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**A mutilação do poder político: exibir despojo de guerra como estratégia simbólica**

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Imagem: Hat belonged to Menelik II. National Museum of Ethiopia. Credit: Timothy O'Neal/BoroughBees.

## Mutilation of political power: *spolia* exhibiting as symbolic strategy

A mutilação do poder político: exibir despojo de guerra como estratégia simbólica

Dra. Monica Palmeri\*

### Abstract

This paper aims to highlight some strategy used during the Fascist regime in Italy to symbolically mutilate the Ethiopian's crown power and it wants to show the exposition context key-role determining items' cultural and symbolic meaning. Through the exposition of cultural goods stolen from Ethiopia such as Menelik's Gala Hat and Hailé Selassié throne, the Fascist regime showed its military and political superiority, proving to succeed where the previous democratic government failed. After the II World War, according to the Treaty of Paris (art. 37), Italy must give back several stolen cultural goods, including the hat and the throne. Following their movements in space and time, these two objects become an opportunity to develop some important reflections about the strategies used to propose a victorious image of the Fascist regime, according to propagandistic goals. The methodology used privileged an analytic and multidisciplinary approach, combining history, museum studies and cultural studies notions.

### Keywords

Fascism; Exposition; Cultural Policy; Ethiopia; Italy

### Resumo

Este artigo objetiva iluminar certas estratégias utilizadas durante o regime fascista na Itália para mutilar simbolicamente o poder da Coroa na Etiópia e seu desejo de mostrar o papel central do contexto da exposição na determinação de significados culturais e simbólicos. Por meio da exposição de bens culturais roubados da Etiópia, como o chapéu de gala de Menlik e o trono de Hailé Selassié, o regime fascista mostrou sua superioridade militar e política, provando ter tido sucesso onde o governo democrático anterior falhara. Após a Segunda Guerra Mundial, de acordo com o Tratado de Paris (art. 37), a Itália deveria devolver vários bens culturais roubados, incluindo o chapéu e o trono. Seguindo esses movimentos no espaço e no tempo, esses dois objetos tornaram-se oportunidade para desenvolver algumas importantes reflexões sobre as estratégias empregadas para propor uma imagem vitoriosa do regime fascista, de acordo com objetivos propagandísticos. A metodologia empregada privilegiou uma abordagem analítica e multidisciplinar, combinando noções de história, estudos culturais e de museus.

### Palavras-chave

Fascismo; exposição; política cultura, Etiópia, Itália.

## Introduction

The Obelisk of Axum was repositioned in its original site in Ethiopia on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008. It was stolen during an archaeological mission in 1935 by the Italians and took in Rome where it became part of the urban design for almost sixty years<sup>1</sup>. For the operation of restitution, the Italian government spent 5 million dollars; numerous were the declarations of contrariety from Italian politicians and exponents of the cultural sector, nevertheless the 23 meters tall Obelisk is now in its home country. This is the most famous chapter of the complex vicissitude about the Italian restitution of cultural goods stolen during the colonial domination; however, it's easy to forget that the Treaty of Paris signed on 1947 declared the Italian obligation to give back a larger group of objects of which the Obelisk of Axum was the most representative because of its spiritual, cultural and historic importance for the Ethiopians (Del Boca, 1998) as well as because the long duration of its stay in Rome. Among the cultural goods stolen by the Italians and exposed in the Colonial Museum of Rome during the last years of the Fascist dictatorship there were also a hat and a throne<sup>2</sup>. Richly decorated with phytomorphic embroideries, incredibly elegant although further from the European fashion of the Thirties and the Forties, Menelik II's Gala hat, as well as the magnificent "Negus Throne", and their displacements between Italy and Ethiopia could become symbols of a century-long story, the Italian contemporary history most struggled part: the colonial one.

## The Ethiopian War, Menelik II and the Last Negus

Menelik II was Emperor of Ethiopia between 1889 and 1913. He is one of the most beloved king of Africa also because he succeeded in defeating an European army: the 1<sup>st</sup> march of 1896 in fact, the Italian army led by G. Ellena, Matteo F. Albertone, G. Arimondi and V. da Bormida was overwhelmed by the Ethiopian one near Adwa. More than 1600 soldiers were made prisoners, about 5000 Italians and 1000 Ethiopians died. Emasculated, skinned and mutilated men remained on the battle field in agony for long hours, the survivors talked about a proper "massacre". Ethiopia succeeded where no other African country did: Europe, in fact, had already opened the so-called "Age of Imperialism" increasing year after year its domains. Europe in 1830 controlled 8 million square km of Earth' surface and more than 200 million of natives; in 1880 controlled 24 million square km and more than 300 million of colonial dependent; in 1930 controlled 53 million square km and more than 320 million of inhabitants. The United Kingdom controlled in 1830 the 90% of the controlled surface, in 1880 the 92%; France respectively the 1 and 3%; Portugal a little less than France and Spain something more in 1830 (Labanca, 2002: 20-21). Germany started building its colonial dominions in 1884 as well as Belgium succeeding in resize the British domain: in 1913 London controlled the 60% of the extra-European colonial domains, France controlled the 18%, Germany the 5,5%, Belgium the 4,4%, Portugal the 1,5% and Spain the 0,6% (*Idem*: 22). Once obtained the National unification, Italy decided to join the so-called *scramble for Africa*: with no colonial preparation and several domestic issues to deal with, Italy was animated by the desire to set herself free from its own mediocrity in Foreign Policy so started to show interest in the Dark Continent affairs at the end of XIX century (Rochat, 1973: 21)<sup>3</sup>. After the conquest of Eritrea, the so called "firstborn colony"<sup>4</sup> in 1890, the Italia government<sup>5</sup> regained some more self-confidence from this victory and decided to try to conquest neighbouring Ethiopia. However, Menelik II was a terrible obstacle crushing the Italian desire to become a recognised colonial power as many others European countries. The echo of this painful defeat arrived immediately in Italy: The Premier, Crispi, was forced to resign and the anti-colonial faction gained political consent shouting: "Viva Menelik!" (Labanca, 2002: 81-82). The importance of the Adwa defeat can be valuated confronting the Italian economic situation with the

European one and its international prestige: Italy had a tenth of the British industrial strength and after this defeat “the international consideration of Italy fell by few notches” (*Idem*: 83)<sup>6</sup>. The Adwa defeat became soon the Italian Colonial Policy guiding light, a tremendous shame to forget but also a memory alive and to take count of in the following military decisions. Even if Italy would never become a colonial power, she never stopped trying to build up its own Empire oversea: it took a long time but the 5<sup>th</sup> may 1936 Addis Ababa was conquered and Vittorio Emanuele III, King of Italy, was proclaimed Emperor. From 1896 to 1936 years of silence and others of frenetic preparations led Italy to the conquest of Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Rhodes and the Dodecanese Isles.

In the meanwhile, the domestic context underwent a number of changes: first of all, the Liberal Government was swept away by the Fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini in the mid-twenties. For the dictator, the colonial policy represented a focal point of his agenda. The conquest of Ethiopia represented an incredible chance to prove the regime strength, triumphing where the democracy failed poorly. For the Fascist regime, the possibility of losing was not admitted and for the Ethiopia war of 1935-36 Mussolini decided to deploy massive military forces using aggressive (and sometimes forbidden) weapons<sup>7</sup>.

The importance to raise awareness among the Italians about the colonies and the colonial adventure in Africa was felt essential both from the Liberal government and the Fascist regime. During the dictatorship, however, the general tendency was to channel efforts in order to prepare messages orientated in the same direction. The main purpose was to make the Italians familiar with these new territories growing the so-called “colonial consciousness”. Africa was narrated – and in a certain way created – for the audience in order to develop a feeling of belonging and interest among these faraway places. This target was difficult to achieve and several intellectuals as writers, journalists, artists dedicated themselves to this “mission”. For this reason, the government created courses to become colonial administrators, colonial camp for women interested in following their husbands or fiancées in Africa; a great number of magazines were financed to spread the propaganda’s messages, new villages were created in Africa in which it seemed that the fascist anthropological miracle came true: the creation of a “new men”<sup>8</sup> community living according the Fascist values as frugality, family, dedication to work and obedience.

### **A hat, a magazine and the Empire**

What kind of instruments and media the regime used to increase the knowledge about the Italian colonies? With which communicative tools it promoted the formation of the colonial consciousness? To answer to these questions, we have to deepen into one of the most interesting part of the Fascist propaganda, the one appointed into the disclosure of an unknown place, described like a mysterious as well as an exotic one, in which the Fascists new men could deploy their creative strength shaping their own reality. During the Fascist dictatorship, a great number of colonial magazines were published; colonial movies were released; prize for colonial literature were established; the production of visual art with colonial contents was encouraged and the geographic society devoted to exploration and discovering were founded. The Colonial Museum of Rome<sup>9</sup> is one of the tools used to spread the African continent image to the Italian public through the exhibition of objects taken during explorative journeys

and military missions as well as the promotion of artists who dedicated their efforts to the production of exotic and oriental works.



Fig.1. Menelik's gala hat. In: *Primato*, n. 6, y 1, 1940.

The Colonial Museum cherished the main characters of our story: Menelik II's gala hat and the Negus throne. We have witnessed that thanks to the photographs published on *Primato*. The photographs caption simply stated: "Menelik II's gala hat at the Colonial Museum" and "Negus Throne. Emblems of power and smiling Justice". The hat stood on a display unit [fig. 1], inside a glass case with a gun and some military medals. The hat is an esteemed workmanship object, rich in gold embroidery composing a floral decoration. For what concern the throne, the photograph on *Primato* consisted in a foreground of the back inlays.

*Primato* was published between 1940 and 1943 and it was founded by Giuseppe Bottai, governor of Rome, governor of Addis Ababa (even if for a month), Minister of Corporation and later Minister of

National Education. Bottai joined the fascism movement since its early beginning and he collaborated with Mussolini for the foundation of the Fascist National Party.

Bottai was an extremely cultured man and he directed for many years the Italian cultural life<sup>10</sup>, which was more complex and heterogeneous than it could seem at a first sight. *Primato* is the final step of an intellectual path started with the magazine *L'Orto*, followed by *Ulisse* and then the most known *Critica Fascista*. In its manifesto<sup>11</sup>, *Primato* revealed inclusive intents related to the willing to make grow the consensus around the cultural policy promoted by the regime. It was made an explicit effort to embrace the most hostile sectors of the Italian cultural world and the magazine represented a place in which gathered the best of Italian literature, art and philosophy (V. Zagario, 2007: 34).

In a long article written by Eugenio Galvano appeared three photographs: the hat, the detail of the back decorations of the throne and an Ethiopian painting of S. George, but our attention is mainly focalized on the first two objects, the hat and the throne, because they are connected with power representation and it is interesting to highlight the semantic changes they are subjected to when they are exposed in different geographic and cultural contexts and to different gazes. It does not surprise us that a hat and a throne belonged to former kings of Ethiopia were kept in a Museum in Rome but the article in which these photos were contained, entitled "The African Academy" (Galvano, 1940: 3-6), raises some questions. First of all, there is no perfect correspondence between the photos and the text: the article is not related in any way to these items, which were never mentioned, not even to the Colonial Museum. The article, in fact, talks about the Institute of Italian Africa informing the public about the change of its denomination and place (now in Palazzo Brancaccio, Rome) and about the numerous activities it sponsored to increase the knowledge about colonies. Why these three photos were chosen? Why a refined magazine with sophisticated intellectual positions as *Primato* made such a choice? The relations between text and images in a magazine article are usually based on reciprocal dependence but it is clear that this relation itself can reveal important features about the article's goals. For instance, *Africa Italiana* was a magazine published in Italy between 1927 and 1941 and it was born from *Notiziario Archeologico's* ashes. *Africa Italiana* promoted the knowledge about the latest archaeological discoveries in Italian colonies. The articles – proper papers addressed to experts of the sector – were written by university professors, archaeologists of well-known fame and the photographic images contained were strictly related to their contents. In *Africa Italiana* the correspondence between text and images was perfect because the photos were required to work as text's viewer, letting the readers see the objects described in the essays.

However, *Primato* was not a scientific magazine but it could be described as a place in which work to define the main characteristics of the culture product under the regime. The magazine admitted a wide range of cultural tendencies such as orthodox fascists, reactionaries one as well as young intellectuals trying to discover their own path (Zagario, 2007: 18-23). So, the question is still open: why a hat and a throne had been chosen to match with an article about the Colonial Institute?<sup>12</sup> These two objects were chosen because they worked as text' symbolic completion. The images, in fact, can add to the verbal content a higher significance level pertaining emotional elements. As it was said, the author Galvano gave an overview about the FCI saying: "The institute in 1906 was modest and arranged in the old location in Esedra square, with no more than 200 members but it is right to admit that it has completed

bravely its path through the years”<sup>13</sup> (Galvano, 1940: 3). The author added that before the regime rigorously established each one’s duties, there were a lot of Societies pursuing the same aims without any coordination. Only thanks to the regime’s unifying action was possible to achieve such a perfect efficiency that it seemed as only in the last years the institute started to work (Galvano, 1940: 4). The three pages long article was written with a triumphal tone and a celebrative style remembering the fascist’s credit in taking control of the country. Near the article’s title, Menelik’s hat photo attracted our attention with his elegant but at the same time exotic aspect. The choice to insert Menelik’s name in the first page of this article was interesting because it is a name capable of call to mind all the tactical errors of the Italian Liberal government, the shame after Adwa defeat, the Italy that “had too many lawyers and few engineers, too many who are looking for modest employment rather than attempting to experience of life and its unknowns” (Parini, 1926: 3) showing the distance with the brave, victorious Fascist Italy. Referring to the enemy who stopped the Italian march towards the Empire and the “place in the sun” that rightly belonged to “44 million of souls” affected by the Unfair Sanctions (Falasca Zamponi, 2003: 256)<sup>14</sup>, Menelik’s hat levered on the shame felt just a generation before and on the consequent satisfaction about the Empire proclamation. The credit of this victory is entirely up the regime and Mussolini capability to lead the Nation to victory. Placing Menelik’s hat in a museum in Italy means to carry from a historic to a mythical term Menelik’s decaying authority, a symbolical mutilation of his political relevance. The Colonial Museum walls were covered in skin of animals (Catelli, 1992: 115) and Menelik’s hat could be seen as a new *trophy*, a metaphorical version of a scalp, presage of future glory for the Fascist regime and at the same time symbol of a restored natural order according to the racists theories spread by the regime theorists <sup>15</sup>.



Fig. 2. “Negus Throne. Emblems of majestic power and smiling Justice”. *Primato*, n. 6, y. 1, 1940, 5.

In *Primato*, like already said, it is possible to find a photo representing the back decorations of the throne with “Emblems of the majestic power and smiling Justice” according to the caption [fig.d2]. In the case of the hat the holder's name, Menelik, was expressed with clarity but this case is different because is highlighted a generically belonging to the “Negus”, a word translatable from the Amharic as “king”. The Emperor, for instance, was defined *negus neghesti*, “king of kings”, the most important political role of the entire country (Rochat, 1973: 24). Speaking about the throne it is possible that the choice to focus on the decoration was meant to evidence the iconographic and technical differences with European thrones and technical skills. On *Rivista delle Colonie*, in fact, Guido Guida gave a severe judgment of this object: “The throne we will call *official* is made of dark carved wood, the lions originally placed on the armrests are missed, it is surmounted by a crown and is a cheap wood-work that does not remember the Ethiopian art and cannot achieve the majestic elegance of European and Asian Thrones” (Guida: 2236)<sup>16</sup>. The caption said: “The last Negus Throne” referring to Hailé Selassié, which was forced to run during the Fascist war against Abyssinia. There are many different ways to symbolically mutilate the power and one of these consists in making fun and ridiculing its appearances. In the case of the throne it was chosen to highlight some features that could be seen as *naif* just to diminish the object's value and consequently the power it represented.

Probably this is the reason why was inserted as third photo a painting represented S. George: it is one of the most famous iconographic theme used during the Middle Age and the Modern Age, several important artists such as Donatello, Paolo Uccello, Pisanello, Carlo Crivelli confronted themselves with this subject. The lack of perspective, the simple composition pattern and the lack of naturalistic background were elements usually interpreted as typical of the Abyssinian painting and were used to prove their inferiority in artistic production. There are a lot of possible examples to quote, for instance there is an article written by Remo Fabbri in 1937 in which he described the major characteristics of Ethiopian paintings: “No importance is given to the landscape which is always monochrome, sometimes enriched with trees; no fear to exaggerate reaching the grotesque; absolute repugnance to respect the reality and to submit to architectural or perspective rules” (Fabbri, 1937: 20); according to Fabbri, Ethiopian artists had also problems in the reproduction of the movements and the gestures of human characters, so they were forced to paint them in the same positions every time. They draw faces with “wide open, glaze eyes” and disproportioned. In Fabbri's opinion, Ethiopian art never exceeded “the embryonal state” (Fabbri, 1937: 20).

The examined photographs, thus, were used to reinforce the article epic tone on one hand, by remembering to the public a long series of mental and emotive associations confirming the equations democracy=failure and fascism=victory, on the other hand by symbolically mutilating the Ethiopian authority.

### **The restitution of stolen cultural goods to Ethiopia**

The imperialist hopes nourished by the Regime failed because of the World War II: Italy lost the war, the king betrayed the people signing a peace treaty with the Americans and running away; a civil war exploded and Italy sank in a terrible chaos. After the World War II, the international context was changed and dominated by the freedom claims by the colonial countries but Italy proved itself to be, one more

time, late. The renounce to its colonial possessions imposed by the Treaty of Paris in 1947 was considered from a great number of Italian politicians as unacceptable and many of them fought for almost five years to get at least the pre-fascist colonies. Ethiopia, however, became independent immediately under Hailè Selassie leadership, Libya became a sovereign state in 1951, Eritrea was made a British protectorate from the end of World War II until 1951 and in 1952 was confederated with Ethiopia. Somalia was given to Italy with a 10 years long trusty mandate (Del Boca, 1998, 592-3). The Treaty of Paris contemplated the restitution of stolen cultural goods within 18 months and among these there was the Obelisk of Axum. Italy didn't respect this deadline and Hailè Selassie had to ask several times to respect the article 37 of the Treaty.

On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1951, the Italian Foreign Affair Minister sent an inventory to the Council of Ministry listing a numbers of objects taken from Ethiopia after the 3<sup>th</sup> October 1935, which was the starting point established by the peace treaty to indicate that every cultural goods stolen after that date must be returned (Gandolfo, 2015: 506). In 1956 among the cultural goods already repaid from that list were also the hat belonged to Menelik II and the throne of the negus<sup>17</sup>. One of the most visited museums in Addis Ababa is the National Museum of Ethiopia.



Fig. 3. National Museum of Ethiopia. Hat and umbrella belonging to Emperor Menelik II.

The Museum has no website or at least it can't be reached using the English denomination. Fortunately, it has riveted the attention of tourists from all over the world who provided uploading online videos or photographs taken during the visit [fig. 3]. Thanks to these audio-visual documents and their crossed consultation, it is possible to know the museum's principal attractions and take a look on the display's setting. They are no-scientific testimonies but they are incredibly important in a context lacking in

information. The Museum is articulated in 4 sections (history and archaeology; modern age; anthropology; paleoanthropology) and its principal attraction is Lucy' skeleton, an australopithecus 3,2 million years old. The museum presents also a collection of modern paintings and the first floor guards several ceremonial robes as well as crowns and thrones. This is the section which interests us and fortunately we can use several videos to reconstruct the internal structure and the display layout<sup>18</sup>. The first floor of the Museum consists in a high ceiling room on which two higher floors lean out. This room guards numerous glass cases and inside one of this, with a decorated parasol with gilded inserts, we find a hat very similar to ours.



Fig. 4. Hat belonged to Menelik II. National Museum of Ethiopia. Credit: Timothy O'Neal/BoroughBees.

The original caption is written in Amharic but the English translation says: "Hat belonging to Menelik II" [fig. 4]. After a comparative analysis of these two objects, however, is not difficult to understand that the hat exposed in 1940 in Rome is not the same exposed today in Addis Ababa. They present similarity but also differences: they are wide lapped hats and the decoration style is the same but the embroiders shapes are quite different. There is another detail to be taken into account: a tiny but surely recognizable cross embroider on Addis Ababa's hat. Looking carefully to its shape it seems to be the "Cross of the Order of Menelik II", a symbol created in 1924 by Menelik' successor, Ras Tafari Makonnen as known as Emperor Hailé Selassie, to commemorate Menelik's memory. This cross was introduced after Menelik's death and this aspect can be considered as a *post quem* element to collocate the hat chronologically. If it was made after Menelik's death, of course it was never used personally by Menelik, but at least made in his memory<sup>19</sup>. Near by the hat there are others glass cases containing three different thrones. The Negus throne is one of them, perfectly responded to the characteristics mentioned by Guida in his article [fig. 5]. Thanks to online photos it is possible to look carefully to the back decorations and we can confirm it is the same object [figs. 6 and 7]. Near the Negus throne we can see a smaller one,

described by Guida as covered in gold, made according to the European style and similar to Maharajas' thrones (Guida, 1941: 2236). According to Guida it belonged to Empress Menen (Menelik's wife) but according to the National Museum of Ethiopia's caption it belonged to Empress Zewditu, Menelik's daughter.



Fig. 5. Ethiopian Thrones in GUIDA. Il Museo dell'Impero d'Italia. *Rivista delle Colonie*, n. 9-10, y. 15, 1941, 2236. Upper line, right: the throne of the last Negus as known as Haile Selassie Throne. Lower line: Empress Zewditu Throne.



Fig. 6. Throne of Empress Zewditu (1876 -1930) in the National Museum of Ethiopia. She was Menelik II's daughter and Empress of Ethiopia from 1916 to 1930. (Credit: A. Davey Wikimedia commons). The caption states that the throne was taken to Italy during World War II. Italy joined the war on 10 June 1940 and we know the throne was in the Colonial Museum in Rome at least in 1941, when the article written by G. Guida was written.



Fig.7. Panoramic view of the first floor of the National Museum of Ethiopia. Starting from the right: Empress Menen Throne; Hailé Selassié Throne; Empress Zewditu Throne.

Placing these objects into the National Museum of Ethiopia is a powerful act. They are vestiges of a power no longer existent but referring to the Ethiopian national history they have a deep meaning: Menelik II was the only king capable to lead his people towards freedom and Hailé Selassié, once restored as Emperor, guided the nation through a delicate transitional moment carrying on the Ethiopian interests. For the Italian public these items were *spolia*, spoils of war, for the Ethiopians they are symbols of opposite values as the fight for the independence and self-determination. For the Italians exposing these objects meant to show the victory smoking gun, something comparable to John Baptist's head on Salomé's tray. Sometimes, to expose an object means to deal with the history it represented and the brief story of this hat and this throne can testify that objects *do* something and they are not just social life reflections (Latour, 2002: 218). The Colonial Museum display invited the Italian visitors to an uncommon experience, the one related to Otherness. Exposing objects belonged to other cultures – perceived both as savage and exotic, mysterious and brutal – became the opportunity to measure the Nation's success and to define the Italian identity as victorious: the strange adventure of Menelik's hat and the Negus Throne remembers us that sometimes "Others" can be used to define "Ourself" (Puccini, 2012: 48).

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## Notas

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<sup>1</sup> It was placed in Piazza di Porta Capena, Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, 12 jul.1956, n. 172, p. 2484.

<sup>3</sup> Italy acquired ownership rights over Assab in 1882.

<sup>4</sup> In Italian *colonia primigenia*.

<sup>5</sup> Italy was a constitutional monarchy led by the Liberal Party under the Savoia crown.

<sup>6</sup> “La considerazione di cui godeva l'Italia era scesa di qualche gradino” is a sentence pronounced by Sidney Sonnino.

<sup>7</sup> During the war against Abyssinia, Italy violated the Geneva Protocol signed in 1925 using mustard gas, a chemical weapon that have the ability to cause blisters on exposed skin and in the lungs.

<sup>8</sup> The concept of “new man” in Fascist doctrine is crucial, please see: (Gentile, 2002: 235-262).

<sup>9</sup> Between 1904 and 1914 it was called *Erbario e Museo Coloniale* (Herbarium and Colonial Museum) because its naturalistic setting. After 1914 the name was changed in *Museo Coloniale* (Colonial Museum), becoming a political and cultural institution (Gandolfo, 2015: 15).

<sup>10</sup> For further information about Giuseppe Bottai, please see: (Zagarrio, 1976: 267-271).

<sup>11</sup> “*Primato* chiama a raccolta le forze della cultura italiana e tenta attraverso un’azione ordinata, concorde e il più possibile nobilmente popolare, di rendere concreto ed efficace il rapporto tra arte e politica, tra arte e vita, col proposito insomma di operare l’unione tra alta cultura e letteratura militante, tra l’Università e il giornale, fra gabinetto scientifico e scuola d’arte, lavorando nel nome e nell’interesse della Pátria”. Cfr: Il coraggio della concordia, *Primato*, n. 1, y. 1, 1940, 1.

<sup>12</sup> The Colonial Institute was born in 1906, it became a no-profit organisation<sup>12</sup> in 1908 and its main aim was the promotion of the colonial consciousness and the improvement of economic and industrial relations between Italy and colonies. In 1928 it was called Fascist Colonial Institute and was recognized as the only organ for colonial propaganda. All the colonial initiatives must be authorised from the FCI (Piraino; Fiorito, 2012: 254).

<sup>13</sup> “Quello che era nel 1906 il modesto istituto Coloniale Italiano, sistemato alla meglio nella vecchia sede di piazza dell’Esedra, con poco più di 200 aderenti, si può dire abbia compiuto valorosamente attraverso gli anni il suo cammino”.

<sup>14</sup> Mussolini during a famous speech said: “Here is not just an army marching toward a military objective, but a whole nation, 44 million souls, against whom the blackest injustice has been committed: that of denying them a place in the sun”.

<sup>15</sup> In Italy the racial laws were promulgated in 1938 and they were addressed against the Italian Jews and the colonies natives. Few months before the official promulgation, it was spread the «Manifesto of Race» signed by ten anthropologists, zoologists and doctors. Please see: Razzismo Italiano. *La Difesa della Razza. Scienza, documentazione e polemica*, n.1, y.1, 1938, 1.

<sup>16</sup> “Il trono, che chiameremo ufficiale, di legno scuro intagliato, mancante dei leoni che guarnivano i braccioli, sormontato dalla corona e intarsiato d’avorio, è una scadente opera di ebanisteria che non ricorda l’arte etiopica e non si eleva alla maestà dei troni e delle grandi poltrone in uso nelle Corti d’Europa e d’Asia”.

<sup>17</sup> *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, 12 jul. 1956, n. 172, 2484.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLXneo0vRhY&t=140s>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSZ9dCy2DI4>

<sup>19</sup> I sent an email to the NME but did not receive an answer.

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