The Persistence of Colonialism

A Century of Italo-Libyan Relationships and Their Influence on the Current European Migration Regime in the Mediterranean (1911–2017)

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Preface

The first person I owe a heartfelt thank you to, is my supervisor Patrick Bernhard. You gave me the impetus to hit the ground running and you have been a solid supporter ever since. I cannot claim to have reached anywhere near the high literary standards of either novelist, but I hope the thesis stays somewhat true to you suggestion of "more Hemingway, less Proust" in terms of its prose. I was also fortunate to have Elisabetta Cassina Wolff as my supervisor, who supplied much needed insight into Italian politics and history. At PRIO I could rely on Maria Gabrielsen Jumbert for further supervision. Your perspective, input and inspiration were greatly appreciated.

Before deciding to enroll in the MITRA program I spoke with both Johannes Due and Jørgen Jensehaugen. Thank you for the real talk and continued encouragement, gentlemen. Among the MITRA faculty, particularly Daniel Maul, Klaus Nathaus and Kim Priemel deserve a tip of the hat. Of my fellow students I want to above all thank Lars Magne Tungland and Siw Ellen Lien Rysstad for our conversations.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to Martin Baumeister, Sandra Heisel, Patricia Kern, Lutz Klinkhammer and Elisa Ritzmann as well as all their colleagues at the German Historical Institute in Rome, for giving me the opportunity to work with and learn from you. While in Rome I had the good fortune of talking to Federico Cresti, Costantino Di Sante, Silvia Salvatici and particularly Alessandro Triulzi, who all gave me valuable feedback and suggestions for further reading. At ENI's historical archives I am indebted to Sara Vian and Daniela Scamuzzi for help and support beyond the call of duty. I was fortunate enough to interview Nancy Porsia, "Niccolò" and "Giulia," thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

Dearest Marte Veys Berg, your patience, endless support and terrific taste is why this thesis looks as good as it does (in my humble opinion). I cannot say how much I appreciate you. To my dear mother Marit Hatleskog, you have always made me feel I can rely on you for just about everything. Knowing you take pride in me is a source of strength, thank you for your willingness to read and reread this thesis. Jens Lunnan Hjort, Fresh Prince of the Ivory Tower. I could not ask for a better friend than you. Hats off for providing on-point commentary and a much-needed sense of humor.

Mathias Hatleskog Tjønn – Oslo, May 14th, 2019

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Abstract

Today, we increasingly see the European Union attempting to move border controls and migration management beyond the Mediterranean and into countries along the coast of North Africa and Asia Minor. The return of migrants intercepted and rescued at sea to a network of EU-financed migrant detention centers in countries like Turkey and Libya, is quickly becoming the desired norm from a European perspective. This thesis focuses on the latter case of Libya, were Italy is spearheading these policies.

The thesis explores Italo-Libyan colonial history going back to the Italian conquest of Libya from the Ottoman Empire, forcibly drawing the area into Italy's political and social orbit and setting the stage for a later imbalanced relationship. In subsequent chapters we see how the two economies of Italy and Libya were tied to each other through joint oil extraction in the post-war era. The thesis goes on to investigates how a more restrictive Italian migration regime came about in the 1980s and 1990s, both as a result of domestic political changes and the demands to strengthen border security in order to join the Schengen system. The final chapter brings these strands together, focusing on the late 1990s and 2000s and a series of treaties between Libya on the one side and Italy on the other (supported by the EU). These agreements connected the colonial past with promises of increased economic collaboration and political acknowledgement, in return for Libya taking on the role as Europe's gatekeeper.

The continued presence and importance of the Italo-Libyan colonial history runs through all the phases of this thesis. This continuity can be broken down into a continuity of interests, colonial infrastructure, continuity in terms of the companies and personnel involved, as well as continuity in how certain aspects of colonial attitudes and management were retained. Findings are based on both primary archive material, a close reading of the treaty texts, interviews with professional who have long experience in Libya (otherwise a "black box" due to the security situation) and a wide array of secondary literature from across academic disciplines, critically examined and put into historical context. Ultimately this thesis shows how the EU, contrary to the common view of it being a "counter-institution" to the previous colonial projects of some of its member states, allowed colonial history to inform its present migration policies in the Mediterranean.

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List of Acronyms

ACS	*Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, Central Archives of the Italian State
AGIP	*Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli*, General Italian Oil Company
ASENI	*Archivio Storico dell'ENI*, Historical Archives of ENI
CORI	*Compagnia Ricerca Idrocarburi*, Hydrocarbons Search Company
DC	*Democrazia Cristiana*, Christian Democratic Party (Italy)
EC	European Community
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission
ENI	*Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi*, National Hydrocarbons Authority (Italy)
FIAT	*Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino*, Italian Automobiles Factory, Turin
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
GNA	Government of National Accord (Libya)
IRA	Irish Republican Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Alliance
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NOC	National Oil Company (Libya)
NTC	National Transitional Council (Libya)
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
PNF	*Partito Nazionale Fascista*, National Fascist Party (Italy)
PSI	*Partito Socialista Italiano*, Italian Socialist Party (Italy)
US	United States
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	First World War
WWII	Second World War

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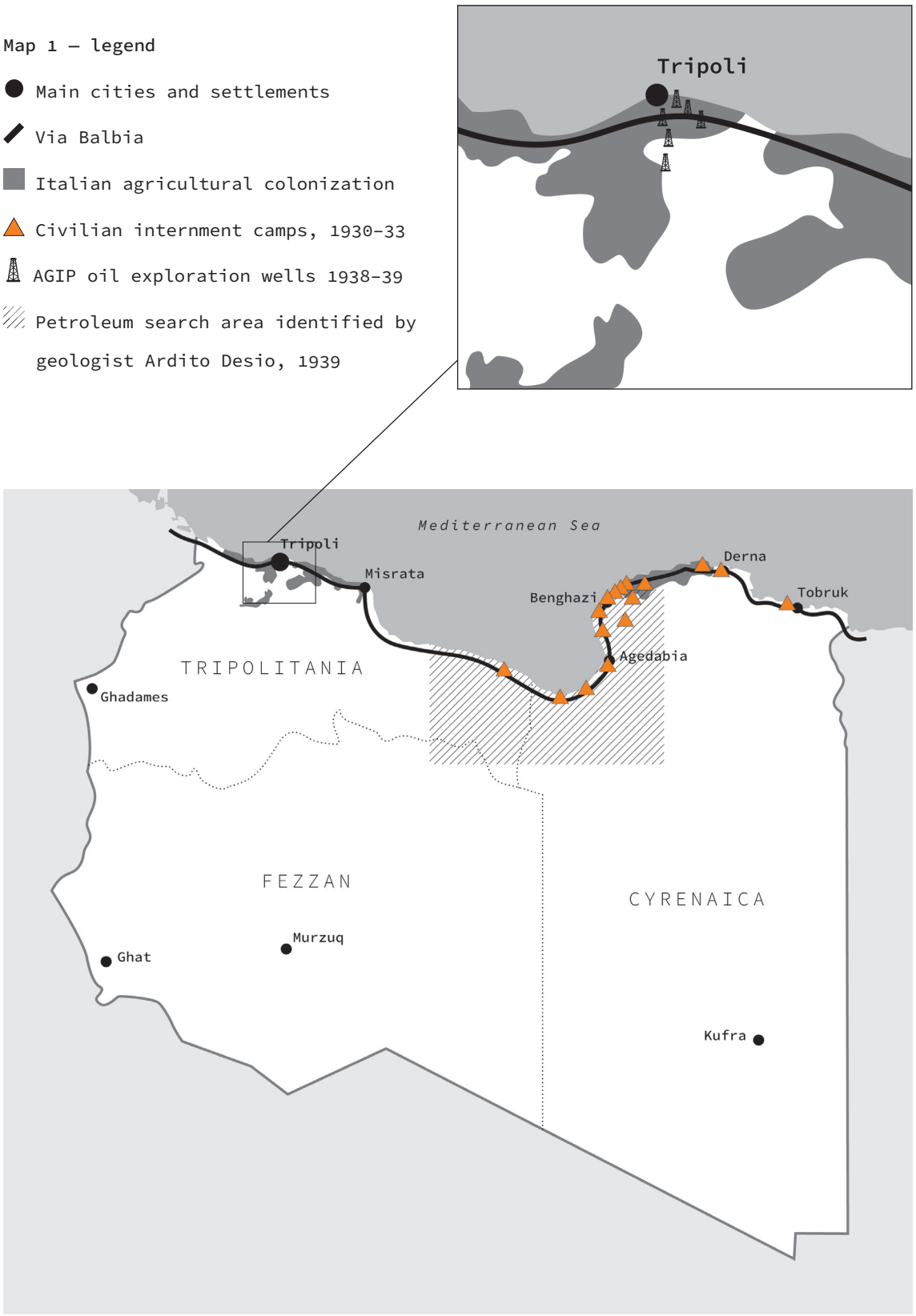
Maps

MAP 1 – THE ITALIAN COLONY OF LIBYA, 1940

This map shows the Italian colony of Libya in 1940, as well as places, events and infrastructure from the preceding colonial period. In Cyrenaica sixteen civilian internment camps set up in 1930-33 are shown. These camps housed the entire nomadic population of northern Cyrenaica in brutal conditions, emptying the land in an attempt to deny the Libyan uprising of support and refuge, causing the deaths of thousands in the process. We see the main cities and settlements, including the capital Tripoli, the provincial capital of Benghazi, and the desert oasis of Kufra, where the resistance leader Omar al-Mukhtar was taken prisoner and later hanged by the Italian colonial administration in 1931. The important coastal highway *Via Balbia* that opened in 1937 in is also visible. It allowed for quick transportation of troops to quell internal unrest, or to confront incursions along the borders with the French and British colonial holdings. The extent of Italian colonial agricultural settlement and terraforming is marked in grey, centered on the coastal areas in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The close-up map of coastal Tripolitania details the exploratory wells dug by AGIP under the leadership of geologist Ardito Desio between 1938-39. In the Bay of Sirte near Agedabia, the diagonal lines show an area Desio found particularly promising and where he urgently encouraged further test wells be drilled. However, the outbreak of WWII curtailed any such attempts. The borders shown between Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan do not indicate permanent provincial political boundaries, but are meant to indicate the historical subdivision of Libya into these three regions, preceding Italian occupation.

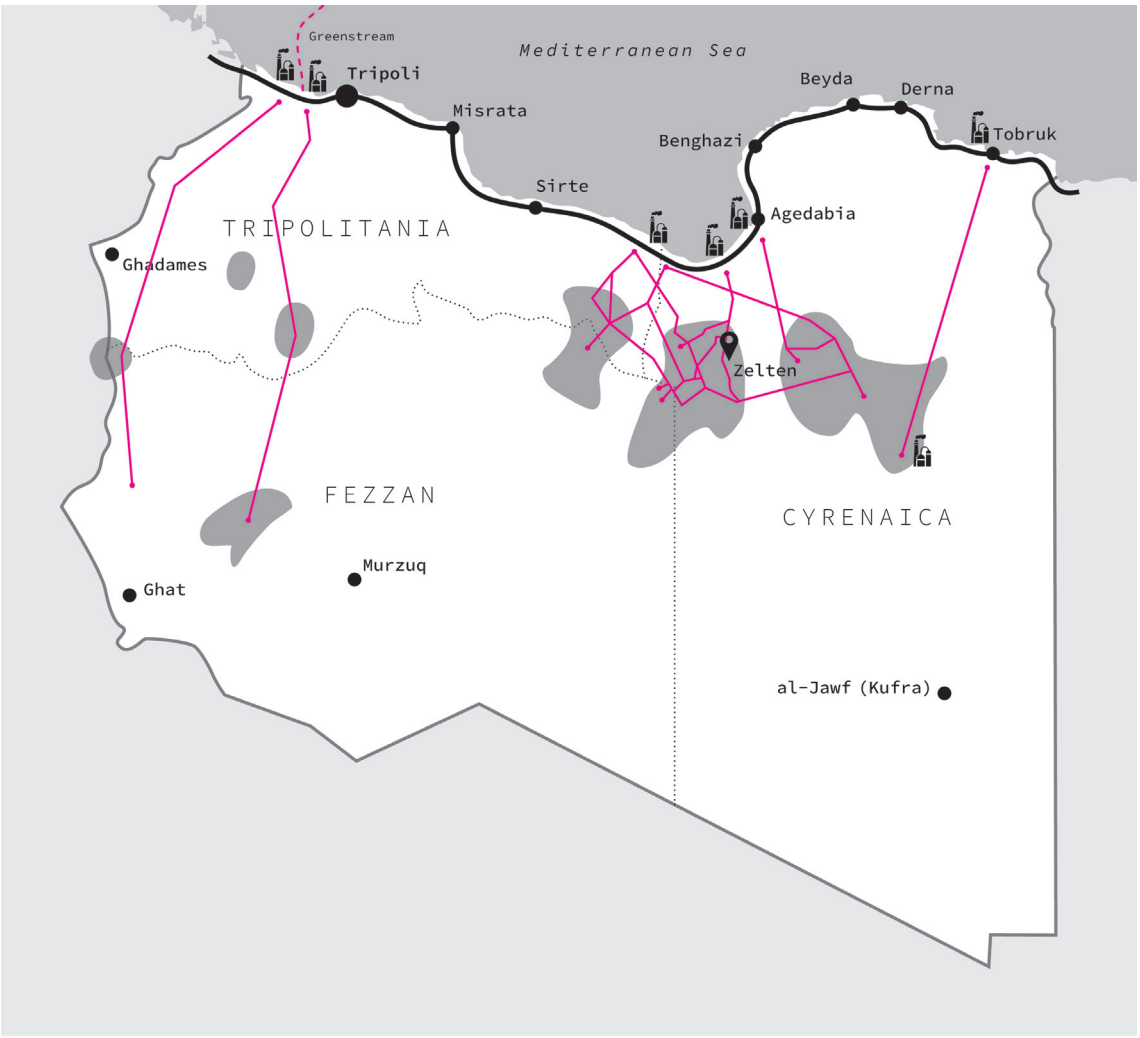
Compiled using information from Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, *Italian Colonialism* (2005), Cresti, "La Libia della colonizzazione agricola," (2009), Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya* (2009), Fowler, "Italian Colonization of Tripolitania," (1972) and the following archival documentation: ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48565, letter from Desio to AGIP's Research and Development section, Milan, January 30th, 1940; ACS, MAI, Direzione Generale Affari Economici e Finanziari (1918–1958), Affari Generali 1918–1953, Miniere e prodotti minerari AGIP (Libia) 1925–1940, b. 206, f. 1, letter from Graziani to the Ministry of Italian Africa, Tripoli, October 4th, 1940.


Map 1 – legend
Main cities and settlements
Via Balbia
Italian agricultural colonization
Civilian internment camps, 1930–33
AGIP oil exploration wells 1938–39
Petroleum search area identified by geologist Ardito Desio, 1939
Tripoli
Mediterranean Sea
Trippli
Misrata
Derna
Benghazi
Tobruk
Agedabia
TRIPOLITANIA
Ghadames
FEZZAN
Murzuq
Ghat
CYRENAICA
Kufra

MAP 2 – LIBYA UNDER GADDAFI, 2010

The second map shows Libya in 2010 before the fall of Gaddafi. His hometown of Sirte is included among the cities and settlements previously indicated. Events and infrastructure from the entire post-war period are shown. Note that the *Via Balbia* was renamed as the Libyan Coastal Highway. In this time period it served the dual purpose of having helped Italian and other foreign oil pioneers reach the interior in the Bay of Sirte in the 1960s to look for petroleum deposits, and later aiding Gaddafi with maintaining control of Libya after his coup in 1969. This illustrates colonial continuity exemplified by inherited and reinvented colonial infrastructure. The map also shows the major Libyan oil deposits, important oil and gas installations and pipelines, as well as the trans-Mediterranean pipeline "Greenstream" constructed by ENI in partnership with NOC to bring gas to Italy. Note how much of the oil deposits, pipelines and installations are in the Bay of Sirte, where Desio had encouraged searching as early as in 1939. The marking "Zelten" is where Esso found the first large and commercially viable oil finding in April 1959, to this day the biggest oil field in operation in the area. It is just within the prospective search area from map 1. Also note that the oasis of Kufra was renamed as al-Jawf in this time period.

Compiled using information from Asghedom, "Libya," (2015), Fitzgerald and Toaldo, "A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players," (2017) and van Genugten, "Libya after Gadhafi," (2011).



Map 2 – legend

- Main cities and settlements
- Libyan Coastal Highway, formerly known as Via Balbia
- Esso's oil discovery in April 1959
- Significant oil deposits
- Major oil and gas installations
- Oil and gas pipelines
- Greenstream gas pipeline to Italy

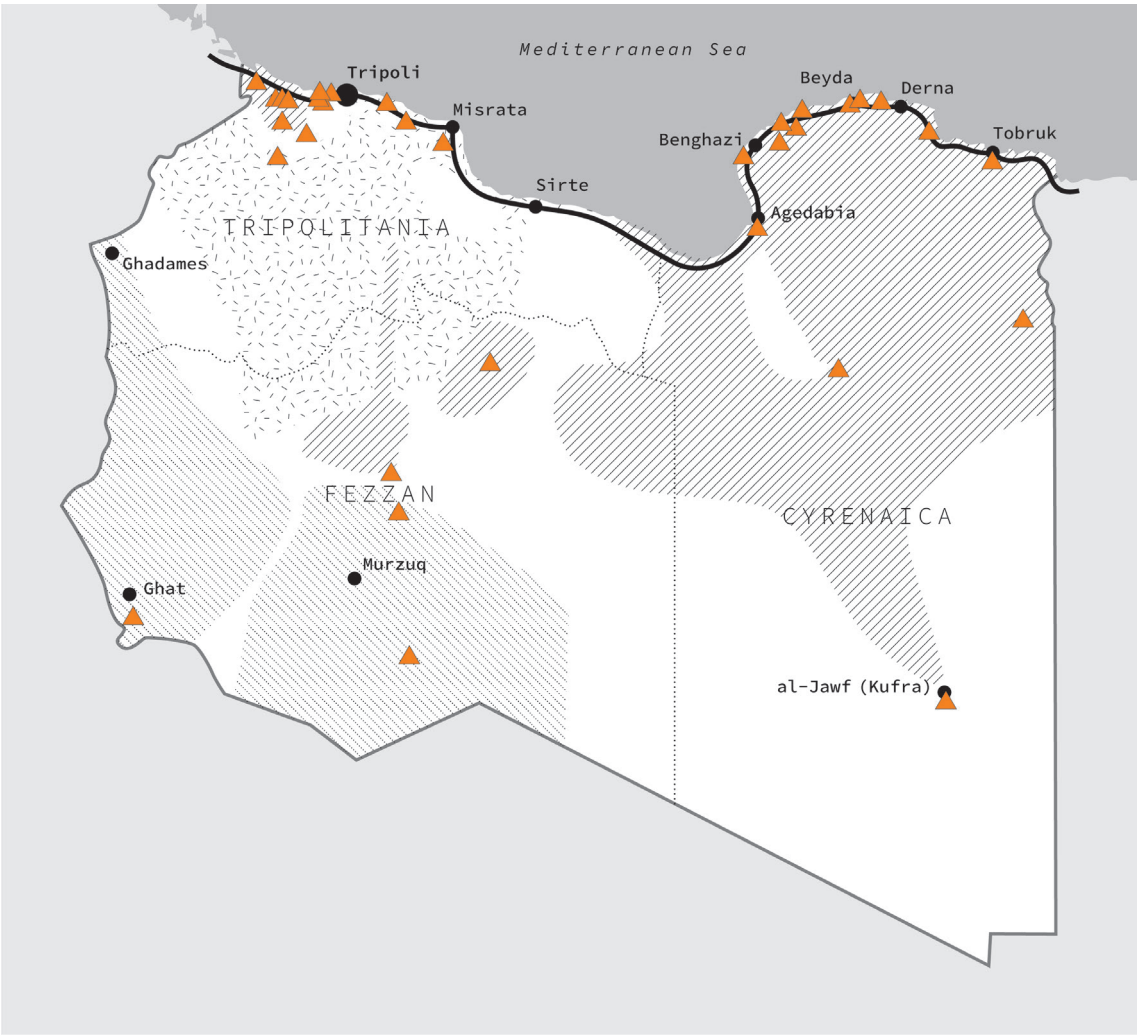
MAP 3 – MODERN-DAY LIBYA, 2017

This final map shows the political situation in Libya in 2017. In the power vacuum that came after the fall of Gaddafi, several new factions compete for dominance. In Tripoli the Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayez Mustafa al-Serraj and supported by the UN, controls territory in Tripolitania, with the backing of several urban militias from cities like Khoms, Misrata and Zliten. In Cyrenaica the Benghazi-based forces of general Haftar and his Libyan National Army (LNA) are their main rivals. In the southeastern desert areas of Fezzan, meanwhile, Touareg and Tobou militias are in control. The breakdown of Libya into areas roughly equivalent to the pre-colonial Ottoman provinces forcibly united into Libya, is noteworthy.

The Libyan Coastal Highway now has a new purpose: to help the Libyan coast guard and various militias keep migrants disembarking from the coastline before they can reach Europe. The coast guard is partially trained by Italian and other EU countries, while according to media and NGO sources, certain militias allegedly receive Italian funding for this purpose.

UNHCR has recorded several migrant detention centers holding migrants in precarious conditions. The camps are both government controlled and privately run, with some funded by Italy and the EU. Along the coastline of Cyrenaica in the east, many of these centers are located in the same areas and that housed civilian internment camps in the 1930s, as seen in Map 1.

Compiled using information from Adams, Koen, Centanni, Evan, and Djordje Djukic, Political Geography Now, "Libyan Civil War Map & Timeline," (2018), UNHCR, "Libya: Detention Centers," (2017) and van Genugten, "Libya after Gadhafi," (2011).



Map 3 – legend

- Main cities and settlements
- Libyan Coastal Highway
- Migrant detention centers
- Areas controlled by the Government of National Accord (GNA)
- Areas controlled by the Libyan National Army (LNA)
- Areas controlled by Tuareg and Toubou militias

Introduction

THESIS

How can colonial history help us to understand and explain the present European migration regime at work in the Mediterranean? I aim to deconstruct common ideas we have about this regime, a regime elaborated and enforced by the European Union (EU) and Italy in cooperation with Libya. We often view current affairs in an unreflective way, not taking into account that our viewpoint itself is shaped by historical trajectories, societal contexts and past political frameworks. In this, colonial relationships between former colonial powers and colonized states are often central, the case in question being the colonial relationship between Italy and Libya. A common assumption about the EU is that it represents a distinct rupture with the previous colonial and imperial agendas of its individual member states. Instead, increased European integration is often represented as a post-colonial clean slate constructed in the aftermath of the Second World War (WWII) based on humanitarian ideals and a rights regime inspired by the European Enlightenment. This includes the EU's approaches to migration, despite the challenges of recent years coming with the so-called 2015 "migration crisis."[1] My thesis argument instead maintains that an asymmetrical balance of power originating with the Italian colonial occupation of Libya has been continuously reinvented and reasserted through a century of political and economic relationships between the two countries. These relationships have in turn played a key part in how first Italy and later the EU have built up a migration regime in the Mediterranean, a regime which over the past two decades has been externalized to include close collaboration with Libya on how to handle migration to Europe.

I perceive this migration regime as willing go beyond what can be called acceptable from the perspective of the rule of law and human rights, set down in the institutional and legal framework of the European Convention on Human Rights. A prime example of such behavior includes engaging in *refoulement* of refugees at sea through forcibly

[1] The term raises many questions: is it a humanitarian crisis for the migrants themselves? A crisis overwhelming the EU's border controls with too many arrivals? Or a crisis of European immigration and asylum policies found lacking and inadequate? Since "migration crisis" is a disputed expression, I will put it in quotation marks throughout this thesis. It is worth remembering that migration across the Mediterranean is not a new phenomenon, nor a European desire to stem and regulate this movement of people. See Jumbert, "Control or Rescue at Sea?," 675, 691.

returning them to North African coasts.[2] The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) condemned *refoulement* in 2012 at the judgment in the *Hirsi Jamaa and others v. Italy* case. Italy has also entered into bilateral agreements intended to help return migrants to third-party countries such as Libya—a nation that is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and which is currently torn between several factions. In this conflict, various parties are fighting for power after the toppling of autocrat Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

According to international relations scholar Christina Oelgemöller, since the 1970s we have seen a Europe in which politicians, mass media and nationalist right-wing factions have created a conversational climate in constant crisis mode when discussing migration and migrants.[3] She also claims governments have obscured how they elaborate their migration policy, making it less publicly visible and subsequently more difficult to challenge. Applying this analysis, I see the 27 EU member states as having been unable to form coherent, common migration handling practices. Due to this inaction certain colonial methods and modes of thinking have been allowed a new lease on life by Italian officialdom, the Libyan ruling elites and EU paralysis alike.

This thesis does not imply a purely neo-colonial relationship where Italy's word is law in Libya. Along with the continuity highlighted there has also been a great deal of change to account for, most importantly the rise of Libyan agency after independence in 1951 and the country's growing economic clout as an important petroleum exporter. Nor do I mean to say that all involved here are monolithic nation-state or supranational actors. Instead, my thesis will attempt to "break open" the actors involved, showing the competing interests and narratives that exist within them.

The time period I investigate runs from the beginning of Italian conquest and colonization of Libya in 1911, up to the Valletta Memorandum of February 2nd 2017 between Italy (its initiatives in turn partially financially subsidized by the EU) and the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA). This memorandum is a key document dealing with the channeling of immigration into the EU, as well as what the parties can jointly do to control and stem this movement of people. The scope of time and depth of investigation may be ambitious for a master thesis. Nonetheless, it is important to start with the colonial

[2] A French term meaning expulsion of potential asylum seekers to a country were they risk persecution, which is forbidden under article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

[3] Oelgemöller, *The Evolution of Migration Management*, 1.

period to supply the historicizing that has frequently been lacking in the writing done so far on the topic. Too often it seems as though academics have split up both fields of study and time periods among themselves; historians writing about Libya most often focus on the colonial epoch or WWII engagements in the Libyan Desert.[4] Political scientists have, in turn, frequently and narrowly investigated the Gaddafi regime as a form of governmental anomaly.[5] More recently, scholars of all disciplines supply headline-driven and often frantic policy papers trying to make sense of the complex and chaotic situation in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring and Gaddafi's death.[6] Historical depth is unfortunately a casualty in a lot of the recent writing in this last category, which is where taking a longer view and connecting time periods and events previously portrayed as disparate and disconnected provides novelty and perspective. Historians Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller have written about a "double marginalization" of Italian colonial history, meaning that it has been sparsely covered within both Italian historiography and the studies done on colonialism in general.[7] My thesis seeks to remedy this lack of academic attention, instead attempting to show that Italo-Libyan colonial history is far more relevant for a wider field than what has been previously considered.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

My argument comprises four parts divided by chapters, which are guided by a set of crucial questions. Since I am focusing on continuous processes and not single historical events, the years covered in each chapter will occasionally overlap.

1. *Reimagining Rome on The "Fourth Shore" (1911–1943)*[8]

The first chapter addresses the question of what shape direct Italian colonialism in Libya took, and which constituting elements of it are important for later time periods. To say anything worthwhile about colonial continuity and the longevity of colonialist ways of thinking, it is vital to first write about the colonial period itself. This includes investigating

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[4] Kelly, *War & Politics in the Desert*; Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia*.

[5] Nicoll, "Forging a Democracy from Libya's Jamahiriya."

[6] Alcaro, "Opting for Second Best in Libya?"; Gausci, "Back to Old Tricks?"; Giuffré, "From Turkey to Libya"; Tocci and Cassarino, "Rethinking the EU's Mediterranean Policies Post-1/11."

[7] Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, introduction to *Italian Colonialism,* 1.

[8] The term "Fourth Shore" was popularized in the Fascist era to convey that Libya was an integral part of Italy's coastline.

the formation of cultural and economic ties with Italy, the effect of colonialism on levels of literacy and education in Libya, and the 1930s system of internment camps for Libyan civilians supporting and harboring "rebels" against Italian rule. All of these elements prove important for later chapters: Libya's entry into Italy's political and economic orbit is the foundation of today's bargaining between the two countries with EU involvement, the colonial mismanagement of education proved important for later Libyan labor participation, and the camps of the 1930s were an earlier and more brutal incarnation of the present migrant detention centers in today's Libya.

2. *Turning Water into Oil: Colonial Continuity in the Italo-Libyan Petroleum Industry (1938–1973)*

As the petroleum industry binds Libya and Italy together and has proven very important in bilateral political agreements dealing with migration, knowing its history and colonial origins is crucial for any further understanding. How then do the post-war activities of ENI in Libya play a part in that country's decolonization history?[9] Despite the reigning historiography saying otherwise, I contend that ENI's activity in Libya drew on its predecessor company AGIP's exploration in the prewar colonial era, starting in 1938.[10] Secondly, how did Libya make use of its growing agency fueled by oil riches running up to the 1973 "oil shock"? Accounting for Libyan agency and involvement in the oil shock of 1973 helps draw a more even-handed portrait of the actors involved. It also had ramifications for the way Europe viewed migration.

3. *From the Oil Shock to the Amsterdam Treaty: The Importance of Schengen for Italy's Migration Policies (1973–1997)*

Which international and domestic events, processes and pressures helped bring about the stringent migration regime formed in Italy? I contend that the oil shock changed how Europe viewed the Global South in general and the Southern Mediterranean in particular, resulting in its opting for increased European integration instead of cross-Mediterranean engagement. This integration through the Schengen system also meant securitized migra-

[9] *Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi,* one of the world's major oil companies in which the Italian state holds a golden share of 30.303%. This percentage of total shares gives it the right of decisive vote.

[10] *Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli,* founded in 1926 as an Italian state petroleum monopoly. After WWII it became the foundation for ENI and is currently a subsidiary of the company.

tion handling and forced European countries like Italy to significantly strengthen its external border controls. In the same time period Italian domestic political developments following the end of the Cold War brought changes that pushed the country towards stricter border and migrant policies. These developments included the rise of a host of new political parties and politicians like Silvio Berlusconi with his *Forza Italia* and Umberto Bossi in charge of *Lega Nord,* who occasionally capitalized on increasing unease with rising migration to Italy. From 1973 onwards Italy for the first time in modern history became a net receiver of immigration, in contrast to its long-standing status as a country of emigrants.

4. *Behind the Agreements: Mediterranean Migration Management on Colonial Undercurrents (1998–2017)*

The past two decades have brought a flurry of agreements, treaties, memoranda and communiqués between Italy and Libya, meant to address various topics pertinent to their relationship such as trade, migration, resource management and the colonial past. I choose the three most important documents, namely the first appearance of migration as a topic of Italo-Libyan bilateral discussions in the Joint Communiqué of 1998, the linkage between colonialism, petroleum and migration made in the 2008 Friendship Treaty between the two countries, and finally the 2017 Valletta Memorandum of Understanding, where the EU as a whole is financially implicated in funding the memorandum goals. Building on the preceding chapters and the findings therein, I analyze the treaty texts and their historical contexts, with an eye to identifying both colonial continuity and the use of colonialism as a "usable past" meant to further migration management and make the regime truly Mediterranean.[11]

STATE OF RESEARCH

I discuss secondary literature as it relates to each of the four key issues brought together in my thesis: colonialism, the history of the Italo-Libyan oil industry, the "Europeanization" of EU member-state domestic policies and its relationship with both the 1973 oil shock and the Schengen system, and Mediterranean migration regimes elaborated and externalized by Italy and the EU. These four strands are often viewed as unrelated, but as this thesis will

[11] Blake, "The Usable Past, the Comfortable Past, and the Civic Past," 423.

show they are intimately tied to each other.

Regarding colonialism, both anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler and historian Andrew Zimmerman stress that colonialism creates both colonizer and colonized, with both shaping and influencing each other.[12] The same would likely be true of post-colonial processes between former colonizers and formerly colonized, on the basis of their shared history. Another key scholar of colonialism is historian Angelo Del Boca, often seen as the first academic to question common Italian assumptions of their purportedly good-hearted colonialism. One lasting claim he counters is that the Italian colonizers were predominantly *brava gente* or benevolent people, more benign than other earlier and more established colonial empires like the British and French dominions.[13] Italian historian Nicola Labanca has furthered Del Boca's argument and academic legacy. He uncovers current Italian attitudes towards their colonial past and how this past is missing from many current political discussions.[14] A comprehensive work that sheds a light on both the colonial period and the historiography of academic work done in this area is *Italian Colonialism* (2005), edited by aforementioned scholars Ben-Ghiat and Fuller. Within this volume of collected articles appear the voices of veterans in the field, younger scholars and, importantly, the voices of academics from the formerly colonized countries, such as Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, Haile Larebo and Tekeste Negash.[15] This broadens the origins of my secondary literature. Finally, an article that truly illuminates the long-term relevance of colonial history for both Italy and Libya is US historian Pamela Ballinger's "Colonial Twilight: Italian Settlers and the Long Decolonization of Libya." She shows the importance of Gaddafi's expulsion in 1970 of the Italian community remaining in Libya after the colonial epoch, and what it meant for both countries.[16] Interestingly, an Italian economic activity that was untouched by this expulsion was the oil company ENI's holdings in Libyan oil fields.

The scholarship related to Libya's oil industry tends to be quite politicized. There are competing views on whether or not ENI's presence in Libya constitutes prolonged colonization, or balanced dealings between a newly-liberated nation and the former col-

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[12] Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories," 155; Zimmerman, "Africa in Imperial and Transnational History," 331.

[13] See for example Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia: Tripoli bel suol d'amore*; Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Libia: dal fascismo a Gheddafi*; Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente?*

[14] Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 142.

[15] Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, *Italian Colonialism*.

[16] Ballinger, "Colonial Twilight," 815.

onizing country as equal partners. Italian historian Pinella Di Gregorio has somewhat brazenly described ENI acting as a "special agent of decolonization,"[17] positioning herself closely to the official ENI public relations line. Historian Giuliano Garavini, instead considers the struggle between petroleum-producing countries in the Third World and the large oil companies based in the Global North as a struggle over decolonization. He views the oil shock as signaling a turning point in this struggle, where the formerly colonized world "balanced the books" after centuries of inequality.[18] Another relevant work is Massimiliano Cricco's article "L'ENI in Libia: dal trattato italo-libico del 1956 ai negoziati degli anni Settanta." ("ENI in Libya: From the 1956 Italo-Libyan Treaty to the Negotiations in the 1970s") Cricco hones in on the particulars of ENI's negotiations with a set of various Libyan governments ranging from the Zanussi monarchy set up in the 1950s to the autocratic regime under Muammar Gaddafi after the coup in 1969.[19]

There has already been a lot of scholarly work done on the topics of the oil shock, Schengen and Europeanization by academics in a variety of disciplines, inquiries I seek to connect and historicize. Academics such as Elena Calandri, Simone Paoli and Massimiliano Trentin have identified the oil shock as a watershed moment not only for the economy worldwide and North–South relations, but also for having shaped European Community (EC)–Mediterranean interaction in the decades after 1973.[20] This can be taken a step further to show how the consequences of that event set the stage for the Schengen Agreement. Political scientist Simone Paoli argues that this agreement primarily aimed to protect the European core states from undesired immigration from the Global South. This would happen through a reinforced externalization of control and securitization of borders, in parallel with an opening of restrictions internally on the continent to speed up travel and commerce.[21] Paoli's findings can be connected to domestic Italian political developments following the Schengen area elaborations. Here, changing circumstances led to more Italian criticism of both the EU and migration. Political scientist Lucia Quaglia refers to this

[17] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 196.

[18] Garavini, "Completing Decolonization," 483.

[19] In the 19th century an Islamic leader from Algeria, al-Zanussi, had settled in the eastern part of Libya, Cyrenaica. His disciples were all referred to as Zanussi. They were not a tribe, but rather a congregation of different tribes united by their loyalty to their religious leader. Idris al-Zanussi became the first king of autonomous Libya in December 1951.

[20] Calandri and Paoli, "Europe and the Mediterranean," 6, 10–11; Trentin, "Divergence in the Mediterranean," 91.

[21] Securitization of border controls involves an overriding focus on threat assessment and prevention in all management of people moving across national boundaries. Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 131.

as the rise of a "Euro-realist" political paradigm within Italy.[22] Sociologist Sara Casella Colombeau adds that the European core Paoli speaks of to was reinvented in a new form centered in the major continental European powers, to the detriment of countries on the European periphery. She claims that this foundation of a new political core also affirmed the position of a much older center of power, namely the nation state.[23] This stands in contrast to other scholarly work that only sees a continuous erosion of the nation state, with nationalist politics losing importance in the face of increased European integration.[24] Instead I view national political priorities as having been reinvented in new ways: when certain governments of the EEC, such as in France and West Germany, struggled to adopt a more restrictive immigration policy on the national level due to unexpected and persistent resistance from parliamentary opposition, civil society and political forces domestically, they instead turned to the supranational level to reinvigorate their legislative push.[25]

Interestingly, the restrictive migration handling forced upon states such as Italy was in turn ultimately went through a process of Europeanization, with the EU moving to a supporting position behind Italian initiatives in the Mediterranean. A noteworthy historian in this context is Antonio Morone. His work catalogues an EU adoption of Italian migration methods in articles such as "Il processo di Khartoum: l'Italia e l'Europa contro le migrazioni," ("The Khartoum Process: Italy and Europe In Opposition to Migration") and "Policies, Practices, and Representations Regarding Sub-Saharan Migrants in Libya: From the Partnership with Italy to the Post-Qadhafi Era," in *EurAfrican Borders and Migration Management – Political Cultures, Contested Spaces, and Ordinary Lives* (2017). The goal of migration regime elaboration and externalization was to push the boundaries beyond the Mediterranean Sea itself and into North African countries like Libya, informed by the colonial experience Italy had previously had in the region. Morone's writing brings to light the kind of political gamesmanship that has come to dominate EU relations with Africa, where various incentives are offered in order to stem and channel migration. His work also connects initiatives on the part of both the EU and Italy with Libya before and after Gaddafi, highlighting continuity at play in the shared migratory practices of all three actors.

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[22] Quaglia, "The Role of Italy in the European Union," 134.

[23] Colombeau, "Policing the Internal Schengen Borders," 480.

[24] Garavini, "The Colonies Strike Back," 318.

[25] Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 129.

Multi-disciplinary academic Emanuela Paoletti, in her article "Power Relations and International Migration: The Case of Italy and Libya," investigates what migration has meant for the power balance between Italy and Libya, looking at a wide number of their bilateral treaties, including two of the three I analyze in chapter four. Her conclusion is that Italy has been the party primarily making concessions and compromises to appease Libya, subsequently weakening rather than strengthening its position vis-à-vis its former colony.[26] It is true that both sides had their own agency in the relationship and Libya was by no means a blank slate onto which Italy could project power and policy. That being said, the continuity displayed over decades in Italian externalization attempts, despite both resistance from European legal institutions and regime-change in Libya, makes it likely that Italian political leadership held up migration management externalization to Libya as a successful strategy, not a loss of face.

Of the three treaties discussed, the most seminal agreement is the 2008 Italy–Libya *Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation* (hereafter referred to as the Friendship Treaty), signed into law by Muammar Gaddafi and Silvio Berlusconi, then in his third term as Italy's Prime Minister. Legal scholar Natalino Ronzitti, in his "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya: New Prospects for Cooperation in the Mediterranean?", provided an optimistic view of what this agreement could mean. His reading is thorough, but fails to mention both countries' instrumentalization of colonial history, which was turned into a "usable past" in order to trade an increase in Libyan border control and a clampdown on "illegal" migration in return for Italian financial aid and investment.[27] Here anthropologist Chiara De Cesari makes a very valuable contribution with "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation: Foreclosing Memory and the 2008 Italy – Libya Friendship Treaty." She questions Italy's apology and promises of colonial reparation, looking into what options doing so gave to both Berlusconi and Gaddafi. There is no simple answer, unless one chooses to accept Berlusconi's summary of the treaty as meaning "fewer illegal immigrants, more gas and more oil."[28]

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[26] Paoletti, "Power Relations and International Migration," 283–84.

[27] The concept of "illegal" migration requires some clarification: as set down in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is not a crime to leave one's country of origin. A migrant may not receive legal authorization to enter or stay in a specific country, but the label "illegal" has been widely criticized for criminalizing migrants even before they have had their applications processed. Furthermore, there are increasingly fewer legal options to enter Europe left for the majority of people fleeing their native countries. Neither do the alternative terms "unauthorized" or "irregular" offer much clarity. I will therefore use "illegal" in quotation marks when related to migration and migrants throughout this thesis. See Jumbert, "Control or Rescue at Sea?," 678–79; Blake, "The Usable Past, the Comfortable Past, and the Civic Past," 423.

[28] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 317.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

My overall goal with this thesis is to write a "history of the present" as exemplified by Andrew Zimmerman among others, linking history with other academic disciplines in order to move my writing up until our own time.[29] I will be guided by the concept set out by the editors of the *History of the Present* journal, where they argue for connecting the present with the past not as an unavoidable or path-dependent outcome, but instead contingent on changing and evolving power relationships over time. How do these relationships draw on the past, and when is this past used to enable or challenge them?[30] To those who say that this brings a danger of "presentism" to writing history, I would argue that the majority of academic work done on my thesis topic is at present quite colored by presentism and in real need of a longer historical arc. This is where the discipline of history can prove useful and complementary to other lines of inquiry.

An approach I will employ is found in *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism* (2014), by Swedish social scientists Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson. The book deals with the Eurafrica project of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1950s, a project judged by the authors to signal a European desire for further colonization and continued colonial relationships between the two continents. Opposed to the common perception of the EU as being exclusively about European integration as a reaction to the decolonization of Europe's previous colonial holdings, Hansen and Jonsson see this Eurafrican idea as having shaped relationships between the EU and several African countries to this day. Eurafrica as a conceptual tool shines a spotlight on the connected history of both European colonialism and integration, allowing for a better understanding of the EU and its engagement in the Mediterranean and North Africa.[31]

Another post-colonial term I use is "colonial discourse" borrowed from social scientist Tanja Petrović.[32] According to Petrović, this discourse can apply outside of a direct colonial relationship between two countries, indicating a prolongation of the attitudes and methods involved in how one sees and treats the other. This concept is highly relevant for how Italian and EU interests have been furthered in Libya after the end of colonial

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[29] Zimmerman, "Guinea Sam Nightingale and Magic Marx in Civil War Missouri," 167; Zimmerman, "Primitive Art, Primitive Accumulation," 5.

[30] "Introducing History of the Present," 1–2.

[31] Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, xiii, 19.

[32] Petrović, "Europe's New Colonialism," 109.

occupation. These interests have shown a notable mutability over the time period investigated, ranging from agricultural settler colonialism before WWII, petroleum extraction in the post-war era, and more recently, Mediterranean migration management.

The final piece of valuable post-colonial terminology is "colonial aphasia," launched by aforementioned anthropologist Stoler. It refers not to the repression, forgetting or lack of knowledge of colonial history, but rather a missing ability to comprehend, connect and speak of it in a proper way.[33] The colonial past has increasingly been brought to the fore in political documents between Italy, Libya and the EU, but the goal has often been to use it as a springboard to address other issues, not to understand and interpret that history.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Due to the grave security situation in Libya it should be considered a "black box" and not accessible to me in my research. Despite this limitation regarding Libyan sources, I was able to retrieve a substantial amount of archival material in Italy that partially compensate. My primary research was undertaken in the *Archivio Centrale dello Stato* (ACS) and in the *Archivio Storico dell'ENI* (ASENI).[34] Halfway through my thesis I move beyond the confines of traditional historical investigations and into the very recent past. I therefore supplement my source material with literature from the social sciences, analysis of three key Italo-Libyan agreement texts, media and NGO sources, and interviews conducted with a freelance journalist and two NGO staff members active in Libya. These interviews are further meant to counter personal limitations and biases, with my knowledge of Italian and a lack of knowledge in Arabic leading me primarily to sources in Italian found in Italy. The interviews with journalist Nancy Porsia and with "Niccolò" and "Giulia" (pseudonyms, real names withheld upon request) employed by an Italian humanitarian organization long active in Libya (name redacted), were conducted in person as semi-structured qualitative expert interviews where I raised certain issues and topics for discussion, but generally wanted my interview subjects to guide the conversation.

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[33] Stoler, *Duress*, 128–29, 156–57.

[34] Translated as the Central Archives of the Italian State and the Historical Archives of ENI.

THE SPHERE

AN ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER FOR THE HOME

Volume XLVII. No. 615. {REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER} London, November 4, 1911. [WITH SUPPLEMENT] Price Sixpence.

DRAWN BY EDOUARD MATANIA

THE ITALIANS IN TRIPOLI—ITALY DRAWS THE SWORD OF OLD ROME

In this symbolic picture the artist has visualised a stirring idea. Young Italy has dared to draw once more the sword of the Cæsars in northern Africa, and all the world is awaiting the issue

Drawn in 1911 by Eduardo Matania for the British illustrated newspaper *The Sphere,* the image shows a recently disembarked Italian marine finding the skeletal remains of a Roman legionary on Libya's shores, grabbing his sword with one hand to continue fighting while cradling Italy's flag in the other. This drawing illustrates the instrumentalization of history in connecting a reimagined Roman past with Italy's contemporary colonial project. The original caption reads: "Young Italy has dared to draw once more the sword of the Caesars in northern Africa, and all the world awaits the issue."

1. Reimagining Rome on the Fourth Shore (1911–1943)

INTRODUCTION

On the afternoon of October 3rd 1911, Italian war ships attacked the Ottoman provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in northern Africa, bombarding the few urban centers along the coast, chief among them Tripoli. Two days later, after disembarking at the head of 1700 marines, Ship-of-the-line Captain Umberto Cagni declared to the few remaining inhabitants of the city not to have fled inland during the initial barrage: "You are now our children and hold the same rights as all other Italians, from which you are inseparable and undistinguishable by law. Therefore raise your voices alongside your Italian brothers: Long live the King, long live Italy!"[35]

This was of course a gross overstatement, both hypocritical and tragic faced with all the pain, violence and death to come in the following decades of Italian colonial rule over this central part of North Africa. These obvious negative consequences aside, the attack and subsequent occupation of what came to be called Libya was also momentous in that it did bring with it the beginnings of a complete transformation of the country, forcibly drawing it into the economic, social and political orbit of Italy. The colonial period laid the foundations for an asymmetrical power balance between the two countries that I contend is visible and important even today. It furthermore set in motion processes and cemented attitudes that still influence how the two countries view each other and negotiate their many present-day relationships, including the one most vital to this thesis, Mediterranean migration management.

This chapter proceeds chronologically through the colonial epoch, briefly sketching the major events and their consequences in order to address elements that are important for the overall thesis of colonial continuity. The first section, running from 1911 to 1923, begins with a discussion of the Italian rationale for starting the war of occupation and what this means for later ideas of what Libya should and could mean for Italy. It also touches upon the foundations of their first economic relationship, namely Italian agricultural settler colonialism, begun shortly after a peace treaty was signed with the Ottoman Empire in 1912.

The second section runs from 1923 to 1933 and details the continued Libyan

[35] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 7.

opposition to Italian occupation, which forced the latter onto the defensive starting already in 1914–15 due to Italian involvement in the First World War (WWI), reducing the number of standing troops in Libya. This opposition was brutally suppressed by the newly empowered fascist government of Italy and the colonies, using methods such as aerial poison gas bombings and internment camps set up for the civilian population in the eastern province of Cyrenaica. In this very same area there are today several migrant detention centers paid for and supported by Italian and EU agencies and governed by local Libyan authorities. I am not claiming that they are equally brutal, but from a historical perspective it would be an oversight not to not tell this story despite its absence from headlines and reports on the detainment centers of our own time.

The third and final section covers the years from 1934 to 1943. It starts with the unification of the original Ottoman provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as well as the interior desert territory of the Fezzan into the *Colonia di Libia,* referencing the ancient Greek name for the territories found west of the Nile.[36] In doing so, the Italian colonial administration wanted to signal a clear break with the Ottoman past and instead link the colony to a preceding Greco-Roman tradition, reinforcing their irredentist claims to the area. This, however, did not represent a meaningful unification of the people inhabiting the land, as clan loyalty and local communities were the framework people lived within and related to. This was the case with many colonized people all over the world, forced to negotiate boundaries and delimitations imposed upon them by European colonial overlords. The divisions swept under the carpet by this forced colonial unification are highly visible again today, as Libya post-Gaddafi broke down into three self-ruled areas roughly equivalent to the old provinces, containing many smaller power centers and city-states within them. I conclude both the section and the chapter with the 1943 Allied defeat of the combined German and Italian forces under the command of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, which forced them out of North Africa and effectively ended Italian colonial rule in Libya.

As my thesis is about the legacy and importance of the colonial relationship and not primarily about the period itself, I will not attempt to provide a full and detailed account of Italy's occupation of Libya. Rather, my focus will be the identification and presentation of those events, relationships and themes that first appeared during this time

[36] St. John, *Historical Dictionary of Libya,* 148.

and that are still relevant for the Mediterranean migration regime today.

SCRAMBLING FOR A SEAT AT THE TABLE: ITALY ATTACKS LIBYA, 1911–1923

The same year that Italy attacked Ottoman holdings on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, it celebrated fifty years as a unified country. How did such a young nation, which had only recently fought off foreign influence, justify attacking and subjugating lands across the sea? What do the reasons and justifications given for the colonial endeavor say about Italian attitudes and expectations of the area that was to become Libya, and in what way might they be relevant today?

It is important to note that the rush to acquire colonies in North Africa was far from uniformly embraced in Italy.[37] The campaign had some important contemporary Italian critics, such as prominent historian and socialist politician Gaetano Salvemini, who famously called it a meaningless war over a sandbox.[38] Writing in 1914, just a few years after the first phase of the conflict had ended in 1912, Salvemini methodically demolished the reasons for war offered by the government led by Giovanni Giolitti and uncritically echoed by a sympathetic press in the run-up to the attack. Giolitti's government in fact bypassed the Italian parliament completely and went to war without its approval or ratification, but with large support among the political class.[39] Salvemini in contrast pointed out that Libya was in fact not an earthly paradise with vast agricultural promise that had simply languished under Ottoman mismanagement, nor had the local population risen up in support of the Italian invaders to cast off the chains of Ottoman rule when the Italians landed on their shores.[40] He also fiercely attacked the outlandish source usage quoted and misrepresented in both Italian political discourse and the press, such as recruiting ancient historians Herodotus and Pliny the Elder to the colonial cause. Their centuries-old writings on the fertility of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were presented as evidence of both the inherent natural wealth of the area and a testament to what Roman ingenuity had succeeded in accomplishing through farming and terraforming, before the Arabs and Ottomans

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[37] Nor did the quest for Italian colonies in Africa begin in 1911. Both private companies and Italian governments had in fact been actively securing colonial holdings in the Horn of Africa since the 1870s. See Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 9.

[38] Cricco, "L'Eni in Libia," 566; some scholars instead attribute the quote to Italian parliamentarian Francesco Nitti. See Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities,* 110.

[39] Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 13.

[40] Nocentini, "L'Italia della guerra di Libia (1911-1912)," 339, 344; Salvemini, *Come siamo andati in Libia,* 1:23, 103, 130, 148, 304–5; Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 144.

"squandered" these resources.[41] It is worth noting that Salvemini was not an opponent of colonization per se, only the value of colonizing Libya in particular.[42]

Curiously, another critic of the colonial campaign, who at the time had little clout but would later prove to be one of the most important people of the 20th century, was imprisoned for taking part in anti-war demonstrations when hostilities broke out in 1911. This was Benito Mussolini, then a 28-year-old journalist working for various socialist media outlets, only a few years away from forming the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) and changing the course of Italian politics.[43]

Having noted the opposition to the colonial war of occupation and the disputed rationale for attacking the Ottoman Empire, it is natural to look at the reasons for the public relations campaign and political maneuvering necessary to go to war. One recurring motivation later historians often point to is the desire to build Italian national pride to counter its image as the "last and the least of the Great Powers."[44] This could be done by playing upon the Roman legacy of modern Italy, claiming it was simply returning to Roman North Africa and that Libya somehow was already theirs to take back from illegitimate Arab and Ottoman rulers.[45] Occupying Libya was also a way for Italy to demonstrate to other European powers that it, too, was a modern nation state, which at the time included engaging in prestigious empire building and colonization.

For historians such as Christopher Seton-Watson, this pursuit of prestige and imperial glory was the main drive behind Italian colonization in the Maghreb.[46] I find this reading too simplistic, echoing the essentialist views of southern Europeans as being lazier and more irrational than their Northern European counterparts. This is a view that has plagued Europe for a long time, perhaps best symbolized in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* as well as later incarnations of the same idea.[47] The goal of attaining national honor and renown certainly played a part in all colonial endeavors, regardless of which European country acted as the metropole. Still, would labeling the

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[41] Salvemini, *Come siamo andati in Libia,* 1:130–31.

[42] Writing in 1943 as Allied and Italian anti-fascist forces were taking control of large parts of the country, he pleaded for Italy's and indeed all existing colonies to be jointly managed by the "entire civilized world," in order to benefit everyone. Everyone presumably, but the colonized peoples themselves. See Salvemini, *What to Do with Italy,* 212–13.

[43] Wright, "Mussolini, Libya and the Sword of Islam," 121.

[44] Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 169.

[45] Fuller, "Preservation and Self-Absorption," 137–38.

[46] Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 170.

[47] Ervedosa, "The Calibanisation of the South," 137–38; Weber, *The Protestant Ethic,* 21, 37–38.

British Empire as primarily being about prestige instead of being concerned with power projection, building and maintaining trade systems and amassing both human and natural resources be as acceptable as Seton-Watson's judgment of the Italian colonial project?

A more nuanced reading is the one offered by literary scholar Valentina Nocentini, namely rational economic motivations on behalf of Italy's political and industrial elite.[48] As Nocentini sees it, they were the only people truly united in a still fragmented and divided Italy a half-century after national unification. Presenting the country as essentially being an oligarchy at the beginning of the 20th century, Nocentini sees the leading class united behind ideas of opening new markets and investment opportunities through colonization, coopting the Italian state to further its goals. This conveniently also served as a national project that the new nation could rally around, helping to create a more cohesive country and keeping mass politics from "getting out of hand" in an era when socialist agitation was deeply feared and distrusted by both the state and leading levels of society.[49] This explanation seems much more convincing in that it views Italian involvement in Libya as calculated and not simply a rash attempt to improve Italy's standing within the international system of nation states. Nocentini's analysis also has relevance for the rest of this thesis, as it supports the idea that what happened in 1911 was about creating an "Italian Space" in northern Africa, to use historian Eileen Ryan's term.[50]

The Italians not only fielded far more soldiers, but also introduced modern warfare techniques and technology that would tip the scale in their favor, ultimately leading them to win the Italo-Turkish War.[51] A particular example of deadly innovation is the first known instance of bombardment from the sky, when Lieutenant Giulio Gavotti dropped rudimentary aerial bombs on a Libyan camp near the oasis of Ain Zara on November 1st 1911.[52] The divide separating Italian and Libyan impressions of this event illustrates the disparity between them: in Italy it was celebrated as a symbol of modernity, with the poet Giovanni Pascoli saying: "Was not [Italy] the first to beat her wings and rain death upon

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[48] Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 170.

[49] Nocentini, "L'Italia della guerra di Libia (1911-1912)," 340–44.

[50] Ryan, "Violence and the Politics of Prestige," 127.

[51] Interestingly, Mustafa Kemal who would later become the leader of republican Turkey, as well as Abd al-Rahman Azzam, who served as the first head of the Arab League, both fought against the Italian invaders in Libya. See St. John, *Historical Dictionary of Libya,* 152.

[52] Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 13; Johnston, "The First Ever Air Raid – Libya 1911," BBC News, May 10th 2011, accessed February 20th, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13294524.

her enemy's camps?" On the other hand, anecdotal evidence of Libyans witnessing the aircraft arriving claims they thought the airplanes were angels. That it could be humans piloting flying machines was at the time not surprisingly beyond comprehension.[53] The centenary of this event would bring another Italian attack on Libya as they joined the NATO alliance on April 25th 2011, which I will discuss in later chapters.

After hostilities between Italy and the Ottoman Empire officially ended with the peace treaty of Ouchy in 1912, Italy organized the conquered territories into the colonies of Tripolitania to the west, centered on Tripoli, and Cyrenaica to the east, centered on Benghazi. To silence the criticisms mentioned in previous paragraphs and prove the colonies' worth, increasing their economic value was vital. A priority in this regard was to find underground water sources, so as to offer the possibility of expanding agriculture in territory overwhelmingly covered by desert. It is important to note that local armed resistance to the Italian occupiers continued even after the treaty was concluded. The hinterlands of Tripoli were some of the few areas where Italians in fact maintained complete military control, as the sporadic but persistent Libyan uprisings ebbed and flowed.[54] This was subsequently the area where the technological challenge of conjuring up water where there was none was first addressed.

In both 1912 and 1913 *missioni agro-geologiche* were sent out to map the subsoil of the new colonies and discover what resources there truly were, beyond the somewhat outdated information supplied by Herodotus and Pliny the Elder. During these exploratory missions engineers started drilling, and in 1914 at one such exploratory drill organized by the *Scuola d'Agricoltura* (Italian Institute of Agriculture) at Sidi Messri a few kilometers southeast of Tripoli, copious amounts of water were found. Interestingly enough, traces of both petroleum and methane gas were detected in the water and reported by engineer Secondo Franchi.[55] Oil would go on to play a huge role in Italo-Libyan relations. At this stage the main point is that the groundwork for Italian agricultural settler colonialism in Libya was well under way. This agricultural settlement policy was the first version of a deep and

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[53] Fuller, "Libya," 300; Nancy Porsia, in-person interview by author, Matera, Italy, September 15th, 2018.

[54] Archivio Storico dell'ENI (ASENI), DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, busta (b.) 74, fascicolo (f.) 48561, *Notizie preliminari sulle ricerche geo-petrolifere nella Gefara Tripolina,* Milan, May 3rd, 1939.

[55] Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Ministero dell'Africa Italiana (MAI), Direzione Generale Affari Economici e Finanziari (1918–1958), Affari Generali 1918–1953, Miniere e prodotti minerari AGIP (Libia) 1925–1940, b. 206, f. 1, *Ricerche di petrolio,* Rome, July 18th, 1923; ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48561, *Notizie preliminari sulle ricerche geo-petrolifere nella Gefara Tripolina*, Milan, May 3rd, 1939.

enduring Italian economic involvement in Libya. There would, however, be limitations as to how far this policy could be taken at this stage. Italy's entry into WWI forced a reduction in the military presence in the Maghreb starting in 1914, drawing more soldiers away from North Africa once Italy attacked the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1915. The Arab and Ottoman resistance had never died down, however, and their combined forces pushed the Italians back into a few coastal cities in both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, where they would remain until 1923.[56]

THE HUMAN COST OF SECURING "A PLACE IN THE SUN," 1923–1933

After the fascists led by Mussolini took full power in Italy in 1922, the project of discovering water took on further importance. The fascists wanted to solve Italy's long-standing demographic problem of landless peasants emigrating (or as they saw it, hemorrhaging) from the south of Italy, instead directing them to the Italian Fourth Shore of Libya just across the Mediterranean. At the time Mussolini's Italy was "losing" these emigrants to the US, South America and, perhaps most embarrassingly to the fascist ethos of autarky and self-reliance, the French colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Keeping emigrants within an Italian colonial sphere required offering them tenable land, a project that could also potentially show off the supposedly superior vitality, ingenuity and hardiness of the "fascist spirit," combined with Italian vanguard technology and architecture.[57] But before any of this could be achieved Libya was brutally returned to complete Italian control.

The arrival of fascist Blackshirt militias in Tripoli in the autumn of 1923, after the appointment of conservative-turned-fascist politician Luigi Federzoni to the post of Minister of Colonies, signaled a new and violent phase in the history of Italian-controlled Libya. Federzoni forcefully argued for a "reconquest" of the territories lost since 1914, inaugurating a military campaign going well beyond the areas previously held by Italy and into the southern province of Fezzan and the southeastern parts of Cyrenaica. He furthermore supported so-called "politics of prestige," entailing a rupture with previous colonial policies of at least partial appeasement of Libyan discontent and a reliance on the loyalty of local elites. Instead, the politics of prestige were meant to instill fear and respect among

[56] Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 143–44.

[57] Cresti, "The Colonization of Cyrenaica," 73–75; Morone, "Italiani d'Africa, africani d'Italia," 20–21; Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 143; Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 170.

the Libyan population and thereby elevating the Italian inhabitants. They also had the additional goal of providing these Italian inhabitants with the proper "colonial culture."[58] This was a culture that assigned clear and restricted roles to colonizer and colonized, where both parties knew their place and were always aware of the hierarchies involved.[59]

As Mussolini grew impatient with the progress of reestablishing control in the Maghreb faced with a guerilla enemy that melted away into the desert, a change in military personnel responsible for the colonies soon followed. From 1929 onwards, Marshal Pietro Badoglio was put in charge of both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as Governor General, aided by the Deputy Governor of Cyrenaica, General Rodolfo Graziani. It would be in Cyrenaica that these two officials would implement the harshest measures any Italian colonial government had done up until that time, harsh even in comparison with the colonial repression meted out by other and much larger European colonial empires of the day.[60] A letter from Badoglio to Graziani outlined what was in store for the civilian population of Cyrenaica:

> We must above all else create a large territorial no-mans [*sic*] land between rebel forces and the subjugated people. I do not hide the seriousness of this measure, as it will mean the complete destruction of the civilian population in question. Still, the path before us has already been chosen and we must follow it to the end, even if all the people of Cyrenaica will have to perish.[61]

Graziani was subsequently put in charge of this operation, which assumed that every man, woman and child in this vast area was complicit in resistance towards the Italians. Starting in July 1930 he therefore ordered that the entire population of Cyrenaica be rounded up and taken on forced marches through the desert to sixteen internment camps constructed along the coast, from the Bay of Sirte in the west to Libyan Marmarica in the east. In addition to imprisoning approximately 100 000 people into these camps, a 270-km-long barbed wire frontier line along the entire border with Egypt was constructed to deny the Libyan "rebels" support and supplies from beyond the confines of the Italian colony.[62] On this now

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[58] Ryan, "Violence and the Politics of Prestige," 123–24, 131, 133.

[59] von Henneberg, "Public Space and Public Face," 156–57.

[60] Labanca, "Italian Colonial Internment," 25, 28.

[61] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 9; Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 38; Morone, "Italiani d'Africa, africani d'Italia," 22.

[62] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 9; Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 40–41, 47; Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia,* 192–93; Ryan, "Violence and the Politics of Prestige," 124.

empty and confined battlefield, indiscriminate usage of mustard gas and other poisonous agents made any resistance a great deal harder to sustain.[63]

This war of attrition on both the civilian population and the resistance fighters had its desired effect. Omar al-Mukhtar, the tenacious leader of the Libyan forces for over two decades, was finally caught and hanged on September 15th 1931, ending a long and entrenched resistance supported by a prominent religious order in the province, the Zanussi. The civilians also suffered terribly—by the time the internment camp system was finally dismantled in September 1933, of the 100 000 imprisoned people about 60 000 had been killed by either disease, forced starvation, the general hardships of life in the camps or having had their livestock and livelihoods destroyed, leading them then to die in the unsparing desert environment awaiting them upon their release.[64]

Such large-scale human suffering aside, the outcome for the Italian side was far freer rein to shape and mold the colony both physically and demographically. The Libyan population left alive was denied a return to their native homelands, as these were also the best agricultural areas in the province, now reserved for Italian settler colonialists.[65] These areas were in turn subjected to extensive terraforming, with increased water well drilling, irrigation systems put in place, and lands cleared and readied for cultivation. This all set the stage for an even closer economic relationship (if not bordering on complete dependency) between the Libyan colonies and the Italian metropole. Historian Pamela Ballinger has also proposed another possible outcome, namely that these camps symbolized the new rectilinear and clearly delineated frameworks of life under European rule. This meant that the former nomadism and local culture no longer had any place. Libyans were instead to be uprooted and made into a sedentary and dependable workforce for the civilizing colonial agents of Italy.[66]

This harrowing history is connected to the present in less obvious ways. Drawing direct lines between these colonial internment camps and today's migrant detention centers, oftentimes erected in the very same areas, is unfounded and perhaps even danger-

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[63] Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 36, 46.

[64] Bernhard, "In the Shadow of El Alamein," 5, 8; Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya,* 43.

[65] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 10; Di Sante and Sury, *The Italian Occupation of Libya*, 46; Morone, "Italiani d'Africa, africani d'Italia," 22.

[66] Ballinger, "Colonial Twilight," 822.

ous.[67] However, I contend that ignoring or suppressing this history is equally dangerous, as it has allowed all the present-day actors in the form of Italy and the EU funding and sometimes constructing these centers, as well as the local Libyan authorities permitting and staffing them, to put migrants at risk of both torture and extortion.[68]

THE FOURTH SHORE TAKES SHAPE BEFORE FINALLY FALLING, 1934–1943

1934 brought with it a deepening of Italo-Libyan relations, as the Italian administration had now violently secured for itself a sort of *tabula rasa* to build its desired colony upon. On November 7th of the preceding year a dynamic, young and prominent fascist by the name of Italo Balbo had become governor, and one of his first orders was to unite all three occupied provinces of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan into the single colony called *Colonia di Libia.*[69] In doing so the divisions between these provinces and the people inhabiting them were superficially erased, though the civil war that erupted many years later in the wake of the 2011 "Arab Spring," clearly tell a story of continued division and local identities surviving within Libya. Balbo, in any case, set out to greatly expand the demographic colonization that Mussolini and the fascist government of Italy had desired since the 1920s.[70]

With organized resistance crushed, governor Balbo could put all his energy into making Libya the crown jewel of Italy's colonial empire. This was to be a people's empire, however, as Italy had a surplus of landless peasants it wanted to employ in the colonies, but not a similar surplus of capital to spend there.[71] To facilitate the transfer of these masses of colonizers, preparing agricultural land, settlements, ports and roads connecting all of the above was the first priority. These large-scale public works in the colonies offered a potential fascist solution to the problem of widespread unemployment in a 1930s world still reeling after the Great Depression. Despite the cash-strapped state of Italian finances,

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[67] Many of the modern-day migrant detention centers are in the same areas as some of the main colonial internment camps were, such as al-Abiar, Agedabia, Ganfouda/Benghazi and Shahat/Apollinia. Please see Labanca, "Italian Colonial Internment," 32; "UNHCR Flash Update - Libya (27 July - 3 August 2018)," Operational Data Portal, August 3rd, 2018, accessed May 12th, 2019, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65029.

[68] Amnesty International, "Libya: Shameful EU Policies Fuel Surge in Detention of Migrants and Refugees", May 16th, 2018, accessed February 20, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/libya-shameful-eu-policies-fuel-surge-in-detention-of-migrants-and-refugees/.

[69] Bouchard and Ferme, *Italy and the Mediterranean*, 3, 25.

[70] Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 141, 155.

[71] Wright, "Mussolini, Libya and the Sword of Islam," 122; Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 122; Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 154.

Balbo was fortunate in that the politics of prestige trumped sound fiscal policy. Therefore extremely expensive projects like the *Via Balbia* coastal highway, stretching along the entirety of Libya's coastline, were constructed in record time, with expenditure in Libya alone taking up over 12% of Italy's entire budget for the year 1937–38.[72]

In 1938 these efforts were crowned with a well-publicized achievement, namely the arrival of the first 20 000 of a planned total of 500 000 Italian settler colonialists meant to cross the Mediterranean.[73] With Balbo himself at the helm accompanying them on the trip, these *ventimila* as they became known (in actuality there were only 16 000 of them, but such minor details were trivial to the fascist propaganda machine) functioned as the showpiece of Italian colonization efforts, and constituted a strong bid for fascist hegemony in the Mediterranean and a seemingly satisfying solution to their irredentist claims.[74]

Balbo could also afford to change tack towards the Libyan population now that they no longer were a military threat to the colonial regime. Therefore similar plans to settle the local people displaced by the Italian agricultural colonists were drawn up, meant to happen in tandem with the arrival of their new neighbors and offering means of continuing surveillance and control.[75] In actuality, however, there was a lot left to be desired in the implementation of these plans, as precious little energy and resources were put into getting these schemes off the ground compared with the work done in preparation for their Italian counterparts. Nor did anyone in the fascist administration bother to consult with the Libyans themselves on what they would have wanted, and the Libyans in turn, were deeply mistrustful of any Italian settlement schemes after the internment camps of a few years prior.[76]

One effort towards the local population that was met with at least partial support was the introduction of educational opportunities for Libyans.[77] Balbo put in place a network of trade schools for arts and crafts, meant to train native artisans in Tripoli and

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[72] Ballinger, "Colonial Twilight," 818; Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 141, 154; Wright, "Mussolini, Libya and the Sword of Islam," 122.

[73] Bernhard, "In the Shadow of El Alamein," 10–11; Cresti, "Land Settlements," 299; Pergher, *Mussolini's Nation-Empire,* 6–7.

[74] Ballinger, "Colonial Twilight," 818–19; Fuller, "Libya," 302; Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 141.

[75] Atkinson, "Encountering Bare Life in Italian Libya," 157, 166.

[76] Segré, "Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya," 151–52.

[77] Scholar Muhammad T. Jerary has claimed that in fact the Italians were responsible for depriving a generation of Libyans of basic education when they shut down the existing Ottoman public schools in the territory after occupation started in 1911. It is however unclear how extensive this educational system had been and if it offered anything like universal access to higher learning. See Jerary, "Damages of Italian Fascist Colonization," 207.

Benghazi. This system went a certain distance towards meeting the dire need for education in the colonies, but historian Tekeste Negash has pointed out that overall, access to this was severely restricted by the Italian colonial administration's desire to avoid creating an intellectual elite that could potentially counter their position of power. As opposed to colonial bureaucracies in both the British and French colonial empires, where at least lower-level clerks were often colonial subjects trained locally, Italians in the colonies did not want to be challenged in their own language. The result was that Libya was left with a legacy of illiteracy and a severe lack of trained native personnel.[78]

With the outbreak of WWII on September 1st 1939, all activity not directly tied to preparations for war was cut short. Not long after Italy declared war on the Allies on June 10th 1940, British forces made incursions into Libyan territory from Egypt, attacking the fertile plateau of Jebel Akhdar where Italian agricultural colonization had been focused. The seesawing back and forth across the desert confines of Libya and Egypt ultimately tilted to the Allies' favor, and the second battle for el-Alamein in Egypt from September 10th to November 11th 1942 decidedly turned the tide of war. Afterwards Italian and German forces were pushed on the defensive almost overnight, with Allies forces pursuing Erwin Rommel and the remains of his Afrika Korps into Tunis on November 17th. A little over a month later, on December 18th 1942, el-Agheila near Agedabia fell to the British, while Tripoli was in Allied hands on January 23rd the following year. The Italian colony of Libya effectively ceased to exist.

In July of the same year Allied forces landed in Sicily, bringing the war to Italy's doorstep. This in turn led prominent fascists in the circle of power around Mussolini to force him from power and arrest him. He would later be rescued by Nazi German forces and put in charge of a reconstituted Germany-friendly state in northern Italy called the Republic of Salò. This move was meant to consolidate Italians loyal to the fascist cause and slow Allied progress northward on the Italian peninsula. The Italian colonial empire was, however, definitively lost, and by now mostly under British control. This did not stop its legacy from lingering, influencing relationships for decades to come.

[78] Clarke, "Oil in Libya," 57; Fuller, "Libya," 302; Negash, "The Ideology of Colonialism," 115.

CHAPTER FINDINGS

In this chapter I have outlined the history of Italy's attack, colonization and means of control in Libya. The main takeaways have been how this forced inclusion of Libya into the orbit of Italy's power politics, culture and economic system laid the groundwork for an unbalanced exchange between the two countries. Particularly the economic dependency on the colonial metropole became dire, as Italian colonial administrations completely overthrew the livelihoods and nomadic pasture systems in place for centuries in order to bring in large numbers of agricultural settlers.

This agricultural scheme could only happen in a country completely "pacified," a brutal process that left scars and created animosities that would be important for later generations. The network of internment camps constitutes a harsh historical backdrop to today's migrant detention centers now set up in some of the very same areas of Libya.

A less brutal but nonetheless important legacy with long-ranging consequences was the educational system that was put in place. It was likely an improvement on what was already offered in Ottoman times (though certain scholars dispute this, see footnote 77), but it did precious little to lower the high levels of illiteracy in Libya, or to supply it with meaningful numbers of trained personnel.

Another relevant heritage from the colonial period is the influence of Italian culture and language. For example, my interview subjects speak of entire categories of day-to-day conversation in Libya relying almost entirely on Italian loan words. These include everything to do with mechanics and engines, as well as kitchen appliances and utensils. These items and equipment arrived in the country with the Italian colonists, along with the related vocabularies used to describe them.[79]

Two of the most senior historians on Italian colonialism in Libya, Del Boca and Labanca, rightly point out that no colonial endeavor was simply about violence and exploitation. Likewise, it is important to note that the individual Italian agricultural colonists brought dedication and hard work to Libya, work that not only benefited the colonists themselves.[80] I acknowledge this, while at the same time underlining that Libyans under colonial rule were at no point asked to participate in the shaping of their own future or to partake in decisions that forever changed the course of their country.

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[79] Nancy Porsia, in-person interview by author, Matera, Italy, September 15th, 2018.

[80] Del Boca, "The Obligations of Italy Toward Libya," 196; Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 142.

Exploratory oil well dug by the fascist state oil monopoly AGIP (*Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli*) in Tripolitania, western Libya, 1938. The geologist heading the exploration mission Ardito Desio singled out other promising areas in Cyrenaica, eastern Libya for further exploration, but WWII kept him from dispatching Italian petroleum pioneers eastwards. That region turned out to be the one in which Esso two decades later in 1959 would report the first major finding of oil.

2. Turning Water into Oil: Colonial Continuity in the Italo-Libyan Petroleum Industry (1938–1973)

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to the view of the end of the war as a sort of *tabula rasa* for relations between colonizers and colonized, ENI's activity in Libya drew heavily on its predecessor company AGIP's exploration in the colonial epoch, illustrating colonial continuity straddling the pre- and postwar eras. There was also a striking continuation in Italian key actors involved both before and after WWII. My findings tell of an economic relationship rooted to a much larger extent on the preceding colonial history of Italy's dominance over Libya than what is recognized in the academic discourse, in the media and by the company itself.

Secondly, this chapter also demonstrates that a colonial discourse involving attitudes and methods from the time of colonial domination helped Italian energy giant ENI to reach its prominent and longstanding position in Libya's oil and gas sector after it started operating in the country in 1959.[81] The multinational's petroleum exploration and extraction in Libya has been linked with rising energy needs in postwar Italy, portrayed as being in fierce competition with more powerful adversaries like Big Oil's "Seven Sisters" and European former colonial powers.[82] Scholars such as Pinella Di Gregorio have written that ENIs petroleum production in the former Italian colony should be read as a form of decolonization, carried out in solidarity with the larger Third World movement.[83] Claims like these are echoed not only in ENI's own official story, but have also shaped much of the historiography on the company into something that borders on hagiographic accounts.

The final section will detail how oil changed Libya in the 1960s and explain the importance of Muammar Gaddafi's coup in 1969. Contrary to the new regime's anti-colonialist and anti-Italian rhetoric, ENI actually cemented its status and operations in Italy's former colony. Gaddafi's Libya is an interesting example of selective usage of colonial commemoration, as the regime in 1970 simultaneously expelled the remaining 20 000 former

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[81] ENI is at present the 8th largest oil company worldwide, with production in Libya constituting over 20% of the company's total extraction of combustibles.

[82] The "Seven Sisters" were: Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP), Gulf Oil (later part of Chevron), Royal Dutch Shell, Standard Oil Company of California (SoCal, now Chevron, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey [Esso, later Exxon, now part of ExxonMobil], Standard Oil Company of New York [Socony, later Mobil, also now part of ExxonMobil] and Texaco [later merged into Chevron]. See Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 249, 252–53; Clarke, "Oil in Libya," 41; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 25; Stevens, "International Oil Companies," 4.

[83] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 195–96.

Italian agricultural colonists under the pretense of ridding the country of a tainted colonialist presence, while at the same time leaving ENI's many Italian employees to continue working undisturbed.

OIL, INTERRUPTED. AGIP IN LIBYA, 1938–1943

The Libyan petroleum history starts not with oil, but with water. As mentioned, evidence of oil and gas were detected and reported in water drilling holes as far back as 1914. Results like this showed up repeatedly as agricultural colonization expanded in the hinterlands of Tripoli and Benghazi.[84] News of these findings made its way to the governor of Libya, Italo Balbo. Balbo, in turn, charged a commission of geologists led by Ardito Desio with the task of drawing up a plan of action. Desio had worked extensively in Libya on several occasions between 1932 and 1935 and knew the country well. The commission recommended explorations explicitly looking for oil, at which point Mussolini himself got involved. In a telegram dated August 4th 1937 he directs the director of AGIP, Umberto Puppini, to organize petroleum searches in collaboration with Balbo and Minister of Italian Africa Alessandro Lessona.[85]

The reasons why Mussolini would take such personal interest in what were admittedly quite marginal findings could be threefold: first, oil was high on the agenda. While Italy had managed to circumvent international commodities sanctions brought to bear on it after the Second Italian-Ethiopian War of 1935–36, there was no guarantee it would successfully do so again. Second, preparations for a potential European-wide conflict were increasingly visible in the second half of the 1930s, a war for which resource-poor Italy would not be well suited. Third, the Italian navy had been building up towards ship parity with its French counterpart since the early 19th century, and oil was gradually replacing coal as combustion for these newer ships.[86] The importance on Italy's part of finding petroleum and finding it fast can be shown by the fact that AGIP initiated oil explorations

[84] Modest findings of oil or gas were sighted in drill holes near Zliten in 1928, again near Sidi Messri in 1933, at Es-Sabbil in 1934, Gasr Garabulli in the summer of 1937 and repeatedly the same year at Gefara. See ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48561, *Notizie preliminari sulle ricerche geo-petrolifere nella Gefara Tripolina,* Milan, May 3rd, 1939.

[85] L'Associazione Ardito Desio, "Biografia Desio," accessed on November 14th 2018, http://www.arditodesio.it/biografia.html; ASENI, AGIP Ricerche e produzione, Miscellanea, Richerce in Libia, b. 22, f. 4, *Ricerche petrolifere in Libia,* Rome, September 23rd, 1939.

[86] Sullivan, "A Fleet in Being," 115–16, 118.

in Ethiopia before the fighting there had even ended.[87]

Acting on Mussolini's instructions, in the fall of 1937 Puppini and AGIP asked Desio and his commission to finalize a research plan and budget. The latter turned out to be an initial stumbling block, as the exploration bill of an estimated six million Italian lire was passed along from one entity to another.[88] Finally the Ministry of Finance agreed to cover the outlays, but it had cost the process an additional six months of bureaucratic wrangling. Such time wasted would prove to have been crucial, as we shall see below.[89]

By mid-March 1938 the AGIP exploration outfit complete with drilling rigs and led by Desio, arrived in Libya. The first dedicated petroleum exploration well was dug on April 13th at Ghiama el-Turc a short distance from Tripoli and close to the earliest oil findings.[90] Already in May of 1939 Desio suggested searching further east in Cyrenaica based on favorable geological conditions, namely the area of Marmarica near the border with Egypt.[91] Work continued past the outbreak of WWII on September 1st 1939, though by the spring of 1940, Desio wound down explorations in Tripolitania.[92] At this point the conflict threatened any attempts to move oil searches eastwards. In the midst of this, Desio received a pressing telegram from Agedabia in the Sirte Basin, where engineers looking for water had once again come across very encouraging petroleum and gas emissions. To Desio this confirmed the geological promise of the region and led him to make urgent attempts to move AGIP's search to Cyrenaica. He had by then returned to Milan as professor of geology, instead urging AGIP's research division to send his young assistant Leonida Coggi, based in Tripoli, eastwards by any means possible. Desio included a hastily scribbled map of the prospective petroleum research area around Agedabia, despite both the outbreak of war and AGIP's search funding having run dry.[93]

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[87] ACS, MAI, Direzione Generale Affari Economici e Finanziari (1918–1958), Affari Generali 1918–1953, Saline Eritrea 1932–1940.b. 207, f. 1, letter to Mussolini from geologist Luigi Usoni. Rome May 3rd,1937; ACS, MAI, Direzione Generale Affari Economici e Finanziari (1918–1958), Affari Generali 1918–1953, Miniere 1939, b. 207, f. 2, *Rapporto sulle risorse nelle colonie,* October 20th, 1939.

[88] ASENI, AGIP Ricerche e produzione, Miscellanea, Richerce in Libia, b. 22, f. 4, *Ricerche petrolifere in Libia*, Rome, September 23rd 1939.

[89] ACS, MAI, Direzione Generale Affari Economici e Finanziari (1918–1958), Affari Generali 1918–1953, Saline Eritrea 1932–1940, b. 207, f. 1, letter from Balbo to Mussolini acting as Minister of Italian Africa, Tripoli, January 1st, 1938.

[90] ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48561, *Notizie preliminari sulle ricerche geo-petrolifere nella Gefara Tripolina*, Milan, May 3rd, 1939.

[91] ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48561, *Notizie preliminari sulle ricerche geo-petrolifere nella Gefara Tripolina*, Milan, May 3rd, 1939; ASENI, AGIP Ricerche e produzione, Miscellanea, Richerce in Libia, b. 22, f. 4, *Ricerche petrolifere in Libia,* Rome, September 23rd, 1939.

[92] ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48565, two letters from Desio to AGIP's Research and Development section, Rome, January 13th and April 8th, 1940.

[93] ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48565, letter from Desio to AGIP's Research and Development section, Milan, January 30th, 1940.

In October 1940 Rodolfo Graziani, then governor of Libya, reported that a total of nine exploratory wells had been dug.[94] Graziani had taken over governorship of Libya after Balbo, who was also a decorated pilot and aviation pioneer, had been shot down in a friendly-fire incident on June 28th 1940. The nine wells had brought occasional new traces of petroleum, but nothing definitive and worthy of proper commercial exploitation. As late as June 26th 1942 Desio was still trying to have a search party to be sent eastwards, allocating an undamaged drilling rig at Chellet el-Bneia near Tripoli and this time offering the services of Cesare Chiesa, director of the city's Museum of Natural History. However, the war made all this impossible – by January 23rd 1943 the Italian colony of Libya effectively ceased to exist.

With this, Desio's dreams of AGIP exploration wells in Cyrenaica also vanished, all the more fateful considering that it was in the same region of Libya that the American petroleum giant Esso struck black gold several years later. In April 1959, less than 150 km southwest of Agedabia and just within the search area where Desio had frantically urged AGIP to implement new trial drilling in 1940, Esso announced it had found a large deposit of petroleum.[95] It is to this day the biggest field in operation in the area, now dotted with rigs and oil facilities from a variety of transnational oil companies, including ENI.

While the Italian colonial administration had not been able to follow them up in the 1940s, Desio's findings and indications for further promising search areas held great importance for ENI's postwar explorations in Libya. But how did the company manage to return?

RETURNING FOR MORE. ENI IN LIBYA, 1943–1962

What were the reasons for Libya allowing the largest petroleum company of its former colonial power to help develop its oil sector in the 1950s? How did ENI win a concession in Cyrenaica in November 1959, and did the colonial past play a role in Libya's licensing of search rights to the Italian company?[96] Available academic literature is contradictory, with one article claiming that ENI's decision to compete for concessions in Libya in the 1950s was based on work done by AGIP's engineers on site before the war, only to later say that

[94] ACS, MAI, Direzione Generale Affari Economici e Finanziari (1918–1958), Affari Generali 1918–1953, Miniere e prodotti minerari AGIP (Libia) 1925–1940, b. 206, f. 1, letter from Graziani to the Ministry of Italian Africa, Tripoli, October 4th, 1940.

[95] Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 558; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 208.

[96] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 213; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 26.

these earlier searches were fruitless and of meager importance.[97] Other works state that ENI's relationship with Libya only started with its participation in the Libyan petroleum search concession competition in 1957. This may be technically true in that the name ENI first shows up on Libyan concession biddings on May 5th of that year, but it completely ignores the long history of the company and its roots in AGIP, traceable not only on paper but in drilling sites around the country in the 1930s and 1940s.[98] It also contradicts some of the primary sources I have found in ENI company promotional material of the 1960s acknowledging ENI's ties to AGIP's on-site activity in Libya before the war (although concealing the precise geography by only referring to work done in "certain countries on the African continent").[99]

When the war ended in 1945, Italian statesmen wanted to recover as much of Italy's pre-fascist colonial holdings as possible, though in the February 10th 1947 Paris Peace Treaty between Italy and the Allied Powers, Italy renounced all its colonial claims. The same year Idris al-Zanussi of the prominent Zanussi religious group in Cyrenaica returned to Libya from exile in Egypt, ostensibly with British support.[100] Britain was, in fact, engaging in colonial gamesmanship in collaboration with the aspirations of France and Italy. The opposing foes in WWII all wanted a continuation of colonial domination in North Africa. In May 1949 the so-called Bevin-Sforza compromise (named after the foreign affairs ministers of Great Britain and Italy) proposed dividing the territory of Libya into the three regions of Fezzan, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, to be put under the control of France, Italy and Great Britain respectively. Despite their efforts the Bevin-Sforza compromise was rejected by the UN General Assembly, which presided over the Libyan situation. Instead a unified Libya became independent under al-Zanussi, proclaimed King Idris I on December 24th 1951.[101]

Newly independent Libya was one of the poorest countries in the world, totally dependent on foreign aid coming primarily from the US and Great Britain, which both maintained military bases in the country. The Italian colonial period had left a Libyan

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[97] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 200, 208, footnote 61.

[98] Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 555.

[99] "L'AGIP in Africa," 292; "Gli impegni dell'Eni in Africa," 308.

[100] Idris had long been a focal point of resistance to the Italian occupiers, and was being groomed by the British to become the first king of a liberated Cyrenaica allied with Great Britain. Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 170.

[101] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 206; Morone, "Quando è stato archiviato il colonialismo italiano?," 132; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities,* 111.

population largely illiterate with few educational or vocational opportunities. Historian Dietmar Rothermund has claimed that there was no awareness at all of the oil riches hidden in Libyan soil, though both the preceding section of this paper, as well as the workings of the Libyan Petroleum Law of 1955 to be detailed below, contradict this claim.[102]

The law incorporated a principle of 50-50 division of profits after taxes, which was considered quite generous at the time, as well as reducing the concession areas awarded to discourage one large oil company from gaining too much leverage over a comparatively weak state apparatus. This set the scene for a range of companies from various countries to enter their bids in competition.[103] Academics from varying nations have treated these oil companies quite differently. Economic historian Mira Wilkins has suggested that Anglo-American and Dutch oil companies were far less reliant on state intervention on their behalf, while she sees French Total and Italian ENI as being extensions of their respective national governments. She does admit that the US State Department, acting in close cooperation with its British counterpart, did what it could to keep other European competitors out of both the established fields in the Middle East and the new areas opening up for exploration in North African countries.[104] This competition allowed companies like ENI to portray themselves as David versus Goliath, with "scrappy" upstart ENI taking on its far larger Anglo-American competitors and siding with the Third World while doing so. That an oil company would make such biased claims is perhaps not surprising, but a certain number of historians writing on the topic seem to have quite uncritically adopted the company's version of events. Where France is seen as an over-zealous former colonial power using its influence with ex-colonies Morocco and Algeria to acquire preferential contracts for Total and to squeeze out ENI, Great Britain behaving similarly in Egypt, and British and American oil multinationals acting unfairly in regard to the Italian energy company on a general world stage, ENI attempting to return to the former Italian colony of Libya is somehow portrayed as different.[105] We should be skeptical of these claims, while at the same time acknowledging the differences that existed in ENI's approach.

Before continuing, it is necessary to briefly sketch the particulars of ENI. ENI

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[102] Clarke, "Oil in Libya," 40–41, 57; Rothermund, *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization,* 121.

[103] Bini, "Building an Oil Empire," 317; Clarke, "Oil in Libya," 42; Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 555; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 208.

[104] Wilkins, "The Oil Companies in Perspective," 164–65.

[105] Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 26; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 197–98.

was founded by law decree № 136 in February 1953.[106] It is often labeled as being a state oil company, but in fact the corporate structure is more complex. The Italian word *ente* means agency or authority in English, and it can be compared to the Tennessee Valley Authority in the US.[107] ENI operates as a government-controlled corporation heavily reliant on "mixed ownership," partly funded partly by the government and partly by private capital.[108] This model is not unusual in an Italian context.

A common misunderstanding is that ENI holds an Italian state-sanctioned oil monopoly. It did receive exclusive rights to the petroleum exploration and exploitation of oil deposits in the Po Valley, which runs through the northeastern parts of Italy, but held no such rights in the rest of the country.[109] This partial monopoly does, however, bring us to the origin story of ENI, namely the true monopoly previously given to the fascist era AGIP, upon which ENI was built and which to this day make up one of its primary subsidiaries.[110] Mussolini gave the order to create AGIP on April 3rd 1926 to quicken the pace of oil exploration in Italy and the colonies with the aim of fulfilling the fascist ideal of autarchy.[111] After WWII ended, the new Italian Republic considered AGIP to have failed to live up to its original mandate and ordered it liquidated.[112]

A key personality in the history of ENI was its first director, Enrico Mattei. He was a successful businessman before the war, and during the conflict became a partisan involved with later key members of the Christian Democratic party (DC) after the war.[113] DC would, together with the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), govern Italy for the majority of the postwar period until the 1990s, so this early affiliation gave Mattei political connections and clout for decades to come. In 1945 Mattei was appointed head of the northern division

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[106] Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 241; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 24.

[107] The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was founded in 1933 in the aftermath of the Great Depression. The Authority supervises the economic development, power generation, flood control and navigational access of the Tennessee River, straddling six US states.

[108] Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 243; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 25.

[109] Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 24.

[110] Indeed, the wording of the 1953 grant creating ENI has been claimed to echo the one that set up AGIP in 1926. Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 241.

[111] Bini, "A Transatlantic Shock," 146; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 24.

[112] At the end of the war the total petroleum production of AGIP and other private companies active in Italy totaled only 10 000 tons a year, with anecdotal writing suggesting AGIP could have been bought for as little as one million dollars, except there were no bidders. Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 237.

[113] Complicating this story somewhat, Mattei's membership card in the Italian Fascist Party (PNF) dating to 1922, was discovered in 2007. Mattei was sixteen years old at the time. See "Enrico Mattei trovata tessera fascista", Corriere della Sera, accessed October 29th, 2018, http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2007/giugno/23/Enrico_Mattei_trovata_tessera_fascista_co_9_070623033.shtml; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 24.

of AGIP at the age of 39, and tasked with dismantling it. Instead, he doubled down on continued explorations in the Po Valley, putting his trust in the research division of the ill-fated company.[114] The gamble paid off, as shortly thereafter AGIP discovered large deposits of natural gas, situated a conveniently short distance from the most important concentration of Italian industry and thereby close to its principal buyers.[115] This was a solid foundation from which ENI would expand under Mattei's leadership from 1953 until his death in 1962.

A crucial element of this expansion strategy was dubbed the "Mattei formula." It meant a willingness to offer better terms than the 50-50 profit division for company and country. The profit percentage ENI offered was as high as 70%, on top of partnerships in joint venture companies set up with the host countries.[116] This formula was certainly fairer than what was offered by other oil companies at the time, but claiming it represented a "Mediterranean vocation" on the parts of both ENI and by extension Italy, as later historians have asserted, does not tell the full story.[117] A more comprehensive picture emerges in the study of Libya and ENI's two bids to secure access to its oil, coming in 1957 and again in 1959.

ENI first failed to gain a concession in Fezzan in May 1957, before finally succeeding in getting permission to search for oil in the Sirte Basin two years later. ENI's first concession bid, submitted by AGIP Mineraria acting as its subsidiary, was initially positively received, but suddenly turned down in December 1957. This happened ostensibly due to pressure and bribes by American competitors, leading to ENI's disqualification on a technicality where state agencies where not permitted to participate. The company reacted with an eyebrow-raising statement from director Mattei, where he accused the recently appointed Libyan Prime Minister Abdul al-Majid Kubar of capitulating to the oil company cartel, turning away from fellow Third World nations and standing in the way of his own country's development and decolonization by turning down ENI's bid.

This paternalistic attitude on the part of ENI and Mattei, implying that the Libyans did not know their own good, as well as the company's "weaponizing" claims of lacking solidarity with the Third World used against a developing nation, should lead to questions about ENI's methods and motives. Instead, Libya's refusal has mostly been

[114] Bini, "A Transatlantic Shock," 146–47.

[115] Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 237, 239.

[116] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 199; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 26.

[117] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 201.

interpreted according to ENI orthodoxy.[118] Historian Massimiliano Cricco quotes the Italian ambassador to Libya, Mario Mondello, who in a letter to ENI implies that the Mattei formula is of little use, because the interests of Libya are not at the forefront of many of its officials, who instead put personal gain above anything else.[119]

There might be reasons to suspect both competing oil multinationals and Libyan officials for having worked against ENI for strategic reasons or personal interests, but in ENI's archives there are several strong indications that the Italian company also played this game. Here I see a retooled colonial approach at play, dividing loyalties and looking for supporters among a small Libyan elite that could be paid off to pave the way for concessions. Corruption is not in itself a sign of continued colonial methods, but that it was part of the toolbox employed by Italy to secure influence in its former colonies is something Morone has shown in his work. He lists several cases in both Libya and East Africa where large funds were transferred to groups and individuals Italy had ties with, such as former intermediaries of the colonial administration, retired *askari* and *quadi* soldiers, and newer players like pro-Italian political parties.[120] I view the following findings in the same light.

There is a folder in the ENI archive called "The Corradi Practice," where coded correspondence between FIAT's local representative in Libya Carlo Talarico, AGIP Mineraria's vice-president and close associate of Mattei, Attilio Jacoboni, and a mysterious courier by the name of Luigi Corradi tells a very different story than the official one.[121] FIAT and AGIP had a long history together in Libya, having formed the joint venture Petrolibia in 1939 to build oil storage and distribution networks in the colony.[122] Less is known about Corradi, other than that he worked for an unnamed competitor of ENI/AGIP and had in secret agreed to undertake a series of travels to Tripoli, Benghazi and Cairo paid for by AGIP.[123]

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[118] Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 556–58; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 200, 209–10; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 26.

[119] Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 557.

[120] *Askari* and *Quadi* are terms used for local Eritrean, Somali or Libyan soldiers serving in the colonial army. Morone, "How Italy Returned to Africa," 129–30.

[121] Pozzi, "Entrepreneurship and Capabilities in a 'Beginner' Oil Multinational," 268.

[122] ASENI, TRIBUTARIO. Agip, Petrolibia, Copia autentica dell'atto costituivo della Società anonima Petroli Libia, b. 119, f. 4280, *Atto costituivo,* Tripoli, July 26th 1939; ASENI, TRIBUTARIO. Agip, Petrolibia, atto costituivo e documenti amministrativi, b. 164, f. 479B, *Costituzione S.A. Petrolibia,* Tripoli, July 26th, 1939.

[123] ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Luigi Corradi to Carlo Talarico, Tripoli, December 16th, 1957; ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Luigi Corradi to Carlo Talarico, Tripoli, December 27th, 1957; ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi", Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Luigi Corradi to Carlo Talarico, Tripoli, January 7th, 1958.

What he did on those travels is left unspecified, beyond the fact that Corradi was "taking care of formalities" on AGIP's behalf.[124] The exchange between these three takes on a strained note, with repeated requests from both Jacoboni and Talerico to supply receipts turned down by Corradi, who says his assignment is not compatible with transparent bookkeeping.[125] In the end their efforts were unsuccessful—on the day of concession announcements ENI's previously promised search area shows up on a revised map penciled over with "area closed to exploration."[126] Jacoboni concludes that they had failed due to Libyan "magnates" being far slyer than their simple European counterparts, with Talarico adding that "our friend" Benkatu of the Libyan parliamentary House of Representatives apologized for the unfortunate turn of events.[127] Talarico goes on to mention that Benkatu would gladly make himself available to discuss other concession areas in the future, giving Jacoboni his address.[128]

This exchange is not definitive proof that ENI was bribing Libyan officials to get its way, but it does strongly indicate that the Mattei formula encompassed more dubious methods than equitable royalty agreements and Third World solidarity. That we can talk of a furthering of colonial attitudes and method becomes even clearer when looking at the first concession grant in the Sirte Basin in Cirenaica given to ENI in 1959. The key players are much the same, with ambassador Mondello being the most forthcoming. In a letter to Mattei sent in 1959, he informs ENI's director that the Libyan Prime Minister Abdul al-Majid Kubar expressed concern over growing electoral campaign expenses, asking ENI for a contribution. Mondello leaves the choice of action up to Mattei, but indicates that it might be useful for ENI to make use of the situation, giving Mattei Kubar's bank account number. He goes on to offer assurances that should there be a need for more funds Mondello himself would happily talk to the Ministry of Foreign affairs to resolve

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[124] The term used in Italian is *disbrigo pratiche*.

[125] ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Carlo Talarico to Attilio Jacoboni, Tripoli, November 26th, 1957; ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Carlo Talarico to Attilio Jacoboni, Tripoli, December 16th, 1957.

[126] ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Carlo Talarico to Attilio Jacoboni, Tripoli, December 10th, 1957.

[127] ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, telegram from Attilio Jacoboni to Carlo Talarico, Rome, November 28th, 1957; ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Attilio Jacoboni to Carlo Talarico, Rome, December 27th, 1957.

[128] ASENI, Libia, "Pratica Corradi," Corrispondenza di carattere amministrativo con il Sig. Talarico della Fiat (Petrolibia) riguardante il Sig.Corradi, b. 90, f. 2224, letter from Carlo Talarico to Attilio Jacoboni, Tripoli, December 10th, 1957.

the situation.[129] This indicates a strong governmental involvement in what was at least on paper private enterprise, since ENI had formed a new company (*Compagnia Ricerca Idrocarburi* or CORI) to sidestep the technicality that had officially hindered them during the bidding round two years earlier.

The documentation does not allow us to say for certain whether if bribes tipped the scale, but ENI did win the concession and went on to make major petroleum discoveries there. Interestingly, already the year after, in 1960, Prime Minister Abdul al-Majid Kubar had to resign due to an unrelated financial scandal.[130] As far as the long-term relevance of colonial discourse is concerned, Mattei's legal advisor Ugo Niutta, when dictating a letter destined to be sent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1959 announcing the confirmed concession and oil discoveries, informs them that ENI has successfully fulfilled its mandate to explore and exploit petroleum resources in the colonies.[131]

Taking a closer look at the personnel involved in petroleum explorations, the continuity is, in fact, almost uncanny. Between 1961 and 1962 a new generation of Desio is back surveying for oil in Libya, this time working for CORI. It is geologist Gianluca Desio, son of Ardito Desio. In rapports sent back to headquarters in Italy it is almost as though no time has passed at all. The search party led by Desio the younger mentions using the *Via Balbia* to ease exploration, a coastal highway built by Balbo during the war and at the time of writing in 1961 long since renamed after Libyan independence a decade earlier. Their area of exploration overlaps in great part with the very same areas Gianluca's father wanted investigated more than twenty years earlier, inland from the Bay of Sirte and towards Bir Zelten where oil had by now been found.[132] In a report from 1962, Gianluca directly cites the geological survey work and opinions of his father, Ardito.[133] This signals a strong continuity in the work of ENI, AGIP and CORI.

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[129] ASENI, Libia. Relazioni e carte topografiche su indagini geologiche e geofisiche in concessioni petrolifere nel paese, b. 92, f. 2230, letter from Mario Mondello to Enrico Mattei, Tripoli, December 23rd, 1959.

[130] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 213; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 26; St. John, *Historical Dictionary of Libya,* 140.

[131] Niutta himself has an interesting and interwoven story; he was born in Tripoli in 1921, the son of a bureaucrat in the colonial administration. During WWII he fought on behalf of the fascist regime both in the USSR and North Africa, only to become a member of the same group of partisans as Mattei from 1943 onwards, ensuring his future role in Mattei's inner circle. See Treccani dizionario biografico, "Niutta, Ugo" accessed on November 21st 2018, http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ugo-niutta_(Dizionario-Biografico); ASENI, Investimenti in Libia da parte Eni tramite la Cori, b. 36, f. 4ABC, letter from Niutta to Bianchedi, Rome, undated.

[132] ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61–62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48564, *Nota preliminare sulla ricognizione eseguita in Sirtica (zona di Marada)*, Benghazi, October 30th, 1961.

[133] ASENI, DESIO (Ardito 38–42 e Gianluca 61-62) relazioni su Libia, ex Scatola 607, b. 74, f. 48558, *Appunto sulla seconda ricognizione geologica a Sahabi,* Benghazi, July 15th, 1962.

OIL, AGENCY AND CONTINUED CO-DEPENDENCY, 1960–1973

The 1960s brought further fundamental changes to Libya, a country that in the preceding fifty years had already been completely transformed by colonialism and war. The oil industry had expanded rapidly under the new monarchy – as many as 55 petroleum search concessions were given out in the first year of the Libyan Petroleum Law of 1955, and by the end of the 1960s an incredible 79% of Libyan territory was covered by concessions grants. The decade saw a staggering average of 20% annual growth rates in Libya, with government revenues from oil exports increasing fifteen-fold from US$40 million in 1962 to US$625 million by 1967. The same year Libya was already the world's fourth largest crude oil exporter, supplying 10% of world exports. These riches and new employment opportunities meant Libyan per capita income rose from US$35 in 1951 to US$1000 in 1967.[134]

The government was almost alone in doing the hiring however, with 40 000 out of 165 000 employment-eligible Libyans being on the government payroll in the 1960s. The oil companies instead brought in their overseas employees or hired from the still sizable Italian community in the country.[135] This community represented a very visible continuity with the colonial past, but it had been gradually decreasing. From a high point of 110 000 in 1941, there were approximately 50 000 Italians left when WWII ended. 1960 brought the passing of a law that prohibited them from owning land in the agricultural settlements previous colonial authorities had created, so many migrated to Italy or moved to Tripoli to become small-business owners or take up work in the petroleum sector.[136] The legacy of Italian rule meant woefully inadequate education levels, with the few Libyans offered education being restricted to primary or vocational schools. Even after independence illiteracy levels remained stubbornly high, all but ensuring that only menial jobs were available to most Libyans. Independence only very slowly changed the scope and quality of schooling, as investment in higher education was not prioritized by Libyan governments. Instead, the fact that Italians made up quite a large segment of trained personnel in the oil sector, or owned businesses based on their technical and entrepreneurial skills and education, created great deal of resentment in Libyan society.[137]

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[134] Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 209; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities*, 111–12.

[135] Bini, "Building an Oil Empire," 317–18; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 209.

[136] It is noteworthy that despite the case study of ENI's successful concession bid in the previous sector, British and American companies dominated these first years of petroleum exploitation in Libya. See Ballinger, "Colonial Twilight," 819–20, 834, 836; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities*, 111; Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 173–74.

[137] Clarke, "Oil in Libya," 57; Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 562; Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 131–32.

The man who on September 1st 1969 seized on this resentment and orchestrated a coup to rid Libya of what he considered continued Italian colonialism, foreign economic dominance and official Libyan unwillingness to challenge their Western backers on issues surrounding Israel and Palestine was Muammar Gaddafi. Without much violence, Gaddafi and the other coup makers deposed King Idris I while he was in Turkey receiving medical treatment, abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the coming of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab *Jamahiriya*.[138] High on the agenda was expelling the then 20 000 remaining Italians and forcing the oil companies to offer better terms than those they were giving Libyan authorities at the time. Both processes started as soon as 1970, though the outcome was not as clear a rupture with past practice as one might expect. Instead, Italian economic interests proved their durability and mutability, marking a definitive transition from agricultural colonialism to shared Italo-Libyan petroleum extraction.[139]

Gaddafi played up the visuals of expelling the last vestige of Italian colonialism, expropriating Italian businesses and land after rounding up and driving out their former owners on July 22nd, 1970. They were denied reentry indefinitely, with the fear in Italy being that the same thing might befall ENI's interests in the country.[140] However, ENI proved adept at weathering the assault on the status quo in the petroleum industry that Gaddafi had simultaneously unleashed, accepting partial nationalization (inspired by similar schemes in neighboring Algeria) and renegotiating contracts already signed with the pre-Gaddafi government giving higher royalty payments to Libya. Another important factor in ENI's favor was that it had made itself indispensable to Libya by focusing as much on the construction and implementation of petroleum infrastructure as on simply digging and managing oil wells. The most recent deal between ENI and the Libyan government to construct oil and gas pipelines, refineries and a countrywide network of gas stations came in 1969, just a few months before Gaddafi's takeover. It came to be considered a company life insurance for ENI in relation to its new hosts.[141]

British and particularly American petroleum companies refused to go along, instead appealing to both their national governments and the international petroleum

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[138] Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities,* 112; Seton-Watson, "Italy's Imperial Hangover," 173–74.

[139] Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 121; Ronzitti, "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya," 126; Stevens, "International Oil Companies," 16; Wilkins, "The Oil Companies in Perspective," 166–69.

[140] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 13.

[141] Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 560–61; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 199.

industry to boycott Libyan oil and force Gaddafi's government to back down. Despite their best attempts, the quality, cost and market proximity of Libyan oil, coupled with the nation's ability to weather boycotts and economic sanctions due to its large currency reserve and small population, meant nationalization and expropriation continued. Again ENI stood to benefit, picking up many of its competitors' oil fields in joint ventures with the newly established and state-sanctioned Libyan Oil Corporation (NOC). For both Gaddafi's government and his Italian counterparts, ENI (and by extension Italy's status as Libya's primary trading partner in both oil and other commodities) was simply too important to throw out. The final colonists in their traditional form left Libya, but a new economic system built on the preceding colonial domination remained in place.[142]

CHAPTER FINDINGS

I have shown the importance of AGIP's prewar petroleum exploration for ENI's later presence in Libya, often downplayed by both the company itself and by historians writing on the topic. My own archival findings indicate a far more complex series of events and processes leading to ENI's prominent position than what has been previously described.[143] To put it bluntly, ENI picked up where AGIP left off, justifying its involvement in the ex-colony by responding to the need for energy resources articulated by the Italian state in its reconstruction and postwar phase of economic boom. In this involvement the "greater good" trumped all concerns, meaning bribing a political elite to gain access to oil was acceptable practice, as corruption had also been in a previous colonial context, despite ENI claiming to be a supporter of decolonization.

The major change that needs to be accounted for is the lack of Italian military and political domination in Libya after WWII. Here I have demonstrated that a colonial discourse on the part of central Italian actors survived the end of direct colonization, and that this discourse was essential to secure access to Libyan oil for Italian companies and the Italian state. The company continuity is obvious, with AGIP and FIAT involved in Libya before WWII, while AGIP Mineraria and CORI (now as part of ENI) together with FIAT turn up again after the war. Within these companies the succession of personnel involved

[142] van Genugten, "Libya after Gadhafi," 71; Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 130; Stevens, "International Oil Companies," 6, 16; Wilkins, "The Oil Companies in Perspective," 166–67.

[143] I refer here to the ASENI "ex Scatole Rosse" containing material the archivists received in 2003 and which is currently (2018) being systemized in anticipation of a relocation of the archive repository.

also illustrates the point—in the case of the Desio family of geologists, the colonial issue is quite literally inherited. As for ENI, both its first director Enrico Mattei and his legal advisor Ugo Niutta demonstrate in their attitudes and writing that among key Italian actors a colonial mindset had very much survived the formal end of colonization, something historian Labanca has also pointed out in his work.[144]

Finally, I have summed up how oil changed Libya in the 1960s and how Gaddafi's takeover of power in the last year of that decade promised even further change, though certain key economic relationships remained the same. The remaining 20 000 Italian colonists left over in Libya after WWII were forced to leave, but the Italian oil industry's presence was simultaneously protected and expanded. New arrangements were made in terms of division of funds and royalties, but it is safe to assume that Gaddafi's autocratic government, ENI's leadership and the ruling political classes in Italy still felt their relationship built on a colonial past, was too important to sacrifice. This shared Italo-Libyan petroleum management regime will be crucial in how the two countries deliberate and deal with migration policies, as coming chapters will show.

[144] Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 126.

The ship *Vlora* docked at a quay in the port of Bari, Italy on August 8th 1991, having carried between 10 000 and 20 000 Albanian migrants on board across the Adriatic Sea after the collapse of the communist regime in Albania. The Italian government turned these migrants away in the first documented cases of Italian forced returns, in violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Doing so demonstrated a clear turn towards stricter border management in Italy.

Photograph by Luca Turi/Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain).

3. From the Oil Shock to the Amsterdam Treaty: The Schengen System and its Importance for Italy's Migration Policies (1973–1997)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the rise of the Schengen system within the European Community (EC) and its effect on Italy's migration regime and related methods intended to control, manage and stem migrants arriving by way of the Mediterranean and hailing from northern Africa and beyond. My aim will be to historicize this process and illustrate that its roots and reasons stretch back at least to the oil shock of 1973, which brought a new urgency to European relations with Maghreb and Arab countries. Italy's former colony Libya played an instrumental role in the oil shock, and the two countries' bilateral relationship was affected and reinvented as a result of it. This tumultuous event also set the stage for deliberations on what later became the Schengen Agreement, which in turn brought both increasing European integration and a hardening of external borders toward what has become known as the Global South, now seemingly considered expendable.

As for the Italian migration regime itself, the country became increasingly willing to walk a legal tightrope with regard to what can be called acceptable from a rule of law and human rights perspective, set down in the institutional and legal framework of the European Convention of Human Rights. This was built up in the aftermath of WWII and itself predates European integration. The hardening of borders and attitudes towards migration came as a result of the complex and sometimes circular situations of pressure and coercion within Europe that set the stage for integration and border securitization in Schengen. Other important contributing factors were domestic political and societal developments in Italy.

My analysis centers on the development of a specific Italian migration regime through many phases of contributing events, implementation and development, each of which will constitute a section of this chapter. The first section runs from the oil shock of 1973 until the rapid oil price decline in the mid-1980s, where I supply the background for why a build-down of borders in the EC in tandem with a hardening of external control became politically expedient. The time period from approximately 1984 to 1990 makes up the second section and deals with the foundation and initial implementation of Schengen, where a French and West German desire to shore up sovereignty, externalize border con-

trol and ease the flow of commodities and citizens came at the expense of more peripheral countries, chief among them Italy. When the governments of these two most important member states in the EC struggled to adopt an increasingly restrictive immigration policy on the national level due to unexpected and persistent resistance from parliamentary opposition, civil society and political forces domestically, they instead turned to the supranational level to reinvigorate their legislative push.[145] The third and final section has its beginnings in the early 1990s, when a general collapse of the post-war Italian domestic political paradigm opened up the possibility for new political forces to enter the national stage. Political parties such as *Forza Italia*, with Silvio Berlusconi at the helm, and *Lega Nord*, led by Umberto Bossi, both capitalized on fears of immigration and showed the initial signs of willingness to risk international condemnation through *refoulement* of unwanted refugees and economic migrants.[146] The section ends with Italy's implementation of the Schengen system in 1997, the same year these regulations were included in EU treaty law and adopted by the majority of the union's member states.

AFTER THE OIL SHOCK – INWARD EUROPEAN FOCUS RATHER THAN MEDITERRANEAN ENGAGEMENT, 1973–1986

Before beginning to detail the differing opinions among European nations on the value and the ways of confronting immigration that took place in relation to Schengen from 1984 and onwards, it is important to discuss why this discrepancy in attitudes existed in the first place, as well as present the historical preconditions that led to inward-looking European integration as a politically viable option. Following the postwar boom years of European growth from the early to mid-1950s onwards, all of the member states of the EC apart from Italy experienced mass immigration. In large part, this was due to guest labor programs instituted to attract workers both from within Europe and outside of the continent, seemingly constituting efficient transfers of "idle hands" from poorer countries in the Global South and southern Europe, putting them to work in the more affluent Global North. However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s this immigration started carrying grave political, social and economic liabilities.[147]

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[145] Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 129.

[146] Quaglia, "The Role of Italy in the European Union," 134.

[147] Garavini, "The Colonies Strike Back," 306; Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 126.

Behind this migratory pressure lay the fact that poverty in the former colonized countries was not only still prevalent but actually growing after independence, despite rising production and trade. This was partially because the raw materials they primarily exported had steadily declined in value since WWII.[148] The most important of these raw materials was petroleum, and its relatively low market value had a particular history, the result of a policy of depressed pricing set in motion by the world's major oil companies and often supported by their countries of origin. Up until the 1950s, the Achnacarry Agreement from 1928, governing extraction quotas and designated areas of exploration divided between the major international oil companies at the time, kept market prices as well as profits and royalty rates awarded to petroleum-rich countries fairly predictable.[149] Gradually, however, a principle of 50-50 division of profits after taxes became prevalent, having been introduced in negotiations between oil companies and Venezuela in 1943. This principle migrated to the Middle East in 1950 with American companies edging in on the lucrative Saudi Arabian oil fields, to the great consternation of the British operators who had until then been dominant there.[150] It soon spread throughout the Middle East, where as we saw in the previous chapter, Libya proved key in its attempts at redressing the low pricing of oil through its Petroleum Law of 1955. The country would again prove to be at the forefront of the conflicts over the value of petroleum and other primary resources between the developed and the developing worlds in the 1970s.[151]

The oil shock of 1973 is often summed up as OAPEC (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries) and its allies punishing the US and European nations for supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur war with Egypt, through a targeted oil sales embargo and price hike. It can, however, also be read as an attempt by the Global South to address the decline in raw material prices (including the price of oil) and to improve their standing through economic activism, for a time uniting both oil producing countries and the other raw material exporters of the developing world. The shock itself did not come out of the blue but was a few years in the making, with the first warning shot meant to indicate a coming change happening in Libya. As detailed previously, Libya's new government under

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[148] Garavini, "Completing Decolonization," 476.

[149] The agreement was in fact successfully kept secret until 1952. See Stevens, "International Oil Companies," 4, 6.

[150] Carey and Carey, "Oil for the Lamps of Italy," 248; Joesten, "ENI: Italy's Economic Colossus," 26; Wilkins, "The Oil Companies in Perspective," 170.

[151] Clarke, "Oil in Libya," 42; Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 555; Di Gregorio, "Eni: agente speciale della decolonizzazione," 208.

Muammar Gaddafi successfully nationalized many of the oil majors' production on its territory from 1970 onwards. Libya was a founding member of OAPEC and took its demand for fairer petroleum pricing and political activism into this forum, forcing the major international oil companies to grant it and other producing countries a part in the pricing of oil.[152] This price participation agreement between the majors and oil producing countries was destroyed as soon as 1972, when Libya successfully found buyers for its nationalized oil in contravention of an attempted sales block by both the US and British governments in support of the oil majors.[153] That same year Algeria completed its oil nationalization scheme and Iraq shortly followed suit. The full blow came in October 1973, when the oil producing countries in OAPEC unilaterally abandoned any pretense of negotiating with the majors over pricing and instead announced significant price increases.[154] This economic activism affected how European countries which initially involved themselves politically with the Global South at their Mediterranean doorstep ultimately disengaged and instead focused on migration control and inward integration.

Coined by Giulio Garavini as the high point of "Third Worldism," the oil price worldwide did indeed reach record levels, shocking a developed world that had grown dependent on affordable oil for its own economic post-war revival.[155] The following numbers illustrate how severe this price hike was to the Global North: at the end of 1974 the seven major industrialized countries of the world closed with a US$ 5 billion trade deficit, in contrast to the US$ 13.7 billion trade surplus they had held the preceding year. Italy in particular was vulnerable to the effects of the oil shock, as it imported vast amounts of oil and gas to make up for the fact that it was only 15% energy self-sufficient.[156] Ensuing financial reverberations forced most western European countries to wind down immigration programs, with France and West Germany taking the lead in reducing their demand for foreign labor.[157] This was complicated by the fact that labor migration turned out to be far from a faucet one could simply turn on and off according to fluctuations of demand. European governments were left reeling, with a new impetus to engage with the oil-producing

[152] Stevens, "International Oil Companies," 16.

[153] Interestingly enough, ENI was among the most important buyers of Libya's nationalized oil. See Wilkins, "The Oil Companies in Perspective," 169.

[154] Stevens, "International Oil Companies," 16; Wilkins, "The Oil Companies in Perspective," 169.

[155] Garavini, "Completing Decolonization," 482; Trentin, "Divergence in the Mediterranean," 91.

[156] Bucarelli and Labbate, "L'Eni e la fine dell'età dell'oro," 469–70.

[157] Colombeau, "Policing the Internal Schengen Borders," 484.

countries in the southern Mediterranean and the Arab world.

Many motives have been attributed to these overtures, ranging from genuine social responsibility and a rising consciousness of historic wrongdoing by the colonial and imperial powers, to desires for oil security and a concern for what instability on the southern edge of the Mediterranean might mean for migration pressure to Europe.[158] The EC's Global Mediterranean Policy had in fact already been inaugurated in 1972, but was quickly followed in 1974 by the Euro-Arab Dialogue, both meant to engage with Mediterranean and Arab countries in the surrounding regions of the EC. Similar examples of outreach also happened on a bilateral level, with Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro traveling to Libya in 1974–75 to make agreements with his Libyan counterparts on economic, technical and scientific cooperation. The accord would secure oil imports for Italy in exchange for development aid and technology transfers. Simultaneously, ENI was strengthening its role in Libyan oil exploration, as well as taking on ever more oil infrastructure projects through securing contracts to build refineries, petrochemical plants and pipelines.[159]

Little, however, was achieved in the time before a second oil shock came with the Iranian revolution of 1979. Prices again skyrocketed, but the fallout this time was different. As soon as 1982 oil prices started declining before falling steeply in 1985–86, Third World economic activism fell apart and the Global South was left with rising national debt and a growing trade deficit with the developed nations. In the meantime neoliberalist doctrine had become dominant in the US as well as in key European countries, meaning free-market fiscal policy prescriptions were now the solution offered by the Global North, rather than political engagement coupled with development cooperation.[160] To return to our example of bilateral engagement between Italy and Libya, the development aid and technical assistance for oil agreement was never implemented. This was ostensibly due to Italian hesitation to cross Europe's primary Cold War ally, the US, which strongly opposed any engagement with Gaddafi's Libya after the country's nationalization spree. The economic initiatives and ties between ENI and Libya did not suffer the same fate, however, with Italy in short order securing more than a tripling of oil imports from 455 million to 1.5 billion Italian lira, as well as doubling its exports of goods to Libya.[161]

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[158] Calandri and Paoli, "Europe and the Mediterranean," 6; Garavini, "The Colonies Strike Back," 309.

[159] Bini, "A Transatlantic Shock," 155–56; Cricco, "L'ENI in Libia," 563.

[160] Calandri and Paoli, "Europe and the Mediterranean," 11; Trentin, "Divergence in the Mediterranean," 89.

[161] Bini, "A Transatlantic Shock," 158–60.

Explanations for why this was the preferred route taken by the European developed nations differ. Historian Massimiliano Trentin sees EC engagement, trade and investment with the Mediterranean countries as always closely following the oil price, depending on what would ensure European dominance in the region. Other scholars, such as Giuliano Garavini and Elisabetta Bini, point to a renewed European turn towards strengthening its relationship with the USA and its interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East region playing a part in this decision.[162] The picture is undoubtedly complex, but for the purposes of this section I see it as having made European countries such as France and West Germany feel it as politically expedient not only to wind down their immigration programs, but to also start a process of cajoling other EC member states into aligning their migration policies to their own.[163] In essence the Mediterranean became less a destination for investment and trade, and more an area delegated to securitization and risk management of a more direct kind.

MIGRATION CONCERNS LEAD TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ON UNEQUAL TERMS, 1984–1990

The Schengen acquis has undoubtedly contributed to a broadening of horizons for EU-citizens with regard to both work and leisure, as well as having expanded markets for business and helped growth in trade between the member nations. But it has hardly been the unmitigated success story scholars such as Dane Davis, Thomas Gift and Cristina Popa claim it to be, nor does it ensure equal treatment for those wanting access, be they countries or individuals. Indeed, at the heart of Schengen lie a series of exclusionary processes that have had wide-ranging consequences in the decades since it came into being.[164] In the mid-1980s, Italy (alongside other countries on the periphery of the EC such as Greece) was knowingly kept out of the initial talks to form a borderless area. At first this area was planned to encompass France, West Germany and the Benelux countries, but the idea was later brought into the wider EC policy field and turned into the foundations of Schengen.[165] France's President François Mitterrand and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced the Saarbrücken Accord in July 1984, meant to ease the crossing of both people

[162] Bini, 185; Garavini, "The Colonies Strike Back," 319; Trentin, "Divergence in the Mediterranean," 89.

[163] Colombeau, "Policing the Internal Schengen Borders," 484.

[164] Davis and Gift, "The Positive Effects of the Schengen Agreement," 1541–57; Popa, "The Challenges of the Schengen Area," 96.

[165] Comte, "Migration and Regional Interdependence in the Mediterranean," 116.

and commodities by abolishing their bilateral border controls, harmonizing legislation and externalizing security checks to their frontiers with adjacent nations. Italy's Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti shortly thereafter signaled his country's strong interest in negotiating a similar agreement with France. His French counterpart quickly declined the Italian request, however, as France had a series of misgivings towards Italian immigration policy and fears of what opening its borders to Italy could entail.

The French government considered Italy's system of controls far too lax and believed that up to 800 000 undocumented migrants then residing in Italy would cross the Alps as soon as any restrictions were lifted. Claims such as this seem to die hard and were frequently repeated throughout the strained Franco-Italian relationship over their shared border. Interestingly enough, persistent stereotyping of southern Europeans as work-shy and always looking to leech off of their thrifty northern neighbors also had a bit-part to play in the French rejection, exemplified in Foreign Ministry deliberations and documents noting that "abolition of border controls with Italy might encourage an influx of inactive and unemployed Italian persons," as Simone Paoli has uncovered.[166] The list of French demands for Italy to be allowed into the Schengen deliberations was quite extensive and included: broad border policing cooperation, a drastic tightening of immigration policy, a harmonization of visa requirements (including demanding visas from countries just across the Mediterranean, hitherto exempted by Italy) and, chiefly, a readmission agreement between the two countries, governing any migrants caught illegally or denied admission into France.

The Italian Prime Minister at the time, Bettino Craxi, was convinced that the EC would do well to adopt a more generous stance in its immigration policies, in tune with moral responsibilities and political interests in the Mediterranean. Not coincidentally, this was along the line of thinking of his own government, which argued for a continued visa exemption of several Third World countries, many of them Mediterranean, as part of a strategy meant to strengthen political ties and intended to improve the economies of countries around the Mediterranean basin. Tightening of access to the EC through

[166] See for example Stephen Brown, "Letta Tells Germans that 'Lazy Italians' Cliche Helps Populists," *Reuters,* November 14th, 2013, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-italy-lazy/letta-tells-germans-that-lazy-italians-cliche-helps-populists-idUSBRE9AD16H20131114; Roger Cohen, "Opinion | A Cheer for Italy's Awful New Government," *The New York Times*, June 8, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/01/opinion/italy-government-league-five-star-movement.html, accessed March 12th, 2019; Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 132–33.

enhanced visa restrictions would contravene any such strategy. Craxi was, in fact, so concerned that in the Florence summit with Mitterand on June 14th, 1985, he insisted on making two points of Franco-Italian disagreement the main issues. The first was the visa-requirements mentioned above and the second was the demand for stricter Italian border policing.[167] Mitterand, for his part, was quite adamant that the ultimate aim of a common EC migration policy should be restrictive in order to protect France in particular, and Europe in general, from undesired immigration from the Global South. For him, this meant that Italy needed to better enforce regulations against "illegal migration" across the border into France, particularly migrants coming from the Mediterranean region. The disagreement seemingly proved too deep to resolve, and all talks came to a sudden end in the early months of 1986.[168]

Ultimately, Italy did cave in to demands and went on to become a full-fledged party to the Schengen acquis, conforming its immigration legislation to the stricter regulations already adopted by the other parties to the agreement. The reasons for this about-turn had their origins partially in the domestic political reality of Italy, where the fall of the Craxi cabinet in April 1987 gave impetus to political forces within the country that felt it was too costly to stay on the margins of Schengen, and the rest of continental Europe. The other countries party to Schengen quickly accepted the Italian turnaround, seeing it as a necessary externalization of border control, convenient from both an economic and a political standpoint.[169]

Still, there were prominent dissenting voices within Italian politics, such as the then Vice President of the Council of Ministers Claudio Martelli, who attacked the core of the Schengen Agreement.[170] He went on to introduce a bill in 1989 that was intended to reform and distance Italian immigration policy from what the Schengen members had opted for, in a clarion call meant to dissuade Italy from following the French example. But this was not to be; instead, other national politicians in Italy counter-positioned themselves to ride a growing wave of popular concern with immigration as the new decade approached. Derisive terms used by Italy's northern neighbors to describe its migration pol-

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[167] In fact, the very same day the Schengen Agreement was signed.

[168] Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 134–35.

[169] Calandri and Paoli, "Europe and the Mediterranean," 12; Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 139–40.

[170] Vice President of the Council of Ministers is the second-highest post in the Italian government.

icies and border control, such as being the "soft underbelly" and "open door" of Europe, were adopted in critique of what was claimed to be the liberal approach, as exemplified by politicians like Martelli. In the end, Martelli himself was pressured to abandon his original stance and in March 1990, with an almost baffling turnaround, he went as far as proposing that Italy deploy its army to patrol the coast. By the end of that same year, all the significant reforms required by the five original signatories as a precondition for Italy's accession to the Schengen system were adopted and the country signed both the Saarbrücken Accord and the Schengen Agreement itself on November 27th 1990.[171] From there, the controls were implemented swiftly – already the following year as many as ten out of the twelve EC member states now required visas for citizens of all Arab states.[172]

AN ITALIAN MIGRATION REGIME SHAPED BY SCHENGEN AND DOMESTIC POLITICS, 1990–1997

The politics of Italy in the 1990s, with its seismic shifts and the birth of what has been called the Second Italian Republic, is a wide topic to wade into.[173] It brought the rise of a new political paradigm in the wake of the complete reshuffling of Italian political life, which Quaglia dubbed the "Euro-realist" paradigm. The first instances of *refoulement* at sea with the fall of next-door communist Albania, coupled with an increasing (if belated) awareness that Italy no longer was a country exclusively of emigrants but in fact itself a destination for migrants, further contributed to the beginnings of a new migration agenda for Italy.[174]

The fracturing of the hitherto main governing parties the DC (Christian Democrats) and the PSI (Italian Socialist Party) came in the wake of domestic turmoil after the *Tangentopoli* scandal and *Mani Pulite* investigations into corruption and Mafia links within the established political class.[175] This domestic political turmoil, as well as the general international upheavals following the collapse of the USSR, set the scene for

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[171] Comte, "Migration and Regional Interdependence in the Mediterranean," 118; Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 141, 143, 145.

[172] Comte, "Migration and Regional Interdependence in the Mediterranean," 117.

[173] For the sake of brevity and scope I will necessarily have to stay focused on the aspects directly related to my chapter.

[174] Quaglia, "The Role of Italy in the European Union," 134.

[175] Sometimes translated as Bribesville, *Tangentopoli* was a term popularized in Italian media to describe the widespread corruption in post-war Italian politics. *Mani Pulite* was the nationwide judicial investigation into this systemic corruption, at one point involving indictments of more than half of all Italian parliamentarians.

a structural reworking of Italy's dealings with both the EU (as the EC became following implementation of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993) and Italian migration policy. A common view of the former has been that Italy seemingly lacked a clear and focused strategy in its dealings with the European Union. However, Quaglia posits that up until this time period the Europe-oriented parts of Italy's political class imposed change through lifting issues to the supranational level, inducing the desired domestic reform by way of European and international fora. As for the latter, migration had gradually risen on the agenda for the past decade among both the political elite and the general population, with Italy moving from being a transit post on the journey to a destination country in and of itself for larger masses of migrants.[176]

That it would take this much longer for Italy to experience a change in both migration numbers and the perceptions involved compared with what had already taken place in many other European countries is easier to understand when taking the following into account: in the century after 1876, Italy had sent more than 26 million emigrants abroad, far more than any other European country. Indeed, the first registered shift to more people arriving in Italy than were departing the country happened as late as either 1972 or 1973, depending on which academic you consult. The previous history of emigration played a part in this as well, as the majority of the people then coming to Italy were return migrants of Italian origin. The number of foreign-born persons in Italy by the beginning of the 1970s was still very low, approximately 122 000 people or about 0.22% of the total population.[177] By the early 1990s this share had tripled to 356 000 or approximately 0.6% of Italy's population, and the first attempts at legislating their presence took place. Again Claudio Martelli played a part, as the law attempting to regulate the arrival, registration, integration and path to citizenship of migrants, carried his name. The Martelli Law entered into effect in February 1990, and it is notable as being postwar Italy's first attempt to properly legislate migration. The law, however, had significant and important shortcomings that quickly became visible—despite what the legal framework now demanded there was very little practical preparedness or training of personnel supposed to handle and receive migrants, nor were the facilities to house them ready for use. All in all, the Ital-

[176] Paoli, "The Schengen Agreements and Their Impact on Euro-Mediterranean Relations," 139.

[177] King and Andall, "The Geography and Economic Sociology of Recent Immigration to Italy," 135–37; Colucci, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia,* 49–50; Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 124.

ian attempts to come to terms with migrant arrivals seemed haphazard and characterized by ad-hoc solutions of sometimes dubious legal standing.[178]

A landmark event that shaped this impression came in the summer of 1991 when the Italian-built ship *Vlora,* crammed with as many as 20 000 people escaping chaotic post-communist Albania, anchored in the southern Italian port city of Bari, bringing with it fears of increasing immigration of destitute and foreign people. The Italian government initially housed the arriving Albanians in the city's soccer stadium, orchestrating helicopter drops of food and water as the security situation quickly deteriorated in the overcrowded sports facility. Within days any attempts to process the migrants through the system ostensibly set up by the Martelli Law was abandoned and instead the Italian government forcibly returned all arriving migrants to Albania, the first documented cases of illegal Italian *refoulement* in violation of the Refugee Convention.[179] In fairness it is easy to imagine most local and national governments being overwhelmed by numbers such as these, but the quick resort to illegal and highly improvised solutions can still be seen as a foreshadowing of what happened when Italy and Europe faced future migration increases in the decades to come, something I will examine in the final chapter of this thesis.

The *Vlora* incident and the general change in migrant arrivals had domestic political consequences for Italy. With the mid-1990s election win for Berlusconi's *Forza Italia*, a new incipient foreign policy emerged that was less willing to put European integration above all else. This new Euro-realist political paradigm viewed international and European influence on Italy's political agenda with suspicion, made wider use of bilateral relations to further its own foreign policy, and sought to define and defend Italian "national interests" more vigorously. This last point aimed to curry favor with public opinion and seemingly "stand up" to the EU. Stemming Mediterranean migration figured high among those national interests.

After reading this chapter it might seem I am implying that a gradual hardening of borders and approaches to migrants was somehow inevitable, but it is important to note other scenarios that could have produced alternative outcomes. In September 1990 for example, the Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernández Ordóñez together with his

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[178] Colucci, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia,* 87, 103.

[179] Ballinger, "A Sea of Difference, a History of Gaps," 90–91, 96; Fargues, "Four Decades of Cross-Mediterranean Undocumented Migration to Europe," 10; Triulzi, "Empowering Migrants' Voices and Agency," 60–61.

Italian counterpart Gianni De Michelis proposed that the EC set aside 0.25% of its GDP for initiatives meant to increase economic growth in the countries along the southern Mediterranean basin in return for these countries curbing migration towards Europe.[180] This proposal did not come to be, but ideas like it made their way into the Barcelona Process of November 1995, meant to improve economies on both sides of the Mediterranean, nurture intercultural understanding and secure peace and stability in the area. It encompassed 15 EU member states and 12 non-member nations around the Mediterranean, and was presented as a strategic refocusing of both energy and means on a region in dire need of both.

However, despite much lofty talk, the initiative has been widely seen as failing. international relations scholar Christopher Hill argues that the EU's priorities at the time lay squarely in Eastern Europe and that this was quite visible to the Union's partner countries. Both Hill and other scholars such as Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme, have further pointed out that implicit in the Barcelona Process lie fundamental desires to secure the Mediterranean Basin, thereby saying that the southern Mediterranean countries are in actuality risks to manage rather than equal partners. Bouchard and Ferme go on to note that despite the quite generic rhetoric of cultural exchange and dialogue across cultures and religions that the Process was intended to foster, there were few concrete references to the shared history over centuries of interaction that characterizes the region. Instead, the project had a center-periphery dynamic where Europe, as the former, willingly offered free-market economics and toll-free trade as its preferred solutions, but neglected to support barrier-free travel and a lifting of the visa requirements imposed on travel across the Mediterranean, something its supposed "partner" countries requested.

It was not solely the EU's responsibility that the Barcelona Process never got on track. Historian Elisabetta Cassina Wolff points out that the stated goals of encouraging democracy and pluralism in the region that went along with talk of improving the economy were unpopular among the North African authoritarian states. Not only could this threaten their power base, but the region's colonial history made many deeply suspicious of any initiatives from their former European colonial masters. Wolff also points to deep-seated European perceptions of the southern Mediterranean basin as being corrupt and stagnant. Finally, she points to the lack of an agreed upon and consistent approach

[180] Comte, "Migration and Regional Interdependence in the Mediterranean," 119; Miranda, "Striking a Balance Between Norms and Interests in Italian Foreign Policy," 10.

from all 15 of its member states participating in the Barcelona Process as having doomed the initiative from the beginning.[181]

Leaving what could have been aside, the end of this section brought Schengen's inclusion into EU law through the Amsterdam Treaty on October 2nd, 1997, as well as Italian implementation of the Schengen system requirements on the 26th of the same month. Both clearly tell a story of European countries putting a premium on integration among themselves and a more closed-off attitude to the surrounding areas, as well as the price countries intent on joining this select group would have to pay to do so.

CHAPTER FINDINGS

I have shown that the exclusionary processes and strong desires to regiment and strengthen border controls that lay at the center of Schengen deliberations in 1984–85 were themselves made politically palatable amidst the background of changing Euro-Mediterranean relations in the wake of the oil shock that had occurred over a decade earlier. Through coercion and applied pressure, the Schengen system resulted in a complete change of Italy's migration agenda and approach. Italy's immigration situation and attitudes towards migrants then underwent further changes after domestic developments in the 1990s, becoming considerably less *laissez-faire,* more restrictive, and inclined towards *refoulement* as an acceptable practice. There were examples of other possible avenues of outreach and engagement across the Mediterranean on both a bilateral and an EU-wide level, such as the Barcelona Process. But they were ultimately not sincere, properly implemented or followed through on. Instead, the Italian migration regime would undergo a process of Europeanization, before externalizing its border controls across the Mediterranean.

[181] Bouchard and Ferme, *Italy and the Mediterranean,* 4, 30–31; Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 119; Del Sarto and Tocci, "Italy's Politics Without Policy," 136, 139; Hill, "The Geopolitical Implications of Enlargement," 104; Seddon, "Dreams and Disappointments," 224; Wolff, "EUs sørlige dimensjon (Barcelona-processen)," 202, 207, 212, 216–17, 220.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi greets Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi upon his arrival in Italy on June 10th 2009, after both countries had signed the *Friendship and Cooperation Treaty* the preceding year. This treaty involved growing Italian economic involvement in Libya, a shared management of migration across the Mediterranean and increased petroleum and gas exports, in exchange for an Italian apology and promise of reparations for the colonial occupation. Or as summed up by Berlusconi: "fewer illegal immigrants, more gas and more oil." Pinned to Gaddafi's jacket is a picture of Omar al-Mukhtar, a Libyan resistance leader hanged by the Italian colonial government on September 16th, 1931.

Photograph by Christophe Simon/AFP/NTB Scanpix.

4. Libya, Europe's Gatekeeper: The Europeanization of a Mediterranean Migration Regime on Colonial Undercurrents (1998–2017)

INTRODUCTION

The final chapter deals with the gradual process of Europeanization and externalization of Italian migration control measures. In the aftermath of 2011's "Arab Spring" and the situation often-termed the "migration crisis" in 2015, Italy's hardened and securitized border regime, resulting from both European and domestic political pressures, experienced a sort of "boomerang effect" and was ultimately adopted and supported by the EU. Furthermore, stringent migration management methods did not necessarily stop at the Italian borders, as historians Alessandro Triulzi and Antonio Morone have illustrated.[182] Rather, these boundaries were pushed further beyond the Mediterranean Sea itself and outsourced to North African countries like Libya, where the shapes this externalization took were in turn, informed by the colonial experience Italy had previously had in the very same region. Libya became Italy's adjunct in the process of externalizing and securing its own Mediterranean border, and in turn that of the European Union.[183] Triulzi finds strong words to describe this development, stating that the former colony was "…acting as a *gendarme* for the old metropolis."[184] Through instances of *refoulement* and the beginnings of a system of detention centers for migrants, these borders were in the process of being relocated from the south of Italy beyond the coastal waters of Libya and into Libyan territory proper.[185]

It is important to note that throughout this chapter I will use the term Europeanization in a different manner than is customary. As described by International Relations scholar Ulrich Sedelmeier and used by historians like Patricia Clavin, the concept most often "refers to the impact of the EU on nation states…across policies, politics and polities."[186] Instead, I lean towards the interpretation of political and social scientists such as Lucia Quaglia and Valter Coralluzzo, who posit a bottom-up reading of Europeanization.

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[182] Securitization of border controls involves an overriding focus on threat assessment and prevention in all management of people moving across national boundaries.

[183] Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 129–30.

[184] Triulzi, "Empowering Migrants' Voices and Agency," 4.

[185] Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 139–40.

[186] Clavin, "Time, Manner, Place," 630–31; quotation taken from Sedelmeier, "Europeanization," 825.

Namely, they assert that it can also be considered a sort of nationalization of European concerns where one country's (in this case Italy's) prerogatives become paramount to the EU as a whole.[187]

This chapter does not seek to paint a picture of Italy as the rogue "bad actor" with undue influence in this story. Not only did Italy face immigration at unprecedented levels in the time period I am investigating, but it also attempted to save many lives at risk in the Mediterranean when others were slow to react. All the while, its European Union counterparts, at least initially, seemingly wrung their hands and hid behind the stringent stipulations of the Dublin Regulation, which dictates that asylum can only be requested in the member state where the applicant first entered.[188] Worth noting is that Italian civil society, the media and the political sphere frequently questioned the validity of governmental approaches to handling the migration influx, meaning this was not the case of a uncontested regime acting on a uniform national mandate.[189]

Another important point to make is that the concern over migration was not only an Italian preoccupation—since Italy was managing Schengen's external border and many of the migrants arriving on Italian shores were heading further north rather than wanting to stay in the country, it was certainly a European matter. However, seeing that Italy was largely left alone to tackle migrant arrivals in the Mediterranean, the country worked to put migrant management high on the EU's political agenda. In this process, the transfer of Italian migration management methods from national to supranational levels was the result of complex and sometimes circular flows of pressure and coercion, with outcomes based on circumstances of immigration to Europe that no party had anticipated.[190] The subsequent externalization beyond the Mediterranean Sea into African countries along its southern basin and beyond was led by Italy and supported by the EU. This process increasingly brought Italy into conflict with human rights norms that had been established by the country and the European community in general: in 2012 the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) strongly condemned *refoulement* with the judgement in the *Hirsi*

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[187] Quaglia, "The Role of Italy in the European Union," 134; Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 117.

[188] With the increase in Mediterranean migration this EU asylum processing regulation has repeatedly pitted countries like Greece, Italy and occasionally Spain against their fellow member states.

[189] Cohen, Roger. "Opinion | Europe's Migration Impasse." The New York Times, December 21st, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/05/opinion/europes-migration-impasse.html; Ball, Deborah, and Giovanni Legorano. "Migrant Surge Exposes EU's Policy Discord." Wall Street Journal, March 11th, 2015, http://search.proquest.com/docview/1661907999/abstract/B6174A997A1342A8PQ/1, accessed on March 12th, 2019.

[190] Andrade, "Initiatives of EU Member States in Managing Mixed Flows in the Mediterranean," 52.

Jamaa and others v. Italy case. Italy also made several bilateral agreements intended to secure the return of migrants to third-party countries such as Libya—a nation that is not participatory in the 1951 Refugee Convention and which is currently torn between several factions. These factions are fighting a prolonged civil war in the aftermath of the toppling of autocrat Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Chapter four will be broken down into three sections, each dealing with a specific agreement or accord between Italy and Libya representing increased migrant control externalization. The final document discussed is the 2017 Valletta Memorandum, which also included EU involvement after Italy's migration agenda had successfully undergone Europeanization to become a policy tool of the Union as a whole. All of these treaties and their contents—and this is the main argument of this chapter—were only possible due to the continuing presence and instrumentalization of Italo-Libyan colonial history. I aim to illustrate this by examining the historical context of each agreement and the specific connections made between the present and the past that informed them. Furthermore, the chapter brings a critical reading of the narrative presented in the accords, through an analysis of the agreement texts with the Italo-Libyan colonial relationship in mind.

Section one deals with a Joint Communiqué from 1998 promoting increased economic collaboration between the two countries, primarily in the field of petroleum and gas, in exchange for increased political recognition of a Libyan regime that had spent almost two decades as an international pariah. Crucially, this communiqué was also the first bilateral agreement in writing between Italy and Libya where migration was raised as an issue of mutual interest.[191]

The second section begins with the 2008 Italy–Libya Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation, signed into law by Libya's autocratic leader Muammar Gaddafi and Silvio Berlusconi, then Italy's Prime Minister. The treaty traded an increase in Libyan border control and a clampdown on "illegal migration" in return for further Italian financial aid and investment.[192] It also created the framework for large-scale *refoulement* to Libya of migrants en route to Europe intercepted in the Mediterranean. Fresh off the heels of this treaty came the eruption of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011, a pivotal point that brought several thousand Tunisian refugees to Italy. Italian dissatisfaction with being

[191] Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities,* 118.

[192] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 317.

saddled with sole responsibility to process and perhaps absorb these migrants, as stipulated in the Dublin Regulation, led the country to give some of these newcomers temporary residency permits allowing for free travel within Schengen. When a small minority boarded trains towards France (along with human rights activists accompanying them), the reaction of French authorities threatened Schengen cooperation, by further securing French national borders within a nominally borderless area. As we will see in this section, however, ultimately France and the wider EU community came to an agreement with Italy, leading to increased Europe-wide acceptance of Italian approaches and demands that constituted a Europeanization of Italy's migration agenda.

The final section of this chapter discusses a simultaneous Europeanization and externalization of migration management, exemplified in the 2017 Valletta Memorandum between Italy (with its initiatives in turn partially financially subsidized by the EU) and the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA). This memorandum is a key document dealing with the channeling of immigration into the European Union, as well as what the two countries can jointly do to control and stem this movement of people. In my analysis the memorandum and other bilateral initiatives coming from the Italian side are culminations of attempts to replicate the EU-Turkey deal aiming to curb migration to Europe, in the wake of the "migration crisis" in 2015.

THE DINI–MOUNTASSER JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ, 1998–2008

As the 1990s came to a close, Italy sought to strengthen economic ties and border policing cooperation with countries along the southern coasts of the Mediterranean, chief among them Libya.[193] After spending much of the 1980s and 1990s as an international pariah, Libya was gradually brought back into the orbit of the European countries. Italy had maintained a mostly cordial diplomatic relationship with Gaddafi's Libya since the 1969 coup, keeping the eccentric and autocratic leader and his regime at political arm's length, while continuing a gradual expansion of economic involvement in its former colony. As we saw in the second chapter, despite the challenges coming with Gaddafi's takeover and the subsequent expulsions of Italian citizens remaining in the country, ENI remained heavily involved in oil and gas exploration and production on Libyan territory. The company was so

[193] Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 138.

successful that by the early 1970s it was the largest foreign operator in the Libyan oil sector, in what was then Africa's largest oil-producing country.[194] Indeed, according to historian Angelo Del Boca the 1970s inaugurated forty years of brisk business for Italian companies in Libya, politics notwithstanding. Interestingly enough, another 17 000 Italians primarily working in the petroleum sector had by the mid-1980s replaced the Italian community of 20 000 former colonists expelled in 1970. This was the second-highest community of Italian expatriates in the world after the one in South Africa.[195] But the road leading to the signing of the joint communiqué and a political engagement to match the economic one was difficult, the specifics of which I will briefly outline below.

Throughout the 1980s Libya had increasingly engaged in and funded terrorist networks, training and equipping the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as well as planning and executing attacks such as the airplane bombings in Lockerbie (1988) and Niger (1989). More directly involving Italy was the launching of Libyan Scud missiles towards the Italian Mediterranean island of Lampedusa in 1986. From the Libyan side this was meant as retaliation for the US bombings of Tripoli and Benghazi in April of that year, an attack in turn coming as a consequence of Libyan operatives having planted explosives in a Berlin discotheque frequented by American servicemen stationed in the country a few days earlier.[196] In the aftermath of these events an embargo on economic dealings with Libya had been imposed on both national (US and Italian) as well as international (EC and UN) levels. Noteworthy, however, is the Italian and West German insistence that the export of Libyan oil be exempted from the economic blockade.[197]

It is not hard to see that in this hostile climate there was initially little room for *rapprochement,* made even more complicated by Gaddafi's continuous insistence over the decades since his coup that Italy pay reparations for crimes committed during the colonial occupation. There had been a modest one-time payment of Italian €5 million agreed with the previous Libyan monarchy in 1956, but Italy had not permitted this sum to be referred to as either reparation for the colonial period or war damages as a result of WWII,

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[194] Colafrancesco, "A Case of Paradiplomacy?," 109.

[195] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 13; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities*, 114.

[196] Colafrancesco, "A Case of Paradiplomacy?," 96, 109; Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 120; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities*, 114; Ronzitti, "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya," 126.

[197] Colafrancesco, "A Case of Paradiplomacy?," 97.

instead calling it a "contribution to the economic reconstruction of the country."[198] So what changed in the years leading up to the 1998 Joint Communiqué? Ultimately, the sanctions and embargo placed upon Libya in combination with low oil prices throughout the 1980s took their toll both on the country's finances and its international reputation. In Italy the political upheavals of the early 1990s created new openings for new politicians. Tentative outreach happened in the first half of the 1990s as a part of the *politica del buon vicinato,* which translates into "Good Neighborhood Policy." This approach cut across many traditional Cold War-divides that had up until then guided Italian politics and put "national interests" front and center, a term itself open to interpretation and reclassification. Towards the end of the decade this policy yielded results, with the communiqué and a verbal process alongside it, both signed by the Libyan Secretary of the General People's Committee, Omar Mustafa el-Muntasser, and Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini on July 4th, 1998.[199]

So what did the communiqué itself say, and can the language used tell us something about how colonial history comes into play? Both the communiqué and the verbal process mention a mutual desire to leave the negative heritage of a colonial past behind and instead look to the future, a future that no polemic, disagreement or contention should mar.[200] The implication seems to be that an acknowledgement of past misdeeds, brutality and imbalance of power cannot coexist with a new future, and that historical memory stands in the way of progress. There are also some curious terms of expression used, with Italy "inviting Libya to move beyond the past, a past which Libya in turn asks Italy not to repeat."[201] At a point in the joint communiqué the Italian government expresses regret for the suffering of the Libyan people, later also promising to restore the rights given to them during the colonial occupation. This is a strange throwback to include in what is ostensibly a forward-looking document, as the rights being referred to must be the Libyan statutes of 1919, where a limited form of Italian citizenship was given to their colonial subjects in Libya, including the right to emigrate freely. These rights were, however, never really granted, because as soon as 1927 the statues were radically changed and a 1938 census of

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[198] Colafrancesco, 94; Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 11–12; Morone, "Asimmetrie postcoloniali," 179; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities,* 111.

[199] Colafrancesco, "A Case of Paradiplomacy?," 116–17; Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 121; Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 14; Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 130–31; Lombardi, "The Berlusconi Government and Intervention in Libya," 37; Ronzitti, "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya," 126.

[200] *Comunicato congiunto*, 3, July 4th 1998, https://web.archive.org/web/20100124055608/http://airl.it/accorditrattati2.php; *Processo verbale*, 1, July 4th, 1998, https://web.archive.org/web/20100110180223/http://www.airl.it/accorditrattati1.php.

[201] *Comunicato congiunto,* 1, July 4th, 1998, https://web.archive.org/web/20100124055608/http://airl.it/accorditrattati2.php

"colored people" held in Italy (the same year draconian racial laws were passed) showed a total of 29 people from Italy's colonies residing in the metropole.[202]

Did the reemergence of this promise of Italian citizen rights to Libyans after ninety years signal a radical rethinking of European inclusivity or freer movement across the Mediterranean? Not exactly; a caveat included included in the communiqué specified that the rights and privileges were to be mutually defined by the Italian and Libyan sides, and whatever was jointly decided was, in turn, dependent on Italy's obligations to the EU.[203] This is not to say that the communiqué and accompanying verbal process had no consequences; on the contrary, they did. The mention of migration was an important first, though in the late 1990s that meant a joint combating of visa forgery, not patrols of the Mediterranean to hinder or intercept African migrants or an outsourcing of their management to Libyans acting on behalf of Italy and the EU.[204] Those developments were yet to come, and in general the political *rapprochement* hinted at in the Italo-Libyan documents of 1998 would take a decade to mature and come to fruition. It is, however, noteworthy that the number of migrant crossings to Italy from Libya as well as related deaths by drowning in the Mediterranean rose significantly, with more than a quadrupling of registered arrivals, from 5500 to almost 23 000 between 1998 and 2005. In the same time period 1641 people died at sea while making the journey. The increase seemingly strengthened Gaddafi's claim going as far back as the mid-1990s that Libya was simply a transit country for migrants and not a destination country in and of itself. This claim was used as a bargaining chip to strengthen Libyan demands for a lifting of sanctions and a readmission into the international community, though scholars such as Morone have questioned its truthfulness.[205]

Also useful to ratchet up pressure on the Italians and their EU counterparts, were the reminders of outstanding debts and apologies for the colonial period. Interestingly enough, the late 1990s brought a strategic rethinking of Gaddafi's demands for Italian atonement for their colonial crimes. After the 1998 Joint Communiqué, he succeeded in convincing Rome to enable and fund research into crimes committed between 1911 and

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[202] Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 8, 10; Ryan, "Violence and the Politics of Prestige," 124; Schanzer, "Italian Colonial Policy," 451; Triulzi, "Across the Mediterranean," 166, 168.

[203] *Comunicato congiunto,* 3, July 4th, 1998, https://web.archive.org/web/20100124055608/http://airl.it/accorditrattati2.php.

[204] *Processo verbale,* 6, July 4th, 1998, https://web.archive.org/web/20100110180223/http://www.airl.it/accorditrattati1.php.

[205] Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 125; Morone, "La Libia, crocevia migratorio," 74; Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 129.

1915, but he did not insist on a similar inquiry into the far worse atrocities happening in the Cyrenaican internment camps of the early 1930s, described in my first chapter.[206]

The immediate effect of the communiqué was an ever-closer economic involvement of Italian companies in Libya, particularly ENI's role in the petroleum sector. As quickly as in August 1999, ENI announced a US$5.5 billion deal with its Libyan counterpart in the National Oil Company (NOC) to build a cross-Mediterranean gas pipeline called Greenstream, as well as to expand gas and oil exploration and exploitation in the country. At this point ENI was responsible for more than half of Libya's oil exports, and the two economies would become ever more intertwined, ensuring an increased importance of Italo-Libyan petroleum industry for their shared migrant policy, as we shall see in the coming section.[207]

THE TREATY ON FRIENDSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION, 2008–2012

Of the three agreements I am looking closely at in this chapter, the 2008 Friendship Treaty is arguably the most important one. It encompassed several key developments: for one, it brought an increased Europeanization of Italy's migration agenda. This was seen already at the preparatory stages of the treaty. As a result of Italy's new Euro-realist foreign policy, coming after domestic changes in Italy's politics combined with the stringent migration approach the country had been forced to adopt to gain access to Schengen, Italy in turn obliged the EU to lift its ban on commercial relations with Libya, in place since 1986. This paved the way for a treaty to be signed, with the aim of advancing a strict Italian migration agenda. Perhaps surprisingly, the process of Europeanization was further cemented when the Arab Spring and resulting overthrow of Gaddafi challenged and suspended the treaty from 2011 onwards. The newly established Italo-Libyan migration management system would be met with its biggest challenge to date as migrant crossings across the Mediterranean increased, in turn affecting how Italy's northern neighbors would relate to both Italy and its Mediterranean migration agenda.

Second, the externalization of Italy's migration regime to Libya allowed for joint Italo-Libyan coast guard patrols and quickly led to a much more organized pushback of

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[206] Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 130–31.

[207] Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 122; Paoletti, *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities*, 119.

migrants landing in Italy than the more scattered efforts previously seen.[208] Historian Alessandro Triulzi called it a "systematic *refoulement*" of all northbound migrant boats across the Mediterranean. The then serving Italian Minister of Interior Roberto Maroni went as far as praising these harsh tactics as a "model for the whole of Europe."[209] At present it is hard to disagree, though that is not necessarily praiseworthy.

Third, this treaty intimately tied the colonial past to both economic and migrant policing cooperation through including an apology and promises of colonial reparation.[210] This is where I will start the section's discussion, addressing how and why this connection with the past was included in the treaty. Whether or not the apology was genuine has been hotly debated in academia and elsewhere, something that I will touch upon as well.

After Berlusconi traveled to Libya, meeting Gaddafi in Benghazi to sign the *Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation* between their two governments on August 30th, 2008, it ostensibly brought the colonial chapter to a close. As mentioned before, the question of apologizing to Libya for that period had come into play several times since the end of WWII. It is certainly notable that no other former colonial power has yet apologized for past wrongdoings or promised reparations as Italy did in that year's treaty with Libya. However, the apology can be read in many ways. In general, Italian and international media at the time accepted it quite uncritically or reacted in somewhat surprising ways, with Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* arguing that Berlusconi had paid too high a price for the deal, while the German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* lauded the colonial apology and promise of reparation for being "not only morally but also financially expedient."[211]

In academic circles the interpretation has varied, with legal scholars like Natalino Ronzitti and international relations expert Valérie Vicky Miranda praising the apology with few reservations.[212] Historian Pamela Ballinger and international relations scholar Ben Lombardi, for their part, do not directly address the motivations or truthfulness of the apology when they touch upon the treaty in their writings.[213] There are, however, many examples of scholars taking an outspoken critical stance, chief among them anthropol-

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[208] Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 139.

[209] Triulzi, "'Like a Plate of Spaghetti,'" 215.

[210] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 316; Triulzi, "'Like a Plate of Spaghetti,'" 215.

[211] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 320–21.

[212] Miranda, "Striking a Balance Between Norms and Interests in Italian Foreign Policy," 11–12; Ronzitti, "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya," 125.

[213] Ballinger, "Colonial Twilight," 815; Lombardi, "The Berlusconi Government and Intervention in Libya," 37.

ogist Chiara De Cesari and aforementioned historian Morone. De Cesari has observed that while the treaty/apology on the surface addresses past colonial misdeeds, it never explicitly points out what they were, nor talks about the damage done directly. Instead it calls for final closure and an end to contentiousness and heated discussions on the matter of the colonial era, discussions and exchanges that never actually took place.[214] De Cesari mentions the writing of another seminal anthropologist in an attempt to explain this theoretically, namely Ann Laura Stoler and her term colonial aphasia. This concept implies that there is no lack of societal memory or knowledge on the topic of colonialism, in contrast to the view that there is a reigning colonial amnesia or silence.[215] Rather, colonial aphasia in Stoler's view, tells us that there is an inability to truly comprehend, reflect and learn from the colonial past, and I agree with De Cesari that this is what we are witnessing in the case of the 2008 Friendship Treaty.[216] I also concur with the perspective of Morone when he posits that the treaty was quite simply a case of *realpolitik*. Behind the excuses for Italy's past behavior, their shared history served as political capital. It benefited both the Libyan regime in its desire for international acknowledgement and economic development, and the Italian government in its search to externalize their border further through *refoulement* and its outsourcing of migration management to its former colony.[217]

The issue of the US$5 billion promised as reparation for the colonial occupation of Libya is also very telling. The money was primarily supposed to cover the costs of expensive Libyan infrastructure projects, like upgrading the coastal *Via Balbia*. Built during the end of the colonial period in the run-up to WWII, the highway was meant to aid Italian occupiers in keeping control of their subjects. It also allowed the Italian colonial government to quickly ferry large masses of troops to the borders with the French and British colonies surrounding Libya, if needed in case of war. The highway also served an important purpose for Italian oil pioneers in the 1960s, helping them get to their search areas. The interesting point about the promised funds is that they were not to be handed over to Libyans directly, but rather managed from Italy and paid to Italian companies contracted to do the work. The money would be raised by levying a tax on Italian companies involved

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[214] *Trattato di Amicizia, Partenariato e Cooperazione tra la Repubblica Italiana e la Grande Giamahiria Araba Libica Popolare Socialista,* preambolo, August 30th, 2008, http://www.istitutospiov.it/articoli/trattato-di-amicizia-partenariato-e-cooperazione-tra-la-repubblica-italiana-e-la-grande-gia; De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 317–18.

[215] Labanca, "Post-Colonial Italy," 142–43.

[216] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 316; Stoler, *Duress*, 128, 156–57.

[217] Morone, "Asimmetrie postcoloniali," 181; Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 141.

in petroleum research and development, headquartered in Italy and with holdings valued at €20 billion or more, essentially a roundabout way of referring to ENI. The spending itself was also tax-exempt, lessening the burden on the petroleum multinational.[218]

This reevaluation shows that perhaps the colonial reparation had an ulterior motivation besides righting past wrongs. So who stood to gain? As the company footing the bill, ENI might initially seem like the least likely party to benefit, but a strengthening of Libyan infrastructure along the coast would ultimately only help the petroleum giant access its oil fields and installations both inland and offshore. As for the Italian government, the treaty committed Libya to assuming the role of Europe's gatekeeper and increasing the patrolling of its coasts to hinder northbound migrant embarkations, something a revamped *Via Balbia* would make a great deal easier. Finally, Gaddafi's authoritarian regime would be able to use the highway for exactly the same purpose that it was originally built for, keeping the local population under control and transferring troops from one end of the country to the other at a moment's notice. If that were to happen, the treaty would not be a hindrance—it did not address the lack of democracy in Libya, attempt to nudge the country towards a more representative system or hinder Gaddafi from repressing his own people.[219]

What the treaty did facilitate was an even greater expansion of Italo-Libyan economic interdependence. This activity was not surprisingly focused on the petroleum sector, but by no means limited to it. In the immediate years after the treaty was signed, Libya grew to be the third largest supplier of oil to Italy, covering almost 30% of its energy needs, with ENI signing an agreement valued at US$28 billion with its Libyan counterparts. Nor was Libya's growing energy importance limited to Italy; the country became the third largest supplier of energy resources (both oil and gas) to Europe after Russia and Norway, with 85% of its oil going to European markets. Italy in short order became Libya's largest trading partner, the source of 40% of Libya's total imports and the destination of 20% of its exports. It also became the largest European weapons exporter to Gaddafi's regime. For its part, Libya also greatly increased its holdings in Italy, investing in the banking sector, the car manufacturer FIAT, the petroleum company ENI and even buying a stake in the

[218] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 319; Del Boca, "Cento anni in Libia," 14; Lombardi, "The Berlusconi Government and Intervention in Libya," 37; Miranda, "Striking a Balance Between Norms and Interests in Italian Foreign Policy," 12, footnote 53; Ronzitti, "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya," 128.

[219] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 316–17; Miranda, "Striking a Balance Between Norms and Interests in Italian Foreign Policy," 12.

famous football club Juventus.[220]

Finances aside, the political aspect of the treaty was also quick to produce effects—between 2008 and 2010, "illegal" migrant arrivals to Italy decreased from 37 000 to 405, while Libya was broadly welcomed back into the fold after years of international isolation. In fact, on September 5th, 2008 only a few days after the treaty was signed, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived for a historic visit to Tripoli.[221]

This new arrangement would be short-lived, however, as change was underfoot in the Maghreb and beyond. With the coming of the Arab Spring to Libya in 2011 after unrest had already started in neighboring Tunisia late the preceding year, tens of thousands of migrants left the chaos of political and social unrest in Northern Africa, heading towards Italy. Italian migration officials issued temporary residence permits to a number of these migrants of Tunisian descent, which gave them the right of free movement within the Schengen zone. This did not particularly endear Italy to its neighboring Schengen member states, least of all to France.[222] Disregarding the permission papers given them by Italy and reintroducing internal border checks under the pretense that these migrants constituted a threat to national security, the French immigration authorities adopted a firm stance in their handling of what was only a few hundred Tunisian migrants and accompanying activists arriving by train at the Ventimiglia/Menton border.[223] Fueled by the now firmly entrenched Euro-realist political paradigm, as well as the more combative stance of the third Berlusconi-government with Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, Italy strongly protested this reaction. Not only did an assertive Italy feel threatened by the increase in migration (regardless of whether the threat was as serious as portrayed politically), but it also demanded support from its Schengen neighbors and was not afraid to prove the point. The two countries were at loggerheads. France continued to defy the European Court of Justice (ECJ), which ruled the reintroduction of internal border controls to be illegal and instigated on dubious grounds. After all, the low number of Tunisians seeking entry could not be reasonably be said to threaten the national integrity of France. The Schengen Border Codes of 2006 did, indeed, allow for temporary internal controls on extraordinary

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[220] Coralluzzo, "Italy and the Mediterranean," 128; Lombardi, "The Berlusconi Government and Intervention in Libya," 38; Morone, "Asimmetrie postcoloniali," 187.

[221] Lombardi, "The Berlusconi Government and Intervention in Libya," 38; Morone, "Asimmetrie postcoloniali," 180.

[222] McClure, "Suspending Schengen," 327.

[223] Colombeau, "Policing the Internal Schengen Borders," 489–90.

grounds, but that was not intended to mean the exclusion of a small group of citizens of a specific nationality.[224] Also worth noting is the fact that Italy had already issued thousands of temporary permits the very same year, and that this in turn constituted only a small fraction of the annual total number of these permits issued across the EU.[225] The situation threatened the stability of the Schengen system as a whole. When putting the numbers in context, France's reintroduction of internal border checks seems unnecessarily dramatic. Scholars have pointed out that looking at the overall migration figures at stake, and disregarding glaring media headlines from both France and Italy relating to "illegal" arrivals, the immigration situation in 2011 had not fundamentally changed since the preceding year.[226] Furthermore, the vast majority of people who did arrive "illegally" did so by overstaying their authorized travel period on tourist visas, compared to a mere 12% arriving by boat across the Mediterranean as these North Africans had done.[227]

The French government's reaction and its subsequent endangerment of the Schengen system as a whole came after Italy exploited its refugee situation by giving out the temporary permits and tested the waters, so to speak, to find out what the reaction would be. This was done in order to raise the Schengen member states' awareness of Italy's predicament and open up a supranational transfer of its national approach to tackling the influx of refugees, thus grafting it onto existing EU border externalization.[228] France had already been a committed supporter of the EU's border control agency Frontex and considered the expelling of a high annual number of "illegal" migrants (40 000 in 2011 alone) as a laudable accomplishment.[229] Now Frontex would get directly involved in the Mediterranean through launching operation *Hermes* on February 20th 2011, at Italy's request, to help manage the migration flow. This signaled a new commitment to externalizing borders and co-opting the Italian migration agenda.

The same day as operation *Hermes* was launched, the Arab Spring protests reached Tripoli after having spread to Libya from neighboring Tunisia just a few days

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[224] See: Regulation No. 562/2006 of the Eur. Parl. and of the Council of 15 March 2006, 2006 O.J. (L 105) 1-32, article 20 "Crossing Internal Borders".

[225] McClure, "Suspending Schengen," 334–35, 341.

[226] Colombeau, "Policing the Internal Schengen Borders," 484.

[227] Triulzi, "'Like a Plate of Spaghetti,'" 214.

[228] Paoletti, "The Arab Spring and the Italian Response," 139, 143.

[229] Active since 2005 and headquartered in Poland, Frontex is responsible for patrolling the borders of the Schengen area. McClure, "Suspending Schengen," 344.

earlier. It quickly became clear that this was a serious challenge to Gaddafi's autocratic leadership and he reacted with a violent crackdown. On March 17th the UN adopted resolution 1973 condemning Gaddafi's attacks on Libya's civilian population and called for a no-fly zone to be established in order to avert further aerial bombardments on protestors by Gaddafi's air force. This was used as the legal basis for a NATO operation launched only two days later on March 19th, with the stated purpose of implementing this no-fly zone. As it gradually became clear that Gaddafi's regime would have no chance of weathering the combined opposition of local uprising and NATO's air campaign supporting it, by April Italy finally relented on its opposition to foreign intervention in Libya. Berlusconi's government had largely stood on the sidelines as the situation across the Mediterranean worsened, weary of the damage Gaddafi's fall could have on the 2008 Friendship Treaty and the benefits attached to it. There were however, advantages to be gained by joining France and other European countries in their campaign: just days after announcing Italy's participation, Italian and French officials signed a deal on April 26th aimed at encouraging the EU's increased presence in the field of managing Mediterranean migration and strengthening Frontex's budgets.[230]

Gaddafi was ultimately deposed and killed on October 20th, 2011. The political situation in Libya only became more convoluted after his fall as the security situation worsened and multiple factions arose to compete for power, and the 2008 Friendship Treaty was suspended.[231] By 2012 more setbacks to cooperation on petroleum and migration were forthcoming: that year, the ECHR condemned the Italo-Libyan bilateral agreement of interception and return of migrants at sea in the July 2012 *Hirsi Jamaa and others v. Italy* legal judgment. This judgment came after 24 Eritrean and Somali nationals who had been forcibly returned to Tripoli after having been intercepted by the Italian coastguard on May 6th, 2009, brought their case before the ECHR.[232] The *refoulement* procedure might have been a prime example of what the 2008 Treaty was meant to facilitate, but it clearly straddled the line of what European Human Rights law allowed. The combination of institutional

[230] The Arab Spring and related fall of Gaddafi in 2011 is a complex topic deserving its own chapter, but I permit myself to only briefly mention it for the sake of brevity and focus. Lombardi, "The Berlusconi Government and Intervention in Libya," 42–43; Malito, "The Responsibility to Protect What in Libya?," 289–91.

[231] De Cesari, "The Paradoxes of Colonial Reparation," 320.

[232] Case of Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy (application no. 27765/09), https://www.asylumlawdatabase.eu/en/content/ecthr-hirsi-jamaa-and-others-v-italy-gc-application-no-2776509; Andrade, "Initiatives of EU Member States in Managing Mixed Flows in the Mediterranean," 52; Triulzi, "Empowering Migrants' Voices and Agency," 63.

resistance and popular uprisings that jeopardized the Italo-Libyan treaties and agreements were not to be permanent, however, as we shall see in the last section of this chapter.

THE VALLETTA MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, 2013–2017

As illustrated in the previous section, parallel to the ECHR's condemnation of Italy's handling of migration, a Europeanization of its approaches through EU involvement was on the increase. Moving into 2013 we see several examples of this, the first being the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) of 2013, where the EU promised to help equip and train Libyan police forces with ta view to aiding in the control and slowdown of the movement of refugees towards Europe. Italy's growing assertiveness and sense of its own agency meant that it could now also push for and succeed in transferring national maritime operations, like the 2013 rescue mission *Mare Nostrum,* from its own jurisdiction (and financial responsibility) to the Frontex-sponsored operation *Triton* that took place over the following year. No longer was Italy expected to receive deported "illegal migrants" from France and left to handle the situation alone.[233] In the years leading up to the "migration crisis" of 2015 the ECHR's 2012 judgment on Italy's *refoulement* policy curbed it to a significant degree, but the policy of moving migrant detention and management beyond European shores persisted, now with additional EU-wide financial and operational backing.[234]

Beyond the Europeanization already detailed above, the key aspect of this final section is the externalization of border controls. What had originally been Italian programs came under the EU operational umbrella, and externalization of European borders moved beyond the Mediterranean and into African countries. Italy had attempted to revive the clauses of the 2008 Friendship Treaty relating to migration management just months after Gaddafi's fall in 2011, making new agreements with the National Transitional Council (NTC), Libya's interim government.[235] This process proceeded unevenly through the handling of increased migration in 2015–2016. There were deep and wrenching arguments over how to cope with the increasing number of migrants who were arriving by way

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[233] Morone, "Il processo di Khartoum," 2; Paoletti, "Power Relations and International Migration," 283–84.

[234] For examples of use of the term "migration crisis," see: Ferruccio Pastore, "The next Big European Project? The Migration and Asylum Crisis: A Vital Challenge for the EU," (Research Report, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2015), 4.; Marco Scipioni, "Failing Forward in EU Migration Policy? EU Integration after the 2015 Asylum and Migration Crisis," Journal of European Public Policy 25, no. 9 (September 2018): 1357–75; Åsne Kalland Aarstad, "The Duty to Assist and Its Disincentives: The Shipping Industry and the Mediterranean Migration Crisis," Mediterranean Politics 20, no. 3 (September 2015): 413–19. Andrade, "Initiatives of EU Member States in Managing Mixed Flows in the Mediterranean," 52.

[235] Andrade, 52, 55, 57.

of the Mediterranean, and the "declining European appetite for foreigners," as Jonathon Moses put it.[236] In these arguments, Italy did still not get full and unconditional support. The yet-to-be solved Dublin Regulation debacle is a prime example of continued strife. Notwithstanding this disagreement, while the press and public opinion stayed focused on the growing dimensions of human tragedy already visible in the Mediterranean by 2015, Italian and EU diplomacy were investing significant efforts and political capital in constructing the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, taking potential border externalization well into the African continent and "improving national capacity building in the field of migration management" in the region.[237] In other important ways, it can also be said that the old colonial hand of Italy was indeed given more room to operate based on its past experience and continuous engagement in the area, leading diplomatic efforts to externalize EU border controls further south. The strategies involved built upon the already established Mediterranean model of economic and political incentives in return for accepting an externalizing of migration management that Italy had spearheaded with Libya. These incentives were now expanded to mean an offer of political and diplomatic recognition from the EU as a whole in exchange for several third-party African countries taking over vanguard border control duties for the Union.[238]

A key document in this regard is the *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Fields of Development, the Fight Against Illegal Immigration, Human Trafficking and Fuel Smuggling, and on Reinforcing the Security of Borders between the State of Libya and the Italian Republic,* from here on referred to as the Valletta Memorandum. The memorandum was signed in its namesake city on Malta on February 2nd, 2017 by Prime Minister Fayez Mustafa al-Sarraj representing the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) supported by the UN, and his Italian counterpart Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni.[239] The memorandum is sprinkled with terminology and topics of the day such as "clandestine immigration," "human trafficking," "fuel smuggling" and "the fight against terrorism," but the intention is clear—a selective revival of the 2008 Friendship Treaty, particularly the articles relating to policing the Mediterranean and limiting migration. In

[236] Moses, "The Shadow of Schengen," 605.

[237] Colloquially known as the Khartoum Process. Morone, "Il processo di Khartoum," 4; Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 145.

[238] Morone, "Policies, Practices, and Representations," 145.

[239] The political situation in Libya after the fall of Gaddafi is a crowded field, with several factions vying for power. Again I will have to be very brief in order to not stray off-topic.

addition, externalization of control is taken to a new level through the establishment of "temporary detention centers" in Libya, paid for by Italy and the EU.[240] It was discovered that the Italian official responsible for brokering the deal with both the GNA and the various Libyan warlords who wield effective control on the ground was the Italian Minister of the Interior, Marco Minniti, a veteran of the secret services. The deal was soon compared to the one the EU struck with Turkey the preceding year, raising legal and humanitarian concerns.[241]

The reaction in the media and among the many NGOs working with migration in the Mediterranean came quickly—speculation was rife that back-channel payments were being orchestrated by Minniti and made to Libyan factions both official and less so, in order to hold back migrants and detain them in both government controlled and "private" detention centres. Italy's denial of any payments was swift, but so was the resulting drop in cross-Mediterranean migration: in August 2017, normally a peak season for crossings, the media reported an 85% drop in arrivals to Italy, compared with the previous two years.[242] Despite the difficulty of accessing and assessing the state of migrants in the Libyan detention centers, both media and humanitarian organizations documented the dire conditions that an increasing number of migrants were experiencing, criticizing both the EU and Italy for the human cost of their deal making. The NGOs that chose to work in Libya to better the camp conditions and the lives of those migrants held there, speak of an impossible choice: they do not want to be seen as legitimizing the initiative to construct a network of camps in Libya to retain migrant heading towards Europe, but nonetheless accept funding from Italy and the EU (who are also instigating and funding part of the camp-system) to help improve the situation for detainees.[243] At the same time, in another attempt at limiting migrant arrivals and under the pretense of hindering what they saw as favorable conditions for traffickers and smugglers, Italy cracked down on the humanitarian organizations that had often rescued migrants in the Mediterranean. Many of these

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[240] *Memorandum d'intesa sulla cooperazione nel campo dello sviluppo, del contrasto all'immigrazione illegale, al traffico di esseri umani, al contrabbando e sul rafforzamento della sicurezza delle frontiere tra lo Stato della Libia e la Repubblica Italiana,* preambulo, articolo 2, February 2nd, 2017, https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/MEMORANDUM_translation_finalversion.doc.pdf.

[241] Giuffré, "From Turkey to Libya," Eurojus (blog), March 20th, 2017, http://rivista.eurojus.it/from-turkey-to-libya-the-eu-migration-partnership-from-bad-to-worse/; Horowitz, "Italy's 'Lord of the Spies' takes on a Migration Crisis," *The New York Times*, August 4th, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/04/world/europe/italy-marco-minniti-migration.html.

[242] Walsh and Horowitz, "Italy, Going It Alone, Stalls the Flow of Migrants. But at What Cost?," *The New York Times*, September 17th 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/17/world/europe/italy-libya-migrant-crisis.html; Nancy Porsia, in-person interview by author, Matera, Italy, September 15th, 2018.

[243] Niccolò and Giulia, in-person interview by author, Tunis, Tunisia, October 14th, 2018.

organizations were self-funded or crowdsourced grassroots initiatives that had come as a reaction to the perceived failure of the EU in handling the influx across the Mediterranean. Some had been active in the area for years, but were now denied licenses to operate and even criminalized for their activity.[244] It must be said that there is a strong contradiction, even hypocrisy, at the heart of this Italo-European Union policy. The overarching goal of stemming migration and combating people smugglers to ensure more humane treatment of refugees en route means halting thousands of people escaping humanitarian crises or political persecution through supporting local authoritarian regimes which are themselves in part responsible for the dire national situations.[245]

CHAPTER FINDINGS

In summation, the Joint Communiqué of 1998 brought the colonial past, migration and economic collaboration together for the first time in modern Italo-Libyan relations. The 2008 Friendship Treaty greatly expanded on the promise of the earlier communiqué, bringing a contested colonial apology and a vastly deepened political and economic collaboration in its wake. The challenge to this new status quo coming with the 2011 Arab Spring emerged as a milestone in the EU's adoption of and support for a migration agenda previously foisted upon Italy, cementing the Europeanization of Italy's migration methods in a political context that was very much determined by the colonial past.[246] Finally, the Valletta Memorandum from 2017 revived the migration management methods after disruptions in both 2011 and 2015, expanding upon them through promises of EU financing and the establishment of detention centers for migrants in Libya. A migration management agenda, which is now poised to be externalized well beyond continental limits, had in a sense, traveled in a circular motion, beginning with European pressure put on Italy related to Schengen and ending with the Europeanization of an Italian regime infused with traits taken from its bilateral dealings and colonial history.

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[244] Amnesty International, "Libya: Shameful EU policies fuel surge in detention of migrants and refugees," May 16th ,2018, accessed May 12th, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/libya-shameful-eu-policies-fuel-surge-in-detention-of-migrants-and-refugees/; "EU migrant deal with Libya is 'inhuman' – UN," BBC World News, November 14th, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41983063; Hockenos, "Europe Has Criminalized Humanitarianism", Foreign Policy, August 1st 2018, accessed May 12th, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/01/europe-has-criminalized-humanitarianism.

[245] Morone, "Il processo di Khartoum," 7.

[246] McClure, "Suspending Schengen," 345.

Conclusion

THESIS RECAPITULATED

In this thesis I have set out to identify and follow colonial continuity through over a century of Italo-Libyan relations, to see if and in what ways this history has shaped and informed the current Mediterranean migration regime elaborated and enforced by Italy, Libya and the European Union. The thesis attempts to analyze and discuss the time period between 1911 and today by using this new analytical lens of colonial continuity and reinvention. Doing so helps question common conceptions of history's role in a much discussed and contested present-day issue, as well as explain the motivations of the principal actors involved.

Since I was not primarily challenging the historiography itself, but rather presenting a new reading of it, I chiefly relied on a wide-ranging sample of secondary literature taken from across the range of academic disciplines. Where pertinent and valuable, I have also consulted primary source material in archives and published works, some of it rarely seen and at times standing in stark contrast to the reigning understanding and interpretation. In order to take the thesis close to our own time, "speak to the present" and move beyond the traditional confines of history writing as dictated by delays in the release and transfer of records to historical archives, I have also included both media sources and oral expert informant interviews. The interviews with a freelance journalist and two NGO workers, who all have experience in the field working with Libyans in Libya, further addressed two potential shortfalls in my thesis—first it helped remedy the fact that I speak Italian but not Arabic, which can easily lead to a source bias. Second, due to the chaotic and conflict-ridden state of Libya at the moment, it should be considered a sort of "black box" that is not accessible for research purposes. Talking to professionals who regularly travel there for work went some way to counter this lack of first-person access.

A final goal of this thesis was to draw together a great deal of the scholarship carried out in the areas and topics I am dealing with, from both history and the political and social sciences. There has been a tendency from the historians' perspective to focus too narrowly on certain time periods and topics (WWII campaigns in Libya as an example), while much social science writing has been colored by presentism and a short timeline not going much past the most immediate events and crises (such as the 2015 "migration

crisis"). This latter point is also certainly true of most media commentary. My thesis attempts to address this by adopting a much longer time frame than usual, and includes a multi-disciplinary selection of literature to avoid the pitfalls of both presentism and scholarship that does not connect the past with the present.

THESIS FINDINGS

My reading is that there are several examples of colonial continuity found and detailed in the preceding four chapters, continuity that has been consistently reinvented and allowed to shape and inform both bilateral relations between Italy and Libya and in turn the EU's approach to migration management on its southern periphery. The various strands of continuity can roughly be broken down into the following categories, though naturally with overlaps between them:

1. *Continuity of Interests*

The point of departure for this thesis, and the event that laid the groundwork for all bilateral relations and developments since 1911, is the Italian colonial occupation of Libya. This act forced the three former Ottoman provinces into the orbit of Italy's power politics, culture and economic system, fundamentally changing them in the process. I have also argued that it created an imbalanced power relation between the two countries that has colored their relationship up to our day. It is also worth noting that once the Italian economic involvement was established in Libya it allowed for a mutability of these interests. This was first exemplified by the initial focus on settler colonialism moving to petroleum extraction in the postwar years. Here, ENI starting in 1959, picked up where AGIP had left off in its oil explorations, though Libya had by that time become a sovereign nation. The mutual Italo-Libyan reliance on petroleum extraction built on a colonial foundation, has ensured that even serious crises in their relationship (the 1970 expulsion of remaining Italians in Libya and the fall of Gaddafi in 2011 as just two examples) were not allowed to disrupt it.

As more interests have come into play, they have also been intimately tied to the preexisting ones. The best and most relevant example of this is migration, which as it grew to be an important issue for both Libya and Italy from the 1970s and particularly the 1990s onwards, was increasingly mentioned alongside economic ties and a shared colonial heritage. Here the preceding colonial history functioned as a foundation for the bargaining

deal tying these economic relations to increased migration management externalization. Furthermore, the colonial past was also instrumentalized to serve as a conversation enabler in a series of agreements between Libya, Italy and the eventually also the EU.

With the Europeanization of Italian migration methods and approaches discussed in chapter three, the colonial epoch and subsequent ties between Italy and Libya became part of a wider European political bargain. Moving closer to our own times in chapter four, we have seen that the EU has gradually relied on Italian attempts to replicate a EU-Turkey deal on limiting Mediterranean crossings. This deal is based on Italy's interests and long-standing presence in Libya. Ultimately, back-channel bargaining in a splintered country involving a system of migrant detention centers on North Africa's coasts means that humanitarian and legal concerns have taken a back-seat.

2. *Continuity of Colonial Infrastructures*

Some of the infrastructure laid down in colonial times has also played an important role throughout the years. The coastal highway *Via Balbia* constructed in the 1930s has, for example, served many purposes, first allowing Italian control of its colony and aiding in its defense from potential enemies on both sides. During the 1950s-60s it also aided Italian oil pioneers in gaining access to search areas when they returned to Libya by invitation. Later, Gaddafi's insistence on Italian funds to modernize the stretch of road as part of a 2008 US$5 billion dollar package meant to make up for colonial misdeeds would have benefited both parties to the agreement. Gaddafi could rely on the coastal artery to help him keep his authoritarian grip on Libya, while Italy would expect it to also make it easier for his regime to live up to their part of the bargain in hindering and stemming migrants' intent to embark from Libya's coast towards Europe.

Another infrastructural legacy from the Italian colonial epoch which later proved important, is education, or rather, the lack of it. The absence of opportunities offered to Libyans severely impeded development of the country after independence. Gaddafi greatly expanded educational offerings and ensured plentiful public sector employment for the graduates, but the higher-grade technical and administrative positions in the private petroleum industry were often implicitly reserved for foreigners. Some of my sources talk of a requirement in petroleum concessions that a certain number of Libyan nationals needed to be employed by the foreign company seeking to operate in the country. These were,

however, often menial positions with a lower pay grade, such as cleaning and other manual labor. According to the same source, a characteristic of the many joint operations set up as collaborations between for example, Italian ENI and its national Libyan counterparts is that they require having a Libyan president, though the vice-president in charge of day-to-day operations will almost inevitably be Italian.[247]

3. *Continuity of Companies and their Personnel*

The Italo-Libyan economic relationship has from the Italian side been marked by a long-standing continuity. Oil has been on the agenda since the 1930s, with pre-WWII AGIP being reconstituted as part of ENI after the war. This petroleum giant and its activity in collaboration with its Libyan counterparts have figured high on the priority-list of both Italy and Libya in the decades since. ENI has been supported by Italian governments in its bid to win concessions in Libya in the 1950s, been kept out of harms way by Gaddafi while other Italian interests (and citizens) were purged from Libya in the 1970s, and acted as a financial guarantor (and benefactor) when colonial reparations in the form of infrastructure projects were tied to migration management in the 2000s. Despite the tumultuous political changes and upheavals Libya has been through, ENI has succeeded in expanding its role in the country and is extracting ever more oil. According to the company itself, in 2017 its production in Libya was the highest on record.[248] This despite the political situation on the ground being arguably more splintered and volatile than ever since Italy forcefully unified the occupied Ottoman provinces into the territory of Libya in 1934.

The most conspicuous case of continuity of the personnel involved before and after colonial rule of Libya is seen in the Desio family of geologists. Ardito Desio led AGIP's attempts to find oil in the colony up until WWII, correctly indicating the general area in the Sirte Basin where petroleum was later found in the 1950s. When Italy again became involved in the late 1950s – early 1960s, his son Gianluca is the one filing reports to AGIP's successor company ENI, in some cases directly referring to the work previously done by his father.

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[247] Nancy Porsia, in-person interview by author, Matera, Italy, September 15th, 2018.

[248] ENI, "Upstream", ENI's Activities in Libya, accessed May 10th, 2019, https://www.eni.com/enipedia/en_IT/international-presence/africa/enis-activities-in-libya.page

4. *Continuity of Certain Practices of Colonial Management*

A last point of continuity would be the reappearance of camps in Cyrenaica, eastern Libya. Whereas in the 1930s these consisted of internment camps housing the entire Libyan civil population in a harsh and indiscriminate attempt to end armed opposition to Italian rule, the current detention centers house African migrants from a range of countries south of the Sahara. While the present center system has been criticized by humanitarian organizations for its precarious conditions, there is of course no comparison with the levels of cruelty or mortality rates exhibited in the colonial internment camps.[249] Nor is making such a controversial comparison my point. It is, however, noteworthy that while colonial history makes several reappearances in treaties, memoranda and agreements when needed as an enabler for *realpolitik* and the political demands and desires of Libya, Italy and the EU, it is conspicuous in its complete absence from official documents and discussions on what funding and constructing a new system to detain and hold people in Libya means from a historical perspective.

SUMMARY: MORE CONTINUITY THAN CHANGE

The continuity aside, there has obviously been a great deal of change in the past century that also needs to be accounted for: the end of Italian colonial control over Libya in WWII, Gaddafi's takeover of power in 1969, the expulsion of former Italian colonists and most foreign oil companies in the 1970s, Libya's increasingly rogue status in an international context in the 1980s, the beginnings of a strengthening and securitization of European borders in the 1990s and the fall of Gaddafi and subsequent Libyan descent into civil war coming in 2011; these were all points in time that brought immense change and upheaval. Yet through all of these instances, Italo-Libyan relations have held firm and grown in importance. For a long time they were chiefly economic in nature, but increasingly this has been tied in with migration management externalization duties. All through the 1990s up until the present, a range of Italian governments of all political stripes, and irrespective of who their Libyan counterparts were and what kind of state Libya was in, have kept on constructing a framework of agreements to enlist their former colony in the work of policing

[249] Amnesty International, "A Year After Italy-Libya Migration Deal, Time to Release Thousands Trapped in Misery," February 1st 2018, accessed May 12th, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/02/a-year-after-italy-libya-migration-deal-time-to-release-thousands-trapped-in-misery/

Europe's border. With the 2017 Valletta Memorandum the EU implicitly backed Italy in these attempts, most likely with wide-ranging consequences for the future of Mediterranean migration management.

THESIS RELEVANCE

The central point of my thesis is that beyond the bilateral relationship of Italy and Libya, their shared colonial history and its importance for migration management in the Mediterranean, challenge common assumptions of the EU as a counter-institution to the colonial projects of its member states. The reigning understanding and self-image of the European Union is as a postwar alternative to these imperial ambitions, meant to mark an end to nationalist and oppressive traditions in the name of increased European integration after 1945, and thus inherently post-colonial in nature. That individual European countries have a long colonial afterlife and imbalanced relationships with their former colonial holdings might not come as a surprise to most observers. Indeed, all my interview subjects mentioned "neo-colonialism" when describing Italy's involvement in Libya during our conversations, unprompted.[250] While this is interesting in and of itself, I do not think Italo-Libyan relations can be reduced to that label. Instead I return to the work of Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, who have argued convincingly for a reinterpretation of the beginnings of the EU, claiming that "… the process of European integration was intimately tied to colonialism," despite the reiging interpretation that the EU has "… an almost immaculate historical origin and purpose, far removed from the ugly imperial and national worlds of power politics and crude interest maximization."[251] My thesis has moved us beyond this colonial origin story and its role in European integration in the 1950s, to show that colonial history is still allowed to inform policy and lay foundations for current European migration management, even if it is not openly acknowledged. This fact alone should be cause for concern and frank discussions on how we confront that history and its lingering influence.

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[250] Nancy Porsia, in-person interview by author, Matera, Italy, September 15th, 2018, Niccolò and Giulia, in-person interview by author, Tunis, Tunisia, October 14th, 2018.

[251] Hansen and Jonsson, "Eurafrica Incognita," 3.

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