduce the numbers of Italians who were emigrating permanently from the metropole. In fact, the government-expropriated lands conceded to private Italian investors early on benefited the Italian poor hardly at all: before the government-sponsored programs of the 1930s, Italian concessions were almost exclusively capitalist concerns that employed cheaper native labor, rather than importing Italian families. Late in the Fascist period, the state's expenditures in the colonies soared; still, the state did not profit, and only a minuscule number of the Italian poor did. The government's settlement programs of the 1930s, parallel in every respect to government-sponsored land reclamation programs run in Italy in the same period, yielded thirty villages (with outlying farmlands) for Italians in Libya; seven in the Dodecanese Islands; and two in Ethiopia.[57] A rough estimate of the total number of government-sponsored settlers suggests that it could not have reached even 100,000.

I propose that all of the reasons that have been given for Italian colonialism are correct, but that they do not sufficiently explain the motives or meanings of Italy's colonial project. Analyses in objective terms of profit, security, or subjective terms of glory ignore the terms in which Italians themselves saw their colonial enterprises. I take the view that there must have been an internal logic – a set of taken-for-granted, shared premises – within which these various ventures, disastrous though many of them were, seemed reasonable. This internal logic of metaphor, fantasy, and ambiguity is a dimension of Italian colonialism that has not been analyzed systematically enough; and yet, it shaped the colonial experiences of Italians, and it influenced the choices they made – not only politically and militarily, but also in the domains of architecture and city planning.[58] The next chapter is therefore devoted to a reading of Italian colonial history in terms of its driving symbols, desires, and tropes.

Chapter 2: Geographies

> The enterprise of empire depends upon the *idea* of *having an empire* . . . and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture.[1]
>
> Edward Said, 1993

> There is no doubt that Italian colonialism was characterized by an extraordinary ignorance of the regions and the populations it set out to conquer.[2]
>
> Giorgio Rochat, 1992

In addition to the physical constructions that are the main subject of this book, Italian imperialism involved various symbolic and rhetorical "constructions" of the colonial territories and their populations. These constructions inevitably influenced designs for three-dimensional ones, so much so that Italian colonial architectural theories and designs cannot be grasped fully without also analyzing the cultural dispositions that informed them. I view these symbolic elaborations as an array of non-continuous, coexisting imaginative geographies. I use the term "geographies" broadly – these encompass primarily spatial knowledge and imagination, including geographers' explorations and cartography, but also, if secondarily, Italian views of history.[3] I begin by analyzing the tropes that shaped Italy's colonial enterprises in the Mediterranean and Red Sea at different stages: figures of speech used in Parliament, the press, and propaganda – figures of speech that were far more real to most Italians than were the colonies themselves, and that amounted to an abstract geography of interconnected images. I then turn to human geographies: official and unofficial Italian classifications of populations, including Italians, in the larger scheme of the Italian colonial imaginary.

The geography of colonial metaphors I outline here resembles Said's "imaginative geography,"[4] but it comprises more than his two components (the Orientalized Near East and the West). Its regions were Africa, the Mediterranean, Europe, and Italy; its colonial linchpins were Libya and Ethiopia, the two largest

and most prized colonies. Italian colonial discourse privileged the Mediterranean above all, and Libya's "*mediterraneità*" (Mediterranean-ness) was therefore emphasized at least as much as its "Oriental" qualities.

Much of this book is concerned with the "*mediterraneità*" invoked by Italian colonial architects in the 1930s. In preparation for discussions of this subject further on, here I explore the rhetorical uses of the Mediterranean in the decades leading up to Italian colonial architectural debates. Even before Italy's colonial era, some Italians had reminded their compatriots that the Mediterranean had been, and should once again be, *mare nostrum* (our sea), the heart of their Empire.[5] With its archaeological traces of what Italians considered their own historic past (i.e. Roman antiquity), the Mediterranean basin was seen by many as saturated with a timeless Roman and Italian essence; and the Italian conquest was seen as a return, both in Libya and the Dodecanese Islands. At the time of the assault on Tripoli, images of Italians "returning" to the Roman province to take up their ancestors' dormant arms announced Italy's military success (Figure 2.1). The notion of the Romans' return across the Mediterranean endured to the end of the colonial period, serving, for instance, in the advertisement for the Triennial Colonial Exhibition inaugurated in Naples in 1940 (*Mostra Triennale d'Oltremare*) (Figure 2.2). The Roman legionnaire's legs brooking the sea in one small step, landing on a typical Roman road, depict just how direct

Figure 2.1
Italy's attack on Tripoli in 1911 was represented as the young state's return to the glories of Roman antiquity. Here, an Italian sailor climbs ashore in North Africa to find vestiges of Roman structures and the remains of a Roman soldier; he draws the soldier's sword to resume his mission of conquest.

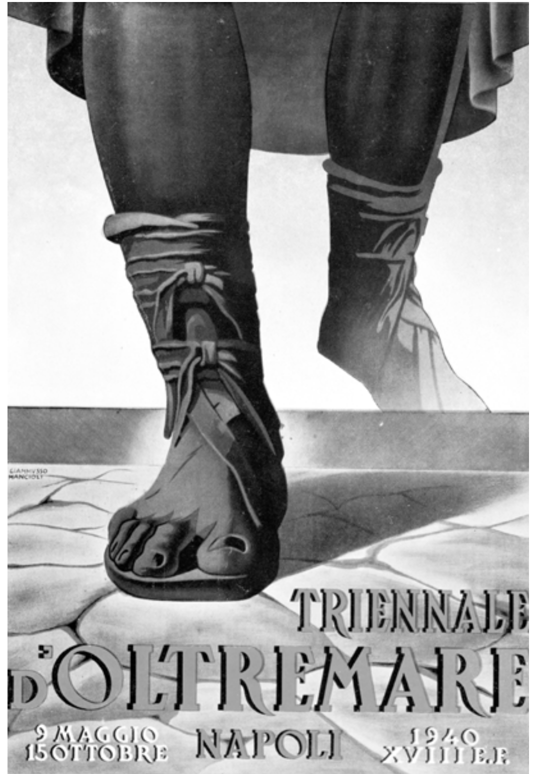


Figure 2.2
In this advertisement for the *Mostra Triennale d'Oltremare* (Triennial Colonial Exhibition) of 1940, a Roman soldier steps across the Mediterranean, onto an ancient imperial road in North Africa. The exhibition's dates are XVIII E.F. (eighteenth year of the Era Fascista, or Fascist Era); and 9 May to 15 October (the anniversaries of the declaration of empire in 1936 and the assault on Ethiopia in 1935, in reverse order).

were the rhetorical paths between Italy and its Mediterranean colonies, and indeed between twentieth-century Italy and its distant past.

This pervasive attitude led to rhetorical appropriations of all that was noteworthy in Libya, including architecture, as in this passage by the famous poet Giovanni Pascoli:

> We are close [to this land] . . . [we] were there before; we left signs that not even the Berbers, the Bedouins and the Turks have succeeded in erasing; signs of our humanity and civilization, signs that indeed, we are not Berbers, Bedouins and Turks. We are returning.[6]

If this Mediterranean essence was presumed to have endured despite the intervening histories since the Roman Empire, "Africa," on the other hand – meaning, sub-Saharan Africa – was treated as genuinely ahistorical. The principal notion Italians (like many other Europeans) had of Ethiopia derived from medieval beliefs that Paradise, or a mythical kingdom, could be found there; it had the mystique of a fairytale.[7] Yet this blurry image did not conflict with the Italian assumption that crucial indices of autochthonous civilization (archaeology and architecture) were missing there:

> The absolute lack of all civilized forms, and the barbarous rule of the various Negusite [Abyssinian] dynasties prevented the birth of any architectonic art.[8]

Italians were predisposed to seeing certain sorts of tangible reminders of history, and they did not perceive such reminders in Africa. Whatever antiquity or evidence of history they did see there (such as Gondar's sixteenth-century palaces), they dismissed as both imported by foreigners and thus not "truly Abyssinian," and irrelevant to Italy, because such vestiges were not linked to Italy's own glorious past.

At the center of this geography was Italy, but its position was in flux. Italian politicians and thinkers strenuously situated Italy in various relations to all three of the other components: far from Africa, but close to both Europe and the Mediterranean. While Italy's European status was never questioned, its long vulnerability to invasion by other Europeans was still within living memory. Italy's proximity to the Mediterranean could be used rhetorically to fortify its autonomy, if only symbolically: Italy had a magnificent history there, and it could conceivably extend that history to a magnificent future.[9] This perception of Italy's Mediterranean autonomy from Europe, at the same time, made it more convincingly equal to Europe.

On the whole, Italians in favor of colonial wars always described them as a more or less implicit rite of passage for the nation and its citizens. Early proponents insisted that Italy would never amount to much unless it expanded. In the twentieth century, the expression *l'Italietta* has best summarized this view of Italy as beneath the consideration of its peers. Literally meaning "Italy the small," it conveys a belittling image of a simpering, feminized Italy that deserves to be patronized – as imperialists claimed Italy was by other European nations. In contrast, imperialism denoted national masculinization: the state would become autonomous, powerful, and self-respecting.[10] Promoters of imperialism also insisted it would help in "making Italians" by endowing them with national sentiment, if only because it might fortify their belief in a national destiny.

Not all Italians saw the colonies in this light, of course.[11] Even among supporters, there were signs of "a curious ambivalence toward colonialism."[12] Combined with Italy's limited resources and the restricted capital of its citizens, this ambivalence made for an "imperialism of the poor,"[13] which has also been characterized as "shoestring colonialism."[14] At a practical level, the most telling sign of this ambivalence was undoubtedly the fact that Italian administrators were not trained for colonial rule, even though some Italians in non-governmental sectors had knowledge of colonial geography, languages, and elementary social anthropology, and might have imparted it to them. Instead, the government sent military and civil bureaucrats who had no knowledge of the languages they would need to speak, or of local terrains, ethnicities, religions, or politics; indeed, they often had no maps.[15]

This contrasts with Italian innovations in the technologies of aerial and chemical warfare, which fueled intense national pride. After the Italian attack on Tripoli, the poet Giovanni Pascoli gloatingly referred to Italy's "primacy" in aerial

aggression: "Was not [Italy] the first to beat her wings and rain death upon her enemy's camps?"[16] The Italian government was blatantly interested in conquering colonies and garnering symbolic capital from such conquests, but it was not as interested in running them or in solving the financial problems they entailed. Only in the last years of the Fascist regime did the government's attention shift to pragmatic issues of daily, mundane, efficient control and the rigors of the exercise of power.

Distinct rhetorical circuits marked Italy's three "waves" of imperialist activity. Before and after Adwa (1896), parliamentarians discussed possible colonial acquisitions in predominantly metaphoric terms; their ambivalence about whether to attempt conquest extended to indecision about whether the Red Sea or the Mediterranean was the best target. Around the time of the assault on Libya in 1911, discussions of imperialism took place much more publicly than they had before, in the press and in public speeches. The terms used were highly triumphalist, rather than ambivalent. From the early 1930s onward, when imperialism could no longer be argued over in totalitarian Italy, the ambient rhetoric emphasized Empire (newly acquired in 1936 but also figuratively regained), *civiltà*, and geopolitics.

TROPES: BEFORE AND AFTER ADWA

Motivated by commercial appetites, discussions of "spontaneous" and "natural" colonies to which Italy might lay claim in the Mediterranean and Red Sea areas dated to the 1850s – before Italy's unification in 1861 – and continued in that vein until after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.[17] The first Italian agricultural development opened in 1867, in what would later become Eritrea, and closed in 1870.[18] The idea that Italy was entitled to land in the Mediterranean Basin on the basis of its legacy from the Roman Empire was already a common trope; but before the 1880s, Italian expansionists did not yet call colonialism a necessity. Instead, it was primarily considered a commercial opportunity not to be missed.

For Italians in general, meanwhile, (sub-Saharan) Africa held little interest at this time. Until the 1880s, only Tunisia was perceived as genuinely desirable territory. After Italy "lost" Tunis to France and Italian expansionists were suddenly forced to imagine the possibility of Italy never obtaining colonies at all, they considered setting their sights on neighboring Tripolitania. Further provoked by agricultural depression and rising emigration rates in the 1880s, some Italians began to describe imperialism as necessary to national trade, rather than a mere opportunity. At the same time, discussions of imperial conquest tended to extreme abstraction, and critical decisions were often made from a great conceptual distance, with little concrete information at hand.

Amidst parliamentary discussions of 1883 on the subject of extending Italy's "sphere of influence" into Tripolitania, one Senator (Musolino) described how France and Britain's growing range of commercial control threatened to suffocate Italy:

> Italy will see itself enclosed in a more or less protectionist iron circle of customs barriers; in time this may even become absolutely prohibitive, so much so that Italy will die of commercial asphyxiation.[19]

Discussions of suffocation by the "iron circle" became increasingly poignant. In 1885, another Senator, Vitelleschi, asserted that:

> the possibility of Italy being completely barred from the Orient and imprisoned in the Mediterranean makes him think of an animal which in a similar situation, enclosed in an iron circle, kills itself.[20]

After the government acquired Aseb from the Rubattino company, debates in Parliament from the early 1880s into the early 1890s focused additionally on whether to aim for colonization in the Mediterranean Basin or in the Red Sea. All agreed that the Mediterranean was Italy's ultimate goal; but some feared that investment of money and military resources in the Red Sea would detract from their quest for Mediterranean territory, while others presented Red Sea pursuits as the most logical means to a Mediterranean end.

The suffocating "iron circle" metaphor continued to appear in these discussions through the 1890s. Another crucial image emerged in 1885 (when the Berlin conference to divide Africa concluded, and Italy occupied Massawa): the "key" to the Mediterranean cage.

> Minister of Foreign Affairs Mancini responds that . . . we must not fear that our current actions in the Red Sea will deter us from what is called the true and important objective of Italian policy, namely the Mediterranean; instead, he asks why it is not recognized that the key to the Mediterranean, and the way to an effective defense against any new disturbances of its equilibrium, can be found in the Red Sea, which is the closest one to the Mediterranean.[21]

Subsequent speakers adapted Mancini's image, whether or not they supported imperialism. One Member of Parliament suggested in 1888 that Italy's imprisonment in the Mediterranean could be remedied by becoming aware of who *held* the key(s) to it:

> Member of Parliament Odescalchi points out that the Mediterranean . . . has two keys: one, the Suez Canal, and the other, Gibraltar; and that England holds both of them. Therefore, having a colony outside of the Mediterranean is the same as having a colony to which the keys are in the hands of the English.[22]

By the late 1880s, the debate over which was the better sea to target was still raging, but Prime Minister Crispi was preparing to declare Eritrea a colony in 1890. A speech he gave in 1889 recapitulated the motifs of Italian colonialist rhetoric: "the entirety of the nation needs breathable air to live," he said, and he referred to Italy's "natural market."[23] In messianic tones prefiguring Mussolini's decades later, he enjoined Italy to live up to its historic duty:

> Our politics must be Italian, and our market must be the world. Situated in the center of Europe . . . right next to Africa, at the gates of the [Atlantic] Ocean and the Red Sea, where our fathers cleared the path for new civilization, we would fail our country if we did not expand our field of economic activity.[24]

He also voiced the optimistic belief that Italy's unofficial "colonies" of expatriates stood as ready bridgeheads for Italy's apparently destined expansion:

> Listen to the voice rising up from our colonies; it is exultant. Italy! it cries from the shores of the Mediterranean, and it answers from the farthest oceans.[25]

His speech marked an important addition to Italian colonialist rhetoric: the idea that the agricultural opportunities afforded by the African colonies made colonization a necessity – not only for reasons of commercial "suffocation," but also because Italy desperately needed land for its rapidly growing population. The "Southern Question" that some members of the political intelligentsia had defined in the 1870s – how to remedy the poverty, illiteracy, and political disaffection of Italy's semi-barbarous south?[26] – combined with the new opportunity for migration and resettlement that came with the acquisition of land near the Red Sea. The image of what kind of colonial power Italy was became part of the rhetoric, too: Crispi described its emigrants as "hard-working" and "pacifist."[27]

Crispi's government collapsed after the disastrous Italian losses at Adwa in 1896, and even those who had promoted expansion ferociously now opposed it. Yet the tropes of imperialism did not change. The image of keys served newly adamant anti-colonial statements as well as it had pro-colonial ones, as in this bitter remark of 1897:

> In the course of interrogations and interpellations on Italian policy in Eritrea, Member of Parliament Imbriani notes . . . that we went to the Red Sea to fish for the famous key to the Mediterranean, but not only did we not find it there; we even lost our compass.[28]

But while Italians retreated from their ambitions in East Africa, their debates over whether to pursue the acquisition of Tripolitania increased in ardor. The Ottoman Empire was weakening; a Mediterranean colony was still Italian imperialists' primary goal; and for some, the shame of Adwa was a continuing incentive to take advantage of colonial opportunities. But to many the most obvious possibility for Italy, Tripolitania, seemed second-rate, and doomed to be a disappointment just as the East African venture had been. In 1897, Member of Parliament Colajanni pointed out:

> that when the time comes for dividing the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire, we will get the crumbs of the feast. By this, he means to refer only to Tripoli . . . and he does not hesitate to add that these crumbs would be highly indigestible; no more and no less than Eritrea.[29]

Nevertheless, the idea that Italy must have room to expand continued to occupy the minds of politicians. In 1899, with tacit reference to the possibility of colonizing Tripolitania, Senator Vitelleschi remarked:

> We must recognize that Italy, which at this time needs major expansion to give an outlet to its excess population, finds itself instead enclosed in an iron circle which is occupied by the strongest military powers of Europe, and at the mercy of those powers for all of our relations with the Orient and Africa, even in the most minute particulars.[30]

A few years later, Italy was thriving and economic penetration by shipping companies and banks was well under way in Tripolitania.[31] In 1905, another Member of Parliament built on the idea of Italy's "suffocation," promoting an Italian attack on Tripoli by casting it as a chance for Italy to "breathe":

> Member of Parliament Giovagnoli states that as the Mediterranean and the Adriatic are Italy's lungs, if Tripoli . . . should fall under the control of any power, we would feel unable to breathe in that area.[32]

The remarkable power of the tropes of keys and breath to capture the Italian imagination of the period can be seen in their malleability, even to the point of inversion. In a final example of Parliamentary discussions in this period, a proposed attack on Tripoli was described in 1903 as potentially fortifying Italy's East African presence – a direct reversal of the claim made from 1885 to 1896, that Italian activity in the Red Sea would lead to Mediterranean security:

> Member of Parliament De Marinis underscores the extreme importance of occupying Tripolitania, which is destined to also ensure the future of our colony in the Red Sea, and of those ports . . . which will link the Sudan to both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.[33]

TROPES: THE ASSAULT ON LIBYA

The rhetorical "geography" of the second era of Italian imperialism differed markedly from the first one. Rather than using tropes of incarceration, asphyxia, and starvation, it drew its force from images of promised land and Empire regained. By the time Italians attacked Tripoli, writers and poets contributed mightily to the elaboration of Italian colonial visions in the public sphere. Some of their formulations defined the debates, and in a few cases their expressions remained in parlance throughout the entire colonial era. The eminent writers Giosuè Carducci, Gabriele d'Annunzio, and Giovanni Pascoli depicted Italy's magnificent imperial heritage in terms that made it seem attainable once more. Their poems gave the imperial impulse a lyrical dimension, and frequently voiced pseudo-mystical ideas of an essential Italian "spirit" (which would also appear in later architectural writings). D'Annunzio coined the expression "fourth shore" to describe Libya, suggesting that its (re)acquisition "completed" (or squared) Italy by adding to its coastlines on the Adriatic, Ionian, and Tyrrhenian seas;[34] Pascoli made a hugely influential speech describing Italy as "the great proletarian [nation]."[35]

Yet the continuities with earlier arguments in favor of expansion were also significant. The Nationalist movement stressed that the high numbers of Italian

emigrants were a humiliation to Italy, and that colonization would allow Italy to retain their manpower. Nationalist leader Enrico Corradini echoed Crispi's earlier rhetoric: "solving the Southern Question and occupying Tripolitania are not two separate acts."[36] Colonialism would not only solve both the emigration problem and the Southern Question, according to this position, but Italy's proletarian "nature" would make it an especially deserving and just imperial power – again, this was reminiscent of Crispi's description of "hard-working" and "pacifist" Italian colonists. Paradoxically, in this reasoning Italy could not be imperialist in the sense that other nations were, because it was fundamentally proletarian, and Italians themselves would develop the colonies, rather than exploiting local populations to do so. Opposing Socialists' claims, Corradini asserted that Italian imperialism would serve Italian workers: "To no class will [the occupation of Tripoli] be as useful as to the class of proletarians."[37] Anti-imperialists countered this with the reasonable argument that Italian laborers would be exploited all the same, as they would only enrich private capital by developing colonies.

Overall, then, all the colonialists' grandiose images of Italy hinged on seeing their country as both the lowest of the important nations, and the most deserving of greater glory. Its poverty and its minimal place in European politics – its incarnation as *l'Italietta* – justified deeming it "the great martyr among nations,"[38] as Pascoli did, yet the period's imperialist vision also portrayed a future *Magna Italia* (Great Italy), encompassing a multiplicity of Italian colonies in Africa comparable to the Greek *Magna Graecia* of antiquity.[39]

On the other side of public opinion, dissenting voices protesting the attack on Tripoli went "isolated and unheeded."[40] Although comprised of only a few politicians (including Mussolini), economists, intellectuals, and priests, the dissent shows that not everyone supported the conquest of Tripoli and expansion across Libya.[41] Frequently repeating the description of Libya by economist and one-time Liberal-era Prime Minister Francesco Nitti as "an immense sandbox,"[42] they opposed all the colonialists' assertions, from the one that Italy was entitled to Tripoli because it had been part of the Roman Empire, to the mirage that Libya would prosper under colonialism, to the idea that it was strategically placed. The most insistent opponent of Italy's attack on Tripoli was undoubtedly the Socialist Gaetano Salvemini. He was engaged in the Southern Question but opposed Italy's involvement in Libya vociferously, calling the colonizing impulse around him "Tripoli animality."[43] His prolific writings were scathing in their assault on the "mystifications" promoted by the government regarding the Libyan campaign and on the rhetoric they employed. In a satirical piece written in 1902, he mocked parliamentarians' convoluted imagery:

> [Member of Parliament] De Marinis . . . finds that nothing less than the occupation of Tripoli will make Eritrea valuable, by creating the commercial route from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. Evidently he does not know where the Mediterranean is, nor where Tripoli is, nor where the Red Sea is, nor where Italy is, nor what a commercial route is.[44]

Salvemini also stressed that the Libyan war served Italian businessmen who wanted to reap benefits from the new colony without risking capital. Italian industrialists indeed benefited from economic penetration in the Adriatic area and Tripolitania, and cynically exploited the national anxiety over emigration in order to achieve their own ends.[45] Yet despite disagreements among Italians regarding Libya, some continued to claim that Italy's "moral unity" was not only enhanced by the war on Tripoli, but was also made all the more visible to the rest of the world. As Member of Parliament Ferri put it:

> The [Italo-Turkish war for Libya] was necessary for Italy's position in the Mediterranean . . . and the enterprise has reaffirmed the moral unity of Italy before the civilized world.[46]

TROPES: YEARNING FOR EMPIRE

Rhetorical preparations for Italy's attacks on Ethiopia bore little overt resemblance to the eloquent parliamentary and public debates of earlier imperialist phases. Occurring in the later years of the Fascist regime, the war on Ethiopia was not a decision made in public, in the Chamber of Deputies, or in the press. Nonetheless, crucial themes of national prestige and echoes of antiquity had endured from the Liberal period into the Fascist one. Mussolini differed from his predecessors in that he promoted higher birth rates as well as colonization; and yet, the terms in which he described threats to Italy – in his famous Ascension Day speech of 1927 – were continuous with earlier rhetoric: "If we shrink [in numbers], gentlemen, we will not have an Empire, we will become a colony!"[47]

Still, this third rhetorical circuit was simpler than its predecessors: it operated on a binary set of images, of Empire and civilization vs. subjection and the lack of civilization. By 1935, Mussolini had already been shaping his public image to evoke the Emperor Augustus of Imperial Rome, and public discourse was saturated with "Italian Empire."[48] We have already seen in the Introduction how the preoccupation with *civiltà* dictated images of Ethiopia in the mid-1930s. Evocations of Empire and *civiltà* combined in the adoption of a notion already familiar from French imperialism in particular: the civilizing mission.[49]

On a practical plane, Italian attitudes toward Ethiopia (and all of *AOI*) also differed from earlier ones. In contrast with the preoccupations with Italian history and image that had characterized the acquisition of Tripoli, the government's approach to Ethiopia carried the imprint of a more straightforward concern with the sheer exercise of control and domination over local populations, Italian citizens, and land. As we will see, this was also abundantly clear in the change of architectural and planning policies after 1936.

NAMES AND NICKNAMES

In addition to the three conceptual geographies I have just outlined – imprisonment vs. freedom; glorious antiquity vs. low status; and having an Empire vs.

becoming a colony – I want to outline another geography: that of names (or toponyms). We have already seen that the Italian government named both Eritrea and Libya, choosing these names for their connotations of ancient Roman hegemony; but popular nicknames added greater variety to how the Italians involved in imperialism pictured them. As with imperialist rhetoric in general, the kinds of names and nicknames that were invented varied across the three principal phases of Italian colonial acquisition.

The earliest Italian colonial moniker had clear kinship connotations: Eritrea was nicknamed "the first-born colony" (*la colonia primogenita*). The vast ethnography of Mediterranean societies in general and Italian society in particular asserts that the birth of the first child marks the completion of the nuclear family, and its entry into a new stage of adulthood. Metaphorically, Eritrea was Italy's first (colonial) offspring, and it solidified Italy's status as a mature nation. Italian Somalia, on the other hand, was nicknamed "the Cinderella of the colonies" (*la cenerentola delle colonie*) because it always received the lowest investment and the least attention,[50] just as stepchildren always do in folklore. Eritrea and Somalia, the first two Italian colonies, were thus integrated into Italian geographical consciousness under the rubric of kinship: a first-born and a stepchild, with the obvious implication that their birth order and degree of relationship (to the mother country or fatherland) would forever determine their places in the national (family) hierarchy.

Kinship imagery was also part of the depiction of Libya, although here it evoked paternity rather than children. In the same stanza where D'Annunzio called Libya the "fourth shore," he asserted that it "made Italy the Fatherland."[51] But besides the continued imagery of Italy's kinship status, the principal image filtering Italian descriptions of Libya was that of the Roman Empire's prior occupation of North Africa. Italians' colonization of Libya was justified as a return; they were merely taking back what was already theirs. In terms of imaginative geographies, taking Libya bridged the historical gap between Italy (the recent martyr) and its own Roman heritage. Thus Libya was not only seen as a territorial extension of Italy – as it would become officially in 1939 – but also as an extension back into Italy's own past. Occupying the Dodecanese Islands was described as a return also, but to the Crusader past, when Christians confronted Muslims in the far reaches of the eastern Mediterranean, as well as the centuries of Venetian dominance over trade.[52] Evoking their earlier military importance, Italian propaganda often described the Islands as Italy's easternmost "bastion" in the Mediterranean, a bold barrier facing Asia Minor.

Earlier figures of speech were not discarded, however: when Badoglio wished to express, in 1929, the urgency of developing Cyrenaica, he called it the "Cinderella of the colonies."[53] And D'Annunzio's image for Libya, coined in 1911, endured over the decades: Albania was later referred to as the "fifth shore."[54]

When the occupation of Ethiopia provided the regime with a pretext for calling Italy an Empire, Italians named the aggregation of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Italian Somalia *l'Africa Orientale Italiana* (Italian East Africa), a strikingly unsentimental designation compared to earlier ones. Rather than suggesting Italy had

been (re-)completed, here politicians rhetorically appropriated an entire quarter of a continent, despite the fact that the French and British occupied parts of it as well, namely Djibuti and British Somaliland. At the same time, the denomination of *AOI* put Italy on a symbolically equal footing with France, which had named its collection of West African colonies *l'Afrique Occidentale Française* (French West Africa), or *AOF*. Also on a symbolic level, if the conquest of Libya was rhetorically over-determined as a redemption, the appropriation of *AOI* collapsed history altogether: Italy "finally" had an Empire, and – in this "imaginative geography" – there was no more need for nostalgia, only the need to look ahead to the future.

POPULATIONS: HIERARCHIES AND POLICIES

Along with images of colonial territories came images of populations, or "human geographies."[55] Italian colonial societies were certainly racialized, and no colonial populations were ever considered equal to Italians, unofficially or officially; but practices varied widely. For instance, housing designs for Italian farmers and for natives, which are described in Chapter 8, reflected a highly differentiated set of assumptions regarding the various colonized populations and their respective levels of *civiltà*.

As did citizens of other imperial powers, Italians routinely represented colonial territories as "empty," and colonial populations as dwelling in a remote, and yet coeval, past.[56] In the words of Johannes Fabian, they "assign[ed] to the conquered populations a *different* time" in the process of reconciling the presence of the colonized with the colonial territory's presumed emptiness.[57] Instead of removing populations physically, this conceptual displacement shifted aspects of the colonial space itself to another temporal frame. Borrowing Anne McClintock's terms, the colonized were "displaced onto . . . *anachronistic space* . . . a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans."[58] Such rhetorical acrobatics allowed Italian colonizers to see the colonized in general as there but "not-now," which made their presence seem less relevant and less challenging to the colonizers.

Italian views of North and East Africa were not identical, and each region was assigned a "*different* time": the Mediterranean was seen through the lens of antiquity and (sub-Saharan) Africa was seen as pre-, or non-historic. For instance, Italians automatically distinguished between permanent and impermanent structures: they saw permanent ones in stone or masonry, associated with the Mediterranean, as more advanced and historic than impermanent ones of wood or mud, associated with Africa. Beyond this binary division, Italians also categorized colonized people according to race, religion, and gender. Their unofficial attitudes, which I describe next, were pervasive and relatively unchanging. I would also call them naïve: un-self-conscious, rarely formulated, and freely essentializing. Official policies, in contrast, were strikingly varied. These are the attitudes that concern us most, as they directly informed official architecture and the development of colonial city planning. I will summarize them second.

Both unofficial and official scales of populations were elaborated with reference to Italian *civiltà*. Primarily, *civiltà* means "civilization," but it also refers to the quality of civility. Anthropologist Sydel Silverman has analyzed it as follows:

> There is no exact equivalent of "civiltà" in English. It is close to "civility," but broader in meaning. It is related to the "civic" and the "urbane," but is not quite either of these . . . In general, it refers to ideas about a civilized way of life . . . it always implies an *urban* way of life . . . Furthermore, "civiltà" may refer now to a wider sphere . . ., now to . . . local manifestations . . . "civiltà" can describe different degrees of inclusiveness. . . . "Civiltà" is an ideology *about* civilization.[59]

For our purposes, it is most important to note that this *civiltà* pertained to idealized Italians. In reality, most Italians did not live up to this ideal, and therefore, lower- and middle-class Italians themselves were among the populations targeted by Italian colonial (i.e. modernizing) techniques of government. In the eyes of the predominantly northern political elite, the marginal peasants and the disenfranchised in Italy were always a more pressing problem than the colonies per se, and Italian physical anthropologists expended more energy on classifying and pathologizing southern Italians than they ever did on colonial study (Figure 2.3).[60] To politicians who unquestioningly held to the premise that housing was an index of modernity and civilization, the living conditions of the Italian poor

Figure 2.3
A stereotypical representation of southern Italian street urchins from the turn of the twentieth century.

(just as those of many of the colonized African populations) – not in "civilized" housing, but in straw huts or rock caves – epitomized and revealed their "backwardness." Vast internal reclamation projects throughout Italy in the 1930s, in tandem with rural settlement projects in the colonies, sought to remedy this perceived problem by providing "modern" and "hygienic" housing for some of the Italian poor.

UNOFFICIAL VIEWS OF OTHERNESS

In unofficial views, colonial populations were ranked simply, according to their perceived cultural and social distance from idealized modern Italians. *I negri* (blacks), comprising everyone in East Africa except coastal Arabs or small communities of Indians, Jews, and Greeks, and a few residents of Libya, were the least differentiated category, and they were at the farthest end of the scale. Closest to Italians were the Greeks of the Dodecanese Islands, who were hard to distinguish from Italy's own internal Others: white and Christian, they lacked only modernity. Jews were treated as an entirely separate category, although a familiar one, as Italy had many assimilated Jews, including members of the "civilized" upper classes as well as the Fascist Party.

Italians showed the greatest ambivalence in their view of Libyan Arabs. They distinguished unquestioningly between coastal Libyans – often urban and sedentary, rather than nomadic – and Libyans of the hinterlands, who were seen as unpredictable and dangerous (as Italian aggressions in Cyrenaica expressed most clearly).[61] The more positive view of Libyans relegated them to a "different time," and as we have seen, that "different time," the era of the Roman Empire, linked them directly to Italians. A striking illustration of this is that Italians likened the *barrakan* – the woolen outer clothing of Libyans – to the attire of ancient Romans: "they wear it . . . with a certain elegant majesty, which brings to mind the Roman *toga*" (Figure 2.4). [62] The idea that Libyans could have unknowingly perpetuated unadulterated traces of Roman civilization would also carry great weight in architectural discussions, which often turned on the notion that the "Arab" house was in fact the Roman atrium house.

After race, the most significant attribute in Italian classifications was religion. Abyssinians and Greeks were understood to be Christian (Coptic or Orthodox) by definition, and Libyans to be Muslim unless they were specified to be Jewish. Muslims were often described as "civilized" even when some Christians were not, depending on their class: poor, rural white Christians (such as the Dodecanesians) were lower on the Italians' scale than well-to-do urban Arab Muslims. At the lowest end of the scale, again, were non-monotheistic African groups.

Gender was equally integral to all colonial relations: among Europeans, among natives, and between the two groups.[63] Even before Italy held any official colonies, in 1889, Crispi had described Ethiopia – which was considered fair game, as no other outside powers controlled it – as feminine and beckoning:

Figure 2.4
A Libyan man wearing the *barrakan*, which Europeans frequently likened to the ancient Roman toga.

> Mysterious, horrendous Africa is opening up before us, friendly and trusting . . . vast areas of cultivable land will give themselves up, in the near future, to that exuberant Italian fecundity.[64]

The most blatantly gendered area of colonial relations was the sexual aspect of conquest. Italian men sexualized the colonies in the abstract, and many of them also took advantage of the opportunity for extra-European sexual adventure. Memoirs abound with descriptions of the brothels in Libya and East Africa.[65] In Italian popular culture, these attitudes were most famously expressed in the songs "Tripoli bel suol d'amore" (Tripoli, beautiful land of love) and "Faccetta nera" (Little black face), which reduced the colonial encounter to fun-loving sexual congress without personal repercussions or social dimensions.[66] Again, though, the Mediterranean and East Africa were treated somewhat differently. Both in these songs and in countless other depictions (photographic and textual), eroticizations and exoticizations of Arab women conformed to a familiar "Oriental" or "harem" model.[67] In the "African" context, on the other hand, Italian men were more blatant in their anticipation of sexual encounters with women whose only defining trait was that they were "black" – a characteristic overlaid with extremely prurient connotations.[68]

OFFICIAL VIEWS OF OTHERNESS

Before deciphering the specifics of native policy changes in the official domain, let us turn to religious policies, which were fairly stable.[69] While independent missions were present in all the colonies, the Italian government did not especially favor proselytizing.[70] In Ethiopia and the Dodecanese Islands, the dominant populations were Christian but not Roman Catholic. Italian authorities there made considerable efforts to break the chains of authority that linked local religious leaders to higher Church figures – Coptic ones in Egypt, and Orthodox ones in Constantinople – because in both cases, the religious leaders wielded secular and political authority which undermined Italians' control.

Vis-à-vis the Muslims of North Africa, on the other hand, Italians tended to conciliation with religious leaders, with the exception of the Sanusi. It has been observed that in European culture in general, "Orientalist literature portrayed Europe as indebted to Islamic civilization, while Africans . . . began to be seen as the lowest form of human life."[71] But Italy's religious policies in Libya were ultimately political rather than culturological. During the Liberal era, Italian orientalists had already sought a rapprochement with Muslim intelligentsias.[72] In fact, the political privileges enjoyed by coastal Libyan populations exceeded those granted by the French and the British in Tunisia and Egypt.[73] In the Fascist era, a huge propaganda campaign was directed at the Middle East. The government hoped that Muslim leaders would prefer Italians to the French and the British, and serve Italian interests in the Levant and North Africa. The campaign involved ludicrous pretenses, as when Mussolini posed in Tripoli as the Defender of Islam[74] – with a sword to prove it – and propaganda described Italy as a "Muslim power."[75]

Italian government policy also sought conciliation with Jews in Libya and the Dodecanese Islands. Italians assured Libyan Jews the same rights of autonomy they had enjoyed under Ottoman rule, in hopes of avoiding Jewish resentment toward the larger local populations, whether Greek or Arab.[76] Nonetheless, after the 1938 laws, Balbo constrained Tripoli's Jewish population, for instance by forcing Jewish shops to remain open on the Jewish Sabbath and punishing resisters.[77]

NATIVE POLICIES

A number of scholars have divided official racial policies throughout Italian colonialism into three sequential phases we can summarize as ones of assimilation (imposed integration into the European system), association (some juridical autonomy, separate institutions, and "indirect rule" through local elites), and apartheid (extreme separateness combined with inequality in all spheres).[78] All are agreed that "apartheid" best describes Italian policy in the late 1930s, when Mussolini explicitly deemed that policies of assimilation and association were inadequate.[79] I am going to argue, however, that while this was officially the case, and apartheid began to be applied in East Africa, what was implemented

on the ground in Libya and the Dodecanese was closer, respectively, to associationist and assimilationist policies. Rhetorically, the "Empire" had a single policy; in practice, however, it distinguished starkly between "Arabs," "Africans," and "Europeans," even in the late 1930s.

Furthermore, it must be emphasized that official Italian "native policy" before the mid-1930s was a congeries of conflicting, overlapping, and undefined (or unobserved) policies. So I will begin at the end: the only period in which Italian policy in this regard was well defined. In the 1930s, administrators began formulating ideas of social and spatial segregation in East and North Africa. Above all, they discussed what they had begun to see as the interrelated problems of miscegenation, and interracial cohabitation and marriage. New laws prohibiting interracial sexual relations – which entailed new orders to create separate residential areas – were announced in 1937 with respect to *AOI*. The government's intention to change Italian men's sexual mingling in the colonies was clearly signaled by a new prohibition imposed on all Italians (even in the metropole): they were no longer to sing "Faccetta Nera," the popular song promising East African women a better government through happy coupling with Italian soldiers.[80] Already the previous year, officials there had begun to impose a discernible loss of civil status on Africans; to prohibit interracial cohabitation; and to prevent "mixed-race" children, natives in general, and even *askari* from obtaining the Italian citizenship to which they had previously had access.[81] The 1938 Volta conference in Rome, on Africa, presented the first concerted set of Italian positions on "native policy," in agreement on separation between Italians and other populations, as well as on Italian superiority.[82] It is around this time too that Italian architects first took a position on colonial city planning, in 1937: emphasizing the cities of *AOI*, architects debated how to implement segregation. The press also reflected the regime's newly accentuated racist views, from newspapers to journals like *Africa Italiana* (Italian Africa) and most vividly, *La difesa della razza* (Defense of the Race), which graphically illustrated the worst of Italian xenophobia and prejudices.

In the early years of Italian colonialism, by contrast, no explicit policy was defined, and practices typical of both association and assimilation existed simultaneously. One of the earliest Italian politicians involved in Red Sea colonialism, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pasquale Mancini, intended for the population on the Red Sea Coast (the future Eritrea) to be Italians' "fellow citizens"[83] – both a utopic vision and an assimilationist one. A number of the early Italian colonists in Eritrea saw things similarly, and created settlements that were "mixed," or worked in cooperation with native neighbors.[84] Some of Mancini's contemporaries, though, envisioned an Eritrea in which Italians would replace natives altogether, and they leaned toward more typically associationist projects. In Libya, Italian rulers "did not have a real Arab policy" to speak of until the late 1920s.[85]

In general, prior to the early 1930s, different Italian officials shaped their individual approaches to their particular settings, frequently creating ties of

collaboration with local elites.[86] Contradictions between policy and practice were unavoidable. In Eritrea, Governor Martini (1897–1907) opposed the education of natives, yet schools for them were opened.[87] "Mixed-race" children could obtain Italian citizenship if their Italian fathers recognized them (as they often did), or if they "appeared white" as late as 1933, when a law to this effect was created.[88] This should not be taken as an indication of tolerance for other races, but a different practical response to the wish to keep "races" apart.[89] In Somalia also, policy fluctuated according to who was in government, although in one particular setting, plantations, Italians abused Bantu ex-slaves by coercing them into agricultural labor.[90]

Because native policy had been so ambiguous in Eritrea from the start, the shift to late Fascist Italian colonial policies was most obvious there. In 1937, Governor Vincenzo De Feo prohibited Italians and other Europeans from living in predominantly native areas.[91] He also prohibited Italians from riding in cars with Africans, and bars, restaurants, hotels, and cinemas soon became segregated as well. Similarly, Italians in Somalia were no longer permitted to enter businesses run by local peoples.[92]

In their early years of rule in coastal Libya, as we have already seen, Italians practiced an ill-conceived mix of attempts at political conciliation with violent aggression. Overall, policy in Libya followed from Italians' ambivalence there, veering between relatively liberal and more severe positions. The Statutes of 1919 accorded coastal Libyans some measure of autonomy, but Governor Volpi (1921–1925) set about imposing a new stringency in Italian rule; seeking greater differentiation between "races," he excluded Arabs from the major economic spheres, having also created the expropriation laws that enabled the government to displace them from their lands.[93] Italians were to exercise administrative positions; Arabs, crafts, husbandry, and small business; and Jews were to be middlemen in economic and intellectual fields.[94] Fascist Governor De Bono (1925–1929) further downgraded the status of Libyans in 1927. Libyans could now aspire to no more than "Libyan Italian citizenship," which was distinctly inferior to "metropolitan Italian citizenship" (although it was also specified to be "above" that of the "subjects of East Africa"). Formal education became virtually inaccessible to Libyans.[95] Meanwhile, Italians held the Bedouin in contempt; their attitude in this regard did not undergo notable change.[96] At the same time, unlike the French in Algeria, Italians did not differentiate between Arabs and Berbers as more or less "pure" or "good";[97] their only criterion was whether populations were sedentary.

Although he was one of the most brutal Fascists in his own right, Governor Balbo (1934–1940) deliberately reversed some of his predecessors' policies in Libya. While he maintained the Italian distinction between Libyans of the hinterland ("people of Negroid race") and coastal Libyans ("a people of superior race influenced by Mediterranean civilization"), he attempted to undo some of the political harm caused by earlier Italian abuses in the coastal regions, first of all by closing the concentration camps, emptying the prisons, giving amnesty

to most incarcerated Cyrenaicans, and releasing the last political prisoners in Tripolitania.[98] He also created numerous new schools for natives, commissioned new mosques, and accorded Libyans the possibility of obtaining land concessions in Tripolitania on the same terms as Italians.[99] In 1938 – going further against the grain of the regime – he moved to accord Libyans regular Italian citizenship (which some Libyans had been eligible for all along, on the basis of merit).[100] He did not get his wish. Instead, in 1939, he instituted the "Libyan Italian citizenship;" in special cases, Libyans might obtain "special Italian citizenship."[101] Finally, against Mussolini's resistance, he also began a program of settlement villages for Cyrenaican Arabs.[102]

In his attempt to "transform the social structure of the population . . . [and] creat[e] the conditions necessary for a more direct participation of this population in our civil life [*vita civile*],"[103] Balbo was pragmatic: the best way to manage the colony was to overcome discontent. To this end, he made inspired speeches:

> In Libya we will not have dominators and dominated, but Catholic Italians and Muslim Italians, united in the enviable destiny of being constructive elements of a great and powerful organism, the Fascist Empire.[104]

But his goal was to make the colony prosper, not to make Arabs the equals of Italians. What especially merits emphasis here is that while the colonial laws moved toward apartheid after 1937, the government's practices in Libya remained associationist. In combination with ambient Italian prejudices, this helps to explain why segregation policies were not implemented in late-1930s Libya to the same extent that they were in *AOI*.

Italians treated Greeks in the Dodecanese as embryonic Italians, potentially capable of *civiltà* and modernity, like Italy's own internal Others.[105] The well-worn motto "*stessa faccia, stessa razza*" (same face, same race) shows that Italians saw Greeks as somatically familiar; in general, their ethnic and historical differences from Italians were minimized, if not dismissed altogether. Indeed, in 1925 the Islands' inhabitants were granted Italian citizenship, with the qualification that they were exempted from military service and had no political voice.[106] There was no talk of apartheid; on the other hand, De Vecchi's late-1930s government pursued increasingly domineering policies of religious oppression and enforced use of the Italian language, in schools and elsewhere. Although Italians did not refer to it as such, their final policy in the Dodecanese was assimilationist, suppressing rather than emphasizing difference – at the same time as *AOI* underwent the beginnings of apartheid, and the Libyan government was said to enforce apartheid but continued to implement associationist policies instead.

"Native policies" in Ethiopia were officially oppressive from the start of Italian occupation in 1936, although the period of greatest discrimination and violence against Ethiopians followed the assassination attempt on Graziani's life in 1937.[107] With the legitimacy of officially segregationist policy backing them

up, planners approached Addis Ababa in an entirely new way. In city planning in the metropole, they were refining designs based on zoning: the separation of residential, industrial, and administrative areas, and the distribution of lower-, middle-, and upper-class housing into discrete areas. In Addis Ababa and the rest of *AOI*, they merged theories of zoning and segregation. While natives were assigned areas based on racial separation, their quarters were also just one category among many in the class-based zoned design for the whole city. Several scholars have noted that "the language of class distinction was often racialized."[108] In Italian plans for colonial cities after 1936, we might add that race distinctions mingled with, and were obscured by, an idiom of class distinctions; zoning was the technique commonly used spatially to realize both sorts of exclusion.

THE NON-OBSERVANCE OF NATIVE POLICIES

Official policies were not always implemented, and they did not preclude most interactions between Italians and natives in ordinary daily life. Oral histories show especially well just how wide the gaps between policy and practice were, even on the part of Italian officials who upheld the late-1930s laws publicly.[109] After royal family member Duke of Aosta replaced Graziani as Viceroy of *AOI* in 1938, Fascist leaders and local notables were seen together once again at Italian bars in Addis Ababa, and lines of Italian men could be seen outside brothels.[110] In support of segregationist policies in the late 1930s, some architects and planners would claim that Europeans felt a "natural repugnance" for natives. But in Tripoli, Italians still rented apartments in Arab families' homes in the old city when housing in the new quarters was in short supply.[111] And in Addis Ababa, the model city for Italian apartheid, many Italians were not above dealing with the housing shortage by living in *tukuls* – local round houses – "alongside the natives."[112] In other words, it is precisely *because* Italians lived in close proximity to locals that the new laws forbade them to do so.

Unofficial Italian worldviews took precedence over policy most blatantly when natives spoke Italian[113] or dressed "like Europeans" – in such cases, they were often not excluded for being natives. This was true even after 1937: Ethiopians could travel by train in first class, if they wore "European clothing";[114] Libyans were not meant to use the same beaches as Europeans in Tripoli, but if they went in "European clothing," no one acted on the rules to exclude them.[115] The most notorious example of an Italian official who upheld Italian rule but disregarded the laws on sexual contact is Alberto Pollera, a long-time colonial administrator who had children by two East African women, one of whom he married.[116]

In sum, Italians displayed a partial indifference to difference. Non-Italian observers commonly remarked that Italians' laissez-faire practice in daily life extended to familiarity in everyday transactions, as a writer for *National Geographic* reported in 1935, before the racial laws were put in place:

> On the first day of my stay in Eritrea, I walked into a small shop to buy some cigarettes. Behind the counter stood the owner – an Italian – wrapping up a package of goods for a black customer. "Many thanks and come back again soon," he said. The black man lifted his head and took leave with a polite "Arrivederci, signore." I was astonished. In no other *black* colony, in my experience, have I seen white shopkeepers, unembarrassed, selling wares for a few cents to native customers. Such a thing would be unimaginable in India, for instance. There you would hardly expect to see Englishmen wrapping up packages for a Hindu [emphasis in the original].[117]

Equally shocking to many foreign observers was that Italian laborers worked alongside natives, without displays of superiority or distance. The Irish writer Gerald Hanley described relations in Somalia in the period of racial laws, as follows:

> The Italians, unlike the British, did not hide their own peasants, laborers, artisans, from the Somalis and Abyssinians. The first thing I saw on the first day I entered Mogadishu in 1941 was an Italian blacksmith, stripped to the waist, burned dark brown by the sun, working at a forge with three Somali assistants. You would never have seen that in Kenya, and I got out of the truck to take the scene in properly. The Italian blacksmith had skill, and the Somalis knew it, and there was an accord there of a kind I had never seen before with a European and African. But the Italians did not allow Somalis into restaurants in Mogadishu, and an ex-sergeant major of the Italian army, a Somali, who had a deep affection for the Italians, told me that "things became very difficult after Fascism took over. But the genuine Italians ignored the Fascist outlook and we were friends."[118]

Italian propaganda, furthermore, regularly made a point of underscoring this presumed lack of social distance between Italians and natives in the context of manual labor (Figure 2.5). Regardless of their number, however, we should not deduce from representations along these lines that Italians ever felt on an equal

Figure 2.5
In hopes of retaining Italy's colonies despite its defeat in World War II, propaganda of 1946 depicted Italians and natives working the fields side by side.

footing with natives. Italians' dealings with colonized populations always retained an element of hierarchy, even when combined with long-term domestic partnership or spatial proximity in physical labor.[119] Furthermore, distinctions between "Fascists" as racists and "other Italians" as "good colonizers" – which often appear in oral histories collected in the former colonies – are equally suspect: the fact that they so patently enable the formerly colonized to reconcile their positive views of the colonial era with their negative ones renders them weak as historical evidence, despite their usefulness for studies of historical memory.[120]

ITALIANS IN THE COLONIES

Ann Stoler has explained variations in Europeans' colonial behavior on the basis of divisions among themselves;[121] indeed, internal class differences help explain Italians' apparent nonchalance in some circumstances, regarding not only contact with natives, but their own laws. The use of clothing in particular as a marker for inclusion shows that Italians in the colonies applied the same grid for discrimination in the colonies as they did in Italy, where such indices as clothing were part of a larger system of what Bourdieu termed "distinction."[122] Italians were akin to the colonial British as David Cannadine describes them:

> When, as they sometimes did, Britons thought of the inhabitants of their empire (as they sometimes thought about the inhabitants of their metropolis) in *collective* rather than in individualistic categories, they were inclined to see them, literally, in terms of crude stereotypes of black and white, and no-less crude relationships of superiority and inferiority . . .
>
> [W]hen, as they usually did, the British thought of the inhabitants of their empire (as they usually thought about the inhabitants of their metropolis) in *individual* terms rather than in collective categories, they were more likely to be concerned with rank than with race, and with the appreciation of status similarities based on perceptions of affinity.[123]

Turning to Italy's internal social relations, one might almost say the same of how upper- and middle-class Italians regarded working-class ones, or of how northerners regarded southerners. For elite, northern Italians, the boundary separating "lowly" Italians from the lower classes of natives, meanwhile, was unclear. This was all the more true since a proportion of the colonists sent by the Italian government were undesirables.[124] Meanwhile, the question of how "African" southern Italians are is one that has recurred throughout northern Italian political thought.[125]

At the same time, Italians' gender status was inseparable from how they perceived colonies and colonial subjects. Since unification, the lives of many Italian women had been changing rapidly – including, for instance, an increase in literacy rates – and middle-class Italian women in the colonies reflected on their lives there in terms that both subverted and reinforced the limitations of their usual lives.[126]

On the whole, then, colonial encounters in Italy's colonies, as in other nations' colonies, were shaped by class and gender relations among colonizers, class and ethnic lines among native populations, and varying relations between

members of each group and sub-group. In this light, the figure of the Italian agricultural emigrant, particularly one settled on expropriated land through one of the state programs, bears analysis (Figure 2.6). Colonial texts show the ideal Italian emigrant farmer in a particularly rosy light, as part of Italy's colonial "rural romance."[127] Colonists were not only charged with transforming lands presumed to be empty of people into fertile, domesticated areas; by extension, they were imagined to be "civilizing" foreign frontiers. Colonists themselves, then, both colonized and civilized the colony; they were also seen as civilizing themselves (and by extension, Italy) in the process. This image of rehabilitation was identical to the one driving internal *bonifica* (reclamation) projects in Italy in the same period: disenfranchised citizens were put in positions (under much surveillance and discipline) in which they were to "reclaim" themselves while at the same time reclaiming land. In brief, this vision of self-reforming landless peasants was the fantasy of Italians who were not agriculturalists themselves, but urban Italians engaged in reforming poor Italians and solving the "Southern Question." To paraphrase Paul Rabinow, if the Italians were on a civilizing mission, its target was the Italians.[128] While poor Italians constructed the colonies, elite Italians harnessed the symbolic capital of possessing colonies in their attempts to construct the Italian nation.

This overlap of Italians to be reformed in Italy and the colonies brings to the fore the pointed linkage between systems of colonialism and ideologies of modernity. Italy, after all, "went colonial" in pursuit of modernity and symbolic autonomy among other things, despite the fact that to do so was economically suicidal. Modernity was inextricable from the colonial imaginary. This was true for other Europeans as well, but Italians' quest for modernity was perhaps more desperate than that of their northern European counterparts. Like other peripheral groups of the same era (for instance, Egyptians and Greeks), Italians were riding a wave of nationalism and observing northern Europe, striving for both

Figure 2.6
State-sponsored Italian settlers in Libya, depicted as "returning" to the Roman Empire.

independence and inclusion. One possible solution was to modernize Italy by modeling its institutions after European ones.[129] Yet Italian political thinkers also felt the conflicting impulse to retain Italian identity, which would require isolating distinctly Italian foundations for an Italian modernity (an issue that would also play an important part in the debates over Italian colonial architecture).[130] Italians in charge did not want an identical modernity to that of France or Britain; their modernity inescapably had to stand on a certain re-historicization of Italy, its re-insertion into world history on terms in which it could recognize itself.

Another aspect of Italians' colonial self-positioning is the way in which Italians defined themselves as colonialists in counterpoint to, or imitation of, other Europeans. On the one hand, Italians' differences from natives certainly confirmed their European-ness; but on the other, Italians were very conscious of other European precedents in colonies comparable to their Mediterranean and East African ones. For most of the colonial era, this consciousness – a mixture of inferiority and competitiveness – focused on France's accomplishments in North Africa. From the "loss" of Tunis onward, Italian expansionists' statements were saturated with the desire to right the "wrong" done to them by France.[131] Furthermore, the "theft" that Italian expansionists resented was not only territorial, for French imperialists deployed a rhetoric of retrieved Roman heritage for their own purposes, as when France's Lyautey wrote in 1924: "Here, in North Africa, we find everywhere the traces of Rome beneath our feet: which proves that we belong here, in the front lines of civilization."[132]

Part of Italians' colonial competitiveness with the French derived from a pressing urge to "re-appropriate" such tropes of (Roman) empire, which they insisted were more rightfully Italian than French – an issue to which we shall return in discussions below of "Mediterranean modern" architecture. Finally, in the mid-1930s, when the British supported Haile Selassie's efforts to resist Italian occupation, Italian competitiveness in the colonial domain noticeably came to include the British Empire. Echoing administrative arrangements in India, the Italian administration of *AOI* featured a Viceroy; and echoing colonial Delhi, plans for Addis Ababa aimed to create broad, axial avenues and other signs of "imperial" design, in marked contrast to the city plans devised in the Mediterranean.[133]

But on what basis, if any, could Italians claim to be *superior* to the French and the British? Most consistently, Italian colonialist writers invoked what they described as Italians' more refined innate aesthetic sensibilities. Even in the early colonial era, long before "colonial architecture" was a subject of analysis, Crispi had affirmed that "art, which is the form of [Italy's] genius," would make Italy stand out among nations.[134] According to such statements, Italians' unique heritage of Roman, Renaissance, and Baroque eras distinguished Italians from other Europeans – and, subtextually, made up for Italians' disadvantages in the political and commercial arenas. In the colonial territories, writers asserted that Italians' aesthetic gifts would distinguish them from other Europeans as well as from natives. In the chapters to come, we will see how integral such claims to unique aesthetic dispositions became to Italian colonialist discourses regarding architecture and cities.

Chapter 3: The Colonial Built Environment Untheorized, 1880s–1920s

> Until Fascism, almost no architect – never mind one in fashion – was called to work in the colony [of Eritrea].[1]
>
> Stefano Zagnoni, 1993

Italians only began to express concern about the politics of their colonial architecture – how colonial buildings represented Italy – in the late 1920s, when a few architects began to decry it as a problem of national relevance. Before then, administrators bought existing buildings or built new ones in Eritrea and Somalia according to their most pressing needs; allowed the areas outside Tripoli's walls to be built up very quickly; and focused on archaeology and touristic potential in their Mediterranean territories. In none of these settings did they initially attribute meaning to their buildings' designs or discuss how to depict Italy through architecture; what they built, meanwhile, resembled what was already standing, either in the colonial setting in question, or back in Italy. Typically – to the chagrin of colonial architects later on – this resulted in non-specifically "Oriental" or "neo-Moorish" designs, or unimaginative transplants of the European building types of the day, ranging from the neoclassical to the Art Nouveau. In a similar vein, architects and administrators did not yet turn their attention to whether they should impose rules separating Europeans' residential areas from those of natives.

This chapter describes how Italian colonial settings were managed before "architecture," in the sense of meaning-laden, self-conscious constructions, arrived – in other words, before Italians defined the colonial built environment in terms of what they erected there. Along with Chapter 4, where I discuss the Italian architectural profession and some of its key theoretical debates, this chapter provides the background against which architects, beginning in the late 1920s, formulated their positions on colonial architecture and planning – which I analyze in Chapters 5 and 6.

I am drawing a contrast here between "untheorized" early approaches to

the colonial built environment, such as those concerned with traffic viability, archaeology, and tourism, on the one hand, and "theorized" colonial architecture and planning on the other. Such a contrast is contrived to some degree, as traffic viability, archaeology, and tourism as determinant urban approaches undoubtedly constitute theoretical approaches unto themselves. But in short order, architects theorized architecture and planning explicitly – as signs of Italian presence and modernity, and as means of physical, spatial, and "spiritual" domination. Compared to such explicit theorizations, "untheorized" approaches made no claims for the potency of architecture or planning itself. In other words, in Italian colonialism's "pre-architecturalist" period, the administrators and engineers in charge of the built environment trained their energies on interpreting and managing what they found in the colonies, rather than analyzing what they would construct there.

EAST AFRICA, 1880s – 1900s

Cities were the first zones of Italian occupation in East Africa, and the military administrators in charge there analyzed security questions above all. Although the government intended to settle Italian farmers in the long term (in Eritrea especially), its first major extra-urban constructions were forts.[2] Once security became less of a preoccupation, responsibility for urban constructions and maintenance shifted from the military to the Ministry of Public Works. Nonetheless, in the coastal towns Italians first occupied (Aseb and Massawa), boundaries between private and government interests and powers had yet to be defined: there were overlaps or gaps between expropriation laws meant to provide land to investors on the one hand, and the needs of civil servants and the military on the other. Administrators' written reports focused on specific details of traffic, cleanliness, and marketplaces; buildings were mentioned in passing, one or two at a time.

Meanwhile, the idea of approaching cities as "organic" entities and "diagnosing" their "health" was just germinating and generating competing discourses about public health and urban interventions in Italy.[3] The state had created a law in 1865 allowing expropriations for reasons of public utility in Italian cities, and this law set the precedent for similar procedures in the colonies. After the Naples cholera epidemic of 1884–1885 brought the need for public health regulations to the fore of government concerns, 1888 saw a national code of public health (*Codice d'igiene e di sanità pubblica*). The code aimed to prevent epidemics by improving circulation of water, sewage, and traffic; in the colonial cities, its regulations were adapted to the exact same ends.

As the actors who shaped urban environments in late nineteenth-century Italian East Africa were military administrators or civil servants rather than urban hygiene experts, however, their planning was not primarily determined by hygiene concerns. Still, elements of urban hygiene texts found their way into colonial administration texts, reflecting administrators' awareness of public

health risks; but they did not always carry much weight or reflect actual decisions. In other words, although hygiene was an important question for colonial administrators, it did not permeate their discourses and practices as much as it typically did those of administrators in British- and French-ruled colonial cities.[4]

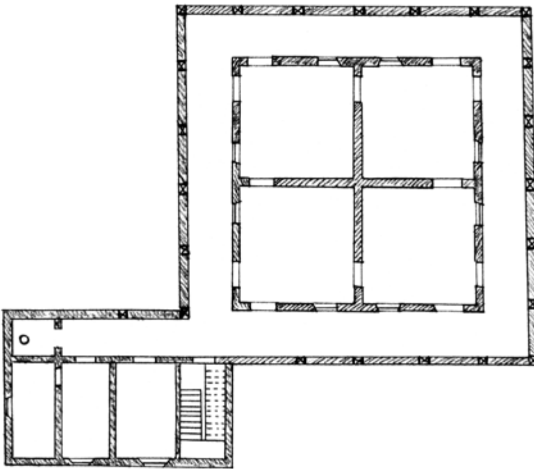
After occupying Massawa in 1885, Italian forces established rules for land expropriations and concessions. The norms were published in 1888, in both Italian and Arabic.[5] Requests for land were handled by the Office of Native Affairs (*Segretariato per gli affari indigeni*), accompanied by details and rudimentary drawings if they concerned new buildings or renovations; the Corps of Civil Engineers (*Genio Civile*), which added recommendations for changes regarding "road improvements, building, and hygiene"; and the military command.

Also in 1888, the Secretary for Native Affairs (*Segretario per gli affari indigeni*) submitted a report on conditions in Massawa.[6] The report was narrow in scope, but very detailed. Shacks had been razed to widen streets; three large thoroughfares were planned; lighting was to be created for the bazaar; private buildings were under construction. The Secretary complained that the natives were dirty, lacked initiative and long-term orientation, and that they preferred to live in flimsy, dirty houses; he did not, however, mention any measures to move them or restrict them to any particular area. He also complained that he needed a proper office, instead of the small house he was renting.

A good example of the confusion between government and private sector prerogatives appears in a discussion of 1899 regarding an agreement made in 1882.[7] The agreement entitled the Rubattino company, Italy's original middleman in East Africa, to a plot of land on the Aseb waterfront, the location of which had been left for later definition. By the time the company specified a location in 1899, though, the government had reserved the area for future structures of its own: the bridgehead, the customs office and a storage building. Such was the extent of planning and detail in the Italian colonies in the late nineteenth century: everything was on the waterfront, and priorities were dealt with as they arose. In contrast to later exercises in city planning, which by definition aimed to create comprehensive urban environments with well-coordinated subparts and anticipate future needs, here any planning that did occur was in response to immediate requirements.

As for individual buildings, Italians often rented or bought ones already in existence (Figure 3.1). The piecemeal view of buildings in the Italian colonies in this period is illustrated by numerous archival entries concerning one or two structures. For the most part, requests for construction funds concerned infrastructural needs, for hospitals, canals, and railways.[8] Buildings did not occasion discussions of style, and they were not expected to represent the Italian nation or Italian civilization, as later buildings would be. For example: two houses were designed in 1884 for construction in Aseb, one for the Italian doctor and the other for the Italian gardener (Figures 3.2, 3.3).[9] The anonymous drawings indicate no interest in architecture as a set of formal options to be exercised consciously or meaningfully, or as a means of distinguishing Italians from natives.

Figure 3.1
Ornate wooden residence in the east African highlands, early twentieth century.



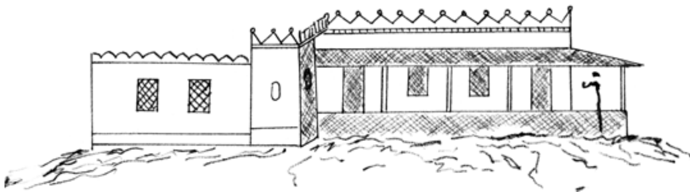
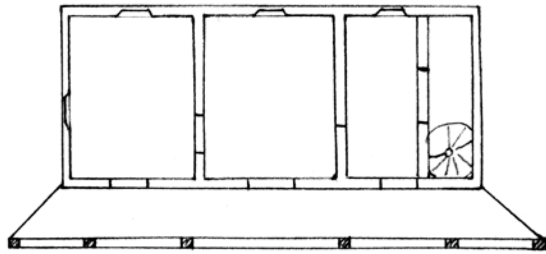


Figure 3.2
House for the Italian doctor in Aseb (Eritrea), 1884.



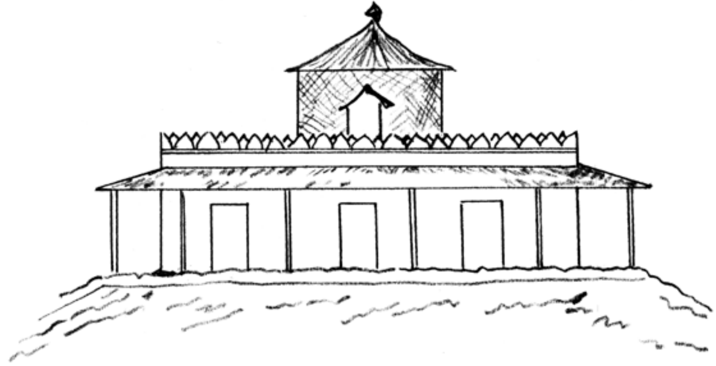


Figure 3.3
House for the gardener in Italian Aseb (Eritrea), 1884.

These were simple, practical, warm-weather houses made of locally available materials, resembling others in East African towns. This pattern of Italians' indifference to any possible political or symbolic implications of using local building patterns for their own needs is further confirmed by the fact that in 1893, the settlers of the first Italian agricultural village built *tukuls* – cylindrical native huts, which I discuss further below – for their own residences.[10] Two buildings bought in Mogadishu in 1904 and 1905 were similarly unremarkable.[11]

In another example, the question of whether to destroy or renovate two government buildings on the island of Taulud, at Massawa, was treated seriously in 1901, becoming the topic of correspondence between colonial administrators and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[12] The government had built the "two large, three-storied buildings, with wide terraces and vast rooms" a decade earlier, and now the buildings' stability was threatened by shifting foundations. The question at hand was one of safety; the only symbolic issue raised in the report was the worry that the buildings' poor condition (rather than their style) might reflect poorly on the prospects for Italian rule. In 1902, the Governor solved the problem by having the buildings' upper stories removed.[13]

In the meantime, the colonial government of Eritrea had moved its capital from Massawa to Asmara in 1898. Despite its opportunity to do so from the start, the government took no part in shaping the architecture Europeans built there. As a result, individual residences variously followed conventions in vogue in bourgeois neighborhoods in Italy, imitating urban Art Nouveau trends, vague

Arts and Crafts derivations, and even "Swiss chalets" with red trim (Figures 3.4, 3.5, 3.6).[14] Early government buildings, on the other hand, initially resembled local ones just as they had in Massawa and Aseb (see Figure 3.1); one Italian writer dubbed them "equatorial."[15]

While in practice, Italian construction in Asmara was not regulated, the *idea* of regulation did begin to emerge in writing almost right away: the local newspaper discussed instituting norms for Asmara's buildings as early as 1899.[16] Over the next decade, government documents made references increasingly to drawing up plans – a partial one for Asmara in 1902; ones for Agordat, Keren, and Adi Keih in 1903;[17] and one for Taulud in 1909.[18] But these plans were more descriptive than prescriptive: they designated general allotments of areas as they had already begun to take shape, and made no provisions for what would soon come to be known (and privileged) as zoning. If they delineated new or future settlements at all, they inclined to small-scale projects such as a new "native village" (*villaggio indigeni*) near Europeans' dwellings on Taulud in 1908–1909.[19]

Even larger plans in this period suggested no preoccupation with how Italians presented themselves through their architecture, or with isolating Italians from natives. An extensive report of 1907 on Brava (Somalia)[20] – where, up through 1905, the Italians barely changed anything in the built environment[21] – paid attention to roads and tribal groups, and included a town plan (Figure 3.7). The plan distinguished between pre-Italian and Italian constructions by color-coding, indicated differences in building materials, and also described officials'

Figure 3.4
House with wall and doorway decoration in "stile floreale" (or Art Nouveau), Asmara (Eritrea).

Figure 3.5
"Villino" (small villa) with Arts and Crafts intonations, Asmara.

Figure 3.6
House in chalet style, Asmara.

intentions for future construction. Moving inland from the waterfront, the first buildings were masonry; next came a strip of wooden shacks. At the line where these two "layers" of the town met was an open *piazza* with a substantial house for the local government representative. Two major roads intersected at right angles. A marketplace, the armory, and all the army and police barracks were at the edge of town. Mosques were noted. The Italian constructions were the city wall, all the barracks, the Resident's house, and part of the customs building. As the drawing of this plan coincided with a new burst of Italian building activity in Brava, including new markets, houses for Italians, and an infirmary,[22] it acts as a transition in Italian colonial city plan drawings of this period: rather than merely

Figure 3.7
Plan of Brava (Somalia), 1907.

showing piecemeal constructions in place, it sketched out areas of imminent construction.

The following year, 1908, marked the first designation of urban areas according to "race" in an Italian colonial city plan. Asmara's 1908 plan resembled the 1907 plan of Brava in other respects – it distinguished between old and new constructions, for instance – but it was the first to delineate different quarters for Europeans and "colonial subjects," along with a "mixed" area.[23] Before addressing how great the impact of the plan could have been, let us recapitulate how Asmara had developed up to that point. When Italians moved their capital there in 1898, Asmara consisted of a gathering of Eritrean settlements in what

would later be the northeastern part of the city; the abandoned compound of the departed chieftain *ras* Alula; and Italians' military settlements to the west. In contrast to most of Italy's colonial cities so far, Asmara was not on the coast, giving Italians greater latitude in choosing their building sites. Indeed, the first location they occupied was quite far from the original settlement, on a plateau, where they built a fort (*Forte Baldissera*). Shortly thereafter, they established a garrison (*campo cintato*) and government buildings down below and in the direction of the Eritrean settlements. They built banks and shops near the new post office to the northeast of the government buildings (Figures 3.8, 3.9), and non-military residences (*palazzine*, Figures 3.4, 3.5, 3.6) to the southeast. Proceeding east from the post office – and across a small waterway – was a large

Figure 3.8
Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy), Asmara (1895–1905; now the Bank of Eritrea).

Figure 3.9
Banco di Roma (Bank of Rome), Asmara (1910s; now the Commercial Bank of Eritrea).

area dominated by the daily markets, and inhabited by Jews, Indians, and Greeks. Everyone in Asmara crossed paths here, and this was the area designated as "mixed" in the 1908 plan and all the ones to follow.[24]

In sum, the government's move to Asmara in 1898 offered the possibility of undertaking a long-term plan with demarcated areas, but Asmara developed through uncoordinated and gradual increments of new building nonetheless. And far from growing along the lines of racial segregation, Italians' constructions developed eastward *toward* the original settlement area, or as Italians would later call it, the original "native quarter" (Figure 3.10). Furthermore, even in principle the boundaries of the plan's "three very distinct zones" were quite porous: according to the plan's official description, the European zone was actually "strictly reserved" for "Europeans and the assimilated," and the mixed area could "be inhabited by Europeans as well as natives."[25] Different "races," in other words, met spontaneously somewhere in the middle, and the market area at the heart of the mixed area constituted the central point of encounter. Meanwhile, many Eritreans worked in the "European quarters," and numerous Italian men lived with Eritrean women. Thus, even though the government disapproved of Italians mingling "too closely" with natives – i.e. having children with them, or bequeathing property to them – the plan of 1908, in itself, is unlikely to have done any more to stop Italians than the other government measures did. The one element of the plan that likely had the most tangible consequences was that it prohibited Eritreans from owning property in the "European quarter"; and furthermore, the "mixed" area was prohibitively expensive for most Eritreans.[26]

Ultimately, while there is no question that Eritreans rarely lived near Europeans on an equal and neighborly footing in the "European quarter," we also know from many sources that day-to-day social barriers in Asmara were not as pronounced as they would be thirty years hence. Italian bourgeois women, for instance, regularly "received *madame*," Eritrean women living with Italian men, in their Asmara homes before the turn of the century.[27] In 1921, one writer identified different sorts of *madame*, asserting that those who had lived with Italian men the longest and had children by them possessed a measure of social legitimacy, forming a well-to-do "caste."[28] And various Italian writers proudly attested to the cosmopolitan mix of populations to be encountered on the city's streets.[29]

In other words, while racial discriminations shaped everyday life in colonial Asmara, the city was not segregated in the sense that we usually give the expression.[30] In the terms relevant to my argument further on, Asmara's 1908 plan (as well as the 1916 one) was not governed by theories of zoning or segregation,

Figure 3.10
A panoramic view of colonial Keren (Eritrea) showing the original indigenous settlement on the left and the European settlement to the right.

despite the fact that it reflected and aimed to reinforce differences among the city's residential areas. It began to approximate later, prescriptive plans, but it did not amount to a full-fledged, comprehensive city plan. Imposing racial segregation would require coordination between plans and laws regulating the lives of Italians – which would only come into existence in 1937. Furthermore, such a plan would call for moving people and creating more significant barriers, of the kind that the government began (with the back up of newly minted theories of segregation) to impose in its *AOI* plans after 1936 (as we shall see in Chapters 6 and 9). In the interim, the laws limiting Eritreans' residential possibilities relaxed in 1916[31] – even though in the same year, a plan was drawn up distinguishing between "European" and native quarters, by shading them in two different colors (orange and pink; the "mixed" area was part of the native area).[32]

One final aspect of Asmara's 1908 and 1916 city plans merits underscoring: like all other plans up to this point, they were drawn up by local Italian authorities, who did not turn to Rome for input or approval.[33] The fact that colonial town plans in this period were left to the discretion of provincial bureaucrats confirms that colonial urban forms held no perceived power to represent Italian nationhood or civilization. Over the next three decades, beginning with the first plan for Tripoli, this would change drastically: by the late 1930s, daily telegrams between colonial governors and Rome – often Mussolini himself – would ensure that no aspect of colonial governance, including architectural and planning policies, unfolded without the supervision of the central government.

THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1910s–1920s

With their occupation of Tripoli in 1911–1912, Italians' attitudes to colonial city planning and architecture began to enter a new phase. For the first time, the Civil Corps of Engineers in Rome drew up a master plan for a colonial city (1912–1914).[34] In part, this new level of government oversight stemmed from the value Italians placed on Tripoli, their first Mediterranean colonial city and part of a once-Roman province. On a larger scale, though, this first-time government involvement with a colonial city plan also coincided with a new level of general European interest in devising master plans and centralizing their supervision. The English Town Planning Act passed in 1909; France's first city planning legislation was enacted in 1914 in Morocco, five years before a revised version of the proposed legislation became French law for the metropole itself. As we shall see in Chapter 4, although city planning laws were not yet in place in Italy, urban specialists there were already in the thick of addressing the problems of preserving old city centers while accommodating new urban growth. In this light, Tripoli was hardly an alien environment for Italian administrators. Morphologically akin to old city centers in Italy and elsewhere in the Mediterranean, it was surrounded by walls and built out of permanent materials (as opposed to mud and thatch); furthermore, it too suffered from increasing congestion and public health risks. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, Italian administrators focused so intently on

aspects of Tripoli that seemed familiar to them that in many ways they were blind to Tripoli's differences from Italian cities.[35]

The city was already a colonial outpost when Italian forces attacked it in 1911. It had been part of the Ottoman Empire since 1551, although for several generations the local Qaramanli dynasty had held actual political control before losing it to Constantinople again.[36] Phoenicians had founded the original settlement, and the site had been occupied ever since. The Spanish had razed most of it in 1510–1511, however, leaving only the city's walls; its Muslim, Jewish, and Christian quarters; and a fortified castle on one of its corners at the water's edge. Apart from the castle and the city walls, in 1911 Tripoli's monuments and residences almost all dated from sometime during Ottoman rule.[37] A certain sprawl had already developed outside the walls: a "European part" with "straight . . . streets" had existed since at least 1881, as had a "Jewish village."[38] These "straight . . . streets," leading away from the city in a radial pattern, would remain as the major arteries of Italians' "new quarters" (Figure 3.11). They all

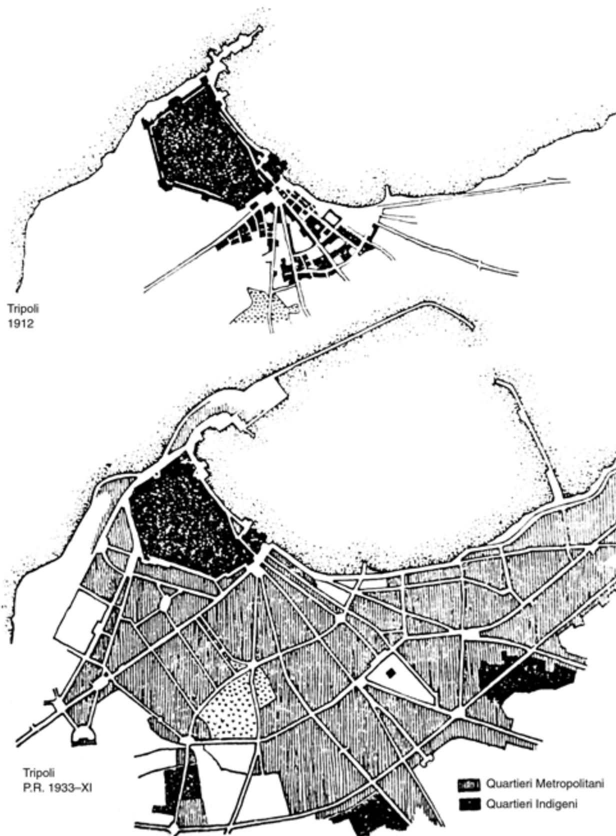


Figure 3.11
Tripoli in 1912, and the 1933 masterplan showing European and native quarters.

started off from the city's eastern gate, the focal area outside the walls, where several markets met throughout the week. Small settlements dotted the oasis, which extended mostly eastward of the walled city; some of these would be dismantled or disappear under Italian rule (a Bedouin camp at Tajura;[39] a "Negro village"[40] (Figure 3.12)), while others (such as the Dahra quarter, to the far east of the oasis) became more permanent as the Italian-controlled city grew.

When Italian military administrators first considered their most pressing tasks in Tripoli, most of their priorities were identical to those of administrators in East Africa. They increased the water supply into the walled city; they improved the existing sewage system, at the same time as they built one in the expanding *extra muros* city.[41] They improved road communications, in part by demolishing substantial portions of the city's walls.[42] Beyond these, their most urgent concern was the need to halt speculation outside the old city, not only because of the potential loss of economic control and the risk of ever-worsening housing shortages, but also for fear of public indignation.[43] Thus the administration immediately created expropriation and property transfer laws giving the government priority and control over all property movements.

Figure 3.12
Foreign visitors to Tripoli in the decades prior to Italian occupation repeatedly mentioned a "Negro village" in the oasis. This is half of a stereoscope image distributed by an American firm (note the original caption).

But officials disagreed among themselves on how soon to invest in costly new buildings. Commander General Tommaso Salsa, who was in charge of Tripoli's political and military affairs, pressed for the rapid execution of numerous building projects. Some of these were sanitation and maintenance-related: cemeteries; a slaughterhouse; new markets, including a fish market; and a firehouse. In addition, though, Salsa especially emphasized the need for large new official buildings, such as a City Hall and a Hall of Justice.[44] In order to facilitate this rapid growth, he also favored "granting a certain liberty to private initiative toward building construction."[45] The Director of Civil Affairs, Domenico Caruso, on the other hand, wanted to limit expenses and proceed cautiously in executing the master plan. Following this course, the public offices would continue to use existing buildings that had been purchased, leased, or appropriated – just as their counterparts in Italy's East African cities had been doing. The matter was resolved when Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti and Minister of Public Works Luigi Sacchi intervened in support of Caruso's conservative position. Two decrees dated 2 September 1912 established that officials would put off investing in public buildings and limit their attention to the most urgent public works.[46]

From one perspective, this conflict merely underscores that in 1912 – after more than two decades of administration in East Africa – Italian officials still had no clear policy or objectives concerning architecture in colonial cities. But the manner of its resolution also confirms that colonial urban developments now preoccupied government in the metropole, including the Prime Minister himself. Colonial cities, in other words, were becoming a subject of national concern. Furthermore, the debate arose because one of the officials involved had injected a new element into the discussions, namely, the idea that Italian architecture could be another way to represent Italian control over the colony. Indeed, Salsa's wish to build rapidly did not stem from practical needs alone. Italians, he claimed, had "conquered [Tripoli] out of a semi-barbaric condition"; thanks to them, the city was now "on its way to becoming great and modern."[47] More specifically, he deemed that a great symbolic burden rested on the buildings representing the colonial power. The Governor ought to have:

> a residence that is truly worthy . . . In its style, its unexaggerated grandeur, its size and its imposing quality, it should be worthy of Italy's new conquest. Even a superficial acquaintance with the Arab mentality is enough to understand how important it is to give the Governor a residence that speaks adequately to the imagination of these populations, who judge power . . . from external appearances . . . If it is necessary to espouse the strictest thrift for all other buildings, in my opinion it would be an extremely serious mistake to follow such a policy for the Governor's Palace, which should be the blatant symbol of the new Italy's greatness.[48]

At the same time, Salsa offered no hint as to precisely how such buildings would convey such prestige, i.e. what the architectural designs should look like. In fact, because Caruso's position won the day, and the construction of a new Governor's Palace (among others) waited until the 1920s, questions of

architectural style for large government buildings remained moot. Non-government construction grew rapidly, however, and the lack of architectural oversight of the private sector led to the urban cacophony that architects would begin to denigrate in the 1920s.

Administrators agreed entirely, on the other hand, to manage the city within the walls with only minimal, public safety-oriented interventions.[49] The old city and the new areas outside the walls, in their view, were absolutely different: one belonged to the pre-colonial past, while the other was the site of the city's Italian future.[50] Not intending to use the old city for Italian business or permanent residences, and not yet thinking in terms of touristic revenue, in this early period officials took little note of its aesthetic qualities. At most, their interest was limited to comments like that of Luigi Luiggi, the designer of the first masterplan, who called the old city's alleys "narrow but picturesque," and its houses "unusually clean."[51]

There was one exception to the administrators' indifference to the *intra muros*, however. Embedded in the center of town, surrounded by Arab or Ottoman buildings for which administrators had no regard, the single Roman-era vestige in the immediate area – "proof" that Italians were "returning" – occupied administrators' interests immediately (Figure 3.13). At the time of Italian occupation, the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, dating to AD 163, was barely visible

Figure 3.13
The Arch of Marcus Aurelius, Tripoli.

under additional structures; and sometimes, it was used for movie projections.[52] Outraged by the monument's condition and its symbolic degradation, Italian administrators moved eagerly to clear the area surrounding it, isolate it from the "backward" natives, and restore it.[53] Archaeologists lent a hand by documenting the monument.[54] After a period of negotiations, the government purchased and demolished all the surrounding properties, completing the Arch's "rehabilitation" by 1918.

As for the degree to which Italians "mixed" with natives, administrators overstated Italians' separateness somewhat, just as they did in Asmara. Typically, they described the "old city within the walls" as "composed of the Arab and Jewish quarters," and the area outside the walls as "the new European city." They only acknowledged that the city was not bisected so simply when they also mentioned the Dahra area to the East of the new quarters, describing it as a "native suburb."[55] But, as we have already seen, the oasis also contained small Jewish, Bedouin, and "Negro" settlements; these were obscured by administrators' schematic descriptions.

Furthermore, administrators even oversimplified the composition of the *intra muros* quarters, describing them as inhabited by single ethnicities rather than acknowledging how mixed they really were. According to an Englishwoman who visited Tripoli immediately after Italians occupied it:

> The city is divided into ten quarters, six of them within the walls and four outside . . . [O]f the first six, four have a mixed population of Europeans and Arabs, and the other two are almost exclusively inhabited by the Jews.[56]

In other words, apart from the Jewish quarter, no part of Tripoli belonged to any single ethnic, national, or religious population. Yet Italian administrators labeled all but the Jewish quarter "Arab quarters." Furthermore, as we will see in Chapter 7, the "mixtures" of populations in most parts of Tripoli would persist into the 1930s, despite new measures steering the city toward increased segregation, including an updated masterplan.

Meanwhile, Italians' activities in Rhodes paralleled those in Tripoli. As early as 1913 – a year after occupation – Italians repaired the aqueduct, improved water circulation to fountains, improved some roads, and installed public lighting.[57] Within the walls, they "restored" buildings to what they construed as their appearance in the medieval Christian period of the Knights of Saint John. Principally, this meant "liberating" city gates from post-Medieval (Turkish) accretions[58] and stripping other signs of the Ottoman Empire's five-century reign – especially *mashrabiyyas*, projecting windowseats encased in carved wooden screens (Figures 3.14, 3.15). The masterplan, with its classifications of lands and expropriation laws, was finalized in 1924.[59]

Italian archaeologists were somewhat more invasive in Rhodes than in Tripoli. Archival documents do not provide any neat explanation for this, but apparently Italians were not as concerned with alienating the Turkish Muslims of Rhodes (citizens of the previously ruling Empire, most of whom departed in the

Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923) as they were the Arab Muslims of Tripoli – this, despite the fact that Muslims outnumbered the city's other groups.[60] Indeed, Italians seem to have regarded the entire city as primarily an archaeological and touristic site (a fact that is confirmed by archival sources), rather than one where they had to accommodate citizens' Otherness. In other words, Italians' view of Rhodes as "historic" – a view that in Tripoli or Benghazi was counter-balanced by Italian perceptions of local ethnicities and religions – outweighed its other characteristics, leading to Italian activities that left the city resembling an open-air museum by the end of Italian rule.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND THE HISTORIC IN TRIPOLI

The distinction Italian colonizers drew consistently between what they saw as historic and non-historic is worth emphasizing, not only because it was so critical to all their decisions bearing on the colonial built environment, but also because scholars of colonial architecture and urbanism have largely disregarded the role of such distinctions, focusing instead on differentiations based on race, religion, ethnicity, and gender. For Italian archaeologists and early administrators, the historic worth of artifacts was the most unvarying criterion of classification, an a priori distinction that largely determined how they perceived colonial environments. And in practice, they distanced new constructions from old ones – by building outside city walls or removing accretions from vestiges of classical antiquity – much more thoroughly than they ever segregated indigenous populations from European ones.

Eventually, Italians broadened their category of "the historic," incorporating some indigenous buildings. In the early 1920s, Governor Volpi commissioned an index of Tripoli's structures of "historical, artistic, and archaeological interest" – in the words of a 1924 article on one of Tripoli's more "interest"-ing mosques.[61] As another author put it, "Tripoli today has thirty-two mosques . . . but only five or six really merit special attention."[62] The index comprised the walls of Tripoli's castle, two Roman monuments, a number of religious Muslim buildings, and twenty-four private houses.[63] Until then, Italians had found "interest" in classical remains alone, but this new index included some non-classical structures, including major mosques: "historical . . . interest," in other words, began to prevail occasionally over distinctions between Arab (or Muslim) and European.

Italians' efforts to document non-Western buildings were due in part to the government's commitment to developing the colony's touristic appeal. The government encouraged Italians to visit "their colonies" and invested heavily to increase the allure of Libya and the Dodecanese Islands by creating road networks, train lines, resort settings, and grand hotels.[64] (The government also promoted Italians' travel within Italy as a means of increasing national sentiment.[65]) In this respect, the growing inclusion of the non-classical "historic" in archaeological documentation and preservation broadened the colonial setting offered up for touristic consumption.

Figure 3.14
Avenue of the Knights, Rhodes, at the time of Italian occupation in the early 1910s.

Thus for several reasons – from urban administrators' decision-making to touristic development – the role of archaeologists in determining the colonial "historic" and enabling urban management and touristic development can hardly be overstated. Also, since colonialist ideologues used the presence of classical remains in Libya to justify Italian occupation as a "return" to a past condition, archaeologists' interpretations of what they found were rife with political implications.[66] One aspect of this was the selectivity of their inquiries: for example, although Tripoli stood on a site of Phoenician origin, Italian interests were limited to classical remains. But yet a further dimension to the politics of Italian colonial archaeology is of special relevance for this study: beginning in the early 1920s, archaeologists in Libya laid the groundwork for architects'

Figure 3.15
Avenue of the Knights, Rhodes, cleansed of Ottoman-era traces during Italian occupation.

theorization of the colonial built environment. Their selections of "important" artistic and historical works – legitimized by the belief in a uniquely Italian aesthetic sensibility, and combined with their scholarly authority as artistic experts – shaped architects' understandings of the local built environment. At a more subtle level, archaeologists' ways of incorporating non-classical works into the panorama of the "historic" led them to complex positionings in their texts of the non-classical vis-à-vis the classical, or European, "historics" – positionings that turned up again in architects' writings later on.

Overall, the rhetorical outcome of archaeologists' assessments of non-European vs. classical buildings was that Tripoli's "historic" was fundamentally Roman, or European, in any number of ways. Archaeologists argued that what

was ostensibly Other, but worthy of aesthetic appreciation, was ultimately not Other at all, instead reflecting Italy's own "historic." A good example is archaeologist Pietro Romanelli's article on "old Arab houses" in Tripoli, published two years after Volpi commissioned his index of important local structures. The essay illustrates how Italians in Tripoli used "the historic" to legitimize their occupation. A prominent member of Tripoli's archaeological superintendency, Romanelli insisted that Tripoli's architecture was ultimately of European origin, asserting that Arab and Turkish structures alike bore traces of Roman or Italian influence. According to him, domestic architecture in Tripoli lacked "art" and had not been "notable" prior to the Ottoman conquest of 1551.[67] The Ottoman era had left an imprint on Tripoli's built environment, but Italy's influence from afar had had an even greater impact: "After the mid-sixteenth century . . . all the Mediterranean countries [were] re-awakening to the breath of life which our peninsula radiate[d] with the energy and vigor of its Renaissance."[68] Throughout, Romanelli described buildings and motifs in Roman, Italian, or European terms. Even though Tripoli's residential buildings conformed to mainstream Near Eastern house forms, in their ornamental capitals he saw "distant memories" of Roman ones. Arches were "between the Roman and the Arab"; local tradition was either "more Roman and Byzantine than it was Arab," or else it was "Romano-Tripolitanian and Byzantine-Tripolitanian."[69] Romanelli even detected influences of seventeenth-century Spain and the French Baroque.[70]

In sum, he treated art, along with the historical, aesthetic sensibility required to produce it, as an exclusive attribute of European (particularly Italian) heritage. Expanding on such narratives of archaeology and architectural history – or "archaeology of art"[71] – Italian architects would soon rely heavily on the conclusion that "the Arab house" was the unadulterated descendant of the Roman atrium house. More broadly, they would continue to re-frame many aspects of Tripoli's built environment as inherently Italian. As we will see in Chapter 5, the logic of these archaeological appropriations would turn up again in architects' analyses of local vernacular architectures. But the basic mechanism of their rhetorical appropriations had originated in archaeologists' texts, which bridged the "pre-architecturalist" approaches to "architecturalist" ones.

LOST CIVILIZATION AND NATIVE HOUSES IN ERITREA

Although classical discoveries in Libya and the Dodecanese Islands dominated Italians' curiosity about the colonies in the 1910s and 1920s, East Africa was not overlooked entirely. One exception to the general lack of "historic" interest in the Horn of Africa appeared in 1912, when a geologist and a geographer, Giotto Dainelli and Olinto Marinelli, published the findings of their travels through Eritrea in 1905–1906. They devoted a chapter to archaeological vestiges in the highlands, treating them as remnants that spoke of an autochthonous "historic." They seemed somewhat surprised themselves to be portraying Eritrea in archaeological terms: their expedition had not concerned archaeology, they explained,

and they were neither trained nor equipped for such studies. Yet while traveling, they had noticed "the remains of an ancient civilization" that had not been described adequately by previous travelers. This "ancient civilization," they added, was the source of all the archaeological materials in the colony; but they also specified that it "present[ed] . . . a complete separation from today's Eritrean populations."[72] They did not identify this earlier civilization, although presumably they had in mind the Axumite empire, which thrived in the first millennium AD and has typically been designated "the" most significant past civilization of the highlands. In any case, this disclaimer allowed the authors to document stone remains and petroglyphs all while reaffirming the ostensibly contradictory, but consistently colonialist, view that Eritreans had no significant history of their own with which to match Italy's claims to a colonial future.

Branching out into more ethnographic terrain, Dainelli and Marinelli also supplied substantial descriptions of native housing types. In the 1890s, Italians initially adopted one of these, the round hut with a conical thatch roof, for their own use; subsequently, they built entire "quarters" "for natives" out of them. In the long run, Italians essentialized the *tukul* (or *tucul*, as they spelled it) as "the" native house – even though there were many other dwelling types – and used it to house East African Others in new urban "quarters," marking their cultural, ethnic, and/or racial separateness from Italians (although not from each other). Given the blanket use of this single house form in disparate areas and for different populations, it is worth noting that Dainelli and Marinelli provide evidence that the commonality of the *tukul* house type in Eritrea, as well as its very name, resulted *from* Italian occupation rather than preceding it. Until recently, another house had been especially typical of Asmara: the *hüdmò*, a much more solid and costly construction, wide and quadrangular in shape, with a flat roof comprising thick wooden beams. But Italians' presence had already changed the colony's landscape by the 1900s, as almost all of the cylindrical huts in view were of recent (and Italian) construction.[73] Furthermore, the Italian government imposed restrictions on the quantity of wood available for building *hüdmòs*, which also contributed to the attrition of the latter house type.[74] In other words, the prevalence of the *tukul* in Italy's earliest colony was an effect of colonialism rather than a pattern of long standing.

Furthermore, in the Hamasien region that includes Asmara, the name for this house type was *agdò* rather than *tukul*. But even though the *agdò* had some morphological particulars that distinguished it from the more generic *tukul* of regions to the South, in the Ethiopian highlands,[75] over the years Italians labeled all the cylindrical huts as *tukul* – both denying local nomenclature and blurring the particularities of Asmara itself. This double move had multiple effects: as Italian actions led to a wholesale shift from one vernacular form to another in Eritrea, they remade the local "traditional." At the same time, though, Italians did not acknowledge the very Italian-ness of this new "traditional," essentializing it as native instead. In fact, as we shall see in Chapter 6, in the 1930s Italian planners insisted that the *tukul*, being the familiar "habitat" for east African natives, should continue to be used for "native quarters."

In sum, even before architecture per se was theorized as a means of national self-representation, Italian premises about the meaning of the built environment in each colonial setting were consistent with the dispositions outlined in Chapter 2: North African history was described as a conduit for Roman (Italian) history; and East Africa was affirmed to be ahistorical – or at least to lack any great "civilization" – even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

Part II

Theories

Chapter 4: Modern Italian Architecture, 1910s–1930s

> Around the turn of the twentieth century [in Italy] nothing was more ambiguous than the expression "architect." At times it obscured the illegal practice of someone with a degree in architectural drawing; more often, it indicated an engineer who was momentarily involved in "artistic" themes.[1]
>
> Guido Zucconi, 1989

> Architecture is no longer the art of decorating houses that are already built, which sees the architect's function, illogically, as that of the man who stretches some sort of covering over a naked wall, . . . or the science of building . . . [; rather,] it is the art of construction which subjects the science of building to the reasons of the spirit. Therefore, it is art; an art that cannot do without science.[2]
>
> Alberto Calza-Bini, Secretary of the National Fascist Union of Architects, 1933

Why did colonial-architectural discourse emerge so late in Italy, half a century after the state first acquired colonial territory? Undoubtedly the single most important factor is that until 1920 Italy had no architectural training for professionals apart from engineers and architectural historians,[3] or any separate institutions for architects alone – in other words, no collective professional sphere in which to define such a specialized issue as architecture in the colonies. But the profession soon "caught up." The same active lobbying that gave rise to the new architectural education system also brought a new stature to architects, beginning in the 1910s and culminating in the 1920s and 1930s. The profession's new consolidation through architecture journals, meetings, and a hierarchy of union and sub-unions, thus coincided with the rise of Fascist rule; indeed, the profession's new importance was in part a function of the financial support and public approbation it obtained from the government.

This chapter addresses the emergence of the profession's new institutions and architects' internal debates, with a specific eye to their relevance to the colonial-architectural problem. Just as processes of modernity and colonialism are

mutually inextricable – i.e. the modern state required colonial territories and populations for constructions of the nation as "modern" – architecturalism in the colonies was more than a simple offshoot of the profession's newly raised profile in the metropole. Architects' arguments in and about the colonies refracted the problems they encountered in defining what was "modern" for architecture in Italy itself. Thus it is no coincidence that modernist architects were the ones who most theorized colonial architecture (although architects of all dispositions built in the colonies): the architects defining "the modern" in Italy and "the (appropriate) colonial" in the colonies were largely the same groups, if not always the same individuals. For many architects working in the colonies, the professional "scene" in Italy was still where the stakes were high and their work had repercussions – their "real world." on which they acted by acting in the colonies. Accordingly, the two stories – modernism in Italian architecture, and architecturalism for the Italian colonies – both intersect and diverge.

The history of the arts under Fascism breaks down into a relatively straightforward periodization, following the twists and turns of the regime's policies: the 1920s into the early 1930s; the early 1930s to 1936; and from 1936 to the early 1940s. The 1920s saw the rise of new movements in architecture. In a second period, from the early 1930s to 1936, we find the peak of cultural production, a coalescence that was contemporaneous with the growing multiplicity of approaches. Practitioners of the arts were excited over the relevance of the arts to the state and the nation; and the state fostered this excitement, not only by its official patronage, but also by the vast wealth it spent on state commissions. Architects debated matters of style, while they also deployed new materials and experimented with prefabricated, "minimum" low-cost dwellings. It is also in this period (specifically, 1931–1936) that colonial architecture became a topic of debate, a venue for professional positioning and ambitions. Finally, with the war on Ethiopia – and the sanctions that followed suit, limiting the materials that could be imported for construction, such as steel – the regime's policies became more rigid. All of Italian political life, architecture included, turned to greater uniformity.

This chapter begins by describing how the Italian architectural profession's new institutions developed in the interwar period, architects' complex involvement with the Fascist state, and the key approaches they promulgated. It then turns to analyze how they theorized an "Italian modern," in four modes which I call "international modern," "historic modern," "traditional modern," and "Mediterranean modern" – all of them integral to the theorization of a "colonial modern" in the 1930s. The ideas at play in each of the four were not mutually exclusive; indeed, various architects "tried them on" at various times. In particular, the (modernist) Rationalists – who were ever in search of theoretical bases from which to justify their international orientation with reference to ultranational inspirations – elaborated the theorizations of all four. It is also worth noting the extent to which the Rationalists' vocabulary and emphases echoed governmental rhetoric. Each of these four architectural theorizations paralleled rhetorical developments in Italian politics, from the highly self-conscious

international orientation of the late nineteenth century, to a retrenchment into intractable nationalism and a turn to an imperialistic invocation of "the Mediterranean" as the repository of the Italian spirit, past and future.

More specifically, each of these four approaches depended on appropriating various sources for architects' own design work. Just as archaeologists' and architectural historians' interpretations claimed as Italian the visibly historic built environment in the colonies, the architects concerned here also appropriated historical antecedents, from Italy's own native (or "vernacular") architecture to what they described as "Mediterranean" architecture in North Africa. In the colonial context, local vernacular architecture would also be re-described as "really" "modern" and "Italian" – following the same rhetorical and logical pattern. I analyze these "appropriations" as theoretical and rhetorical mechanisms that went far beyond the practical questions of design, operating across classical archaeology and architectural history.[4]

THE RISE OF ITALY'S PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTIONS AFTER UNIFICATION

Before a new kind of architectural training became available in 1920, different Italian specialists designed buildings: specialists in engineering and ornamentation. As elsewhere in Europe, the split between technical and artistic approaches to architecture made its practice inconsistent. The idea of instituting an architecture university to overcome this inconsistency had been broached in Italy as early as 1859, when new technical schools (modeled on France's *Ecole Polytechnique*) opened. While such technical schools trained engineers, the various *Belle Arti* academies (modeled on the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*) taught an artistic and historical curriculum, but lacked technical instruction.

Although specialists of various sorts could all be labeled as architects, at the turn of the century a great many working designers in Italy were drafting teachers.[5] Meanwhile, the principal novelties of the period were in the realm of decoration, rather than structural design or materials: some designers incorporated "Orientalism" in their ornamentation,[6] and others developed an Italian version of France's *Art Nouveau*, *l'Arte Nuova*, or *stile floreale*.[7] Although the first two decades of the twentieth century brought the Futurists' radical reconceptualizations of art, there was little to disrupt the predictability of ongoing neoclassical, neo-Renaissance, and neo-Medieval repetitions developed in the 1870s by designers in search of ways to reflect the state's recent unification by "unifying" architectural styles.[8]

But while architecture was hardly thriving, a variety of new specializations in urban problems of public health were.[9] Just as "architects" encompassed specialists of diverse trainings and capabilities, the new urban specialists emerging in the late nineteenth century were versed in a variety of sciences: they included medical doctors, engineers, and veterinarians. These professionals enjoyed state financing and training into the first decades of the twentieth century, becoming

increasingly indispensable to urban administrations throughout Italy. Not only did they promise to address the government's most pressing problems of growing cities and squalor, rather than style; in addition, their new approaches to city management were in tune with rapidly developing international standards.[10] In other words, they were patent indices of modernity. Architects' expertise, in contrast, was secondary and less to the point.

Before they could achieve the "supremacy"[11] to which some of them aspired, architects thus had to overcome more than the inertia their field had suffered from for decades: they also had to supplant another group of professionals. In this light, the purpose of the new architecture university was not only to integrate structural and decorative aspects of design, training new specialists with a distinct, up-to-date expertise, but also to make architects indispensable to the modern Italian city and state. It is worth remembering, though, that despite architects' claims in the early twentieth century to new science and radical approaches, much of their work concerned issues that had been addressed for several decades by other professionals, and it incorporated these other experts' approaches.

The first two decades of the twentieth century constitute an overlapping of eras, the cusp of modernity for Italian architects. One indication of this is the opacity and multivalence of professional designations in use at the time. *Belle Arti* experts, engineers, medical doctors, veterinarians, and so on all worked for and in the same professional niches, often under the same denominations – "architect" or "hygiene specialist." for instance. By way of illustration, in his *Architect's Manual (Manuale dell'architetto*), written between 1906 and 1925, Venice's chief engineer Daniele Donghi used "architect" to mean "builder": all of the first volume dealt with materials.[12] Meanwhile, the "hygiene expert" was also prominent, as affirmed by the publication in 1914 of the *Hygienist's Manual* (*Manuale dell'Igienista*), which was limited to strictly "scientific" domains, such as chemistry, physics, statistics, and epidemiology. The term *urbanistica* was not yet in use, but the 1912 *Treatise on Hygiene and Public Health* (*Trattato d'Igiene e di Sanità Pubblica*) by Luigi Pagliani has been described as "the first manual for city planning produced by Italian culture,"[13] based on its discussion of types of urban growth, criteria for housing distribution, and the ratio of surface to inhabitants.

One individual above all played an essential public role in the institutional reconfiguration of the architectural profession and its takeover of the urban professions: Gustavo Giovannoni (1873–1947). Trained at the end of the nineteenth century in engineering and public hygiene,[14] Giovannoni bridged the two professional eras that were overlapping in the early twentieth century. In 1916, he coined the expression "the integral architect" (*l'architetto integrale*): "an artist, a technician, and a man of culture,"[15] clearly the hybrid – the rhetorical hybrid, at least – that was needed in order to supplant the new scientists while incorporating art and culture into architects' new expertise.

The crucial element common to the formation of Italian architects in the 1920s and 1930s was the fundamental theory formulated in the 1910s by

Giovannoni, who integrated his views on the conservation of historic cities – balancing measures of public health and aesthetic priorities – in the curriculum of urban and architectural history. Two articles he published in 1913, discussing *ambientismo* ("contextualism," or harmony with the pre-existing built environment) and *diradamento* (the "thinning out" of cluttered urban spaces) established him as one of the seminal thinkers on (what we now call) built "heritage."[16] *Ambientismo* dictated that although cities were in need of improved hygiene measures (i.e. space and ventilation), it was harmful to introduce new buildings into historic city contexts, or to otherwise alter the settings of old buildings in such a way that they no longer "fit" their urban environment. By implication, privileging new construction and preserving old urban fabrics were nearly impossible goals to reconcile.[17] As Giovannoni later summed up his position: "Old cities and new cities are organisms separated by absolutely essential differences."[18]

A judicious use of *diradamento*, however, could help to renew old city quarters without demolishing them or altering their character. The purpose of *diradamento* was to create:

> not [a] regular uniformity of new thoroughfares, but irregular widening: the demolition here and there of a house or a group of houses, and the creation in their place of a small piazza or a garden, a small lung in an old quarter . . . a few rays of sunshine will come in, some new views will open, and the old houses that were too close together will breathe.[19]

For a time, Giovannoni was the most important player in architecture's usurping of the other professions, through his writings, his politicking, his teachings, and his directorship of the new university. On the threshold of the Fascist era, in 1921, he was also one of the founders of *Architettura ed Arti Decorative*, a journal that combined architectural and art history with questions of modern Italian architecture. After Mussolini came to power, the profession flourished further with several new journals and the solidification of state licensing for architects in 1923. Architecture universities multiplied, opening in Venice (1926), Turin (1929), Naples and Florence (1930), and Milan (1933).

Beginning in 1930 with the foundation of the National Institute of City Planning (*Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica*) – with Giovannoni at the helm – the profession updated itself again with its turn to *urbanistica*, the "new" art and science of city planning. Taking a long historical view, one cannot help but see the "new" field of *urbanistica* as having been another new bottle into which to pour old wine, incorporating architects' and urban hygiene experts' techniques in design, engineering, and urban problems, as well as new approaches learned from other countries' experiences. In any case, this new version of the integration of architecture and urban approaches rapidly made itself essential to the state through its promise of remedying urban and social ills, and its approaches to new settlement areas. The Institute's journal *Urbanistica* began publication in 1932. Italy's city planning laws were sketched out in the following year, and university courses in Urban Architecture and Landscaping (*Edilizia cittadina e arte dei*

giardini) were replaced by courses in *urbanistica* in 1934. The Institute held its first national conference in 1937, anchoring this "new" aspect of the profession.

ARCHITECTS AND THE FASCIST STATE

But the story of modern architects' rise in Fascist Italy cannot be told, even as summarily as I have done here, without clarifying the extent of the profession's political involvement with the state, and the state's reciprocal involvement with the profession. Scholarship on modernism in interwar Italian architecture was long stymied by the embarrassment of architects' ties to the Fascist government. Since the early 1980s, however, when Diane Ghirardo and Giorgio Ciucci, respectively, addressed the question in terms of the profession and the regime, rather than individual architects and the regime,[20] scholars have re-visited the question of interwar Italian architects' politics with increasing frankness.[21]

This recent work confirms that despite their disagreements, architects of all orientations pursued the government's approval and commissions, both corporately and individually, and achieved notable successes throughout the period. The dictatorship's especially heavy financing of government projects such as rural settlement programs, monumental public works, and public housing translated into a large number of commissions and competitions. Mussolini sometimes allowed one group or another to believe that it might win the ultimate commission, namely, control over all state architecture. But in fact, in architecture and other arts, the government never settled on any one approach, in effect fostering an "aesthetic pluralism"[22] – one that served the regime's propagandistic needs while cloaking them in an appearance of relative freedom. In brief, despite its internal struggles, the profession as a whole was very successful under Fascism.

One ingredient that was essential to the profession's collective success was the National Union of Architects (*Sindacato Nazionale Architetti*) created in 1923. From its beginnings, the union was the most concentrated and effective tool for the profession's alliance with the state. Its founding directors included Alberto Calza-Bini, whose brother Gino had been one of the founders of Rome's Fascist party.[23] Frequently, the union architects' statements directly echoed the imperialist rhetoric of historic redemption discussed in Chapter 2, as when Ghino Venturi – a directing member of the union beginning in 1923, and secretary of its Rome branch[24] – addressed "all those who hope to see Italy return to its traditional position of dominance in the field of architecture."[25]

Eventually, when debates died down generally in Italy after the mid-1930s, architects' power was more and more concentrated in the hands of one individual (paralleling the increasing centralization of the dictatorship itself). If Giovannoni and Calza-Bini were two of the most powerful architects in the period leading up to the late 1930s, Marcello Piacentini (1881–1960) – like Giovannoni, a professor at the architecture university in Rome – became the single most powerful architect in late 1930s Italy, at one point being referred to by Mussolini as the "state's architect" even though no such official title existed.[26] Together,

Giovannoni, Calza-Bini, and Piacentini were the crucial brokers between the profession and the government through all three of the periods I outlined earlier. By the end of the ventennium (the two decades of the Fascist regime), Piacentini was the single most important one.

An especially clear instance of the intermeshing of these individuals' careers, the state's involvement in the profession, and the various domains of architectural discussion is the trajectory of the journal *Architettura ed Arti Decorative*, which Piacentini co-founded (with Giovannoni) in 1921. The journal became the union's official publication in 1927 – bringing Piacentini, Giovannoni, and Calza-Bini together as its directors. When the union renamed itself the Fascist National Union of Architects (*Sindacato Nazionale Fascista Architetti*) in 1932, Piacentini took over the journal (under its new name, *Architettura*), clarifying that the journal's new aim would be to strive for good totalitarian architecture, "in accord with the political, social, and civic aspirations of the Italy of today."[27] From then on, the board's communications and editorials echoed the regime's militaristic language ever more closely.

Developments in Piacentini and Calza-Bini's careers after the regime's collapse further underscore just how politicized architectural practice was during Fascism.[28] Giovannoni's death in 1947 protected him from the post-Fascist purges. Piacentini's trajectory, though, was as tortuous as his career was political. Piacentini was arrested after Mussolini's fall in 1943, but gained release thanks to the intervention of Giovanni Battista Montini – the future Pope Paul VI – and spent some months in hiding. Meanwhile, the many instances of Piacentini's political corruption were increasingly public knowledge. When the architecture school elected to fire him in 1944, it did so for explicitly political reasons, accusing him of having used his government connections to procure business and positions – in the words of one medicine professor, of having been "the boss of the profession's *camorra*." In a few short years, though, Piacentini regained his university post, with help from none other than Giulio Andreotti, who later served as Italy's Prime Minister seven times. Similarly, Calza-Bini was judged to have been complicit with the Fascist government and lost his post, only to regain it in the early 1950s. By 1951, both Piacentini and Calza-Bini were back in business, collaborating once more, and reconstituting their network of allies and colleagues.

In contrast to Piacentini, who disavowed his obvious links to the regime and Mussolini after the war,[29] some people in the arts were "true believers," and continued as such even after the regime's end. The prominent painter Mario Sironi never denied his once-passionate Fascist stance.[30] Others who had taken their Fascism seriously changed their views in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Giuseppe Pagano-Pogatschnig, arguably the most brilliant of the Rationalists, was an ardent Fascist until the late 1930s, when he joined the Resistance, only to be imprisoned and eventually die in the concentration camp at Mauthausen. A close collaborator of his was Gino Levi Montalcini – the primary author of the editorial on *civiltà* discussed in the Introduction – whose politics were also

re-shaped by the progression of the regime: under the laws imposed against Jews in 1938, he was interned at the northern detention camp of Carpi.

COMPETING APPROACHES AND FACTIONS

While the triumvirate of Giovannoni, Calza-Bini, and Piacentini may appear to have been somewhat cynical, for many architects there was more than profit at stake in the profession's pursuit of the state's patronage. The idea of representing the new state and the "ancient" nation of Italy offered a heady mix of seductive sensations, in which individual profit was one factor, but others were the satisfaction of serving the profession and the glory of representing the state. Architects' writings of the period often reveal a credible sense of heroism keeping the triumphalism aloft. But whether they were believers or not, what the most vocal architects had in common was their effort to solve the same fundamental problem throughout the interwar period, one that had preoccupied their predecessors since Italy's unification in the nineteenth century: how should the nation be represented architecturally? Beyond this commonality, the articulation of diverse groups within the increasingly centralized profession was always a delicate balance, especially as the various movements gained strength in the early 1930s. Competition among groups ran particularly high in the late 1920s and until 1936, when members of these groups competed in "Fascistizing" (*fascistizzare*) their work.

Architects who were active in the profession's institutions and publications fell into roughly four groups: *Accademici*, or straightforward historicists; proponents of the *Novecento* ("twentieth century") movement, who aimed for a modernized neoclassical and neo-Renaissance style; *razionalisti* (Rationalists), who were not only "modernists" but for a time, the "young Turks" of modern architecture; and finally, architects such as Piacentini, whose work was versatile and who did not wed themselves to any one group permanently, drawing instead on the range of approaches and conjoining them according to circumstance.

Accademici steadily obtained important government commissions. In the early 1920s, Armando Brasini was one of the most important architects in Italy, and he was the first architect to be summoned by the government to work in a colony (Libya). But over the course of the Fascist era, the main contenders for state backing were members of the *Novecento* and the Rationalists – and both groups obtained it. The *Novecento* movement began in Milan in 1921. Through designs that were both "modern" and decorative, it sought to revive academic classicism in a new way. In addition, it had a regional bent, reflecting Milanese nineteenth-century neoclassicism. The Rationalist movement also began in Milan, in 1926, when the *Gruppo 7* (Group 7), an association of seven young architects, began publishing position papers that were clearly influenced by Le Corbusier's tracts. The *Gruppo 7* combined the Futurists' commitment to industrial form with the *Novecento*'s nationalist premise and classical grounding. At the same time, it clung to Italian historical identity and thus did not follow Futurists in their total

rejection of tradition; and it also condemned the *Novecento*'s reliance on classical precedent as excessive. In addition, the Gruppo 7 took a more-heroic-than-thou stance and claimed to be revolutionary, breathing (Le Corbusier's) "new spirit." In short order, other Rationalists came to the fore: Gruppo 7 heralded the movement's beginning, but it faded in importance by the early 1930s, giving way to more sophisticated readings of the problems of theorizing modernism.

Both the *Novecento* and Rationalism thrived. The first show of *Novecento* works (not only in architecture but in other visual and plastic arts) took place in 1926, and the second in 1929; the first show of Rationalist architecture took place in 1928, and the second in 1931. By the early 1930s, the variety of approaches was at its peak – particularly exemplified in the 1933 Triennial Exposition in Milan, which combined *Novecento* figurative arts with Rationalist architecture.[31] Yet this is also when inner divisions in the architectural profession became most pronounced – so much so as to cause a reaction and retrenchment, eventually leading to a more consistent blend of classical and modern approaches in state-commissioned buildings, and Piacentini's tightening grip.

In this arena of heated competition, the Rationalists were only slightly more self-promoting than their peers, yet their efforts to eliminate the opposition eventually compromised their position. Their aggressive criticisms of other architects wound up tipping the delicate balance of movements and protagonists. Beyond that, though, their internal factionalism and bitter disputes were probably even more to blame for their losing the slight advantage they appeared to have at the end of the 1920s. In their first show, in 1928 (the *Movimento Italiano per l'architettura razionale*, or MIAR), they had overtly attempted to ally themselves with the regime at the expense of other architects. Architect Pier Maria Bardi famously called on Mussolini to deem architecture the "Art of the State,"[32] a request that seemed to meet with Mussolini's approval. But in 1931, when Rationalists – by now internally reconfigured into in-fighting sub-groups – held their second show, their *ad hominem* attacks on other architects lost them some of the support they had enjoyed previously. The most egregious assault was by the same Bardi, who presented his "table of horrors," a collage of recent architectural works of which he (and his colleagues) disapproved.

While the Rationalists' initial belligerence soon cost them the tolerance of other architects, both the *Novecentisti* and the *Accademici* received commissions and carried on. In short order, Rationalist-designed public works were under attack in the public domain, including the Chamber of Deputies. Discussions in May 1934 about designs for a new Palazzo del Littorio (meant to be Rome's central Fascist Party headquarters) led to raised voices in the Chamber, insulting the architecture of the new town of Sabaudia and the Florence railway station. In particular, the line of attack that these designs were "not Italian enough" exploited the Rationalists' increasingly weakened position as "too international" within the more and more adamantly nationalist state. This turn against the Rationalists' ambitions was probably also partly responsible for the rebuffing of Le Corbusier from 1932 to 1936. Although he disapproved of how the new

towns of Littoria and Sabaudia had been designed,[33] Le Corbusier doggedly tried to become involved in the state's "New Towns" program, but he never obtained a meeting with Mussolini. (Later on, he also sketched a potential city plan for Addis Ababa.)[34]

Rationalists did not disappear any more than their colleagues did, but the transition into "the years of consent" after the Ethiopian war was reflected in the transition to a classicizing modernism – *stile littorio* – that was identified with Piacentini personally. The *stile littorio* combined current materials, technologies, and monumentality with direct references to the lintels and arches of classical orders, becoming the most visible imprint of the regime's building projects in its final years. In addition, Piacentini achieved his personal political hegemony by incorporating divergent approaches into the large projects of which he skillfully gained control. He neutralized his opponents – most of them, at least – by embracing them. Among the best examples of the coexistence of architectural veins in late 1930s Italy are the University campus (*città universitaria*) of Rome and the intended site of a 1942 World Expo, EUR (*Esposizione Universale Romana*), just outside of Rome.

Meanwhile, the domain of *urbanistica* moved increasingly toward radical interventions, and away from the preservationist subtleties voiced by Giovannoni two decades earlier. In Rome and other important cities, the government instigated "guttings" (*sventramenti*) that entailed large-scale relocations of residents – a far cry from the earlier emphasis on *ambientismo* and *diradamento*.

ITALIAN MODERNS

Having briefly explored the inner workings of the architectural profession's new institutional configuration, let us turn to the question that is crucial to all the developments charted in this book: what did "modern" mean for Italian architects and planners? Regardless of their particular orientation, these professionals all used the term in one way or another to describe the architecture they strove to formulate. Thus the term was ambiguous at all times: its meaning varied according to who used it, and in what context.

For all the groups concerned, though, in principle an Italian modern had to be self-generated even if, in fact, architects could not help but react to developments in international architecture. Thus one particular problem driving interwar Italian architects was: how could Italian architecture be in tune with international developments – and thus modern – and yet not be *too* international? Like architects of other nations that were similarly peripheral to the great powers of western Europe but engaged in a quest for occidental modernity,[35] they could either react against internationalism altogether by relying solely on the nation's own past, or attempt to integrate international work into their nation's new modern.

Those Italian architects who sought legitimate internal sources for a national modern to put them on a par with other Europeans – in parallel with

politicians who sought to dispel the old image of *l'Italietta* through both parity with, and autonomy from, Europe – had to tackle a second key question: how could Italian architecture reflect its historic origins in general, and its regional origins in particular, without merely imitating historical or regional models? Those who opted for an internationalist orientation, on the other hand, could not politically afford to lean so much toward the international that their architecture seemed insufficiently nationalistic.

Overall, architects turned to four rubrics of modern in their legitimation of various styles: "international modern," "historic modern," "traditional modern," and "Mediterranean modern." In "international modern" I include the works and debates of Rationalists, which overlapped with the modern movement elsewhere. "Historic modern" includes all adaptations of past architectural models, from antiquity to the Baroque. "Traditional modern" and "Mediterranean modern" stemmed largely from Rationalists' attempts to tone down their internationalism. Architects who "discovered" Italy's regional vernaculars claimed that these were the most appropriate, purely Italian bases for a "traditional modern." "Mediterranean modern" extended this appropriation beyond Italy itself: as we shall see in Chapter 5, dubbing Arab vernaculars in Libya "Mediterranean" enabled colonial architects to theorize their design work in consonance with the political appropriation of the colony. In the end, this tack would prove the most successful, garnering approval in Italy and abroad.

Because Italian architects used "modern" unstably, let us set their terms aside for a moment. At a fundamental level, the debates among architects veered between two basic sensibilities, or priorities: historicist and essentialist. Looking at the debates in these terms shows that they were simpler than they appeared, in the metropole and the colonies alike. In the most fundamental terms, Italian architects (like the politicians discussed in Chapter 2) were arguing about the exact place of their history in their modernity. The two sensibilities, of course, could never be mutually exclusive: they were closely intertwined, and both appeared in each strain of the rhetoricization of modern Italian architecture.

I classify the "international modern" as historicist, for both negative and positive reasons. Negatively, Rationalists were concerned first and foremost with escaping from specific historic models. On the other hand, their concern with what was "happening now" on the international scene, and their urgency in wanting to participate in the (international) modern "on time," marks the movement's positive preoccupation with the historic, i.e. their impulse to privilege Europe's future – and their relation to it – over Italy's past.

Giovannoni's formulations of *ambientismo* and *diradamento* were clearly in aid of the "historic modern." privileging the visibly historic parts of the built environment. *Accademici* approaches, which never strayed from Italy's historic models of architecture and ornamentation, were also clearly historicist, and *Novecentisti* also placed historical models in the first order of their sources. The Fascist regime's extensive use of monumental classical antiquity, Medieval and Renaissance urban fabrics and design models also exemplifies this historicist

stance.[36] And in Mediterranean colonial cities, Italian administrators' awareness of history (even if it was only Roman history) was at the heart of their planning policies, just as it was in Italy.

Both the "traditional modern" and the "Mediterranean modern," in contrast, were preponderantly essentialist. The theorization of each is owed to the Rationalists, when they sought to get away from the historicism of specific models *and* of their initial internationalist position. In their first writings, they had discussed historic models in terms of a "spirit," à la Le Corbusier, to which they could be faithful while abandoning the particular historic vessels of that "spirit," such as classical forms. Similarly, "vernacular" (or "traditional") and "Mediterranean" models were described in terms of their timeless essence. Rather than acknowledging that vernacular models were of necessity historically shaped, the theorizers of essentialist models described them as atemporal, non-elite, and belonging to loosely bounded geographic areas. Positioning the "traditional modern" and the "Mediterranean modern" as antidotes to the aporias of historical models, the architects who wielded them used their lack of historical specifics to override the particularities of history altogether. In the colonies, the anonymity of local vernaculars was used, in addition, to minimize ethnic differences as well: naming the local vernaculars "Mediterranean" obscured the fact that local models were developed by the colonized – who were presumed to be inferior – and left Italian architects free to imitate the local models without appearing to be politically subservient.

INTERNATIONAL MODERN

Let us return to the terms in which Italian architects themselves framed their search for the modern. The progress of Italian Rationalism is decipherable in two principal phases of both theorization and professional cohesion. The first began in 1926, when the first (and most frankly internationalist) Rationalist writings appeared in print, and includes the March 1928 MIAR exhibition. The beginning of the second phase can be traced to the same MIAR exhibition, as that is when fissures within the group began to form. New journals (*Domus*, *Casabella*, *Quadrante*) and new sub-groups soon emerged. Rationalists' debates reached their height in the early 1930s, when they argued over the quandaries of a nationalist internationalism and explored national sources for a legitimate modernism. Yet this was also the same period in which they entered into greatest conflicts, among themselves and with other architects.

Gruppo 7's original members included Giuseppe Terragni, Luigi Figini, and Gino Pollini – architects whose renown has endured – as well as Carlo Enrico Rava and Sebastiano Larco, who would soon become active in the colonies. The *Gruppo*'s first publication offered a clear genuflection to Le Corbusier: it echoed both his journal *Esprit Nouveau* and his *Vers une architecture*, proclaiming that a "new spirit" in architecture had been "born,"[37] and paying obeisance to the "rational" principle of aesthetics deriving from "necessity":

> The new architecture, true architecture, must follow from a strict adherence to logic, to rationality . . . the new forms of architecture must, at first, be given their aesthetic values on basis of necessity, and only as a result, by a process of elimination, will a style be born.[38]

The piece dealt with the obstacle of regional or national (i.e. non-universal) forms by dividing up types according to function: "industrial buildings, offices," and other "mechanical" types might "have similar appearances throughout the world,"[39] while "other architectural forms [would] conserve in each country . . . national characteristics, even in their utter modernity."[40] The "Hellenizing" aspect of the article was most apparent in its Le Corbusier-like comparison of "certain offices" with the Parthenon on the basis that like it, "they are devoid of anything superfluous, and they correspond only to necessity."[41] Hellenic allusions extended to the Group's fourth statement, in the proclamation that in its radical departure from existing artistic stances, Rationalism constituted "a new Archaic period."[42]

The author of the first and last of Gruppo 7's four initial statements in 1926 and 1927 was Carlo Enrico Rava, who would soon be a major participant in debates on Italian colonial architecture. As early as 1927, he also published under his own name apart from the Gruppo 7, responding to (understandable) accusations made against it of "Europeanism," a term implying that Rationalism was merely derivative of modernist work in the international arena, and could not solve the problems pertaining to a national Italian modern architecture. In a triumphalist and competitive tone typical of both the era and his own writings, Rava responded opaquely that "Europeanism" was a good influence for Italian modernist architecture, as it entailed Italian "ultra-nationalism: the whole of these works, whose qualities are so complete as to be of value anywhere, represents the civilization of a period."[43] Rather than admitting to the opposition's implications that "Europeanism" would only enslave Italians (once again) to the cultural dictates of other European nations, he asserted that Italy was on the verge of taking the lead of the modern movement. Italy was to become the center of Europe's "reborn Hellenism," which it would "bring . . . to perfection, and impose once again on the world in a renewal of the glory of Rome, which absorbed and assimilated Greek culture."[44]

In the long run, Rava was not the most important Rationalist theoretician or designer, for although he was ambitious, he was not the most incisive thinker among his peers. His many texts circulated important buzzwords, but ultimately their multiple arguments, borrowing from all the discussions in vogue, are difficult to reconcile.[45] He was several times the first to voice an idea (particularly a foreign one), but never the one to carry it through to greatest effect. Yet his career is important to this narrative because he was the most prolific writer on questions of colonial architecture. Thus it is worth noting that his ambitions led him to bully and alienate many of his peers,[46] all while he curried favor with international practitioners and Mussolini.[47] He sought out Le Corbusier's

endorsement in 1927 (without, apparently, obtaining it),[48] and in June 1928, he was one of the two Italian architects to sign the proclamation of the first CIAM meeting (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*).[49] The following year, he detached himself from the *Gruppo 7* (as did Sebastiano Larco, with whom he collaborated in Libya),[50] and from then through the 1930s he wrote more and more bitterly, demanding repeatedly to be acknowledged as the initiator of all that was avant garde in Italian architecture at the time. True to his pattern of using all the architectural-theoretical tropes he could, he began barking up new theoretical trees in 1931, appropriating historicist ideas by referring to "Latinity," while also promoting essentialist ones by formulating the first Italian version of "Mediterranean modern."

But by 1931, a younger generation of Rationalists was reaching its professional prime and publishing more sophisticated theoretical works. Giuseppe Pagano-Pogatschnig and Edoardo Persico, who were on the board of *Casabella* beginning (respectively) in 1932 and 1933, stood out in particular. They remained committed to architects' collective agenda of creating a modern, Italian, national architecture, but at the same time, they were reluctant to reiterate the familiar rhetorical peregrinations of previous years. In particular, they were inclined to point out the contradictions in many architects' arguments. Pagano-Pogatschnig acknowledged straightforwardly that Rationalism could not help but take classical forms into consideration (rather than pretending that only their "spirit" mattered); unlike *Accademici*, however, he was not interested in the monumental classical so much as "humble," day-to-day building techniques and simplicity.[51] This interest in "minor" architecture also led Pagano-Pogatschnig to explore Italian vernacular models, and to become one of the principal theorizers of a "traditional modern" in the mid-1930s.[52]

Edoardo Persico was especially critical of his peers' political aspirations. He opposed the "conquest of the state" that engaged many of them, and lucidly pointed out Rationalists' theoretical impasses and disingenous positions. In 1933 he objected to the idea that Italian modernism could be fully based in an Italian tradition, instead stating clearly that "today there is a style of European architecture."[53] In 1934, he took Rationalists to task for their new reliance on the idea of the Mediterranean as a legitimizing source for modernism, reminding everyone that Rationalism had in fact been drawn from abroad, and that fundamentally nothing was new.[54] In practice, "international modern" architecture in Italy continued to be built after this point, but as the Italian public sphere turned to increasing uniformity after the mid-1930s, the originality and fervor of these arguments died down, all while Piacentini's hegemony took hold of the overall architectural profession.

HISTORIC MODERN

The idea of turning to antiquity and other historic periods for architectural models was not new, of course. Even in the late nineteenth century, designers had sought to ground a national architectural style for the now-unified Italy in

any number of precedents. Furthermore, archaeology and architectural history were influential in defining legitimate artistic sources for Italian "identity" throughout the post-unification period. The novelty of the "historic modern," though, was the effort to make historic forms yield legitimate *modern* national architecture. In the 1920s Italian architects began to search for ancient "roots" in architecture that was not monumental – most especially housing. On the strength of archaeologists' interpretations, excavations in Ostia and Pompeii allowed architects to delve deeply into connections (as they saw them) between "modern" housing and Roman housing. As ever, archaeologists formulated terms that were fundamental for architectural rhetoric: in 1923, one explained confidently that Ostia revealed "the Latin origins of modern housing," along with:

> a spirit of modernity . . . which . . . continues to our day, with a vitality which we did not imagine. Many forms that were once thought to have been the product of new life needs and foreign influences, or ones that came after the Latin, turn out instead to be claimed by Roman architecture . . . [for] the most common modern housing . . . [we now see] a direct heritage from the Latin house through the Renaissance.[55]

Even though they claimed to disagree on every score with the *Accademici* (who advocated using ancient forms without substantial modification), by the early 1930s, Rationalists were also fervently discussing the ancient, seeking a less form-based affirmation in the historic.[56] In 1931, Rava, for instance, began to press clearly for an "Italianization" of Rationalism. In doing so, he turned toward the historic – which in his terms, was still "spirit" rather than forms – and the Mediterranean. Building on what Rationalists in the 1928 MIAR had described as *romanità* (Roman-ness), he invoked "the Latin spirit" (*lo spirito latino*). He still asserted that if they were true to their unique heritage, Italian architects would become leaders in international architecture; but on the other hand, he now asserted that excessive adherence to European modernism would spell "sterility" for Italian Rationalism.[57]

> We wish that . . . Italian architects would feel the need to create according to their race, their culture, and their personality; that they would find once again the joy of liberty and imagination; that they would dare to once again feel independent, designing their work . . . so as to reflect the climate of their time, the climate of Latin modernity.[58]

The epitome of the debates dividing "classicists" from "modernists" was the exchange over "arches and columns" that took place in 1933 between *Accademico* Ugo Ojetti and Piacentini. For Ojetti, architecture could not be specifically Italian unless it incorporated the arches and columns that had been integral to Roman architecture:

> Is the only thing that matters in architecture today, to be new and modern, and not to be Roman and Italian above all? . . . Triumphal arches, bridge arches, aqueduct arches, marketplace arches, arches of temples, arenas, baths, and palaces: the balanced power and justice of Rome could not have had a clearer, more easily legible symbol . . . Thus

> the column . . . [which] Rome thrust upon the entire world it pacified, tens of thousands of columns so that man would become accustomed to looking upward. The column was truly the flower of Roman art: firm and obedient, superb and measured.[59]

For Piacentini – who was leaning heavily toward Rationalist arguments in this instance – the insistence that building structures and outward forms be transparently linked meant that arches and columns were dishonest, masking the "truth" of structures; therefore, to use them merely for purposes of historical or national legitimacy was retrogressive, or explicitly anti-modern. He responded:

> Why don't you speak and write in Latin? Why don't you wear a toga . . . ? . . . Romans . . . used the column . . . as a typical, even unique element, in their *weight-bearing structures*, and it also appeared where it was pleonastic . . . Thus the column is the technical element that became expressive of *Civiltà*, lyrical and poetic: the ruling element . . . Today, the building systems we use are of iron and reinforced concrete, although not exclusively . . . it is the *sentiment* of reinforced concrete, the typical and dominant structure of our time, that is winning and imposing itself. It is only thus, by obeying the dominant forms, that we can succeed in creating a style . . . Our claim is to be Italian in another way: through the consciousness of being somebody *today*, and to count for something on our own merits, not only because we are descended from the ancients.[60]

Piacentini's invocation of "sentiment" here resembles the Rationalists' term "spirit," which they used not only to emulate Le Corbusier's "*esprit nouveau*," but also to reconcile antiquity with the modernity they were advocating. In other words, they still condemned imitation, but claimed it was possible to draw inspiration from the "spirit" of antiquity while building blatantly "modern" structures.

Giovanni Michelucci, the main designer of the controversial Florence railway station, made a case in 1932 for drawing directly on "'contacts' between ancient and modern architecture," such as Medieval and Renaissance walls in Florence. Unlike Rava, however, he described them in terms of their specific forms rather than their "spirit," calling them:

> works of the past, to whose form the sensibility of modern architects subscribe. These are simple forms . . . determined by the necessities of life . . . [T]oday their appearance is profoundly interesting for modern architecture, which is thirsty for absolute sincerity of expression.[61]

In 1934, the editor of *Domus*, Gio' Ponti, defended Rationalists' interest in antiquity on the basis of neither strict "spirit" nor forms, but of materials *as well as* forms – negating the specific historicity of structures and turning to the kinds of traits that would validate architects' interest in vernacular and Mediterranean buildings. In an article titled "Today's Moderns are like 'our Ancients'," he claimed that modern architecture resembled the housing of antiquity in

> [its] rejection of cement shaped to imitate stone . . . [its] taste for the beautiful color and flavor of whitewashes . . . [its] return to deliberate simplicity . . . loggias, pergolas, terraces . . . [and its] love of beautiful courtyards, enclosed gardens, hanging gardens.[62]

For all the architects who claimed they saw "the modern" in Italy's Roman excavations, the excavations did more than yield a clearly autochthonous source for Italy's modern. They also appeared to confirm that such sources proved that what Italians perceived as "modern" in the present was not, after all, imported or borrowed from foreign (other European) cultures; and in addition, that the "modern" did not have to signify a rupture with every aspect of Italy's past.

TRADITIONAL MODERN

Architects' interest in remote islands as unwitting museums of uncorrupted vernacular domestic architecture began long before the 1920s; in fact, the idea of an autochthonous modern had been afoot since as early as 1890.[63] Modernists elsewhere were turning to "the vernacular" for inspiration in the 1920s,[64] and in 1920s Italy – when concepts of Italian tradition in general were studied and even reinvented for ideological purposes[65] – architects' focus on the southern islands of Capri and Ischia gained new vitality and urgency, especially because some felt that the islands' simple architecture had been "stolen" by foreigners.[66] Italian architects who treated Capri as a rediscovered resource conveniently failed to mention that since the turn of the century, wealthy property owners there had not been drawing inspiration from the vernacular so much as from fanciful "Orientalist" architecture.[67] Instead, architects wrote about new houses built in the vernacular vein, glorifying their simplicity, practicality, authenticity, and functionality.[68]

In 1928, Ponti, editor of *Domus*, published a short proclamation about "the Italian house." First, he described all Italian traditional housing as follows:

> the architecture of the outside penetrates into the interior . . . [f]rom the inside the Italian-style house returns out into the open with its porticoes and terraces, pergolas and verandahs, loggias and balconies . . .[69]

Furthermore, he claimed that "in every language [these features] are known by their Italian names," which demonstrated their Italian origin and essence. In an additional gesture to distinguish Italian architecture from that of foreigners, he added that the "Italian-style house" was "not only a *machine à habiter*," a machine for living à la Le Corbusier; instead, it also reinforced what made Italians themselves Italian:

> So-called "comfort," in the Italian house, is not just in how it makes things correspond to needs . . . it is in something superior, in giving us through architecture a measure for our own thoughts, giving us with its simplicity a healthy setting for our way of life.[70]

In 1929, the year of the Second CIAM meeting, on the topic of "minimum dwellings," architect Plinio Marconi focused on "minimal architecture." He described Italy's vernacular in terms of "the fresh beauty of southern Italy's rustic buildings," "the stylistic derivations of Mediterranean minimal architectures," and "the singular relationship between these buildings and some aspects of the

modern architectural sensibility."[71] In Rationalist terms, vernacular architecture was modern because "[a]ll the architecture [is] in the construction and never against it," and it expressed the all-important "full correspondence between form and structure."[72] In 1932, Michelucci compared photographs of Italian farmhouses with drawings of typically international-modernist single-family houses (Figure 4.1). Like Ponti before him, his main goal was to re-appropriate forms that belonged – according to these theories – to the autochthonous Italian repertoire. He used the two farmhouses "to show how 'new' forms, which the not-very-attentive public defines as Nordic, or more precisely, 'German', also

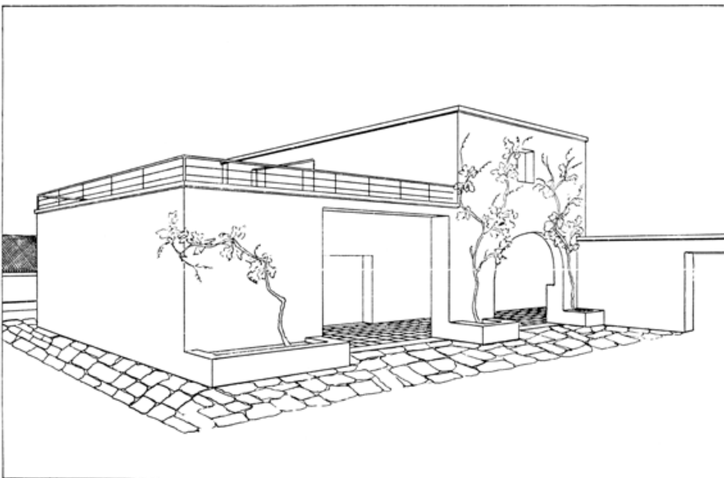


Figure 4.1
An Italian farmhouse and its correspondence to modernist single-family house designs.

have roots in Italy."[73] In particular, he (re)claimed the "terrace" as "a very ancient element, a Mediterranean element."[74]

Finally, 1936, when so many aspects of Italian internal and colonial policy shifted dramatically, was also the apogee of the vernacular architecture movement, which peaked in a large exhibition on "Italian rural architecture" (*l'architettura rurale italiana*). The organizers had created a broad survey of Italian vernacular types, which they described as an "immense dictionary of man's logic of construction . . . opening before our eyes in rural architecture."[75] By now, architects' appreciation for Italian vernacular architectural types extended to northern farmhouses as well as southern island dwellings. But it is worth noting that originally, the vernacular was identified exclusively with the south – a region, as we have seen, that was problematic for "modern Italians" of the north, who since unification had encoded the area as backward and Other. Thus even though architects cast southern vernacular architecture as unconsciously bearing Italy's autochthonous modernity, they did not by implication view southern Italians as modern. Instead, they implied that the modernity of the vernacular could only be understood and extracted by architects. Here, Italian stereotyping of southern Italians and colonized populations were virtually indistinguishable: under the rubric of "Mediterranean modern," northern Libyans were similarly described as vessels of an ancient modernity that could only be (re)discovered by superior northerners.

MEDITERRANEAN MODERN

While traditional-modern discourse referred occasionally to the "Mediterraneanness" of the Italian vernacular, a parallel set of theoretical elaborations was developing that was focused *primarily* on "Mediterranean modern" and its implications for Italian modernism and colonial architecture. Scholars have commonly credited Rava with initiating discussions of *mediterraneità* in modern Italian architecture,[76] as he did himself.[77] His original statement on the subject dates to 1931:

> We are the fated, centuries-old vessels . . . of this Latin spirit that Le Corbusier cannot get away from, this eternal Latin spirit that is returning to invade Europe: from our Libyan coasts to Capri, from the Amalfi coast to the Ligurian riviera, a whole vernacular architecture that is typically Latin and belongs to us, that is without age and yet is extremely Rational, that is made of white, smooth cubes and large terraces, that is Mediterranean and solar, seems to be showing us the way to retrieve our most intimate essence as Italians. Our race, our culture, our civilization both ancient and new, are Mediterranean: thus it is in this "Mediterranean spirit" that we should seek the characteristic of *italianità* [Italian-ness] that is still missing from our young Rational architecture, especially since this spirit certainly warrants the reconquest of [our] primacy.[78]

Significantly, though, Rava could not explain his own vision of the architectural "Mediterranean" without alluding to Le Corbusier. Indeed, rivalry with foreign modernist architects was the subtext to Rava's initial theorization of

"Mediterranean modern." Just two years earlier, French architects in Algiers had begun publishing articles titled "Towards a Mediterranean Architecture" (*Vers une architecture méditerranéenne*).[79] Although, in their title, these articles paid direct homage to Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* of 1923, in fact the authors were struggling in their own right to claim that their colonial architecture, "modern" and based in part on local vernacular models, was more site-appropriate than northern European modernist architecture that resembled their works in form. Understood in this context, Rava's piece not only advocated general design principles; it implicitly claimed that Italian architects were more entitled to appropriate Mediterranean vernaculars than northern modernists *or* French colonial architects were.[80]

In any case, the trope of "the Mediterranean," already so crucial in other spheres of Italian conceptual geographies, allowed Rava and other Rationalists to posit autochthonous and exclusive origins for Italian modernism. Rhetorically, it was the most successful solution to their political dilemma of promoting functionalist architecture without drawing on other European sources. Although some Rationalists, Persico in particular, did not support the turn to "Mediterraneity" (*la mediterraneità*), it enabled Rationalists as a group to fix a stable intellectual and political position for their designs. Politically, they could attribute their modernism to Italy's own south rather than northern Europe, all while designing works that were "up to date" with international modernism. Furthermore, as we shall see in the next chapter, "Mediterranean modern" was even more useful in stabilizing theoretical formulations in the North African colonial context, where it had the additional advantage of allowing Italian architects to borrow from local vernacular forms while claiming that they were not indebted for them to the colonized populations. Relying on "the Mediterranean" as Italy's natural claim, in other words, gave Italian architects the theoretical flexibility to echo both modernist works and North African housing while denying that they were drawing inspiration from any non-Italian sources at all – as one author did in 1937, claiming that "Italian architecture in Libya [was] Mediterranean rather than colonial."[81]

Chapter 5: Colonial Modern, 1920s–1940s

> The non-West, as its name implies, represents the non-place, terra incognita, the wasteland . . . But it also stands for the place of timelessness, a space without duration, in relation to which the temporal break of modernity can be marked out . . . [T]he colonial-modern involves creating an effect we recognize as reality, by organizing the world endlessly to represent it.[1]
>
> Timothy Mitchell, 2000

> Must buildings be dressed up, in a word, as Romans or as Moors?[2]
>
> Armando Melis, Architect, 1935

How did Italian architects' "colonial-modern" differ from their other theorizations? The terms of their colonial-architectural debates were virtually identical with those discussed in the last chapter, regarding all but one issue: difference. Self-conscious, state-mandated architecture in the metropole took an increasingly didactic turn in the interwar period, attempting to depict a unified Italy by minimizing architectural allusions to internal, regional differences. In the colonies, however, differences of ethnicity, "race," religion, and political-cultural capital could hardly be dissimulated (and it is unlikely, in any case, that Italian colonizers would have wanted them to be). At the same time, the incorporation of local ornamental elements also held great aesthetic appeal for many architects. More important still, many architects wished to emulate native structural provisions for local climate conditions such as bright sun and intense heat.

Even had they wished to, in any case, architects who theorized colonial architecture could not have sidestepped the question of whether to incorporate local architectural elements, as Italians had been practicing architectural syncretisms for some time before architects began to consider the subject. We have already seen that Italians bought and replicated local buildings in East Africa, and that their Asmara residences were often out-of-context transplants of European models; overall, by the 1920s cities in Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya were already

showcases of disorganized variety. As businesses and government invested more in the colonies – especially in Libya's cities from 1912 on – medieval, Renaissance, Art Nouveau, and international "Art Deco" styles continued to proliferate, in tune with Europeans' constructions in Tunis, Alexandria, and Cairo.[3] Worse still, to the architects who wrote on the subject, equally inappropriate European "neo-Moorish" concoctions began to appear among the most high-profile buildings in the colonial cities, namely hotels and restaurants (Piacentini, for instance, designed a "neo-Arab" Hotel Roma in Benghazi in the early 1910s[4]), as well as major banks and government buildings (Figures 5.1, 5.2).

When Italian architects began to comment on the colonial-modern in the second half of the 1920s, then, the question at stake was whether it was best to transplant European models of any or all historical periods; imitate local forms wholesale; build fanciful hybrids that belonged nowhere in particular; or follow other alternatives which had not yet been devised. In sum, if solving the problem of "Italian modern" in the metropole meant figuring out the place of history in modernism, the question here was to define the exact emphasis architects should place on differences between Italians and the colonized within their colonial modernism.

The complexity of the question emerged in stages. In 1925, just when archaeologists were defining what was historically and aesthetically "worthy" in Tripoli and Rhodes, Giovannoni first commented that Italians had begun to copy native buildings in Rhodes, and should break this nascent pattern. Another architect, Salvatore Cardella, soon made similar remarks with respect to North Africa.

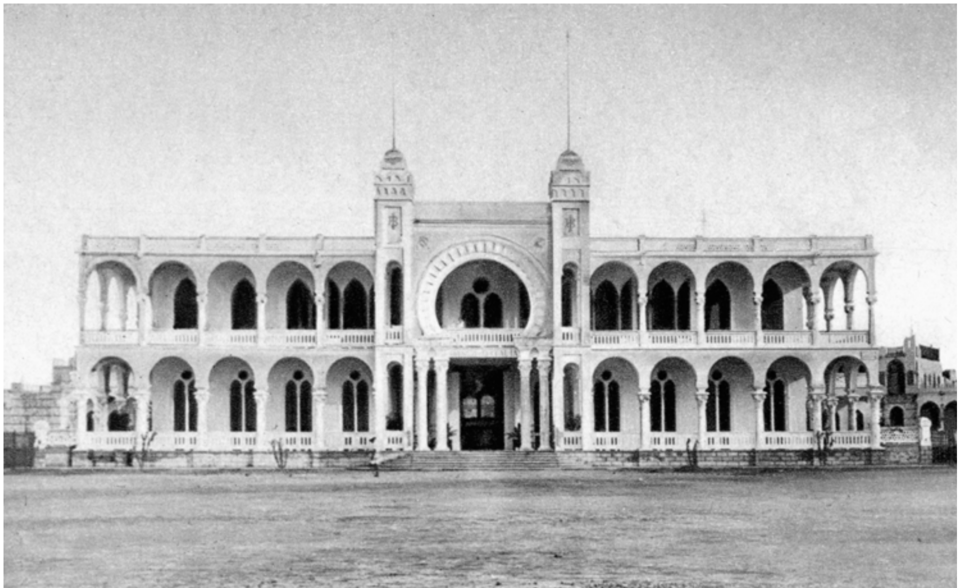


Figure 5.1
Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy) in Massawa, Eritrea (1925–1928, Architect Giuseppe Cané).

Figure 5.2
Palazzo del Parlamento (Parliament) in Benghazi, Libya (1921–1923, Architect Carlo Rossoni).

Novecento and *Accademico* architects – historicists – would continue to make such remarks through the 1930s, in the context of statements that what Italian colonial buildings *should* do was "speak" clearly of modern Italy and/or its Roman heritage, unambiguously proclaiming the colonizers' origins and superiority. A more complex set of positions began to develop in 1929, when Rava published his first contribution on colonial architecture and city preservation in Tripoli, describing local vernacular architecture in more positive terms than the Italians' own transplanted European models and faux hybrids.

From 1931, when Rava reframed his argument in terms of "Mediterraneanist" theorization and other Rationalists began to respond, through 1936, Rationalists (principally Rava, Luigi Piccinato, and Giorgio Pellegrini) discussed how to incorporate local elements, and which ones, into Italian colonial-modern architecture. These architects' overt admiration for the structural "functionalism" and ornamental simplicity of North African vernacular architecture was as central to their views as notions of historic value and Italian superiority were to those of the *Novecento* and *Accademico* architects. At a rhetorical level, however, adaptations of local architecture required complex justifications in order to avoid accusations of placing Italians "beneath natives" by building architecture similar to theirs. Drawing on the same theoretical arsenal they applied to discussions of Italian modernism in the metropole, Rationalists relied on principally essentialist tropes

for their arguments, emphasizing the vernacular's ahistorical design features – in this case, a "Mediterranean" rather than "Italian" regional vernacular – and invoking a Latin or Mediterranean "spirit" as well as Mediterranean climatic conditions.

Meanwhile, *Novecento* architects (Alberto Alpago Novello and Ottavio Cabiati in particular) held their own, calling for buildings that were *both* "modern" and "recognizably Italian" (i.e. not modernist). As they were not attempting to reconcile architectural practices of syncretism with a political ideology of Italian superiority and autonomy, their arguments did not require the complexities of the Rationalists. Furthermore, their authority was buttressed by the high-profile government commissions they garnered for some of Libya"s cathedrals and mosques and for Tripoli and Benghazi's new masterplans.

Discussions within and between both groups of architects culminated in the professional journals in 1936, and then began to fade almost immediately. Colonial architects and governments turned their attention to *urbanistica* and colonial segregation with the formation of *AOI*,[5] and by and large, Italian theorizing architects returned to their original silence on matters of colonial architecture and syncretism. It is, of course, worth noting that the period of greatest activity in discussions of Italian colonial architecture coincided with the era of most intense professional consolidation and artistic "pluralism" in Italy itself. From this point of view, battles between architects over the best designs for Italy's colonies appear to have been an extension of battles for professional "supremacy." Indeed, Mussolini had visited Libya in 1926, and various royal family members traveled to Italian holdings in North and East Africa, signaling personal interest in the colonies' development. Architects turn to colonial activism can therefore be seen as yet another attempt to earn the privilege of designing some of Fascist Italy's most representative architecture. I would add, though, that this temporal coincidence also underscores how inextricable theorizations of colonial architecture were from elaborations of modernism for the metropole, and vice versa. The colonial-architecture debates, in fact, involved only Rationalists and historicists (*Novecento* and *Accademico* architects) – the same groups who argued most vociferously about other facets of Italy's "moderns" – at the very same time that they argued nearly identical issues in the context of the metropole.[6]

Despite the groundswell of colonial-architectural interest from 1929 to 1936, however, the debates I describe in this chapter concerned *only* the architects who were active in the journals. These authors attempted viable generalizations, hoping to influence the shape of Italy's colonial cities – Tripoli in particular[7] – but government was only rarely involved except for sporadic interventions on a local level, such as De Vecchi's stripping of Rhodes' *Grande Albergo delle rose* in 1938. Furthermore, when they did occur, such interventions were usually directed at traffic and hygiene rather than the political implications of architectural design. Architects calls for a greater role in colonial urban development were eventually heeded in 1936, in the context of the newly-invaded Ethiopian Empire, when the government formed a "Central Committee on Building and City Plans" (*Consulta centrale per l'edilizia e l'urbanistica*) meant to oversee design and planning in

AOI's cities. But despite the prominence of several individuals on the committee, and the apparent success of the profession in having obtained the formation of such a group, the Committee's main activity consisted in evaluating city plans; definitions of colonial architectural "style" had already faded from view. Meanwhile, individuals and individual government offices continued to commission and build as they chose.[8]

Thus I would argue that when architects ceased to publish articles on the virtues of colonial vernacular architectures, theirs was a helpless silence. They had attempted to take a position of power in colonial architectural design, and failed; they therefore turned their hopes to colonial city planning. Publications on the colonial built environment after 1936 were authored by other specialists, including architectural historians – who picked up where they had left off in the early 1920s, dismissing aspects of local architecture that were not of Roman origin as "unworthy" – and field researchers of anthropological inclinations, who typologized the native material culture rather than considering its design benefits.

Because it may seem paradoxical to describe the entire project of a national colonial-modern architecture in terms of how Italian architects interpreted native architectural Other-ness, let us note that questions of syncretism in colonial architecture – whether to practice it, how to practice it, how to justify it, and what to name it – gave definition to all national colonial architectures in the modern era. British colonizers in India conducted enormous classificatory studies of Indian architecture, and came up with hybrid decorative styles along "Indo-Saracenic" lines.[9] French architects in North Africa and other colonial territories used deliberate, sanctioned syncretisms in their government-commissioned buildings.[10] Similarly, Dutch architects in Indonesia, Spanish architects in Spanish Morocco, and Zionist and Israeli architects in Palestine elaborated systems of syncretism for their local architecture.[11]

Finally, colonial syncretisms were always at center stage in European nations' depictions in the metropole of their colonial territories. Without fail, interwar European exhibitions related to colonial territories resorted to syncretisms in abundance for their own designs. In the Italian Triennial Colonial Exhibition of 1940 (*Mostra Triennale d'Oltremare*), for instance, Florestano di Fausto designed the pavilions representing the Dodecanese Islands and Libya, the very colonies in which he had designed multiple buildings for the Italian government.[12] In other words, the syncretisms that architects developed on the ground in the course of representing Europeans in the colonies were imported (or exported) to the metropole, suggesting that Europeans' means of representing themselves to the colonized turned out, inversely, to be the most appropriate vehicles for representing the colonized to Europeans.[13]

AGAINST IMITATING NATIVE ARCHITECTURE, 1925–1926

When Giovannoni first raised the issue of Italians' designs for new buildings in the colonies in 1925, he criticized a new church built outside Rhodes' old city,

describing it as an imitation of structures within the old city. His "dream" for the "new Rhodes," as he put it, was to honor the "glorious city of distant ancestors" – meaning, in this case, not Romans but medieval Christian knights, who had controlled the island prior to Ottoman rule – but he objected to architecture that obscured Italy's own present and future by reproducing predecessors' models. In Rhodes, there was no question of ethnic difference, and Giovannoni's resistance was not due to any fear of lowering Italians' standing in the colonial hierarchy. His point, rather more simply, was that Italians should design new architecture that "bears witness to present-day Italy's always lively potentiality, perennially on-fire genius."[14]

The writers to follow would voice similar sentiments, but with the added question of whether colonial superiority could be expressed while assimilating local, non-European architectural traits, or required excluding them altogether. The next publication to address Italy's colonial architecture concerned North Africa and, although it was brief, it struck the heart of the problem. In 1926 Salvatore Cardella, an architect with an interest in questions of modernism,[15] voiced the crux of the historicist view, assessing the architecture of Italians and natives in terms of historic "value." His article called on the government to take a hand in architectural developments in Tripoli, on the basis that "borrowing the architectural forms of the dominated population" betrayed a "falsity or spiritual misery"[16] which ran counter to the government's need for prestige. For Cardella, incorporating local design elements could be acceptable inasmuch as these were appropriate responses to the climate and other environmental factors, but he maintained that architects should avoid borrowing culturally emblematic forms such as horseshoe (or Moorish) arches. Above all, "local elements" should not "distort or overwhelm the essential tone of the colonizing people's art." Beyond these cautions, his only specific advice was to use Roman arches and architraves. Unlike architects' arguments in the 1930s about whether arches should be used in modern Italian architecture at all, his article suggested instead that the use of arches was inevitable, and foresaw a variety of materials – "stone, iron, or reinforced concrete"[17] – in their construction.

AGAINST INAUTHENTIC EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE, 1929

Carlo Enrico Rava's 1929 article on Tripoli, "We Must Respect the Character of Tripoli's Architecture" (*Dobbiamo rispettare il carattere dell'edilizia tripolina*), in contrast, not only voiced an appreciation for local buildings; it also expressed a holistic view of the city and its parts, placing unprecedented emphasis on the colony's landscape and its role in generating appropriate architecture.[18] By the mid-1920s "archaeologists of art" had already set a pattern of negating local architecture's local-ness, breaking it down into vestiges of Roman antiquity or more recent imports. Rava, who with his colleague Sebastiano Larco had begun his colonial career by designing a hotel built at Khums in 1928 (Figure 5.3), departed from this pattern by describing what he called "Arab architecture."

Figure 5.3
Albergo agli scavi di Leptis Magna (hotel near excavations of Leptis Magna), Khums, Libya (1928–1929, Architects Carlo Enrico Rava and Sebastiano Larco).

In his terms, the local vernacular (*architettura minore locale*) "represent[ed] the *true Arab style of Tripolitania*."[19]

His piece was as polemical towards Italians' architectural tastes as it was appreciative of the local vernacular. To begin with, he condemned all instances of what he called an "imaginary Moorish style."[20] Unlike Cardella, who had seen the use of Moorish elements as inappropriate because it was borrowed from natives, Rava explained that "the abuse of a 'Moorish' style" was inappropriate because it was European above all else, having no roots in Libya (which had never been under Moorish rule).[21]

> The *true* Moorish [style] only exists in Morocco and in the traces of Moorish rule left behind in Spain; but . . . in Libya there was never even the shadow of it . . . [this Moorish style] is not even really Moorish . . . instead, it is that style in which once upon a time hotels and seaside establishments were built on fashionable beaches, with an additional touch (as if that were not enough!) of reminiscences of Turkish and Persian architectures, of no particular authenticity.[22]

He was equally contemptuous of pure historicism, namely, *Accademico* repetitions of time-honored styles. But he reserved his most biting comments for European styles transplanted to the colony without any modification. Describing the European city outside the walls as "pleasing" in appearance, he voiced distaste nonetheless for the "little bourgeois residences in . . . that *Art Nouveau* that

was abandoned, thank God, almost thirty years ago even in the most provincial small European towns" and Italian buildings "in a fantasized Medieval" vein.[23]

In contrast to all such erroneous architectural approaches, to Rava's eyes "the Libyan Arab style" was instead "naturally in tune with the climate and the country's characteristics," and for this reason it offered "clues" toward the creation of a "colonial yet European architecture."[24] The architect admired native houses' simplicity and equilibrium: in their "general building mass, Arab houses are almost always extremely balanced."[25] Furthermore, he vouched for their comfort: "the Arab "patio" surrounded by doorways and terraces is the ideal, most logical solution."[26] Yet architects, he claimed, should strive for "freely understanding and interpreting" rather than direct imitation.[27] But on the other hand, while he further described his quest as one for a "fusion" of modernist sensibilities with local patterns – "*Italian colonial architecture* will be born of the felicitous fusion of environmental characteristics with taste and modern requirements"[28] – in practice, he appeared to advocate incorporating all the key aspects of local architectural tradition:

> For instance, it will not really be necessary for patio porticoes to have arches, just because arches are generally built in Arab ones; nor will doorways and windows with pointed arches always be adopted, just because they sometimes are in Arab houses; and so on . . . it will be understood how appropriate those large, flat, naked planes on the *external* walls are, because the house . . . will have few windows, as it faces the sun. Finally, useless decorations of cement and stucco will be abandoned . . . and if one wants to decorate the exterior of the house, one will resort to coloring the large smooth surfaces . . . with colors in which Arab houses are masterful, and which give the native quarters under the beautiful African sun a special charm.[29]

In 1929, Rationalists had not yet come under attack for excessive "internationalism," and here Rava made no attempt to justify drawing inspiration from local models. As a result, unlike articles from 1931 on, this piece did not rely on especially historicist or essentialist tropes, whereas later writers would lean heavily on claims that local vernacular architecture in Libya was "really" Roman or Italian, in form or in "spirit." Rava did comment casually in this article that the Arab patio was "intimately our own, since it goes back to the classical house of ancient Rome,"[30] but this was not the main concern of the piece, and the argument was not crucial to his general claims.

One respect in which the piece forecast many later ones, in contrast, was its invidious comparisons between Italian Tripoli and other European powers' colonial cities. Rava wished for a distinctive Italian and Libya-appropriate "architecture that would be to Tripolitania, or Libya in general, what the bungalow is to the British colonies."[31] His praise for the deliberately syncretistic neo-Moorish work in Lyautey's Morocco was more tacit, consisting in an admission that Moorish architecture was indeed indigenous there (as it was not in Libya). Rava's appraisals of French and British buildings in colonial settings were partly colored by his wish for Tripoli to become a world-famous resort. He felt that Tripoli "still

today has the potential of . . . becoming the most beautiful city of Mediterranean Africa,"[32] but naming "Pasadena and other California cities" along with Caribbean and Hawaiian locales,[33] he regretted that it did not match:

> what others have been able to create, with miracles of attention and artifice, in the most celebrated resort cities – nowadays much in vogue – of California and the West Indies, creating in such cities an exotic and colonial feel that is typical of the nature of these locations.[34]

MEDITERRANEANIST VARIATIONS, 1931

By the early 1930s, architectural circles' growing discussions of colonial architecture had begun to attract the attention of prominent critics. Roberto Papini, for instance, reviewed an exhibition of "colonial art" held in Rome in 1931.[35] His review did not offer any particular novelty in the domain of stylistic criticism, but it publicized architects' growing wish that government – in particular, the Ministry of Colonies – would oversee and coordinate architectural production in the colonies. Competitions in which young architects could vie for colonial commissions would ensure better, more consistent architectural design, and they would also benefit the profession as a whole. Thus the three articles on colonial architecture published in 1931 – by Rava; another Rationalist, Luigi Piccinato; and *Novecentista* Francesco Reggiori – appeared at a time when the profession's colonial stakes were growing. The prospect of a central role for the architectural profession made the colonies highly motivating indeed.

Rava had first interjected *la mediterraneità* into his theorization of Rationalist architecture in the January 1931 issue of *Domus*;[36] in May and June, he published two further articles in the same journal, working his "Mediterranean" views into his position on colonial architecture.[37] We have already seen that he was not as original in his Mediterranean analyses as he claimed to be, given that French architects in Algiers had been discussing architectural "Mediterraneanism" since 1929. Le Corbusier, meanwhile, traveled to Algiers in 1931, and developed his ideas for that city throughout the 1930s, with special attention to the key concept of "the Mediterranean."[38]

Rava's articles of 1931 resembled his publication of 1929 in that they still privileged the local vernacular as the most valuable and appropriate source of inspiration for Italians' architecture in Libya. In fact, here he analyzed "Arab architecture" in some detail, extending his earlier general remarks. But he had recast his arguments in different terms, molding them on the one hand to a Mediterraneanist rhetoric compatible with Le Corbusier's, and on the other, addressing the use of classical forms, which he had not done before. His discussion of "Arab architecture" now elaborated on the historicist idea that it was "really" Roman. One can see the effect of his recent shift of position on Rationalism, and Rationalists' general defensiveness about the "Italian-ness" of their internationalist architecture: Rava was at pains to trace the foundations of

colonial architecture to models that were unrelated to northern European modernism, and to find specifically Italian, i.e. "Latin" or "Mediterranean" sources for it.

Specifically, he justified drawing inspiration from "authentic Libyan architecture" by imputing to it three characteristics: its having been shaped by Roman influence; its "impulse of vigorous primitivity [which] is perfectly in tune with our most up-to-date modern tastes"; and its "general Mediterranean character."[39] He placed the Roman influence in the foreground, declaring that the local work bore "the true tradition of Rome, the unerasable . . . imprint of its dominion."[40] He detected Roman elements throughout North African housing, even in the "primitive:"

> [This] Roman influence (the real one, that of the practical organizing spirit of Rome . . .), [is] as of now, the most vital [element] in the design of the Arab-Turkish house, whose Rational plan is the exact reproduction of that of the ancient classical house . . . [and] best answers to the climate and the exigencies of the colonial life.[41]

Yet Rava still opposed *Accademico* copies of ancient buildings, and specified that while the "true Roman tradition continues," it was not to be found by "re-exhum[ing] trabeations and columns."[42]

Paradoxically, at the same time Rava advised architects to study the "Arab" architecture in order to draw on Roman tradition. Architects must use local examples because of their manifest design qualities; but they must do so with the understanding that these examples were actually mere vessels of the Roman "spirit." To imitate Libyan forms was therefore not to imitate the forms of the colonized population, but to obey the incentive of *Latinità* ("Latinity"):

> The Arab house . . . is nothing more than the ancient Roman house, faithfully reproduced . . . We will derive nothing from the Arabs, but will realign ourselves with the true, great Roman tradition, which has admirably resisted through the centuries . . . Taking up once more, with modern intent, the classical house design that has been preserved in the Arab one, we will perpetuate the work of Rome, creating the new in its traces . . . Thus we will conclude the eternal task of *Latinità* . . . [and be able to] renew and complete the still primitive local architecture of our colony, with all the most modern technical and practical innovations.[43]

This statement proposed three rhetorical solutions to the problem of colonial form, the first two of them historicist, and the third essentialist: describing the Arab house as Roman; describing the classical as modern; and defining the Arab house as Mediterranean (and therefore also Roman). First, by re-describing the Arab house as Roman, architects could imitate native architecture without ostensibly borrowing anything from the colonized subjects, while at the same time ensuring that their "new" designs would not disrupt the existing setting. But this also amounted to denying Libya any history, identity, or culture of its own, which Rava had not done earlier. As in so much of his compatriots' rhetoric when it came to the virtues of Italy's own vernaculars, Rava now depicted Libya as a mere repository for modern Italy's "roots," and echoing Romanelli, he

detected traces of Ostia and of the Byzantine Empire in remote parts of Libya.[44] He also began to see the apparently "Arab" house he had praised just two years earlier as a colonial fabrication rather than an authentic model, claiming it combined the Roman legacy with Ottoman syncretisms to form the "Arab-Turkish" house.[45]

Rava's second rhetorical strategy involved placing ancient architecture in the present and re-describing it as modern. Even though references to Roman architectural achievements legitimated the new Rationalist colonial architecture, to repeat these achievements blatantly would be unacceptably retrograde. For example, Rava feared that the Italian Pavilion at the 1931 Colonial Exhibition in Paris, a small copy by *Accademico* architect Brasini of the Basilica of Septimius Severus at Leptis Magna, would lead viewers to believe "that today's Italy, Imperial and Fascist, hasn't the force within to create its own, contemporary, colonial architecture."[46] If, on the other hand, architects reinterpreted the classical tradition as also modern, they could invoke the classical while claiming creativity.

Third, by invoking the term "Mediterranean," Rava's rhetoric overcame the difference between categories of "Italian" and "Arab." These two necessarily formed a dichotomy, but for designs to be both "purely" Italian and similar to local ones, there had to be some common ground. *La mediterraneità* solved this problem, allowing Libyan architecture to be "really" Italian, thanks to:

> the general Mediterranean character which . . . renders the very Italian local architecture of our Libyan coasts akin to that of our other Mediterranean coasts.[47]

In sum, modeling Rationalist architecture on the Libyan vernacular would lead architects unerringly to "the ever-lasting traces of an architectural *latinità* which is above all, profoundly Mediterranean."[48] Along the lines of Rava's more essentialist arguments, the ahistorical and apolitical aspects of the "Mediterranean" argument also led to questions of climate, of the environment's power to engender timeless architectural forms. He cited Libyan architecture's:

> Rationalism, most modern simplicity of exterior forms, its perfect adaptation to the necessities of the African climate, and its perfect harmony with Libyan nature.[49]
>
> Natural and climatic conditions here are in and of themselves what generate the architectural forms, and therefore these are, still today, perfectly, overwhelmingly Rational . . . no element is superfluous . . . it fully satisfies our modern aesthetic.[50]

Linking this perception of the Libyan vernacular to familiar statements in the metropole about the vernacular elsewhere in the Mediterranean, he mentioned Amalfi, Ischia, Capri, and the shorelines of Greece, finding them akin to "the simplest houses of Tripoli" and asserting an:

> obvious, extremely close kinship that links them all, and which leads us back to their common origin, the south: white cubes, sun-drenched terraces, under a very blue sky.[51]

Therefore, if a building was "Mediterranean," it could be called both "Italian" and "African" without contradiction; and if it was "Mediterranean," it

was modern, since it was both functional and ahistorical. Italian architects rhetorically appropriated Libyan architecture, which in this logic had only one *raison d'être*: the safekeeping of modern Italy's "roots," which were now to be the starting point for Italy toward its future. With the statement of an architectural modernity based on the Libyan vernacular, the Latin spirit of Italy became both antecedent and consequent, and Italian architects looked ahead to a glorious future:

> We will be able to . . . consider that we have impressed . . . the lasting sign of our present greatness, of our new civilization . . . the moment [has come] for the creation of a truly modern colonial architecture of our own.[52]

Typically, Rava had unleashed so many lines of argument as to muddy his main points. Tempting as it is to give great importance to the political implications of his many sub-points, it is worth remembering that his rhetoric did not determine architectural practices. If anything, his attempts to argue *everything* by stating several positions simultaneously proved self-defeating. It is as though he tried to reinforce his position from every possible angle, combining historicist and essentialist ("spirit"-based) arguments along with claims of environmental determinism.

By contrast, Luigi Piccinato, another Rationalist, wrote elegant and straightforward contributions, and his 1931 essay, an encyclopedia entry on "colonial architecture," took clear and solution-oriented positions. One of Piacentini's prize students, Piccinato had joined the Rationalists' MIAR in 1928. His career path was more mainstream, and arguably more successful, than Rava's: in 1933, his design for a "colonial house" won a prize at the Fifth Triennial Fair of Milan (Figure 5.4); he also participated in the design of Sabaudia, the best-known example of the Fascist "New Towns" program.[53]

Interestingly, although his designs were Rationalist, Piccinato's analysis rested more on historicist assumptions than essentialist ones. In "primitive" settings, which were "lacking in traditions" (as Italians generally saw "African" environments), Europeans' only architectural recourse was a "simple" approach, focusing on "climate" and "building materials."[54] In "civilized" settings, though, with "a culture, a tradition, an architecture, and therefore artistic values," Piccinato (echoing Giovannoni's *ambientismo*) saw the issue as "more complex," proposing that Europeans should make sure to keep the new colonial architecture apart from the old structures already in place.

Piccinato agreed with both Cardella and Rava that Italians' "neo-Moorish" buildings in North Africa had been inappropriate. Calling "neo-Moorish" the "Arab style," he deemed it a "hybrid and vulgar architecture" created by European architects short on inspiration and a reflection of the colonizers' "spiritual poverty." As for what Rava had called "Arab architecture" itself, though, Piccinato denied its existence altogether, asserting that:

> the local architecture on the African coasts is, in character, not so much *Arab* as it is *Mediterranean* . . . an architecture of masses, white and luminous, simple, closed to the outside, rich in volumes and poor in decoration.

Figure 5.4
Model colonial house, 5th Triennial Exhibition of Milan (1933, Architect Luigi Piccinato).

Rather than searching for "spiritual" roots to the local architecture, Piccinato asserted a specific path of historic and geographic diffusion long after the demise of the Roman Empire, naming influxes from Italy, mediated through other Mediterranean agents in the early modern era, the Turks and Maltese:

> Unfortunately colonial architecture . . . has used imitations of the local style . . . All the cities of North Africa, Persia, and India are filled with stylistic imitations of local art, often misunderstood, as for example in the two Libyan colonies [Tripolitania and Cyrenaica], where [architects] believed they were working in the local style when they built in an Arab style that had never existed there . . . [55]
>
> Native and Turkish architects themselves, prior to the European occupation, had already diffused the *Maltese* style, which contains many elements of Italian derivation. It does not conflict with the tone of the old quarters, whereas modern pseudo-Arab architecture is foreign to the local populations' comprehension and soul.[56]

But even though Piccinato (unlike Rava) did not encourage his colleagues to draw inspiration from these local forms, he believed in the possibility of "modern colonial architecture."[57] Like Rava, he praised the English bungalow, "the type of house adopted in nearly all the advanced areas of colonial penetration." At the same time, bungalows or other models for domestic architecture would not do for "major," representational architecture.

Finally, in the same year Francesco Reggiori used the same terms as Rava's

and Piccinato's articles, but to a strictly historicist end, promoting "classical" colonial designs by *Novecento* architects Alpago Novello, Cabiati, and Ferrazza in Benghazi.[58] Reggiori too believed that there were "traces" of Italy's influence, Venice's in particular, in Libya.[59] His main emphasis, though, was the idea of making a distinctive mark in the colonial setting: important buildings should be "fundamentally classical" works, rather than ones of "Mediterranean" inspiration.[60] Congratulating himself and other *Novecento* proponents on the movement's growing success in Libya, he boasted that "now Mother Italy is returning in new garb . . . sincere and modern."[61]

RATIONALIST PRACTICALITIES, 1936

The quantities of articles published between 1931 and 1936 praising architects' designs in Libya reflected architects' efforts to expand their professional horizons to the colonies. Furthermore, many of the articles rejoiced in the variety of architectural approaches, creating an architecturally polyphonic effect in which *Accademici*, *Novecentisti*, and Rationalists would appear to have worked harmoniously to create rich effects. But after the international economic sanctions against Italy in retaliation for its attack on Ethiopia instigated Italy's period of "autarky," or economic self-sufficiency, Rationalist architects' final discussions about colonial architecture turned to highly practical issues of climates, materials, and costs – all the more so because the mid-1930s declaration of Empire resulted in a greater demand for housing in the colonies. Elaborate theorizations were a luxury architects could no longer afford, and their articles began to describe usable models rather than theories.

Piccinato, who had always been less ideologically motivated than some of his colleagues, published three articles in *Domus* in 1936, on "the colonial house" and "building in the colonies."[62] Some of his statements repeated earlier discussions, such as those regarding "Arab style." But the series was not concerned with local architecture per se. Instead, it addressed problems of creating models for Europeans' colonial houses in both North and East Africa. Rather than elaborate historicist or essentialist justifications for incorporating local models into Italian ones, these articles took only practical factors as their premise: "the climate, the system of life, and construction materials."[63] The house should be "organized in function" of environmental factors;[64] viewed in terms of its "economy" in balancing these factors with available materials; and it should also be approached as an "organism" dictated to by local necessities, which differed from those in Italy.[65]

To follow these practical requirements, Piccinato analyzed local architecture in terms of specific components. The two useful North African house types he named were the small Arab courtyard house derived from "the purest traditions of the Mediterranean house" – which he also called "the Latin courtyard house," adding that it "shows us a logical, economic, and Mediterranean solution"[66] – and the multi-storied house with outward loggias and porticoes, which similarly

offers protection from sun and dust, ventilation, privacy, and economy (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). Piccinato then generalized principles of climatic determinants of subtropical and tropical environments. Although he did not spell them out, these generalized principles had specific implications for Italian settlers in East Africa. In such settings, ventilation was still a key problem, as was the sun. In addition,

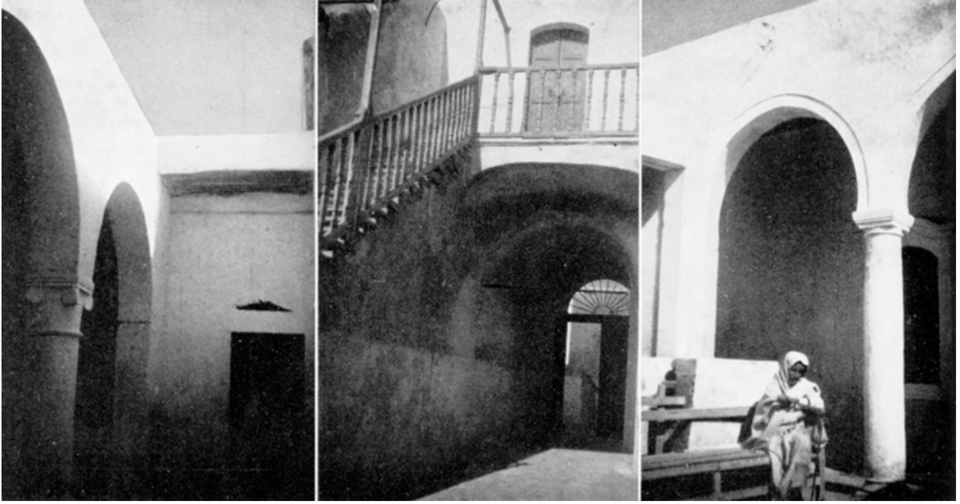


Figure 5.5
Views of an "Arab courtyard" analyzed in search of an appropriate Italian colonial architecture by Luigi Piccinato in 1936.

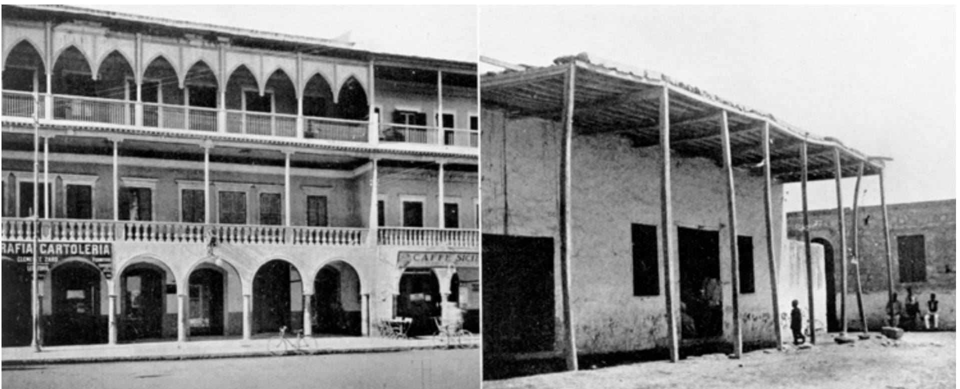


Figure 5.6
North African "loggias" analyzed in search of an appropriate Italian colonial architecture by Luigi Piccinato in 1936.

though, the house had to be protected from torrential rains and insects, both of which made wood a delicate building material. As did his colleagues, Piccinato named the British bungalow as the design best suited to such climates.[67] Yet in regards to Italians' designs, he only singled out the bungalow's most critical element: the verandah (Figures 5.7 and 5.8). Equivalent to the courtyard and loggias of North African houses:

> the covered verandah . . . is undoubtedly . . . the most significant and characteristic element of the tropical house. It is . . . the place of rest and leisure during the coolest hours of the day . . . [where] one welcomes friends, . . . relaxes, reads, [and thus must be regarded as] an important constituent element [rather than as an accessory to the house].[68]

Finally, Piccinato's most detailed analysis – of materials – espoused what he called a "structural-technical" point of view.[69] His key question was the extent to which European architects should use local materials, as opposed to integrating advanced European technologies into colonial building. Given economic constraints, he encouraged architects to become familiar with local materials and techniques, and use them in combination with European ones, or adopt them altogether while "perhaps refining them."[70]

Giovanni Pellegrini, another Rationalist, also published three articles in 1936, similarly advising architects to follow the clues of climate, materials, and local housing.[71] Pellegrini had moved permanently to Libya after completing his

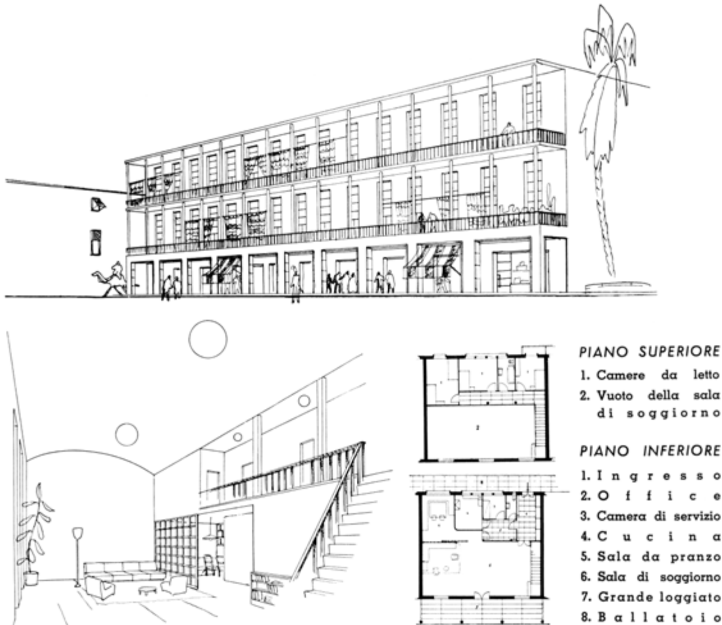


Figure 5.7
Design for a colonial apartment building, Luigi Piccinato 1936.

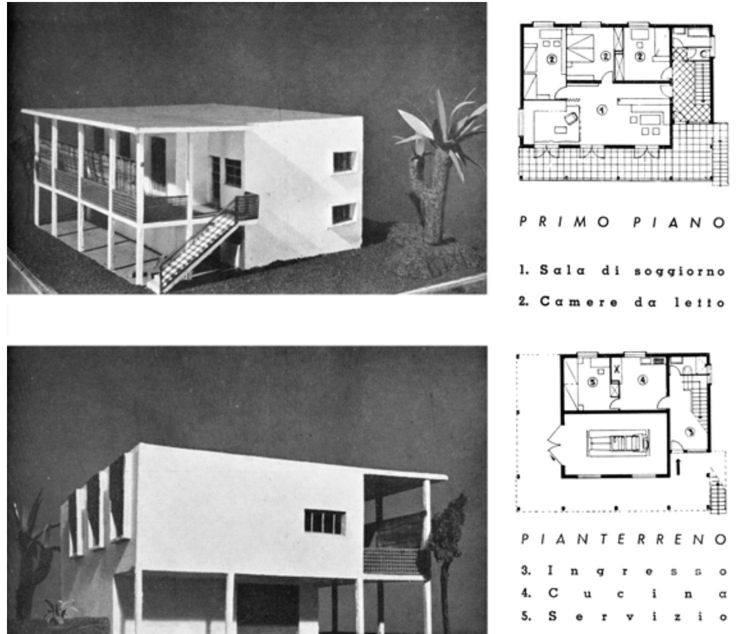


Figure 5.8
Model of a colonial house, Luigi Piccinato 1936.

architectural training in Milan and committed his career to the colony.[72] As a result, he was responsible for many residential structures in 1930s Libya, ranging from workers' housing to villas (including Rodolfo Graziani's), apartment buildings, and agricultural villages for Italian settlers (Figures 5.9, 5.10, and 5.11).[73] But while he built a great deal, he published very little. The articles he published drew attention to local vernacular structures and spaces, with the help of many illustrations – and none of these were of the work of Europeans. Nonetheless, because one of his articles was titled "Manifesto of colonial architecture" (*Manifesto dell'architettura coloniale*), scholars have often treated his article as typical of Italian colonial architects' views, or a summation of their debates. While his appreciation for local buildings was shared by other Rationalists, though, his statements were quite polemical, rather than mainstream. Instead of analyzing local buildings in terms of elements or components that Europeans should adopt for climatic reasons – and Piccinato, for instance, had been very clear in sorting out elements that they needn't adopt, insofar as Europeans' needs were more refined than those of natives[74] – Pellegrini stated flatly that "the European can live in houses of this type very well."[75] "The Arab house," with its "centralized plan" and private patio, offered the best solution with respect to physical conditions in Tripoli, and dwellings "must follow the native type with central courtyard."[76] His only concession to the idea that European buildings were better than native ones was in the technical domain. Thus he suggested combining local

Figure 5.9
Villa in Tripoli (*circa* 1935, Architect Giovanni Pellegrini).

structural bases with European technical know-how and materials, that is, "resolutely combining [local models] with all that modern technology and modern aesthetics calls for."[77] In sum, for Pellegrini the lessons to be drawn from local houses were practical (i.e. their inner courtyards) as well as aesthetic (cubic shapes, loggias), if not all technical.[78]

Despite Pellegrini's more resolute acceptance of local models, Rationalists clearly agreed among themselves more than ever before. They had all turned to climatic determinism and away from essentialist and/or historicist justifications, and this simplified their arguments considerably. Rava's "practical turn," meanwhile, was more political than technical. Rather than delving into colonial-architectural models, he positioned himself as the grand old man on the subject, expressing bitterness over not being treated as such, and passing critical judgment on Italian architecture throughout the colonies. In 1936, in addition to two short articles that were predominantly about his own place in the field and the inadequacies of most other architects,[79] he published two longer pieces on "building in the colonies" in *Domus*, alternating with Piccinato's articles.[80]

As with his 1931 articles, Rava's 1936 texts were a bit of a hodgepodge, taking several positions at once and reiterating some of his own well-worn ideas.

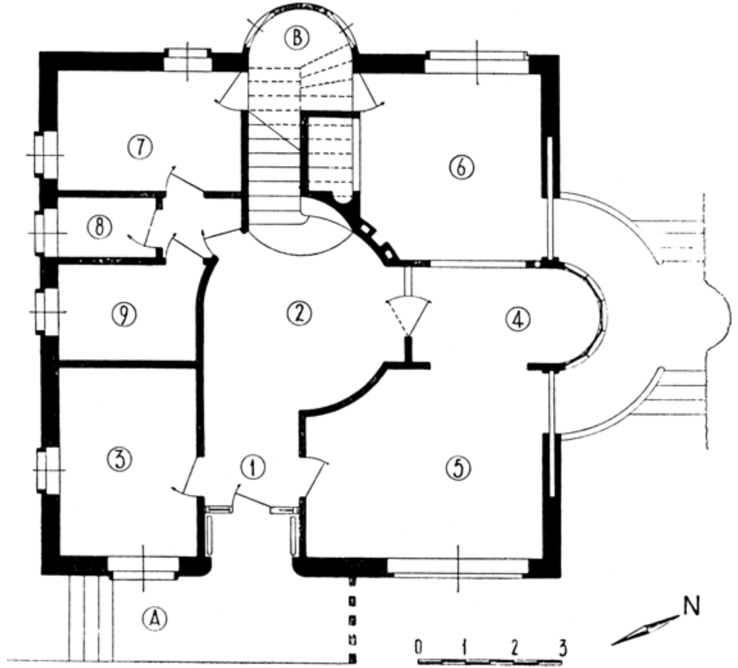


Figure 5.10
Villa in Tripoli: plan (*circa* 1935, Architect Giovanni Pellegrini).

Figure 5.11
Apartment building in Tripoli (*circa* 1937, Architect Giovanni Pellegrini).

Their novelty was in the strength of their political statement, that the government should take a more active hand in overseeing architectural work in the colonies. This was not an entirely new idea – the critic Papini had written something to the same effect in 1931 – but the new stress on Empire made the time ripe for architects to press more forcefully for official involvement. Indeed, just days after Mussolini's declaration of Empire on 6 May 1936, Piacentini had sent the dictator two letters volunteering his services to create a master plan for all of Italian East Africa, as well as a coordinated design program that would prevent egregious developments like the "neo-Arab" works of Tripoli and Benghazi. (Not surprisingly, he omitted any mention of his own "neo-Arab" works in these cities.)[81] Piacentini also issued a call to Italian architects in his journal, *Architettura*, urging them to participate in the development of *AOI*.[82]

Rava's own entreaty tended toward blame, accusing colonial governments of relying on engineers in the government's technical offices (*Uffici tecnici*) rather than architects. In Addis Ababa and Asmara, he charged, extensive new building was taking place without the involvement of any architects, and this would lead to a repetition of Tripoli's lack of architectural coordination. Rather than simply volunteering himself to solve these problems, he proposed a "Colonial Architecture Committee" (*Consulta coloniale per l'architettura*) that would mediate between the Architects' Unions and the Ministry of Colonies, orchestrate and oversee architecture and city plans, and spearhead national competitions to attract young, well-trained, ambitious architects to colonial work. As we shall see in Chapter 6, such a Committee was eventually created; it did not include Rava, however.

NOVECENTO CONTINUITIES, 1936

While Rationalists had journeyed from high theory to extreme practicality in the previous five years, *Novecento* architects' views had not varied. They supported the use of a "modern," or renewed, neoclassical style; they held that the admirable qualities of local domestic architecture were "really" Roman, and Rationalists had not acknowledged such origins sufficiently; like the Rationalists, they disliked misplaced eclecticisms; and they believed important buildings should be monumental and signify the difference between colonizers and colonized clearly – as summarized by Armando Melis in 1935: "Must buildings be dressed up, in a word, as Romans or as Moors?"[83]

Of such architects, Alberto Alpago Novello and Ottavio Cabiati (sometimes in collaboration with a third architect, Guido Ferrazza) were especially well known in Libya for designing major buildings and the new master plans for Benghazi and Tripoli in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[84] The two architects published articles in the same issue of *Rassegna di Architettura* where Pellegrini's three articles also appeared. Alpago Novello's title, "Romans or Arabs?," echoed Melis's, although it also corrected it subtextually, as there had been no Moorish occupation in Libya. Alpago Novello reiterated the view that local courtyard

houses were of Roman origin, but in a specific rebuke to Pellegrini's statements regarding "the Arab house," he added: "I am not convinced that we architects must propose these as models today while forgetting the originals."[85]

Ottavio Cabiati, meanwhile, explained why the colonizers' architecture should illustrate the colonizers' difference clearly.[86] According to him, the eclecticism of the past had given natives the wrong impression, allowing them to believe that Italians were "not mature enough to affix signs of [their] civilization."[87] More specifically, he distinguished between private, domestic buildings and public (civic or religious) ones. In the private domain, he allowed for all the variations from neo-Moorish to locally-inspired Rationalist works, but:

> the architecture of public buildings must . . . serve the purpose of gaining the respect of the natives . . . All the public buildings of a colonizing people in a land that has been submitted to their sovereignty, be they civil or religious, must speak a language that is clear enough, to the subjected populations, and to the guests. There must be no doubt as to the character of the culture and the civilization of the nation that erected those buildings.[88]

Overall, these articles convey the tone of confidence that comes with being at the center of professional practice. Rather than condemning Rationalist works, for instance, *Novecentisti* deemed them appropriate for housing, but not for large public works and government buildings. Even more interesting, though, is how much these architects had come to echo Rationalists' earlier negative positions on eclecticism and the neo-Moorish. Similarly, Piccinato had forecast their emphasis on more monumental styles for more important buildings in 1931. By the end of the colonial-architectural debates, in other words, the core lines of disagreement between the two groups had emerged clearly. Ultimately, their differences concerned whether "Mediterranean" architecture, drawn from vernacular models and bearing only sparse ornamentation, was suitable for important official buildings; and whether that architecture should be classified as Roman.

THE AESTHETIC RETURN, 1937

At this juncture, publications continued to multiply, but they almost always reiterated the positions that had been voiced over the last decade. In 1936, the Architects' Union held colonial-architectural conferences that mostly rehashed works already in print.[89] The only innovation was some architects' subtle reorientation to *Italian* vernacular architectural traditions, rather than local ones, as a basis for colonial designs.[90] In fact, this distinction was largely semantic, as it spoke of identical architectural practices. Yet its emergence is worth noting, as it marks the end of the era when architects justified their practice of modeling work in Libya on local buildings by discussing the history or essence of those buildings. Now, instead, they renamed what they were doing as a direct inspiration from strictly Italian vernacular models. Besides this new twist, though,

no new voices or positions developed on the subject: when one architect published a summary of colonial-architectural theorizations in 1940, it offered nothing that had not been touched on by 1936.[91]

Rava continued to publish on matters of colonial architecture, increasingly appearing to flog a dead horse. He reiterated his colonial-architectural intellectual trajectory, quoted voluminously from his own publications, and continued his *ad hominem* attacks. Disagreeing with the general opinion that the East African colonies had no architectural traditions of any importance, he still promoted the adaptation of local forms, now justifying it on the basis that it was in "the true and great Roman tradition" to "re-adapt characteristic local patterns . . . [while] imprinting them with the dominant signs of superior civilization."[92] He also continued to claim that all truly modern Italian architecture was of entirely original national derivation, with the new expression (in keeping with the times) of "architecture of Italian race;"[93] and to call for a more important official role for architects in determining colonial-architectural policy.[94]

But Rava also expanded his professional range to interior decoration and furnishings for urban colonial life, organizing part of the Milan Triennial Exhibition of 1940.[95] Just as syncretistic, colonial designs "returned" to the metropole in colonial exhibitions, here, in "high-class accommodations for every need of the colonial life,"[96] what had once been seen as primitive traits became subject to stylization. Italians should choose their colonial furniture according to whether they were "nomads" or "settlers," and earthenware dining services "renew[ed] the old techniques of North African potters." In a direct continuation of colonial-architectural discourses, Rava added that these North African potters "perpetuate[d] an art inherited from Rome, colonizer and conqueror."[97] And in another quotation of earlier themes of re-appropriation – inverted, this time – Rava described native artisans as rediscovering their own traditions, returning to the "primitive," working through it by "modern" means, and deriving a "Mediterranean" result:

> The return of native craftsmen to primitive sources, free of the infiltrations, adulterations and superimpositions of an entirely false Arab/Moorish "style" . . . will come about within modern designs of a very controlled taste . . . [this will be] an anti-exotic production, of a happily "Mediterranean" character... which should make it appropriate and refined, not only for the colonies, but also in Italy.[98]

Rava continued to pursue this vein of decoration and practical furnishings, publishing a twelve-part article in 1941.[99] After the war, he went on to a career in movie-set design.

The period of colonial-architectural theorizations had come to a close. But other kinds of texts regarding the colonial built environment appeared in growing numbers. These new remarks focused on aesthetic refinements, or on assessing "historic" worth – reviving, in fact, the lines of argument presented in architectural historians' and archaeologists' texts of the early 1920s. On the one hand, architect Florestano di Fausto wrote an article describing "his"

Mediterranean; on the other, a long essay by a prominent art historian re-opened a view on the local as aesthetically unworthy.

Di Fausto was the most prolific Italian architect working in the colonies and other foreign settings.[100] In the service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he designed Italian consulates in Belgrade, Nice, Algiers, Tunis, and London, from 1920 into the 1930s; participated in the master plan for Tirana; and orchestrated the master plan for Rhodes, while also designing many of its buildings. After being dismissed by Rhodes' Governor Mario Lago in 1927,[101] he kept his position with the government in Rome, eventually going to work in Libya under Governor Balbo in 1934. As we shall see in Chapter 7, parts of Tripoli were re-shaped while he was chief architect there: his large hotel-casino "Uaddan" rose along the waterfront, and he completed the *piazza* fronting the Cathedral. Meanwhile, he designed house types for the agricultural settlement programs in Libya, and housing for Italian employees in Ethiopia as well.

In addition to being prolific, di Fausto's work was extraordinarily versatile, borrowing from local decorative elements of all sorts. In Rhodes, he inflected buildings throughout the new city with Venetian accents – because the islands had at one time been under Venetian control – from the Governor's Palace (Figure 5.12) to the Hotel of the Roses (on which he collaborated; Intro.2). For housing, he developed a nearly Rationalist idiom – simple and functional, and yet sporting arches (Figure 5.13). Flying in the face of the *Novecento* idea that the larger the building, the more non-native it ought to be, he designed more than one luxury hotel to look like a vernacular complex, cloaking the Uaddan's casino in the guise of a Libyan mosque, with its distinctive small cupolas (Figure 5.14).[102] For an office building across from the Lombard-style Tripoli Cathedral, he designed a monumental arched façade that could easily have been Piacentini's own semi-classicizing work (Figure 5.15).

Yet di Fausto had never published in the architectural journals. In fact, when *Novecentisti* and Rationalists made snide remarks in their articles about

Figure 5.12
Palazzo del Governo (Government Offices) in Rhodes (1925–1926, Architect Florestano di Fausto).

Figure 5.13
Residence in near Rationalist idiom yet boasting "Roman" arches (*circa* 1937, Architect Florestano di Fausto).

inappropriate "folkloristic" tendencies in colonial architecture, as they did for years, they were referring above all to di Fausto's work. All the debates on "the Mediterranean" had transpired without di Fausto defending his work or any particular position. And now, when the debates had died out, some critics praised di Fausto as "the" architect of colonial Libya, for remaining refreshingly unaffected by architectural or theoretical fashions.[103]

His article, titled "The Mediterranean Vision of My Architecture," squarely grounded his entire body of work in the Mediterranean context.[104] But his Mediterranean was not the Rationalists': rather than a gloss for timeless vernacular works of North Africa, it was specifically Eurocentric:

> I have not betrayed my land, nor my sky! And my colonial architecture . . . could not betray it as a result . . . Architecture was born in the Mediterranean and it triumphed in Rome . . . thus it must remain Mediterranean and Italian.[105]

Di Fausto's Mediterranean was also decidedly historical: indeed, he began by stating that "no sea is rich in history like the Mediterranean" – by which he meant Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Christian histories, rather than Semitic or Ottoman.[106] He then claimed it was his "certain sense of history" that guided him, rather than "ephemeral fashions."[107] But it is especially striking that he invoked history as a basic pattern book for his designs. Other architects had long invoked history for the purposes of justifying the incorporation of local forms into their designs; di Fausto, unlike them, made no attempt to justify his eclectic approach.

Regarding specific forms, he explained that his work "reconcile[d] the lines of pyramids with the lines of Roman triumphal arches."[108] As ever, the arch represented all things classical, powerful, and historically legitimate:

Figure 5.14
Uaddan Hotel and Casino in Tripoli (*circa* 1935, Architect Florestano di Fausto).

Figure 5.15
Offices of the Istituto Nazionale Fascista per la Previdenza Sociale (National Fascist Welfare Institute) in Tripoli (1938, Architect Florestano di Fausto).

> The arch cannot be excluded from any architecture . . . the arch is a thing entirely our own . . . It is by the arch that buildings become dimensions of the spirit, more than by their material dimension.[109]

In some other respects as well, his statements were continuous with earlier themes of colonial spatial politics. In his own iteration of *ambientismo*, he claimed that the ensemble of his work in Rhodes added up to a "harmonious whole," which he had achieved by "nostalgically reliv[ing] the Hellenic life, the Oriental life, and the Gothic life of the Knights, in a supreme osmosis."[110]

Finally, di Fausto used the term "spirit," but in a departure from the Rationalists' usage. The styles left by history, he claimed, reflected each past culture's "spiritual tendencies."[111] Thus he had arrived at his own designs through interpretive communion with such past achievements:

> I did not place a single stone without first filling myself with the spirit of the place, such as to make it my own; and it was only afterwards that the new work emerged, like the blossoming of a tree.[112]

Di Fausto's overall presentation suggested that his work depended on his own ability to select from among historical models, in harmony with specific sites, as much as it did on the existence of history's pattern book. Indeed, his claims to a specifically Italian understanding of history and architecture echoed Crispi's earlier assertion that Italians possessed a unique artistic genius: "For us Italians, there is really no need to search far and wide for the truth [of history], which instead is so very close to us."[113]

At the precise time when colonial architects had begun calling for uniformity, consistency, and centralization in the field, di Fausto's article asserted his victory on the ground in creating buildings and urban areas that were unpredictable and ornamental, non-dogmatic and context-specific. In effect, di Fausto had the last word, countering the many remarks by other architects that his work was too "folkloristic": his buildings dominated Libyan and Dodecanesian settings.

Meanwhile, a forceful analysis by art historian Fabrizio Maria Apollonj spelled out especially clearly the new politics of distance from the native that now pervaded all aspects of Italian colonial politics.[114] Di Fausto had not mentioned local vernaculars in his text; Apollonj, instead, articulated disdain for any claims that the vernacular of North Africa had value. For him, Libyan vernacular architecture bore no relation to Italian architecture, being entirely Other and not up to Italy's level of civilization, and for this reason it must not be used as a model for modern Italian colonial architecture.

He began by pointing out how familiar Libya's coastal landscape seemed to Italians, but emphasized that the colony's *people* dispelled this illusion of familiarity. Their impoverished architecture, or "Arab buildings," demonstrated their unbridgeable difference from Italians – and proved that it was a mistake to try, as the Rationalists had, to reconcile the local vernacular with their modern colonial work.[115] The architecture of ordinary houses, instead, only served to reveal "in its entirety the poverty of artistic and specifically architectural value of Arab building in this country."[116]

Apollonj's analysis of local monumental architecture, on the other hand, amounted to a return to Romanelli's early analyses of Tripoli's architectural vestiges as entirely imported. Rather than looking for complex paths of diffusion such as Piccinato's or Reggiori's, he claimed that what looked Italian or Roman *was in fact* Italian or Roman. Local work had not been "inspired" by imported models; it had to have been directly copied from them, or made by "a western artist, perhaps reduced by Barbary Coast corsairs to slavery, and forced to work for them." Strikingly, he even called the Murad Agha mosque – placed on Volpi's index of Tripoli's heritage in the early 1920s, as a significant Arab building – a "profoundly Roman monument."[117] Courtyard houses were straightforward Roman houses: "the faithful reproduction of the Roman plan," such as was found in Pompeii.[118]

Having definitively reduced the "Arab house" to a Roman original, Apollonj nonetheless contradicted himself by persisting to claim that it had no intrinsic historical or artistic merit, and was not even worthy of being called "architecture." "Nothing is more suggestive than the bare, taciturn appearance of an Arab house," but it was a "simple architecture, if it can even be called architecture."[119] Indeed, it matched the landscape *too* well. Libyans' houses were so close to the ground, so to speak, that some of the population had "reduced itself" to living in troglodytic dwellings, which Apollonj found repugnant – although he failed to mention that some southern Italians also lived in troglodytic dwellings at that time.[120] The local vernacular's tendency to "unite itself to, and blend with . . . the land" led him to characterize it as:

> the negation of architecture . . . if by architecture we mean the art of building buildings in the image of . . . the social and civic existence for which they are designed . . . [these buildings] purposefully detach themselves from the natural surroundings.[121]

Thus, despite their direct Roman genealogy, such buildings were the opposite of architecture, as they did not result from "evolution" but betrayed a "primitivism [lacking] real artistic consistency."[122] Despite appearances, in this analysis, there was no analogy of forms *or* spirit between modern and Arab architectures, and to align modern colonial architecture with local motifs was "absurd."[123]

ANTHROPOLOGICAL DISTANCE, 1936–1942

This new (or renewed) distance in Italians' positioning vis-à-vis their colonies' natives and architecture found even greater voice in representations of the colonized populations as remote and exotic, such as those offered in travel publications. Such publications took a stance of condescending documentation, emphasizing the poor quality of local constructions – "Evidently, the natives are not famous for the construction of their walls"[124] – and the impermanence of native settlements. Art-historical evaluations of local monuments' "worthiness" also continued, with articles on Ethiopia's castles at Gondar and rock-hewn churches at Lalibela.[125]

Straightforward anthropological publications on the native built environment emerged as well. Anthropologist Lidio Cipriani – a regular contributor to the ultra-racist publication "Defense of the Race" (*La difesa della razza*) – published a large study of East African house types, focusing entirely on classifications of settlements according to whether they were nomadic or sedentary, and the permanence of their materials. From this sort of classificatory perspective, housing was just one of many ways to categorize populations in the colonies, and identify them in terms of their "characteristics." Still, occasional hints of the archaeologists' inability not to detect resemblances to Occidental patterns came through, as when Cipriani likened one hut shape to "the silhouette of a Byzantine chapel."[126]

A more thoroughly researched book on Libya, by geographer Emilio Scarin, demonstrated a more nuanced understanding of differences among the various groups in the colony. Providing a cultural context according to which Libyan groups were somewhat "civilized" thanks to Islam, and more "evolved" than peoples of the African interior, he identified their main dwelling types as tents, shacks, masonry houses, and troglodytic dwellings, and leaned on a largely material-deterministic explanation of how these forms had developed over time. Climate, the availability of water, economics, and social factors had all contributed; on the other hand, he did not mention historic diffusion – the premise some architects had used to justify their appreciation of local vernaculars. Instead, Scarin's notion of various groups' "historic-ethnic evolution"[127] devolved from how material and social factors had impressed different forms on the housing, rather than contact or exchange. Despite his tone of mild cultural relativism, Scarin's framework was fundamentally evolutionist nonetheless. He shared in the common prejudice that buildings of permanent materials provided signs of advanced civilization, calling Libya's masonry houses "the most evolved form in the country."[128] As architects had, he linked the "Arab house" to the Roman house, and to ancient Egyptian houses as well – not, though, for reasons of historical transmission, but because consistent climatic factors had generated consistent models.[129] Scarin went on to a write a similar monograph about the Harar region of Ethiopia, describing local houses in scrupulous detail, and linking their forms to their inhabitants' pastoral economy.[130]

As for architects, they concurred (with the exception of Rava) that the new East African Empire had no local "tradition" or "art" to stand in the way of, or enhance, Italian innovations. In the late 1930s, architects and other construction experts made studies of *tukul*s – even though Italians themselves had been responsible for their spread a few decades earlier, as mentioned in Chapter 3 – not to document native life, or to theorize groundbreaking colonial designs, but in order to build new native villages and quarters. Even though some Italians had initially lived in existing *tukuls* until new housing became available to them, Italians' residences in East Africa – whether created by architects or not – did not incorporate the *tukul* form for Italian citizens syncretistically.[131] Instead, the form was used for servants' quarters or *askari* encampments (Figure 6.3), while Italians increasingly built variations on bungalows for themselves. As architects' attention shifted from North to East Africa in 1936, in any event, the question of colonial-architectural syncretism faded out altogether, leaving engineers and architects to discuss fine points of local materials and labor (to which we will return in Chapter 9).[132] But although the theorization of colonial architecture had evaporated, colonial city planning, with all its intellectual and professional promise, erupted in the second half of the 1930s.

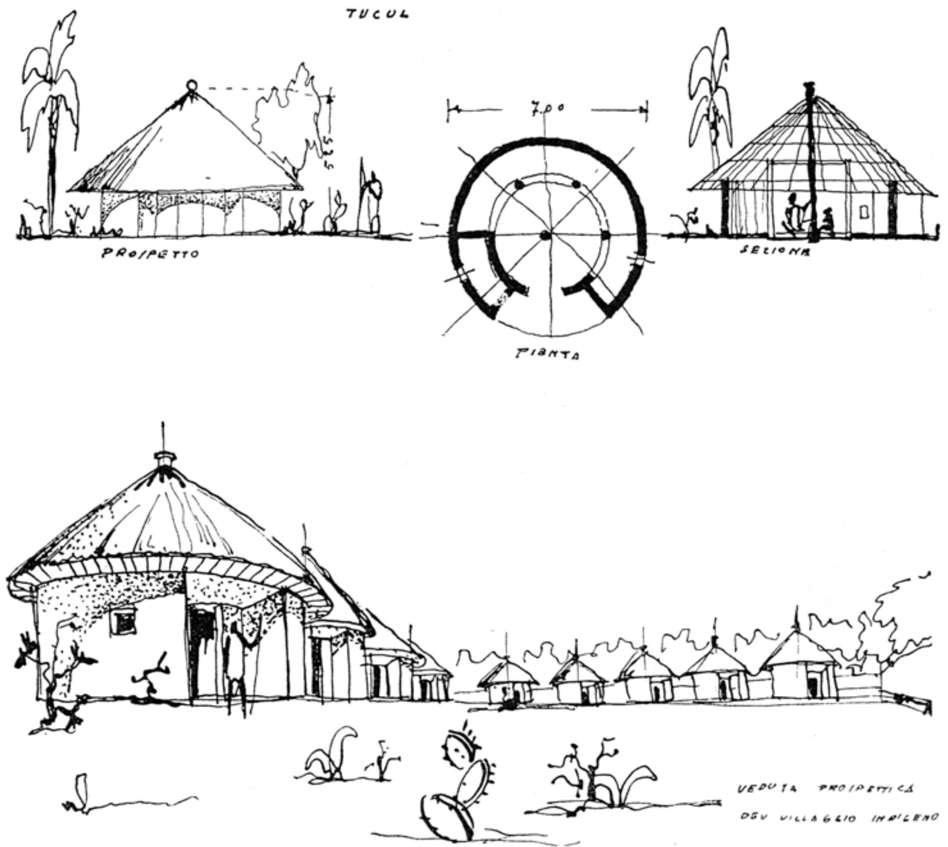


Figure 5.16
"*Tukul*" in elevation, plan, section; and "native village" in perspective.

Chapter 6: Imperial Urbanism, 1936–1937

> The *colonial city* is that urban area . . . most typically characterised by the physical segregation of its ethnic, social and cultural component groups.[1]
>
> Anthony D. King, 1976

> Colonial cities, more than other cities, serve as expressions of dominance . . . in colonial cities the relationship between the dominator and the dominated is clear, as are the political agenda and the motivations behind it.[2]
>
> Nezar AlSayyad, 1992

While their debates on architectural form flagged, colonial architects shifted their attention to city planning. As described in Chapter 4, the "new" field of *urbanistica* began to gain professional ground in 1932, and architects focused increasingly on problems of urban organization. Furthermore, on the international front, the French conference of 1931 on "urbanism in the colonies and tropical countries" established separation of European and native quarters as the sine qua non of colonial urbanism.[3] Despite these new developments, though, Italian architects could not apply such principles in the colonies quite yet. Tripoli was virtually the sole site of architects' theorization in the early 1930s, and by then it was far too late to alter the city's overall plan. Thus Italian architects did not begin fully to incorporate ideas of segregation into their theorizations until 1936, when those ideas might conceivably be practicable: the new Empire, inscribed as the site of greatest difference between Italians and natives, now promised vast expanses of "virgin" territory for urbanists and the necessary government commissions to match.[4]

EARLY REMARKS

This is not to say, of course, that Italian architects had ignored colonial cities' plans until then. Descriptive plans had been drawn up since the late nineteenth

century; and in their earliest articles on colonial architecture, both Rava and Piccinato had commented on colonial city layouts. Rava was strictly interested in Tripoli, and while he made passionate claims about the city's overall feel and how to preserve it, his discussion did not amount to a generalizable theorization. Instead, the article's emphasis on the interconnectedness of the city's landscape, urban setting, and architecture made it a particularly eloquent call for *ambientismo* to prevail in this very specific place, calling on Italians:

> to build single new buildings, or entirely new quarters . . . in tune with the characteristics of the environment and of nature, while also satisfying modern requirements.[5]

Rava made no allusion to separating the city's different ethnic groups from each other. Instead, he invoked separation only to protect Tripoli's pre-existing urban fabric, as well as the outlying oasis, from Italians' egregious additions. He deemed the existing break between the "old Arab and Jewish city" and the "modern European city" to be a "fortunate circumstance," not because Europeans should avoid contact with natives, but because "the characteristic quarters can be considered intact, on the whole."[6] Indeed, Rava was confident that Italian visitors – the growing number of tourists from the metropole, on whom Tripoli's economy also depended – would be eager to visit "the old native or Jewish quarters" of the walled city because they offered an "impression of Africa and the East, characteristic, typical, and most interesting in every detail."[7] They would find a visit to the oasis even more rewarding, and the government should make such a visit feasible by improving access to the city's outlying areas.[8]

Rava most wanted to preserve the city's feel of artless coherence, rather than any particular buildings (such as those catalogued in Governor Volpi's index). Thus his contempt for many Italian buildings was not based solely on his assessment of their inherent aesthetic flaws, but on the disruptions they imposed on the city's overall cohesiveness. Ruthlessly, he asserted that European buildings infringing on the oasis:

> should be cleared away completely . . . which will not require excessive courage, since these are miserable constructions – wherever necessary, scrupulously preserving any . . . characteristic aspect of the local setting.[9]

Finally, his wish to preserve the "characteristic" areas of Tripoli – the walled city and the oasis – from European contamination extended to vegetation: "Only palms or other characteristic flora should grow . . . in the *piazze* of Tripoli."[10]

Two years later, Piccinato made more general observations on colonial city layouts in his essay on colonial architecture. Starting from the idea that colonizers and colonized formed distinctly separate "civilizations," and that this was the key "political and psychological problem,"[11] he was the first to voice an idea of ethnic segregation in the Italian publications – in the same year that the 1931 French conference advocated it. Piccinato explained that new (European) quarters had often been built outside old (native) ones "spontaneously," due to "that sort of repugnance that metropolitans have to mix with natives."[12] But this

segregationist note also blended with the same *ambientismo* expressed by Rava: architectural styles should not clash, and native areas should not be altered. In fact, one advantage of separating European from native quarters, as the new plan for Benghazi intended to do, was that it would "leave to the native populations the development of their characteristic architecture according to local customs and tastes."[13]

THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE, 1936

These early remarks by two Rationalist architects were only that: not fleshed out or comprehensive enough to provide any usable principles for future city administration, they were merely precursors of discussions to come. More substantial signs of Italians' theoretical turn toward segregation-based city plans, instead, began to appear with published descriptions of the early-1930s plan for Tripoli by *Novecentisti* Alberto Alpago Novello and Ottavio Cabiati. Echoing the masterplan's own proposition – which I discuss further in Chapter 7 – that segregation would be desirable, and simultaneous counterstatement that it could not be implemented fully, journal editors admitted that:

> the fundamental separation of native and metropolitan quarters is . . . not entirely feasible in the vast area where the old outlying Turkish villages mingle with the earliest Italian buildings.[14]

Alpago Novello added in 1936 that the early Italian constructions had posed the greatest problem in his team's masterplans. In the future, accordingly, he claimed that architects should fully enforce "precise distinctions between metropolitan quarters and native ones" from the start in newly colonized cities; lay out the large areas intended for growth right away; and proceed slowly when it came to important, costly building projects that would be hard to modify later on.[15]

In the same year, Giovanni Pellegrini – the author of the "Manifesto of Colonial Architecture" – recommended what we might now call a "hybrid" of Italian cities and North African ones. Unlike his colleagues, he did not take up the new refrain of necessary segregation, just as he was the least inclined to minimize the value of local architecture. He posited that (like Italian cities) Tripoli should have wide streets, with trees and covered porticoes for shade; and the "native house type must without question be used in residential quarters."[16] For small streets, he preferred the spanning arches that were already typical in Tripoli, for their protective and their aesthetic properties. Buildings, with their inner courtyards allowing for privacy, should be clustered. Finally, he called for gardens to be planted throughout the city, in order to disrupt monotony. Here, as in his architectural comments, he was thinking practically above all else; his articles stand apart from those of his peers for his attempt to arrive at usable principles without deriving them from, or accommodating, theories of either modernism or race.

Typically, Rava was the first to adopt a new line of rhetoric. Outlining his views on the new imperial capital, Addis Ababa, in 1936, he began to use the segregationist language that would become common architects' parlance within the year. In perfect keeping with the new ambient rhetoric of Italian Empire, he advocated "the total separation of the European city from the native one, and . . . adequate zoning . . . [both of which] are essential for all sound and vital creation of new colonial centers."[17] In addition to this binary segregation, he was in favor of a monumental city center, "a true . . . governmental acropolis" which, like the Ethiopian Emperor's compound, the *ghebi*, would "act on the native mentality, impressing it with the isolated grandeur of power."[18] It is hard to imagine a colonial-urban configuration less like Rava's own earlier object of admiration, the Tripoli oasis. But he and others were beginning to think of colonial works in terms of their effect on the natives rather than the impression they would make on Europeans alone.[19] And – forecasting many architects' emphasis in 1937 – he was now more interested in "unified organization in a grand manner," as displayed, for instance, in Lyautey's Moroccan capital of Rabat.[20] Ideally, architects would even plan beyond cities, creating "an ideal planimetric network, covering the entire territory of the Empire," which would be true to the "most genuine Fascist spirit . . . [and the] totalitarian concept of a truly imperial affirmation."[21]

THE *ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI URBANISTICA* CONFERENCE, 1937

Such observations were further developed in 1937, in the large conference held by the National Urbanism Institute (*Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica*). One section of the conference was dedicated to colonial planning, and yielded a volume of twenty-two essays.[22] (Interestingly, most of the contributions were from engineers rather than architects, which did not prevent Rava from rehearsing his battle cry that "architect-urbanist[s]" should be "at the apex of the building hierarchy.")[23] Like the Volta conference on Africa the following year, in which coherent "racial" principles were established solidly, this conference consolidated general, "race"-based views of colonial cities. The participants' analyses were uniform in advocating segregation as the fundamental approach to colonial cities. The conference proceedings are therefore repetitive; far more importantly, however, they were the last word on the subject. Beyond 1937, colonial urbanism was an ongoing practical issue, but the basic theory of what a colonial city should look like and accomplish was already set.

With the exception of two articles on Libyan cities, all the papers concerned *AOI*, sometimes mentioning Addis Ababa specifically but largely stating principles to be applied throughout the East African Empire. Unlike Libya, where various obstacles had stood in the way of aggressive city planning, *AOI* was depicted as virtually empty, a great bare territory with just a few squalid native settlements of no great worth. Into that emptiness, according to the common vision, Italians would bring *civiltà* and the constructions that accompany it. The conference

participants' sense of the natives, to the extent that they acknowledged their presence, was entirely predicated on the inferiority, even vacuousness, of their minds and habits. They described a virgin terrain that Italians could freely inscribe without having to compromise, or justify their designs:

> There is nothing there . . . but a land awaiting the plow and our will . . . There must be only one civilization: our own. There can only be one urbanism, and one architecture: ours.[24]

In September 1936, the government had formed a committee to oversee colonial architecture and planning, as Rava and others had wished. Everyone agreed that such oversight was necessary, and conference participants made enthusiastic suggestions for specific logistics of how this coordination would work. They described grandiose roles for urbanistic practice – reiterating architects' images from the early 1930s of themselves as entwined with state power, but on a larger scale – calling the field "all that concerns the organization of the population's life."[25] In the past, urbanism had been "passive," focusing on changes in cities that already existed; today's "active urbanism," instead, was "at the basis of civilized life" and had the grand mission of studying "the distribution of a city, a region, a State, across territory."[26]

The practitioners' growing taste for typologizing cities and populations was apparent throughout the papers. Contributors proposed various subtypes of Italian colonial settlements in *AOI*, ranging from the military and agricultural to the industrial, political, and commercial. More broadly, though, they agreed unanimously that separation of whites from natives was "the first [problem] to solve." The "co-existence of metropolitans and natives . . . so different with respect to race, religion, and (above all) *civiltà* . . . must be disciplined."[27] The most important topic at hand, therefore, was the management of Otherness within cities. For new colonial urban areas, it would be simple enough to ensure plenty of room for future growth. As for existing cities, Alpago Novello and Cabiati invoked their experience planning Tripoli and Benghazi to insist that in the future, Italians should build their new areas apart, and then plan their continuing occupation carefully (Figure 6.1).

The key issue of segregation was not so much to keep natives out of contact with Europeans as the opposite:

> the absolute protection of our settlers and their families from the perils of "going native" . . . can only be effected by building clusters of houses for them that are clearly set apart from the native concentrations.[28]

Similarly, Italians should not share public transportation with natives, benefiting instead from "special vehicles for metropolitans."[29] The natives, on the other hand, were expected to gain from their daily contact with Italians, or with Italian buildings and institutions. Rather empty, like their territories, and patiently waiting to become replete with Italian civilization, they would learn from Italians' constructions: "works of urbanism and architecture . . . as forms of *civiltà*, must come alive in order to penetrate into the natives' intimate world."[30] Images of

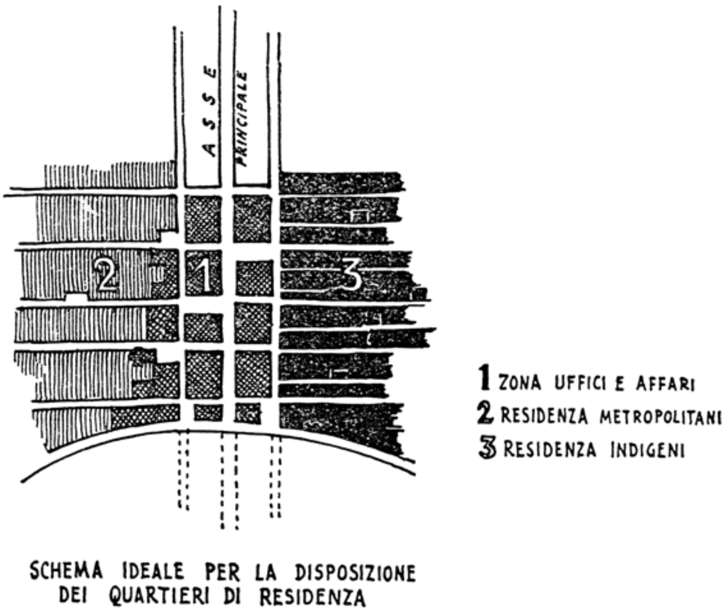


Figure 6.1
"Ideal scheme for the disposition of residential quarters: 1) Office and Business District; 2) European Residential Area; 3) Native Residential Area," according to segregation-promoting planners in 1937.

seduction abounded – a seduction of which these presumably barely sentient beings would not be aware, as it was so gradual. Specifically, schemes of separate cities would draw them effortlessly into the orbit of Italian civilization.

> The native must join his new nation, absorb its principles and *civiltà*, attracted to it step by step. Social centers at the heart of the natives' quarters [including hospitals, government offices, schools, etc.], . . . real hearths for the emanation of *civiltà* [will carry out] the work of propaganda and penetration almost inadvertently.[31]

Even outside the cities, in Italians' agricultural settlements, natives would be improved by their contact with Europeans, learning to plan for the future by watching Italians develop farms.[32] In sum, "the gradual insertion of our *civiltà* will necessarily cause a change in [the native's] mentality, his customs, and his requirements."[33]

Based on past experience, some participants pointed out that the ideal situation would be the creation of entirely new towns for Italians. The existing layouts in the Ethiopian cities, according to one contributor, consisted of "a disordered and inhuman mass of hovels surrounding the chief's so-called palace, an ignoble remnant of a sort of feudalism that is now a thing of the past."[34] New plans, in contrast, would allow for maximal control of public hygiene and eventual expansion, not to mention control of the native populations. Indeed, several authors recommended starting from new, small settlements and avoiding developments in the large cities for the time being. As for existing cities, all agreed something had to be done, and various suggestions were proposed: modifying

their layout and imposing new zoning regulations; "destroying the insalubrious areas and rebuilding them from scratch;" or cleaning them up, reducing their density, providing large streets, clean water supplies, and sewer lines.[35]

Altogether, the papers described variations on the dual-city configuration – although not always the classic dual-city in which European colonizers built alongside an already existing city, as had happened in Tripoli and Benghazi. Here, the desired outcome was one in which the native city stood alongside (and at some distance from) the larger European area, and public offices and commercial buildings occupied the plan's center. Alpago Novello and Cabiati's concrete suggestion was to begin the layout of new Italian cities by establishing the best orientation and placing the long middle axis of the town in the center. On this axis would stand banks, offices, government institutions, markets and shops, hotels, theatres, and so on. The two main residential areas should stand on either side of the axis, the best one having been reserved for Europeans, and the other for natives. Furthermore, on the European side the transition from residential to the commercial and political center could be a gradual one, whereas the transition on the native side ought to be abrupt.[36] Engineer Cesare Valle, who was responsible for several town plans in the new Empire, pointed out that at the French conference of 1931 on colonial urbanism, participants had specified 500 meters as a good distance by which to separate European and native towns. This span would make travel back and forth feasible for natives; even more importantly, it had permitted French planners to build their colonial cities next to native ones and yet keep them "separate in a discreet fashion, almost so that this separation . . . is not perceptible" (for Europeans, one presumes).[37]

European and native quarters should also be subdivided respectively according to different parameters: ethnic and religious on the one hand, and economic on the other. "Zoning according to building types" and functions, which had recently become the norm for European city planning, would "become zoning according to ethnic groups" in the colonies. Plans should separate "Arabs from Jews and Copts; Showans from the Galla, the Amhara, the Somali," and so on. Meanwhile, European quarters would be zoned in the European way, according to function in industrial areas and class in residential areas.[38] One incentive to subdivide natives by race, ethnic grouping, and religion was to preserve their separateness from each other:

> keeping as intact as possible the ethnographic [*sic*] traits of individual native races, given that . . . entirely inferior elements result from racial mixes, even among races that have affinities of color.[39]

Paul Rabinow has pointed out that Lyautey's urban programs creating new "native cities" modeled on pre-colonial urban settings, and doing so in such a way that they could not expand in any direction, was tantamount to "museumification."[40] Here, similarly, one might conclude that Italian planners wanted to "dioramize" the natives in their new settings by keeping them true to their physical "types," while at the same time acculturating them to Italian *civiltà*.

What impact would their new surroundings have on the colonized populations, besides keeping their mutual Othernesses distinct, and sheltering them from excessive contact with European-ness? According to several of the contributions, the segregation proposed was a mild one, as Italians were by nature not exclusionist or tyrannical. Organizations of government, politics, religion, and commerce should be within the reach of natives at the center of town:

> Within the given limitations of the native's mental structure . . . the basic separation of native living areas from the metropolitan ones must not constitute a barrier whereby individual groups live and work with their only chance of contact deriving from work or trade. Such a conception must not be part of Fascist colonization, which as such is a humane colonization.[41]

Sounding like Balbo at the Volta conference the following year, one author noted that:

> [The city will reflect the] Roman criterion of colonization introduced by Fascism in Africa: not lords and masters, not dominators and dominated, but hierarchy, and an orderly co-existence of workers all oriented to a single goal: creating the Empire of Italian labor.[42]

Ultimately, native populations in Italian imperial cities would not suffer from social inequality comparable to that in other colonizing nations' territories, "at least at a social level."

> The innate sociability of Italians often makes them forget the very sentiment of imperialism and domination that is the reason for the force and authority of the English over [their] subject populations.[43]

Once again, if anyone was at risk in this scenario, it was Italians. Too kind and humane for their own good, they stood to forget their responsibilities through contact with the natives, who, in contrast, could only benefit from such contact. Disingenuous or not, such statements make clear the colonizers' wish to have their cake and eat it too, controlling the colonized while imagining themselves as both beneficent and beloved.

This sentiment of beneficence does not appear to have been challenged by the fact that this new approach to planning meant uprooting the natives rather than leaving them in their cities and building European quarters nearby, as Italians had done in North Africa. In Italy itself, by the late 1930s the premise of *ambientismo* had given way, in practice, to vast "guttings" (*sventramenti*) of historic city centers and relocations of inhabitants from the old quarters to urban outskirts. Similarly, in these theorizations the idea of building on a "clean slate" prevailed, with the argument that forced resettlements of natives to the edges of their own cities was for their own good: their current abodes were "hotbeds of infection;" their new houses would improve their circumstances. Deliberately creating urban *dépaysement*, a loss of familiar bearings, would also enhance Italian control and prestige. In the new European-built areas, the native would be "a guest rather than the former master," which would radically alter his attitude toward the Italians, putting him at a disadvantage.[44]

> The native will be a guest in the new towns . . . he will have to conform to new laws and a new type of house; and he will do it willingly, because he will feel that he is in someone else's home.[45]

Indeed, all this purported magnanimity entailed systems of far-reaching control. Besides being "ordered and organized" by European standards,[46] native quarters were ideally to be situated in "a position that is easily dominated . . . and . . . easily isolated."[47] Control extended even further, to what natives would be able to see. Generally speaking, natives should see the signs of Italian domination, such as Rava's "acropolis." But not everything about Italians should be visible: natives might rebel if they could fully perceive "the iron fist of the dominator."[48] One paper proposed a number of possible schematic plans for ideal cities built along a single central axis, plans that would allow as much freedom and privacy as possible to the Italians and as little as possible of both to the colonized populations (Figure 6.2).

The encoding of natives as "naturally" different was further embedded in city designs through the use of landscape – i.e. natural elements – as containers and definitions for the space Italians wanted to allow them:

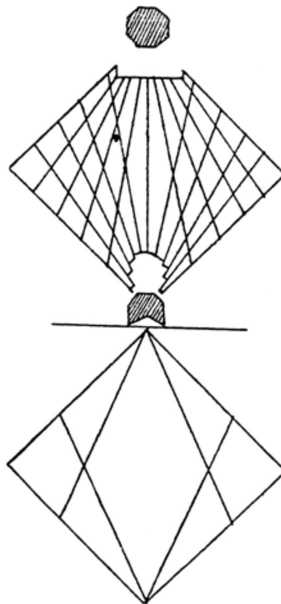


Fig. 7

Mentre nel quartiere indigeno tutte le strade dovrebbero confluire a l'uno o l'altro fortino, nel quartiere metropolitano vi dovrebbero confluire solo alcune strade lasciando ampia libertà di tracciato alle altre strade di lottizzazione

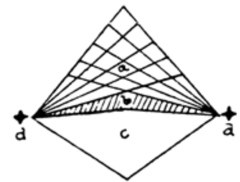


Fig. 8

a - **quartieri indigeni a disposizione panottica**
b - **zona di separazione**
c - **quartieri metropolitani**
d - **fortini**

Fig. 9

a-b-c-d - **quartieri indigeni con separazione etnica**
e-f-g - **quartieri metropolitani con zonizzazione**
o - **zone di rispetto**

Figure 6.2
Another schematic design for segregationist plannning in Italian colonial cities.
"Figure 7: Whereas in the native quarter all the streets should converge on one fort or another, in the European quarter only a few of the streets should converge there, thus allowing ample freedom of direction for the other streets.
Figure 8: a – native quarters, arranged panoptically; b – area of separation; c – European quarters; d – forts.
Figure 9: a-b-c-d – native quarters divided by ethnicity; e-f-g – European quarters; o – zones of respect."

Figure 6.3
Italian-built quarters for natives in the Acria area of Asmara (*circa* 1930s).

> Given the need to separate [the native area] clearly from the European area, it is appropriate to set it in a place that is already defined and delimited by topographical elements. If these are lacking, green areas will be created.[49]

The parameters of natives' areas included air itself: the "native city" should be "in a valley, or downwind from Europeans."[50] The confinement of natives was thus far more than a one-directional move, displacing them from the middle of the city to one of its edges. Topography, nature (physical and symbolic), and their placement respective to the Italians were the three dimensions of their new area; air, which whites would breathe first before releasing it downwind to the natives, was the fourth.

The Italian conception of appropriate surroundings for natives teetered between the idea of placing them in unfamiliar settings to maintain control over them, and the impulse to make their new settings artificially familiar. Thus, disregarding the fact that the prevalence of the *tukul* form was in part due to Italians themselves, all agreed that the appropriate house form for new "natives quarters" was the *tukul*: "it is the house shape that is appropriate for them . . . it is practical and economical," and they would continue to prefer it until their "level of civilization has evolved."[51] In fact, Italian colonial governments in East Africa had been building settlements of *tukul*s for native *askari* since the beginnings of Italian settlement (Figure 6.3). Still, these new *tukul*s would act upon the natives despite their familiar appearance, as they would "demonstrate . . . all the salubrious advantages of civilized life [*vivere civile*] through a hygienic and social transformation."[52]

The conference devoted far less discussion to Italians' houses and quarters, in marked contrast to all the periods of debate preceding the imperial one in East Africa. Departing from Rava's 1936 call for a monumental center, most participants insisted that Italians should put off constructing permanent institutional

buildings in the centers of towns, and proceed instead to develop new areas in and out of cities with an eye to healthy and practical habitats. For some, this meant that East African new quarters should be garden cities. But for most, the best solution seemed to draw directly on the "New Towns" the regime had been building in the metropole since 1928. These towns and villages in Sardinia, the Pontine Marshes, Apulia, Sicily, and elsewhere were for the most part agricultural, and settlers moved there from as far away as the Veneto region. Even though many of these settlements were isolated, in fact each was in some small sense a satellite of the centralized, authoritarian state the regime was building: every one featured a central *piazza* linking the settlement to central Italian institutions, comprising a church, a Fascist Party headquarters (with tower), and a range of services and offices.[53]

The largest, most highly praised area covered by these new settlements was the Pontine Marshes south of Rome, and speakers at the 1937 conference specified that the Pontine Marshes should serve as the model for new Italian settlements in *AOI*. As we shall see in Chapters 8 and 9, in fact colonial planners adapted the "New Towns" formula directly, not only in small agricultural settlements, but as the starting point for grand masterplans in the late 1930s. The one significant difference from settlements in the metropole would be the presence of natives, but contributors claimed this would not modify the settlements' essential model, or how Italians themselves would experience living there. These settlements were a "typically Italian idea," and by definition they would be set apart from natives, entailing no problems of internal co-existence or separation.

> In the evenings, the *piazza* where the church, the post office, and the Fascist Party Headquarters are, gathers the inhabitants just as in any village of the Italian countryside . . . the natives gather on the periphery to live off the crumbs of the white man's life, in order to be at the ready to carry out the lowest day labor, or to try their hand in the market, or at small crafts.[54]

In general, Italian texts never acknowledged how essential native labor was to the colonial economy, and this is a good example. Small remarks alluded to the presence of natives in the settlements – a presence that in fact, made these settlements radically unlike the ones in Italy – but glossed over the implications of this, stopping only to reiterate that the natives must live apart and be "disciplined" or "controlled"; or to point out that in the colonial situation the smallest measurable unit of laborers was not the family, as it was in the Pontine Marshes, but "usually one white family along with one or more native families."[55] In reality, of course, the native presence could not be subtracted from the new settlements. As with other aspects of colonial governance, theories concerning architectural design and city planning translated only rarely into practice.

Part III

Practices

Chapter 7: The Italian Colonial City

Tripoli

> In a mere twenty-five years, Italy has transformed this city into a nearly European capital . . . Modern Tripoli is quite an Italian success . . . Latin Tripoli has become Italian again with ease . . . Are we in Milan, in Rome?[1]
>
> Alice Guibon, 1939

We have already seen that Italian planning in Tripoli immediately after 1912 did not derive from grandiose visions of long-term growth or prestige, focusing instead on cost-conscious solutions to pressing problems. The original plan's essential premises – shaping the new quarters' rapid growth, and intervening in the walled city as little as possible – did not change much over time, even when new masterplans drawn up in 1931–1933 and 1936–1937 added small-scale measures corresponding to the emerging theories of segregation and zoning discussed in Chapter 6. At the same time, Tripoli continued to grow quickly. The census of 1912 had counted a total population of 72,130 (excluding the military);[2] by the late 1930s, Italian estimates approximated 100,000 people.[3] The city had also acquired a newly distinctive character by then, boasting recognizable landmarks: the renovated Castle with its vast adjoining *piazza*, various prominent buildings, the oasis, and the waterfront. One further measure of the city's growth and rising commercial activity is that the Tripoli Trade Fair eventually attracted up to 30,000 daily visitors.[4]

I call Tripoli a colonial city here – as opposed to an imperial city, as I will describe Addis Ababa later on – specifically because Italians adapted their plan to the original city's fundamental configuration. In Chapter 3, I described how administrators found the walled city morphologically familiar and made little effort to modify it. In addition, for Italians and other Europeans, Tripoli's Mediterranean populations (Maltese, Greek, Italian, French, Turkish, and Jewish) also confirmed the setting's familiarity, since in this respect also it resembled any

number of port cities in Sicily, the Italian peninsula, and the rest of the Mediterranean basin – notwithstanding its higher proportions of Arabs and sub-Saharan Africans. Of course, this sense of recognition was tempered somewhat by the proximity of non-European-built areas, especially exotic markets and ubiquitous mosques. Still, Europeans tended to compartmentalize their awareness of the non-European, speaking only of the European quarters, or treating the native quarters as distant areas one visited only occasionally. This combination of de facto adaptation to the local built environment with the contradictory perception of the overall city as European distinguishes the colonial city from the imperial one. It was an existing city that had been colonized, in which the colonizing population was disproportionately aware of its own presence, and relatively blind to the numerous ways in which it had made relatively little impact. Concerning Tripoli, one Italian propagandist wrote: "In sum, Tripoli is truly a new city. Which does not mean that the old one has disappeared."[5] In imperial cities, instead, Europeans were strenuously focused on the local populations rather than oblivious to their presence, and intent on modifying what had existed there before.

My qualification of the colonial city as defined by Europeans' adaptation echoes a significant ambiguity in the Latin-derived term "colony" itself. As in English, the Italian *colonia* can mean a country dominated by another country, but it can also refer to a group of people who have nationality in common ("the British colony"), or share little more than difference from the local nationality ("the expat colony"). Long before Italy had official holdings in the Mediterranean, for instance, Italian settlers had clustered in Algerian, Tunisian, and Egyptian cities, and these groups were denoted invariably as Italian colonies. Moreover, because many local masons, architects, and engineers were Italian, these cities sometimes appeared Italian to other Europeans. Alexandria in particular bore the architectural imprint of its Italian inhabitants, and was likened variously to Naples and Genoa. One British traveler put it more generally: "Alexandria is an Italian city."[6] In other words, cities like Algiers, Tunis, and Alexandria, which in the early nineteenth century had hosted colonies of Europeans, and subsequently formed part of European colonies, appeared quasi-European to Europeans. They all fit my definition of colonial cities by virtue of the way in which their European-ness amounted to a recent accretion rather than a re-shaping of original urban fabrics. In Tripoli, such ambiguity was further enhanced when the colony became part of metropolitan territory itself in 1939: the city was suddenly fully Italian, and no longer colonial at all.

The imperial imagination of Addis Ababa, in contrast, would depend on a notion of wiping the city's slate clean, so to speak; installing an imposing axial plan and rigid separations between Ethiopians, who would be displaced from the city center, and Europeans; and flanking the city's broad avenues with intimidating monumental edifices. In other words, the ideal imperial city presented a uniform image of having been built anew, as well as of total political control. Imperial cities both segregated and integrated the foreignness of their settings far more radically and visibly than colonial ones. They differed from colonial cities

most in their lack of familiarity; they were meant to appear foreign to Europeans (signaling a departure from both the metropole and the past) and natives alike. In brief, the imperial city was intended to create a new political and cultural order for all concerned. In the Italian case, however, although colonial governments successfully developed "layered" colonial cities, they never fully realized their more ambitious designs for imperial ones.[7]

The formulation I propose here is a refinement upon the key definitions of colonial cities offered by Anthony King and Nezar AlSayyad. In King's classic explanation, "the *colonial city* is that urban area . . . most typically characterised by the physical segregation of its ethnic, social and cultural component groups,"[8] a definition that in my scheme applies to imperial cities in particular rather than all European-colonized ones. Similarly, in my parlance, I would substitute "imperial" for "colonial" in AlSayyad's definition:

> Colonial cities, more than other cities, serve as expressions of dominance . . . in colonial cities the relationship between the dominator and the dominated is clear, as are the political agenda and the motivations behind it.[9]

Thus the colonial city, as I describe it here, encompasses all the forms that have been called "dual-city" types of colonial cities.[10] It is characterized by a layering and partial merging of European additions to the existing built environments; some differences between residential areas, but no specifically prescribed limitations on daily, commercial, and social contact; and a general self-absorption on the part of Europeans who saw themselves as living in their own world, in a parallel universe to the very evident native city life. The Italian colonial city par excellence, Tripoli, was certainly shaped by European dominance, but it was also a site of numerous countervailing ambiguities, in its architecture, its social policies, and its malleable spatial and political relations.

ARCHITECTURE IN THE 1920s: DISPLACED HISTORICISM AND REGIONALISM

When Volpi became Governor of Tripolitania in 1921, relatively little effort had been put into implementing Tripoli's masterplan. Volpi undertook an energetic urban program, returning to the city's development, and promoting its archaeological heritage. The earlier impulse of archaeologists and art historians to identify a few structures for preservation reached a new level of governmental rationalization when Volpi had an index of worthy buildings compiled. His administration also moved to complete monumental aspects of Tripoli's plan. By 1924, it finished work on the harbor; the city sprouted broad streets and new trees; and the City Hall and Hall of Justice were completed, or nearly so.[11]

The waterfront project – the *lungomare Volpi* – was especially ambitious. As in Benghazi, Rhodes, and Kos, the waterfront was the first opportunity to make a grand visual impression on Europeans arriving by sea. Volpi brought the well-known *Accademico* architect Armando Brasini to Tripoli and entrusted him

with this, yielding a sweeping promenade that Rava would criticize precisely for its undistinguished European-ness:

> Tourists . . . will certainly never stroll on the *lungomare Volpi* – as, incidentally, no one does now – given that they can find equally or even more beautiful ones on the Italian or French Riviera without going to the trouble of traveling abroad.[12]

Brasini also designed the Monument to War Heroes and Victory, which dominated the harbor from the highest ground, and restored the castle's bulwarks. In addition, he designed the Savings Bank of Tripolitania next to the castle, an imposing building facing the sea. Overall, Brasini, who had begun his career as a decorator,[13] turned Tripoli's major edifices into a historicist's style sheet, drawing on the Baroque, the neoclassical and various Italian regional styles as well.[14] Other architects participated too: for instance, the Milanese architect Saulle Meraviglia-Mantegazza designed the imposing new Governor's residence in a Sicilian-Moorish hybrid (Figure 7.1). Stylistically, in other words, Volpi's period brought the culmination of all the haphazard, uncoordinated grand architectural investments that were completely indifferent to the non-Italian-ness of their environment, and which various architects later derided as uninventive to the point of parody.

By 1925, when General De Bono assumed the Governorship, the Cathedral (in "Romanesque Tuscan-Lombard style")[15] and the Governor's residence were well under way. So were several neo-Moorish buildings along the *lungomare*: the Bank of Italy (Figure 7.2), the Law Courts, the Miramare Theatre, and the Grand Hotel.[16] In 1929 – the very year of Rava's initial complaint – the Touring Club Italiano guidebook to the Italian colonies praised these rather garish buildings precisely for their exoticism:

Figure 7.1
Governor's Palace in Tripoli (1924–1929, Architect Saulle Meraviglia-Mantegazza).

Figure 7.2
Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy) in Tripoli (1921–1928, Architect Biagio Accolti Gil); demolished in 1997.

> Some of the most remarkable buildings in the city . . . are the Grand Hotel, with its lively Oriental forms, the Bank of Italy, a sumptuous construction, also with Moorish forms, although these are more subdued . . . [and the] Miramare Theatre . . . with its gay Moorish architecture.[17]

When Rava decried architects' abuses of Euro-"Moorish" ornamentation, then, most of the city's important structures were indeed in this vein. Many of its lesser ones were as well, including the *Alle Venete* restaurant and the Sidi Hamuda mosque.[18] In sum, Rava and his colleagues had ample grounds for their complaints that Tripoli resembled a European fairground rather than a North African city.

ARCHITECTURE FROM 1928 TO 1934: ARCHITECTURAL PLURALISM

It was into this architectural environment that a new generation of architects began to arrive in 1928. Neither retrained decorators nor engineers, these were the same theory-driven architects who were on the rise in Italy: *Novecentisti* and Rationalists. Furthermore, these years saw various competitions for large urban projects.[19] For both of these reasons, some scholars have described Tripoli in this period as an architectural "laboratory" or "testing ground."[20]

Alessandro Limongelli, a classically inclined student of Giovannoni's, became the artistic consultant for the Tripoli municipality in 1928 at Governor De Bono's behest. In that same year, Rava and Larco designed a hotel at Khums (or "Homs"), near the Roman ruins of Leptis Magna;[21] Piacentini started an insurance building project in Tripoli; the Berenice Theatre in Benghazi, designed by Piccinato and Piacentini, began construction; and Alpago Novello, Cabiati, and Ferrazza were given the master plan project for Benghazi.[22] Limongelli died in 1932, and relatively few of

his works were completed in his lifetime.[23] But in the short time that he was in charge of Tripoli's development, his tendency to draw inspiration exclusively from classical or other historical referents evolved, incorporating modernist ideas of functionalism and reduced ornamentation. In the midst of the acerbic debates of the moment and the heated competition for commissions, Limongelli's designs enjoyed rare accolades from all sides, the Rationalists appreciating their simplicity and *ambientismo*, and the *Novecentisti* praising their classicism (Figure 7.3).[24]

Alongside the articles theorizing colonial architecture already discussed in Chapter 5, many articles also appeared praising new buildings in the colonies.[25] Here, we find once again the great elasticity of architects' tropes, but in connection with specific designs. By 1931, readers were being instructed to recognize the key terms – modern, colonial, Mediterranean, classical, etc. – that drove the debates. For instance, Limongelli's pavilion representing the Government of Rome at the Trade Fair in 1928 was described as "monumental" and "Roman" (Figure 7.4).[26] In their church at Suani-ben-Aden near Tripoli (Figures 7.5 and 7.6), Rava and Larco

Figure 7.3
Hotel Cirene in Cyrene, Libya (1930–1932, Architect Alessandro Limongelli).

Figure 7.4
Pavilion of the Governatorato di Roma (Governorship of Rome) at the entrance to the Tripoli Trade Fair (1928–1929, Architect Alessandro Limongelli).

Figure 7.5
Church at Suani ben Aden, Libya (1930, Architects Carlo Enrico Rava and Sebastiano Larco).

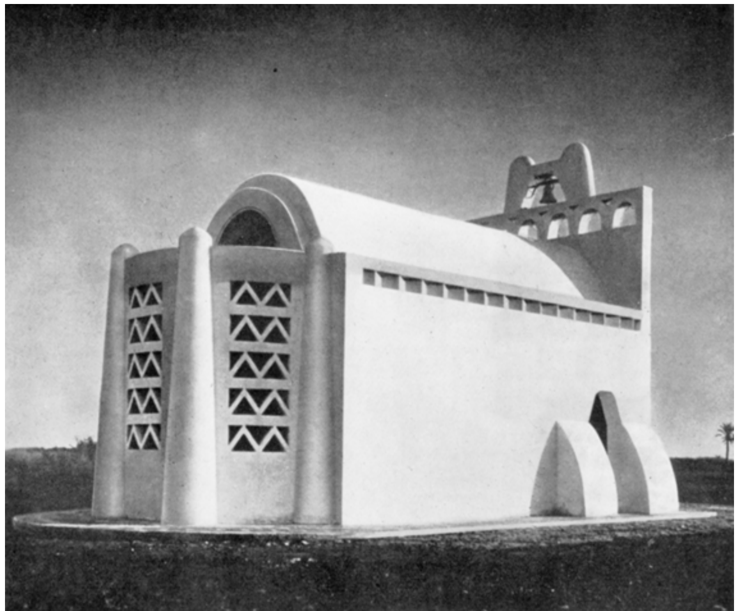


Figure 7.6
Church at Suani ben Aden, Libya (1930, Architects Carlo Enrico Rava and Sebastiano Larco).

were credited with "fusing" disparate elements by means of a "Mediterranean African" principle – yielding "colonial" and "modern" results:

> The fusion of originally Romano-Christian elements with indigenous African elements, which is inspired by the historical evolution itself, and therefore the architectural evolution as well, of Mediterranean Africa, suggests the elements on the basis of which to create an architecture that is religious and colonial, but above all modern.[27]

Also using the "Mediterranean" trope to justify emulations of local vernacular architecture in developing modern designs, one writer described Rava and Larco's Hotel at Khums (Figure 5.3) in terms of its masterful combination of diverse elements, noting the essential compatibility of the "modern" and the "Mediterranean:"

> It is curious . . . to observe how an architecture that is completely in tune with the Mediterranean country sprang from the objective and well-meaning application of modern ideas: not just in the absolute sense [such as] the use of reinforced concrete . . . but rather a certain abstract communion of spirit.[28]

An extreme example of the elasticity of the term "Mediterranean" appeared in 1934, concerning Rava and Larco's Eritrea-Somalia Pavilion at the Tripoli Trade Fair.

> One thing that will strike the reader is the "Mediterranean" intonation . . . even taking into account . . . its consistent reminders of its Somali derivation in its great portal, and the Eritrean inspiration of its *mashrabiyyas* and patio tiles . . . the building, unfolding . . . around a central patio, takes up once again the classic house plan, both Latin and African, of the southern house.[29]

Not all appropriations of the Libyan vernacular were in the context of new designs, however. Restorations of old – if not classical – structures could also be "modern." According to an article presenting Governor Volpi's villa in Tripoli, acquired in 1929 (Figure 7.7), the villa had been renovated following:

> the most modern and Rational criteria . . . It is the first example . . . in an Italian colony, of what the French and other foreigners have been doing for twenty years already, in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, giving new life to the old Arab residences, with modernity of intentions and views.[30]

THE EARLY–1930s MASTERPLAN BY ARCHITECTS

According to the new plan developed in 1931–1933 and finalized in 1934, between 1928 and 1933 alone Tripoli's total population had grown from 63,400 to 88,900 inhabitants.[31] Because the 1914 plan had not provided for such expansion, the Tripoli government commissioned a new plan, from Benghazi's planners *Novecentisti* Alpago Novello, Cabiati, and Ferrazza, approving it late in 1933, and passing it into law in 1934 (Figure 3.12). The city had spread far to

Figure 7.7
Governor Volpi's villa, Tripoli (photographed in 1931).

the east, and road connections between these new areas and the city's south-western parts were insufficient, making traffic through the center especially dense. Anticipating continued growth, the planners aimed to accommodate a doubling of the population. Like the earlier plan, this one was concerned with "disciplining" private enterprise building in order to avoid "disorder and anarchy;" and with issues of transportation, public structures and areas, and landscaping. Architecturally, the plan also provided for the sort of municipal control that Rava had called for, insisting on "aesthetic norms" to prevent "shamelessly exotic" constructions, and "encourage" "modern simplicity."[32]

The new plan also confirmed the *ambientismo* of the earlier approach to the old city, protecting it from radical change by forbidding new European constructions.[33] Citing the walled city's "picturesque" and "characteristic" quality, the plan went further still, supporting "reconstruction, where necessary, done by natives according to traditional building types." At the same time, the planners provided for a "judicious use of *diradamento*" to widen public spaces and create green areas within the walled city. Both the minimal use of *diradamento* and the idea of leaving responsibility for new buildings to natives were qualified as thrifty, allowing the city to avoid extensive demolitions (*sventramenti*) and ambitious constructions. Finally, the plan protected the oasis, both for aesthetic reasons and to prevent excessive density.[34]

Although the plan largely reiterated earlier concerns, it was innovative nonetheless in its use of zoning as the main organizational principle. Aligning themselves with recent developments, such as the edicts that emerged from international CIAM meetings – and even using the English term "zoning" – the planners divided the city into four areas: a high-density one with buildings no higher than four stories, namely "the entire modern city center and the denser

parts of the large new quarters;" a low-density one of "small villas" in the new "peripheral quarters;" industrial areas; and zones "reserved for the natives."[35] This last designation has sometimes led scholars to conclude that Tripoli became segregated as a result of the new plan.[36] They have hardly noted, however, that the planners themselves affirmed explicitly that segregating Tripoli was impossible, barring costly interventions; and that it was not even desirable, given the benefits to Europeans of having easily available local labor in each neighborhood. Scholars have also not acknowledged that – as we shall see in the next section – while government documents from the metropole, like journal articles, voiced the facile certainties of the period (such as segregation as the sine qua non of colonial planning), the Tripoli government's documents were more precise as to what could (or could not) be done. Even propaganda varied from silence on the subject to descriptions that actually belied talk of segregation. In short, although the 1930s brought segregationist discourses as well as increased social and institutional exclusion of Libyans, the masterplan of the early 1930s hardly transformed Tripoli into the imperial city envisioned by the *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* planners in 1937. Even despite somewhat more significant interventions in the later 1930s, Tripoli would remain a colonial city, with its pre-existing areas and patterns overlaid with those of the Italian colonizers.

As noted in Chapter 6, in 1937 Alpago Novello bemoaned the impossibility of imposing segregation in Tripoli in 1931–1933. In fact, in their 1934 plan he and his colleagues followed a discussion of measures to protect the old city from European architectural encroachments with the clarification that "a fundamental separation of native and metropolitan quarters is . . . not entirely feasible in the vast area [east of the Castello] where the old Turkish villages mingle with the earliest Italian buildings." This area was "the ample, vital center of the new Tripoli: it would therefore prove fatal to modify it," and only a few "carefully pondered" cuts should be made there, for traffic improvement. Far from promoting heavy-handed measures of separation, the authors described the distribution of the city's populations – as it was, and would remain – in terms of *reasonably* distinct areas. "The entire area covered by the plan has been divided into reasonably distinct quarters, for metropolitans . . ., for natives . . ., and for industry."[37] Away from the center, they aimed to preserve some of the natives' "important existing areas;" and provided additional surface in order to allow "small native villages" in the outer areas to grow, intending that natives themselves would build them "with their own kinds of houses, streets, and small gardens." Rather than confine natives to these outer areas, though, they provided that some natives might live in metropolitan-designated quarters: "the outer areas are for metropolitans, as well as for those natives who conform to our ways of life."[38]

Specifically, the planners outlined the distribution of populations throughout the city. According to their calculations, 50,000 people of "mixed population" lived in the center; 19,000 people (of unspecified ethnicity) inhabited the old city; 7,000 resided in "exclusively native" outer areas; low-density quarters for metropolitans housed 8,000 people; and 4,900 people occupied the rural

area. The new plan made no drastic changes. It hoped for a reduction of the old city's population, by 1,000 to 18,000; and for a sizable increase in the population of "exclusively native" outer zones, from 7,000 to 11,250. But it expected the highest growth to take place in the mixed central area, rising from 50,000 to 87,000, and becoming more, although not exclusively, Italian: "a mixed but predominantly metropolitan population." The planners also anticipated that the low-density metropolitan quarters would grow more rapidly than the native ones, reaching a population of 21,550. Finally, they expressed the hope that future Italian arrivals would not necessarily come to Tripoli but settle elsewhere in the colony. In brief, although in principle they would have preferred to create neatly distinct zones according to populations, their main emphasis was on keeping density within limits, particularly in the old city and the native outer areas. They did not, however, propose measures to force people out of the old city: "it would be best . . . if the attraction of the other, more modern quarters facilitated the spontaneous *diradamento* [thinning-out] we hope for."[39]

But the statement that contradicts most strongly the notion that Tripoli underwent planned segregation in the early 1930s concerns the virtue of leaving native clusters in close proximity to European areas:

> Plots that are now inhabited by natives alone remain . . . attached to the [metropolitan] quarters, and they are to be maintained for them alone. These sectors . . . are hygienically sound, and they present certain advantages, such as avoiding excessive population displacements; keeping available native laborers in proximity to every one of our quarters; and lastly, preserving their attractive folkloristic character.[40]

The plan, in other words, insisted on keeping native areas intact, and developing newer metropolitan areas near or between them, for the benefit of Europeans who would inevitably use local labor. This illustrates especially well the distinction I have drawn between the colonial city as defined by Europeans' adaptation – adaptation for their own benefit, such as easy access to laborers – in contrast to the imperial model of displacement and dominance. Of course, we might interpret this point in the plan as a tacit means of dispersing natives into clusters to reduce their potential to unite in opposition to Europeans. But the planners explicitly mentioned the city's "absolute tranquility" of the city in the preceding decade, obviating the question of security.[41] Meanwhile, depending on their means, natives apparently had choices of residential areas, ranging from the old city to the mixed center, the outer areas "for natives", and ultimately, even the low-density outer areas "for metropolitans," should they choose to "conform to Italians' way of life."

Comparison with Benghazi helps put the implications of the new plan for Tripoli in perspective. Italian policies in Cyrenaica were harsher than in Tripolitania throughout the colonial period. Even after the "peace" of 1932, the natives' movements were heavily controlled, whether in concentration camps, the desert, or cities.[42] We can thus safely presume that Italians would be more excluding of the natives in Benghazi than Tripoli. Indeed, according to the Benghazi plan of

1932 by Alpago Novello, Cabiati, and Ferrazza, the original plan of 1914 had "provided for . . . a clear separation of our city from the native city,"[43] which had not been true of Tripoli's first plan. The new plan aimed, again, to "separate, *as clearly as possible*, the part of the city inhabited by natives from the part that is or should be inhabited by metropolitans [emphasis in the original]."[44] Because the plans for Benghazi and Tripoli were by the same authors, the difference in emphasis between the two is significant. Total separation was evidently not feasible in Benghazi, yet the plan would create delineations "*as clearly as possible*." In Tripoli, on the other hand, separation was not entirely possible either, but the planners' less stringent solution was to maintain "reasonably distinct" quarters.

In addition to this subtle but meaningful difference in language, the Benghazi plan differed from Tripoli's in its allocation of native space(s). New European quarters in Tripoli developed away from the old city; in Benghazi, they encircled the original settlement altogether, both confining it and isolating it from outlying native areas.[45] To further delimit the principal native area, the plan aimed to widen the roads surrounding it.[46] And insofar as its purpose was to ensure the European-ness of the European center, the plan seems to have been implemented effectively. When traveler Freya Stark visited Benghazi in the 1930s, she was horrified by the absence of Arabs in the European quarters: "I began to look round for the Arabs, and there were none to be seen."[47] Still, the native areas were evidently as porous to Europeans as Tripoli's. The new master plan complained that Italians should "abandon native houses and quarters, which they have adopted all too often, mingling in a regrettable promiscuity with the native element." Even the City Hall was in the native quarter. And despite the more draconian separatism of the plan, the plan allowed that "more or less well-to-do natives, who adapt to our way of life" might settle in the (European) new quarter.[48]

THE LATE-1930s MASTERPLAN BY URBAN HYGIENE SPECIALISTS

Unlike Stark in Benghazi, foreign travelers to Tripoli in the mid- and late-1930s noted the presence of Arabs throughout the city's central area, in one case pointing out that "there is no colour bar . . . about seats" in the public gardens.[49] Nevertheless, by the late 1930s some important changes were made to the city's master plan, moving incrementally toward displacing natives from the mixed center and gutting areas of native quarters. In this respect, even though Tripoli's plan was not an expression of total segregation, it began to foretell strict a priori lines of demarcation in the plans for *AOI*, and echo the back-handed exclusions implemented by the French administration in Rabat, as interpreted by Janet Abu-Lughod in her study of how economic barriers there amounted to segregationist sleight-of-hand – apartheid – under the guise of comparatively benign associationism.[50] At the same time, as I explain below, in this respect it also paralleled new measures for Italian cities as well, such that the exclusion of natives was much like that affecting Italian citizens of the lower classes.

It is essential to note that architects were not responsible for these increases in the plan's use of "guttings," or slum clearance [*sventramenti*]; urban hygiene experts were. After the early-1930s plan was finalized, public health bureaucrats brought a less aesthetic sensibility to bear on Tripoli's development, and departed from the *ambientismo* that had prevailed for two decades. We can only surmise that this explains why architectural journals neglected to mention the administration-generated plan of 1936 (which scholars have not discussed either); but the administration's turn to engineers and hygiene experts – the very specialists the architectural profession had worked so hard to displace, as we saw in Chapter 4 – suggests that the silence of architects stemmed from more than an unrelated loss of interest. In any case, it is evident from this plan that after the mid-1930s, interventions in Tripoli were determined by the government (in Rome and Tripoli) and urban hygiene professionals, a different circumstance than the one the self-important journals had long depicted, featuring architects at the center of built-environment practices.

Initially, Civil Corps engineers made only minor amendments to the 1934 architects' plan. Their texts remained faithful to its outlines, continuing to mention "existing native quarters,"[51] the preservation of the old city and the oasis, and the intent to make new native areas where natives would build for themselves.[52] But in 1935, the Tripoli municipality's Technical Office departed from the plan's general intent, deciding to remove an entire "native nucleus" from its central location. Prompted by a vote on the part of the local Buildings Commission, the Technical Office deemed it necessary to "eliminate . . . the old native area" near the *lungomare* in the vicinity of the Uaddan hotel and casino, in order to give the area a "unified character" in tune with recent "major architectural projects related to tourism."[53] To aesthetic reasons, the report added hygienic ones. The heart of the area contained "dense and insalubrious . . . Arab dwellings" that were, moreover, unattractive. Also, the areas' edge, abutting the developing tourist zone, contained ugly shops and "modest houses for metropolitans." Moving the natives out, to a distant area south of the train station – and leaving the Europeans – would "remove the inadvisable promiscuity between metropolitans and natives that was developing there."[54] The plan further motioned to practice "thinning-out" [*diradamento*] on an unprecedented scale in the old city, and in a large native area, the Dahra.[55]

In an equally significant development, direct government involvement from Rome began to shape planning for Tripoli. A meeting of the Ministry of the Interior's public health authorities in March 1936 again upheld the essence of the plan, praising its preservation of the walled city (which it called "the Arab city"). But it also concluded forcefully that Tripoli required "a rational improvement of the oldest and densest area, namely the *Arab* one."[56] In response to this communication from Rome, the municipality "compiled a new master plan" dated 16 October 1936, including strong new measures to remove natives from the old city and turn it into a showcase for tourists.[57] The following year, the Ministry of Italian Africa went further in this direction, leaving behind the earlier documents'

calls for cautious "improvements" and supporting, instead, "major thinning-out of [its] dwellings, such that the center will hold only shops, Arab and Jewish workshops, and few residences."[58] Although it was Roman bureaucrats who had originally mandated new, drastic interventions, by the end of the decade even the local documents espoused full segregation, aiming to "constitute . . . separate quarters for metropolitans and Muslims."[59]

Even though Tripoli's municipality eventually echoed the language of memoranda from Rome, it is worth highlighting the discrepancies in the intervening textual record. Following the exchanges between Tripoli and Rome reveals how much more inclined officials in Rome were to make blanket statements, collapsing local nuances and presenting interventions as simple to implement. At first, the Rome-issued approval of the 1934 plan's "reasonably distinct quarters" rephrased the plan in terms of "quarters for metropolitans" and "natives."[60] As we saw in the last paragraph, the old city appeared in Rome's documents as an ethnically simple "Arab city," whereas in fact the walls contained Arabs, Jews, and Christian Europeans. More dramatically, what began in a Tripoli document as a comment about preparing to "unify the Muslim cemeteries" (*i cimiteri musulmani*) into one, consolidating them to create more surface in the city's center (something that had not been done previously for "reasons of political-religious nature,"[61] i.e. for reasons of adaptation to the local population), was reiterated, erroneously, in a return document from the Health Council of the Ministry of the Interior as concerning the "Muslim centers" (*i centri musulmani*),[62] suggesting that all Tripoli's Muslims would be displaced and concentrated in one setting. In short, documents from Rome tended to broader generalizations, and may not be especially reliable indices to what took place in practice. Those from Tripoli, on the other hand, showed more clearly the realistic limitations of the site and the means at administrators' disposal.

It is also significant that hygiene experts began agitating for "improvements," "thinning-out," and even slum clearance [*sventramenti*] when they did. Concerned primarily with risks to public health, they cited the dangers of open sewers, rat infestations, and possible outbreaks of plague as incentives to greater interventions. Even though their policies would dovetail with segregationist policies of the later 1930s, in Tripoli they dictated more radical policies than the architects' even before the creation of *AOI* in 1936, and the subsequent *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* meeting. There is some evidence that the new measures for East African cities were at least examined – one outline of such measures is in the files on plans for Tripoli[63] – but hygiene experts had already espoused more drastic interventions before these became a matter of official policy in the *AOI*. Even when they approved the 1934 plan – when all concerned wanted to continue leaving the old city untouched – they called for "an organic and systematic program to progressively improve the hygiene of the old city, which remains enormously crowded with people whom tradition and fatalism make loath to all progress where hygiene of houses and persons is concerned." Although they acknowledged the great attraction of the old city, they deemed it "indispensable

[to] attempt to draw some of the old city's inhabitants to the new quarters that will be created, in order to achieve in the old city the necessary thinning-out of the population."[64] Especially since this report closely followed the completion of the architects' plan, it is striking how much more emphatic hygiene experts were in their recommendation that the population density in the old city be diminished: Alpago Novello and his colleagues had merely hoped that the great attraction of the new quarters would entice people to leave their old city.

Scholars of colonial environments have long emphasized the participation of hygiene experts in segregationist administrators' agendas.[65] Of particular relevance here is the idea that French authorities in Rabat, while ostensibly preserving and promoting native ways of life and architectural design, "museumified" the native settings, calcifying them into dioramas and limiting their ability to grow spatially and develop architecturally.[66] From the available documents in Rome – Tripoli's municipality archives have been closed to all but a very few foreign scholars – it is impossible to decipher the extent to which ideas of hygiene were implemented, and whether an ostensibly beneficent discourse masked egregious practices of dispossession and relocation.[67] For instance, one could read between the lines an insidious agenda to contain the natives in an enclosed environment – the walled city – or more likely, to exclude them from civic participation by removing them from the city center. On the other hand, there is no evidence in the old city today, or in oral-historical materials, that there were any sizable, imposed resettlements. Indeed, recent decades have seen an organized movement to restore and preserve the core of the old city,[68] which a walk through the city reveals to be dilapidated, but still in place. Outside the cities, Bedouin were confined to camps in Cyrenaica, and even in new "camps" just outside Tripoli's walls, at Bab Tajura; but it appears that in the capital, no direct restrictions were placed on locals' moves, although economic factors undoubtedly determined their movements. Nonetheless, even if Abu-Lughod's analysis may be relevant here, colonial Tripoli differed from Rabat and Casablanca, where new quarters confined natives to European interpretations of traditional environments – "new old cities," or *nouvelles médinas*; and there is no sign of the French "museumification" of the colonized population.

Architectural and propaganda articles also left the question open, remaining noticeably vague on the subject of possible new segregation in Tripoli. Even the geographer Emilio Scarin, whose 1940 book was clearly based on painstaking fieldwork, wrote that "the new city is entirely inhabited by Italians, although in the Belcher [area] and the eastern satellite of Dahra there are still many Muslims . . . The blacks [*negri*] are scattered here and there, in both the old city and the new,"[69] suggesting that boundaries between groups still remained relatively porous. Interestingly, his text repeated verbatim a passage from an earlier (1937) article on Tripoli.[70] The point here is not that Scarin was a plagiarist – recirculating official texts and travelers' descriptions was very common practice – but that things seem not to have changed much in the last few years of the 1930s.

But the most useful comparanda for 1930s Tripoli are Italian cities during the same period. Ostensibly for reasons of hygiene – although it has been argued that such displacements were ultimately political – thousands of citizens were displaced from urban centers, and extensive medieval neighborhoods were demolished.[71] The similarity of Tripoli's measures was deliberate. Beginning with the 1934 document from hygiene authorities in Rome, the experts involved insisted consistently on bringing Tripoli to a status uniform with what they had been doing in Italy, particularly with respect to the use of *sventramenti*.[72] As mentioned in Chapter 2, Italians of the lower classes and southern regions were generally viewed by authorities as pre-modern Italians in need of civilizational intervention, and authorities openly discussed ways to modernize them in spite of themselves. For example, the comment quoted above regarding "people whom tradition and fatalism make loath to all progress where hygiene . . . is concerned" echoes countless officials' remarks concerning subaltern Italians, highlighting the fact that in the Italian context, the difference between modernization and colonization was to some extent one of degree rather than a thorough distinction between all Europeans and all natives. Italian administrators' particular focus on Italian subjects extended to the colonial city too, where the working classes were under surveillance. One article of 1939, boasting of the workers' housing built under Balbo's government, specified that "The supervision [*sorveglianza*] of the tenants continues assiduously, and satisfying results are obtained through the work of persuasion that is carried out intensively and systematically."[73] If we juxtapose such remarks with the comments published in the INU proceedings, it appears that Italians were the natives that weighed most heavily in the government's projects of social reform.

In the broader context of the history of Italian-colonized cities, although the later plans for Tripoli inched toward eventual segregation, it was still the case that segregationist practices did not automatically follow from the theories so clearly enunciated in 1937. In Asmara, as we saw in Chapter 3, Italians engaged in some exclusionary practices, but these were solidified by neither social theory nor official policy. In Tripoli, to put it simply, the situation was the reverse. By the late 1930s, planners had a theoretical apparatus mandating segregation, and the national government had instituted segregationist laws. Still, carrying through on these mandates would have meant destroying most of the standing city, which was not done. Instead, only in the late-1930s East African setting of *AOI*, where Italians (officially or unofficially) had little sense of recognizing Italy's own ancient history or of continuous historical contact – and thus of historical value – and with the limitless government backing of the late 1930s, would segregationist theory and practice begin to mirror each other.

ARCHITECTURE FROM 1934 TO 1940: "HARMONIOUS" ECLECTICISM

In order to understand changes made in Tripoli beginning in the mid-1930s, we also need to take into account the fact of Italo Balbo's governorship, which

began in January 1934. He does not appear in the documents discussed above, but he energetically organized air shows, car races, and other such spectacles, and made astute use of propaganda, giving the colony a highly public profile. He involved himself in the city's development, forming an aesthetic-oversight commission upon his arrival.[74] Immediate changes entailed demolitions symbolizing Balbo's new stature, such as the removal of one of his predecessors' architectural legacies: the metal cupola topping the Galleria De Bono, a large apartment and shop complex in the center of town.[75] Balbo was equally active in shaping the city's image, lending it the hue of pragmatic associationism he brought to all aspects of governing Libya. Far from trumpeting Tripoli as a segregation-based city, his propaganda presented it as a harmonious one, closely paraphrasing his remarks about a non-hierarchical Libyan society quoted in Chapter 2:

> In five years [of Balbo's governorship], a miracle has been accomplished. Here there are no dominators and subjects, but citizens, differentiated by their race, their religion, and their traditions, but united in a single will, guided by a single *Duce* [Mussolini], and equally intent on the grandiose development of this land.[76]

Rather than the heated architectural battleground that architectural journals had depicted in previous years, the author – suggesting significant "spin control" on Balbo's part – presented the city's architectural variety as part of an intentional ensemble, or a "harmony of three architectures:"

> In Tripoli, Balbo has created a new style: a style that makes use of the beautiful and harmonizes it with the useful, that blends the modern with local architectural elements, that responds intimately to our rising people's will to work and to the fascination of tradition.[77]

Of course, although Balbo took credit for it – even presenting the very cacophony architects had deplored previously as a success – he had, in fact, "inherited" the city's architectural variety. When he arrived, the rate of new buildings was continuing to accelerate. The first decade of occupation had seen the erection of 202 new buildings; 1,210 additional ones went up between 1923 and 1931. Between 1932 and 1936, 720 new buildings (including 1,800 apartments) were completed.[78] But Balbo was also responsible for a period of intense architectural activity: it was in the latter half of the 1930s that Tripoli fully became a showcase for Italian architecture and celebrations. For Tripoli alone, eighteen new public works or building complexes were planned in October 1937, for completion by October 1938.[79]

Balbo's architectural right hand was Florestano di Fausto, who had served as Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Technical Office, and was still in the Office's service when Balbo summoned him to Tripoli in 1934, making him overseer of its architectural developments. As we saw in Chapter 5, di Fausto's building record was remarkably eclectic. During his Dodecanese service under Governor Lago from 1923 to 1927, he had designed the overall plan as well as most of the buildings in the cities of Rhodes and Kos, in an eclectic palette

inspired by both Italian and local past genres, but principally echoing Venetian building motifs that recalled Venice's commercial hegemony centuries earlier. The overall result was a combination of Renaissance façades, Orientalizing effects, a contrived medievalism evoking the period of the Knights of St John, and a "Venetian Gothic" exemplified by the Government Palace, which deliberately evoked the Doges' Palace in Venice (Figure 5.12).[80] At the same time, di Fausto had also been at work with Brasini on Tirana, even though it was not yet officially an Italian colonial city. As in Tripoli and Rhodes, the 1925 master plan there was based on the separation of new constructions from old; and significant government-built structures by Brasini and di Fausto resembled their historicist designs elsewhere.[81]

Di Fausto's projects for Tripoli were enormously varied, as they had been in Rhodes. Under his supervision, for instance, the space around the Arch of Marcus Aurelius was widened further; a museum of antiquities was built within the Castello; a new path was cut leading from Arch to the harbor; the southwestern artery, Corso Sicilia, was widened, which required razing eight *funduqs*;[82] new markets were built;[83] and he designed hotels throughout the colony, as well as *borghi* for Italian settlers.[84] A great many of these designs, whether for new buildings or to refurbish pre-existing settings, were ultimately in aid of increasing Tripoli's appeal for tourists, a government strategy that flourished especially in the late 1930s.[85] Meanwhile, workers' housing and office buildings were in the hands of state organizations or separate companies, and featured less prominently in propaganda or architecture journals (Figures 7.8 and 7.9).[86]

Through the city's numerous government and architectural enterprises, the capital's appearance changed; but in addition, its center of gravity shifted somewhat, away from the Piazza Castello at the juncture of the newer areas and the city walls, eastward to the Piazza della Cattedrale, which di Fausto helped to complete.[87] He designed a broad open portico facing the cathedral, leading directly to the sea, both physically and visually – a symbolically meaningful link, since the sea was both the coveted, end-in-itself Mediterranean, and the link back to Rome (Figure 5.15). At the same time, in the late 1930s the government added to Piazza Castello – which it had already created by razing markets and buildings, and joining two smaller *piazzas* together – two monuments signifying the more governmental, official character of this central *piazza*, inscribing it with specific signs of Italian rule. A bronze statue of Caesar stood near the main city gate off the *piazza*, and an equestrian statue of Mussolini brandishing the "sword of Islam" was added on the occasion of the dictator's visit in 1937.[88]

In late 1930s Tripoli, then, the government was actively invested in architectural developments, along with representations of Italian sovereignty and *civiltà*, ranging from the Roman Empire to the Catholic Church and the new Italian Empire. At the same, although Rationalist and *Novecento* architects continued to build private commissions, their designs did not dominate the city; di Fausto's did. Di Fausto's collaboration with Balbo was extremely successful, in

Figure 7.8
Workers' housing in Tripoli (1932, Architect Umberto di Segni).

Figure 7.9
Palazzo Istituto Nazionale di Assicurazioni (National Insurance Institute) in Tripoli (1934–1935, Architect Tullio Rossi).

other words, and the architect's "signature" was literally everywhere. But this outcome abounds with irony. As described in Chapter 5, in contrast to architects who theorized colonial architecture, di Fausto was silent in the professional journals, except for one article he published in 1937. Conversely, the journals shunned his work throughout their period of colonial-architectural theorizations; his numerous designs in the Dodecanese Islands appeared in propaganda journals instead.[89] Yet in large part, Tripoli had become what Rava and his peers had

desired: a city boasting (some) distinctively Italian and modern designs in the "new quarter" (Figure 7.10); an oasis, with its original vernacular architecture, that was protected; and an old, walled city that was also relatively intact. Nonetheless, it was not the showcase of modernist or *Novecento* consistency they had envisioned. With his usual animus, Rava attacked di Fausto for not being a "true" "colonialist architect," and having "disfigured the beautiful cities of our colonies" by using "that unfortunate contamination of Arab picturesque-folklorism with the *Novecento* [approach]."[90] Rava's bitterness, furthermore, likely stemmed from more than a mere dislike of di Fausto's works. Indeed, like Mussolini himself (as we saw in Chapter 4), Balbo was not committed to a consistent Rationalist or *Novecento* aesthetic. Architecture had finally become central to the colonial administration's ambitions, but the very architects who had promoted the centrality of architecture were excluded from direct participation in the government's projects.

It is also worth underscoring that Rava was the only architect to publish such criticisms of di Fausto's work in the late 1930s; his colleagues, instead, remained essentially mute, praising the great "activity" in colonial architecture but refraining from real criticism or appraisal. With respect to Tripoli as well as the Libyan rural settlements (which I discuss in the next chapter), it seems that most architects were loath to criticize Balbo, even by criticizing the architecture he commissioned. Instead, when Balbo wrote a letter to the editor of *Architettura*, Piacentini, to praise a photographic survey of Tripoli's residential buildings published in the journal, Piacentini used this recognition from a powerful Fascist to promote his journal by publishing the letter.[91] Both figures, in other words, used this exchange to promote their own importance. In the meantime, theoretical discussions of colonial architecture had come to a full stop.

Figure 7.10
Corso Sicilia (now Shar'ia 'Umar al-Mukhtar) in Tripoli (*circa* 1939).

Chapter 8: Islands of Ethnicity

Planned Agricultural Settlements

> "We aren't emigrating though, are we? We're still going to our home, even more so; we were born here [in Italy], but there [in Libya] we will have land" . . . From a distance, the village . . . which looked like a great whiteness of evenly distributed dice, could have been an Arab settlement . . . But this was no Arab village, there was no white minaret.[1]
>
> Gian Paolo Callegari, 1941

While some architects in the early 1930s engaged in recriminations about show-case architecture in Tripoli, a handful of others extended their practice into a field that would become especially important under Balbo: new settlements in Libya for Italian farmers. These brought the culmination of Italian efforts at state-sponsored "demographic colonization," which had been implemented only minimally thus far in Eritrea and Rhodes. In substantial part due to Balbo lobbying for greater state investment, fertile areas of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica became a different sort of showcase, of newly built villages. In all, government-sponsored agencies completed between thirty and forty of these (Figures 8.1 and 8.2); but the government intended to increase this number, bringing half a million Italian settlers to Libya alone by mid-century.[2]

With respect to architectural designs, master plans, and government intentions regarding the physical, moral, and social hygiene of settlers, these settlements mirrored the more numerous ones built throughout Italy in the 1930s, under the "New Towns" program.[3] The Fascist regime regarded the settlements in Italy and Libya as solutions to identical problems, of Italian over-population, poverty, and emigration; it also used them similarly for international self-promotion, publicizing them to gain the approbation of other industrialized countries.[4] It is not surprising, then, that propagandists described the Libyan villages in the same terms they used for those in Italy, praising their simplicity, modernity, and hygiene, as well as their positive effects on the settlers' health and nationalist spirit. At the same time, though, their texts masked the fact that the Libyan settlements were not built in relatively uninhabited areas, as those in

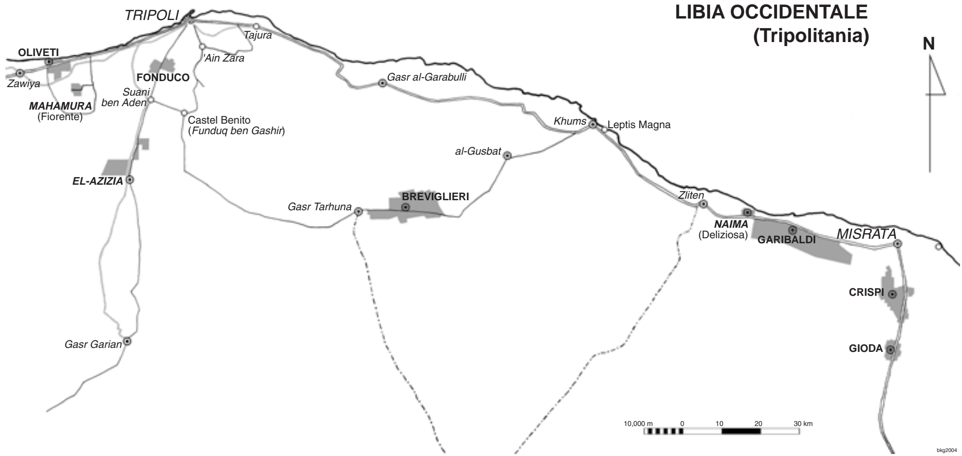


Figure 8.1
Western Libya (Tripolitania): settlements created by the *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*. The map does not show privately funded settlements, or those of the *Azienda Tabacchi Italiani* or the *Istituto Nazionale Fascista per la Previdenza Sociale* (the two largest other parastatal agencies).

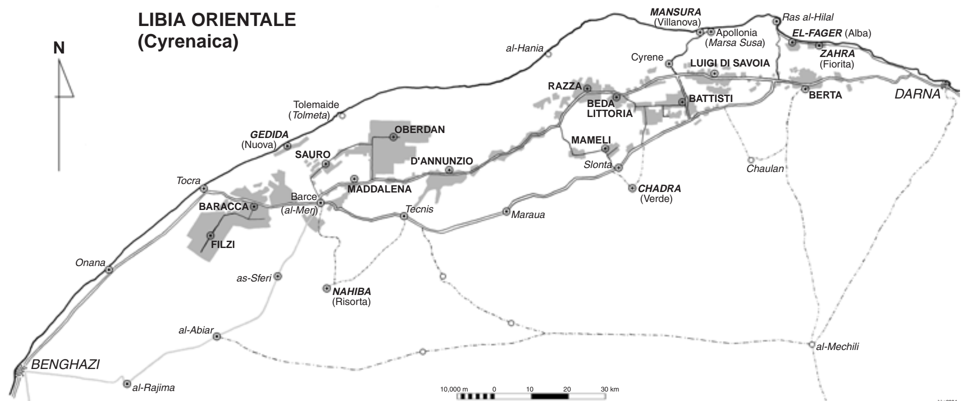


Figure 8.2
Eastern Libya (Cyrenaica): settlements created by the *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*. The map does not show privately funded settlements, or those of the *Azienda Tabacchi Italiani* or the *Istituto Nazionale Fascista per la Previdenza Sociale* (the two largest other parastatal agencies).

the metropole were; and that local Arabs were part of the settlers' everyday lives. In Balbo's own terms, the government intended the settlements to be "ethnic [Italian] islands;"[5] and with very few exceptions, writers represented them as such. In practice, however, Italians in the settlements were anything but isolated. Libyan Arabs had been part of the labor force that built them; they were the settlers' neighbors; and they remained essential to the settlements' economies. Inevitably, signs of this contact developed, such as changes in Italians' eating habits and clothing.

This textual elision of the settlers' actual neighbors, combined with emphatic remarks about the Italian-ness of the villages and their residents, extended the conceptual displacement of natives and appropriation of colonial territory already discussed in Chapter 2. As in Tripoli, here the authors of travelogues and government propaganda emphasized how Italian the landscape was, likening it to parts of the metropole or pointing out traces of Roman ruins. More interesting still – in terms of analyzing the demographic and imaginary dimensions of these settlements – is the fact that in 1939, when Italy annexed Libya, Libyans in general were marginalized in a new way. Some Libyans had been entitled to Italian citizenship, but when their native territory became Italy rather than a colony, they lost the right to it, becoming instead eligible for "special Italian citizenship." In effect, Libya became Italy; and in a simultaneous counter-movement, Libyans became the equivalent of migrants to another country, rather than inhabitants of their own – even though they were not displaced physically in the process. Metaphorically, in other words, the ground shifted under their feet.

In this light, of course, the disingenuousness of the comments quoted earlier, claiming that Libya was not made up of "dominator and dominated" populations, becomes fully apparent. But the government's complementary discourse concerning the increased Italian-ness of Italians in the colony was, perhaps, more heartfelt. Differences of dialects and regions, it was asserted triumphantly, were being effaced, making the previous subalterns into proper citizens (Figure 2.6). In theory, then, occupying agricultural lands both extended Italian colonization over vast ranges of soil and strengthened the "colonization" of Italians by the Italian state, using the new "low men" – Libyans – to fill the lowest slots, while raising Italians' hierarchical positions. From this point of view, Libyans were the new Italian subalterns, taking the place of Italian southerners and other "problem subjects." Meanwhile, these conceptual shifts of territory and citizenship also suggest that we should use the categories of "colonial" versus "Italian" architecture judiciously when examining Libya's agricultural settlements. Although they began as Italian outposts in the North African colony, they eventually changed to the equivalent of the metropole's "New Towns," with the peculiar addition of Arab neighbors.

I return to these points below, after discussing the programs in general and their designs for the settlers. I bring them up now, though, to highlight that while on paper these settlements were always meant to distinguish between Italians and natives, there were ambiguities afoot. For now, I begin with the

perfunctory, and rare, comments made in the architectural journals regarding the 1930s government-sponsored Libyan settlements – virtually the only architects' remarks on any of the colonial settlements anywhere.

ARCHITECTS' COMMENTS

Architects' taciturnity concerning the Libyan settlements is all the more striking in light of the otherwise abundant propaganda, as well as the fact that they published more profusely on the "New Towns" in the metropole.[6] Since 1932, the principal agency in charge had been the Agency for the Colonization of Cyrenaica (*Ente per la colonizzazione della Cirenaica*), which then became the Agency for the Colonization of Libya (*Ente per la colonizzazione della Libia*), and the programs had been developing rapidly; nonetheless, the first architect's comment did not appear until 1935. As in 1930s Tripoli, I surmise that this apparent loss of interest on the part of architectural journals is due to the fact that architects were almost entirely excluded from these projects, which involved only di Fausto, Pellegrini, who wrote the 1936 "Manifesto," and Umberto di Segni. As in Tripoli, the architects employed by the agencies in question had achieved what architecturalists had wanted: they worked hand in hand with government agencies, with a free hand in design. But the *Novecentisti* and Rationalists at large, apparently, had no say in the development of the designs; and they were cautious in their published judgments, which might have seemed critical of Balbo. In any case, the blandness and remoteness of their observations about the new "centers" of the late 1930s differ noticeably from their earlier, biting comments on rivals' work in Tripoli.

The first architect's observations, by Ottavio Cabiati, who had collaborated on masterplans for Benghazi and Tripoli, concerned the Cyrenaican villages of Primavera (previously named Messa in Arabic, and subsequently renamed Luigi Razza by the Agency), Giovanni Berta (formerly Gubba), Beda Littoria (formerly Zawiyah al Baydah), and Luigi di Savoia (formerly Labrach). Cabiati was brief, yet he made it clear that this was not *auteur* architecture, but rather the product of Cyrenaica's Public Works Office and the Agency's own Technical Offices, of which not much was to be expected.

> The settlers' houses are . . . constructions without any architectural pretense. Indeed, their merit lies in this modest, decorous, and modern simplicity of form, which makes them appropriate to their purpose and consonant with the environment . . . the village [by the Public Works Office] [is] richer in unnecessary motifs, such as the exedra behind the church . . . [and] the showy gates, [and] seems less successful.[7]

Distancing himself further still, and making no commitment to aesthetic judgment, he specified that the mass colonization of Libya was of such importance to Italians that "to consider it from the architectural point of view means seeing it from the least thrilling angle." At best, he was damning the designs of the first four villages in Cyrenaica with faint praise: "It is to the greater credit of

our colonization that [they have] not disturbed the beauty of the landscape with vulgar constructions."[8]

Three years elapsed before the next architectural article, by the editors of *Rassegna di Architettura*, appeared in 1938. It maintained the same tone, seeming perhaps even more helpless, as though the editors could only watch this rapid construction from afar. It made no comment whatsoever on the architectural designs. Instead, it noted the same four villages described by Cabiati, plus a fifth Cyrenaican one, Umberto Maddalena; and went on to show plans for villages currently under construction in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica: Crispi, Gioda, Oliveti (Figures 8.3 and 8.4), and Giordani in the former, and Oberdan, d'Annunzio, Battisti, and Baracca in the latter. Noticeably, though, whereas Cabiati's article had not named the architects involved, this article credited di Fausto, Pellegrini, and di Segni.[9]

The settlements' growth peaked in 1938, when Balbo masterminded a mass transport of 1,800 families at once, adding up to approximately 15,000 or 16,000 individuals. (Despite Balbo's protests, Mussolini – and therefore the press – insisted on calling these settlers "the twenty thousand," *i ventimila*.)[10] Thus subsequent articles, published in 1939, were reporting on the settlements after the fact. Architects still seemed covertly resentful, refusing to contribute their expert evaluations. One article, for example, reproduced photographs from a propaganda publication, *L'illustrazione coloniale*, merely appending a list of villages and a "no comment":

> an arid list . . . [its] aridity does not detract from the imposing and evocative quality of these works; in fact, it seems to us that [the list] sets them in higher relief than the most thoughtful comment could.[11]

A further article in the same journal showed photographs and did not even deign to comment on the fact that it offered no comment.[12] Yet another described the basic elements of each village – "the church, the Fascist Party offices [*casa del fascio*], the school with lodgings for the teacher, the military police station, the post office, the market, and in the case of the larger villages, the inn." It mentioned four house types, "each . . . [with] an oven, a kitchen, eating area, three bedrooms, a toilet, a shower, a stable, a pigsty, a manure heap, a storeroom, and a well." Like the others, however, this article avoided any architectural evaluation, even though it praised a work by di Segni that was not part of the new settlements – implicitly leaving the negative judgment on the latter hanging: "The new group of small villas outside Porta Benito in Tripoli . . . [is] noteworthy."[13]

Finally, also in 1939, one architect ventured a frank call for the Rationalists' earlier architecturalism. Stressing the positive role of Pellegrini, who executed many works in the settlements and residential ones in Tripoli itself, and wrote the "Manifesto of Colonial Architecture" discussed in Chapter 6, Plinio Marconi used the article to revive the rhetoricization of the architect's role, although at a time when this was already a moot point.

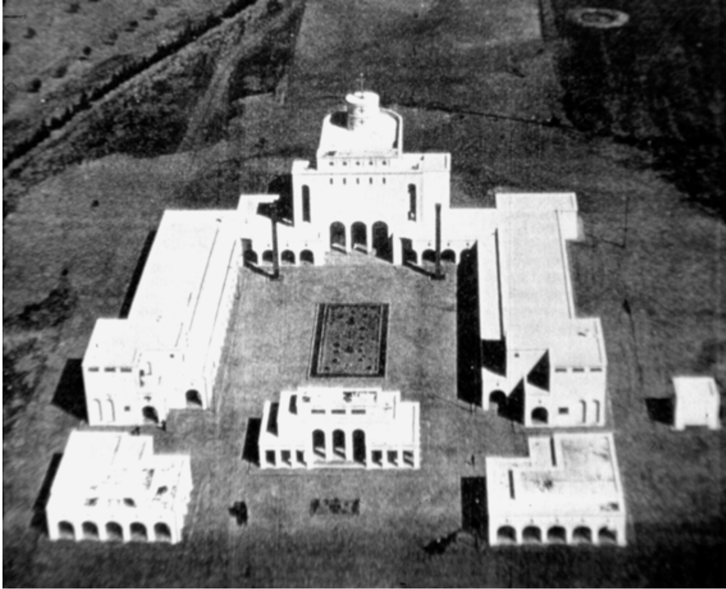


Figure 8.3
Villaggio Oliveti in Tripolitania (1935–1938, Architect Florestano di Fausto).

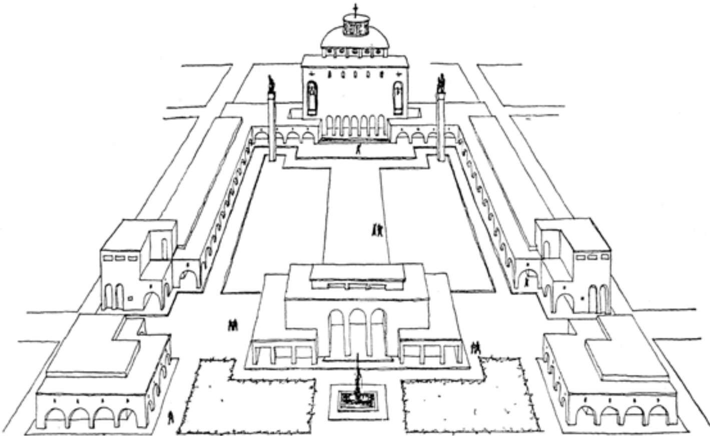


Figure 8.4
Villaggio Oliveti in Tripolitania (1935–1938, Architect Florestano di Fausto).

> Thanks to the presence in Libya of a few Architects who are especially sensitive to the compositional and plastic values that are most appropriate to that Country . . . architecture there is taking on a character that is rather remarkable. Giovanni Pellegrini is one of the most active and intelligent among these Architects.[14]

Appropriating the work in the settlements to the credit of all Rationalists by extension, and failing to mention the participation of di Fausto, di Segni, the

Public Works office, or the Agency's Technical Offices, Marconi credited Pellegrini's work in the settlements with:

> maintaining the integrity of his gifts as an architect who is wholesomely Italian and modern . . . shaping them to the themes of local construction, to certain particular inflections of the local art, [while] staying away on the other hand from a mechanical repetition of forms borrowed from abroad.

In sum, the Rationalist author congratulated himself that "a young comrade of ours has been able so early on, to say a word of his own in these lands of ours, which in the future will open up further to the fullest activity of Italian Architects."[15] Ultimately, even this article had little to say about the settlements' designs. Instead, it concerned the prominence of professional architects, suggesting further that the architects writing in the journals were preoccupied with their status vis-à-vis government-sponsored architecture, and on the other hand, mute concerning the designs themselves, which were clearly not within their own purview.

SETTLEMENTS AND GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP (1890s–1930s)

Architectural sophistication, meanwhile, had never been a typical concern of the engineers, agronomists, politicians, and private investors with interests in the colonies' agricultural concessions in the decades leading up to the 1930s. Instead, the main question at stake for the development of the colonies was whether to pursue "demographic colonization" – the state-sponsored settlement of Italian farmers on a grand scale. We have already seen that the first colonial farming settlement, consisting of ten families, was established in Eritrea in 1893.[16] It was spearheaded by Parliamentarian Leopoldo Franchetti, who had been one of the original formulators in the 1870s of the Italian "southern question," problematizing southern Italians as targets for reform. His Eritrean interests extended directly from his long-term quest to solve Italian agricultural and population problems.[17] His attempted settlement depended on government financing, however, and it was short-lived. After the defeat at Adwa and the fall of Crispi's government in 1896, the government's commitment declined, as did the settlement.

In contrast, the Fascist government would commit enormous resources to colonial agricultural development, in two more or less distinct phases: by subsidizing capitalist enterprises, largely in the 1920s, and by commissioning new settlements through a variety of agencies in the 1930s. In the dominant pattern of the 1920s, colonial governments handed expropriated lands over in concessions to individual entrepreneurs, and rather than financing them directly, they supplied indirect aid, such as selling materials at reduced prices, and financing public works, roads, and railroads. Under government decrees, in addition, investors were able to obtain especially good loans: in Rhodes, the Bank of Sicily opened lines of credit for agricultural entrepreneurs in 1928, the same year that

the state monopoly on wine production there was created (*Cooperativa Agricola Italiana di Rodi*, or CAIR).[18] Although Somalia was atypical among the Italian colonies in not being targeted for demographic colonization, it serves as a case in point to illustrate various approaches, and combinations thereof, for developing agricultural potential prior to government-sponsored settlements of the 1930s. In the early 1910s, the colony's governor established an experimental agricultural station at Genale (the *Azienda Agraria Governativa*); by the late 1910s, the venture was already failing. The governor had brought two Italian families in 1913, hoping to develop "white colonization;" this aspect of the station failed as well. Royal family member Luigi Amedeo di Savoia created the largest concession in Somalia in 1920, the *Società Agricola Italo Somala*, with initial capital from industrial and private interests; the concession's center was named after his title, Duca degli Abruzzi. The plantation – mostly devoted to bananas and cotton – was highly mechanized, and entirely geared to capitalist profit rather than self-sufficiency for Italian farmers, using native labor. Later, the colony's first Fascist governor, De Vecchi, brought a renewed impulse to invest and develop the earlier Genale plantation; after 1924, it began to let small plots to private concessionaires.[19] Similarly, in Rhodes, a Government Agricultural Enterprise was established in "San Marco" ("Katavia" today), and an Experimental Institute in "Villanova," in 1928; in 1929 a fruit company began a development in "Peveragno," and by 1930 it was building a second set of sixteen farmhouses to accommodate the second set of families to be brought there from Italy.[20]

But compared to Eritrea, Somalia, and Rhodes, the government's most significant ambitions and investments concerned Libya. The state's tobacco monopoly (*Azienda Tabacchi Italiani*, or ATI) was created in Tripolitania in 1921, and independent capitalists took on extensive land concessions through the 1920s – including Governor Volpi himself, who owned a vast area in Miṣrata.[21] As part of his expropriation programs, he issued governmental decrees in 1923 and 1925, creating credit institutions in support of private agricultural development.[22]

The idea of settling thousands of Italian families re-emerged with a vengeance in the early 1930s, when Cyrenaica and its especially fertile terrain were "pacified," and was implemented through several large settlement programs run by different (but all state-funded) organizations. In 1932, two organizations that were government-funded but administratively autonomous (i.e. "parastatal") began developing new landholdings in both Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, for the explicit purpose of settling Italian farmers: the Fascist National Welfare Institute (*Istituto Nazionale Fascista per la Previdenza Sociale*, or INFPS) and the Agency for the Colonization of Cyrenaica (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Cirenaica*, or ECC), which then became the principal development agency for all of Libya in 1934 (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*, or ECL). Altogether, these agencies established nearly forty settlements in the fertile areas of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, including a handful of settlements for Arabs.

Also in the 1930s, the state developed its huge "New Towns" program in the Italian peninsula. The principal agency in charge there was another

state-financed one: the National Veterans' Organization (*Opera Nazionale Combattenti*, or ONC); its biggest undertaking, the draining of the Pontine Marshes and the settling of five "New Towns" in that area, also began in the early 1930s. The ONC was subsequently the first agency put in charge of developing settlements in Ethiopia after 1936. Because of continuing fighting outside the cities, however, only two of these settlements were even partially completed. Both were, in reality, "reactivations" of earlier model farms belonging to the Emperor rather than Italian creations – a fact that passed unmentioned in Italian propaganda and documents. In any case, they were still barely in use when Italians lost control of the colony in 1941, comprising roughly only 400 Italians.[23]

HOUSES AND "CENTERS" FOR ITALIANS

The government's shift to direct sponsorship of intensive settlement programs is relevant here because it marked the transition to a systematization of settlement designs, under the direction of the Agency's architects. At the same time, just as the theorizations of architects we considered in earlier chapters did not influence all of architectural practice in Tripoli, architectural formulations did not reshape all of the concessions' designs, or even building terminology.

Italian and local laborers had built the concessions within the parameters of low budgets and whichever materials and patterns were most convenient. The first Italian farmers who settled in Eritrea lived in *tukuls*. Subsequent settlers often inflected their farm buildings with more or less local aspects. One text concerning Somalia in 1910 describes Italian constructions as "imitating and rather improving on the native ones" with respect to "comfort, space, hygiene, and aesthetics," using stronger materials while still incorporating the same finishing details as the natives.[24] Even into the 1930s, when architects' rhetoric rallied against such admixtures, concession houses ranged from strictly box-like exteriors to added whimsical flourishes, some of which resembled local forms – because natives actually built them, or because a touch of mimetic native color seemed attractive to Italians, or both.

Throughout the decade, Enrico Bartolozzi, a specialist in engineering questions regarding the settlements in Libya, and later, Ethiopia, meticulously considered questions of house types, labor, materials, and the best ways to house livestock. One measure of the gap between the rhetoric of theorizing architects in Italy and practitioners on the colonial ground is that the decorative elements he depicted, and the words he used in the process, did not vary over the course of the decade, even though he noted the rising routinization of house type design that began to develop after 1932 with the large settlement agencies.[25] In one 1933 article, he illustrated the house type for the *Unione Coloniale Italo Araba* concession near Benghazi – one whose arched windows clearly echo pointed North African arches (Figure 8.5).

The same article also reflected other ambiguities. We have seen that architects proclaimed the superiority of Italian methods, materials, and designs; but it

Figure 8.5
Housing, *Unione Coloniale Italo Araba* settlement at Guarsha (Libya).

is clear from Bartolozzi's text that, in practice, builders used North African structures and terms. Italians called their compounds *fonduchi*, after the Arabic *funduq* – meaning the equivalent of "inn" or "hotel," and describing a large enclosed courtyard with one or two stories of rooms wrapped around it. Due to security concerns, the surrounding walls were especially thick:

> The typical characteristic of the rural constructions in Cyrenaica . . . is to collect, with very few exceptions, the house, the stables and the annexes in a single building, more or less square in plan, with a large inner courtyard, known as the "*fonduco.*" At first sight, this type of rural building looks like a . . . small military fort with high, thick enclosure walls, often bearing small corner towers with appropriate fixtures for machine guns.

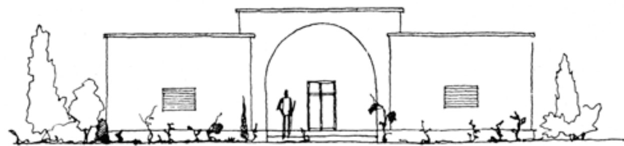
Furthermore, Italian builders used so-called "Tunisian," inexpensive roofing materials – dried algae over a flat wooden roof.[26]

Most interesting, considering the rhetorical "cleansing" of architects" discussions of any acknowledgement of imitation, is that in 1939 Bartolozzi *still* described Italian constructions "that are widely used in rural houses" as "Arab '*fonduco*' types." In this instance, he was not describing buildings with ornamental references to their Arab context, but ones like the model in Figure 8.6 – low white buildings with one or more simple arches, the façades of which he called "borrowed from the Arab style, in its essential elements."[27] In other words, while architects debated what made colonial architecture appropriate in both design and terminology, practitioners of long standing did not give up their descriptive habits, maintaining embedded practices not only in terms of functional design (such as the large courtyard building) but with respect to what we might call "colonially incorrect" terms of reference.

Meanwhile, the architects who formulated house types for the Agency – di Fausto, Pellegrini, and di Segni, in Libya – were not preoccupied with rhetoric

either, instead focusing on simplicity, costs, and above all, both physical and moral hygiene. As in the metropole's "New Towns," houses were meant to impose sexual segregation by separating the parents, the sons and the daughters into three bedrooms. (In reality, many settler families included more than one married couple, and we can surmise substantial overcrowding.) Animals and humans should occupy separate quarters. Settlers previously accustomed to keeping farm animals in the large kitchen, day or night, had to relegate them to stalls or the designated courtyard. And in terms of appearance, the architects developed a variety of consistent, and quite repetitive, house types without ornamentation, reminiscent of both Arab *and* Italian vernacular ones – an ambiguity I return to below (Figures 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8).[28]

In addition to house types, the state-sponsored settlements also introduced some changes to the layout of settlements. In Libya, settlements no longer needed to be primarily shaped by military concerns after the defeat of the resistance in 1932. Instead, the colonists' houses spread out from the central village (Figures 8.9 and 8.10). At the same time, under the architects' supervision, the villages came to resemble Italian towns no matter how small. They were not entirely modular, but they always contained key components of state and church offices – including schools, clinics, and Fascist party headquarters (*case del fascio*) around a central *piazza*, maintaining the recognizable "map" of spatial and social life inhabited by the Italian rural classes.[29] In both of these respects, the Libyan settlements of the 1930s resembled those in the metropole – except for the presence of Arabs. In contrast, although their contents were the same (Figures 8.11 and 8.12), the short-lived Ethiopian settlements were designed in circles, allowing for protection of the periphery in case of attack (Figure 8.13).



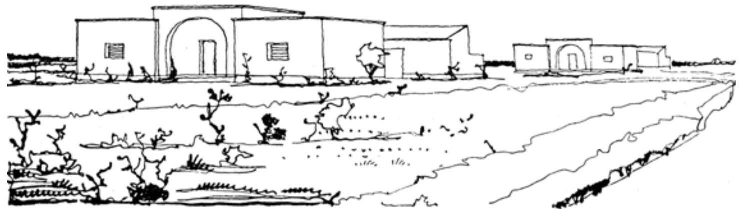


Figure 8.6
Houses for Italian settlers (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

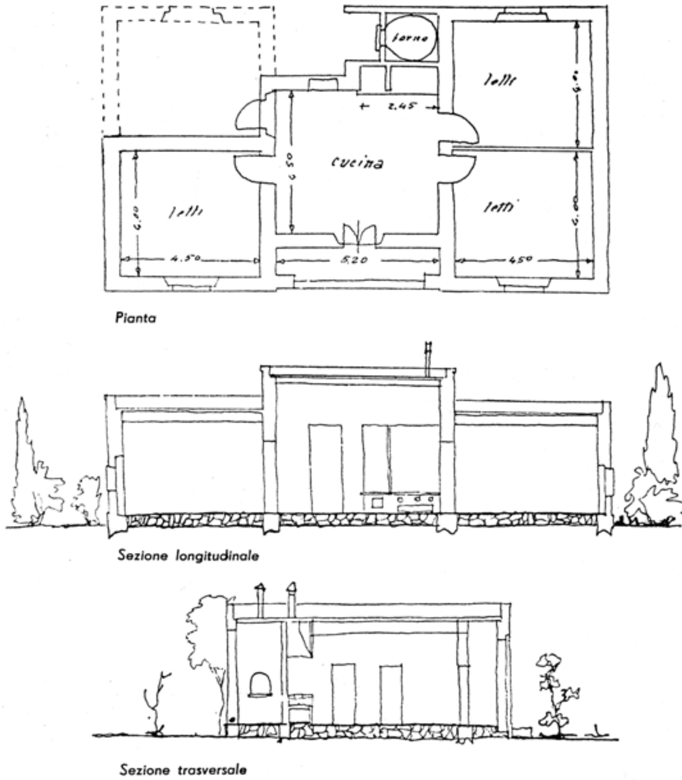


Figure 8.7
Houses for Italian settlers (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

DIFFERENCE AND AMBIGUITY

Even as late as 1938, one author described the settlement houses in Libya as built "on a virgin land."[30] And if one looked at the villages alone, especially in close-up photographs, one might believe that Balbo's formulation – according to which the Libyan settlements would be "ethnic islands" of Italians – had been realized (Figures 8.14, 8.15, and 8.16). In other words, Italian colonial discourse continued to portray colonial territory as devoid of prior occupation. And yet, various slippages underpinned this ostensibly absolute distance between Italians and Others: slippages that become more apparent as we consider settlements built for Libyans, and "native areas" built in Italian compounds in East Africa.

In a very rare departure from the general trend of representation, one especially fervent propagandist illustrated the more complex realities of social contact in the Libyan settlements. Traveling through Cyrenaica in 1941, he reiterated some familiar ambiguities concerning the landscape, denying its particularity

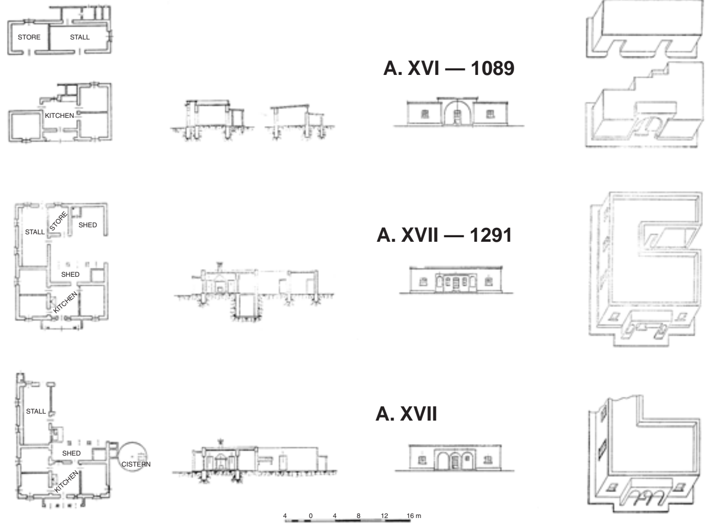


Figure 8.8
Three models of houses for Italian settlers (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*). The types are identified by year (A. XVI, for instance, means "Anno XVI" or "year 16" of the Fascist Era), namely 1938 and 1939. The third model is a variation on the principal model for 1939. The numbers refer to the units built.

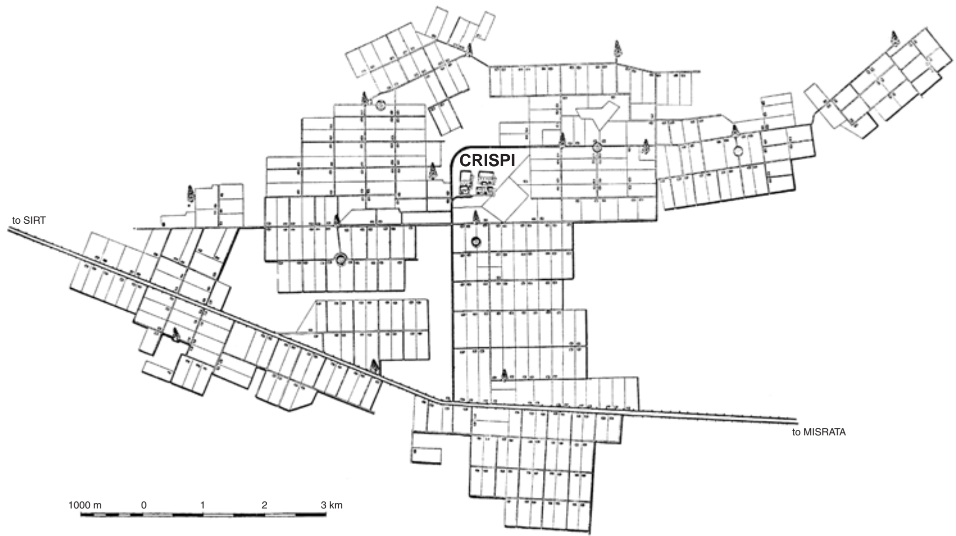


Figure 8.9
Layout of Villaggio Crispi in Tripolitania, showing administrative center and spread-out farmsteads (1938, Architects Umberto Di Segni and Giovanni Pellegrini, *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

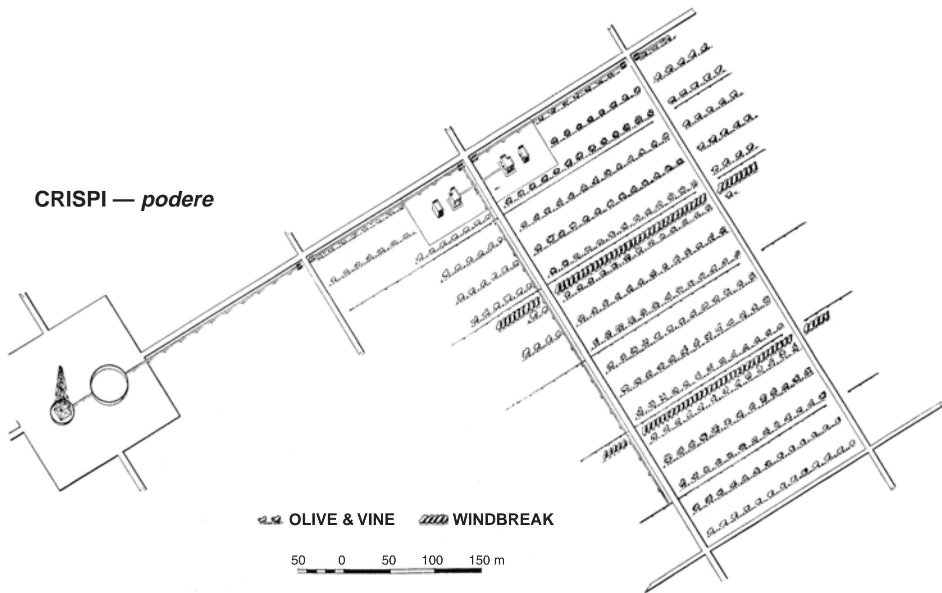


Figure 8.10
Two linked farmsteads (poderi) in Villaggio Crispi in Tripolitania, including their plots and their linkage to the communal well (1938, Architects Umberto di Segni and Giovanni Pellegrini, *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

while assimilating it to Italy: one village "was like one of our own in Sicily;" the land was "an extension of Sicily." By then, of course, Cyrenaica had been annexed to Italy, and in a sense, he was correct to minimize Cyrenaica's difference from southern Italian lands. More interesting still were his descriptions of how Italian *braccianti* – day-laborers – had been transformed by "reclaiming" land in Libya: they were now *contadini*, peasants. Libyans, by implication, now filled the role of *braccianti*, and despite their invisibility from standard texts and photographs, they were inevitably a constant presence in the villages (Figure 8.17). As Italians rose in class, the author emphasized their blending into a non-regional "new race . . . Mussolini's race, Fascist race, colonial race" that was overcoming the divisions that plagued metropolitan Italy. Settlers were adopting each other's habits – settlers from Apulia, for instance, now rode bicycles as much as those from the northeast – and their dialects were blending into a local *patois*. They had also adopted some habits from the Arabs, such as drinking tea rather than wine, and wearing "Saharan gear."[31]

Meanwhile, in 1938 Balbo had initiated a settlement program, managed by the ECL, for Libyan veterans of the Italian armed forces in East Africa. For some scholars and apologists of Italian colonialism, this gesture has indicated warm-heartedness toward Arabs on Balbo's part; yet it was undoubtedly a strategic move. According to his explanation to Mussolini, Balbo saw the "Arab populations" as "depressed by the reclamation work [Italians] have been doing, so [he] want[ed] to give them not mere hope, but a concrete vision of their good fortune." Having emptied the concentration camps, he needed to provide

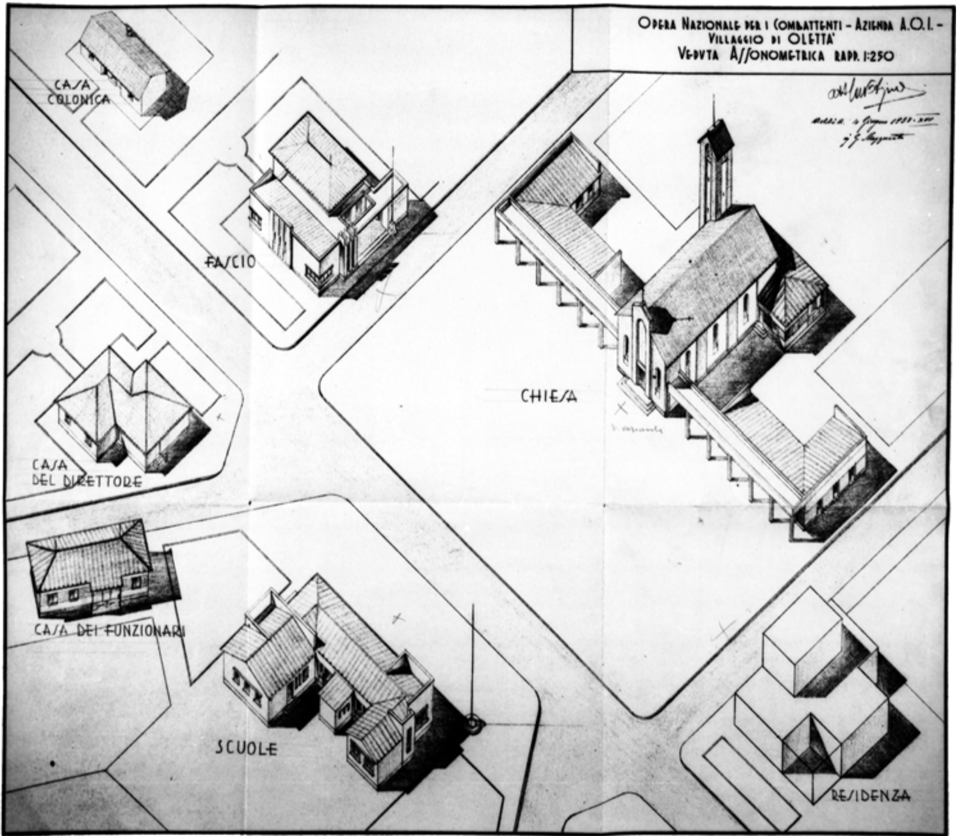


Figure 8.11
Center of projected Villaggio Olettà (Holäta), Ethiopia, showing the church, Fascist offices, administrators' houses, and the school (*Opera Nazionale Combattenti*).

territory for the released Arabs; at the same time, his priority was to retain the entire Jabal Akhdar – the fertile plateau of Cyrenaica – for Italians. This would entail "saturating" it with settlers, enabling the government to maintain military control over the region.[32] Balbo was even willing to expropriate an Italian concession to carry out the program.[33] Yet it is important to note that the concessions to Arabs consisted of smaller lots and poorer land – in the long run, had the program continued, this would have served to keep them subjugated economically.[34]

Just as creating such concessions for natives was an uncharacteristic move on the part of an Italian colonial government, the Arabs in charge of the four settlements in question – appointed by the government – were hardly typical either. The director (*mudir*) of one had spent time in Italy, as had the schoolteacher, and he dressed as a European, wearing "clothing of a perfect cut, in a comfortable, occidental manner." Another resident spoke Italian in a Roman accent, although he "looked Arab."[35] These centers were also atypical in comparison to other

Figure 8.12
Church in Villaggio Olettà (Holäta), Ethiopia (*Opera Nazionale Combattenti*).

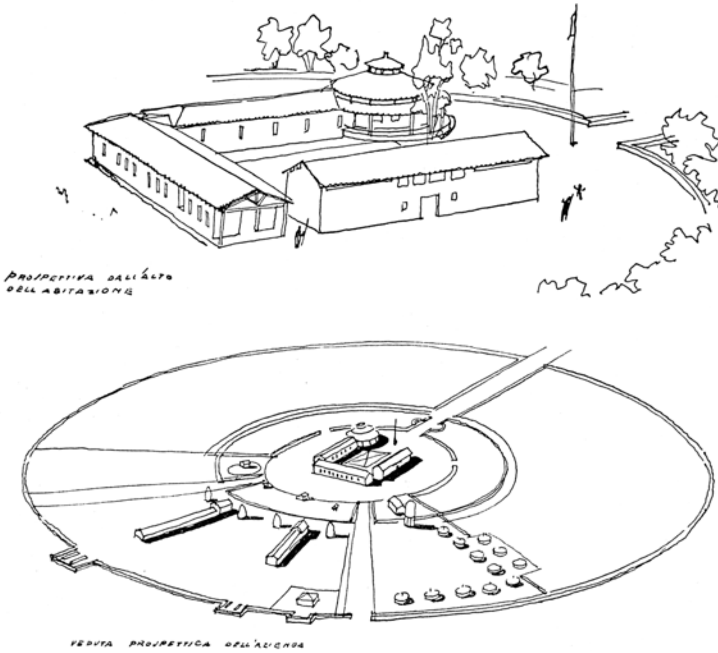


Figure 8.13
Design for a plantation in the Ethiopian midlands (*circa* 1941, Architects Pietro Morresi and Dagoberto Ortensi).

Figure 8.14
Villaggio Breviglieri in Tripolitania (1938, Architect Umberto di Segni, *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

Figure 8.15
Villaggio Breviglieri in Tripolitania (1938, Architect Umberto di Segni, *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

Figure 8.16
Villaggio Giovanni Berta in Cyrenaica (1933–1934, Architect Umberto di Segni).

Figure 8.17
Libyan men in village for Italian settlers: Villaggio Oliveti in Tripolitania (1935–1938, Architect Florestano di Fausto, *Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

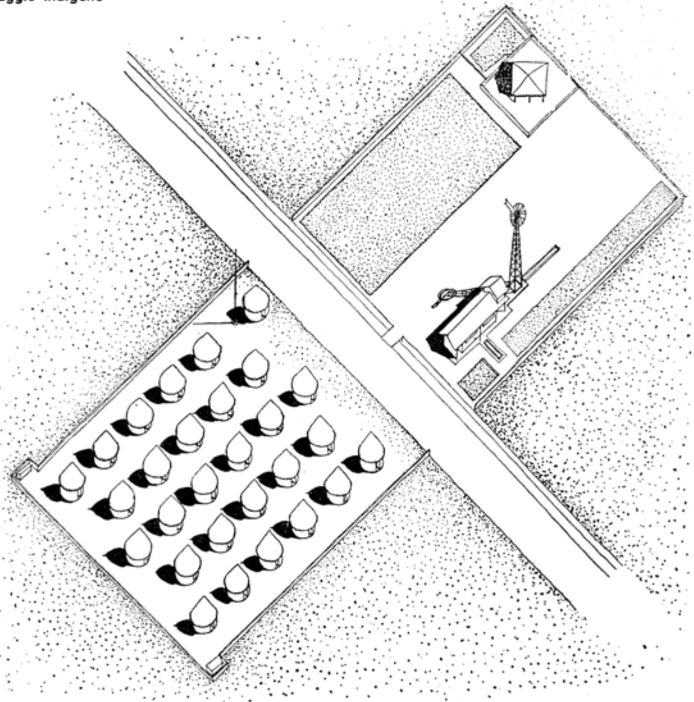


Figure 8.18
One of four villages for natives (villaggio indigeno) in a design for part of the Genale concession in Somalia (*circa* 1941, Architects Pietro Morresi and Dagoberto Ortensi).

settlements, camps, and quarters Italians built for natives. We have already seen that Italians built new quarters for natives in Eritrea (Figure 6.3). Although sometimes these featured schools, mosques, or churches, such installations rarely came together spatially in a coordinated "center." Indeed, the monotonous rows of Italian-built huts were no different from those of the Libyan concentration camps (such as Soluch) or those of transit camps for Bedouin (such as that at Bab Tajura, outside Tripoli),[36] above all in that they offered no central organizing principle, and no spatial articulation – reflecting, certainly, limited resources, but also suggesting a view of natives as not requiring or possessing more sophisticated social and spatial organization.

At its most extreme, this pattern took the form of native "villages" laid-out on large concessions, with nothing but huts with access to water nearby (Figure 8.18). More interesting in terms of how hierarchical relations were spatialized, and spaces between groups were created, are designs showing the precise relation of the huts to the European part of a plantation. Figure 8.13 shows a design for a plantation run by "white farmers" in the Ethiopian midlands. At the center is the European section (Figure 8.19), which holds only one room for native (domestic) use, at the farthest point away from the Europeans' leisure area under

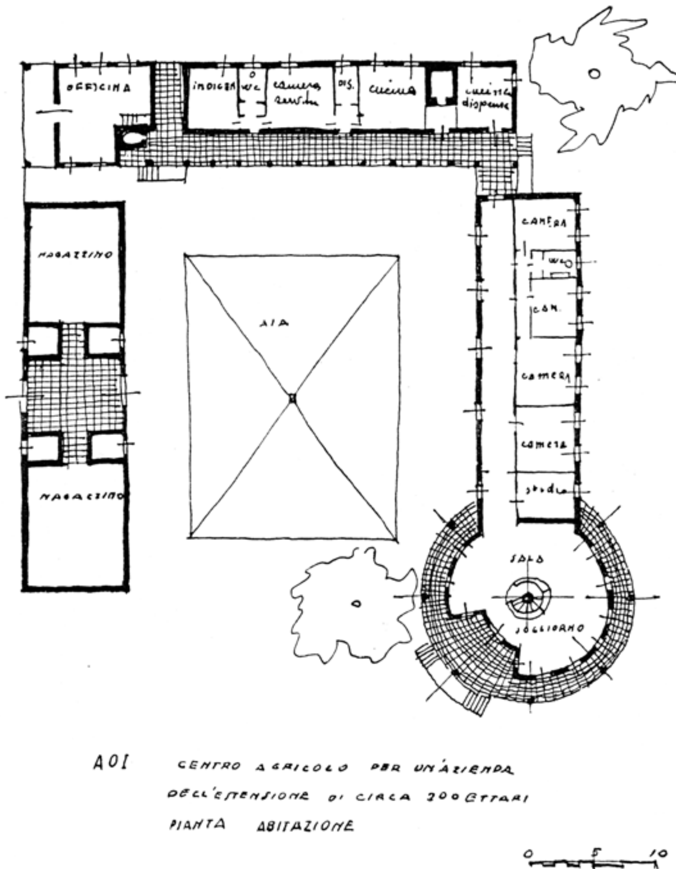


Figure 8.19
Central (European residential and administrative) part of design for a plantation in the Ethiopian midlands (*circa* 1941, Architects Pietro Morresi and Dagoberto Ortensi).

the wide circular roof, the only European part to echo the cylindrical *tukul* shape. For security purposes, such settlements in East Africa were always laid-out in a circular pattern, leaving the natives and their huts as the first zone of contact with possible attackers.

The designs just discussed were only that: designs. Very little was actually implemented in the way of new settlements in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, on the basis of the little work Italians completed at Holäta, the ONC concession, we can derive a somewhat more detailed sense of the subtleties of racial-spatial contact in Italians' East African settlements. The roughly two hundred Ethiopian families on the plantation occupied the farms, and they were not altogether in a separate area. Rather, clusters of Ethiopian farms sat near clusters of Italian farms, in such a way that European farms and Ethiopian farms were respectively bundled in

Figure 8.20
One of the villages built for Libyan settlers (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

groups of four. Typically, Ethiopian farms stood about a mile from the Europeans' houses – as historian Haile Larebo describes it, "distant enough to keep the two races apart, yet close enough to control the Ethiopian and promote economic integration."[37] As for the small town of Holäta, there too a native area abutted roughly half the town's contour.[38]

In contrast, the "centers" built for Libyans in the late 1930s were specifically intended to provide greater autonomy, as the government wanted to distance these settlers from more desirable regions. Each contained a mosque, the director's office (*mudiriyya*), a school, a coffeehouse, the market, and some residences (Figures 8.20, 8.21, 8.22, and 8.23).[39] More than any other Italian-built areas for natives, these foregrounded religion, subordinating the entire civic center to the looming minaret. On the surface, these "centers" were fairly persuasive in their appearance as appropriate new settlements for Libyan Muslims. Their arcades and minarets certainly presented postcard-perfect images of North

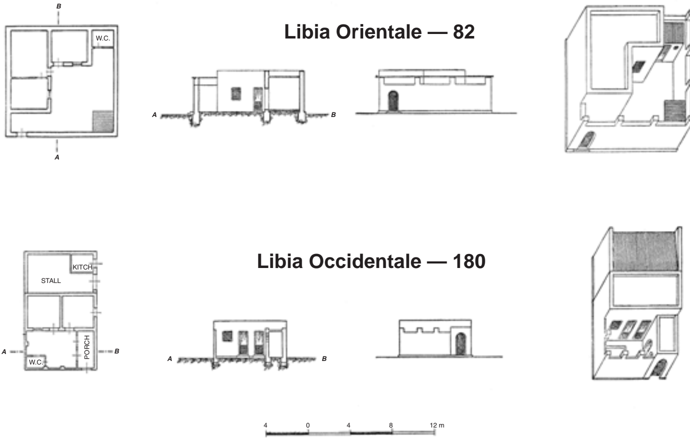


Figure 8.21
Houses for Libyan settlers (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*). The types are identified by the area of Libya, namely eastern Libya (Cyrenaica) and western Libya (Tripolitania). The numbers refer to the units built.

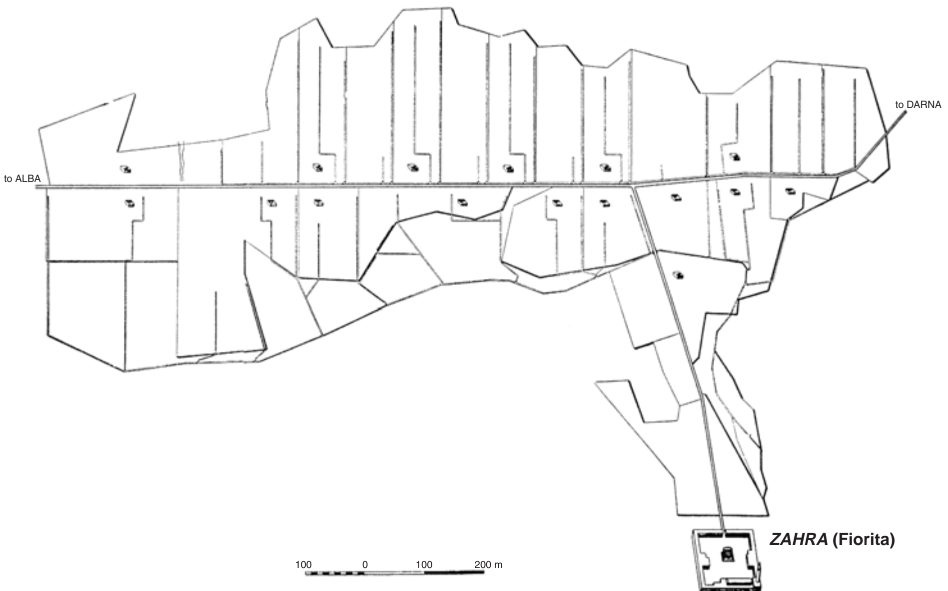


Figure 8.22
Layout of Villaggio Zahra (or Fiorita, in Italian; in Cyrenaica) for Libyan settlers, showing administrative center and spread-out farmsteads (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

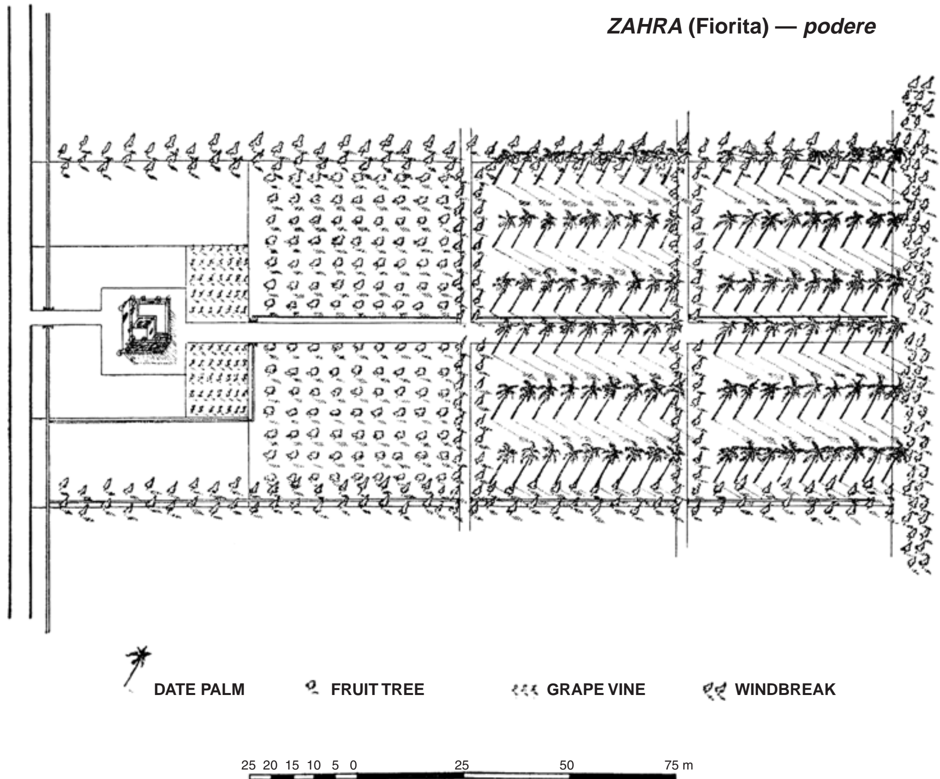


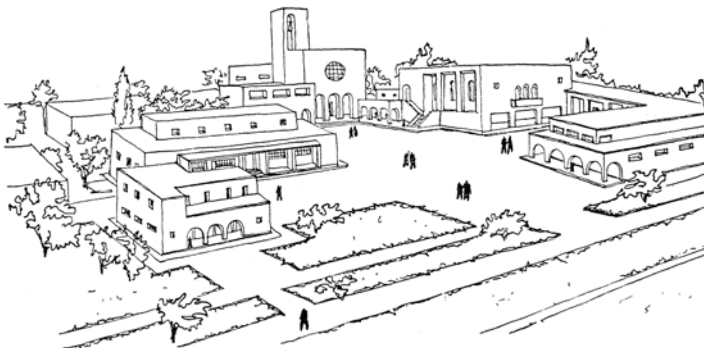
Figure 8.23
A farmstead (podere) in Villaggio Zahra (or Fiorita, in Italian; in Cyrenaica) settlement, including its land (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

African settlements. Yet these same arcades and minarets also reduced the Islamic settlement to its most essential signifiers. Indeed, while they fairly cried out "we respect the difference of Muslims," these "centers" also condensed Islamic settled life to a mere handful of structures, and one single instititution other than the director's office: Islam (leaving out other, more specific institutions, such as the *waqf*).

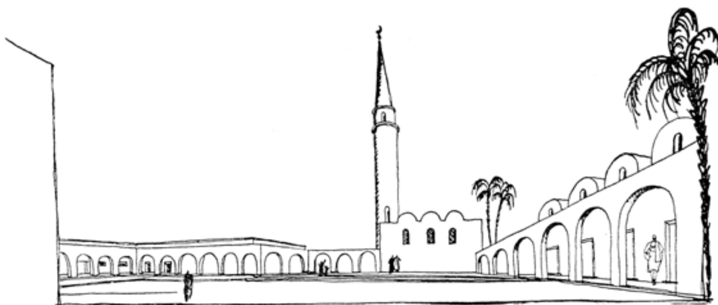
At this point, it is useful to recall di Fausto's participation in the Agency's designs. A veteran architect of Italy's colonies, he had already accumulated a vast portfolio of eclectic works in Rhodes and Libya that appropriated local elements. He had designed the Uaddan Hotel in Tripoli (Figure 5.14) – which housed a casino under a roof evoking Libyan mosque complexes – and other tourist hotels with self-consciously amalgamated local traits used out of context. Our reading of the new "centers" for Libyans as artificial renderings of the very social configuration Italians had uprooted – Cyrenaican society at the local level – is enhanced by the fact that di Fausto was personally responsible for the greatest number of eclectic Italian designs that transplanted models to new contexts. Furthermore, di

Fausto designed the Libyan pavilion for the *Mostra Triennale d'Oltremare* in Naples (1940), using a skyline and pattern compatible with both the Uaddan Hotel and the "centers," and adding another layer to the dioramic hall of mirrors through which native design elements found their way into the most European of consumer-oriented architecture. How different, ultimately, were the architectural intentions behind the "centers," on the one hand, and the hotels on the other? Can we regard the "centers" for Libyans as fodder for European consumption at the same level as di Fausto's hotels and his pavilion?

Another way to analyze the symbolic simplification of Islamic life that operated at the design level in these "centers" is to compare them to the settlements for Italians. The simplification of the Islamic skyline is worth contrasting with the multiple levels of horizontal and vertical differentiation the architects integrated into their designs for Italian settlements, no matter how small (Figure 8.24). While the latter contained multiple heights along vertical ensembles, the ones for Libyans tended to be more horizontal and also less differentiated in terms of elevations. In other words, any one of the Italian villages can be seen to have a more articulated vertical level, subtly reflecting the multiplicity of institutional



Villaggio « Battisti » - Derna - Arch. F. Di Fausto



Borgata mussulmana « Vittoriosa » - Derna

Figure 8.24
Villaggio Battisti and Villaggio Vittoriosa, both in Cyrenaica, for Italian and Libyan settlers respectively (*Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia*).

presences (or authorities) that were featured in the village. Even the Uaddan Hotel bore greater vertical articulation and variety than the "centers" – in comparison to all the other designs of the moment, in other words, the "centers" were particularly flattened, further enhancing our reading of them as reductionistic stage-sets.

Meanwhile, the most widespread ambiguity lies in the housetypes for Italians and Arabs in the Libyan settlements. Here too, despite statements to the contrary, distinctions between the two groups were greater in rhetoric than in fact. Houses for Italians and for Libyans were not identical, but each group could be said to have drawn not only on its own native architecture, but on each other's. In other words, Italians' houses drew on the North African vernacular (already appropriated in theory by Italian architects, as we saw in Chapter 5), and the Italian-built houses for Libyans drew on Italian ideas of modernity.

In the metropole, where such housetypes were more thoroughly discussed by architects, the overarching question was, how to design a recognizable farmhouse for farmers without making its design too recognizable? Ideally, these buildings were meant to emphasize settlers' belonging to the Italian nation rather than any one region. The settler's new home should be "traditional" in appearance, but it should not reflect the origins of any settler in particular (they came from various regions and spoke numerous dialects). The architects' solution, then, was to evoke a simplified Italian vernacular, corresponding to Italian agricultural shelter in general but connoting no particular place.

This atopian quality of settlers' houses in Italy – their clear, but non-local, references to Italian vernacular(s) – was an equally defining trait of the houses built for Italian settlers in Libya. There were, however, notable differences between the overall design patterns in Italy and Libya. Houses in Italy generally had two storys; very often, this was so that humans would live upstairs and farm animals would stay below. Whatever the internal distribution of rooms, the houses in the metropole often had an outside staircase, and they usually had no outdoor porch on the ground floor.

In Libya, on the other hand, the houses were normally single-storey; they often had a covered area on the ground floor, even if it was a very small porch; windows were few and small; and often the courtyard was enclosed (which it was not in the metropole) – and all of these traits echoed the local vernacular rather than a strictly Italian one. The apparent straightforwardness of these simple house designs belies a different, more complex and more subtextual "spin" on the question of how settlers' houses might reflect (and foster) their Italian national identity in the colonial context. Despite the prominence of "Italian-ness" in the architects' justifications of their designs – most often signified by the so-called "Roman arch" – local elements were incorporated, specifically ones that provided added protection from sun and heat: the buildings were white, thick-walled, and had few (and small) windows. In other words, they bore the very traits that Italian colonial architects saw as the "essence" of Arab/Libyan architecture. So on the one hand, these houses were the obvious and literal sign

that Italians were now occupying these precious agricultural lands; and they were described by their designers in terms of their national, indivisible, and most of all, non-Libyan "Italian" character. On the other hand, though, if their architects had set out to create colonial hybrids, they could hardly have done a better job.

Houses for Libyan settlers resembled those for Italians, although they were smaller and had no outer windows. They clearly referred to standard North African houses in this blind exterior and having an interior courtyard; at the same time, they incorporated non-Libyan traits, such as stalls for livestock and other hygiene measures. Finally, because of Libya's annexation to Italy in 1939, it is worth pausing to re-evaluate our interpretation of the architects' intentions in using one or another "traditional" element or invoking vernacular architecture from any place in particular. If the Libyan agricultural settlements were suddenly in the metropole, then North African vernacular designs for Arab settlers were now out of context, making these settlements not only more exotic but also more separate; meanwhile, the North African aspects of houses for Italians could, theoretically, be seen as the fulfillment of architects' rhetorical appropriation of the native vernacular. Houses for Italians represented the appropriation of Libyan soil *and* Libyan architecture.

THE DESIGN FORMULA

Although these settlements were strictly rural, the development of their basic outlines and contents played a role in the further development of Italian colonial planning. Italians had previously developed their colonial city – mostly in Tripoli, but elsewhere in the Mediterranean as well, retaining its historic infrastructure while inserting new Italian structures. In 1936, with the occupation of Addis Ababa, planners turned to a system that was defined by segregation, as well as Italians' move to occupy the centers of pre-existing cities. The combination of these two goals defined the Italian imperial city, which was meant to appropriate pre-existing centers and distance the natives, making them guests in their own city (as described in Chapter 6). In order to accomplish this, Italians would build new quarters for them; at the same time, they would build an entirely new Italian center in place of the earlier one, or abutting it. And these new centers followed the exact formula of the new settlements, from the central *piazza* to the constituent parts reflecting all the chains of authority governing the lives of Italians under late Fascism.

Chapter 9: The Italian Imperial City

Addis Ababa

> How much easier our task would have been if we had built our capital entirely *de novo*, on sound and bare land . . . Instead we had to rebuild it on a disproportionate stretch of ruins and filth.[1]
>
> Ciro Poggiali, 1938

ADDIS ABABA IN 1936

Italian authors consistently represented Addis Ababa as a non-urban city, with no permanent structures or monuments worthy of the name. Planners, in their texts, depicted it as a nearly blank slate on which they laid out their grand designs. But in fact, Addis Ababa was already an important market hub participating in the world economy despite its geographic remoteness. It harbored a large international presence, both commercial and diplomatic. The market hosted a Saturday crowd of 30,000 to 50,000 people, offering imported goods from North America, Britain, and India, and attracting European, Armenian, and Indian traders.[2] Long before Haile Selassie's reign, under Menelik II (1889–1913), Ethiopia had nearly doubled in size by conquering its neighbors; and the Emperor had invited British, French, Italian, Russian, and German ambassadorial representatives to establish themselves in the wooded northeastern area just outside of the city.[3] In 1906, he had also commissioned the building of St George's (Coptic) Church – from a Greek architect and an Italian engineer – just north of the market on a high point, symbolizing the capital's expansion far outside the imperial palace complex (or *ghebi*) itself (Figure 9.1).[4]

In the decades preceding the 1930s, building activities and technological innovations had moved apace, many of them paid for or executed by Europeans:

> Between 1908 and 1913 about a hundred European-type houses were constructed, mainly by Indians and Greeks . . . [I]n 1912 there were still only about two hundred European-style houses as against twelve to fourteen thousand huts and one or two

> thousand tents. Stone houses were occupied exclusively by West Europeans, Armenians and Greeks, as well as by the Emperor, [and] three or four *ras*es . . . Many Europeans were then building four or five roomed houses, usually with corrugated iron roofs.[5]

Public and government structures included water systems, a rail for the transport of building materials, a racecourse, the Bank of Abyssinia, a hotel, a school, a hospital, a state printing press, and a hydro-electric installation, all undertaken by 1911. In addition, the cinema – which Italian colonialists would promote in the imperial capital, as though they had first brought it there – had arrived in 1898. All of these contacts with the technologized world market brought social changes, specifically modifications in clothing, eating, and drinking habits – meaning that Addis Ababa society was hardly the static entity Italians perceived it to be in 1936.[6] Indeed, the mix of populations – from Europe and all over the Ethiopian Empire; religions – Orthodox Christian, Muslim, Roman Catholic, and non-monotheist; and languages – among them, Amharic, Galla, Arabic, French, Italian, English, Greek, German, and Russian, indicates that Addis

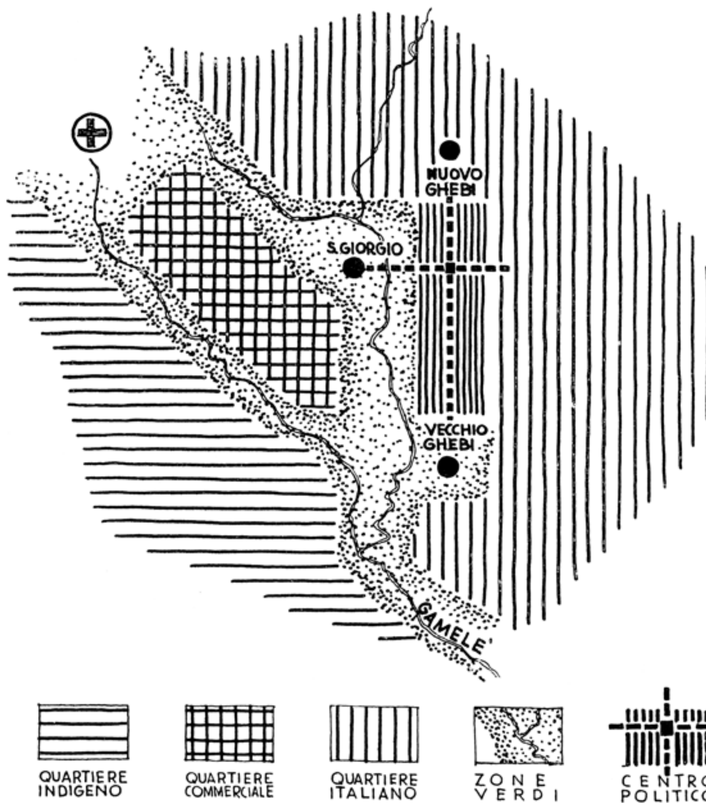


Figure 9.1
The first Italian plan for Addis Ababa, showing St George's Church (S. Giorgio); the old imperial compound (vecchio ghebi); and the proposed site for the new Italian imperial compound (nuovo ghebi). The planners intended to use existing green surfaces (zone verdi) along the riverbeds to maintain divisions between the native "quarter" (quartiere indigeno), the commercial "quarter" (quartiere commerciale), and the Italian and political "centers" (quartiere italiano and centro politico).

Ababa, despite its poverty, was more cosmopolitan than Tripoli, or for that matter, than any Italian city.[7]

Italians did not just fail to mention the city's boomtown atmosphere; they obscured the role of Europeans in the city's development, and above all the direct link between Italy's military loss at Adwa in 1896 and the city's subsequent growth. Indeed, Italian prisoners of war had helped build the *ghebì* and other public works.[8] Instead, writers focused on the city's poor public hygiene; what they portrayed as its "medieval" level of social and civilizational evolution; and their attribution of both of these to the city's "black"-ness.

Ciro Poggiali, a journalist, deplored the fact that Italians had to contend with the city's "filth" rather than constructing a capital anew. His disgust extended to the city's most important structures and its inhabitants:

> Right in the center, around the . . . cathedral . . . the most opprobrious bums, beggars, and pariahs would erect shacks on the gravesites . . . and spend the nights there . . . A chaos, in brief, of superlatively picturesque Orientalism, but one that is also superlatively dirty . . . [There was] an utter absence of sewage systems . . . a hundred thousand natives in the area of the capital, and not a single [public latrine] . . . [nor] even the shadow of a cemetery for natives.[9]

The colonizers' perception of the colonized as inhabiting a "different time" took on the idiom of medieval European settlements, rather than that of antiquity deployed in North Africa. In the words of an engineer, Giorgio Rigotti,

> If we think back to a medieval citadel, where the life of an entire small population unfolded in devotion around the master, that gives an idea of the organization of a *ghebì*, a true and proper village within the city . . . it is said that the *ghebì* of Addis Ababa housed about 2,000 people within its triple walls, including dignitaries, armor-bearers, artisans, peasants, and merchants.[10]

Finally, planners used the notion of "black"-ness to underscore the primitive Otherness of the Ethiopian imperial capital. They decried that "blacks" were undisciplined because their use of space was undisciplined; and claimed that Addis Ababa was "the true Negro city . . . the unhappy result of the incapacity that blacks on the whole and Ethiopians in particular have for [organization]."[11]

One symptom of this "disorganization" was the fact that the existing city was not already segregated, in contradiction with Italians' expectations of "African cities" and in hindrance of their intentions. Thus it already presented perils of miscegenation when Italians arrived in the late 1930s, due to patterns developed in the previous decades:

> When the Europeans arrived . . . they had to adapt where they could. They built residences, more or less European ones, among the straw huts, ineluctably mixing themselves in with those who lived in *tukuls* . . . What developed . . . was a bizarre city with heterogeneous mixtures, and familiarities between blacks and whites, from which followed intimacies and fusions that certainly could not confer prestige on the white man.[12]

Why, then, did the government choose to take over Addis Ababa as its own capital, not only for Ethiopia, but for all of Italian East Africa? In addition to Italians' disgust with its urban conditions, the city was very far from the Red Sea, Italy's supply route. On the plus side, it offered greater possibilities for the strategic control of inland populations. Some government officials adamantly opposed using Addis Ababa as the Italian capital, but in the end, the symbolism of taking over the seat of the Empire won out.

Menelik had moved his court to the site in the 1880s, when he was still King of Showa and not yet Emperor of Ethiopia. For Mussolini, taking over the physical site of Menelik's centralized power meant visibly absorbing it, controlling the apparatus he had created, and expanding it for his own purposes. Thus Italians would "inherit" the high stature of the previous Empire:

> The insertion of the new center among the buildings that already represented the major expression of the Abyssinian dynasty's reign, reaffirms the total superimposition of Italy's domination.[13]

But what was, for Mussolini, a relatively simple decision entailed perceptual problems for Italian planners, who were eager to get to work rapidly but seem to have been baffled by the city's character. Specifically, they described Addis Ababa both as a city and a non-city – a problem that had never arisen in Tripoli and Benghazi, where the city's parameters and its significant structures appeared to them patently urban (and historic). Its combination of the sorts of buildings associated with organized power – a palace, a parliament, a church – with a lack of urban infrastructure made planners' discussions paradoxical. On the one hand, the city (and by extension, the country) had no historic value, and its primitivity was one justification for conquering it; but on the other hand, Italian architects had to build there rather than *de novo* because of its specific historic meaning.

The engineer Rigotti detailed what he called "monumental buildings," while at the same time denying them any value as such. His list of permanent structures in Addis Ababa included the Italian hospital, built by Italians employed between 1931 and 1934 of reinforced concrete with stone facing; a radio station (1931–1935); the palace of *ras* Tafari (1925, built by an Italian); the Consolata Mission of reinforced concrete, with stone and brick facing, designed by an Italian in 1931; the Church of St George; the Mausoleum of Menelik, of massive stone, by a German engineer; the Belvedere, belonging to the *ghebì*; the Parliament building, partly made of reinforced concrete and designed by a Czech; the *ghebì*, in part built by Italian prisoners of war; the Italian-designed gate to the American Hospital; the gate to Haile Selassie's Church, designed by an Italian; a potable water cistern and the smaller *ghebì*, both by a German engineer.[14]

Clearly, Addis Ababa had a good number of large and permanent structures. Yet Italian writers, even in the context of deploying such evidence, inevitably denied their "European"-ness, demoting them to primitivity by pointing to the fact that they had been commissioned by natives in conformity with native tastes. Again, in contrast to Tripoli, where Italian writers pointed with triumphal tones to buildings

that (to them) showed signs of Italian work – long past, built by anonymous captives perhaps – here, where the traces of Italian and European craftsmanship were recent, and the names of European architects who had been employed were still in memory, this created a different balance of symbolic economy. The Italians who had participated in creating the Addis Ababa of 1936 had done so in one of two capacities: as prisoners, or as employees of richer, more powerful natives. Thus while Italians' narrative of their superior power was more strident in Ethiopia than it had been anywhere else, in fact, the knowledge that Italians had recently been subservient to the old order – as when the Italian minister had made a gift of the cinema to the Emperor – made that narrative all the more necessary.

Furthermore, in the most practical terms, the existing large structures could not be avoided: each of the four city plans Italians designed had to use the church, the market, and the *ghebì* as their points of reference. Nonetheless, the investment in seeing Addis Ababa as having no architectural content was such that Poggiali, the journalist, flew in the face of the evidence, speaking contemptuously of the city's "many pseudo-monuments . . . arches, obelisks, and plinths . . . for the most part these were made of plaster . . . false stone, [and] painted stucco."[15]

As for the architectural style(s) found in East Africa, vernacular or otherwise, the Italian verdict was equally grim. In keeping with his championing the use of local Libyan styles for inspiration, Rava argued that some East African vernacular constructions amounted to artistic "traditions" and were worthy of serious Italian consideration:

> As far as the lands of the Empire are concerned, it is necessary to note just how false the assertion, that has had a great deal of circulation, is, that in our East African colonies there are no local architectural or decorative forms. The case might be made (and only partially) for Ethiopia, but not for Eritrea, and even less so, for Somalia . . . where I have had the opportunity to take note of extremely interesting architectural details.[16]

But Rava was now alone in articulating such views. Gherardo Bosio, one of the planners most involved in East African cities other than Addis Ababa (Gondar, Dessie, and Jima), perused a series of local types, accompanied by photographs, but from a position of extreme anthropological distance, and not as if they might be relevant to Italian concerns.[17]

The two writers who documented local building forms and techniques at greatest length, Rigotti and another engineer, Serrazanetti, were in large part concerned with practical issues, such as available construction materials and the qualities of laborers of different ethnicities. Even though Rigotti provided thorough documentation of a variety of *tukuls*, along with Serrazanetti he reiterated the Italian premise that Ethiopians had no tradition or art – demonstrating their incapacity for evolution:

> The native still builds . . . his primitive *tukul*, with the same means that his ancestors used millennia ago. There is no sign of improvement; not a hint of a better life, material or spiritual.[18]

> True building, in our meaning of the term, does not exist [here] . . . One can see, in Addis Ababa, examples of a degenerate, wretched architecture – if it can be called such – that has none of the local spontaneity or simplicity, and that, furthermore, has nothing praiseworthy in an artistic sense, and demonstrates clearly the incompetence of whoever planned and executed it.[19]

In Tripoli also, Italians had held the natives to have perpetuated inherited building styles without any inventiveness of their own – but in that context, Italians had celebrated this conclusion on the basis that they had thus been able to rediscover their own heritage, intact.

SEGREGATION AND CONTACT IN THE "NEW" ADDIS ABABA: INTENTIONS AND FACTS

In the context of these discussions of Ethiopia's architectural value, the contradictions of Italians' "virgin fantasy" become most apparent. Addis Ababa was not "virgin," as Italians complained, but in their view what was there was without value, making the site near-virgin, or capable of being returned to near-virginity by razing what stood there. Because Ethiopia's cities were perceived as containing little or nothing of historical or exotic value (with the sole exception of Harar, a walled, predominantly Muslim city), the idea of blank-slate planning there seemed at first more attainable than ever before. Planners often wrote as if they were in fact constructing entirely new cities, ones in which the city center would be both new and strictly Italian.[20]

In fact, substantial portions of Addis Ababa had been looted and destroyed after Haile Selassie had left the city just prior to the arrival of the Italian troops – a destruction which Italian writers claimed only reinforced their point about the worthlessness of local structures. As it had done elsewhere, the Italian government quickly prohibited any restoration or new building, in hopes that the city's growth could be frozen until the guidance of a comprehensive masterplan was initiated.

Between 1936 and 1939, a succession of four plans was formulated, all under the aegis of the Governor's Technical Office.[21] In November 1936, the Central Committee on Building and City Plans (*Consulta centrale per l'edilizia e l'urbanistica*) was created – comprising, among others, Alberto Calza-Bini and Plinio Marconi – and began to participate in revising the plan.[22] Overall, the agenda of architects had succeeded: the government in Rome took an active interest from the start in overseeing the comprehensive structuring of the Empire's capital. Also, in keeping with the discussions held at the 1937 conference of the *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica*, the key to the plan was "the clear separation between native and Italian quarters."[23] Beyond that, the two major concerns were the design of a new commercial and political center that would satisfy Italian needs (both of commerce and prestige); and zoning, both for European and native quarters.

Despite the ostensible straightforwardness of the plan's priorities and the bureaucratic infrastructure behind it, however, the process of completing and implementing it was plagued with inconsistencies of both conception and execution. When architects complained that the plan commission had been handed over to the Technical Office without any open competition, a second commission added to the first architects, Ignazio Guidi and Cesare Valle, others who were more prominent and were not state employees: among them Enrico Del Debbio (National Secretary of the Fascist Architects' Union) and Gio' Ponti (editor of *Domus*). This team's trip to Addis Ababa confirmed that the original plan would be far too costly, requiring vast expropriations, demolitions, and the wholesale relocation of the native population. In the ideal, each of these was desirable from the Italian point of view; but under the stringent limitations of international trade sanctions and autarky, the feasible was far less than ideal.[24] This team's work, however, did not solve the essential problems of the plan, for Mussolini disapproved of their timetable, according to which construction would not begin before the Fall of 1937.[25]

Throughout the plan's subsequent revisions, one essential question was never fully resolved: where to place the new Italian center (Figures 9.2 and 9.3). The city's difficult topography, including its two widest riverbeds, its *ghebì*, and St George's Church, all had to be incorporated into the plan. According to planners' theories of imperial urbanism, Italians should occupy the existing center and transform it, while displacing natives to the periphery. In fact, though, more and more existing buildings were put to use rather than replaced. The third plan shifted the intended center altogether, southwards (and downhill), leaving the densest native area around the church of St George, uphill, more or less in place.

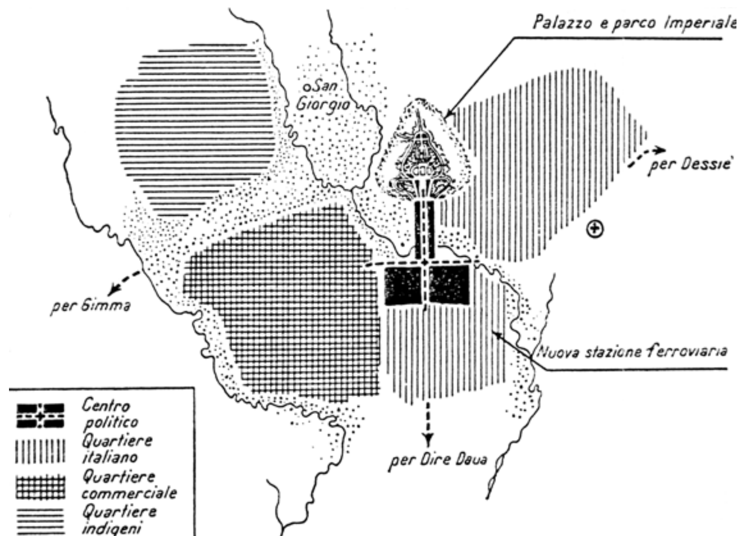


Figure 9.2
A later plan indicating the new Italian political "center" (centro politico) adjoining (and directly downhill from) the existing imperial compound (palazzo e parco imperiale), as well as the Italian "quarter" nearby (quartiere italiano); the commercial "quarter" (quartiere commerciale); and at the greatest distance, the native "quarter" (quartiere indigeno).

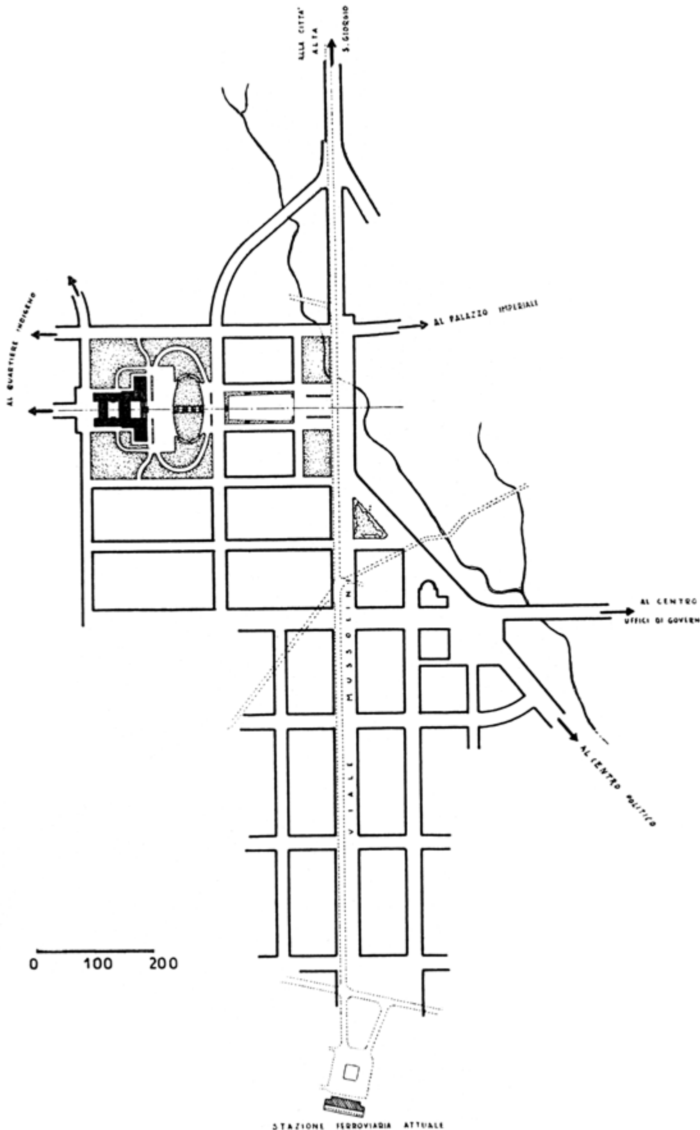


Figure 9.3
A further stage of siting crucial administrative buildings – in this case, the City Hall (Municipio) stands apart from the political center (to the southeast) and government offices (to the east). In comparison to the previous plan, which concentrates political offices together, here the City Hall is close to the intended (mixed) market area and native quarter. St George's is to the north, and the old imperial compound to the east. The accompanying text underscores that placing the City Hall here, "on the border between the metropolitan and native zones," helps to avoid "contact with the native element." It also stresses that the City Hall is placed on a height and is "very visible from the native quarter."

Thus the resulting plan was a hybrid of up-to-date theories and the earlier, colonial, solution of building anew in juxtaposition with the pre-existing city. Uphill from the new Italian center (once intended to be an "acropolis") were the church at the top of the hill; the market to the northwest; and the *ghebì* (now used by the Italian military command) to the northeast. On the other hand, the

plan moved important areas southward and downhill such that the center was now actually the periphery, placing Italian residential quarters to the southeast; the railway station to the south; and industrial areas to the southwest.

In Tripoli – their principal colonial city – Italian planners had aimed from early on to deal as best they could with the *fait accompli* of settlements already under way, and buildings that had sprung up where new European residents found them most convenient. Here, an attempt was made – not particularly successfully – to take control of the urbanization process from the beginning, by paralyzing spontaneous growth and dictating the paths of development. This was all represented with stances of authority, but what is most notable is that over time, the plans had to work around existing natural and built landmarks. The truly fixed sites were the Ethiopian imperial ones and the most concentrated area of native businesses and religious structures, because the government could not afford large-scale relocations and demolitions. Oddly, this means that in effect, Italian accommodations in Addis Ababa bore a partial resemblance to those in Tripoli, while the theory behind the plans, of unambiguous distance and control, was quite the opposite.

The final revisions of the plan focused on the Italian "center" itself, making it more grand and imperial. But as of the third plan approved in March 1938, work began on the native quarter – now settled to the northwest, beyond the market – and commercial and industrial areas. As formulated at the INU conference of 1937, natives were not only set apart from the center of the city, but they were sorted out into subquarters according to their ethnicities and religions.

A further obstacle to the rapid implementation of the masterplan was entirely bureaucratic, and illustrates the lack of coordination within the parts of Italy's Empire. According to the mandate of the Committee overseeing architectural and planning decisions, each of the six Italian governors in East Africa was expected to send masterplans to the Committee for approval. In fact, though, governments were slow to fulfill this request, such that in early 1938 – a year and a half after the initial plan for Addis Ababa was drafted – the Minister of the Colonies chided the governors, pointing out that "the lack of master plans obviously makes the creation of new centers and the adaptation of old ones disordered and chaotic."[26]

Professional and political excitement about the vision of an imperial Addis Ababa, meanwhile, led to a proliferation of urbanistic theorizations of the city. In 1936, no sooner had the first of the plans been set in motion, than the first wave of these texts appeared. They continued until 1939 and were highly repetitive. We have already seen the outcome of the 1937 conference of urban planners; and since most of the ideas expressed in architects' articles about Addis Ababa were fairly general, they are not very different from those in the conference's collected papers. Nonetheless, they refined and adapted the general theories of planners to the specific setting of Addis Ababa, giving more nuanced views of the whys, wherefores, and hows of segregation – particularly with respect to the regulation of traffic and contact, and issues of mutual visibility

between "blacks" and Europeans; and the obstacles or utility of the city's topographical, or natural, barriers. Echoing Rava's broad theoretical statements, Bosio stated:

> It will be possible to plan concentric cities with urban zoning plans centered around a knoll or spur, where, as though it were an acropolis, the buildings of Government, the element of conquest and domination, will constitute the urban hierarchy of the city which should formally make evident the predominance of white over black, and visually admonish that every *piazza* seeks our supremacy over the infantile, primitive native population.[27]

In terms of practical mobility, it was important that whites have physical access to all areas of the city, but with as little necessary direct contact with natives as possible. Separate bus systems were created for whites, who thus could keep their trajectories within the city area "private," i.e. removed from Others. On the other hand, natives were to be able to circulate, go to market, and labor, all without necessarily coming into contact with Europeans.

The result in terms of all the plans was that "native quarters" and markets, as well as industry, were always to be on the edges of the city, and the European commercial and residential areas were near the government offices in the center of town. Segregation extended to terminology: natives were always said to live in "quarters," while Italians lived in the "city" or the "center." Traffic to and from the markets was to be directed so as to expose the whites to the locals as little as possible:

> An important problem is to channel the traffic of caravans away from the national traffic: caravans and native traffic will end up in the native quarter . . . they must reach the native market and quarter without going through the [Italian part of the] city. The national market will be separate from the native one, although it will have frequent commerce with it.[28]

Natives should have restricted access to the Italian markets in Addis Ababa and elsewhere: in Gondar, "the natives will be conceded commerce in such zones, but in no case will they reside in them."[29] But the problem remained of preventing whites from entering into contact with blacks outside the circumscribed spaces of the market, especially since the "native market" attracted European residents and tourists.[30] Thus in Gondar, where tourists would also drift to the market, "[Italian] functionaries [would] be able to go [to the central *piazza* of the native quarter] by a road independent from native traffic."[31] Not only did control include residences and the sites of daily activities and commerce, but blacks and whites were to move about within the city with as little contact as possible.

In light of anthropological theorizations of the naturalization of "racial" difference, it is especially interesting to note how Italian planners construed spatial and racial divisions in Addis Ababa as natural, and reinforceable by means of natural elements.[32] Figure 9.2 shows the projected areas of the city, by "ethnic" groups. The "native quarter" in the upper left-hand corner is distanced

from the government center and Italian residential areas by open vegetation (represented by stippling), riverbeds, and the commercial zone, where blacks and whites would meet. Much was made of using the existing riverbeds or vegetation as "natural" lines of segregation, thus making the spatial "natural barriers" into reflections of naturalized social barriers.

In contrast to the utter artifice of such planning (but in harmony with the "color" theme of city differentiation), the actual barriers were either "green," that is, vegetational, or of water, as in the case of Addis Ababa, which had two riverbeds that seasonally channeled rapidwaters. The lines of spatial separation were based on the course of the riverbeds. The rivers in question could not successfully be crossed in the rainy season without using Italian-controlled thoroughfares: it was estimated that "a score or so of Ethiopians and several Europeans" drowned annually while trying to cross them.[33] For planners, these seasonal torrents provided the ideal barriers for racial groups, since they allowed Italians even more control over contact.

> It is these torrents . . . which will provide the means . . . for imposing the master plan with respect to the segregation of the indigenous city . . . The torrents . . . constitute the natural lines of separation.[34]

"Green" belts also offered "natural" separations:

> Green . . . will constitute . . . the best frontier between the Italian quarter and the native one (the latter always being built downwind), and efficient protection from the epidemic diseases frequently found in the unhygienic indigenous life.[35]

While it was "useless to pave the roads" of "native quarters," as natives would neither appreciate paved roads nor maintain them, "green" should play a part there, "to facilitate ventilation . . . The abundant vegetation will interrupt the uniform monotony of these rudimentary complexes."[36]

More specifically, "green" could be used to separate natives from natives just as it would natives from whites: ethnic subdivisions could be arranged in a fan, or radial shape, with the market at its center, and separated by means of "large tree-lined roads."[37] In the Italian "center," meanwhile, landscaped vegetation was to be used ornamentally.

The Italian occupation of Addis Ababa lasted a short time, and although many of the major projects were not even begun, a great deal was built in just a few years. The market, a key site as it governed daily contacts between whites and natives, was a sizable construction. Along with it, the roads built by Italians have endured. Hotels were enlarged; six apartment buildings were completed by the popular housing association, INCIS;[38] the Casa del Fascio was established in a pre-existing building at the top of the hill, in what otherwise had remained an area of native constructions; and Plinio Marconi designed an imposing City Hall (Figures 9.4 and 9.5). Upon occupation, Addis Ababa had sixteen Coptic churches and two Catholic ones, but it had only a very small (and un-prestigious) mosque. In keeping with Italian policy in Libya, the government in Addis Ababa

Figure 9.4
Project for Municipio (City Hall) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1939, Architect Plinio Marconi).

emphasized its wish to be on good terms with local Muslims by building a Great Mosque.[39]

The "native quarter" of concrete huts was brought closer to completion than other parts of the plan, since this was in fact built in an area that was bare of European buildings and industry, and the government could forge ahead and build without major relocations or demolitions.[40]

> By mid-1937, more than ten thousand blacks, which amounts to a ninth of the colored population of Addis Ababa, were relocated to a quarter that had been created specifically for them. A quarter . . . that faces the old southwestern quarters . . . and is large enough to accommodate twenty thousand *tukuls*.[41]

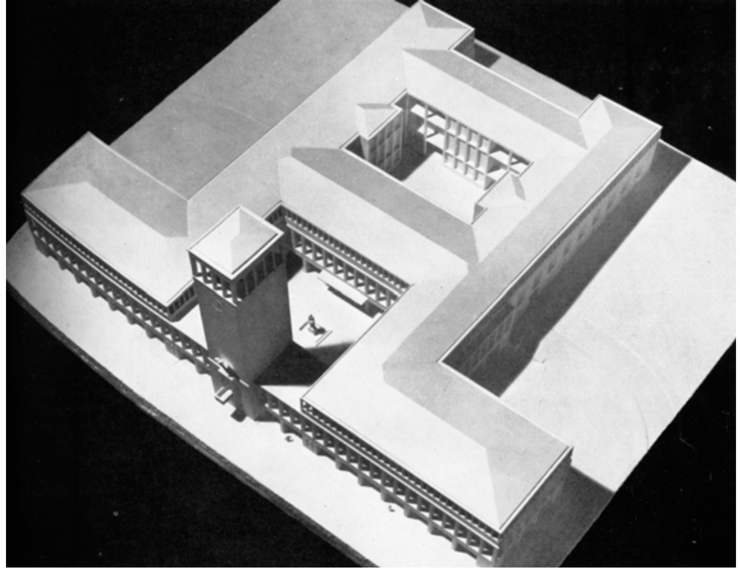


Figure 9.5
Project for Municipio (City Hall) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1939, Architect Plinio Marconi).

It was considered that the *tukuls* themselves were of better quality than anything the local residents had been using previously – even though the *tukul* was, after all, their own housing form – because they were built by Italians.

> Several hundred *tukuls* were built . . . by Italian laborers, following the standards of our own building techniques, these truly were models of . . . practicality, and, compared to traditional *tukuls*, they were palaces
>
> . . . In the great majority of cases, the *tukuls* of Addis Ababa – more than twenty thousand of them – were in a state of frightening decrepitude. The natives seldom restore their houses.[42]

The relocation allowed natives to be, if not integrated into Italian society as equals, incorporated as semi-participants in the Italian hierarchy:

> Because [the *tukuls* built by the government] had cost eleven thousand lire each, they could not be provided for the multitudes [who could not afford them]; which is why some of them were designated for natives who, without possessing hierarchical ranks – in which case they would not have been mixed in with the plebe – had attained a certain position with respect to our domination . . . But then it seemed more practical that the natives themselves build their own *tukuls*. To this end, the government supplied free land and a subsidy of 400 lire . . . freed former slaves in particular benefited from this concession.[43]

In a larger and far more menacing sense, the relocation of natives allowed for a regularization of surveillance that far exceeded any prior colonial treatment.

> The relocation of natives to their own quarter has furthermore made it feasible practically to conduct census counts, and thus to institute a civil status in a fashion that had not existed in Addis Ababa . . . In order to take possession of the new residence, the head of the family must procure an identity card, on which are collected all the family data. An identity card, of course, with a photograph. . . . Among the minor enterprises of the capital's government, there was its photographic organization . . . tens of thousands of natives filed through, with great enjoyment, in order to fix their dark features on their cards. A task which was not without difficulty, since to the eyes of Italian photographers, the images all resembled one another . . . [thus] each subject being photographed held in his right hand a board with a number, which was reproduced in the photo and permitted the government to give each one his rightful card.[44]

Not only the individuals, but also their new living spaces, were regularized in such a way as to facilitate control and surveillance: "The 'checkerboard' solution, which yields a precise and geometrical mosaic of races, provides an optimal discipline and framing of the elements."[45]

Despite the planners' grand visions of total order, however, by the time the fourth and last plan had been approved, most Ethiopians and Italians had been building whatever they needed, in spite of the prohibition, and were living in a disorganized, undisciplined jumble toward the center of town. Italians did not discipline their imperial city; they did not contribute substantially to its growth, either.[46]

CONSTRUCTION AND DOMESTIC SPACES

We have seen that by the late 1930s, architects' discussions about proper colonial style had waned, and their attention had turned to plans. The single Italian writer who carefully documented local vernacular housing forms in Addis Ababa was Rigotti, who examined *tukul* shapes as well as "house-shops . . . belonging to Arabs or Levantines . . . [made] of masonry, and a single storey high."[47] In part, his interest in all matters of construction in the capital was practical, extending to materials and to advice on the use of local laborers – and transposing Italians' scale of civilizations to their respective abilities:

> Masons in general are Arabs, and these are able enough . . . They have a good eye, and a sure hand, and the stone only needs a small amount of retouching with a hammer, after which it fits into its right place almost right away. Abyssinian masons . . ., on the other hand, are without talent. They persist in hitting the stone without sense, so that they often manage to round out a stone that was almost square before putting it in place . . . It is sufficient to compare various workers to realize that if an Italian mason completes a cubic meter of stonework in about eight hours . . . the Arab completes about three quarters as much, and the native hardly succeeds in finishing half a cubic meter. Often, he only finishes a quarter.[48]

But Rigotti's text is interesting above all in its analyses of social-spatial arrangements in Europeans' residences. In Tripoli, architectural writers could undoubtedly have commented on divisions of space within domestic households, but they had not. In Addis Ababa, by contrast, the new interest in segregation raised questions of contact and separateness "at home."

> In the plans we note right away a clear division between the house of the master, that of the servants and the utility buildings . . . The master's house is in the center of the plot . . . as far as possible from it are the servants' quarters; near the master's house but well separated from it are the utility buildings. Surrounding the buildings, much open space, many trees and fields.[49]

By the time of Rigotti's text, of course, Italian planners promoted racial separations in all spheres, particularly the sexual and domestic ones. But this description undoubtedly included compounds built before 1936. It is certain that, as with early plans for Asmara, Europeans in Addis Ababa had been practicing segregation (in their domestic environments, although not in the city as a whole) much longer than they had been talking or writing about it.

> The plan of the villa has nothing particular to recommend it, it is shaped by the usual corridor that leads from the entrance to each of the rooms, an extremely banal solution . . . However, we find in it a clear separation between daytime areas, night-time areas, and service areas.
>
> The door that normally divides the corridor in two is usually closed and separates the masters' area from the service area. The dining room has two doors, which respectively lead to the two domains.[50]

This is a small-scale version of the larger spatial solution provided by Addis Ababa's market zone, with separate paths of egress for whites and blacks. Here, in a linked activity of consumption (eating), is the domestic-scale solution for conjoining the two areas that, ideally, were otherwise separate.

> The servants of color thus have their own passage within the master's house. Service comes down to the simple "boy," as the other servants are hardly ever admitted into the residence. Usually the boy does not go beyond the already-mentioned door. He goes to the dining area to prepare the table and remains there throughout the meal. He does not enter the other rooms unless he is called there, and he only goes there for cleaning and for service
>
> . . . The servants' house, on the other hand, is . . . of the characteristic construction type of the *tukul* . . . in each room lives a servant with his or her own family. A row of plants isolates and nearly hides the building. These families have nothing to do with the masters, the entrance to the villa is forbidden to them, and they may not circulate on the grounds.
>
> . . . The service of the European master consists of a boy, who by rights lives with his family on the master's land, a gardener, a cook, and a night guardian. The latter may or may not live with their families in the servants' quarters, but they are considered as

> permanent and must stay, day or night . . . on the grounds . . . The master normally gives his orders to the boy, who represents the head of the servants, and he reports orders to the other servants . . . Thus that distance between white masters and colored servants that must be the basis of all colonial organization is maintained, even within the house.[51]

The beginnings of a complex division of labor, and therefore of class divisions (rather than ones of nobility), were making their appearance in Addis Ababa after the turn of the century. Some Ethiopians therefore also exercised European-seeming divisions within the domestic sphere.

> In the city, the *tukul* . . . generally is always poor and nasty, and always has the look of a shack rather than of a proper house.
>
> The houses of rich Abyssinians are different, as are those of foreign businessmen, especially the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Arabs. The constructions of Europeans also have completely different characteristics, each one tending to bring to his own house the style that reminds him of home. Thus we may find a London garden-city house, the sloping, agitated roofs of old German houses, and the hybrid French colonial architecture that early in the century predominated, especially in Algeria. The usual house of a rich native consists of the master's house and the servants' quarters, divided, one from the other, by a wide stretch of ground where plants grow lushly.[52]

Here too is a small-scale parallel to citywide solutions practiced by Italian planners: the "green" barriers, described above, which were used as convenient divisions between races. The question, in the compound of a rich native, was (from Rigotti's point of view) how the master would distinguish himself from his fellow native, the servant:

> Let us see how the master's villa is done, given that the servants' quarters are usually *tukuls*. The walls may be of . . . stone or wood. The plan is very simple: an entrance verandah, a large room that serves as a living area, a reception area, and a dining area; in other words, it serves all the daily and public needs of the family. Off this room are the doors leading to the family's bedrooms; these are small, and usually are simply for sleeping . . . There is no hint of so-called utilities: bathroom, toilet, or kitchen, which, if they do exist, can be found outside the villa . . . The interior is rich in appearance, due to Persian carpets, lion and leopard . . . skins; the walls are covered in trophies of armor and horn.[53]

THE IMPERIAL EFFECT

The imperial model attempted in Addis Ababa was also applied, as much as possible, to cities under new Italian occupation, such as Gondar, Jima, and Dessie, in Ethiopia. Asmara, however – the capital city Italians occupied the longest – is the best site to examine the implementation of late-1930s Italian approaches to the city (Figure 9.6).[54] Here, an adapted version of the imperial ideal was juxtaposed on the city, stretching the administrative buildings along the main axial road rather than clustering them into a single arrangement. Even though Italians did

Figure 9.6
View (left and center) of fish, meat, and vegetable markets, and the Great Mosque adjoining the Viale Mussolini (now Harnet Avenue) in Asmara (1938, Architect Guido Ferrazza). On the right, Palazzo Mutton (the Mutton Building), resembling the well-known Novocomum by Giuseppe Terragni (Architect Antonio Vitaliti).

not rule other East African cities for a comparable period, all of them pre-existed Italian rule to some extent, and Italians' theories were inevitably not entirely implementable. Still, in all of these cities we can still retrieve the elements of the new "centers" thought to be vital to the urban lives of Italians, as well as the quarters built for natives. But whether we examine Addis Ababa alone or provincial cities in the Italian Empire, the Italian imperial city model – wherein populations were to be displaced wholesale, the pre-existing city core razed to the ground, and a new center built – failed. Had the Empire lasted longer, it might have ultimately been realized; but this seems unlikely, given the compromises planners accepted from the very beginning of their attempt to put their urban theories into practice.

Epilogue

For most Italians today, the colonial era ended long ago; despite the best efforts of a few dedicated scholars, they know very little about it. It is impossible to gauge how many Italians fought in colonial wars and settled in the colonies for any length of time. But it has been estimated that one in ten Italian households in the metropole had touristic and propagandistic literature about the colonies in their homes by the end of the colonial era.[1] Without question, then, Italians could not avoid being aware of the colonial enterprises. Yet in the chaos of the transition from Fascist rule to the Italian republic, colonial history was not examined. Those who had perpetrated atrocities were not publicly named or made accountable, and this has allowed a general amnesia regarding colonialism to develop among Italians ever since.

Italian colonial history has not been taught as part of the national elementary or secondary school curriculum. Even Italians' access to some media representations of Italian colonial history has been limited: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs suppressed Italian distribution of the 1979 film "Lion of the Desert," a realistic portrayal of Italy's war against 'Umar 'al-Mukhtar in Cyrenaica.[2] "Mediterraneo," on the other hand, a 1990 film depicting Italian soldiers stranded on an unnamed Greek island in the course of World War II and escaping into a timeless boyhood idyll there, glossed over issues of war and colonialism, achieving great commercial and critical success (and winning the US Academy Award for Best Foreign Film that year).

The colonial era is not a closed chapter for everyone, however. Some Italians have long tried to obtain compensation for lands in Libya that they had to surrender in 1970, when they were expelled under Colonel Qadhdhafi's new regime. The Libyan government, for its part, has argued in vain for decades that it was entitled to compensation for war damages from Italy, particularly in light of the mines that still dot the deserts and continue to maim Libyan citizens (Italy and Libya recently reached accords attempting to put a close to this disagreement). Associations of nostalgic Italians who began their lives in Libya and the

Dodecanese hold annual meetings and publish regular newsletters. A new wave of Italian scholarship has emerged in recent years (alongside new examinations of "memory" in connection with World War II and Fascism), examining social and cultural questions left untouched by earlier scholarship, which had focused on questions of military and diplomatic history. Individuals are also publishing personal memoirs at an increasing pace, and presses have reprinted a few colonialists' works dating to the turn of the twentieth century. All of this suggests that the Italian public is more open than ever before to revisiting the country's colonial past, although very little of this work can be called critical. Indeed, in some cases it is openly aestheticizing, leaving aside past and present conflicts and focusing instead on the "timeless" beauty of a former colony or – more to the point here – on the architectural legacies of Italian colonialism.[3]

In the former colonies, meanwhile, Italian rule is remembered in a wide variety of ways, depending on the individual interviewee's class, age, political views, and the present condition and orientation of his or her national government.[4] Some older citizens of Tripoli and Rhodes have voiced frank regret to me, citing the "quality of life" and the dignity of government that they now associate with the Italian colonial era. They frequently mention the advent of indoor plumbing and quality of construction brought by the Italians, knowing that these were not as common in Italy as they were in their own cities at the time. Postcolonial scholarship, meanwhile, has been growing since the early 1980s and promises to continue to bring to light facets of this previously undocumented history.

In my visits to the former colonies, I have examined the physical remains of Italian colonialism in conjunction with public and private remembrances of the era. In some cases, public celebrations override any physical remnants. For instance, Adwa – both the place and the events that took place there in 1896 – remains highly significant in Ethiopian history and nationalism; the battle's centennial in 1996 was fêted extensively.[5] But in most instances, it is the urban built environment that remains most obviously laden with Italian-era structures or the traces thereof. Many contemporary citizens do not know the precise history of the streets in which they dwell, but many do, and my interviews with them usually concern the question of their view of the Italians and their attitudes towards the buildings they left – are these views mutually contradictory, or do they blend comfortably?

The Libyan government takes the position that Italian colonialism was horrendously destructive, and that the damages done by the Italians have not been compensated for or even properly acknowledged. In Tripoli, where Italian architects and administrators built so intensively and were so intent on appropriating the city's landscape and cultural environment, many of the largest, most central Italian structures – the ones most representative of the colonial past – have been demolished by Colonel Qadhdhafi's government. The former Piazza Castello, now Green Square, has been widened extensively. This has entailed tearing down the Italian-renovated Sidi Hamuda mosque as well as the two remaining

examples of Italian neo-Moorish work in Tripoli: the Teatro Miramare, and, as recently as 1997, the Banco d'Italia, which had more recently been occupied by the People's General Committee.

And yet, the market outside the walls remains intact and in use. The wide streets converging on Green Square are still lined with arcades and Rationalist, *Novecento*, and more eclectic apartment buildings and commercial centers. Private Italian villas – once in the oasis, and now engulfed in Tripoli's post-independence sprawl – remain numerous to the east and south of Tripoli's center. Most of the imposing government buildings constructed throughout the *extra muros* city in the 1930s remain in use as police stations and foreign embassies. Inside and outside the walls, Italian-built churches still stand. The alterations made by Italians to the "Castello," and the archaeological museum they built within it, have not been removed or changed. The *Suq al-Mushir* inside the walls, a native commercial and arts and crafts center built under Italian rule, stands as it was designed and continues to conduct the same daily business as before. Finally, the Arch of Marcus Aurelius – to Italians, the central sign of their right to colonize Libya – still stands unfettered for touristic visits. This being said, the city has shown more ambivalence than enthusiasm for Italian buildings. Much as Italians left most buildings in the walled city in disrepair, Libyans have not rushed to restore or renovate Italian structures. Instead they have concentrated on repairing the decay of the walled city, long neglected under Italian colonialism and later abandoned by the well-to-do.[6]

In contrast to the Libyan government, the government of Rhodes does not remind its constituents of abuses suffered during Italian colonialism – even though it might well do so, given that Italian rule was oppressive in many ways. Instead, Rhodes and Kos (the second largest Dodecanese Island) are now huge tourist havens, attracting an enormous share of British and Scandinavian holiday markets. In 1949, the Hotel of the Roses took a significant place in world history, when it hosted the signing of the Egypt–Israel Armistice Agreement that mandated the existence of the Israeli state. The medieval buildings tourists appreciate so much owe their historic appearance, for the most part, to Italian manipulations of the built environment in the 1920s. Indeed, the Palace of the Grand Masters, Rhodes' most visible and most visited "medieval" vestige, standing on the old city's highest point, was inaugurated in 1939, having been built from the ground up by the Italian government (the original structure had exploded in the nineteenth century, when a cache of munitions detonated). Italian buildings in Rhodes, Kos, and the other islands – including government buildings, apartment buildings, churches, harbor offices, post offices, restaurants and hotels – are subject to renovation. Even though most tourists do not recognize them as Italian, Rhodians regularly acknowledge in interviews that they are, and indeed, that Italian rule modernized Rhodes long before the Greek government would have done so. In other words, the islands' current economic independence is due partly to the infrastructure and structures built by Italians (including hotels and bars). Most Rhodians are thus less vociferous than they might be in criticizing the regime.

Asmara is perhaps the most startling of Italy's former colonial capitals. Although the first areas of European construction there date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of the urban core dates to the building boom of the mid-1930s, when Italians arrived in droves to support the aggression against Ethiopia. Its center presents an unadulterated Italian appearance almost identical to comparable environments in Italy itself. Furthermore, it has not been preserved, but is virtually intact, or at least one can see the original beneath the damages of time. During the Eritreans' thirty-year "federation with" Ethiopia, the city was neither demolished nor developed. Meanwhile, for Eritreans, the suffering endured under Ethiopian rule outweighs any memories of the Italian period. On the whole, Asmarans do not discuss the Italian era with unmitigated bitterness, often voicing appreciation for their city and sometimes, for the cultural legacy of their long contact with Italians (such as language and literary heritage) (Epi.1).

In all of the former colonial cities, certain elements invariably appear: covered markets for meat, produce, and fish; churches and government buildings; and in *AOI* in particular, mosques built by the Italian government. In *AOI* also, in all the cities Italians built "native quarters" of concrete *tukuls*, which can still be located. The original structures, very much modified and added-to, are still in use, although in present-day shantytowns it can often be hard to discern them. Other sorts of structures, such as villas and apartment buildings, cinemas, Fascist Party headquarters, and so on, create a broad commonality between these late 1930s cities and those in Italy at the time, whether one is thinking of Addis Ababa, Asmara, or other cities such as Gondar, Jima, or Dessie. Mogadishu and Tirana, meanwhile, are the cities least permeated by their Italian colonial past, in part due to destructions in the intervening time.

Epi.1
Cinema Impero (Empire Cinema) on Harnet Avenue (formerly Viale Mussolini, or Mussolini Avenue), Asmara (1937, Architect Mario Messina).

For the scholar of Italian colonial architecture, what is most striking in the former colonial cities is that – architects' complaints in the 1920s and 1930s notwithstanding – Italian architects, administrators, and individuals did succeed, even in their disorganization, in creating (or at least in leaving behind) a visibly *Italian* colonial architecture. As we have seen, the Italians in charge aimed to give Italian rule an added solidity through its architectural representation. While they deplored their own architectural ineffectiveness at the time, the product of all their efforts now appears far more uniform and more recognizable than it did to them previously. This is not only true with respect to their monumental public buildings but even more so of residences, industrial buildings, railway stations, and so on.

Even leaving buildings aside, these sites are "familiar" as Italian ones thanks to the trees and sidewalks that are still there. In addition to the all-purpose eucalyptus, Italians also planted the same trees they used at home.[7] They put sidewalks in place, of the same width and height as those in the metropole, and planted the trees at regular distances from each other, making the most benign stroll in one of the former colonial cities reminiscent of one in any Italian town built or modified in the Fascist period. Today, these sidewalks, trees, and *piazzas* affirm the legacy of Italian rule more consistently than the buildings themselves. One has only to imagine the posters, stencils, slogans, loudspeakers, banners, statues of the Caesars, ubiquitous *fasces* – and last but not least, Italian passersby – to picture these cities in the colonial period.

Indeed, this architectural uniformity and the almost eerie familiarity of these cities' general environment regularly cause first-time Italian visitors to Asmara – the least changed of the colonial cities – to enter a state of semi-shock and remembrance. Echoing Proust's passage about the *madeleine* that stimulated powerful memories, Italians are stunned to see a city that – in their perception – is nearly an exact replica of an Italy they remember from their childhoods in the 1940s, or of specific "Fascist" neighborhoods in their home cities. Similarly for Asmarans, the experience of going to Italy for the first time gives them a sense of out-of-place familiarity, as certain neighborhoods built in the 1930s are to them too, "just like home."

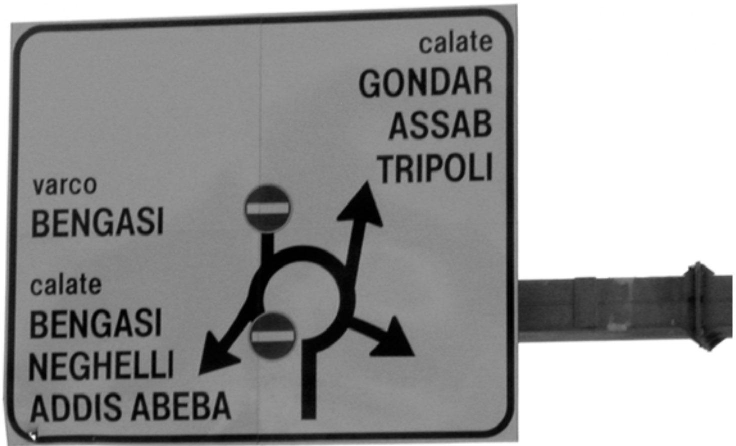
Scholars are increasingly turning their attention to monumental remains of the colonial era in Italy, objects that have been ignored in the long amnesia regarding the period. Some physical landmarks, such as monuments to colonial losses or victories, continue to echo historical landmarks in Italy's colonial past.[8] The 1940 *Mostra Triennale d'Oltremare* grounds in Naples, a grand exhibition on Italy's colonies – in which many of the buildings depicting the colonies were built by di Fausto, who worked *in* the colonies – are still there; dilapidated in parts, but faithful to the images published in its inaugural year. Trophies of the colonial period have also remained visible: until recently, the obelisk Italians brought from Axum (Ethiopia) to Rome in 1937 stood incongruously at one end of the Circus Maximus. Signs of Fascist triumph, colonial and otherwise, are even more pervasive. The concrete obelisk vaunting the letters "DUX MUSSOLINI" in Rome's Foro

Italico (formerly the Foro Mussolini) is entirely undefaced. Most common of all, the *fasces* that were applied to virtually every public surface under the regime are still easy to find, on lampposts, manhole covers, archaeological sites, and public buildings. At a more pervasive level, street names throughout Italy revive the names of early Italian explorers, such as Giuseppe Sapeto, as well as those of colonial cities and battles. And at a humbler level, Italian designations for urban configurations at one time also reflected the colonial experience in that "*villaggi abissini*" ("Abyssinian villages") was a "late-thirties term for shantytowns."[9]

Occasional alterations indicate that there is a limit to Italians' amnesia, though. For instance, a long brick wall on the *Via dei Fori Imperiali*, which has linked the Colosseum to Piazza Venezia in Rome since the 1930s, was graced with five large maps of the Roman Empire's expansion over time, beginning with the Republic. The fifth map showed Italy's empire as of the conquest of Ethiopia in 1936;[10] it is gone today.

But the most marked continuity with the colonial era is not to be found in Italy's cities. Instead, seaside resorts and private beach-houses provide the most direct – if unacknowledged – link to Italy's "colonial-time": the *tukul*. Indeed, Italians – individuals, not the state, and hotel owners – adapted the *tukul* of East Africa, the simple round hut with a conical thatched roof, to their own needs. As the Italian governments were building concrete versions of the *tukul* in regular rows for natives in "native quarters" of East Africa, individual Italians were also building them for themselves at the beach, and in hotels and resort villages in the colonies (Epi.2). Furthermore, they continue to build them today. In this sense, the architectural legacy of Italy's colonial era continues to be part of Italians' lives, not only of the populations in the former colonies.

Epi.2
"*Tukul*" in Italian-built resort on the shore of Lake Hora, Ethiopia.



Epi.3
Signage at the port of Livorno (Leghorn) for holiday ferry quays, named after former colonial cities.

More interesting is that this legacy is part of the world of leisure and consumption. Italian beach settings today often seem to echo the colonial holiday settings of the past, especially since the buildings are *the same* as in the former colonies. In some cases, this echo is quite blatant. For instance, quays in the port of Livorno (Leghorn) – quays for ferries of travelers departing for the southern Italian islands – are named after cities of the former Empire: Benghazi, Addis Ababa, Gondar, Aseb, Mogadishu, and Tripoli (Epi.3). The effect of these colonial resonances in Italian holiday areas is one of "the exotic" captured permanently on the soil of the metropole – but this "exotic" is ambivalent, being both "away" from daily Italian life and subtextually referring to Italy's "colonial-time." Even in the face of Italy's current problems in adapting to waves of immigrants from Africa and South Asia, these physical traces persist, as do images of "exotic" locales and people in advertising and fashion. In sum, to paraphrase Marc Augé's expression "non-place,"[11] the *tukuls* and names of some Italian holiday sites suggest a "non-time," in which Italians' holiday time and their colonial time intersect, reasserting the very colonial history so many Italians have suppressed.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Reggiori, F. (1936) "Architettura coloniale e architettura coloniale," *RDA* 8: pp. 339–342, p. 340. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
2 Foucault, M. (1984) "Space, knowledge, and power," in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, New York: Pantheon, pp. 239–256, p. 247.
3 Levi Montalcini, G., Mollino, C., and Pifferi, E. (1936) "Civiltà," *DOM* 9, 2: pp. 1–3, p. 1.
4 In particular, see Metcalf 1989 and Béguin *et al.* 1983.
5 Apollonio, F. I. (1993) "Architettura e città nel Dodecaneso," in Gresleri *et al.* 1993: pp. 313–321, p. 319; and Martinoli and Perotti 1999: pp. 301–306.
6 Thomas, N. (1994) *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 5.

1 HISTORY: 1869–1943

1 Rochat, G. (1992) "Il colonialismo italiano," in N. Labanca (ed.) *L'Africa in vetrina. Storie di musei e di esposizioni coloniali in Italia*, Paese: Pagus, pp. 9–15, pp. 10, 12.

2

> One useful way of distinguishing between [imperialism and colonialism is] to . . . separate them in . . . spatial terms and to think of imperialism . . . as the phenomenon that originates in the metropolis, the process which leads to domination and control. Its result, or what happens in the colonies as a consequence of imperial domination is colonialism . . . Thus the imperial country is the 'metropole' . . . and the colony . . . is the place which it penetrates and controls. Imperialism can function without formal colonies . . . but colonialism cannot.
>
> (Loomba, A. (1998) *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 6–7)

3 Betts, R. F. (1985) *Uncertain Dimensions. Western Overseas Empires in the Twentieth Century*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 113.
4 Very few sources summarize Italian colonial history in all the different territories. See Miège, J. L. (1968) *L'impérialisme colonial italien de 1870 à nos jours*, Paris: Enseignement Supérieur; Rochat, G. (1973) *Il colonialismo italiano*, Turin: Loescher; Labanca, N. (1994) *Storia dell'Italia coloniale*, Milan: Fenice 2000; Del Boca, A. (1996) "Colonialismo," in

B. Bongiovanni and N. Tranfaglia (eds) *Dizionario storico dell'Italia unita*, Rome and Bari: Laterza, pp. 157–173; and Labanca, N. (2002) *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

5 This discussion of early Italian forays into East Africa draws on Battaglia, R. (1958) *La prima guerra d'Africa*, Turin: Einaudi; Rainero, R. (1960) *I primi tentativi di colonizzazione agricola e di popolamento dell'Eritrea (1890–1895)*, Milan: Marzorati; Pankhurst, R. (1964) "Italian settlement policy in Eritrea and its repercussions 1889–1896," in J. Butler (ed.) *Boston University Papers on African History*, Boston: Boston University Press, pp. 121–156; Hess, R. L. (1966) *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press; Del Boca, A. (1976) *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale. Dall'Unità alla marcia su Roma*, Rome and Bari: Laterza; Taddia, I. (1986) *L'Eritrea – colonia, 1890–1952: paesaggi, strutture, uomini del colonialismo*, Milan: FrancoAngeli; Negash, T. (1987) *Italian Colonialism in Eritrea, 1882–1941. Policies, Praxis and Impact*, Stockholm: Uppsala University; Mesghenna, Y. (1988) *Italian Colonialism: A Case Study of Eritrea, 1869–1934. Motive, Praxis and Result*, Lund, Sweden: University of Lund; Zewde, B. (1991) *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855–1974*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press; Labanca, N. (1993) *In marcia verso Adua*, Turin: Einaudi; Podestà, G. L. (1996) *Sviluppo industriale e colonialismo. Gli investimenti italiani in Africa Orientale, 1869–1897*, Milan: Giuffrè; Ottolenghi, G. (1997) *Gli Italiani e il colonialismo. I campi di detenzione italiani in Africa*, Milan: Sugarco; Mesghenna, Y. (2001) "Eritrean prisoners deported to Italian prisons: a preliminary study," unpublished paper, presented at the 1st International Conference on Eritrean Studies ("Independent Eritrea: lessons and prospects"), Asmara, 22–26 July 2001; and Lenci, M. (2004) *All'inferno e ritorno. Storie di deportati tra Italia ed Eritrea in epoca coloniale*, Pisa: Serantini.

6 See Maione, G. (1991) "I costi delle imprese coloniali," in Del Boca, A. (ed.) *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo,* Rome and Bari: Laterza, pp. 400–420.

7 Castellini, G. (1911) *Tunisi e Tripoli*, Turin: Bocca, p. 123.

8 From the Italian point of view, "Ethiopia . . . [meant] the Empire of Ethiopia within the borders it had at the beginning of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. Abyssinia . . . [was] often used to indicate all of Ethiopia, but it really ought to [have designated] the northern part alone, i.e., the country of the Abyssinians, as opposed to the Galla, the Sidama, and the Somalis" (Consociazione Turistica Italiana (1938) *Guida dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Milan: Consociazione Turistica Italiana, p. 33).

9 On "native troops" in the service of Italian colonialism, see Scardigli, M. (1996) *Il braccio indigeno. Ascari, irregolari e bande nella conquista dell'Eritrea 1885–1911*, Milan: FrancoAngeli; and Quirico, D. (2002) *Squadrone bianco. Storia delle truppe coloniali italiane*, Milan: Mondadori.

10 On Italian emigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Ipsen, C. D. (1996) *Dictating Demography. The Problem of Population in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Gabaccia, D. (2000) *Italy's Many Diasporas*, Seattle: University of Washington Press. On Italian ambivalence about whether colonialism or emigration was preferable, see Choate, M. (2002) "Defining 'Greater Italy': migration and colonialism in Africa and the Americas, 1880–1915," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University; and Choate, M. (2003) "From territorial to ethnographic colonies and back again," *Modern Italy* 8, 1: pp. 65–75.

11 On Italians' agricultural development of Eritrea, see Taddia *L'Eritrea – colonia*.

12 On Italian colonial politics after Adwa, see Goglia, L. and Grassi, F. (eds) (1981) *Il colonialismo italiano da Adua all'Impero*, Rome and Bari: Laterza; and Aquarone, A. and De Courten, L. (1989) *Dopo Adua: politica e amministrazione coloniale*, Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali.

13 Webster, R. A. (1975) *Industrial Imperialism in Italy, 1908–1915*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

14 On Tianjin (formerly transliterated as Tientsin), see N. A. (1910) *A Guide to Tientsin, March, 1910*, Osaka: Osaka Shosen Kaisha; Rasmussen, O. D. (1925) *Tientsin. An Illustrated Outline History*, Tientsin: Tientsin Press; Cesapi, C. (1937) *La concessione italiana di Tien-Tsin*, Rome: Istituto Coloniale Fascista; and Rogaski, R. (2000) "Hygienic modernity in Tianjin," in J. W. Esherick (ed.) *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 30–46.

15 See, for instance, Corada, G. C. (1996) *Lafolè. Un dramma dell'Italia coloniale*, Rome: Ediesse.

16 On Libya before Italian colonization, see Juhaydar, 'A. (1991) *Afaq wa-watha'iq fi ta'rikh Libiya al-hadith* [Perspectives and Documents on Modern Libya], Tripoli: al-Dar al'Arabiyah lil-Kitab. Essential texts on Italian colonialism in Libya are Del Boca, A. (1986) *Gli Italiani in Libia. Tripoli bel suol d'amore, 1860–1922*, Rome and Bari: Laterza; (1988) *Gli Italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi*, Rome and Bari: Laterza; and Rochat, *Il colonialismo*. This summary also draws on Tilisi, K. M. (1973) *Ba'da al'Qardabiyah: dirasat fi tarikh al-isti'mar al'itali bi-libiya (Tarabulus al-gharb, 1922–1930)* [After al-Qardabiyah: Historical Studies of Italian Colonialism in Libya (Tripoli, 1922–1930)], Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafah; Ashiurakis, A. M. (1976) *A Short History of the Libyan Struggle against the Italian Colonialism (1911–1970)*, Tripoli: Dar El Fergiani; Salerno, E. (1979) *Genocidio in Libia*, Milan: SugarCo; Barbar, A. M. (1980) "The Tarabulus (Libyan) resistance to the Italian invasion: 1911–1920," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Wright, J. (1982) *Libya: A Modern History*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; Al-Buri, M. (1983) *Al-ghazw al-Itali li-Libiya: dirasah fi al-'alaqat al-dawliyah* [The Italian Conquest of Libya: a Study in International Relations] Tripoli: Al-dar al-'arabiyah lil-kitab; Anderson, L. (1986) *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Elbhloul, T. A. (1986) "Italian colonialism: the young Turks and the Libyan Resistance, 1908–1918," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara; Roumani, J. (1987) "The emergence of modern Libya: political traditions and colonial change," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University; Childs, T. W. (1990) *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the War over Libya, 1911–1912*, Leiden and New York: Brill; Al-'Arfawi, M. and Tahir, 'U. (1991) *Makhad al-imbiryaliyah wa-al-fashiyah al-Italiyatayn: 'usr wiladatiha wa-dafniha fi Libiya, 1882–1912* [Labor Pains of Italian Imperialism and Fascism. The Hardship of Its Origins and Its Burial in Libya, 1882–1912], 2 volumes, Tripoli: Markaz Jihad al-Libiyin lil-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyah [Libyan Studies Centre]; Rochat, G. (1991) "Introduzione," in G. Rochat, *Guerre italiane in Libia e in Etiopia. Studi militari 1921–1939*, Paese: Pagus, pp. 11–27; Ahmida, A. A. (1994) *The Making of Modern Libya. State Formation, Colonization, and Resistance, 1830–1932*, Albany: State University of New York Press; Del Fra, L. (1995) *Sciara Sciat. Genocidio nell'oasi. L'esercito italiano a Tripoli*, Rome: Datanews; Labanca, N. and Venuta, P. (eds) (2000) *Un colonialismo, due sponde del Mediterraneo*, Pistoia: CRT; and Baldinetti, A. (ed.) (2003) *Modern and Contemporary Libya: Sources and Historiographies*, Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente. My thanks to Nora Lafi for her generous help in obtaining some of the Arabic sources.

17 Wright, J. (1978) "Aeroplanes and airships in Libya, 1911–1912," *Maghreb Review* 3, 10: pp. 20–22.

18 See Pellegrini, V. and Bertinelli, A. (1994) *Per la storia dell'amministrazione coloniale italiana*, Milan: Giuffrè.

19 See Minutilli, F. (1903) *Geografia della Libia*, Turin: Bocca. The Italian government adopted the usage in its decree asserting Italian sovereignty over Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, issued on 5 November 1911. The provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were officially joined under one governor in 1929; and the absorption of the two

provinces into a unified Libya came about in 1934. I use the name "Libya" throughout the text for simplicity.

20 These islands are Rhodes, Kos, Leros, Patmos, Lipsi, Kalymnos, Astypalea, Nissyros, Tilos, Symi, Khalki, Karpathos, Kassos, and Kastellorizo. Technically, they were never a colony but a "Possession," which Italy initially agreed to relinquish but did not. The islands therefore remained the concern of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as did the Tianjin concession (which was occasionally referred to as a Protectorate). Because the islands were treated in every sense like the other Italian colonies – for instance, a handful of rural settlements for Italians were built there – I also treat them as an Italian colony throughout this book. On Italy and the Dodecanese, see Bosworth, R. J. B. (1979) *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers: Italian Foreign Policy Before the First World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Petricioli, M. (1983) *L'Italia in Asia Minore. Equilibrio mediterraneo e ambizioni imperialiste alla vigilia della prima guerra mondiale*, Florence: Sansoni; Hesychos, M. (1989) *To panorama tes Lerou* [An Overview of Leros], Leros: Hesychos; Childs, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy*; Doumanis, N. (1997) *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean. Remembering Fascism's Empire*, London and New York: Macmillan Press and St Martin's Press; Tsirpanlis, Z. N. (1998) *Italokratia sta Dodekanesa, 1912–1943: allotriosi tou anthropou kai tou perivallontos* [Dodecanese under the Italians, 1912–1943: Alienation of People and environment], Rhodes: Ekdosi Grapheiou Mesaionikis Poles Rodou; and Vittorini, E. (2002) *Isole dimenticate. Il Dodecaneso da Giolitti al massacro del 1943*, Florence: Le lettere.

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58 McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, New York: Routledge, p. 30.
59 Silverman, S. (1975) *The Three Bells of Civilization: The Life of an Italian Hilltown*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 2.
60 See, for example, Lombroso, C. (1896) *L'uomo delinquente*, Turin: Bocca; Niceforo, A. (1898) *Italia barbara contemporanea*, Milan: Sandron.

61 They supported this claim by stating that urban Tripolitanians also feared the Bedouin: Haimann, G. (1886) *Cirenaica (Tripolitania)*, 2nd edition, Milan: Hoepli, p. 181; and Ghisleri, A. (1911) "Tripolitania e Cirenaica dai più remoti tempi sino al presente," *EMP* 34: pp. 379–396, p. 395.

62 Haimann, *Cirenaica*, p. 178. A few comparable remarks were made about East African men, but without implying that such analogies were historically justified. One writer described "dignified" Eritreans, although not their clothing per se, as reminiscent of ancient Roman senators: Pianavia Vivaldi, R. (1901) *Tre anni in Eritrea*, Milan: Cogliati, pp. 48, 99. Another was reminded by Eritreans' outer clothing, the *shamma*, of "ancient Pompeii, come back to life," until the Eritreans' skin color "ruined the illusion": Paoli, R. (1908) *Nella colonia Eritrea*, Milan: Treves, p. 59.

63 Cf. Stoler, A. L. (1991) "Carnal knowledge and imperial power. Gender, race, and morality in colonial Asia," in M. di Leonardo (ed.) *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 51–101; (1992) "Sexual affronts and racial frontiers: European identities and the cultural politics of exclusion in colonial Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34: pp. 514–551; (1995) *Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Order of Things*, Durham and London: Duke University Press; McClintock, *Imperial Leather*; and Wildenthal, L. (1997) "Race, gender, and citizenship in the German colonial empire," in F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (eds) *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 263–283.

64 Crispi, "Discorso," p. 738.

65 On prostitution in Eritrea, see Barrera, G. (2002) "Colonial affairs: Italian men, Eritrean women, and the construction of racial hierarchies in colonial Eritrea (1885–1941)," Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, as well as Barrera, G. (2004) "Sex, citizenship and the state: the construction of the public and private spheres in colonial Eritrea," in P. Willson (ed.) *Gender, Family and Sexuality: The Private Sphere in Italy, 1860–1945*, London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 157–172. For comparative purposes, see Levine, P. (2003) *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*, New York and London: Routledge.

66 For the songs' lyrics, see Rochat, *Il colonialismo*, pp. 79, 170.

67 See Denti di Pirajno, A. (1985 [1955]) *A Cure for Serpents. An Italian Doctor in North Africa*, New York: Hippocrene; and cf. Alloula, M. (1986) *The Colonial Harem*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

68 Cf. Pinkus, K. (1995) *Bodily Regimes. Italian Advertising under Fascism*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press. On photographic and cinematic representations, see Palma, S. (1999) *L'Italia coloniale*, Rome: Riuniti, palma, S. (2002) "Fotografia di una colonia: l'Eritrea di Luigi Naretti (1885–1900)," *Quaderni storici* 37, 109, 1: pp. 83–147; and Ben-Ghiat, R. (2003) "The Italian colonial cinema: agendas and audiences," *Modern Italy* 8, 1: pp. 49–63. For broader inquiries into Italian images of colonial Africa, see Mignemi, A. (1984) *Immagine coordinata per un impero: Etiopia, 1935–1936*, Turin: Gruppo Editoriale Forma; Gabrielli, G. (ed.) (1998) *L'Africa in giardino. Appunti sulla costruzione dell'immaginario coloniale*, Anzola dell'Emilia: Zanini; Castelli, E. (ed.) (2000) *Immagini e colonie*, Rome: Museo Nazionale delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari Castelli, E. and Laurenzi, D. (eds) (2000) *Permanenze e metamorfosi dell'immaginario coloniale in Italia*, Perugia: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane; and Polezzi, L. (2003) "Imperial reproductions: the circulation of colonial images across popular genres and media in the 1920s and 1930s," *Modern Italy* 8, 1: pp. 31–47. With thanks to Brien Garnand for Castelli, *Immagini e colonie*.

69 Marongiu Buonaiuti, *La politica*; Marongiu Buonaiuti, C. (1982) *Politica e religioni*

nel colonialismo italiano (1882–1941), Rome: Giuffrè; Ianari, V. (1995) *Chiesa, coloni e Islam. Religione e politica nella Libia italiana*, Turin: Internazionale.

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71 Duncan, J. (1993) "Sites of representation: place, time and the discourse of the other," in J. Duncan and D. Ley (eds) *Place/Culture/Representation*, London: Routledge, pp. 39–56, p. 48.

72 See Baldinetti, A. (1997) *Orientalismo e colonialismo: la ricerca di consenso in Egitto per l'impresa della Libia*, Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente.

73 Anderson, L. (1986) *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 203.

74 See Wright, J. (1987) "Mussolini, Libya and the sword of Islam," *Maghreb Review* 12, 1–2: pp. 29–33, and the eponymous article in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller 2005.

75 Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero (1940) *L'Italia per le popolazioni islamiche dell'Africa Italiana*, Rome: Novissima, p. 5.

76 De Felice, R. (1978) *Ebrei in un paese arabo. Gli ebrei nella Libia contemporanea tra colonialismo, nazionalismo arabo e sionismo (1835–1970)*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 54, 57.

77 Labanca, N. (ed.) (2001) *Posti al sole. Diari e memorie di vita e di lavoro delle colonie d'Africa*, Rovereto: Museo storico italiano della guerra, pp. 82–83.

78 Cf. Betts, R. F. (1961) *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890–1914*, New York: Columbia University Press.

79 Del Boca, A. (1995) "Le leggi razziali nell'impero di Mussolini," in A. Del Boca, M. Legnani, and M. G. Rossi (eds) *Il regime fascista: storia e storiografia*, Rome and Bari: Laterza, pp. 329–351, p. 336.

80 With thanks to Catherine Brice for reminding me of this fact.

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86 Negash, T. (1987) *Italian Colonialism in Eritrea, 1882–1941. Policies, Praxis and Impact*, Stockholm: Uppsala University; Cresti, F. (2003) "La formation pour les musulmans de Libye à l'époque coloniale, ou les supposés dangers de la modernité," in F. Siino (ed.) *Sciences, savoirs modernes et pouvoirs dans le monde musulman contemporain*, *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*: 101–102, pp. 269–304; and Ahmida, A. A. (2005) "State and class formation and collaboration in colonial Libya," in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller: pp. 59–71.
87 See Smith-Simonsen, C. (1997) " . . . All'ombra della nostra bandiera: a study on Italian educational activities in colonial Eritrea, 1890–1941," thesis, University of Tromsø; and Negash, T. (2005) "The ideology of colonialism: educational policy and praxis in Eritrea," in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller 2005: pp. 109–119.
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92 Ibid., pp. 337–338.
93 Del Boca, *Gli Italiani* (1988), p. 50.
94 Romano, S. (1979) *Giuseppe Volpi industria e finanza tra Giolitti e Mussolini*, *Venice: Marśilio*, p. 119.
95 Del Boca, *Gli Italiani* (1988), pp. 121–122.
96 Atkinson, D. (2000) "Nomadic strategies and colonial governance: domination and resistance in Cyrenaica, 1923–32," in J. P. Sharp, P. Routledge, C. Philo, and R. Paddison (eds) *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance*, London: Routledge, pp. 93–121.
97 Cf. Lorcin, P. M. E. (1995) *Imperial Identities. Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria*, London: I. B. Tauris.
98 Balbo, I. (1939) "La politica sociale fascista verso gli arabi della Libia," in Fondazione Alessandro Volta (ed.) *Atti del Convegno di scienze morali e storiche, 4–11 ott. 1938-XVI. Tema: l'Africa*, Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, pp. 733–749, p. 734; Del Boca, *Gli Italiani* (1988), p. 237.
99 Balbo, "La politica," pp. 737–738.
100 Del Boca, *Gli Italiani* (1988), pp. 240, 280; Segrè, *Fourth Shore*, p. 105.
101 Del Boca, *Gli Italiani* (1988), p. 240.
102 See Balbo's exchanges with Mussolini in 1938 and 1939, in MAE, MAI/GAS, 1937/40, *cartella* 70, Colonizzazione demografica in A. O. ed in Libia.
103 Balbo, "La politica," p. 735.
104 Ibid., p. 749.
105 Italians classified Albanians similarly. See Mai, N. (2002) "Myths and moral panics: Italian identity and the media representation of Italian immigration," in R. Grillo and

J. Pratt (eds) *The Politics of Recognizing Difference: Multiculturalism Italian-Style*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 77–94; and Mai, N. (2003) "The cultural construction of Italy in Albania and vice versa: migration dynamics, strategies of resistance and politics of mutual self-definition across colonialism and post-colonialism," *Modern Italy* 8, 1: pp. 77–93. In a parallel attitude, nineteenth-century British colonizers in the Ionian Islands saw Greeks as "the Irish of the Mediterranean": Gallant, T. W. (2002) *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, p. 35.

106 Martinoli and Perotti 1999: p. 20.

107 Taddia, I. (1996) *Autobiografie africane: il colonialismo nelle memorie orali*, Milan: FrancoAngeli.

108 Stoler, *Race*, p. 152. Also see Prochaska, D. (1990) *Making Algeria French. Colonialism in Bône, 1870–1920*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 20.

109 Taddia, I. (1988) *La memoria dell'impero: autobiografie d'Africa Orientale*, Manduria: Lacaita; Taddia, *Autobiografie*; Taddia, I. and Chelati Dirar, U. (1997) "Essere africani nell'Eritrea italiana," in A. Del Boca (ed.) *Adua. Le ragioni di una sconfitta,* Rome and Bari: Laterza, pp. 231–253; Doumanis, N. (1997) *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean. Remembering Fascism's Empire*, London and New York: Macmillan Press and St Martin's Press.

110 Del Boca, "Le leggi," pp. 347, 348.

111 Personal communication from an elder Libyan citizen of Tripoli who wishes to remain anonymous (1998).

112 Del Boca, "Le leggi," p. 346.

113 For example, Negash, *Italian Colonialism*, p. 114.

114 Del Boca, "Le leggi," p. 348.

115 Personal communication from an elder Libyan citizen of Tripoli who wishes to remain anonymous (1998).

116 Sòrgoni, B. (2001) *Etnografia e colonialismo. L'Eritrea e l'Etiopia di Alberto Pollera 1873–1939*, Turin: Bollati Boringhieri.

117 Lechenperg, H. P. (1935) "With the Italians in Eritrea: torrid colony between the Red Sea and Ethiopia, 2,600 miles by sea from Rome, is mobilization place of Fascist troops and planes," *NAT* 68, 3: pp. 265–295, p. 287.

118 Hanley, G. (1971) *Warriors and Strangers*, London: Hamish Hamilton, pp. 49–50.

119 Labanca first called for a re-evaluation of Italian historiographies regarding colonial racism: Labanca, N. (1999) "Il razzismo coloniale italiano," in A. Burgio (ed.) *Nel nome della razza. Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia 1870–1945*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 145–163. Barrera, in turn, has definitively answered many questions regarding racist theories and practices in colonial Eritrea in "Colonial affairs." For a summary of the continuities and differences between Liberal- and Fascist-era racial views and policies, see Sòrgoni, B. (2002) "Racist discourses and practices in the Italian empire under Fascism," in R. Grillo and J. Pratt (eds) *The Politics of Recognizing Difference: Multiculturalism Italian-Style*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 41–57.

120 For example, in Taddia, *Autobiografie*, and Doumanis, *Myth*. On postcolonial memory and ambivalence, see Cole, J. (2001) *Forget Colonialism? Memory and the Art of Sacrifice in Madagascar*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

121 Stoler, A. L. (1992) "Rethinking colonial categories: European communities and the boundaries of rule," in N. Dirks (ed.) *Colonialism and Culture*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 319–352.

122 Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

123 Cannadine, D. (2001) *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 123.

124 Segrè, *Fourth Shore*, p. 139; and see Barrera, "Colonial affairs," on Italians expelled from Eritrea.

125 For example, Triulzi, A. (1997) "L'Africa come icona," in A. Del Boca (ed.) *Adua. Le ragioni di una sconfitta*, Rome and Bari: Laterza, pp. 285–281; Schneider, *Italy's Southern Question*, Dickie, *Darkest Italy*, and Moe, *The View*. Southern and working-class Italians' ethnic and racial status was ambiguous outside of Italy as well: see Guglielmo, T. (2003) *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

126 See, for instance, Pianavia Vivaldi, *Tre anni*, p. 25; Lombardi-Diop, C. (1999) "Writing the female frontier: Italian women in colonial Africa, 1890–1940," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University; Pickering-Iazzi, R. (2003) "Mass-mediated fantasies of feminine conquest, 1930–1940," in Palumbo: pp. 197–224; Lombardi-Diop, C. (2005) "Pioneering female modernity: Fascist women in colonial Africa" in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller 2005: pp. 145–154; Pickering-Iazzi, R. (2000) "Structures of feminine fantasy and Italian empire building, 1930–1940," *Italica* 77, 3: pp. 400–417; For comparative purposes, see Thompson, E. (2000) *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York: Columbia University Press; and Wildenthal, L. (2001) *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945*, Durham: Duke University Press. To my knowledge, no scholar has analyzed homosexuality in the Italian colonies, although on homosexuality, writing, and Italian travel to other "exotic" settings, see Duncan, D. (2002) "The queerness of colonial space: Giovanni Comisso's travels with Fascism," in K. Chedgzoy, E. Francis, and M. Pratt (eds) *In a Queer Place: Sexuality and Belonging in British and European Contexts*, Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 110–133. Also see Aldrich, R. (2003) *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, London: Routledge.

127 Stoler, A. L. (2002) "Developing historical negatives: race and the (modernist) visions of a colonial state," in B. K. Axel (ed.) *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and its Futures*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 156–185, p. 175; and see Burdett, C. (2000) "Journeys to Italian East Africa 1936–1941: narratives of settlement," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 5, 2: pp. 207–226.

128 Rabinow 1989: p. 286. Also see Finaldi, G. (2003) "Culture and imperialism in a 'backward' nation? The Prima Guerra d'Africa (1885–96) in Italian primary schools," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8, 3: pp. 374–390.

129 Cf. Faubion, J. D. (1988) "Possible modernities," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, 4: pp. 365–378; Faubion, J. D. (1993) *Modern Greek Lessons. A Primer in Historical Constructivism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Mitchell 1988; and Fawaz, L. T. and Bayly, C. A. (eds) (2002) *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, New York: Columbia University Press.

130 In this connection, note Ben-Ghiat's analysis of how Fascist laws against Jews also served the quest for modernity: Ben-Ghiat 2001, pp. 153–256.

131 For example, Crispi, "Discorso," p. 730.

132 Lyautey, H. (1924), preface to P. Ricard, *Les merveilles de l'autre France. Algérie – Tunisie – Maroc. Le pays – le monument – les habitants*, Paris: Hachette, p. 2. Also see Lorcin, P. M. E. (2002) "Rome and France in Africa: recovering colonial Algeria's Latin past," *French Historical Studies* 25, 2: pp. 295–329; and Davis, D. K. (in press) "Desert 'wastes' of the Maghreb: desertification narratives in French colonial environmental history of North Africa," *Cultural Geographies*.

133 On Delhi, see Irving, R. G. (1981) *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi*, New Haven: Yale University Press, as well as Volwahsen, A. (2002) *Imperial Delhi: The British Capital of the Indian Empire*, Munich: Prestel.

134 Crispi, "Discorso," p. 742.

3 THE COLONIAL BUILT ENVIRONMENT UNTHEORIZED, 1880s–1920s

1 Zagnoni, S. (1993) "L'Eritrea delle piccole città. 1897–1936," Gresleri *et al.* 1993: pp. 145–163, p. 146.
2 See Apollonio, F. I. (1993) "L'architettura del cannone: occupazione e opere di fortificazione," Gresleri *et al.* 1993: pp. 127–143.
3 See Zucconi (1989) and Horn, D. G. (1994) *Social Bodies. Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
4 Cf. King 1976, Rabinow 1989, Goerg 1997.
5 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 11/9, *fascicolo* 94, Regolamento per le concessioni di suolo pubblico e per gli edifici privati, 1 July 1888.
6 ACS, PCM, 1888, 9.6.894, Rapporto semestrale al Signor Comandante la Piazza ed il Presidio di Massaua, from Segretario per gli affari indigeni Pestalozza, 29 March 1888.
7 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 1/7, *fascicolo* 68, Piano regolatore di Assab, Appezzamento di terreno in Assab spettante alla Navigazione Generale, 16 July 1899.
8 For example, MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 26/2, *fascicolo* 1, Lavori pubblici, Edilizia a Massaua e Assab, 1881–1885; ACS, PCM, 1904, 2.2.51, Colonia Eritrea: illuminazione dei canali di Massaua; ACS, PCM, 1909, 30.388, Costruzione della ferrovia Massaua – Agordat – Eleghin; ACS, PCM, 1910, 11.218, Ferrovia Gondar-Setit: costruzione.
9 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 26/2, *fascicolo* 1, Lavori pubblici, Edilizia a Massaua e Assab, 1881–1885.
10 Pianavia Vivaldi, R. (1901) *Tre anni in Eritrea*, Milan: Cogliati, p. 181.
11 MAE, ASMAI, I, Somalia, *posizione* 89/1, *fascicolo* 14, Acquisti di immobili (1904–1907).
12 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 26/2, *fascicolo* 16, Palazzi coloniali a Taulud (1901–1902), 24 January 1901.
13 Ibid., June 1902.
14 For an itemized list of Asmara's European buildings at the time of the capital transfer, see Checchi, M. (1910) "Asmara," *RIV* 5-2, 14–15, 1: pp. 346–355, p. 350. Also see Pankhurst, R. (1985) *History of Ethiopian Towns from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to 1935*, Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag-Wiesbaden, pp. 332–333.
15 Paoli, R. (1908) *Nella colonia Eritrea*, Milan: Treves, p. 58.
16 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 34/3, *fascicolo* 68, Norme edilizie in Asmara.
17 Zagnoni, "L'Eritrea," p. 162.
18 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 34/3, *fascicolo* 68, Piano regolatore di Agordat, Piano regolatore di Cheren, Piano regolatore di Adi Caiè.
19 MAE, ASMAI, I, Eritrea, *posizione* 34/3, *fascicolo* 68, Villaggio indigeno a Taulud (sistemazione, ubicazione). A rare, furiously anti-colonialist (and self-published) Italian author claimed that "poor blacks" were "expelled" from Massawa Island to Taulud Island because "whites" did not want them nearby, although "Europeans, Asians, and merchants of all races" lived on Massawa: Gandolfi, T. (1910) *I misteri dell'Africa Italiana*, Rome: Gandolfi, pp. 49–50. I have seen no documentation to this effect; it may have been a strictly local, and unreported, decision. But it is worth noting that even if some natives did not live near Europeans on Massawa, they did on Taulud. From the early 1890s on, Taulud Island held official buildings, including the Italian governor's palace, as well as "natives' shacks and huts": Pianavia Vivaldi, *Tre anni*, p. 12.
20 MAE, ASMAI, II, Somalia, *posizione* 171/1, *fascicolo* 5, Monografie sulla Somalia meridionale, Brava.
21 Molon, M. and Vianello, A. (1990) "Brava, città dimenticata," *Storia Urbana* 14, 53: pp. 199–240, p. 226.

22 Ibid., p. 228.
23 Barrera, G. (2002) "Colonial affairs: Italian men, Eritrean women, and the construction of racial hierarchies in colonial Eritrea (1885–1941)," Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, p. 52. Zagnoni also describes a fourth sector planned for suburban residences, in "L'Eritrea," p. 151.
24 For descriptions of the city in 1906 and 1912–1913, see Paoli, *Nella colonia*, pp. 55–58, and Stanga, I. (1913) *Una gita in Eritrea*, Milan: Cogliati, pp. 46–47.
25 Checchi, "Asmara," p. 350.
26 Barrera, "Colonial affairs," p. 107.
27 Pianavia Vivaldi, *Tre anni*, p. 25.
28 Larco, R. (1921) "Vita Eritrea: 'Le nostre madame,'" *EMP* 53: pp. 92–97, p. 95.
29 For example, Paoli, *Nella colonia*, pp. 64–65; Occhini (1910) *Viaggi*, Città di Castello: n.p., p. 72. Also see Taddia, I. (1996) *Autobiografie africane: il colonialismo nelle memorie orali*, Milan: FrancoAngeli.
30 On this point, also see Zagnoni, "L'Eritrea," p. 158.
31 Barrera, "Colonial affairs," p. 113.
32 The plan is reproduced in Denison *et al.* 2003: 39.
33 Zagnoni, "L'Eritrea," p. 146.
34 See Talamona 1992 for a detailed account.
35 Fuller 2000.
36 On the administrative history of Tripoli under the Qaramanli, see Lafi, N. (2002) *Une ville du Maghreb entre ancien régime et réformes ottomanes. Genèse des institutions municipales à Tripoli de Barbarie (1795–1911)*, Paris: L'Harmattan; on the process of state formation already under way at the time of the Italian occupation, see Ahmida, A. A., (2005) "State and class formation and collaboration in colonial Libya," in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller 2005: pp. 59–71.
37 On Tripoli's morphological history, see Messana, G. (1979) "La Medina di Tripoli," *Quaderni dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Tripoli (nuova serie)*, 1: pp. 6–36; Ali-Husnein, A. (1991) "From Tripolis to Medina. Historical development and urban morphology of a Libyan traditional core," Master's thesis, University of Washington; Warfelli, M. (1976) "The old city of Tripoli," in *Some Islamic sites in Libya: Tripoli, Ajdabiyah and Ujlah*, a special supplement to *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, 9: pp. 2–18; and Elmahmudi, A. A. (1997) *The Islamic Cities in Libya. Planning and Architecture*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp. 79–107.
38 De Bisson, L. (1881) *La Tripolitaine et la Tunisie*, Paris: Leroux, pp. 4 and 14.
39 Treves, Guide [Treves Guidebooks] (1925) *Tripoli e dintorni*, Milan: Treves, pp. 10–11.
40 This "Negro village" appeared in travelers' chronicles rather than Italian government documents: see Pinon, R. (1904) *L'empire de la Méditerranée*, Paris: Perrin, p. 294. It was mentioned as late as 1925: see Casserley, G. (1925) "Tripolitania, where Rome resumes sway," *NAT*, 48, 2: pp. 131–161. On travelers' descriptions see At-Tilis, K. M. (1974) *Hikayah madinah. Tarabulus lada al-rihalat al-'arabi wa-al-ajanibi* [Tale of a City. Tripoli in Arab and Foreign Explorers' Accounts], Tripoli: Ad-Dar al-'Arabiyah lilKitab.
41 ACS, PCM, 1912, *protocollo* 6/302.T, *busta* 6/442, *fascicolo* 227: Esecuzione del piano regolatore, from Commander General Salsa to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giolitti), 9 June 1912, p. 3.
42 On early policies regarding the fortified city, and comparisons with French interventions in North Africa, see Fuller 2000. For a more detailed discussion of early interventions, see Fuller, M. G. (1994) "Colonizing constructions: Italian architecture, urban planning, and the creation of modern society in the colonies, 1869–1943," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. On the first phase of Italian planning, also see Lafi, N. and Bocquet, D. (2002) "Local élites and Italian town-planning

procedures in early colonial Tripoli 1911–1912," *The Journal of Libyan Studies* 3, 1: pp. 59–68.

43 See C., G. B. (1920) "Tripolitania. Il caro alloggi," *ESC* 35, 1: 22–24, and *RIV*, eds (1920) "Incremento edilizio in Libia," *RIV* 15, 1: p. 166.

44 ACS, PCM, 1912, *protocollo* 6/302.T, *busta* 6/442, *fascicolo* 227: Esecuzione del piano regolatore, from Commander General Salsa to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giolitti), 9 June 1912, pp. 9, 10–11.

45 ACS, PCM, 1912, *protocollo* 6/302.T, *busta* 6/442, *fascicolo* 228: Pro memoria, personale riservato, 22 June 1912, p. 1.

46 Talamona 1992: pp. 67, 68.

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48 ACS, PCM, 1912, *protocollo* 6/328.T, *busta* 6/442, *fascicolo* 176: Esecuzione del piano regolatore, Questioni edilizie e finanziarie, from Commander General Salsa to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giolitti), 16 June 1912, pp. 14, 17–18.

49 Over the years, buildings were sometimes torn down, including several in the poorer, Jewish quarter in 1922: Bertarelli, L. V. (1929) *Guida d'Italia del Touring Club Italiano. Possedimenti e colonie, Isole Egee, Tripolitania, Cirenaica, Eritrea, Somalia*, Milan: Capriolo and Massimino, p. 251. A document of 1939 also refers, albeit vaguely, to "the demolition of old, unsound structures": MAE, ASMAI, Libia, *posizione* 150/37, *fascicolo* 168: Relazione sanitaria per l'anno 1939, XVII–XVIII, Governo della Libia, p. 64. For greater detail on Italian changes to the walled city, see Sangiovanni, O. (1990) "La Medina di Tripoli. Dal piano regolatore del 1912 ai lavori del 1936–37," *Islam. Storia e civiltà* 30, 9, 1: pp. 48–61. My thanks to Nora Lafi for locating a copy of this article for me.

50 ACS, PCM, 1912, *protocollo* 6/302.T, *busta* 6/442, *fascicolo* 227: Esecuzione del piano regolatore, from Commander General Salsa to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giolitti), 9 June 1912, p. 5.

51 Luiggi, L. (1912) "Le opere pubbliche a Tripoli. Note di viaggio," *NAN*; 242: pp. 115–130, p. 115.

52 Bertarelli, *Guida*, p. 289.

53 ACS, PCM, 1912, *protocollo* 6/275.T, *busta* 6/442, *fascicolo* 261: from Lieutenant General Caneva to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti), 26 May 1912, p. 1. Note that this document also is a report directly to the Italian Prime Minister, signaling the high level of national importance accorded to the matter.

54 The Arch was the topic of many celebratory publications, for instance, Aurigemma, S. (1938) *L'Arco di Marco Aurelio e di Lucio Vero a Tripoli*, Rome: Libreria dello Stato.

55 MAE, ASMAI, Tripolitania, *posizione* 133/1: Relazione sommaria sui lavori compiuti dall'ufficio opere pubbliche di Tripoli dall'occupazione al 31 gennaio 1914, Corpo Reale del genio civile, XVI compartimento (Libia), 28 February 1914, pp. 13–15.

56 Braun, E. (1986 [1914]) *The New Tripoli, and What I Saw in the Hinterland*, London: Darf Publishers, p. 89.

57 ACS, PCM, 1913, *fascicolo* 1/2 – 505: from Lieutenant General Ameglio to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti), 5 May 1913, pp. 56–58.

58 Ibid., p. 59. Also see Mesturino, V. (1937) "Architetture medievali in Rodi e loro restauro," *RDO* 7, 10: pp. 31–34.

59 Papani Dean, E. (1979) "La dominazione italiana e l'attività urbanistica ed edilizia nel Dodecaneso, 1912–1943," *Storia Urbana* 3, 8: pp. 3–47, p. 11; Apollonio, F. I. (1993) "Architettura e città nel Dodecaneso," Gresleri *et al.* 1993: pp. 313–321, p. 316.

60 ACS, PCM, 1913, *fascicolo* 1/2 – 505: Report from Lieutenant General Ameglio to the Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri (Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti), 5 May 1913, pp. 58–59. The report gives the following population numbers: 4890 Muslims, 4290 Jews, and 4246 Greeks.
61 Bartoccini, R. (1924) "La moschea di Murad Agha in Tagiura (Tripolitania)," *AAD* 3, 8: pp. 337–346, p. 337. On Italians' indexing and preservation, see Papani Dean, "La dominazione"; Sangiovanni, O. (1990) "La Medina" Talamona 1992 and 1993; and McLaren 2002b. For comparative purposes, also see Oulebsir, N. (2004) *Les usages du patrimoine. Monuments, musées et politique coloniale en Algérie*, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
62 Namely, the Qaramanli, Al-Naga, Gurgi, Al-Kharruba, Durgut Pasha, and Tajura mosques. Corsi, M. (1925) "Le moschee di Tripoli," *EMP* 61: pp. 96–98, p. 98.
63 Talamona 1992: 69. For a full compilation, see Aurigemma, S. (1927) *Tripoli e le sue opere d'arte*, Milan: Alfieri.
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66 See Petricioli, M. (1990) *Archeologia e mare nostrum: le missioni archeologiche nella politica mediterranea dell'Italia 1898/1943*, Rome: Valerio Levi; Sangiovanni, O. (1993) "Roma nel deserto: ricerca archeologica in Libia," Gresleri *et al.* 1993: pp. 89–99; Livadiotti, M., and Rocco, G. (eds) (1996) *La presenza italiana nel Dodecaneso tra il 1912 e il 1948: la ricerca archeologica, la conservazione, le scelte progettuali*, Catania: Prisma; Di Vita, A. (1996) "La politica archeologica italiana nel Dodecaneso tra 1912 e 1943," *Magna Graecia* 31, 1, 3: pp. 1–4; Altekamp, S. (2000) *Rückkehr nach Afrika. Italienische Kolonialarchäologie in Libyen 1911–1943*, Köln, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag; and Munzi, M. (2001) *L'epica del ritorno: archeologia e politica nella Tripolitania italiana*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
67 Romanelli, P. (1924) "Vecchie Case Arabe di Tripoli," *AAD* 3: pp. 193–211, p. 193.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., pp. 200, 202, 205, 206.
70 Ibid., pp. 204, 207. Similar, but less strident analyses of Rhodes' architecture appeared around the same time: e.g. Maiuri, A. (1924) "Architettura paesana a Rodi. La casa di Lindo," *AAD* 3: pp. 392–409.
71 Zucconi, G. (1997) *L'invenzione del passato. Camillo Boito e l'architettura neomedievale*, Venice: Marsilio, p. 149 *passim*.
72 Dainelli, G. and Marinelli, O. (1912) *Risultati scientifici di un viaggio nella Colonia Eritrea*, Florence: Galletti e Cocci, p. 469.
73 Ibid., p. 407.
74 Ibid., p. 408.
75 Ibid., p. 410. For some alternative (and less well substantiated) claims, see Stanga, *Una gita*, p. 47, n. 1; and Pianavia Vivaldi, *Tre anni*, p. 46.

4 MODERN ITALIAN ARCHITECTURE, 1910s–1930s

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2 Quoted in Compagnin, L. and Mazzola, M. L. (1976) "La nascita delle scuole superiori di architettura in Italia," in Danesi and Patetta 1976: pp. 194–196, p. 195.
3 On Italian architectural education, see Compagnin and Mazzola, "La nascita," on which I draw here; De Stefani, L. (1992) *Le scuole di architettura in Italia. Il dibattito dal 1860 al 1933*, Milan: FrancoAngeli; and Nicoloso 1999.

4 Cf. McLaren 2001, which focuses primarily on appropriation of North African design solutions.
5 Nicoloso 1999: 15.
6 See Giusti and Godoli 1999.
7 See Meeks, C. L. V. (1966) *Italian Architecture, 1750–1914*, New Haven: Yale University Press, and Etlin 1991.
8 See particularly Zucconi, G. (1997) *L'invenzione del passato. Camillo Boito e l'architettura neomedievale*, Venice: Marsilio, p. 149 *passim*.
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17 Giovannoni, G. (1913) "Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova," *NAN* series 5, 165, 995: pp. 449–472, pp. 450–451.
18 Giovannoni, G. (1995) [1931] *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova*, 2nd edn, Milan: CittàStudiEdizioni, p. 6.
19 Giovannoni, G. (1913) "Il 'diradamento' edilizio dei vecchi centri. Il Quartiere della Rinascenza in Roma," *NAN* series 5, 166, 997: pp. 53–76, p. 62.
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23 Nicoloso 1999: 54.
24 Ibid.
25 Venturi, G. (1924) "La Scuola Superiore di Architettura," *AAD* 4, 3: pp. 107–125, p. 125.
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27 Piacentini, M. (1932) "Il nostro programma," *ARC* 11, 1: pp. 1–2.
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29 Nicoloso 1999: 213.
30 Braun 2000.

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34 See Ciucci, G. (1980) "A Roma con Bottai," *Rassegna* 3: pp. 66–71.
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81 Apollonj, B. M. (1937) "L'attuale momento edilizio della Libia," *ARC* 16.2: pp. 793–817, p. 816.

5 COLONIAL MODERN, 1920s–1940s

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12 See Siola, U. (1990) *La Mostra d'Oltremare e Fuorigrotta*, Naples: Electa.

13 See Morton 2000 on "hybridity" in colonial exhibitions; also see Mitchell 1998 and Çelik 1992.

14 Giovannoni, G. (1925) "Edilizia rodiese" ("Commenti e polemiche"), *AAD* 4, 6: pp. 474–480, p. 480.

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16 Cardella, S. (1926) "Architettura coloniale," *ARF* 1, 5: pp. 216–217; p. 216. My thanks to Jessica Otey for this article.

17 Ibid., p. 217.

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that in 1929, the year of its original publication, the essay was also submitted as a petition by Rava's father to the Tripoli government, which may explain its publication under his name: to lend it more credibility (1992: p. 71); but in any case, she concurs that Carlo Enrico was the actual author (1985: p. 1105). For a differing interpretation, i.e. that Rava's father was its true author, see McLaren 2001 and 2002b. For a longer discussion of the article's holistic approach, see Fuller, M. (1994–1995) "Carlo Enrico Rava, the radical – first formulations of colonial Rationalism," *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 15–16, 1–2: pp. 150–159.

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37 Rava, C. E. (1931) "Di un'architettura coloniale moderna (parte prima)," *DOM* 4, 5: pp. 39–43, 89; and Rava, C. E. (1931) "Di un'architettura coloniale moderna (parte seconda)," *DOM* 4, 6: pp. 32–36. On *mediterraneità* in Italian colonial architecture, see Danesi, S. (1976) "Aporie dell'architettura italiana in periodo fascista – mediterraneità e purismo," in Danesi and Patetta 1976: pp. 21–28; Fuller 1988/1992 and Fuller (in press); Brunetti 1993; McLaren 1994–1995, 2001, and 2002b; and Martinoli and Perotti 1999: pp. 123–126.
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42 CRGUSIR, "La zonizzazione," p. 70.
43 Battigalli and Dodi, "Della moderna urbanistica," p. 87.
44 Basile, F., and Alpago Novello, A. (1937) "Relazione generale sul tema: urbanistica coloniale," INU, *Atti*, pp. 3–9, p. 4.
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48 Bafile, "Gli aggregati," p. 51.
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50 Bantarle, F., and Guarienti, M. (1937) "Alcune considerazioni in materia di urbanistica coloniale," INU, *Atti*, pp. 96–98. Cf. considerations on hygiene and air in King 1976 and Goerg 1997.
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55 Strumia and Pifferi, "Direttive," p. 103.

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23 For a list of his accomplishments, see Oppio, C. E. (1933) "Alessandro Limongelli," *AAD* 12, 2: 496–507; and Godoli and Giacomelli 2005: pp. 210–215.
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26 *AAD*, eds (1929) "Il Padiglione del Governatorato di Roma alla Fiera di Tripoli," *AAD* 8, 2: pp. 515–20, pp. 515 and 520. On the designs of Tripoli's trade fair, see von Henneberg 1996b and 2005, and McLaren 2002a.
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28 *AAD*, eds (1931c) "Architetture libiche degli Architetti Carlo Enrico Rava e Sebastiano Larco," *AAD* 10, 2: pp. 682–687, p. 682.
29 *DOM*, eds (1934) "Per la moderna architettura coloniale italiana," *DOM* 7, 6: pp. 11–13, p. 11.
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31 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Relazione sul piano regolatore e d'ampliamento della città di Tripoli, Municipio di Tripoli, 1934, p. 9. In 1928, the total included 30,100 Libyan Muslims, 13,500 Libyan Jews, 15,100 Italians, and 4,700 "foreigners"; by 1933, these figures had become 43,300 Libyan Muslims, 15,600 Libyan Jews, 26,100 Italians, and 3,900 "foreigners."
32 Ibid., pp. 1–2, 7, 17, and 29. Parts of the plan's text were reproduced in De Rege, M. (1934) "Il nuovo piano regolatore di Tripoli," *URB* 3: pp. 120–128.
33 On the plan's *ambientismo*, see McLaren 2001: p. 160.
34 Relazione sul piano regolatore . . ., pp. 4, 5 and 7.
35 Ibid., pp. 18–19.
36 A typical example is Reitani, G. (1986) "Politica territoriale e urbanistica in Tripolitania, 1920–1940," in Mioni, A. (ed.) *Urbanistica fascista. Ricerche e saggi sulle città e il territorio e sulle politiche urbane in Italia tra le due guerre*, 2d edn, Milan: FrancoAngeli, pp. 219–234. For an exception, see McLaren 2001: pp. 381–385.
37 Relazione sul piano regolatore . . ., pp. 5, 6–7.
38 Ibid., pp. 1, 18, and 20. At the same time, the government held some competitions for new housing for natives in other parts of the city: Grillo, "1929–1931," p. 43.
39 Ibid., pp. 5 and 9–11.
40 Ibid., p. 21. For a discussion of colonial Calcutta that raises comparable issues of spatial ambiguities, see Chattopadhyay, S. (2000) "Blurring boundaries: the limits of 'White Town' in colonial Calcutta," *Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians* 59, 2: pp. 154–179.
41 Ibid., p. 3.
42 On differences between Italian Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, see Biasutti, G. (2004) *La politica indigena italiana in Libia. Dall'occupazione al termine del governatorato di Italo Balbo (1911–1940)*, Pavia: Centro Studi Popoli Extraeuropei.
43 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, *sottofascicolo* Piani regolatori, parte generale: Relazione sul nuovo piano regolatore della città di Bengasi, Municipio di Bengasi, June 1932, p. 5.

44 Ibid., p. 6.
45 For a publication proposing this as a necessary principle, see Gallimberti, N. (1934) "La nuova Bengasi," *URB* 4: pp. 209–220.
46 Relazione sul nuovo piano regolatore della città di Bengasi, pp. 8, 9.
47 Stark, F. (1953) *The Coast of Incense. Autobiography 1933–1939*, London: John Murray, p. 163.
48 Relazione sul nuovo piano regolatore della città di Bengasi, p. 6.
49 Steer, G. L. (1939) *A Date in the Desert*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, p. 132. Even the fervently anti-Italian Kurt Holmboe agreed: Holmboe, K. (1937) *Desert Encounter. An Adventurous Journey through Italian Africa*, trans. H. Hombek, New York: Putnam's.
50 Abu-Lughod 1980.
51 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Schema di legge per l'approvazione del piano regolatore e di ampliamento della città di Tripoli, Municipio di Tripoli, 1934, p. 12.
52 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Ampliamento e variante al piano regolatore della città di Tripoli, signed by the Ingegnere Capo del Genio Civile, Governo della Tripolitania, Opere pubbliche, 30 March 1935.
53 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Relazione, Ufficio Tecnico, Municipio di Tripoli, 12 August 1935, p. 1.
54 Ibid., p. 2.
55 Ibid., and ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Piano regolatore di Tripoli, from the Governor General to the Ministero delle Colonie, 9 December 1935.
56 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Adunanza del 18 marzo 1936 anno XIV, Consiglio Superiore di Sanità, Ministero dell'Interno, 18 March 1936, p. 2.
57 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Municipio di Tripoli, Direzione Affari Civili, to Ispettorato Generale delle Opere Pubbliche, 17 May 1937; also, from Ministero dell'Africa Italiana to Governo della Libia, 3 June 1937. Yet another "new plan" was mentioned at the end of the colonial period: ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, from Direzione Igiene to Ispettorato del G.C.AI., 17 April 1941.
58 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Ministero dell'Africa Italiana to Governo della Libia, 19 September 1937.
59 MAE, ASMAI, Libia, *posizione* 150/37, *fascicolo* 168: Relazione sanitaria per l'anno 1939, XVII – XVIII, Governo della Libia, p. 64.
60 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Nuovo piano regolatore e di ampliamento della città di Tripoli, from the Ispettore Generale delle Opere pubbliche, Ministero delle Colonie, 4 September 1935.
61 Piano regolatore di Tripoli, 9 December 1935.
62 Adunanza del 18 marzo 1936 anno XIV, p. 3.
63 ACS, MAI, *busta* 114, *fascicolo* 15, Norme per la redazione di piani regolatori dei centri urbani dell'A.I., 1937.
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65 Such as King 1975, Abu-Lughod 1980, Rabinow 1989, Wright 1991, Goerg 1997.
66 See, in particular, Rabinow 1989 and Hamadeh, S. (1992) "Creating the traditional city. A French project," in AlSayyad 1992: pp. 241–259.
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71 See Kostof, S. (1973) *The Third Rome, 1870–1950: Traffic and Glory*, Berkeley: Berkeley Art Museum; Cederna, A. (1981) *Mussolini urbanista: lo sventramento di Roma negli anni del consenso*, Rome and Bari: Laterza; Horn, D. G. (1994) *Social Bodies. Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; and Kostof, S. (1994) "His Majesty the pick: the aesthetics of demolition," in Çelik, Z., Favro, D., and Ingersoll, R. (eds) *Streets. Critical Perspectives on Public Space*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 9–22.
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88 On the history of the *piazza* and its use as a public space, see von Henneberg 1994; on the 'sword of Islam' ceremony, see Wright, J. (1987) "Mussolini, Libya and the sword of Islam," *Maghreb Review* 12, 1–2: pp. 29–33, and the eponymous article in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller 2005.
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8 ISLANDS OF ETHNICITY: PLANNED AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS

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15 Marconi, "L'architettura," pp. 713 and 717.
16 Ipsen, *Dictating Demography*, p. 34.
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18 *AGC*, eds (1928) "Notiziario agricolo commerciale – Isole Italiane dell'Egeo," *AGC* 22: p. 393.
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27 Bartolozzi, E. (1939) *Le case cantoniere in Libia*, Florence: Regio istituto agronomico per l'Africa Italiana, p.1.
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30 Roberti, V. (1938) "L'architettura libica e i nuovi centri agricoli," *EMP* 88: pp. 309–318, p. 316.
31 Callegari, *I villaggi libici*, pp. 22, 37, 57, 58, 59. In point of fact, the Italian settlers were as much *mezzadri* – share-croppers, under contract with the State – as they were *contadini*, but the author's more romantic description obscures this nuance.
32 MAE, MAI/GAS, 1937/40, cartella 70, Colonizzazione demografica in A. O. ed in Libia, 4 August 1938, Balbo to Mussolini.

33 MAE, MAI/GAS, 1937/40, *cartella* 70, Colonizzazione demografica in A. O. ed in Libia, 25 July 1938, Balbo to Teruzzi.
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35 Callegari, *I villaggi libici*, pp. 88, 89.
36 For a rare discussion of these, see Romano, M. (1933) "Sistemazioni urbanistiche in Cirenaica," *CIR* 2, 11: pp. 16–26, and *CIR* 2, 12: pp. 10–25.
37 Larebo, *The Building*, pp. 91 and 109–110.
38 ACS, ONC, *busta* 601 (AOI), *fascicolo* 1, Azienda Agraria 'Olettà', *sottofascicolo* 2.
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4 Pankhurst, *History*, pp. 212, 225–226.
5 Ibid., pp. 225–226, 227.
6 Ibid., pp. 228–232.
7 Ibid., pp. 222, 223, 224.
8 Pankhurst, R. (1961) "Menelik and the foundation of Addis Ababa," *Journal of African History* 11, 1: pp. 103–117, pp. 109, 114; Pankhurst, *History*, p. 212.
9 Poggiali, "La nuova Addis Abeba," pp. 464 and 463. On the city's lack of organized sanitation and the disposal of animal carcasses, see Pankhurst, *History*, p. 214.
10 Rigotti, G. (1939) *L'edilizia nell'Africa Orientale Italiana, La zona di Addis Abeba*, Turin: Editrice Libraria Italiana, p. 120. For a non-colonialist description, also see Pankhurst, *History*, pp. 209–210.
11 Bosio, G. (1937) "Future città dell'Impero," *ARC* 16: pp. 419–431, p. 422; Guidi, I. and Valle, C. (1937) "Programma urbanistico per Addis Ababa," *ARC* 16: pp. 755–769, p. 755.
12 Poggiali, "La nuova Addis Abeba," p. 471.
13 Guidi and Valle, "Programma," p. 761.
14 Rigotti, *L'edilizia*, pp. 132–137. Pankhurst describes a few others, including "solid edifices of stone built by European masons": *History*, p. 228.
15 Poggiali, "La nuova Addis Abeba," p. 464.
16 Rava, C. E. (1938) "Architettura coloniale," *AAI* 1, 3–4: pp. 1291–1300, p. 1295.
17 Bosio, "Future città." For Bosio's work on various city plans, see Bosio, G. (1937) "Progetto di massima per il piano regolatore di Gondar," *ARC* 16: pp. 769–776; (1937) "Progetto di massima per il piano regolatore di Dessiè," *ARC* 16: pp. 777–785; and (1937) "Progetto di massima per il piano regolatore di Gimma," *ARC* 16: pp. 786–792.
18 Serrazanetti, A. (1936) *Edilizia nuova, le costruzioni ne l'Africa Italiana*, Bologna: Edizioni Tecniche-Utilitarie, p. 61.
19 Rigotti, *L'edilizia*, p. 35.
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21 See Talamona 1985 for a detailed recounting, which this account summarizes; also see Boralevi, A. (1986) "Le 'città dell'impero': urbanistica fascista in Etiopia,

1936–1941," in Mioni, A. (ed.) *Urbanistica fascista. Ricerche e saggi sulle città e il territorio e sulle politiche urbane in Italia tra le due guerre*, 2nd ed., Milan: FrancoAngeli.

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25 ACS, MAI, *busta* 103, *fascicolo* 1, telegram from Ministero delle Colonie to Governo Generale, Addis Abeba, 16 December 1936. The team's report to Mussolini, "A S. E. il capo del governo," is dated 7 December 1936.

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28 Ibid., p. 427.

29 Bosio, "Progetto . . . Gondar," p. 774.

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31 Bosio, "Progetto . . . Gondar," p. 774.

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40 In December 1937, 200 native houses were under construction; in 1940 and 1941, construction was intense, especially as the government wanted natives out of the way, for fear that the ongoing war would incite them to rebellion. See ACS, MAI, *busta* 103, *fascicolo* 1, "A S. E. il capo del governo" 7 December XV (1936), p. 8; *busta* 103, *fascicolo* 2, letter from Carlo Boidi to Teruzzi, 30 May 1940; and "Sgombero di nativi dalla cinta interna di Addis Abeba," 5 February 1941.

41 Poggiali, "La nuova Addis Abeba," p. 471.

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44 Ibid., p. 473.

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ACS Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome
MAE Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome

CORPUSES

ASMAI Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana (MAE)
MAI Ministero dell'Africa Italiana (ACS)
MAI/GAS Ministero dell'Africa Italiana, Gabinetto, Archivio Segreto (MAE)
ONC Opera Nazionale Combattenti (ACS)
PCM Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (ACS)
RG Rodolfo Graziani (ACS)
SAP Serie Affari Politici (MAE)
SPD/CO Segreteria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Ordinario (ACS)

PERIODICALS

AAD Architettura ed Arti Decorative [became Architettura in 1932]
AAI Annali dell'Africa Italiana
AFI Africa Italiana
AGC L'Agricoltura Coloniale
AIT L'Architettura Italiana
ARC Architettura [previously Architettura ed Arti Decorative]
ARF L'Arte Fascista
AVT L'Avvenire di Tripoli
CAS Casabella [1928–1932: La Casa Bella; 1933–1937: Casabella; 1938–1939: Casabella – Costruzioni]
CIR Cirenaica Illustrata
CNA Chantiers Nord-Africains
DED Dedalo
DOM Domus
EMP Emporium
ESC L'Esplorazione Commerciale
ILL Illustrazione Italiana

LIB	Libia
MDR	Messaggero di Rodi
NAN	Nuova Antologia
NAT	National Geographic
OLT	L'Oltremare
QUA	Quadrante
RAI	Rassegna Italiana
RAS	Rivista di Agricoltura Subtropicale e Tropicale
RBE	L'Urbe
RDA	Rassegna di Architettura
RDO	Rassegna d'Oltremare, Politica Economica Culturale
RSA	Rassegna Sociale dell'Africa Italiana
RIV	Rivista Coloniale
UNI	L'Universo
URB	Urbanistica
VIT	Le Vie d'Italia

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