Beyond Addis Ababa and Affile:
Italian public memory, heritage and colonialism

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Abstract

In February 1937 Italians murdered between 20 to 30,000 Ethiopians over three days in Addis Ababa. Known locally as Yekatit 12, the massacre almost wiped out both the centre of colonial resistance and the country's intelligensia, and remains a hidden history for most Italians. Indeed, it is for most Europeans. Yet in 2012, a small town in Lazio, Affile, the birthplace of Marshall Rodolfo Graziani, a key figure in the massacre, used regional funds to create a memorial to this fascist Viceroy of Italian East Africa. The ensuing global criticism of this local heritage-making revealed the faultlines not just in Italy's heritage sector, but between public memory and the transnational entanglements of heritage-making in the present. The Addis Ababa massacre and the Affile monument are emblematic of how colonial memory is 'staged', and illustrates a failure of contemporary heritage-making to live up to its promise of social transformation, and to further the social inclusion of the country's residents. This is despite a series of efforts, in film-making, local activism, theatre and literature - Italy's 'postcolonial turn' - to problematise the country's cultural projection of itself. Italy's colonial pasts also matter within a broader European context of slow institutional recognition and limited attempts to represent colonial pasts in reflective ways in the continent's major memory institutions. This article uses ongoing fieldwork with diaspora communities and heritage professionals to critically map the contours of Italy's public memory of colonialism.

Keywords

Introduction: Making Italian colonial(ism) heritage

The Ethiopian emperor Alchitrof and the Grand Duke of Florence and Tuscany exchanged gazes in 1568.[1] One of a series of portraits including Dante and Da Vinci commissioned by Cosimo I De Medici, the painting shows an exoticised but powerful ruler. That mutual gaze is testament to the peculiarity of one of the great silences of Italian public memory, its brutal colonisation of Ethiopia in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935 to 1939).

What should we make of this portrait, and the silences surrounding colonialism in Italian public memory? Is the portrait representative of the early roots of what would become Europe's 'scientific' racism of the 19th century, through its portrayal of Alchitrof as enraptured by a European mirror? Or does it demonstrate that precolonial African and European contact differed from later ideologies of superiority that justified atrocities and injustices in the name of the 'civilising missions' of different colonial powers? Consider that "by the 15th century a Pontifical Ethiopian College was operating in the Vatican, King Alfonso VI had dispatched artisans and artists from Naples to adorn the churches of Ethiopia, and a marriage pact had been proposed between the two royal families" (Campbell 2017: 10). Italy's historic recognition and respect for Ethiopia stands in marked contrast to the current 'colonial amnesia' that many see as characteristic of Italian knowledge of the country's colonial past (Lombardi-Diop and Romeo 2012).

If the painting of Alchitrof remains little known now, during Italy's colonial period, images of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Libya circulated widely. Indeed, there was a huge appetite for postcards,[2] films and popular publications of empire even for those Italians who would never set foot in Libya or 'Africa Orientale Italiana', Italian East Africa. Across Europe, memory institutions like ethnographic museums have tended to be silent about colonial histories: they have been seen as too complicated, too potentially incendiary. When critical exhibitions have emerged, like *ExitCongoMuseum: A Century of Art with/without Papers* in 2000 to 2001 at the Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren, they have attracted considerable controversy, sometimes at the national political level (Hoenig 2014). Perhaps because of this, ethnographic collections have tended to be used to demonstrate positive representations of cultural diversity, rather than critically interrogate the colonial past: they are staged as 'contact' rather than conflict zones.

Italy has a complicated past of violence towards the peoples it colonised, and yet an uncomplicated self-image prevails: *Italiani, brava gente* (Italians, good people). The contradiction is unresolved in terms of public memory and also institutional recognition. And despite a few temporary exhibitions on aspects of colonialism, it remains so. For many historians Italy needs to stop "whitewashing the brutality of colonial rule" (Triulzi 2006, 433): 'colonial amnesia' needs to be countered by a strong programme of actions that should include institutional representation, official apologies and possibly reparations (Lombardi-Diop and Romeo 2012). This article asks why difficult colonial histories have been ignored in public memory, and why critical engagement from the country's major heritage-making institutions has been minimal despite a flourishing postcolonial critique across different art forms. Elsewhere in Europe, critical heritage-making around colonialism is increasingly represented in memory institutions, and so the article briefly compares the situation in Italy with how the colonial past is heritagised in France, the UK, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands.

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[1] Since 1587 Christofano del'Altissimo's portrait of Alchitroff has stared out at visitors to the Uffizi's First Corridor. Most recently, the painting has been used to stage different narratives, it was loaned to Sao Paulo's MASP as part of its temporary exhibition *Afro-Atlantic Histories* from June to October 2018.

[2] In the early 20th century postcards were an imperial mania, with one billion sent in Great Britain in just one year. Many featured photographs of local peoples, reflecting an anthropological passion for classifying peoples (MacDougall 1997, 279, 280).

The article has two goals: firstly, to make sense of the ongoing heritage-making processes around Italian colonialism; and secondly, to delineate a new critical approach that may help orientate heritage-making towards social inclusion and social justice, concerns that sit at the heart of the Council of Europe's influential 2005 'Faro Convention',[3] and indeed underpin much recent heritage policy-making. In this way the article makes two contributions: it shows how a combination of 'colonial aphasia' and 'staged memory' best describe why counter-canonical cultural production like documentaries, literature and art installations have become the meaningful space through which Italy's colonial forgetting is challenged. The second contribution is to make the case for a 'rehumanising' heritage (after Rasool 2015), to take the past beyond nationalist narratives and appropriations, and to advocate for a heritage sector that furthers social cohesion through tackling the challenge of representing difficult heritage in all its complexity. Based on fieldwork undertaken during a fellowship at the European University Institute during 2017 and 2018, the article draws on interviews and participant observation of museum and exhibition curators, artists, filmmakers, community activists and diaspora representatives.

The article is divided into three parts, beginning with Italian colonial forgetting, then moving through exhibitions and representations of the colonial to the actual practices that help make spaces of cultural inclusion. In the first section we examine the problem of Italy's collective memory. In doing so we compare 'colonial amnesia' with Ann Laura Stoler's more nuanced 'colonial aphasia' (Stoler 2011). Both concepts help us understand why memory institutions - museums, archives, public memorial spaces - have ignored or masked the difficult aspects of Italian colonial heritage. These have been compounded by both institutional silences, the romanticisations of aspects of colonialism, and even censorship. In this way, Italy's colonialism is less 'forgotten' than it is a 'staged memory' (Del Monte 2015), created and enacted through deliberate management of representations of the past. Such 'staging' has its own past, echoing the symbolic use of the colonies by successive 19th century Italian governments, liberal and fascist, to promote national pride. This section therefore helps describe the memory context in which it was possible that a public administration could construct a monument to Rodolpho Graziani, an Italian equivalent of the infamous Nazi, Joseph Goebbels.

Furthermore, Italy has yet to stage a critical representation of colonialism in a major heritage institution. In Section 2 'Beyond Postcoloniality: exhibiting the colonial' I describe the temporary exhibits that have represented Italy's colonial past, drawing on interviews with their curators. The limitations of institutional heritage-making are then highlighted by briefly considering the art practices that over the last decade or so have shifted representations of colonialism from the celebratory to a more critical stance.

The third section 'Beyond heritage institutions: making spaces of cultural inclusion', examines how the Italian colonial past is in fact being critically examined through other cultural forms, in particular documentary film and contemporary art practice. It shows how counter-canonical cultural production (particularly film and art practice), challenges the persistent 'aphasia' surrounding Italy's colonialism, and it asks whether these 'counter-canonical aesthetics' (Deandrea 2016) restate public memory in a more inclusive way. It also emphasises a new framework based on 'rehumanising' heritage (Rasool 2015), one that favours individual lives and responsibilities rather than grand narratives. By taking us away from identity politics, such an approach might lead to a greater sense of a shared 'memory citizenship' (Rothberg and Yildiz, 2011). 'Rehumanising' recognises that it is precisely the combination of different cultural forms of heritage-making - from museums and public spaces to documentaries, films, literature, school curricula and more - that helps build a more inclusive heritage. Rehumanising heritage-making processes takes us beyond processes designed top-down, out of the museum, towards a more *cosmopolitan* heritage (Delanty 2017).

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[3] *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*: https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention

Beyond Addis Ababa and Affile therefore takes us in two directions: beyond the individual cases themselves, one a particularly violent massacre largely unknown to Italians but well remembered by Ethiopians, the other a contentious monument built in an era when such monuments are generally being destroyed or hidden-away (Bryant *et al.* 2018). Secondly, it takes us beyond the idealistic expectations policy-makers place on 'heritage' to catalyse social inclusion, and into the realities of how cultural (re)production impacts on public memory.

(1) The 'innocence' of Italy's colonial forgetting

Italian memory institutions have an amnesiac quality. There are no museums specifically dedicated to Italian colonialism, apart from Ragusa's *Museo Civico l'Italia in Africa* which is largely a display of military costumes,[4] and there is no attempt to systematically reinterpret those places in Italy that are directly linked to the country's colonial past, places like the contested monument in *Piazza del Cinquecento* originally outside Rome's Termini station dedicated to the five hundred fallen white Italian soldiers from the battle of Dogali in 1887 (Henneberg 2004, 49).[5] Does it matter if the Italian heritage sector fails to represent the country's colonial past? Or that the significance of the Dogali swimming pool in Modena or Florence's Piazza Adua (Henneberg 2004, 43) are unknown to Italians? What difference might a more visible heritage of colonialism mean for those who consider themselves 'real' Italians, and also for the social inclusion of migrants and others who call Italy home?

At the root of this issue are two interconnected concepts, the 'guilt of nations' (Barkan 2001) and 'multidirectional memory' (Rothberg 2009). Claiming some responsibility for past wrongdoings has developed into a new moral economy that recalibrates the relationships between victims and perpetrators (Barkan 2001), and has begun to grow in popularity among European leaders. Though if there is genuine regret in these *mea culpas* it often gets lost in their inconsistency. For example, British Prime Minister David Cameron described the Amritsar Massacre in India as 'shameful' in 2013 but didn't given an official apology (Lakshmi 2013). Meanwhile, in the same year his foreign secretary William Hague admitted sincere regret for British torture of Kenyans in the so-called 'Mau Mau' rebellion in Kenya, and agreed to pay £19.9 million to 5000 victims in compensation, as well as funding a memorial monument unveiled in 2015 in Nairobi to these victims of British colonialism (Balint 2016). More recently, in mid September 2018, Emmanuel Macron gave the first apology and admission of French torture during the Algerian war of independence, a statement widely welcomed, including by the curator of Paris's Museum of the History of Immigration (Le Monde, 2018). For Michael Rothberg, historical experiences like the Holocaust are 'multidirectional' because they are tied up with decolonial struggles like Algeria's, rather than being historical narratives that compete for space in public memory: this new staging of the 'guilt of nations' evidenced in apologies for colonial atrocities is a potentially transformative form of heritage-making, and one whose transnationalism has the potential to make public memories more socially inclusive.

What then is Italy's colonial 'guilt'? The post-war image Italy presented to itself and the world was as a 'benevolent moderniser', a builder of roads, schools and hospitals (Henneberg 2004: 38). This has been a tenacious image, one that few Italian institutions or politicians have critiqued, and one the international community has fostered. Indeed, there are still echoes of this in the unproblematised inscription in 2017 of "Asmara: a modernist African city" as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Fascism and colonial racism are not discussed in Asmara's World Heritage nomination dossier, and the role of Eritrea in Italy's colonial project still remains hidden in this international heritage-making process.

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[4]   As discussed below, the former Museo Coloniale, which became the Museo Africano, has been absorbed into the Pigorini, itself currently restructured into the Museum of Civilisation.

[5]   Ethiopia erected its own monument to their victory at Dogali, though after Eritrean independence it was destroyed (Henze 2000, 157), another testament to the contested nature of Italy's colonial past, even between its former colonies.

Yet after years of painstaking historical research, scholars agree that the Italian colonial record, from the preceding liberal as well as fascist periods, is far from benevolent (Del Boca 1965, 1986; Henneberg 2004; Labanca 2005; Rochat 2008). Italian collective memory is either non-existent ('colonial amnesia'), or stresses the insignificance and small scale of the Italian colonial project. Apologies for colonialism that diminish the scale or impact of colonial atrocities, and look to the 'legacy' of colonialism as a builder of infrastructure, a bringer of 'civilisation', remain common to all former European powers. But, as British rapper Akala puts it in his recent book *Natives*, when white Britons seek to diminish the evils of Britain's colonialism by emphasising it was less aggressive than Belgium's, "Yes, but its a shit boast" (Akala 2018).

What makes such 'shit boasts' possible is what Gloria Wekker calls 'white innocence', a lack of self-reflection that inflicts both institutions as well as individuals. Wekker's critique of Dutch racism through its colonial archives is instructive for Italy, as Holland is another country that has successfully presented itself as different from colonial powers like Britain and France (Wekker 2016). Ignorance of the violence that was instrumental to their colonialism mean the Dutch established an enduring myth of being a 'gentle' people, much as the Italians have perpetuated theirs as *Italiani, brava gente*, 'Italians, good people'. Indeed, international publics "expect narratives of Nazi collaborationism or anti-Semitism, ethnic discrimination or political violence from other European nations in a way they simply do not expect from Italians. … they do not expect these narratives because of their own prejudices, but also because they have never got them from Italy" (Lichtner 2013: 190).

In the case of Italians, the myth persists because Italians have never been able to separate the facts of history from national identity.[6] For Ethiopians, the idea of 'Italians, good people' is impossible to swallow when there is a shared memory of Yekatit 12, the day that Italians began a massacre that killed between 17 to 20,000 people (Campbell 2017). Though such comparisons are distasteful, it is worth noting that Nazi atrocities across Italy from September 1943 to April 1945 killed 15,000 civilians (Fulvetti and Pezzino 2017), and these events remain part of Italian public memory. In contrast, Italian ignorance of the massacre in Addis Ababa, the related slaughter in Debra Libanos, and other colonial atrocities, is multifaceted, but is in part explained by the rehabilitation of fascists. A good example is that of Marshal Pietro Badoglio, who was responsible in part for the deaths of around 100,000 Libyans, around one eighth of the population (Del Boca, 2005: 198). In Libya he pioneered techniques of repression and internment that - like Rodolpho Graziani - he would go on to use in Ethiopia. When Badoglio then led Italy's first post-war government, he acquired a statesman-like reputation rather than that of a war criminal. Italian strategies and techniques echoed and sometimes pioneered the brutal strategies of conquest and control of other colonial powers. The Italian invasion of Libya in 1911 "represented the world's first military use of airpower and aerial bombardments. Later, under Fascism … Italy was the first country to widely use chemical weapons in violation of the 1925 Gas Protocol" (Campbell 2017: 31-32). The extensive listing of war crimes in Italy's colonies by Nicola Labanca (2004) totally discredits the myth of 'Italians, good people' (see also Pankhurst 1999).[7]

Despite this, in 2012 the small town of Affile in Lazio built, with €130,000 of regional funds, and on the initiative of its mayor, a mausoleum to a colonial era 'hero' and its most famous son, Rodolpho Graziani.[8] A convicted war criminal, Graziani is a key figure linking together Italy's north African and Horn of Africa colonies. Both as a general in Libya, and then later Marshal in Ethiopia, before being promoted to Viceroy by Mussolini, historians are clear about Graziani's role in systematic repression, torture, and massacres. The "butcher of Libya" is not a controversial figure for historians, he is a convicted fascist war criminal.

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[6] My interpretation of Lichtner (2013: 215) writing instead about fascism in Italian cinema.

[7] Knowledge and recognition of war crimes may lead to more inclusive public memories. Giving people factual accounts of war crimes, rather than vague ones, is more likely to create empathy with victims, and a desire to make amends for such crimes (Cajani 2018: 87).

[8] My thanks to Victoria Witkowski for her insightful conversations and work on Graziani.

However, there are contested views over the monument to him in his birthplace, with some Affile locals preferring to describe Graziani as simply a soldier and a patriot. International outcry followed the construction of the monument, with the New York Times stating: "It's like Germany building a monument to Goebbels".[9] Indeed, the words of the judge when he handed down a sentence of one year and four months to the town's mayor Ercole Viri in November 2017 were unequivocal in describing the mayor's crime as being an apologist for fascism (Judge Marianna Valvo, Tribunale di Tivoli, 30/01/2018). At issue here then is the long-running idea that fascism was not comparable to Germany's Nazism. This ignores the fascists' systematic brutality in their colonies, and stages the memory that ordinary Italians were themselves victims of fascism, a myth carefully constructed in the immediate post-war period (Battini 2004). It is a myth carefully refuted by ANPI (the (Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia), who brought the case against Affile's civic administration, and whose attempts to keep the memory of Italian colonialism, as well as fascism, alive we see also in their sponsoring of the exhibition on the Fascist racial laws, mentioned in section 2.

Colonial Amnesia as national culture

Later in this article we will see how in Italy the past is being opened up, with heritage-making around Italy's colonial past in museums, contemporary art and film. First though, we need to approach the country's 'colonial amnesia': Italy's 'postcolonial turn'[10] has consolidated the idea that most Italians are particularly ignorant of colonial history. One of the main reasons given for Italy's 'amnesia' over its colonial past is attributed to the lack of any decolonisation process. Stripped of its colonial possessions after the Second World War, except for trusteeship of part of Somalia, unlike other powers Italy never faced the realities of decolonisation (Andall and Duncan 2005). It also never had the equivalent of the Nuremberg Trials to publically judge its fascists, and to highlight to a wounded nation and the world its crimes (Battini 2004). Two other factors are unique to Italian imperialism, and impact on the way Italian 'colonial amnesia' developed. The first is demographic, the second a kind of heritage symbolism (Santoro 2013, 109-110). Italian politicians, both liberal and fascist, used empire to attempt to 'repatriate' diaspora Italians living elsewhere in the world. The other aspect was to build prestige for the young country, to 'regenerate' the Roman Empire, because "one of the impulses toward Fascism in politics, and to Italian futurism in the arts, was as a sense of humiliation at the degeneration of the land of the Caesars into a museum for contemporary foreigners" (Jenkyns 1992: 31; cited also by Santoro 2013: 110). In fact, not only ancient Rome was an inspiration to Italian expansion. Famous Italians like the journalist and politician Luigi Einaudi were also inspired by the mercantile brilliance of Venice, Genoa and Milan: "Whereas Crispi had promoted the myth of the ancient Roman Empire … Einaudi praised what he claimed to be Italy's true imperialism, that is, the pacific colonisation of lands through creative entrepreneurship and work" (ibid.: 163). The loss of earlier empires and nostalgia for its medieval republics have all contributed to a positive staging of the Italian imperial project as unique and different. This 'benevolence' myth persisted despite the historic shame of defeat by Ethiopia at Adua in 1896, numerous atrocities, and imposed decolonisation after the Second World War: Italy's colonial 'forgetting' was driven by a need to recuperate a national myth.

But such failures of the international system to properly account for the many evils of the Second World War perpetrated by non-Germans is well known. Italy's 'colonial amnesia' has been a more insidious and indeed a more *cultural* problem than simply the lack of post-Fascist self-reflection. We see this, for example, in censorship of the film *Il Leone del Deserto* ('Lion of the Desert'), and even of documentaries (discussed in section 3). Visually then, the realities of the colonial past have been off-limits to the Italian national imaginary.

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[9]   See Zeitz 2017 on 'why there are no Nazi statues in Germany'.

[10]   See Lombardi-Diop and Romeo's 2012 edited volume.

Reinforcing the 'cultural' reasons for Italian 'colonial amnesia', is what has, and has not, been taught in schools. Luigi Cajani delineates the shifts in the 'defascistification' of schools in history textbooks since the end of the Second World War. Some fascist-era historians continued to write the texts that informed post-war Italian schoolchildren about the nature of their country's colonial enterprise. One durable idea was the characterisation of Italian colonialism as categorically different from that of other colonial powers like Britain and France: 'symbiotic' in contrast to 'parasitic' (Cajani 2013: 77). Slightly more critical views of colonialism began to emerge, because - with the exception of censoring Fascist apologism, a crime since 1952 - post-war Italy made all state control of textbooks illegal (ibid.). However, even in the textbooks produced in the 1990s and 2000s when authors began to mention that Italian forces had used mustard gas in Ethiopia following a public admission by the Italian government in 1996, there is still little to no mention of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani and his repression (ibid.: 83). Generations of Italian schoolchildren have been fed either comforting accounts of Italy's colonialism, or watered-down narratives.

Beyond Amnesia: colonial aphasia and staging memory

'Colonial amnesia' belongs to a broader trend in alternative historiography to unmask power, give voice to subalterns, and open up the archives. Particularly influential in postcolonial studies at present, Ann Laura Stoler's idea of 'colonial aphasia' is more nuanced than 'amnesia' in helping understand how difficult pasts get left behind. She uses 'aphasia' to shift focus away from 'forgetting' onto other features of the selective remembering and forgetting of the colonial past. Aphasia is "an occlusion of knowledge, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things, and a difficulty comprehending the enduring relevancy of what has already been spoken" (Stoler 2011). In Stoler's analysis, postcolonial countries like France displace their pasts; 'aphasia' takes us beyond a simplistic 'forgetting' into the political, social, as well as personal dimensions of how knowledge of these pasts is masked, and then not transmitted. It is a convincing theoretical tool, but this article is most concerned with the transmission of colonial pasts through cultural production, and so a cultural metaphor may best help highlight the different dynamics which reproduce the myths of Italian colonialism.

In her recent book *Staging Memory: myth, symbolism and identity in postcolonial Italy and Libya* Stefania Del Monte (2015) combines a number of these postcolonial theories, whilst emphasising how the 'staging' of memory works for both Italy and her North African colony: she uses staging "in the sense of *orchestrating*, i.e. - as defined by the Oxford Dictionary - 'planning or coordinating the elements of (a situation) to produce a desired effect, especially surreptitiously'" (Del Monte 2015: 21). In her two connected case studies, she shows how from Tripoli to Rome, what citizens think about the colonial past is deliberately structured by popular media as well as political forces (Qaddafi in Libya, and successive Italian governments). Both Libyan and Italian collective memory rely not on historic facts but on myths that perpetuate an idea of the colonial past that fits with each country's self-image.

Italy is not unique in how it forgets and hides its difficult colonial histories. However, some European states have moved more quickly to recognise and represent, in heritage spaces and institutions, the darkness of their own colonial pasts. Efforts to 'face down the dark past', *vergangenheitsbewältigung*, mean that more Germans are aware about their country's atrocities than - for example - Britons are of their repression of Kenya's 'Mau Mau' rebellion, or the Amritsar Massacre. Or indeed of the colonial policies that led to an estimated 1.5 to 3 million dead in the Bengal Famine of 1943;[11] this is the other side to the foreign policy of Britain's favourite national hero, Winston Churchill (Mukerjee 2010). But 'aphasic' public memories of this kind are currently being challenged by a new generation of critical historians, curators, activists and filmmakers. In the UK and the Netherlands such memory work is also increasingly institutionally supported. For example, in August 2018 Historic England launched its co-

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[11] Explored in Joy Banerjee and Partho Bhattacharya's 2017 documentary *Bengal Shadows*.

curated temporary exhibition in London, *Immortalised: the people loved, left and lost in our landscape*. It does not shy away from difficult heritage, including Bristol's Countering Colston campaign, and the efforts of the group Memorial 2007, a long-running campaign to get a memorial to enslaved Africans into London's Hyde Park (Historic England 2018).[12]

As we see in the next sections, if Italy's prior amnesia/aphasia seemed pathological, something of a cure is now emerging in these broader international trends addressing difficult histories. These 'stage memory' differently, partly through the ethics of 'new museology', but also through broader cultural production. Recent Italian heritagisations of colonialism are thus a reaction to a more widely shared transnational politics of memory, not least because only small numbers of people from Italy's former colonies actually live in the country, and for reasons discussed below, they do not push Italy to critically explore its colonial pasts.

In our analysis of the staging of Italian colonial memory, we need to be constantly aware of the contemporary heritage-making processes in Italy's former colonies. They have their own dynamics and priorities, much of which is not directly concerned with how the former coloniser represents the past. For example, over the last decade Ethiopia's own culturally diverse ethnicities have been challenging the long-lived 'heritage meta-narrative' of Ethiopia as an Orthodox Ethiopian Christian Kingdom (Finneran 2013). What is emerging now are 'heritage micro-narratives'. Meanwhile Eritrea has its own heritage-making tied both to the special role of Eritrean askaris in building colonial Italian East Africa, and recognition from the global community with UNESCO's inscription of Asmara as 'World Heritage' in 2017. Somalia and Libya remain particularly troubled spaces, but people here also mobilise the past to legitimate their views of recent history. A good example of this was the establishment of the Misrata Weapons Museum during the first phases of what has become Libya's lengthy civil war: it sought to bring together a kind of people's memorialisation of the conflict to oust Qaddafi (MAG 2013). Considering that these makings of heritage are by no means unitary or unifying (both within each nation and between former Italian colonies), how to represent Italian colonial heritage remains a complicated and difficult question. Yet continued requests for repatriation of objects and cultural property stolen during colonialism mean heritage-institutions and policy-makers need to engage with it.[13] The following section explores the role of Italian heritage-making institutions in addressing these postcolonial politics.

(2) Beyond Postcoloniality: exhibiting the colonial

For most migrants settled or settling in Italy, the heritage industry and its representations of different cultures and histories is not a priority. Consequently, *Italy has yet to stage a critical representation of colonialism in a major heritage institution.*

By contrast, elsewhere in Europe in countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, minority heritages and the nature of the colonial past have gradually gained importance. Campaigns to place minority heritages in the centre of national representations have contributed to major projects like Liverpool's International Slavery Museum that opened in 2007. Broader shifts in representing heritages of dissent are also emerging in unexpected institutions, like 2017's temporary exhibition on peace protests, *People Power: fighting for peace* in London's Imperial War Museum, and so too at a smaller scale in Rovereto's Museum of War History, discussed below. The situation in France has been different, in part because of the deep wound of the Algerian War, but also because of the centralised restructuring of France's museum spaces, including its major ethnographic collections: MUCEM in Marseille, Paris's Musee du Quai Branly and the new Museum of the History of

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[12]   In the UK this interest in dissent and alternative perspectives is expanding across major cultural institutions: in September to October 2018 the BFI is running a film series titled 'Black and Banned: the films you weren't allowed to see'.

[13]   In 2018 the Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, Hailemichael Aberra Afework demanded that the Victoria and Albert Museum give back objects plundered by the British Army at the Battle of Maqdala in 1868.

Immigration (housed in the 1931 International Colonial Exposition) are all new developments critiqued by museum scholars for consistently failing to reach broader publics (Labadi 2013; Price 2007).

As Johanna Zetterstrom-Sharp (2017) suggests, anthropological museums' interest in displaying colonial histories creates an artificial rupture between what happened 'over there' and what happens within Europe. Our taxonomies and thematisations of museums (e.g. 'migration museums') break-up connected histories into discrete areas that mask their interconnectedness and 'multidirectionality' (Rothberg 2009). Rather, as Stoler and Cooper (1997) argue, always consider the colony and the metropole together: colonial histories are a foundational element in *national* heritages.

In Italy racism and demographics underpin the lack of interest in heritage representations of Italy's colonial past. Italian politicians continue the post-war tradition of seeing Italians as white, something exemplified in the 2017 failed modification of the *Ius Soli* law that currently leaves 825,000 children born in Italy to non-Italian migrant parents without a pathway to full citizenship (UNICEF 2017). The Lega and Forza Italia political parties denigrated the proposal as a *sostituzione etnica* (ethnic substitution) of Italians. This political failure to expand citizenship was staged through redeploying colonial categories of Otherness,[14] and echoed debates over the relative humanity of non-Europeans that occupied European thinkers and politicians from the Enlightenment onwards (Stoler and Cooper 1997).

And in these battles over belonging, migrants from former Italian colonies are in a distinct minority. Unlike the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands where large numbers of migrants have come from former colonies, the majority of Italy's current migrants do not come from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and Somalia. Settled regular migrants with backgrounds from the four former Italian colonies are 28,446 in Italy (ISTAT 2018), compared to 154,979 for the UK (United Nations Global Migration Database and British Home Office statistics). This relative lack of migrants from former Italian colonies living in Italy is one reason there is so little call from diaspora communities for greater visibility and knowledge of the country's colonial past, but there is another, the decades that Eritrea and Ethiopia spent at war.

The 1998 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea saw both belligerents use very different narratives and public memories of colonialism to express their mutual hatred. For the Ethiopians, all Eritreans were *ascari*, traitors who aided the Italians in the battle of Adwa in 1896 and then occupied Addis Ababa in 1936. As Alessandro Triulzi describes, "the memory of the colonial past was used in Ethiopia to distinguish the historical experience of the two national communities - the century-old independence of Ethiopia broken by the brutal fascist occupation, and the colonial subservice of its Eritrean neighbours who accompanied the Italian troops invading the motherland" (Triulzi 2006: 436-437). On the other hand, Eritreans saw Ethiopia's annexation of their country in 1962 as itself a colonial incursion, and instead developed a national identity tied to the foundation of the Italian colony: "what to Ethiopians was 'a shameful past', was perceived by Eritreans as a 'founding' one" (ibid.).

Because of this enmity the contemporary relationship between colonised and colonisers has remained muted or refracted in Italian society.[15] An exception is explored in Valerio Ciriaci's documentary *If Only I Were That Warrior* (2015), discussed in the next section, where we see how a single individual, Mulu Ayele, president of the Italian Ethiopian Association, creates awareness of the issues around the contentious monument to Graziani in Affile. Significantly, the activist diaspora community that had most impact on mobilising against the Affile monument were Ethiopian-American citizens.

Exhibiting the (Post)Colonial

Whilst the Affile monument was being built, and a legal process used laws against fascist apology to indict the town's mayor, what has been going on in Italy's primary memory institutions, its museums?

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[14] See Pesarini 2017.

[15] July 2018 saw a historic peace treaty signed between both countries, largely due to Ethiopia's charismatic prime minister, Abiy Ahmed.

"In this ceremony there is no place for nostalgia or for a re-examination of our colonial history which, in its light and shadow, belongs to scholars. There is, however, the will to pay homage to the sacrifice of Eritreans taken as a symbol of all our African soldiers, the Eritreans, who for nearly a century have fought with us and for us, towards whom we have a debt that does not end with this exhibition ... The spirit of this event, which significantly before coming here to Rome was inaugurated in Asmara, is expressed precisely by the engagement and participation of Eritrea today. ... also Eritrea regains a page of its history. A history it shares with Italy. … A people that have no complexes and that remember how the Ascari were the first contribution to the creation of a free Eritrea." (Senato della Republica 2004; author's translation.)

This speech by Senator Servello opened the exhibition *The Epic of Eritrean Askaris*, in 2004 in Rome. Housed in the Vittoriano, the nationalist monument in Rome (also known as the Altar of the Fatherland), it offered the first post-fascist representation of Italian colonialism in a major Italian heritage institution.[16] The political and symbolic tone of the exhibition, much like the inauguration speech, was unapologetic, and uncritical: "In this ceremony there is no place for nostalgia or for a re-examination of our colonial history which, in its light and shadow, belongs to scholars". Servello was doubtless aware of the extensive historical work of scholars like Nicola La Banca, Angelo Del Boca and Giorgio Rochat, who since the 1960s had been detailing a series of colonial-era atrocities and were campaigning precisely for a re-examination beyond academe. If Italian historians were asking for detailed and public re-examination of colonial history, how was such a self-aggrandizing exhibition possible?

In her analysis of the exhibition, Silvana Palma (2007) shows how by reviving the myth and collective memory of the Eritrean *ascaro* as a noble and loyal servant of empire, Italy was also deliberately rehabilitating its colonial past. The loyalty of the *ascari* thus became (again) the master narrative in place of the colonial atrocities that Labanca (2005) and Del Boca (1965; 1986) had carefully detailed over the last few decades. To borrow Del Monte's (2015) concept of 'staging memory', these were deliberate strategies that filled the stage with willing native participants in a colonial adventure narrative, to the exclusion of the dead and mutilated bodies, the sexually exploited, and the mixed-race children abandoned by their Italian fathers after the 1937 'tutela della razza' racial laws, and by the Italian state itself. The latter issue is explored in the 2015 documentary, *Asmarina*, by Alan Maglio and Medhin Paolos, on Milan's habesha community. This historic abandonment resonates with the continued refusal to see the children of migrants born in Italy as actual citizens.

So, the 'return of colonial memory' that *The Epic of Eritrean Askaris* represented was of a particular kind of memory: against the senator's own inaugural declaration it was in fact nostalgic, 'staging' a benevolent idea of Italy.[17] A complicating factor here is that to reconsider Italian colonialism is also to reconsider Italian Fascism. The durability of the 'benevolence' myth is somewhat harder to understand given this heritage. Indeed, its reappearance in a symbolic national monument and museum space like the Vittoriano in 2004, contrasted with the critical exhibition a decade earlier which explored Italy's fascist-era racial laws. In 1994, Bologna's Library of the Archiginnasio along with the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Emilia Romagna (IBC) created a touring exhibition, *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascisti* (The shame of race. Documents and images of fascist racism and antisemitism). In 2005 IBC produced a smaller version of the exhibition, *L'offesa della razza. Razzismo e antisemitismo dell'Italia fascista*, designed once again to tour Italian cities. It continues to be shown, most recently in 2018 in Milan, in part thanks to the activities of ANPI (the Italian National Association of Partisans).[18]

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[16]   *The Epic of Eritrean Askaris* was not the first representation of Italian colonialism: it was prefigured by colonial-era exhibitions like the *Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d'Oltremare* which opened in Naples in 1940 just before Italy entered the war, and was reborn briefly in 1952 as the *Prima Mostra Triennale del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo*. See Arena 2011.

[17]   See Triulzi (2006: 439) on this idea of 'benevolent memory'.

[18]   The timings of this exhibition have all been symbolic, to commemorate the 60th and then 70th anniversaries of the Racial Laws. See the catalogue: https://ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/progetti/mostre/mostre-itineranti/loffesa-della-razza**.**

Thirteen years on from the *The Epic of Eritrean Askaris*, the theme of colonial soldiers emerged again in another exhibition conceptualised in a very different way. *Ascari e Schiavoni* (Askaris and Schiavoni) was an exhibition and outreach project led by Alessandro Casellato from the University of Ca Foscari's Department of History and Anthropology in combination with a team of young researchers. Significantly, the curators were inspired by an exhibition at the Deutsches Historiches Museum, *German Colonialism: fragments past and present*, that ran from October 2016 until May 2017, and this transnational aspect of curatorship is something we return to below (interview 2018). The exhibition attempted a critical perspective on both askaris and another category of imperial soldier, the *schiavoni*. The latter fought for the Venetian Republic, but the exhibition also used interviews to explore the contemporary prejudicial meanings of the word *schiavoni* in the Veneto dialect. Unexpectedly, this aspect proved to be more contentious than the critical representation of Eritrean askaris. Significantly, given my use of Rothberg's 'multidirectional memory' to identify how aspects of Holocaust memorialisation and public memory also figure in Italian public memory, the exhibition was conceived to commemorate the *Giorno della Memoria* of the city's Jewish community. As local stakeholders they were very pleased to be involved with an exhibition that tackled the fascist racial laws, and saw clear links between experiences and memory of the Shoah and colonial violence. In contrast, the curators were less successful, despite repeated attempts, in engaging members of the Eritrean, Ethiopian or Somali diasporas.

The cultural programming connected to the exhibition highlighted various problematic aspects of representing these pasts. Guest speakers explored Hannah Arendt, Ciriacci's documentary on the Affile monument, Porrajmos (the Roma Holocaust), as well as colonialism and Italian racism in a series of public seminars. This attempt to create a 'contact zone' went beyond simplistic representations of Italy's colonial past by explicitly placing Italian and Venetian imperialisms within a broader transnational politics of memory.

Part of the original plan was to run multiple iterations of *Ascari e Schiavoni* in different Italian cities, and to use the opportunity to engage with local archives and collections to situate the exhibition within local memories and kick-start a national conversation around colonialism. In the end, because of a lack of finances and practicalities, they only ran one more, *Ascari e Schiavoni 2*, in Treviso in early 2018. Limited resources meant that the broad engagement and media coverage they got for the first exhibition was less successful in the second. The curators stressed that whilst they had incredible support from private collectors and individuals, institutions greeted their initiative with enthusiasm but rarely followed up their promises (interview 2018).

From Ethnographic Museum to Museum of Civilisation

One major Italian museum has created meaningful engagement with source communities. Currently restructured into the *Museo della Civilta'*, Rome's former Pigorini Museum has presided over a number of projects that attempted to bring in new and second generation migrants to critique and diversify its collections.

These earlier engagements were focused on engaging Rome's diverse diaspora communities, though not specifically from former Italian colonies. Instead, as part of a number of European Union funded projects and networks, the Pigorini's working group included representatives from AssoCina, Buudu Africa, Comunidad Peruana de Roma, Comunidad Católicas Mexicana de Roma, and Kel'Lam Onlus. One of the curators, Rose Anna Di Lella, admits that their earlier approach was naive, and the problems with the exhibition *(S)oggetti Migranti* are clearly described in the exhibition's own catalogue. She detailed notable differences between the concerns of different communities, for example, the African associations were extremely concerned with 'decolonising' the collection, in drawing attention to and weeding-out all racism and violence inherent in the Pigorini collections and their display (interview 2018). Despite this strong ethical stance, it proved impossible to involve representatives from the Associazione Corno d'Africa (Horn of Africa Association). Meanwhile, the Latin American associations

involved talked of pride. Representing Peruvians and Mexicans they saw their engagement with the museum's collections not as critical voices redressing historic wrongs, but as cultural ambassadors, for them "History is history". Di Lella noted that the 'contact zone' process the museum created was too open, and some associations were disoriented by this. And for second generation descendants of Chinese parents, it proved particularly difficult to create a community, and to show that working with these objects matters.

Subsequently, the Pigorini was also recently used in an academic/artistic intervention *The Scattered Colonial Body* (see below). Such artistic re-uses of museum collections to create new narratives may yet result in the most significant museological representations of Italian colonialism. Di Lella is currently heading a team redeveloping the former Colonial Museum and is due to open a new exhibit of this collection in 2019.[19] The scientific committee is broad, including Italian scholars long involved in the critique of colonialism (Nicola Labanca, Angelo Del Boca, Silvana Palma, Alessandro Triulzi). The museum will probably not be able to co-curate this exhibit, not least because such processes demand significant time as well as finances. However, a consultation process will engage various stakeholders, including a delegation of heritage professionals from Libya, and the overarching aim is to use the collection to present a critical view of Italian colonialism.

Over the last decade or so there have been other small initiatives which have addressed Italy's colonial past, though many have sought to bring attention to the collections - archival photos and objects - rather than attempt a critical reconsideration of the national heritage imaginary. One museum which has made efforts to tell more complex narratives from its collection has been Rovereto's Museum of War History. Over the last six years three of its temporary exhibits have addressed, or touched on Italian colonialism. The first was *Libya. An Italian colonial war* in 2011. Running for almost a year, it was composed of two distinct temporary exhibits, one on postcards from the 1911-12 war, and another on the 'pacification' of Cyrenaica.[20]

In 2015, the exhibition *1935. Images from the photographic archive of the Museum of War* included a section on the 1935 war in Ethiopia, and in 2016 in a temporary exhibition on aerial warfare it appealed to a transnationalisation of Italian public memory with 'From Libya to Hiroshima'. The first mentioned that the Ethiopian War gave Italians an empire and the mirage of "a place in the sun" whilst the war would "cost the lives of Ethiopia hundreds of thousands, Italy 4000 dead and a brief and violent colonial period" (Museo Storico della Guerra, 2015). These temporary exhibits are small, but as critical reinterpretations of the museum's photographic archives, they reflect international trends to that re-stage the archives, trying to foster a more nuanced heritage-making.

Yet, despite the explicit multiculturalism of these and other projects, networks, and policies across the European Union, colonial aphasia and other nationalist stagings of memory persist. One reason may be how contemporary heritage-making institutions, as a means of creating broader social engagement with the past, are frequently politicised. Another may be that building a more diverse 'memory community' is impossible until they reach broader publics. And useful as exhibitions - participatory or otherwise - can be, their impact on Italian public memories of colonialism has been insignificant. The next section describes other kinds of cultural production that may have greater impact, restating and rehumanising colonial heritage for an increasingly broad audience.

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[19] In fact, whilst the former Museo Africano (1923-2011), previously known as the Museo Coloniale), had its collections acquired by the Pigorini, the latter has now been redeveloped into a major amalgamation of museums. The Pigorini is now part of Rome's new Museum of Civilisations (MuCiv), which includes both the collections of the former Museum Nazionale d'Arte Oriental Giuseppe Tucci, the Museo Nazionale di Arti e Tradizioni Popolari and the Museo Nazionale dell'Alto Medioevo.

[20] *"Un salute da* Tripoli *italiana" Le cartoline della guerra di Libia 1911-12*, curated by Enrico Sturani, and *Una colonia per l'italia. Italian e libici della guerra italo-turca alla 'pacificazione' della Cirenaica. 1911-1931*, curated by Gabriele Bassi.

(3) Beyond Heritage Institutions: making spaces of cultural inclusion

How are historically inaccurate heritagisations of the past best challenged? In the politics and policies connected to making heritage more socially inclusive, 'participation' of source communities and local stakeholders is said to lead to greater inclusion; bring minorities into the cultural mainstream and nationalist representations should open up to multiple narratives of the past. Such optimism has been particularly evident in the idea of the 'inclusive museum' that developed from the popular concept of the museum as a 'contact zone' (Clifford 1997). However, recent debates about monuments in public spaces, from the international Rhodes Must Fall campaign (Ndletyana and Webb 2017), Confederate monuments in Charlottesville USA, Countering Colston in Bristol UK, to statues of King Leopold in Brussels, have highlighted how 'participation' is often out of the control of heritage professionals (Bursch-Brown 2017).

The idea that using museums as a 'contact zone' helps resolve these tensions is still popular with policy-makers. However, some argue that the 'contact zone' itself is effectively neocolonial: "contact zones are not really sites of reciprocity. They are … asymmetric spaces of appropriation. No matter how much we try to make these spaces accommodating, they remain sites where the Others come to perform for us, not with us" (Boast 2011: 63).[21] More generally, the 'contact zone' is better identified as a space of *friction* (Karp and Kratz (2006). But 'friction' is now out in the open, in the public spaces of heritage like Affile's monument to Graziani.

Another 'friction' is over the collections themselves, with ethnographic museums in particular exemplifying the deep connections between colonial collecting/plunder, 'universal' museums and nationalism. Yet recent major museum redevelopments do not seem to be decisively unmasking Europe's aggrandising self-image as the centre of civilisation (De Cesari 2017: 20), nor indeed do they deeply engage with the legacies of colonialism. More difficult pasts remain either hidden in collections, aestheticised (Aldrich 2009; Price 2007), or simply don't relate prior colonialism to issues like migration and Europe's resurgent racism. In a critique of what 'Europe' means in two new major museum developments - Marseille's Museum of the Civilisations of Europe (MUCEM), and Berlin's Museum of European Cultures - Chiara De Cesari remains sceptical, noting, "It is troubling how often well-intended, critical curators who strive for inclusivity seem unable to overcome civilisational narratives imbued with colonial amnesia and Orientalist assumptions, and the idea that European culture is essentially Christian and made by white Europeans" (De Cesari 2017, 31).

Whilst the lack of diversity in museum audiences remains a persistent problem across Europe, the kinds of developments De Cesari discusses remain a highly visible symbolic space for representing new narratives. In December 2018 Belgium's Museum of Central Africa will reopen after significant redevelopment, and Berlin's Humboldt Forum will be inaugurated in 2019. Both are controversial projects, stimulating public debate over how to represent colonial pasts. Representations of colonialism often attract the anger of nationalist politicians, as did Europe's new *House of European History* in Brussels.[22] It is criticised not just because of its cost, but because of its focus on 'overly negative' aspects of the European past, like colonialism and the Holocaust.[23] In fact, the curators of the *House* found it difficult to display excluded histories like colonialism and migration (Settele 2015), but nonetheless their exhibits have generated friction.

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[21] It has also been used in reflective ways. For example, the third and final section of Wastiau's 2000 exhibition ExitCongoMuseum was called *Exit Museum: the contact zone*.

[22] An initiative of the European Parliament ten years in the making and inaugurated in 2017.

[23] Piotr Gliński, Poland's deputy prime minister, believes such representations biased.

The art of decolonisation and a new memory community

Italy's cultural production is becoming increasingly diversified. In contrast to the relative silence of its major cultural institutions over the colonial past, films, documentaries, art practice and literature that address colonialism, its aftermath, racism and belonging in Italy have been burgeoning, as indeed has the academic success of postcolonial studies in Italy (Lombardi-Drop and Romeo 2012). A landmark book/photographic essay in 2014 by Igiaba Scego and Rino Bianchi, *Roma Negata. Percorsi postcolonial della città*, catalysed a critical art practice that focuses on the material culture of colonialism, sifting through archives, interrogating spaces and trying to create public engagement. This broader cultural production could shift public memories of colonialism and open up Italian identity, creating a kind of 'counter-canon' to prevailing narratives.[24]

But to what extent do these cultural outputs, these counterworks, represent a new 'counter-canon' that really decentres and decolonises? For example, there is a gap between well-meaning but sometimes patronising films made by Italian filmmakers, and those made by migrant filmmakers "telling their own stories in their own accents" (Deandrea 2016: 99), but this is narrowing. Similarly, the idea that heritage too might need to be 'accented' (chosen, developed and represented by a source community on their own terms) can perpetuate the idea that heritages belong to one community rather than all citizens. This is precisely the issue with Italian colonial aphasia, a reticence - institutional as well as personal - to bring difficult pasts onto the stage of a broadly defined popular memory. This article argues something similar, that heritage-making outside the museum, and outside the heritage site, may be producing the counterworks needed to overcome both an institutional and a collective public aphasia.

In her 'essay film' *Negotiating Amnesia* (2015) and art installation, *Notes on Historical Amnesia*, Alessandra Ferrini explores Italy's collective forgetting. Chasing the chimeras of Italy's Second Ethiopian War in 1935 to 1936, Ferrini's methodology was to delve into the Alinari Archive and the National Library in Florence and combine the material she found with interviews and an analysis of the kind of textbooks Cajani describes above. Her film reveals how memory and forgetting work alongside Italy's institutional racism to create the country's colonial amnesia. Importantly, the art installation accompanying the film was a kind of 'contact zone' very much in keeping with the approaches of the new museology. With its first iteration held in Florence's *Le Murate* art space, and subsequently in 2017 (*Notes on Historical Amnesia Pt.2*) held in Gallarate's MA*GA Museum of Contemporary Art, she combines outreach work with schoolchildren with art practice to create an evolving installation that "aims to provoke a reflection on the way historical narratives are created, on issues such as perspective, distance and point of view, as well as on the multiplicity of readings that each archival source can hold" (Ferrini 2017).

In 2018 Ferrini continued her artistic exploration of the postcolonial in a residency at the British School in Rome, where she worked on *Gaddafi in Rome: the expanded script*. This new work reflects on "the performance and spatial organisation of institutional power; the historical colonial and neocolonial relations between Italy and Libya in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including the ongoing conflict in Libya; and the way real-time news affect the way historical time is perceived and produced" (Ferrini 2018). Significantly for this article's argument that transnational exchanges and curatorial practices are a crucial part of new representational practices, her work on *Gaddafi in Rome* is funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council as well as Arts Council England.

Smaller art institutions have also begun to touch on colonialism. In 2016 the Museum of Modern Art of Bologna (MAMbo) commissioned a temporary exhibit by the Austrian-German Mahony Collective called *Ghosts and the self*. The eight installations they created were designed to highlight the contradictory aspects of European colonial pasts, and in particular used material from Bologna's

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[24] I do not discuss here the extensive postcolonial literature on Italian colonialism, music, or indeed the recent and well received play *Acqua de Colonia* by Elvira Frosini and Daniele Timpano.

Museum of Anthropology with its extensive anthropometric collection as representative of European racist science.

Since *Ghosts and the self* another decolonising art intervention has reinterpreted another collection of anthropometric material. In 2017 the Pigorini commissioned the anthropologist Arnd Schneider (University of Oslo), and Italian artist Leone Contini, to interrogate their collection as part of the Horizon 2020-funded research project TRACES (*Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages with the Arts: from intervention to co-production*). Their exhibit, *Bel Suol d'Amore – The Scattered Colonial Body* references the title of a song written just before the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911, whilst the 'scattered colonial body' resonates on multiple levels. The curators state that their objective was not to reveal hidden histories and facts, but rather to highlight the dismembered nature of the collections and so too of memories of colonialism. The project ended up working in particular with plaster casts taken of faces in Libya in the 1930s, reproducing them with 3D printing to "invoke a process of 'reanimation' of the colonial subject who comes 'alive' as a simulacrum, and whose agency had been repressed through the colonial regime" (Schneider and Contini, 2017). The metaphor is a strong one, and dismemberment is apt given the innocent bodies that Italian colonialism left in its wake in both Libya and Ethiopia, but how far can such decolonising art interventions help to make an inclusive heritage out of this past? [25]

These shifts to a more critical and nuanced stance with regard to exhibiting Italy's ethnographic collections are common to broader trends in Europe where more critical evaluations are preferred by many museum professionals, even as they still attract controversy with sections of the public, press and nationalist politicians. Increased networking between museums involved in European projects is a key factor; for example, the ex-Pigorini is currently involved in a project called SWICH (*Sharing a World of Inclusion, Creativity and Heritage*, funded by the Creative Europe Programme) which itself emerged from earlier networks and collaborations such as RIME (Ethnography Museums and World Cultures) and READ-ME I and II (Network of Diaspora Associations and Ethnographic Museums). These projects have followed the ethical instincts of 'new museology' in opening up ethnographic collections to source and diaspora communities, addressing contentious issues like repatriation, and co-curating exhibitions that critique established ideas about colonialism, race and belonging. In an analysis of an exhibition in the University of Parma's Natural History Museum called *Creatures of Earth and Sky* (2008-2009), that involved African migrants interpreting its two African collections,[26] Serena Iervolino argues that European projects - as networks of best practice and advice, rather than finances - have been crucial in getting the Italian museum sector to be more proactive in engaging migrants and other minorities. If a new memory community does eventually emerge from this developing critical museology, it will in part be due to these transnational activities.

It is worth considering why art interventions have yet to pierce Italian public consciousness, or indeed establish a new narrative for the past. For example, Italy has yet to have an artistic critique of colonialism as high profile as William Kentridge's *Black Box/ Chambre Noire*, which takes apart the world's first modern genocide, Germany's suppression of the Herero Uprising in Namibia (De Jong 2018).[27] In contrast to Italy, colonial heritage is increasingly in German public consciousness, following *Unser Afrika* ('Our Africa'), a new exhibition in Hamburg from 2018. Again, this examines the Herero and Nama genocide perpetrated by Germany between 1904 and 1908. Now the country's ethnological collections are under close scrutiny, for example in the expected exhibits that will populate the new Humboldt Forum due to open in 2019.[28] Such developments and debates elsewhere in Europe contrast

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[25] The trend for these kinds of exhibitions, mostly outside of major institutions, continues, with *Italiani Brava Gente: amnesie e memorie del colonialismo italiano* at Rome's Fondazione VOLUME! in late October 2018.

[26] The museum's two collections contain mostly fauna from Eritrea, and ethnographic objects from central Africa.

[27] Kentridge's 2016 intervention along the Tiber in Rome, *Triumphs and Laments*, was a notable public artwork that questioned the power of the 'eternal city', but did not place colonialism centre stage.

[28] The Humboldt Forum is under a constant critical gaze from the CARMAH project, managed by a major voice on 'difficult heritage', Sharon Macdonald.

with the continuing silence – at the level of major institutions – around Italy's colonial past, however new heritage imaginaries are becoming increasingly visible on screen.

Colonial heritage on screen

Valerio Ciriaci's 2015 documentary *If Only I Were That Warrior* unpacks the Affile monument to Graziani, demonstrating the transnational nature of the affair: the erection of this monument in an otherwise unremarkable Italian village was reported in the New York Times, and led to protests in the United States thanks to the work of the president of Italy's Ethiopian Association Mulu Ayele and others. Supported by the New York NGO Centro Primo Levi, the film was crowd-funded, with support and activism from the Ethiopian community in the US, particularly in Atlanta and Washington where the director ran community events to raise awareness of the project. This internationalism, the diaspora quality of Ciriaci's documentary, takes the discourse beyond the Affile monument itself, and into how memory communities are being made in the present.

If there has been silence and ignorance over the Italian past, it is in part because of textbooks, cinemas and televisions. And the power of popular media to 'stage memories' of colonialism is also in those films and documentaries that were *not* screened. Generations of children encountered largely apologist accounts of Italian colonialism in their school textbooks, but also did not see negative depictions of Italian colonialism onscreen.[29] When Antony Quinn starred in the 1981 Libyan production *Lion of the Desert* about Omar al-Mukhtar, the anti-colonial resistance hero who led the Senussi rebellion, Italy banned the film claiming it tarnished the reputation of the Italian armed forces. The rebellion that Omar al-Mukhtar had led in the 1920s and 30s saw the Italians, and General Rodolpho Graziani - later to inflict similar atrocities in Ethiopia, and the 'hero' behind the monument in Affile - incarcerate two thirds of the inhabitants of eastern Libya (Cyrenaica) in concentration camps. Around one third of them died there, at a minimum 40,000 (Del Boca 1986; Ahmida 2005). The British anthropologist Edward Evans-Pritchard wrote: "In this bleak country were herded in the smallest camps possible, 80,000 men, women, and children, and 600,000 beasts, in the summer of 1930. Hunger, disease, and broken hearts took heavy toll of the imprisoned population. Bedouins die in a cage" (Evans-Pritchard 1945).

The film *Lion of the Desert* - which actually uses the anthropologist's line about the cage as a line the film - was eventually broadcast on Italian television in June 2009, but by Sky Italia, not by state broadcaster RAI.[30] Omar al-Mukhtar remains largely unknown in Italy, yet in transnational popular memory he is a polysemic figure, used by Muamar Qaddafi on Libyan dinar bank notes and as a cultural hero, as well as by anti-Qaddafi forces who explicitly claimed Qaddafi was absolutely not an heir to al-Mukhtar's tradition. al-Mukhtar was also appropriated by groups like Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in their statement "In Defence and Support of the Revolution of Our Fellow Free Muslims, the Progeny of Omar al-Mukhtar" (McGregor 2011). How al-Mukhtar became a key figure far beyond Libya, an icon in the cultural memory of the Arab world, invoked by both Arab nationalists and by transnational insurgents (Khamis Nassar and Boggero 2008), used also by leftwing activist Italian groups like Bologna's *Resistenza in Cirennaica*, reveals a key aspect of heritage-making outside of institutions like museums: the colonial past is multidirectional, and able to tell radically different stories to different publics.[31]

Italian censorship did not limit itself to Libyan-produced films. As recently as the 1990s it extended to include television documentaries. In 1989 the British BBC produced a two-part series - *Fascist Legacy* - that examined the Italian use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia and war atrocities in Yugoslavia. The

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[29] Though public awareness of decolonisation struggles did increase with Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 *The Battle of Algiers*.

[30] See Clò 2009, and Del Monte 2015.

[31] It is a cruel irony perhaps that the Syrian director of *Lion of the Desert*, Moustapha Akkad, was killed by an Al Qaida suicide bomber in Amman in 2005.

documentaries were not shown in Italy until 2004, long after the belated admission in 1996 by the Italian state that it had used chemical weapons in Ethiopia (see Cajani 2018: 80).

Colonial aphasia is also present in the way documentaries are financed. So whilst a publicly-funded broadcaster like the BBC commissioned *Fascist Legacy*, the Ethiopian director Haile Gerima noted how Italy's state broadcaster RAI and Istituto Luce refused to help finance what became his acclaimed 1999 documentary *Adwa, an African Victory*. Significantly, this film - which creates a new representation of the defeat of Italy in 1896 by Ethiopia - develops its own documentary aesthetic, one that brings together archival research and images, oral history, and even poetry to offer a new 'narrative logic' of the events of Adwa (Greene 2012, 255). The documentary's counter-canonical aesthetics echo its counternarrative, heritage on screen takes us beyond the archives and majority narratives like 'Italians, good people'.[32]

Gerima represents an approach that puts the human aspects of heritage first by using personal accounts and alternative forms of historicity like the oral poetry of former Italian colonial subjects (see Taddia 1996). Other diaspora filmmakers and writers are also using approaches that break the aesthetic norms and expected codes of representing 'difficult heritage' in documentary. Another US-based Ethiopian filmmaker, Yemane Demissie, in his work in progress *The Quantum Leapers*, explores colonialism in a tangental way by instead focusing on the biographies of more than 500 individuals who lived through the turbulent period from 1917 to 1974 (Demisie, personal communication, May 2018). For Demisie, other narratives need to be told beyond simply restating the violence and injustice of colonialism; in this way real agency for former colonial subjects is re-established, and real memories brought to a wider audience. Filmmakers like Gerima and Demissie reveal that there is a disjuncture between the heritage-making needed in Italy, right now, and what is needed in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and Somalia. The dilemma is how to create new narratives from hidden and marginalised heritages, plural pasts that foster a new transnational 'memory community', without falling into the trap of identity politics.

Making colonialism heritage

Meaningful and innovative as films, documentaries and art practice might be, the monument and heritage site still holds a particular symbolic power as the visible embodiment of contested pasts. So, whilst America's Smithsonian Museum debates whether Confederate Monuments removed from public spaces should now be stored in museum collections or destroyed (see Bryant *et al.* 2018 and Burch-Brown 2017), the Congolese diaspora have been campaigning for over a decade for a square in Brussels to be renamed after the first leader of independent Zaire, Patrice Lumumba (Goddeeris 2016). Meanwhile in Bristol, the arguments over one of the UK's most notorious slave-owners Edward Colston have, after decades of campaigning, brought a more reflexive and critical mode to heritage institutions in the city. Bristol Museum and Art Gallery recently launched a temporary exhibition, *Empire Through the Lens* (2017 to 2018). Based in community participation it reused the now defunct collections of the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum to take narratives about slavery beyond historical injustices to ongoing discrimination and xenophobia in Britain today.

The community participation this exhibition depended on was catalysed by contested monuments to slave-trader Colston, but its praxis was based on photographs; consequently, it is worth emphasising that there are some forms of heritage (and so forms of heritage-activism) that impact on public memory more than others. Elizabeth Edwards, former Curator of Photographs of the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, analyses the new exhibition in Bristol, and whilst critical of the limitations of such projects, she notes that the exhibition raises "broader questions about the work of photographs in museums, and their

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[32] Yet, in Italy "If cinema is to be conceptualised as the cultural crucible of Italian national identity" (Duncan 2008: 195, cited by Deandrea 2016: 89) we might question why the post-war focus on creating consciousness of the horrors of war through cinema - something strongly pushed for by the association of former partisans, ANPI - did not extent to include Italy's colonial era atrocities?

ability to draw people in through that sense of the presence of the past and confront, through their very reality effects, the aphasic and amnesiac" (Edwards 2018: 7). As she argues elsewhere, photos are *strong history* (Edwards 2015). They have, in their immediacy, and also in their potential for wide circulation, the ability to make the past real, to shape public memory.

There is a rich heritage of colonial photographs dispersed across Italy's archives, but it is underused, rarely researched, and almost never seen by the broader public. Engaging the public through a direct kind of witnessing of the past has been attempted in Italy, notably in the 2013 *Modena-Addis Abeba andata e ritorno* project and exhibition by Modena per gli Altri (MOXA) and their Centre for the Documentation of Colonial Memories, part of an attempt to repatriate historical memories from the private archives of Modenese back to Ethiopia. Framed not as 'heritage-making' but as Public History, these initiatives - like the 2017 *Askari and schiavoni* - are directed towards engagement, but thus far have mostly involved white Italians and not diaspora communities and new migrants.

Returning to the Graziani mausoleum, does the conviction of Affile's mayor for fascist apology take us beyond a divisive identity politics and towards a more inclusive 'memory citizenship'? Does it make Italy's colonial history (and its atrocities) any more real to the Italian public? Perhaps in this case Italy's judicial system has upheld the country's constitution, but culturally and politically awareness does not appear to have increased.

Meanwhile, in 2017 a modest intervention on a Fascist-era frieze/plaque in the centre of Bolzano offered a rather different example of practical strategies for working with the heritage of Fascism. Faced with an image of Mussolini on horseback accompanied by the words "Credere, Obbedire, Combattere" ("Believe, Obey, Combat"), Bolzano city council launched a public call for an intervention. It decided on a simple solution. Rather than destroying the fascist bas-relief they now simply project in Italian, German and Ladin the words of Hannah Arendt: "Nobody has the right to obey" (Invernizzi-Accetti 2017). This deliberately minimal intervention, a subtle restaging of memory, returns context and a critical perspective to a contested heritage space.

Conclusion: remembering and social justice

In Italy, there is little state-funded public heritage-making around the colonial past. We have seen that the policy environment and the politics around heritage are different from other European countries where addressing colonialism has become the issue major heritage institutions can no longer ignore. Italian heritage institutions have rarely been a space for social change, and so activists have been more interested in the transformative and communicative power of film, documentary, art practice and literature. However, whilst restaging colonial memory has long been taken up across the political left, now museums are increasingly concerned that their collections might be misrepresented and misused: they need to be 'de-essentialised' (De Lella 2013, 92).

But the 'collective' itself is essentialised. It may be that the most successful approach for de-essentialising is to counter ethnocentric approaches by working transnationally. Rosa Anna De Lella, the curator from the former Pigorini Museum, emphasised that it was transnational collaborations that modified what curators believed possible. This is because a lot of the literature and discourse about cultural inclusion perpetuates the trope of the *national* citizen: migrant identities and heritages are presented as external, apart from national narratives and heritages, needing to be 'integrated'. Yet their heritages are already in Italy, long hidden in dispersed archives and ethnographic collections, and it is Italy's combination of 'colonial aphasia' with the 'staged memory' of a benevolent colonial past that has rendered them invisible within majority narratives of the past.

How to tackle such invisibility and simultaneously foster social inclusion? Does Bolzano's subtle use of the Arendt quote mentioned above actually decentre a fascist monument, or is it just a quick and pragmatic solution to a more entrenched problem, part of colonial aphasia and the staging of memory? Ciraj Rasool, in a discussion of the repatriation of the human remains of Klaas and Trooi Pienaar from

Austria to South Africa, makes a compelling case for the 'rehumanisation' of museum collections, where bodies have been "disinterred, transported and stored as artefacts, and returned as the remains of citizens and subjects of history" (Rasool 2015). Similarly, the benefits of 'rehumanising' Italy's colonial past by bringing to life the actual stories of colonial subjects might be an achievable corrective to simplistic hagiographies to contentious colonial/fascist leaders like Graziani.

What hope then for public memories based on historical accuracy and mutual recognition? This article has described a changing landscape of heritage-making in Italy - exhibitions, initiatives, public art, opening up the archives, and staging the past on screen - one that might yet reconfigure the country's pathological 'colonial aphasia' into a new consciousness of the past. Increasing both the visibility of difficult colonial heritage, and encouraging broad sections of the public to work with it - especially with the 'strong history' of photographs previously locked away in archives and attics - might encourage socially inclusive heritage-making that fosters a new kind of 'memory citizenship' (Rothberg and Yildiz 2011).[33]

However, making Italy's colonial past an *inclusive* heritage still risks aphasia. What are the unintended consequences, the new silences created by focusing on the guilt of nations, on Italy's shameful past? 'Rehumanising' the heritage of colonialism is a much harder task than simply displaying co-curated exhibitions, or nurturing participatory 'contact zones'. Creating a more widely-shared 'memory citizenship' requires not just greater public knowledge of Adwa, Affile, Agheila, al-Mukhtar, Emperor Alchitrof, Dogali, and Yekatit 12, but that the heritage industry itself recognises the social impacts and unintended consequences of the different ways it stages memory. It also requires that Italy is able to recognise itself in that reflection in Alchitrof's mirror.

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[33] Such 'memory citizenship' does not require legal status, indeed, as a cosmopolitan imaginary, it stands outside of it.

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