Images of Propaganda: Emotional Representations of the Italo-Turkish War

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Abstract: This paper explores the emotional impact of the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1913) through the visual imagery that mediated its perception in Italy and abroad, depicting the conflict as a glorious mission of civilization and easy land appropriation. It does so by analysing a series of exceptional materials from a rich trove of Harvard Collections – featured in a 2014 exhibit, but never object of a critical study – which ambiguously comply with the propagandistic war narrative, rooted in a problematic entanglement of nationalism, racism and orientalism. Materials include: three stunning photo-albums belonged to Carlo Caneva (Supreme Commander of Italian forces in Libya between 1911 and 1912), Count Pompeo di Campello (a good photographer and officer in the higher echelons of the army) and Angelo Cormanni (a soldier in the 3rd telegraphic unit); commemorative postcards and trading cards. Focussing on how each of these media differently embodies the nationalistic clichés, my aim is to reconstruct how the emotional effects of visual propaganda shaped both direct and indirect encounters with the war, fostering a collective falsification mechanism, all the while unconsciously denouncing the colonialist gaze, hence triggering another kind of emotional response.

Keywords: *Italo-Turkish war (1911-1913)*, *colonial photography*, *visual propaganda*, *war and emotions*

Introduction: framing the African emotion within the Italo-Turkish war

According to Nicola Labanca, "despite the geographically circumscribed and chronologically contained nature of the national colonial experience, the Overseas represented one of the greatest 'emotions' for the Italian people" (*Oltremare*: 219).[1] The Overseas is, first and foremost, Africa: a complex cultural chronotope where the belated desire for imperialism of post-unification Italy met the need for a "symbolic 'other'" (Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*: 337), mixing violence, racism and orientalism in a powerful imagery of encounter and clash of civilizations, people and places. The rhetorical character of this imagery was mediated – from the late 1880s until the Fascist conquest of Ethiopia (1936) – by both written descriptions of the African colonies (e.g., travel accounts, pamphlets, reportages) and visual images, which took the manifold forms of illustrations, postcards and, following its massification at the end of the nineteenth century (Zannier, *La massificazione della fotografia*: 85-92), private and official photography. All these means displayed an ambiguous entanglement of reality, fiction and propaganda that responded to the dicta of colonial

domination and triggered an emotional response in the home public, in Italy and abroad, with the primary aim of strengthening the national identity.

Narrowing the attention on the sole visual aspects of the Italian colonial *koiné* – as images embody the most wide-ranging and manipulable medium for both authors and users – this paper focuses on the emotional representations of the African experience through the frame of Italy's first venture in the "scramble for Africa", after the tragic defeat at Adwa in 1896: namely, the attack on Libya, which was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and thus resulted in the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1913).[2] Italy's major attempt at colonial expansion, the Libyan campaign was depicted as a glorious mission of civilization and easy conquest of land by new and modern propaganda, which, for the first time, replaced the old naive exoticism with a coordinated political discourse on a large scale (Labanca, *Oltremare*: 236). In order to build consensus in the electoral base of the Liberal government, led by Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, and fuel the enthusiasm of the masses, Libya was "invented"[3] by the press and the nationalist circles as fertile soil, teeming with luxuriant oases and rich caravan trades: a "promised land" (Corradini, *L'ora di Tripoli*: 74)[4] to be returned to Italy in the name of an ancient Roman hegemony over the Mediterranean, which could offer an escape valve to the problem of national unemployment and migration[5] (Proglio, *Libia 1911-1912*: 25-69). The press also promoted the idea of an effortless victory – whose virile rhetoric was meant to reinvent and sacralise the nation (Illuzzi, *Reimagining the Nation*: 423) – by presenting the whole operation as a sentimental adventure that would encounter little resistance from the scarce and disorganized Turkish divisions stationed in the region and could count on the sympathy of the Libyan population, tired of the Ottoman oppression and ready to welcome the Italian liberators. If it took only 10 months to unify Italy behind the war (Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Libia*), the truth was that Italians were completely unprepared for what they would find: Libya was a poor and largely desert region, occupied by countless sedentary, nomadic and semi-nomadic groups that lived throughout Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan under the system of the *qabila*, an intricate network of clans and tribes connected beyond any degree of relationship or specific territory (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911-1931*: 39-44). Italians lacked an anthropological understanding of this situation – that brought the natives to get allied with the Ottoman army – and were also unequipped for a guerrilla-style war, as the opponent refused to fight in a pitched battle, preferring to retreat into the interior and leaving the invaders in control of the sole coastal areas. "Liberal Italy thus went to war under the influence of emotions and false impressions rather than knowledge" (37),[6] opening a cognitive gap between the illusion fostered by the images of national persuasion – which continued throughout

the campaign via illustrated magazines, postcards, official and private photos of soldiers, newsreels – and the reality of the war in the Libyan context.

Such a gap, however, has been little explored until now, and almost never in the perspective of the interactions among visuality, propaganda and emotions. The existing studies on the visual imagery of Italian colonialism have rather concentrated on the early period of exploratory missions and the *Colonia Eritrea* (Labanca, *Uno sguardo coloniale*; Palma, *Fotografia di una colonia*), or on the Fascist military action in the Horn of Africa (Mignemi, *Modelli visivi per un impero*), considered the moment of maximum expansion of Italy's colonial politics; at the same time, they have often limited their attention to photography, relinquishing other forms of iconography and rarely connecting it to the written texts accompanying the images (descriptions, accounts, but also captions).[7] When the Libyan experience has been tacked, it has been either limited to the sporadic publication of collections of personal and official photos (e.g., Labanca & Tomassini, *Album Africano*; Rosati, *La guerra italo-turca*; and Folisi, *La "Guerra di Libia" 1911*); or included in broader historical *excursus* (Goglia, *Colonialismo e fotografia*; Palma, *L'Italia coloniale*; and Mignemi, *Un caso*), which have briefly focussed on the documental value of war photography in its military, commercial or private forms.[8] While these studies have stressed the importance of distinguishing different typologies, users and producers of the photographic imagery, recognizing its delicate existence between testimony and propaganda and its nature of socio-cultural product of a particular historical moment,[9] they have not provided a detailed analysis of primary materials alongside their emotional effects on the (mis)conception of the conflict and the colonial experience as a whole.[10] Deciphering the emotional component of the visual images that represent the Italo-Turkish War, instead, is essential not only to better understand how they shaped both direct and indirect encounters with the war, but to avoid the risk of what Triulzi, in *Fotografia e storia dell'Africa*, defines a "sentimental anti-imperialism": an irrational, hence ineffectual rejection of colonialism that lacks a conscious understanding of its emotive roots.

Upon these premises, this paper aims at shedding light on the emotional impact of the Italo-Turkish war by focussing on a series of exceptional visual materials from a rich trove of the Fine Arts Library's Special Collection at Harvard University, which were featured in a 2014 exhibit – *In Africa it is Another Story: Looking Back at Italian Colonialism* (4th April – 2nd May 2014, Pusey Library), but have never been the object of a critical study.[11] Materials include, first and foremost, three stunning photo-albums belonged to General Caneva, commander of the armed forces in Libya, Count Pompeo di Campello, a Roman

nobleman, a good photographer and high officer, and Angelo Cormanni, a soldier working as a telegraphist. These unprecedented photographic "documents" – which stand in between the military and the autobiographic, the official and the private, the propagandistic and the memorial, spanning from the cultural elite to the middle class – are flanked by other visual items conceived for mass persuasion and distribution in Italy and abroad: a nearly complete series of 50 trading cards narrating the war, produced by a Spanish chocolate factory; five black and white numbered trilingual postcards, featuring Italian military personnel and facilities; and numerous cartoony-style postcards that belong to the most popular war imagery, some of which were actually mailed. The following sections of this paper will linger on a selection of these materials, trying to identify their motivation, line of vision and emotional reach, comparing them with other modes of visual dissemination, their related text(s) and different audiences, and when possible combining the analysis of their content with that from other sources of the time. Establishing connections among multiple representations of the same or different nature and the universe of linguistic signs around them, particular attention will be paid not only to what they display but to what they leave out of their frame, complicating any (hi)story they were called upon to tell (Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*: 339). By assuming the "emotive function" as a privileged means of perception and construction of alterity, and highlighting a central tension between the contemporary reader and the post-colonial one, my ultimate aim is to show how the emotional effects of the visual imagery of the Italo-Turkish War fostered a collective falsification mechanism: one that emphasized the experience of the conflict as a heroic adventure, in contrast with the reality of the combats and massacres that were taking place, all the while unconsciously denouncing the colonialist gaze.

Unfaithful narratives, equivocal memories: war through personal albums

On 5th December 1911, the day after the first battle of Ain Zara – an oasis located 8 km south of Tripoli, defended by 8,000 men of the Ottoman army and several 87-mm Krupp guns (Finazzer, *Dalla corte del sultano*: 293) – Count Pompeo di Campello, a cavalry officer during the Libyan Campaign, strove to take a majestic photo of the first Turkish cannons captured by the Italian troops since the beginning of the war (**fig. 1**). Son of Marie Bonaparte (daughter of Napoleon's nephew Charles Lucien Bonaparte) and the Roman nobleman Paolo Campello della Spina, Count Pompeo (1874-1927) was a skilled photographer and disposed of a high-end camera throughout his whole experience of the Italo-Turkish War, which spanned from 9th October 1911 to 28th May 1912. The

photo – one of the 247 of the personal album that chronicles this period, probably combining his snapshots with other professional pictures – stands at full-page and exhibits a compositional strategy of great emotional impact: it displays a close-up of the enemy's military equipment scattered on the sand to emphasise its status of abandonment as well as the power of the Italian army, symbolically represented by the figure of Captain Biancardi, whose contemplating pose stands out against the Italian camp in the backdrop. It is the perfect balance of the photographic ensemble that tricks the post-colonial viewer into thinking that what she is looking at are actually, as stated by the caption, some "Turkish cannons at Ain Zara the day after the battle". In truth, what is caught by the picture appears to be just the carriage – that is, the frame and mount that support the gun – of only one cannon, whose barrel is not even there. Furthermore, while several sources on the battle of Ain Zara confirm that the Italians did seize 7 Turkish cannons, the 87-mm Krupp artillery pieces were old, rigid carriage guns that belonged to a severely understaffed, second-rate Ottoman unit (the 42nd Division). Campello's scenographic photo and elusive caption thus succeed in offering an emotionally charged reading of the military facts, showing a complex interaction between the power of photography to reveal the ambiguities of the war and the attempt to contain the image within the nationalistic clichés. The tension among the indexical nature of photography – that according to Charles Pierce is the physical relationship of the image with its object (*Philosophical Writings*: 98-119) –, its calibrated staging and textual alteration, that is, allows this photo to signify outside the propagandistic structure, ultimately complicating the official history that it was meant to celebrate. But this is not all: it reflects a fracture between subjectivity and referentiality that widens the traditional gap always existing between experience and narration, unleashing a particular form of autobiography, in between visibility and invisibility. Indeed, Campello's story – that tracks the war from the very first day the troops landed, throughout the major battles, up until the day he headed for home – entails a complex emotional representation of his Italianness within the military and African context, which aims at enhancing the authentication effects of photography and writing, but often achieves an unfaithful narrative, both in his and our perspective. A double emotional response, in other words, is at stake: that of the Count, who tries to make us *see* his own vision of the war; and that of the post-colonial viewer, who *sees* also what he is concealing and thus perceives the photo in a completely different way.

Fig. 1. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The caption reads: "The Turkish cannons at Ain Zara the day after the battle. The officer is Captain Biancardi. 5th December 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

The most evident example of this dynamics are the photos that Campello devoted to the infamous Italian reprisal that followed the Sciara Sciat massacre, one of the most difficult episodes of the Libyan Campaign, which took place on 23rd October 1911 in a suburb of the oasis surrounding Tripoli. Here are the facts: at the down of 23rd October, the Libyan population joined the Turkish army and attacked the weak eastern sector of the Italian defence which, between Fort Messri and the sea, ran "through as many as two million palm trees of the oasis, that is in the middle of a real labyrinth of hollow paths and clay walls, strewn with obstacles, such as palms and olive trees, thick bushes, houses, tombs, wells" (Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente?*: 110). At Sciara Sciat, in particular, the 4th and 5th Companies of the 11th Bersaglieri Regiment were forced to retreat and surrender. Prisoners were then concentrated and massacred in the cemetery of Rebab: the Italian soldiers were crucified, buried alive, torn to pieces; many had their eyes stitched closed or their genitals cut off.[12] According to Del Boca (111), 21 officers and 482 soldiers were killed. The reaction of the Italians in the next three days was cruel, accentuated by the unfounded belief that the Arabs of Tripoli had betrayed them, whereas the events of Sciara Sciat were the result of a revolt to all intents and purposes. From 24th to 26th October furious revenge against the Arabs took place, with rapes, burnings, deportations of hundreds of Libyans to Italian islands (e.g., Tremiti, Ustica, Ponza, Favignana, where they mostly died of hardship) and more than 4,000 summary executions of civilians.

The narrative and visual manipulation of these facts from the Italian point of view embodies the most interesting case of sentimental misrepresentation of the Italo-Turkish War. Words and images, however, worked in slightly different ways. On the one hand, press correspondents spoke of the revolt as a treacherous ambush, lingering on gory details of the Italian retaliation, as did Giuseppe Bevione (*Come siamo andati a Tripoli*),[13] and even complaining, as Ezio Maria Gray (*La bella guerra*),[14] that the response had been too mild. Enrico Corradini, in his *Cronache della conquista di Tripoli*, written for the magazine *L'Illustrazione Italiana* and later republished as a book for Treves, insisted that the Arab-Turkish action had ended with the advantage of the Italians:

> Let us add that the combined Arab-Turkish action of the 23rd and 24th ended to our advantage: the plot was foiled, the revolt was suppressed, the attack on the outposts was once again repelled. That part of the oasis which we occupy is almost entirely free of snares. Thousands of prisoners were taken in the oasis. On the 23rd and 24th they were brought to the city by our soldiers in large herds. […] All that human havoc covered in whitish rags could be seen trembling between the rifles' stocks and bayonets of our soldiers like a pack of dogs under the scourge. […] Most of their faces had […] the expression of the humblest misery and the most miserable, begging suffering. This is the expression of Arab pretence, of these Arabs covered with sweetness. (*La conquista di Tripoli*: 68-69)

On the other hand, images documenting the Italian reprisal – let alone those of the massacre of the Bersaglieri – were less frequent: even though many began to circulate in Italy, often through photos sent home by soldiers, they were generally controlled by censorship.[15] One thing was to narrate a counterfeited story; another for the public to see the horror that was being perpetrated. Some pictures of the Italian repression, however, found space – with contrasting intents – in two photographic reportages of the war, which can be compared with the Count's album. One, released in 1913, is the *Album-portfolio della Guerra italo-turca 1911-1912 per la conquista della Libia*, which consisted mainly of epic photographs previously appeared in *L'Illustrazione Italiana*.[16] The other is the thirty-two-page pamphlet *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*, published in 1912 by the socialist journalist Paolo Valera, who echoed the international press in condemning the Italian bloodbath[17] and collected pictures of the most atrocious acts against civilians. Indeed, since Valera had been denied permission to embark for Libya from Augusta (Sicily) for political reasons, the booklet – which appeared as a supplement to issue 14 of the weekly publication *La Folla* (founded by Valera himself in 1910) – was built on accounts and photos that came from other correspondents, who had been there and had chosen to

denounce the Italian government's lies about what had happened at Sciara Sciat. This – as Valera remarked in an article published a few months earlier, provocatively entitled *Carlo Caneva assassino* – did not diminish the testimonial value of the reported facts and images, but rather accentuated the historical significance of the journalistic document, to be entrusted precisely to those who, like Valera, could collect it and give it resonance ("It is up to us to sift through and unearth the material that has been produced in these nine months of military and journalistic mayhem"). Valera openly names several sources of his chronicle of the events: such as Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*; British Lieutenant Herbert G. Montagu, who worked for the Central News Agency; and Francis McCullagh, whose war correspondence for the *New York World*, the «Westminster Gazette» and the *London Daily News* had become in May 1912 a four-hundred-page account entitled *Italy's War for a Desert, Being Some Experiences of a War-Correspondent with the Italians in Tripoli* (Horgan, *"The Great War Correspondent"*: 548). Strangely, however, he does not provide the considerable amount of photos included in his booklet (30 in 32 pages) with exact metadata (Forgacs, *Messaggi di sangue*: 91). While this could suggest a manipulative intent of its own, the fact is that for Valera journalistic photography – taken "not out of morbid curiosity, but to document" (*Le giornate di Sciarasciat*: 19) – functions as pure indexicality: as a proof of reality so incontrovertible, that there is no need to specify its provenance. Valera's *booklet* is hence a pivotal, yet usually overlooked testimony which, if put in dialogue with the version of the conflict promoted by the *Album-portfolio*, can help to demonstrate how the public propaganda corresponded to private reminiscences like that of Campello.

Campello's pictures actually have a lot in common with both these visual accounts, although the sentimental framing of the representation and the sought effects are very different. As we have seen already, in the Count's album the emotional relevance of the photos is entrusted to their position and relationship with the text. In this regard, the pictures of the after-Sciara Sciat display a different strategy compared to that used for the image of the Turkish cannon, which was placed alone in the middle of the page alongside its short caption; here, instead, the pages appear progressively more crowded with images, in some cases accompanied by longer and dramatic narrative explanations. The initial page (n. 8 in the album) dedicated to Sciara Sciat features three photos (**fig. 2**). The first two, dated 23rd October, show a dead horse in the oasis of Gurgi – first alone and then surrounded by Italian officers – after "the charge of the Arab cavalry", as stated by the caption. The last one, instead, is the crude image of a corpse, wrapped in a white burnoose and thus identifiable as an "Arab", as Italians generically called all Libyans. The caption

reads: "Henni. 24th October." The normalization of the brutality in this representation of the war exposes what Adolfo Mignemi has referred to as "macabre details of the bodily destruction of the opponent" (*Un caso*: 111); opponent which is moreover subjected to a form of animalization, due to the specularity of the picture with that of the dead horse, without further specification. Not only is this photo made to speak the language of propaganda – according to which, after Sciara Sciat, extreme methods against the insurgents were justified –, but it entails a complex sentimental dynamics: that which assigns to the "small print of the 'horrible subject'" a propitiatory value, capable to function as a "symbolic equivalent of the rites of reparation towards the enemy" and to transform him into a friendly object (111-112). This fetishist attitude – that turns the goriest experience of the war into a pocket product of emotional and self-absolving value – appears all the more evident if we compare the photo with one from Valera's reportage, taken from McCullagh's account (where it is credited to the author himself) and showing the body of an "Arab girl killed" (**fig. 4**). The photo serves, like all the others in the booklet, to intersperse and reinforce the harsh denunciation of the Italian violence. This is the text placed just below the image in the original edition:

> [Arabs] were killed because they were afraid to die, because they disobeyed, because they kept silent, because they swore by their innocence, because they called Allah to their rescue. They were always killed. They have all been executed. It has been a carnival of blood. Full of horrors, of mutilations, of indecency, of aberrations. (Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 18)

The accusatory force of Valera's prose explodes here through denotative parataxis that mirrors the objectivity of the photo and its essential caption (Schiavulli, *Il dibattito dei letterati italiani sull'impresa di Libia*: 142-143). The latter is not dissimilar, from a stylistic point of view, to the one used by Campello; and, although the sentimental impact pursued by the two is antithetical – implying disdain for Valera, revenge and hygienic emotional restitution for Campello – the reaction provoked in the post-colonial reader is ultimately the same: horror and condemnation for the Italian conduct. Yet again, photography reveals its ambiguous documental and emotional power at once.

This ambiguity becomes all the more striking if we compare Campello's image of the Arab corpse with another visual token of the war, which appears much later on in his album, precisely on page 22, dated 28th November: a very small – and very rare – photo of a "Bersagliere found with his eyes stitched closed in the cemetery of Rebab" **(fig. 3)** that is almost hidden in a series of six

other photos, four of which have nothing to do with the massacre and instead depict a recaptured fort in Sidi Messri and some moments of life in the trenches. If the separation of this picture from the others related to the Sciara Sciat episode can be ascribed to the fact that many missing Italian soldiers were found dead a month later, with obvious signs of torture (Forgacs, *Messaggi di sangue*: 84), Campello's arrangement of the photo is a clear sign of emotional manipulation. Indeed, while the image remains shocking and reveals the reality that the Italian authorities were trying to cover up, discouraging photos of brutalized corpses of Italian soldiers (Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile*: 338), it nevertheless falls back into the reassuring frames of propaganda because of its caption and place on the page. On the one hand, the caption – previously denied to the enemy's animalised body – restores humanity, dignity and at least partial identity to the corpse, which appears half-wrapped in a cloth that suggests an imminent burial; on the other, the small size of the image contributes to minimising its effect, ultimately defused by the larger photo at the bottom of the page, which portrays a torture house in the Rebab cemetery now set on fire by the Italians, hence providing justice for the dead.

The idea that Italian troops were bringing order into the colony after Sciara Sciat is a core theme throughout the rest of the album. Two pages after the one containing the image of the Arab corpse, for instance, we find a four-photo series displayed clockwise that represents a large group of civilians (called "rebels" in the captions) arrested and led to the Italian headquarters, their bodies piled up after the execution and then carried away on a cart (**fig. 5**). Here, the iconographic message turns once again into its opposite and ends up coinciding anew with the one achieved by Valera. In particular, the photo of the piled-up bodies appears almost identical to one published in *Le giornate di Sciarasciat* (**fig. 6**) – originally by Frank Magee of the *Daily Mirror* (Forgacs, *Messaggi di sangue*: 94) – with a detailed caption that documents the number of the dead (about fifty, including young boys) and describes the scene as "an open tomb" (14). Campello's photo, however, is even more ambiguous if compared to another couple of pictures published on *L'Illustrazione Italiana* (n. 45, 5th November 1911), which are advertised as "unique photos" representing the shootings of Arab spies and Turkish rebels (**fig. 11**). In both these images, we can see the firing squad posing for the photographer, with the condemned civilians standing in front of them, or the shot bodies lying at their feet. While this choice is an enthusiastic exhibition of a clear-cut propagandistic nature, Campello's photos are less explicit and sentimentally more shaded, generically referring to "an execution" and excluding from the frame the Italian perpetrators of the violence. If this exasperates the cruel indexicality of death from the post-colonial point of view, in the Count's perspective it serves the

purpose of fostering the idea of the Arabs' guilt without referring to the barbarity of the Italians. Something similar happens when, later in the course of the war and hence in the album, he includes an appalling photo of fourteen Arabs hanging from the gallows infamously set up in Piazza del Pane (the Bread Market) in Tripoli on 5th December 1911 (**fig. 8**). The photo is denied the most basic descriptive note: the caption states only the month and the year of the execution, without mentioning anything else. This harsh essentiality is especially poignant if compared to the magniloquence that Campello reserves to the sacred burials of the Italian soldiers who died in the massacre, which he visited just before documenting the hanging. He filled the four pages that precede that of Piazza del Pane with photos of tombs, transcribing the epitaphs written upon each grave (**fig. 7**): words such as "glory", "hero", "revenge" appear in the captions, alongside the names of the soldiers, their regiment and the date on which they fell (indeed, October 23rd).

The absence of further specifications below the photo of the hanging, however, has probably something to do also with the fact that this image had a particularly controversial relevance in terms of propaganda. In fact, the execution of 5th December had been widely documented, both by the Italian General Staff and the foreign press, but with different emotional objectives. For instance, a very similar picture to the one included in Campello's album – evidently taken from the same perspective – was authored by Gaston Chérau and published in the French newspaper *Le Matin* on 26th December 1911 as part of a four-photo series entitled *Ce qu'on voit en Tripolitania*, with an effect of dramatic denunciation of the Italians' violence (**fig. 9**). At the same time, Campello's image could also be compared with a 56-second tracking shot along the gallows filmed by Luca Comerio or one of his operators on 6th December 1911,[18] with the official purpose of testifying the order achieved by Italians over the rebels. The mute footage – which almost equates to a series of photos, for the stillness and unsettling insistence of the images – embodies the disturbing morbidity often deprecated by Valera and provides a valid example of what Luca Mazzei has defined as a dislocated (in time and space) perception of the war's emotions (*L'occhio insensibile*: 342-344). The disturbing reaction of horror and disbelief triggered in the post-colonial viewer by both uses of the same violent event is enhanced here by the awareness that these images are virtually identical and can be differentiated only on the basis of their intention and presentation. For a contemporary reader, that is, the emotional perception of the image strongly depended on its (para)textual surroundings. That is why Campello leaves the image to speak for itself. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Valera assigns instead all the emotional brutality of the fact to the commentary, specifying the name and age of almost all the condemned, adding

that they were left hanging for three days and opting – this one time in the whole booklet – for a drawing taken from a photo (**fig. 10**): almost as if the violence was too extreme to be tolerated *dal vivo* (*Le giornate di Sciarasciat*: 28-29).

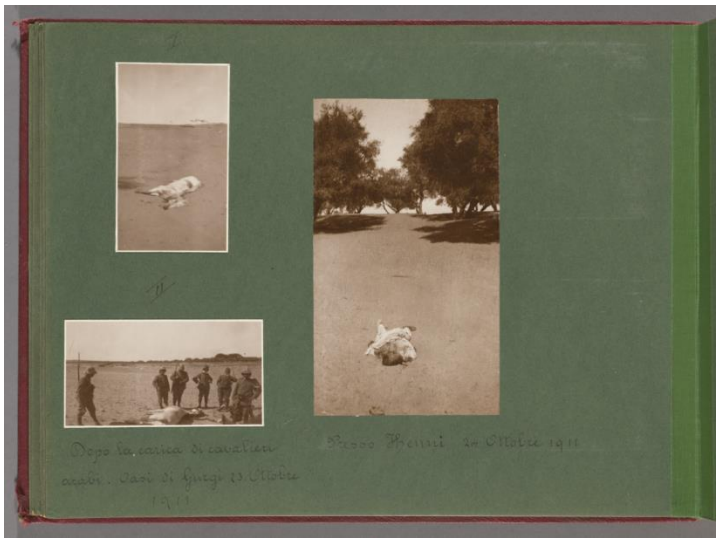

Fig. 2. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The bottom-left caption reads: "After the charge of the Arab cavalry. Oasis of Gurgi. 23rd October 1911." The other caption, under the photo of the Arab corpse, says: "Henni. 24th October." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 3. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The page is dated 28th November 1911. The captions of the four smaller photos read (clockwise from top-left): "Mesri Fort recaptured on 26th November"; "Marabout of Sidi Mesri"; "Bersagliere found with his eyes stitched closed in the cemetery of Rebab"; "Fences where the soldiers have hanged empty cans of meat." The caption below the vertical photo reads: "Trenches of Henni. Lieutenant Gastinelli"; the one below the horizontal one: "House in the Cemetery of Rebab

where 5 bodies of tortured Bersaglieri were found. Photograph taken while the house was being burnt down." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

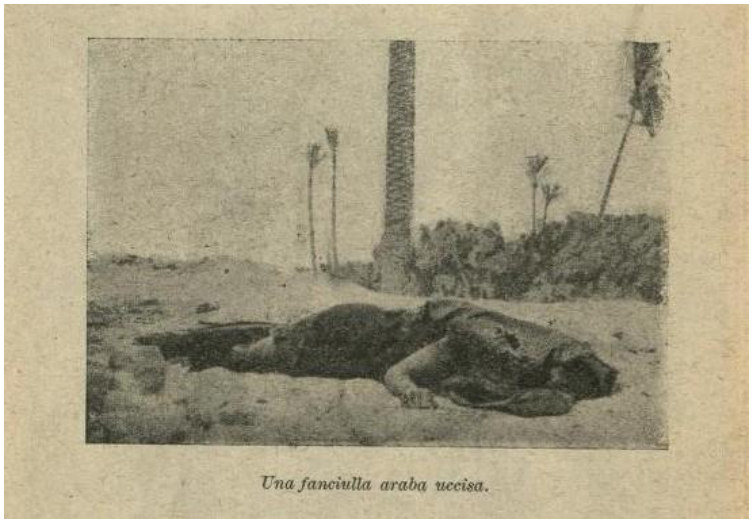

Fig. 4. **Paolo Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 18**. The caption reads: "An Arab girl killed." The photo is taken from Francis McCullagh, *Italy's War for a Desert* (1912), where it is credited to the author and faces page 268, with the caption "Dying Arab Girl."

Fig. 5. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The captions read (clockwise from top-left): "Rebels led to the Castle by the cavalry. 24th October 1911"; "Rebels arrested in the oasis by a unit of the 82nd Infantry. October 25th 1911"; "After an execution. 25th October 1911"; "Transportation of the executed bodies. 25th October 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

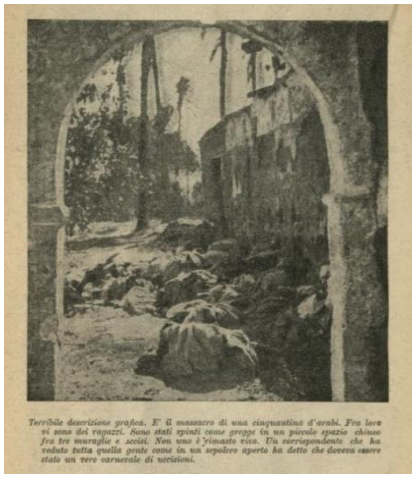

Fig. 6. **Paolo Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 14.** The caption reads: "Terrible graphic description. It is the massacre of about fifty Arabs. Among them, there are boys. They were pushed like a herd into a small space enclosed in three walls and killed. None of them remained alive. A correspondent who saw all those people as if in an open tomb said that it must have been a real carnival of killing." The photo, by Frank Magee, was also included (slightly cropped on the left side) in Francis McCullagh, *Italy's War for a Desert* (1912), where it faces page 286, with the caption "Pile of Fifty Men and Boys."

Fig. 7. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The captions are all epitaphs written by soldiers on the tombs of those killed at Sciar Sciat. Clockwise, from top-left: "Amerigo De Murtas, medical lieutenant, here had martyrdom and glory on 23rd October 1911"; "You, hero, lie in this land on which you fought for the Homeland: we do too for the love of it and the revenge of our soldiers... (the rest has already faded)"; "Sleep quietly, rest in peace! He who dies for the Homeland has lived a long time"; "Here five brave men of the 11th Bersaglieri, who heroically fell on 23rd October 1911, rest in peace. The comrades of the 93rd Infantry"; "A corpse has been found. It was consumed by dogs. Borlacchini and Provini, two soldiers of the 93rd Infantry, 4th Company, buried him. He is a Bersagliere"; "Here, radiant with Glory, lie 19 brave men of the 11th Bersaglieri fallen on 23rd October 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 8. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The captions read (clockwise from top-left): "December 1911"; "Pond of Mellaha"; "Mosque of Tagiura"; "Occupation of Tagiura. 13th December 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 9. *Ce qu'on voit en Tripolitania*, photos by Gaston Chérau. *Le Matin*, 26th December 1911: 1. The captions of the images read (clockwise from top-left): "The accused Arabs before the war tribunal"; "(5th December). The array of the fourteen men hanged"; "The transportation of the bodies, after the hanging"; "(6th December). Children in front of a hanged dignitary." Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

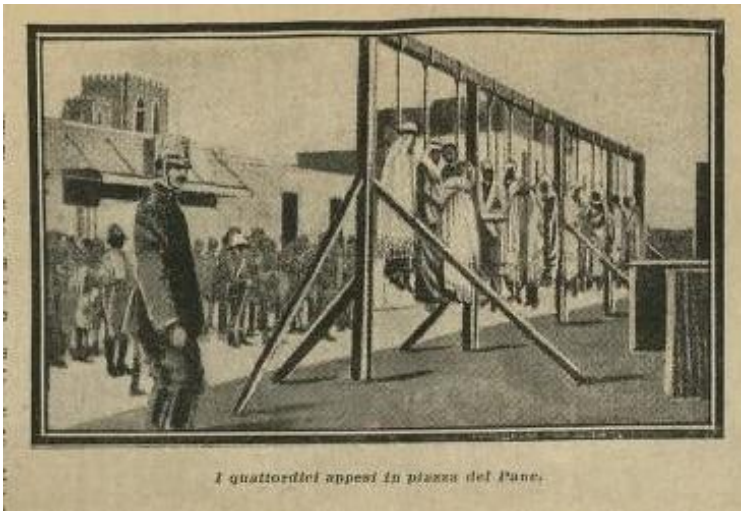

Fig. 10. Paolo Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 29. The caption reads: "The fourteen men hanged in Piazza del Pane."

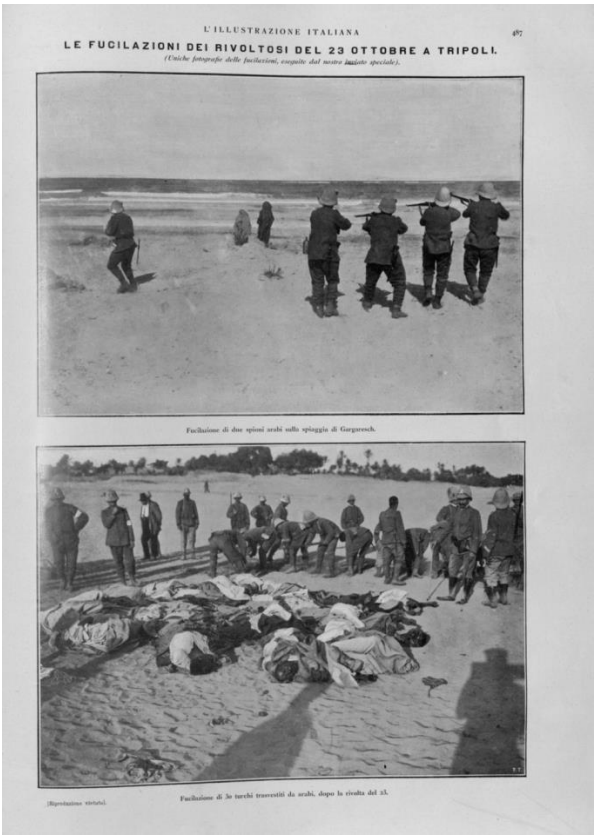

Fig. 11. *Shootings of the Rebels of 23rd October in Tripoli*. *L'Illustrazione Italiana*, XXXVIII, n. 45, 5th November 1911: 487. The captions read: (1) "Shooting of two Arab spies on the beach of Gargaresch"; (2) "Shooting of 30 Turks disguised as Arabs, after the revolt of the 23rd."

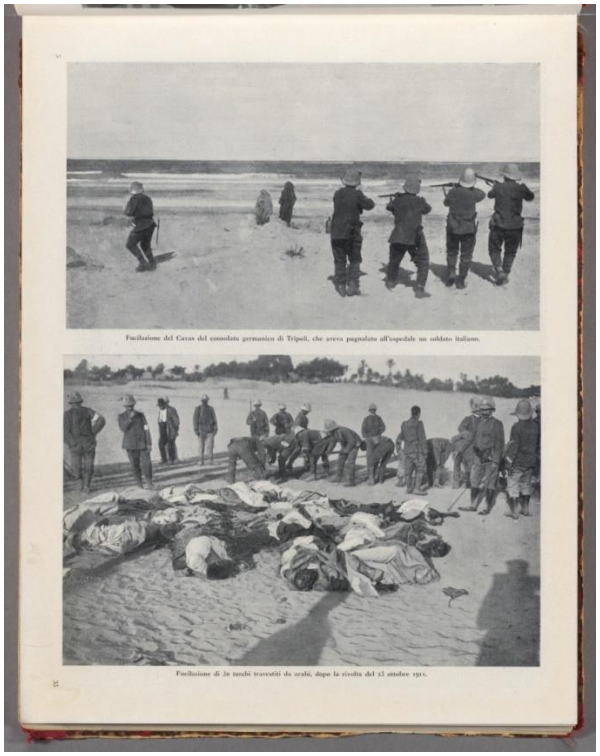

Fig. 12. ***Album-portfolio della Guerra italo-turca 1911-1912 per la conquista della Libia*****: 33.** The captions read: (1) "Shooting of the Kavass of the German consulate in Tripoli, who had stabbed an Italian soldier at the hospital"; (2) "Shooting of 30 Turks disguised as Arabs, after the revolt of 23rd October 1911."

Campello's album thus confirms its careful propaganda staging, which is much more subtle if compared to that of *L'Illustrazione Italiana*. Indeed, when the Treves brothers published the *Album-portfolio della Guerra italo-turca 1911-1912*, the first of the two photos of shootings appeared on n. 45 of the magazine was involved in a blatant manipulation and passed off as visual proof of another event: namely, the execution of Hussein bin Ahmed, the young *kavass* (the indigenous guard, spelt *cavas* in the Italian reports) of the German consul in Tripoli, falsely accused of having stabbed an Italian soldier (**fig. 12**). Beyond the unequivocal comparison with the original photo (**fig. 11**), it would be enough to note that in the falsified image the condemned are two, while Hussein was executed alone after what was more a farce than a trial. Valera registered the facts – which had a great echo in the Italian press (Bono, *Tripoli bel suol d'amore*: 47) – in narrative and photographic details (**fig. 14a and 14b**), offering a scene of the court-martial and one of the firing squad ready to shoot (which exposes the deception passed as truth in the *Album-portfolio*). Count Campello provides slightly different photos of the same moments, by inserting two small images of the trial and the *kavass* surrounded by soldiers, on his way to the execution, in the lower right corner of a page already filled with three other pictures of

Italian troops between Henni and Messri, on October 24th (**fig. 13**). This page is interposed, in the album, between that containing the photo of the Arab's corpse (**fig. 2**) and that of the bodies piled up after the shooting of civilians (**fig. 5**) and seems thus to fulfil a function of attenuation and normalization of the violence, which this time is expressed by the caption alone. Of the process, in fact, Campello immortalized only the army officials seated in the assembly, without Hussein being in the frame. Furthermore, the choice to exclude the moment of the actual execution distances the shock of death in favour of a scene of military order, capable of triggering feelings of admiration for the efficient Italian colonial machine.

Fig. 13. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. Captions read (clockwise from top-left): "Between Henni and Messri. 11th Bersaglieri Regiment. 24th October 1911"; "84th Infantry – Messri. 24th October 1911"; "Trial and shooting, under the Castle, of the Kavass of the Consulate of Germany Ben Hamed Hussein (*sic*.). 24th October 1911"; "My attendant Luigi Capotondi – 24th October 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

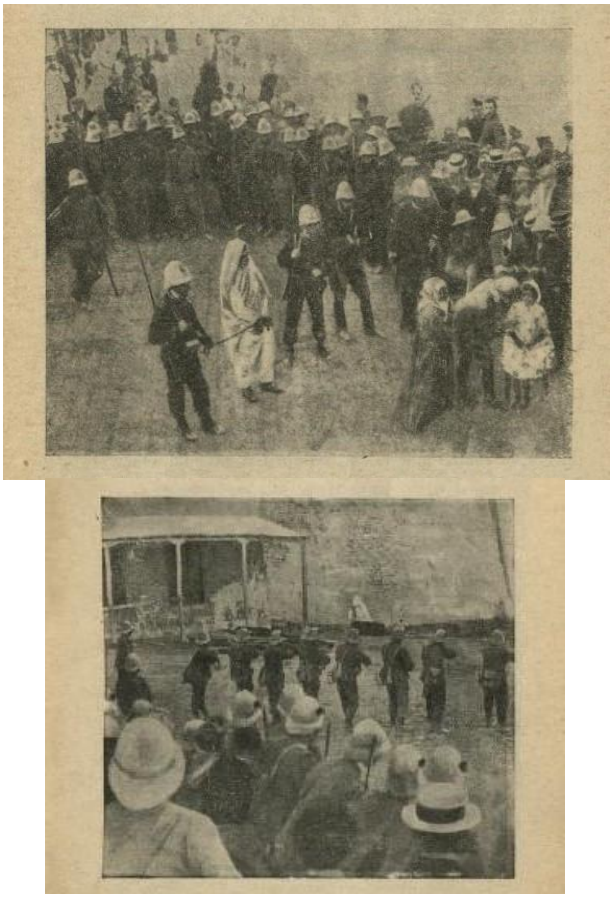

Fig. 14a and 14b. Paolo Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 24 and 26. Both images have a caption: **(a)** "The scene at the court-martial. The accused is the kavass of the German consul. He continued to say that he was innocent. The military judges sentenced him to death on the testimony of a little girl. It should be noted that all Arabs in the burnoose look alike. You can't tell the young from the old, nor the rich from the poor. The Arab has his wrists chained and the chain is in the hands of a soldier"; **(b)** "Revenge against the Arab attaché at the German consulate. Immediately after the verdict he was taken to the beach, placed on a pile of hay with his back to the guns, wrapped in his burnoose and shot by eight soldiers. The first round of bullets left him unharmed. The second had him rolling on the hay with shudders. The third failed to kill him. It took two revolver shots in the head to finish him off."

The peculiarity of Campello's photographic choice is even more significant if we consider that there were certainly many available photographic documents of Hussein's trial and execution. This is confirmed by Valera, who gives us an important testimony on the use of photography in the military departments during the Libyan Campaign:

> The trial took place spectacularly on a public street on 24th October 1911. Hussein went there in his white burnoose, with his hands tied and surrounded by an overflowing number of soldiers and Carabinieri [military police]. The *Kodak* cameras caught him in all

> poses. Hussein was luckier than others who were shot without procedural pomp. His status as kavass forced the authorities to perform a *mise en scène*. […] In half an hour everything was finished. He was led a hundred paces from the tribunal that had condemned him to the torture, under the high walls of an ancient, run-down Spanish castle, in a corner that served the soldiers as a water-closet. […] The firing squad consisted of eight men commanded by Lieutenant Vercelli. At his order they loaded their rifles. Behind them was a line of correspondents and officers, some with cameras. All the officers owned a camera. Almost all the spectators had cigarettes in their mouths. The cinematograph occupied the best position. Carlo Caneva was obsessed with cinema. He had given *carte blanche* to the photographers. The official one was Luca Comerio. (Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 23-25)

Hussein's trial is treated as a spectacle, as a display of the legitimacy of the Italian actions after Sciara Sciat, to be celebrated and spread through sanctioned channels (namely, the Comerio Films Company and the officers who owned amateur Kodak cameras). Leaving out its most inhumane moment, Campello manages to attenuate this insensible use of photography as a means of both social entertainment and cold anthropological record documented by Valera, reinforcing the calibrated emotional representation of the war that we have recognized in his album.

A strong anthropological interest and entertaining tone transpire from yet another album, belonged[19] to General Caneva, Supreme Commander of the Italian forces in Libya from October 1911 to August 1912, who according to Valera was obsessed with photography and cinema. Carlo Caneva had believed in a quick and easy war, rooted in the certainty that the Arabs and Berbers would welcome the Italian occupation and that the Turkish garrison, unsupported by the tribesmen, could be brought to surrender with little or no difficulties. This would result in the successful establishment of an Italian protectorate over Libya. His mindset, soon deceived by the reality of the conflict – that drove him to excessive caution and to reinforce the army's positions in the occupied coastal cities – is reflected in the selection of 26 large-format photos that fill his precious brown leather album, adorned by lateral curlicues and featuring a paper label in the top-centre, which reads: "Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi – Libia / gen. Carlo Caneva". The pictures convey a prominent ethnographic fascination, interspersed with scenes of improvements carried out by Italians, as well as with images of local architecture, spanning from Roman ruins in an archaeological site 120 km east of Benghazi to the city's synagogue and main mosque, or the Pasha's villa in the district of Berka. This is all the more shocking if we consider that Valera accused Caneva of instigating the soldiers' fury against the Arabs after Sciara Sciat:

> The greatest criminal of the Sciarasciat days is Carlo Caneva […]. General Caneva never showed up during those dreadful days. He remained cloistered in his residence protected with sandbags and bomb-proof coverings, with soldiers on the rooftops around his building. It is clear the soldiers were in a state of great agitation after the attacks of the 23rd. Unleashed with orders to kill mercilessly anyone wearing the burnoose, they started a massacre that continued on the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th. It was Caneva who gave them that fury and had them running in the suburbs like madmen looking for Arabs to slit their throats. (*Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 4-14)

Caneva's detachment from the massacres – ordered but then hygienically kept at a distance, like the whole war – seems to mirror the representative choices of his album, which reveals a tendency to self-absorption that passes through an emotional relationship with the colonized city and, although apparently harmless, reinforces the principles of the most abused orientalism. The sentimental scope of these photos, that is, is not rooted in an unfaithful albeit ambiguous military narrative, as it was for Campello, but rather in the inability of seeing the colonial reality without the lens of cultural mythologies that are connected to the imagination of the African space. Without being too intellectually complex, Caneva's album shows a Libya belonging to a bunch of colonial stereotypes: in its religious, housing, female customs; in its exotic landscapes, astonished at the arrival of Italian technology; in its yielding to the myth of an ancient connection with Italy built on the thread of Roman domination. The first three pictures begin to set this tone by alluding to the civilization brought by the Italian conquerors to the colony. The opening photo features a grand representation of the Italian operation base at the new Gran Palazzo in Piazza del Re (**fig. 15**), on which the sign "Albergo Italia" (Hotel Italy) stands out signalling the idea of quasi-touristic colonization shared by the military, as well as by the larger home public. The album continues with two rare pictures of the disembarking of the first locomotive in Libya (**fig. 16**): a symbol of progress and power that would ensure the newest technological means of the homeland in the colony as well. The rest of the album reflects an ambivalent attitude, combining a superficial interest for local diversity and a search for familiarity, as well as a desire for a modern self-representation of Italianness and an appropriation of Libya as "a historical and imaginary site" (Fuller, *Preservation and Self-Absorption*: 138). In these mostly urban photos, we recognize the same attitude noted by Mia Fuller in describing the behaviour of Italians with respect to the city of Tripoli: a naive attempt to minimise the difference of the indigenous environment, preserving it "without necessarily exploring its Otherness" (139), all the while presenting Italians as generous

colonisers, champions of innovation and modernisation. Indeed, except for a few photos dedicated to the construction of homes for Italian Customs officials (**fig. 22**) and to a military radio station in Merg, the remaining images feature a great number of street scenes, which show local life – e.g., the funeral of a notable, an Arab district (**fig. 17**) – in a mixture of intimacy and enchantment. Exemplary, in this respect, are the picturesque images (**fig. 18-19**) of the laundresses at sunset and the milling of barley; or those of the main mosque and the synagogue during prayer (**fig. 20-21**). The latter, in particular, are not to be considered proof of attention for native architecture (nor of religious tolerance), but rather as part of a map of the non-threatening population of the Libyan city, made up mostly of Muslims and Jews. On the other hand, three photos – one in the middle and two at the end of the album – represent a village near Benghazi, whose inhabitants are indicated as "Sudanese" (**fig. 23-24**), hence separating them, in terms of ethnicity and kinship, from the urban area, which Italians believed to be more controllable and trustworthy. This negative prejudice against the extra-urban populations went alongside the importance assigned to the Roman ruins equally located outside the main urban areas – such as the archaeological sites of Ptolemais (*Tolmetta* in Italian, **fig. 25**) – which reinforced the colonisers' reason for owing Libya.

Fig. 15. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "The New Gran Palazzo in Piazza del Re." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 16. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "Disembarking of the first locomotive." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

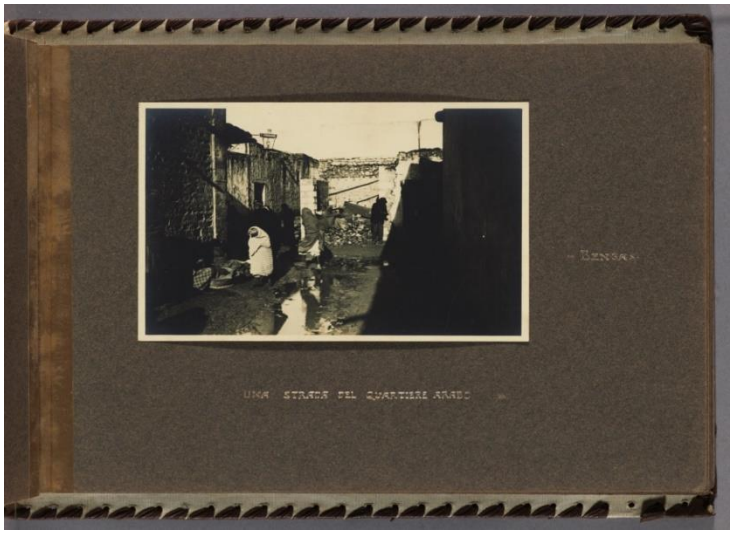

Fig. 17. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "A street in the Arab district." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 18-19. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The captions read: "Laundresses"; "Milling of barley." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

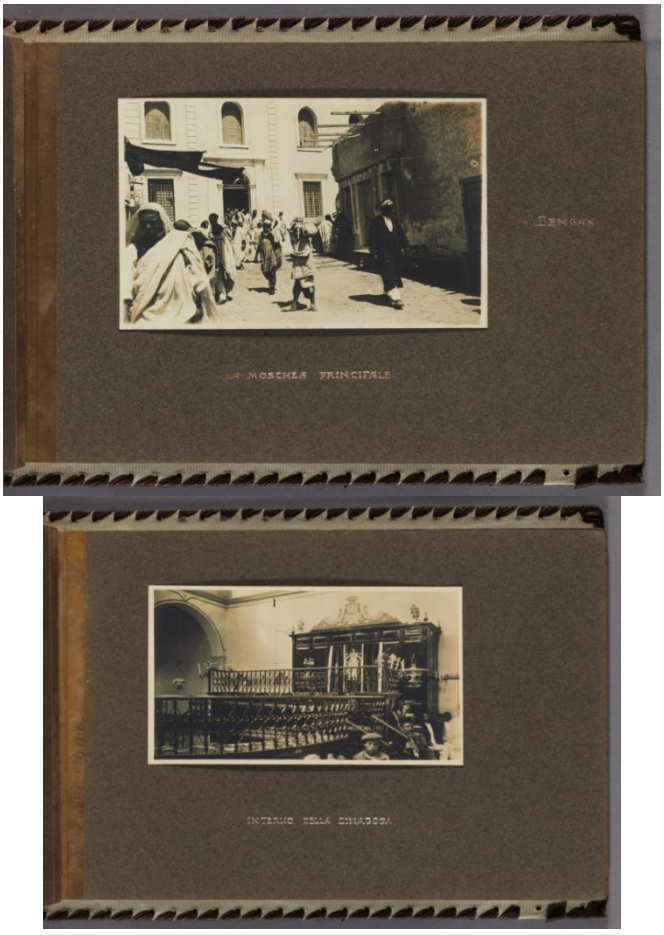

Fig. 20-21. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The captions read: "The main mosque"; "Inside of the synagogue." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 22. Carlo Caneva *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "Major renovation works." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 23-24. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The captions read: "Sudanese village"; "Sudanese traditions." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 25. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* / *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "Ruins of Roman antiquities – Tolmetta." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Although devoid of military references, General Caneva's album thus offers a representation of the Libyan Campaign that is equally adherent to the dicta of nationalistic propaganda. The photos, this time, speak to the post-colonial viewer not through their contrast with captions or other sources of the time, but rather through the clash between the cultural information conveyed by the images and their inappropriate, out of place nature: they seem more similar to travel shots than to war documents, being especially problematic against Caneva's responsibility in the bloody aftermath of Sciara Sciat. This contrast – which recalls, albeit in negative forms, the one between *studium* and *punctum* advanced by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* – embodies, in a way, the experience of the Italo-Turkish War in its own right, for Caneva as much as for Italians in general: their "self-absorbed" attitude toward the soon-to-be-colony, perceived as "'already' theirs" at least in its urban spaces (Fuller, *Preservation and Self-Absorption*: 138-139), ended up colliding dramatically against the complex reality of Libya. On 30th August 1912, after an overall unsatisfactory campaign with no strategy, Caneva returned home, recalled by the central government. He was replaced by two generals, Ottavio Ragni in Tripolitania and Ottavio Briccola in Cyrenaica.

Briccola – who had already led the occupation of Benghazi – appears in the third and last personal album featured in the Harvard Fine Arts' trove: that which belonged to Angelo Cormanni, who served with the 3rd "Genio Telegrafisti" under this General. Cormanni was thus a rank-and-file soldier, who put together a military album of 20 well-described albeit of lesser quality photos, dedicated – and possibly donated upon return to Italy – "to the Kind Lady / who lavished me with her care / in everlasting memory" (*Alla Gentil Dama / che mi prodigò di sue cure / in perenne ricordo offro*): probably a nurse who had cared for him during his travel back home, since the dedicatory is signed "Palermo 26-6-1912." The album documents the operations around Benghazi in 1912 and ultimately works as a sort of photo-diary, of whom the soldier is subject and object at the same time: Cormanni appears in fact in the very first photo (**fig. 26**) on the back of a camel held by a native man, against a background filled with palms, as in a postcard dripping with exoticism. The "advent of oneself as other, a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida*: 12) starts like this: with the photo used as a physical testimony of presence and souvenir for remembrance by one anonymous individual, allowed by the democratization of photography. Cormanni's representation of the Italo-Turkish War is, in this perspective, the most sentimental one, as he aims at immortalizing his own smaller experience of the Otherness within the great national adventure. Hence, he often captures the telegraphists at work in the standard pose of the servicemen (**fig. 28**), simple

soldiers in various occupations (e.g., drawing water from the Fojat oasis), and then scenes of local life that suggest a sort of touristic curiosity of the photographer, already testified by the opening picture: camel transports, local farming, an Arab fisherman, a caravan resting at the village of Sidi-Hussein, the harem of the Pascha at Sidi-Daud. Cormanni's photos reflect the penetration of propaganda at the microscopic memorial level, influencing his emotional perception of the war, represented as a celebration, as a festive moment of encounter and glory. Accordingly, no documentation of the crude violence of the conflict occurs in the album, although, as anticipated, General Briccola is often mentioned and once also represented while visiting the military barracks in Piazza del Sale (**fig. 29**). As Nicola Labanca has explained, Briccola's military strategies were particularly harsh:

> From Benghazi, Briccola and his troops carried out collective punishments of the villages that had launched assaults against the Italian army, took hostages the notables of the towns that did not cooperate or deported them to a forced residence in Italy, and had the military ships carry out coastal bombardments with their powerful naval guns. Briccola was also the author of some rather daring proposals, such as hiring an Arab adventurer to lead local people to wage the irregular war that the Italian troops could not and, in his opinion, should not wage. His faith in the blockade that was supposed to drive the Libyan populations to the brink of exhaustion certainly did not translate into a humanitarian strategy: Briccola was convinced that hunger would push the native chiefs, at that time allied with the Ottomans, to surrender under the pressure of the population. (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia*: 82)

If even historiography has been mostly silent on these terrible practices, we can understand why they have been removed from Cormanni's photographic *memoire*. Memory, after all, "is at best an unfaithful tool and can also constitute a helpful alibi if there are parts of a story which an author (or an entire country) wishes to marginalize, or simply erase" (Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*: 339). The selective use of memory in Cormanni's photographic diary goes alongside the fact that there is almost no *punctum* in his pictures: images and their captions are so standardized and plainly descriptive that it is difficult to scrutinize them in post-colonial terms. There is, however, in the album, one exemplary propagandistic misinterpretation of the war that concerns the battle of 12th March, also known as the Battle of the Two Palms, which took place in Suani Abd el-Rani. Cormanni includes a photo of the oasis of the Two Palms (**fig. 27**), referring to the battle as a "celebrated fight", in line with the official glorification of the event (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia*: 92). In truth, although Italians achieved a momentary success, discouraging the Turkish army from moving further action against Benghazi, the victory at the Two

Palms was not at all decisive, as the bulk of the Ottoman forces did not intervene in the battle and continued to threaten the region. Furthermore, this battle saw one of the first joint efforts of the indigenous resistance of the Sanusiyah – an Islamic mystical brotherhood based in Cyrenaica – and the regular Ottoman army, which would stop the Italian advance into the interior. This last album thus confirms the dissemination of nationalistic clichés at all social and cultural levels and allows us to move on to the other kind of visual materials in the Harvard trove, intended for more popular circulation: postcards and trading cards.

Fig. 26. Angelo Cormanni, album. The caption reads: "Benghazi – The garden of the Berka, in the background you can see the barracks." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 27. Angelo Cormanni, album. The top-right caption reads: "Benghazi – The Oasis of the Two Palms, where the celebrated battle of the 12th March took place." The bottom-left one,

instead: "Sidi-Daud – The Pasha's house after the bombardment." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 28. Angelo Cormanni, album. The captions read: "Benghazi. - A section of telegraphists at work. - During the tension of the telegraph wires" (top-right); "Again the telegraphists assigned to scientific and geographical operations" (bottom-left). Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 29. Angelo Cormanni, album. The captions read: "Benghazi – Gen. Briccola visits the barracks of Piazza del Sale" (top-right); "The village of Sidi-Daud. The minaret – The Pasha's Harem" (bottom-left). Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Stirring emotions: the Italian national imagery through (post)cards

In 1912, the Liebig Company – established in London in 1865 and soon grown into a multinational corporation, with branches and factories all over the world – released a trading card series dedicated to the Italo-Turkish War (*Catalogo Sanguinetti*). The cards, which were meant to advertise its famous meat extract, belonged to the third and last genre that, according to Gabrielli, informed the massive circulation of Liebig small paperboard pictures featuring colonial images since the beginning of the twentieth century: namely, the commemoration of the "imperialist appropriation" of Africa by European countries (*Trading Cards*: 196). The other two themes – epitomized, in Italy, by the racialist series *Moretti dalla testa grossa* (Big-headed Blacks) and *Moretti scherzosi* (Fun-loving Blacks), published at the end of the 1880s – were "the grotesque […] that derides the idea of primitive black people" and the "ethnographic", heavily tainted with orientalism (196). The Italo-Turkish War series poignantly embraced the colonialist clichés, putting Italian soldiers and settlers at the centre of the illustrations and excluding almost completely any reference to the Ottoman army, as well as to local customs and people:

> All the cards refer to the conquest, and the images focus exclusively on Italian soldiers, riflemen and sailors, who are shown landing, advancing and hoisting flags. The only signs of any Turkish soldiers at the scene of a pitched battle are a few caps and rifles left behind as they made their hasty escape, while a group of diplomats are represented in the act of receiving the Italian ultimatum. In another image, Arabs are pictured lying face down in an act of submission. (197-198)

For their incredible diffusion, the Liebig cards are a most powerful testimony of the collective Italian imagery of this period, all the more because they were issued also in other languages and countries, thus helping the circulation of the nationalist emotional stereotypes, upon which they were constructed. These stereotypes seem to have passed, albeit in a much more ambivalent way, in yet another set of trading cards devoted to the Libyan Campaign, which were produced in Spain: those distributed by the chocolate factory Juncosa between 1911 and 1913. A near-complete series of the Juncosa cards (50 in total) entitled *Guerra Italo-Turca* – and indicated by the letter A, which suggests that other series might have been printed as well – ended up in the Special Collections of Harvard's Fine Arts Library, and was featured in the related exhibit. These incredibly fascinating cards display the heading "Guerra Italo-Turca" in capital

blue letters in the centre of the upper margin, except for the very first card, which functions as a cover of the entire series, where the title stands in large red letters in the middle of the image (**fig. 30a**). Eventually, the back of each card features the name of the brand, with the famous Juncosa label (**fig. 30b**). According to Trevor Denning, Juncosa had the habit of choosing well-known historical episodes to draw the public's attention to its products, at least since the late nineteenth century:

> The Barcelona-based chocolate firm of Evaristo Juncosa entered enthusiastically into the use of promotional *cromos* of various kinds and issued decorative albums crammed with textual information in which collectors could arrange them. Theirs is the name most commonly associated with a set of playing-cards of historical characters symbolising the union of Castille, Aragon, León and Navarre. These too were printed by Litografía Madriguera and extended into many editions. […] Some versions made no commercial reference at all on the face of the cards except to the printer. More commonly they carried publicity for Juncosa, with the firm's trademark of a *chocolatera* appearing on the 4s of cups, coins and clubs and the words "Chocolate Juncosa" towards the edge of every card. In some editions these words were in red, in others blue. Furthermore, some versions were printed on coated paper and others on more substantial cards, so noticeable variations in thickness may be found. (*The Playing-Cards of Spain*: 105-107)

While it seems to comply with the conventional traits of other contemporary trading cards – the immediacy of drawing, bright colours, vivid representation of historical chronicles intended as "a sophisticated game for the young bourgeoisie" (Gabrielli, *Trading Cards*: 195) – the Juncosa series on the Italo-Turkish War offers an interpretation of the conflict that is, from the point of view of the cultural experience of the event and its emotional significance, quite different from the one ingrained in the majority of other examples. The Juncosa cards, too, focus on detailed military episodes, described through formulaic structures, but they also show the uncertain outcome of the war. The quality of the design is slightly standardized (as proved by the very first card, **fig. 30a**, where an Italian Bersagliere and a Turkish soldier respond to their typical characterisations of the time), but it still manages to acknowledge both the contenders' diversity and the distinctive Libyan landscape of deserts, oases and villages. It is also interesting to note that, although the cards express some commonplaces about the Arabs (e.g., their proverbial cunning and bloodlust – **fig. 33**), they also convey an overall negative impression of Italians, which are often shown engaged in massacres (**fig. 31**) and abductions of women (**fig. 36**), or shooting and mercilessly killing their prisoners (**fig. 34**). On the other hand, Turks and Arabs often emerge as heroic figures, because they prefer to die rather than surrender. There is also a touching scene of family love, in the

episode of a father saved by his daughter (**fig. 37**). Nor are spared scenes in which Italians appear defeated (**fig. 35**) – a thing which, as already mentioned, is almost never visually depicted in Italian sources. Space is also granted to often silenced episodes of political opposition to the war in Italy: that is the case of a terrorist attack, probably organized by the anti-colonial fringe of the socialist movement, directed against a train carrying troops from Rome to Milan (**fig. 32**).

The Juncosa cards thus show relative independence of judgment with respect to the (emotional) representation of the Italo-Turkish War promoted by the Italian official propaganda, one which is willing to recognize the substantial equality of the opponents.[20] On the contrary, Italians and most parts of the international public looked at the Libyans as an exotic, inferior population, and to Turkey as a tyrannical and cruel giant, ruled by incompetent sultans and subjected in all respects to the stricter precepts of Islam. It is probably not a case, after all, that these trading cards come from Spain – a country which, although welcoming the Italian ultimatum to Turkey with no opposition, remained always at the margins of the colonial adventure in Africa – and in particular from Catalonia, a historical enclave of a liberal and avant-garde culture in the Iberian context. The Spanish public, moreover, was not addressed by the Italian propaganda postcards specifically produced for foreign countries, which were rather directed to France, England and the United States.

Fig. 30a. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 1 (front): "Once the war was declared against Turkey on September 29th 1911, Italy blockaded Tripoli's and Cyrene's coast, starting the bombing of Benghazi and disembarking in Tripoli." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 30b. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 1 (back). Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

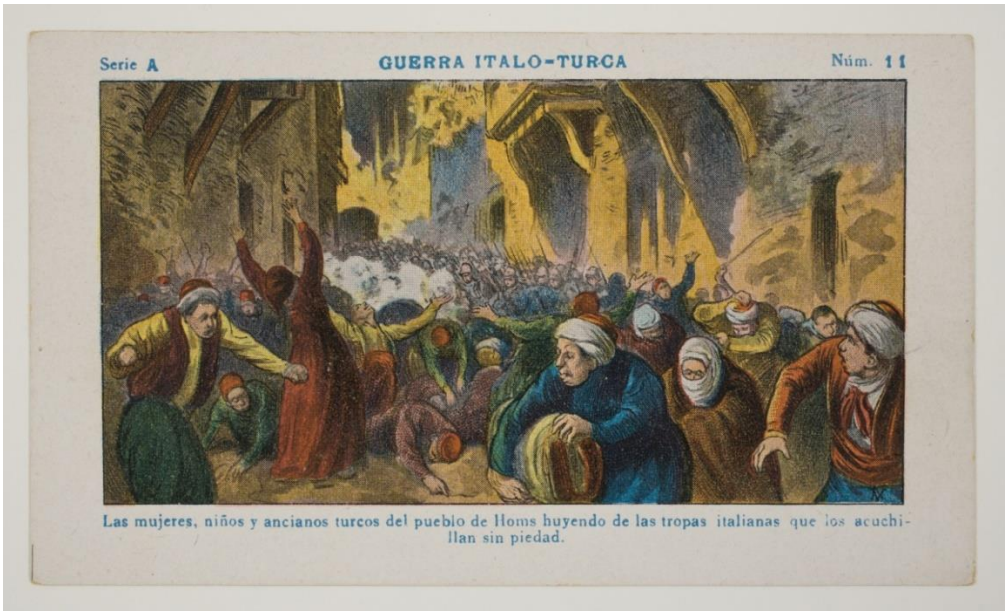

Fig. 31. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 11: "Women, children and old people from the village of Homs run away from the Italian troops, which stab them mercilessly." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

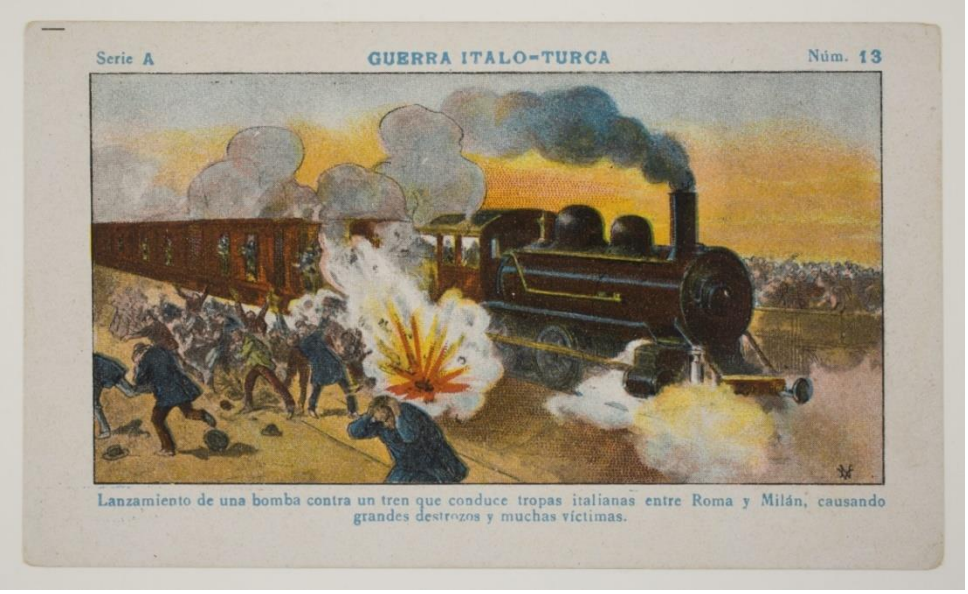

Fig. 32. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 13: "Bomb dropping on a train that carries Italian troops from Rome to Milan, which causes heavy damages and many victims." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 33. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 17: "The Arabs, whose cunning is proverbial, build traps covered with branches where the Italian soldiers who chase them fall and are assassinated." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 34. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 19: "An Arab, servant of the German consul in Tripoli, is executed for having assassinated an Italian soldier treacherously." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

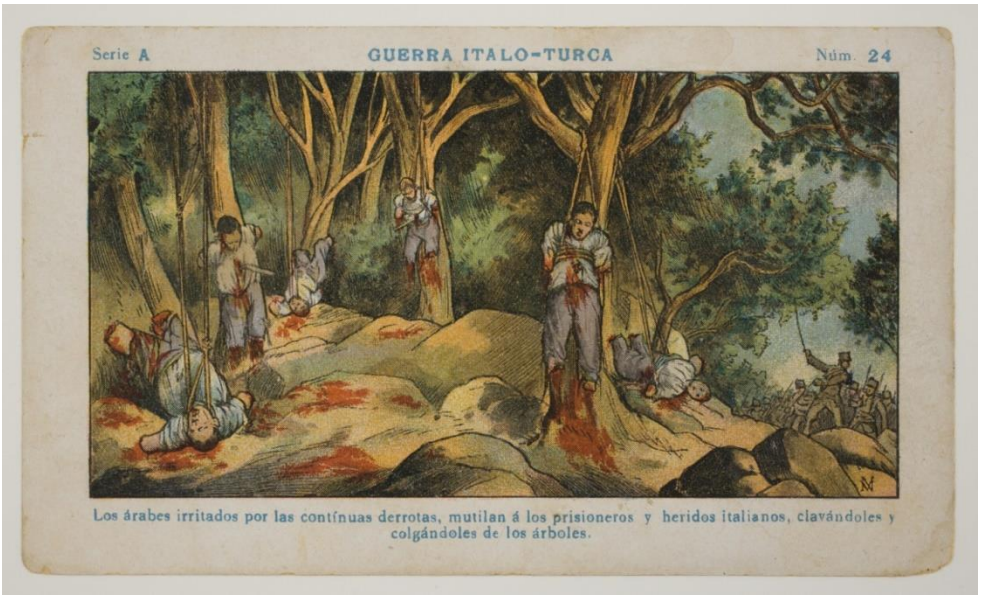

Fig. 35. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 24: "The Arabs, who are irritated at the continuous defeats, mutilate the Italian prisoners and wounded, hammering and hanging them from the trees." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 36. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 45: "The Italian troops kidnap the Arab women of an *aduar*, after having shot all the men." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 37. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 46: "A Young Turkish girl saves his father from two Italian soldiers who took him prisoner, killing them both with two gunshots, while she stays hidden in a bush." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

The rich trove on the Libyan Campaign in Harvard Library's Special Collections includes five black and white trilingual photographic postcards of this kind, numbered 4, 5, 10, 24 and 49 – thus belonging to a wider series – that show only

Italian military personnel and facilities. In the bottom margin, a brief description of the photo is reproduced in Italian, French and English and, in two cases, the back provides printing indication: the Milanese Traldi & C., known at the time as a printer of historical postcards. Meant both for local and foreign circulation, these images – which are nevertheless high-quality products – are much more tainted with clichés and self-justifying, heroic rhetoric, if compared to those made in Catalunia: they recover themes already encountered in the private albums, especially that of Campello (e.g., the cannons abandoned by the Turks, the punitive patrols organized by the Italians to "liberate" the oasis, the pitiful burial of the fallen – **fig. 38 a-b-c**), but they add a patina of virile grandeur, a static and rigorous pose of the army, without neglecting the exotic background, made of luxuriant vegetation, palms and sand. The result sought by these trilingual postcards is similar to the "patriotic emotion" described by Silvana Patriarca in reference to the Risorgimento – another capital moment of national construction – and also evoked, in the context of the Italo-Turkish War, by Jennifer Illuzzi as an attempt to remould the concept of Italianness, by means of a masculine display of power, violence and glorious sacrifice:

> The story of the Libyan War, related on all levels of Italian society, by people of various political leanings, emphasised the masculine qualities of the new Italy and highlighted the link between masculinity, empire and the nation. The story both unified the public in support of the war, for at least a short time, and attempted to change the negative and effeminate image of Italy abroad. (*Reimagining the Nation*: 432)

The obsession for a narrative of greatness and strength, "intimately linked with nationhood", obliterated, from the visual horizons of propaganda, the parallel "destruction of men, women, and children in Libya" that were paying the price of this emotional project of national re-fashioning (Illuzzi, 427-429). This is all the more evident if we compare the elusive choice of subjects of the trilingual photographs with the more honest story told by the Juncosa cards which, even though through simpler drawings that lack the display of documentary authenticity often claimed by photography, end up offering a truer iconographic testimony of the Italo-Turkish War.

If the post-colonial observer can glimpse some fragments of truth by means of the confrontation of different kinds of propaganda in terms of production and intended audience, visual items created for less-educated segments of the Italian population should also be taken into account. This is the case of a few other photographic postcards – still from Harvard's trove – that belong to an

unnumbered series (entitled "Guerra Italo-Turca") and whose themes are military operations, the desert and artillery pieces. The appearance of the photos, which, in some cases, are identical to those produced by Traldi in three languages, indicate the same printer, but these pictures were thought for national use only and their captions look more explicitly apologetic. Number 24, for instance, mentions the "enemy in sight in the treacherous oasis of Sciara Sciat" (**fig. 39**), combining feelings of love (for the nation and its honourable fallen) and hatred (for the African other) to solicit a passionate reaction from the home viewer. Similar combinations – of national-patriotic and aggressive feelings, sometimes bordering on both the sacred and the blasphemous – take the centre stage in the most popular military and colonial imagery, diffused through cartoony-style postcards: the last iconographic medium of visual propaganda in the Italo-Turkish War. Some of those collected in Harvard's Fine Arts Library were mailed – to family and friends in Italy – and show plenty of military events, depicted as moments of glory (**fig. 40**); one is even featuring Jesus leading the troops and has a prayer on the back ("May God protect and guide our soldiers, and bless he whoever does good unto them", **fig. 41**). These images and corresponding texts play on the emotional parallel between the manly love for family, friends, even God and that for the *patria*. The latter had been represented, alongside its Libyan colonial extension, as a beautiful, desirable woman to be conquered and possessed since before the beginning of the war. At the Belbo Theatre in Turin in 1911, in fact, on the very eve of war, Gea della Garisenda, a prosperous star of the operetta, had sung *Tripoli, bel suol d'amore* – a mixture of banality, rhetoric and rudeness – covered only by a three-coloured drape as the Italian flag, raising the enthusiasm of the audience and sending the Italian soldiers off for the Libyan front as one would leave for a romantic affair. The myth of the war as an easy, passionate – and ultimately anti-female – experience would last at least until the end of the first phase of the conflict, closed in October 1912 with the Peace of Ouchy. After all the defeats, massacres and manipulations, the national propaganda would go on to produce a postcard that retraced the three pivotal moments of the Campaign (Italian disembarking, proclamation of sovereignty, peace), illustrating them with the symbolic image of an Italian soldier embraced with a veiled and seductive Arab woman (**fig. 42**): hence sanctioning, at once, the virile conquest of Libya and the collective falsification mechanism that allowed it to be perceived as such.

Fig. 38 a-b-c. Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 39. Guerra Italo-Turca. The caption reads: "The enemy in sight in the treacherous oasis of Sciara Sciat." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 40. Postcard "The battle of Benghazi. 19th October 1911." The caption on the top-right reads: "Forward, garibaldini of the sea!..." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 41. Postcard. The text in the back, signed by Mario Beltrami, is addressed to Ms Clotilde Boveri from Parma and reads: "affectionately mindful, I reciprocate, thank and pay tribute." On the right margin of the postcard, there is a prayer: "May God protect and guide our soldiers, and bless he whoever does good unto them." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 42. Postcard. The text reads: "5th October 1911 - First disembarking in Tripolitania. / 5th November 1911 - Proclamation of Italian Sovereignty over all Libya. / 15th October 1912 – Peace Treaty with Turkey drafted in Ouchy (Switzerland)." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Conclusions

The visual imagery of the Italo-Turkish War – investigated in this essay through the lens of private photographic albums, national and international postcards,

trading cards – embodies a colonial and military politics of emotions, capable of generating a communal process of mythologising and falsification of the conflict and the African space, which informed all levels of society, from the highest echelons of the government and army, to the lower classes of soldiers and citizens. As different as they are for the type of iconographic products they offer (ranging from photos made with high-end cameras to low-quality drawings), as well as for the main perspective of their emotional representation (which takes the forms of autobiography, ethnography, orientalism, or apologetic justification), all the materials examined share a substantial similarity of aesthetic canons: they obsessively repeat the same motifs, fostering a collective narrative tainted with exoticism, nationalism and racism. This narrative – grounded on the aggressive display of patriotic love and the search for a new Italian identity of strength, power and modernity – was promoted both in the homeland and abroad, as proven by the realization, in Italy, of materials intended for other countries and by the circulation of a few stereotypes regarding the war in foreign visual artefacts, such as the Juncosa trading cards. However, the analysis of the images through the very emotional perspective that framed them – while taking into account their nature, content and absences, as well as their pivotal relationship with other visual or textual elements – has shown how passions in their own right can reveal the weakness of the propaganda machine to the post-colonial viewer. Indeed, the contradiction between the documental value of visual representations and the pronounced attempt to emotionally manipulate them, changing the reality that they were meant to depict, opens a gap that allows to capitalise on the uncertain position of the resulting images and to rewrite – or at least critically reconsider – the story of the Italo-Turkish War, returning the actions of Italians to the truth of history, hence recognizing their faults, misinterpretations and crimes.

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1 All translations from Italian in this essay are mine.

2 The Italo-Turkish War officially started on 28th September 1911 (ultimatum to Turkey) and ended on 18th October 1912 (Treaty of Lausanne), although hostilities continued until 1913. This did not mean that the Libyan conquest was by any means completed: "The war continued until and beyond 1921, when Liberal Italy decided *in extremis* to 're-conquer' the territories occupied and then lost between 1911 and 1915. The war on the ground ended only in 1931, when the armed resistance […] against the Italian colonial conquest was definitively crushed" (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911-1931*: 10).

3 In 1911, the unitary name of Libya – which Italy would use alluding to the ancient Roman possession – did not exist on maps. The regions that composed it were Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911-1931*: 15).

4 Enrico Corradini, leader of the recently founded (1910) Italian Nationalist Association, wrote about a wonderful garden visited in the oasis of Tripoli in his travelogue *L'ora di Tripoli*, promptly published by Treves in September 1911: "It is a reddish soil, very fine, without

stones of any kind. What thick, dark, unpruned, wild olive trees! Vines are forced to the ground by the weight of the bunches. No desert at all! We are in a promised land" (74). Giuseppe Bevione would add, a few months later, in *Come siamo andati a Tripoli*: "I have seen mulberries as large as beeches, olive trees more colossal than oaks. The alfalfa can be cut twelve times per year. Fruit trees develop spectacularly. Wheat and melic yield, in average years, three or four times the yield of the best rationally cultivated lands in Europe" (171).

[5] These themes were famously tackled by Giovanni Pascoli in his speech *La grande Proletaria si è mossa* (1911).

[6] Similarly, Angelo Del Boca ascribes Giolitti's preparatory speech for the war, delivered on 7th October 1911 at the Teatro Regio in Turin, to the sphere of the irrational and the supernatural, well beyond the realm of politics and economics (*Italiani, brava gente?*: 108).

[7] An exception to this tendency can be found in Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*, which tackles "written and visual components of Italian accounts of Africa" (337), focussing on both photographic materials and "other forms of visual representation" (337), namely drawings, *bozzetti*, *stampe illustrate*. However, Polezzi's essay – which addresses manifold kinds of travel writing – skip directly from Gustavo Bianchi's *Alla terra dei Galla* (1884) to Fascist and post-colonial travelogues, eluding the Libyan phase. The Libyan Campaign is instead at the centre of Illuzzi, *Reimagining the Nation*, which focuses primarily on materials from the illustrated press, but excludes photography completely, thus reaffirming the diffused compartmentalisation of media in scholarly contributions on the Italian colonial visual imagery.

[8] The Italo-Turkish War represented the first great opportunity to apply photography to military and commercial situations on a large scale. The Photographic Military Section – created on 11th April 1896 with the Specialist Brigade of the 3rd Engineer Regiment, based in Rome (Mignemi, *Un caso*: 116) – set up laboratories in Tripoli, Benghazi and Zuara, and worked from dirigibles and aeroplanes to provide snapshots of tactical importance, principally related to the equipment of the Ottoman army. Photos from the frontline were taken by newspaper correspondents and professional photographers (such as Luca Comerio), as well as by Italian officers with their private Kodak cameras, which "were able to penetrate the fabric of families and society as a whole" (Valtorta, with Hill & Minghelli, *Photography and the Construction of Italian National Identity*: 58) and to later reveal otherwise erased aspects of the war (Palma, *L'Italia coloniale*: 78). These images were soon transformed into illustrations for magazines destined to readers of the upper and middle classes, and into a series of postcards meant to reach the less literate parts of the Italian population.

[9] On the complex reading of colonial photographs practised in the last 50 years, see the 2006 bibliographic essay by Tania Rossetto, *Africa in fotografia*.

[10] Recently, the socially emotional role of images in shaping the perception of the Italo-Turkish War in Italy and abroad has been tackled on the side of cinema. In his article *Dramatizing the Italian-Turkish War (1911-12)*, for instance, Giorgio Bertellini has explored the power of "contemporary melodramas of national sacrifice, war newsreels, and *actualités*, as well as historical and literary film epics" (131) to affect the national and foreign public opinion about the Italians' conduct in the conflict. Also, at the end of *L'occhio insensibile*, Luca Mazzei has recognized especially in the use of documental cinematography "a technological and emotional conception which is at the basis of all nationalist thinking of the time" (341). The specific contribution of cinema to emotional propaganda, however, falls *outside* the *scope of this essay, which builds on a particular trove of printed visual materials.*

[11] The exhibit was promoted by the Lauro de Bosis Fund (Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Harvard University) and curated by Giuliana Minghelli, Matt Collins, Dalila Colucci, Eloisa Morra and Chiara Trebaiocchi. It featured, besides a vast range of materials related to the Italo-Turkish War (which I specifically curated), maps, photos and postcards from 1900 to Fascism, and tackled four themes: "exploratory missions; colonial wars; containment of the colonial other through photography; and colonial dominion through architectural and urban planning" (from the website of the exhibit that displays most part of the digitalized materials, alongside portions of the original explicatory labels: http://www.italiancolonialism.org/intro.html). Mention of all three photo albums examined in this essay is in Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile* (328, 331 and 333). Three photos from Cormanni's album have also been reproduced in the volume *Stillness in Motion*, edited by Hill & Minghelli, as examples of the construction of "a collective memory": "In photographs such as these, the soldier, both photographer and photographic subject, is at the same time the producer and consumer of colonial images, thanks to which he establishes a dialogue with those left at home. […] In these colonial snapshots, even the anonymous soldier can construct his own image on a model produced by the myths of war propaganda and participate in adventure and conquest: sadly, the element of exotic Africanness adds a new and spectacular element to the photographs, enhancing the mass appeal of the images" (Valtorta, with Hill & Minghelli, *Photography and the Construction of Italian National Identity*: 58). My deepest thanks go to the Special Collections of the Fine Arts Library at Harvard University – and in particular to Joanne Bloom, who worked with my colleagues and me on the 2014 exhibit – for allowing the reproduction of all images featured in this essay and for their generous support to my research.

[12] This is the private account that the journalist Luigi Barzini sent to Luigi Albertini, director of the newspaper *Corriere della sera*, on 4th November 1911: "At noon the captain commander of the 6th Company arrived, wounded, and told General Pecori that his company had been crushed, that the enemy was inland. The general did not take him seriously. […] Two companies of Bersaglieri, meanwhile, a thousand meters away, were annihilated, slaughtered, martyred, group by group, and the corpses stripped entirely and the wounded stabbed and the dead had their genitals cut off and put in their mouths and the wounded had their ears cut off" (in Nardi & Gentili: *La grande illusione*: 15). None of these words ever saw the light on the *Corriere*, which published only vague and rhetorically oriented reports of the episode.

[13] "The reaction of ours, when they were certain of the betrayal, was violent. They fired without mercy on the suspicious Arabs who approached them, shooting them dead. A major of the Bersaglieri, who must have a prodigious aim with the revolver, entered alone into the gardens from where shots were fired, with two weapons in his hands, and opened fire on anyone he saw in front of him. The raid was so swift, the shots so fast, that the Arabs had no time to react. With every shot, a casualty" (Bevione, *Come siamo andati a Tripoli*: 333-334).

[14] "Sentimentalism, which is a typical and torpid disease of our race, polluted our defence even on that day. […] Only the indispensable blood was shed, and not even the necessary one, while the *possibility* of the same *betrayal happening again* would have required the maximum harshness" (Grey, *La bella guerra*: 14-16).

[15] According to Mazzei, censorship was limited to images of mutilated or decomposing corpses of Italian soldiers, while there were virtually no limits in showing the mangled bodies of the enemies (*L'occhio insensibile*: 338-340). If it is true that there was an absolute suppression of pictures of tortured Italians – while sometimes the press indulged in portraying Turkish

soldiers, mostly dead on the battlefield – the determination to deny the evidence of Italian atrocities after Sciara Sciat led to a limited circulation of images of summary executions of civilians. That would explain the scandal that broke out in Italy after the publication – on 5th December 1913, hence much later on – in the socialist newspaper *Avanti!* of a series of six photographs in which Italian soldiers were portrayed hanging Arabs (Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente?*: 117): a sign that the home public was not so used to that kind of images.

16 Several weekly magazines in Italy followed the war closely, through drawings, photographs and articles. Among others, *La Domenica del Corriere*, a supplement of the «Corriere della sera», worked as a more popular alternative to *L'Illustrazione Italiana*, celebrating the conquest by means of traditional illustrations mostly drawn by *Achille Beltrame, who authored its* famous *covers (see* Folisi: *La Domenica del Corriere nella Guerra di Libia*).

17 A hard condemnation of the Italian actions came, especially early on, from the Anglo-American press (the most used by Valera): Bennet Burleigh from the *Daily Telegraph*, Francis McCullagh from the *New York World* and Thomas Grant from the *Daily Mirror* were particularly critic. On the complex balance between denunciation and forgiveness of the international press, as an effect of the diplomacy and counter-information orchestrated by the Italian and other European governments alike, see Bertellini (*Dramatizing the Italian-Turkish War*) and Forgacs (*Messaggi di sangue*).

18 David Forgacs indicates that a copy of the footage owned by the British Pathé, wrongly titled *Public Hanging of 14 Turks*, can be watched online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EprSRy_cG0A (*Messaggi di sangue*: 100-101, endnote n. 1).

19 The album was possibly assembled and donated to the General by an unnamed author. This wouldn't be the first photographic homage offered to Caneva, who was also gifted the album *La conquista della Libia* by Luca Comerio (Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile*: 332-333, footnote 35).

20 This is especially important if we recall, alongside Illuzzi, that "the Italian imperial project in Libya […] served as a specific nationalist response to a historical discourse that posited Italian men as degraded and effeminate, and women as immoral seductresses" (*Reimagining the Nation*: 438): hence as an attempt to differentiate Italians from Arabs and Turks, to which a large portion of the European discourse used to equate them, explicitly or not.