

MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ



LXIV. BAND — 2022
HEFT I



LXIV. BAND — 2022

HEFT I

MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ

Inhalt | Contenuto

Redaktionskomitee | Comitato di redazione
Alessandro Nova, Gerhard Wolf, Samuel Vitali

Redakteur | Redattore
Samuel Vitali

Editing und Herstellung | Editing e impaginazione
Ortensia Martinez Fucini

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz
Max-Planck-Institut
Via G. Giusti 44, I-50121 Firenze
Tel. 055.2491147, Fax 055.2491155
s.vitali@khi.fi.it – martinez@khi.fi.it
www.khi.fi.it/publikationen/mitteilungen

Die Redaktion dankt den Peer Reviewers dieses Heftes für ihre Unterstützung | La redazione ringrazia i peer reviewers per la loro collaborazione a questo numero.

Graphik | Progetto grafico
RovaiWeber design, Firenze

Produktion | Produzione
Centro Di edizioni, Firenze

Die *Mitteilungen* erscheinen jährlich in drei Heften und können im Abonnement oder in Einzelheften bezogen werden durch | Le *Mitteilungen* escono con cadenza quadrimestrale e possono essere ordinate in abbonamento o singolarmente presso:
Centro Di edizioni, Via dei Renai 20r
I-50125 Firenze, Tel. 055.2342666,
edizioni@centrodi.it; www.centrodi.it.

Preis | Prezzo
Einzelheft | Fascicolo singolo:
€ 30 (plus Porto | più costi di spedizione)
Jahresabonnement | Abbonamento annuale:
€ 90 (Italia); € 120 (Ausland | estero)

Die Mitglieder des Vereins zur Förderung des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz (Max-Planck-Institut) e. V. erhalten die Zeitschrift kostenlos. I membri del Verein zur Förderung des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz (Max-Planck-Institut) e. V. ricevono la rivista gratuitamente.

Adresse des Vereins | Indirizzo del Verein:
c/o Schuhmann Rechtsanwälte
Ludwigstraße 8
D-80539 München
foerdereverein@khi.fi.it; www.khi.fi.it/foerdereverein

Die alten Jahrgänge der *Mitteilungen* sind für Subskribenten online abrufbar über JSTOR (www.jstor.org).
Le precedenti annate delle *Mitteilungen* sono accessibili online su JSTOR (www.jstor.org) per gli abbonati al servizio.

_ Aufsätze _ Saggi

_ 3 _ *Serena Quagliarioli*

Da un episodio poco noto una nuova traccia biografica per il bolognese Girolamo Mirola alias Baroni

_ 31 _ *Marco Folin – Monica Preti*

Da Anversa a Roma e ritorno: le *Meraviglie del mondo* di Maarten van Heemskerck e di Antonio Tempesta

_ 69 _ *Laura Moretti*

Gli inventari della “casa dell’orto”: nuove indagini sulla collezione di disegni e stampe di Niccolò Gaddi

_ 101 _ *Agnese Ghezzi*

Looking Home: Ethnography, Photography, and the Visualisation of Italian Cultures (1861–1911)

_ Miscellen _ Appunti

_ 131 _ *Patrick Kragelund*

Augustus, the Strong Box of Mark Antony, and Vincenzo Danti’s *Cassaforte* Relief for Duke Cosimo I of Tuscany



1 Eugenio Aruj, hand-coloured prints of costume portraits from Sardinia, ca. 1870. Florence, Sistema Museale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze, Museo di Storia Naturale, Antropologia e Etnologia, inv. 7697-7701

LOOKING HOME ETHNOGRAPHY, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND THE VISUALISATION OF ITALIAN CULTURES (1861–1911)

Agnese Ghezzi

Introduction

In April 1911, the *Mostra di Etnografia Italiana* – a vast exhibition dedicated to Italian ethnography – was opened in Rome. The project carried a strong political message and was part of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Italian unification. If 1911 has been considered a turning point in the establishment of Italian ethnography, similar exhibitions or photographic collections were already promoted by scientific communities since the end of the nineteenth century.¹ While tracing the history and agenda of such realised or unrealised proposals, the article aims to reflect upon the role of photography in the

process of creation and establishment of ethnographic knowledge and the visualisation of a new subject, the ‘Italian people’. In particular, it considers how photography and ethnography intersect with the making of the new nation-state, looking at the negotiation that was at stake between unified identity and regional plurality as well as between processes of self-identification and othering in Italian scientific, public, and visual discourses.

This article explores the entanglement between exhibitions – approached as performances of the modern nation-state² –, the emerging discipline of ethnography, and photography, a research tool circu-

¹ On the birth of Italian ethnography see *Prima etnografia d'Italia: gli studi di folklore tra '800 e '900 nel quadro europeo*, ed. by Gian Luigi Bravo/Benito Ripoli, Milan 2013; Enzo Vinicio Alliegro, “Storia degli studi antropologici, memoria e oblio: Lamberto Loria e l'istituzionalizzazione della demologia in Italia”, in: *Palaver*, n.s., VII (2018), I, pp. 33–46. More generally on anthropology in Italy see: *L'uomo e gli uomini: scritti di antropologi*

italiani dell'Ottocento, ed. by Sandra Puccini, Rome 1991; *Antropologia italiana: storia e storiografia, 1869–1975*, ed. by Enzo Vinicio Alliegro, Florence 2011. See also Francesco Faeta, *Questioni italiane: demologia, antropologia, critica culturale*, Turin 2005.

² See Alexander Tony Bennet, “The Exhibitionary Complex”, in: *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. by Bruce W. Ferguson/Reesa Greenberg/

lating as part of a wider “visual economy”.³ By using primary sources coming from Italian anthropological archives, the article investigates the visual tropes adopted in pictures, the connection between political needs and scientific research, and the performance and interpretation of the documentary value attributed to photography. Topics such as visualisation and display, the materiality of photographs, and archival stratifications are starting points of the present study, which is based on the growing literature around photographic history and theory, intersecting it with contributions to the history of anthropology as well as the history of liberal Italy.

Research that has addressed the interaction between photography and anthropology has developed greatly in the past thirty years. Scholars began turning their attention to the photographic representation of otherness and colonial subjects, showing the strict connection with the development of racial discourses, the making of human taxonomy, and the positivistic and Darwinist culture in general.⁴ Besides, an interest in the representation of internal and domestic populations arose, analysing the nineteenth-century “documentary impulse”⁵ toward folklore and popular cultures, which resulted in photographic campaigns,

illustrated publications, exhibitions, and collecting endeavours. The growing literature that is developing in the field helps to put these kinds of initiatives within a European framework, showing thematic and stylistic influences and scientific interconnections, but also differences in the narratives and the meaning attributed to popular traditions, which depended on the different audiences and contexts.⁶

Anthropology applied the same “salvage paradigm” to ancient primitive civilisations,⁷ non-Western populations, and rural communities, but the attempts to register internal popular cultures went hand in hand with educational and identity purposes. Therefore, the essay builds on Benedict Anderson’s fundamental investigation of “imagined communities” as well as Hobsbawm and Ranger’s notion of the “invention of tradition”,⁸ crucial texts that shifted the approach from an essentialist view of national cohesion and history to a consideration of the role that imaginations, stories, and materiality have played in the construction and perception of shared cultural belonging.⁹ As underlined by many scholars in recent years, photographic documentation was deeply connected to the national negotiation, and pictures partook in building theories of affinity or diversity,

Sandy Nairne, London 2005 (1996), pp. 71–93; Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de Siècle Europe*, New York 2010.

³ See Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, Princeton 1997.

⁴ To name just some relevant international works: *Anthropology and Photography: 1860–1920*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards, New Haven, Conn., et al. 1992; Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*, Oxford et al. 2001; *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame*, ed. by eadem/Christopher Morton, Farnham et al. 2009; Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, London 2011. For the Italian case see: *Etnie: la scuola antropologica fiorentina e la fotografia tra '800 e '900*, exh. cat., ed. by Brunetto Chiarelli/Paolo Chiozzi/Cosimo Chiarelli, Florence 1996; *Lo specchio infedele: materiali per lo studio della fotografia etnografica in Italia*, conference proceedings Rome 1994, ed. by Francesco Faeta/Antonello Ricci, Rome 1997; Francesco Faeta, *Strategie dell'occhio: saggi di etnografia visiva*, Milan 2003; *idem, Le ragioni dello sguardo: pratiche dell'osservazione, della rappresentazione e della memoria*, Turin 2011; Alberto Baldi, “Ipse

vidit: fotografia antropologica ottocentesca e possesso del mondo”, in: *EtnoAntropologia*, IV (2016), I, pp. 3–28.

⁵ Gregg Mitman/Kelley Wilder, “Introduction”, in: *Documenting the World: Film, Photography, and the Scientific Record*, ed. by eadem, Chicago/London 2016, pp. 1–22: 1.

⁶ For some European comparison see Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885–1918*, Durham 2012; Christian Joschke, *Les yeux de la nation: photographie amateur et société dans l'Allemagne de Guillaume II (1888–1914)*, Dijon 2014; Justin Carville, “Performing Ethnography / Projecting History: Photography and Irish Cultural Nationalism in Ulster”, in: *Photo Archives and the Idea of Nation*, conference proceedings Florence 2011, ed. by Costanza Caraffa/Tiziana Serena, Berlin 2015, pp. 59–76; Ewa Manikowska, *Photography and Cultural Heritage in the Age of Nationalisms: Europe's Eastern Borderlands (1867–1945)*, New York 2021. The recent conference *Reimagining One's Own: Ethnographic Photography in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Europe* (December 2021) organised by the Volkskundemuseum Wien and Photoinstitut Bonartes attempted to build a transnational history of ethnographic photography.

establishing centres and peripheries, and creating geographical and social hierarchies.¹⁰

Reflecting upon how ethnographic photography developed in Italy, it is important to consider the existence of a pre-photographic iconographic tradition of customs and genre scenes, strictly linked to the Grand Tour experience.¹¹ The notion of picturesque, originally applied to landscape and ruins, came to include the nostalgic feeling and exotifying look upon social life and traditions. In this regard, it is interesting to think also of the influence that an etic (meaning non-Italian and pre-unitarian) representation played in the making of an emic ethnographic depiction.¹²

Since its proclamation in 1861, the Kingdom of Italy needed to build its own identity and define the feature of national cohesion. Italy had been united under the guidance of the Savoy dynasty (already governing in the north-western area) and the influence of the liberal political class mostly coming from the North. In terms of administration, despite the enduring debate around the possibility of a federal state, in 1861 the Italian government opted for a centralized model. The state was divided into municipalities and provinces, but the idea of having regions as a “stepping-

stone to nationhood”¹³ was discarded out of fear that this would undermine the cohesion of the state. The changes of capitals in the first years after the unification (from Turin to Florence to Rome) testified to the difficulties in defining not only the political fulcrum of the state but also its symbolic apparatus, its visual and cultural identity.

Strong contradictions soon emerged, such as the lack of a commonly spoken language, the social, historical, and economic dissimilarities of the country, the low alphabetization rate (around 25 percent), the uneven distribution of industrialization between North and South, the little participation in the political life (with census-based and male suffrage; less than 2 percent of the population could vote). In the South, popular revolts labelled as *brigantaggio* spread against the Piedmont rulers, opening up a violent phase that ended in 1865 with the bloody repression of the opposers by the military forces. Meanwhile, the unification process was still ongoing: it continued with the annexation of the Veneto in 1866 and the capture of Rome in 1870.¹⁴ The phenomenon of emigration is another social issue that characterised the Italian peninsula, especially from the 1880s, leading to the creation of new forms of diasporic identities

See also *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Timothy Baycroft/David Hopkin, Leiden/Boston 2012.

⁷ See James Clifford, “The Others: Beyond the ‘Salvage’ Paradigm”, in: *Third Text*, III (1989), 6, pp. 73–78. See also Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York 1983.

⁸ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983; Eric Hobsbawm/Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983.

⁹ For investigations on the Italian case see Ilaria Porciani, *La festa della nazione: rappresentazione dello Stato e spazi sociali nell'Italia unita*, Bologna 1997; Alberto Mario Banti, *Sublime madre nostra: la nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo*, Bari 2011.

¹⁰ See *Photo Archives and the Idea of Nation* (note 6). For Italy see in particular Tiziana Serena, “Cultural Heritage, Nation, Italian State: Politics of the Photographic Archive between Centre and Periphery”, *ibidem*, pp. 179–200; Francesco Faeta, *Il nascosto carattere politico: fotografie e culture nazionali nel secolo Ventesimo*, Milan 2019.

¹¹ See Mariantonieta Picone Petrusa, “Iconografia del costume popo-

lare: modelli fotografici in studio”, in: *La fotografia a Roma nel secolo XIX: la veduta, il ritratto, l'archeologia*, conference proceedings Rome 1989, ed. by Lucia Cavazzi, Rome 1991, pp. 52–74; *Voir l'Italie et mourir: photographie et peinture dans l'Italie du XIX^e siècle*, exh. cat., ed. by Guy Cogeval/Ulrich Pohlmann, Paris 2009; Marina Miraglia, *Specchio che l'occulto rivela: ideologie e schemi rappresentativi della fotografia fra Ottocento e Novecento*, Milan 2011.

¹² On the distinction between the categories of emic and etic applied to historiography, see Carlo Ginzburg, “Our Words, and Theirs: A Reflection on the Historian's Craft, Today”, in: *Historical Knowledge: In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence*, ed. by Susanna Fellman/Marjatta Rahikainen, Cambridge 2012, pp. 97–119.

¹³ Stefano Cavazza, “Regionalism in Italy: A Critique”, in: *Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building, Regional Identities and Separatism*, conference proceedings Leiden 2010, ed. by Joost Augusteyn/Eric Storm, London 2012, pp. 69–89: 72.

¹⁴ Only with the end of World War I Trento and Trieste were included. On the history of liberal Italy see Fulvio Cammarano, *Storia dell'Italia liberale*, Bari 2011.

which included mainly rural communities from Southern Italy. In the meantime, Italy began a slow colonial campaign that led from the 1880s to the unstable control over the Horn of Africa, while it experienced strong defeats at Dogali (1887) and Adowa (1896).¹⁵ In 1911, the closing year of the present article, Italy started the colonial campaign for control over Libya.

On the one hand, public and scientific discourses aimed at placing the newly founded state at the same level as other European countries and in opposition to colonial populations. On the other hand, a constant negotiation for the recognition of the many differences dividing the peninsula characterised national rhetoric. Regionalism and localism emerged in the nation-state from the very beginning, shaping a pattern composed of many different homelands anchored to local traditions.¹⁶ Such characteristics, rooted in centuries of historical divisions, jeopardised national cohesion on the one hand, while it led to a celebration of regional particularism on the other. The growing scholarly communities that developed around newly founded societies, museums, and universities represented the scientific as well as the political elite of the country and played a significant role in constructing a convincing narrative for the new nation. Anthropology in particular nurtured the public debate with concepts of race, lineage, civilisation, cultures, and origin. These notions tied together with the development of scientific methodologies, the implementation of administrative policies, the formation of nationalistic messages, and the creation of visual identities.

¹⁵ On Italian colonialism in liberal Italy see Giuseppe Finaldi, *A History of Italian Colonialism, 1860–1907: Europe's Last Empire*, London 2017. See also Angelo Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale, I: Dall'Unità alla Marcia su Roma*, Milan 1992; Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare: storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, Bologna 2002.

¹⁶ On the idea of *piccole patrie* during Fascism see Stefano Cavazza, *Piccole patrie: feste popolari tra regione e nazione durante il fascismo*, Bologna 1997.

¹⁷ Paolo Mantegazza et al., "Materiali per la raccolta di Etnologia Italiana", in: *Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia*, I (1871), pp. 381f.: 382.

Anthropological Communities

The idea of developing investigations into Italian traditions was one of the declared goals of the first anthropological society, the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia, founded in Florence in 1870 by Paolo Mantegazza, together with the related museum and journal. In 1871 Mantegazza, Cesare Lombroso, Maurizio Schiff, and Arturo Zanetti launched the *Raccolta dei materiali per l'Etnologia italiana*, which promoted a questionnaire to be distributed in every municipality to register the physical features of the various "razze italice".¹⁷ The administrative and scientific agenda went hand in hand in this project, as the focus of the *Raccolta* was almost entirely on the measurement of external bodily elements to classify the newly united Italian people into ethnic subgroups.¹⁸ The question of the ethnical belonging of the Italians was considered crucial in the post-unification debates and, although the collected materials were less than expected, the Florentine society used the result to recognise the regional ethnic varieties over the peninsula, without however questioning the cultural unity of the nation.¹⁹

The first ethnographic exhibition was organised in Milan in 1881, as part of the *Esposizione Industriale Italiana*, with an important section dedicated to regional costumes. More than a hundred mannequins were inserted, as in a diorama, in bucolic spaces with fake natural elements or domestic objects, very similar to the settings of a photographic studio. Photographs were employed, together with drawings or sculptures, as substitutes for real costumes, a feature that would

¹⁸ For a detailed analysis of anthropological survey and instructions see the fundamental work by Sandra Puccini, *Il corpo, la mente e le passioni: istruzioni, guide e norme per la documentazione, l'osservazione e la ricerca sui popoli nell'etno-anthropologia italiana del secondo Ottocento*, Rome 1998.

¹⁹ For the results of the survey see Enrico Raseri, "Materiali per l'Etnologia Italiana", in: *Annali di Statistica*, II (1879), 8, pp. 3–124. The operation was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce and by the Statistical Commission. On nation and statistics see Silvana Patriarca, *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, Cambridge 1996.

become recurrent in the following exhibitions. In showcases, there were smaller objects of use that “formano il principio d’una storia del lavoro italiano”, as the visitor’s guide to the exhibition declared.²⁰ The guidebook moreover stressed the representation of the variety of traditions as a key aspect of the show: “La conformazione della penisola e più ancora le vicende politiche, hanno fatto sì che fra gli abitanti d’una provincia e quelli d’un’altra passa maggior differenza di vestire, di industria e di abitudini che non quasi fra due popoli di stirpe diversa.”²¹ The commentator had contradictory feelings toward such conflicting identities. On the one hand, it was presented as a national feature to be exposed and appreciated; on the other, it was felt as a defect to flatten: “L’unione politica cerca di far scomparire queste differenze, a quella guisa che l’istruzione sostituisce gli oggetti primitivi con quelli perfezionati dalla scienza.”²² Differences were paired with backwardness and primitiveness, which both science and education would coldly eliminate. However, next to this controlling necessity, we also find the nostalgic feeling over classical ruins, represented this time by human traditions, embodied in the figure of the shepherd: “ma vi sono tuttora in certe provincie gli arnesi, gli aratri e i vasi dei pastori della Bucolica [*sic*] e delle Georgiche.”²³

A different case was the anthropological section of the Turin exhibition in 1884, curated by the phy-

sician Enrico Morselli and carefully described in the exhibition programme, which was published in the *Archivio per l’Antropologia e la Etnologia*. The quest for scientific reliability passed through a careful analysis of the methodology for data collecting, and Morselli granted an important documentary role to photography. Subsection VII of the exhibition was dedicated to ethnography, since “[I]o studio dei costumi e delle usanze delle varie regioni italiane non venne fatto fin qui in modo completo, e secondo l’indirizzo dell’Etnografia”.²⁴ In illustrating this ambitious project, Morselli cited the 1878 Paris exhibition and the 1880 Moscow exhibition as models: “Ci è parso opportuno che anche per l’Italia venisse tentata una Mostra consimile, tanto più che essa varrà certo ad illuminare alcuni problemi ancora oscuri dell’etnografia italiana.”²⁵ The reference to the French and Russian expositions is particularly interesting, as it opens up the question of the transnational connections between exhibitions.²⁶

In explaining the criteria for the selection of costumes, Morselli specifically asked contributors to avoid manipulation, and he proposed to expose photos, sketches, and models as sources that would guarantee the traditionality and naturality of the artifact:

Ci sembra intanto necessario pregare fin d’ora i collezionisti di [...] non alterare, a scopo estetico, la forma

²⁰ *Guida del visitatore alla Esposizione Industriale Italiana del 1881 in Milano: sola pubblicazione autorizzata e compilata sotto la sorveglianza del Comitato Esecutivo dell’Esposizione Industriale*, Milan 1881, p. 89 (“constitute the beginning of a history of Italian labour”).

²¹ *Ibidem* (“The shape of the peninsula and even more so political events have determined that between the inhabitants of one province and another there are more differences in dress, industry and habits than almost between two peoples of different ancestry”).

²² *Ibidem* (“Political union will try to remove these differences in the same way as education replaces primitive objects with those perfected by science”).

²³ *Ibidem* (“but in some provinces, there are still tools, ploughs, and vases of the shepherds of the *Bucoliche* and *Georgiche*”).

²⁴ Enrico Morselli, “Programma speciale della sezione di Antropologia all’esposizione Generale Italiana di Torino”, in: *Archivio per l’Antropologia e*

la Etnologia, XIV (1884), pp. 123–132: 130 (“the study of customs and habits of various Italian regions has not been conducted so far in a complete way, and according to modern ethnography”).

²⁵ *Ibidem* (“We found it appropriate to attempt a similar exhibition also for Italy, all the more so since it will certainly be worthwhile to illuminate some of the still obscure problems of Italian ethnography”).

²⁶ See Angela Schwarz, “The Regional and the Global: Folk Culture at World’s Fairs and the Reinvention of the Nation”, in: *Folklore and Nationalism* (note 6), pp. 99–111. About Russian ethnography see Alberto Baldi/Tamara Mykhaylyak, *L’impero allo specchio: antropologia, etnografia e folklore nella costruzione di un’identità culturale nazionale ai tempi della Russia zarista (1700–1900)*, Rome 2017. For the Paris exhibition see Daniel DeGross, “Ethnographic Display and Political Narrative: The Salle de France of the Musée d’ethnographie du Trocadéro”, in: *Folklore and Nationalism* (note 6), pp. 113–135.

2 Caterina Capri-Galanti, "Giov. Battista Magnanti di Michelangiolo di Veroli, n. nel 1865. (Ciociaro) Pollastraro", ca. 1890. Florence, Sistema Museale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze, Museo di Storia Naturale, Antropologia e Etnologia, inv. 7482, 7483



25. Giov. Battista Magnanti di Michelangiolo di Veroli, n. nel 1865 (Ciociaro) Pollastraro

dei vestiri e degli oggetti [...] ma di esporre fedelmente, sia per esemplari, sia per modelli o fotografie o disegni, tutto quanto di più tradizionale ed antico si conserva e di più spontaneo e naturale viene svolgendosi nella ricca e varia vita del nostro popolo.²⁷

While in subsection VII photography appeared to play a complementary role to the display of objects, Morselli further underlined the potentiality of pictures in subsection IV of the exhibition, dedicated to “Antropologia biologica ed etnologica”. There he promoted studies on specific ethnological problems, including the “Espressione e fisionomia degli Italiani”, which should be investigated by means of “Collezioni scientifiche di fotografie di tipi popolari e campagnuoli per le diverse regioni d’Italia”.²⁸ Peasants and workers became anthropological objects and photographic subjects both

for their habits and tangible traditions and for their expressions and physical attitude, bringing together the natural and the cultural dimension. Indeed, Morselli saw the exhibition as a way to “collegare in un tutto armonico e completo quanto si riferisce ai caratteri fisici e intellettuali delle popolazioni del Regno”.²⁹ Photography, considered capable at once of recording customs and fixing gestures and bodily traits, was perceived an important tool in this mission.

Morselli’s exhibition programme specifically addressed the “utilità scientifica delle fotografie (ritratti)” – where “l’uomo si ritrae di faccia e di profilo, in formato abbastanza grande perché nessun particolare della fisionomia possa sfuggire all’azione della luce”³⁰ – as well as the importance of “aggiungerne ancora delle artistiche, prese cioè coll’atteggiamento naturale e libero degli individui ritrattati, e possibilmente nei

²⁷ Morselli (note 24), p. 131 (“Meanwhile, we deem it necessary to ask collectors [...] not to alter, for aesthetic purposes, the form of clothing and objects [...] but to faithfully exhibit, either in specimens or in models or photographs or drawings, all that is most traditional and ancient and most spontaneous and natural in the rich and varied life of our people”).

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 127 (“scientific collections of photography of popular and rural types for the various Italian regions”).

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 130 (“connecting in a harmonic unity what refers to the physical and intellectual characters of the populations of the kingdom”).

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 126 (“scientific usefulness of photography (portraits)”; “the



3 Caterina Capri-Galanti, "Pio Mambor fù Michele, di Ponzano Romano n. nel 1843. Esattore", ca. 1890. Florence, Sistema Museale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze, Museo di Storia Naturale, Antropologia e Etnologia, inv. 7440, 7441

loro costumi o fra strumenti ed utensili caratteristici della loro regione e della loro classe sociale".³¹ This double tension inherent in ethnographic representation can be linked to the concept of the ethnographic type but also to Luke Gartlan's analysis of costume as a predominant genre in the commercial visual market that preceded the invention of photography and that continued influencing strongly the depiction of people through a focus on traditional dress.³²

The idea of a physiognomic and characteristic depiction of social classes is visible in a photographic series of people from the area of Valmontone in Latium

(between Rome and Frosinone), preserved in the photo archive of the Museo di Antropologia e Etnologia in Florence (Figs. 2, 3). It was donated in 1891 to the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia by the noblewoman Caterina Capri-Galanti, a fellow of the society.³³ Unfortunately there are currently no other traces of her photographic activity, but this example attests to the presence of women in a male-dominated scientific milieu.³⁴ The series was praised by Mantegazza "per il metodo scientifico e per la singolare abilità"³⁵ and it consists of over a hundred facial portraits of common people in frontal and profile view,

man has to be portrayed in front and profile, in size big enough so that light can capture every detail of the physiognomy").

³¹ *Ibidem* ("adding also artistic ones, taken with the natural and free attitude of the portrayed subjects, possibly in their traditional costumes or surrounded by tools and utensils typical of their region and their social class").

³² Luke Gartlan, "Types or Costumes? Refraining Early Yokohama Photography", in: *Visual Resources*, XXII (2006), pp. 239–263, DOI: 10.1080/01973760600807812. On the notion of types see also Elizabeth Edwards, "Photographic 'Types': The Pursuit of Method", in: *Visual Anthropology*, III (1990), pp. 235–258; Deborah Poole, "An Excess of Description:

Ethnography, Race, and Visual Technologies", in: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, XXXIV (2005), pp. 159–179.

³³ See Cosimo Chiarelli, "Mantegazza e la fotografia: una antologia di immagini", in: *Paolo Mantegazza e l'Evoluzionismo in Italia*, ed. by *idem*/Walter Pasini, Florence 2010, pp. 95–120.

³⁴ The historiography has not yet dedicated any specific attention to female participation in anthropological knowledge, a presence often neglected. See *Se vi sono donne di genio: appunti di viaggio nell'Antropologia dall'Unità d'Italia ad oggi*, ed. by Alessandro Volpone/Giovanni Destro Bisol, Rome 2011.

³⁵ Paolo Mantegazza, "Comunicazioni", in: *Archivio per l'Antropologia e l'Etnologia*, XXI (1891), p. 435 ("for the scientific method and the special capability").

pasted on cardboard and inscribed at the bottom with a number and the indication of name, father's name, hometown, year of birth, and profession. The sitters are captured in front of a neutral background and dressed in daily clothes that provide a hint to their social condition. Of particular interest are the written references to the working activity: they testify to the attempt to answer the double need of registering physiognomic traits while gathering information about class affiliation and social condition. Moreover, the series did not include only popular or rural people, but also bourgeoisie citizens.

The idea of using photographs for the anthropological survey of the Italian population appeared and disappeared in the course of the history of the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia in Florence and, at a meeting in 1883, Enrico Hillyer Giglioli discussed with the other members the opportunity to “far percorrere le varie regioni da uno studioso che raccogliesse crani e prendesse fotografie. Urge raccogliere e serbare memoria dei tipi speciali, che [...] stanno per scomparire”.³⁶ The idea of the disappearance of indigenous types due to the industrialisation process was transferred from far-flung populations to the Italian regions, together with the need to safeguard customs: “Ho ben visto io in Sardegna quali siano gli effetti delle ferrovie anche in un tempo breve: usi e vestimenti speciali a dati luoghi vanno sparendo.”³⁷ The archive of the Museo di Antropologia e Etnologia in Florence totals around three hundred images of Italian costumes. The various regions are represented in

uneven ways, with Latium predominating, Emilia Romagna, Sardinia, and Calabria present and many areas absent. The iconographic styles vary: next to *cartes de visite* and portraits of actresses collected by Mantegazza for his study on emotions, there are commercial studio pictures, functional to the documentation of the variety of popular garments (Figs. 1, 4).³⁸

Another important figure in the establishment of Italian ethnography was Giuseppe Pitrè (1841–1916), physician and passionate scholar of Sicilian traditions, who initiated one of the most significant instances of regional anthropological research in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century. His interest in oral expression and popular uses led first to the publication of the *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane* (1870/71) and then to the creation of a dedicated journal, the *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari* (1880), and a specialised society, the Società per lo Studio delle Tradizioni Popolari in Italia (1884), in which he widened the perspective beyond the Sicilian island to establish a connection with international communities.³⁹ In 1891–1892 Pitrè curated the *Mostra Etnografica Siciliana* as part of the *Esposizione Nazionale di Palermo*, the first national exhibition in Southern Italy. The idea was to display traditions and material cultural heritage but, differently than those in Milan and Turin, this time the exhibition was entirely dedicated to the Sicilian region.⁴⁰ The dynamic pictures representing street scenes and popular work taken by Eugenio Interguglielmi, who ran a prominent photographic studio in Palermo, were selected by Pitrè for the exhibition and became

³⁶ “Rendiconti della Società”, in: *Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia*, XIII (1883), pp. 585–587: 586 (“have a scholar travelling through the various regions collecting skulls and taking photographs. There is an urgent need to collect and preserve the memory of the special types, which [...] are about to disappear”).

³⁷ *Ibidem* (“I have seen in Sardinia what the effects of the railways are, even in a short time: customs and garments typical of certain places are disappearing”). On Giglioli's photographic collection see Agnese Ghezzi, “La collezione di Enrico Hillyer Giglioli, un atlante fotografico antropologico”, in: *Rivista di studi di fotografia* (forthcoming).

³⁸ The various phases of stratification and sedimentation of the photo archive of the Museo di Antropologia e Etnologia are hard to reconstruct. The current organisation in boxes and numbered cardboards originated probably in the thirties, when the museum was relocated in its current location in Palazzo Nonfinito.

³⁹ See Pasqualina Manzo, *Storia e folklore nell'opera museografica di Giuseppe Pitrè*, Frattamaggiore 1999; *Pitrè e Salomone Marino: atti del convegno internazionale di studi a 100 anni dalla morte*, ed. by Rosario Perricone, Palermo 2017.

⁴⁰ See Giuseppe Pitrè, *Catalogo illustrato della Mostra Etnografica Siciliana*, Palermo 1892.

- Calabria -



Campana



Mendicino



Cebio



Luzzi

4 Costume portraits from Calabria, ca. 1880.
Florence, Sistema Museale dell'Università degli
Studi di Firenze, Museo di Storia Naturale,
Antropologia e Etnologia, inv. 7659-7662

part of his museographic project. If Pitre's objective was to dignify Sicilian traditions and save them from disappearance, in its reception the effect of the exhibition was mainly a defamatory one. As already analysed by other scholars, many commentators insisted on the backwardness of the island as opposed to the rest of Italy, and they established a parallel between the *Mostra Etnografica*, with popular Sicilian costumes, and the coexisting *Mostra Eritrea*, exposing Eritrean people in a recreated setting.⁴¹

Angelo De Gubernatis, a comparative linguist, scholar of oriental and Indian cultures and founder of the Museo Indiano in Florence, inaugurated in 1893 a new society, the Società Nazionale per le Tradizioni popolari italiane, turning his interests from distant India to close Italian territory. In his case, it becomes evident how exoticism nurtured parallelly the research on oriental populations and that on domestic traditions.⁴² In the introduction of the new journal *Rivista delle tradizioni popolari italiane*, De Gubernatis stressed the need to initiate reliable and systematic collecting campaigns, in order to recover the voices of the ancient Italian 'races':

Dalle varie terre italiane, i popoli antichi ci mandano ancora voci solenni; ascoltiamo riverenti e rifrughiamo, tra le macerie, gli indizi delle nostre varie antiche civiltà latenti. Non è vero che siano intieramente scomparsi dal suolo italiano gli Elleni, gli Etruschi, i

Fenici, i Latini, i Volsci, gli Equi, i Sabini, gli Umbri, i Sanniti, i Liguri, i Sardi, i Siculi, gli Euganei, gl'Insubri, gli Allobrogi, i Veneti, i Cimbri, i Longobardi, i Saraceni, i Franchi. Alcune delle nostre razze più antiche, specialmente nei paesi di montagna, in alcune isole, in alcune valli alpine ed apenniniche, sono rimaste quasi intatte.⁴³

With such a list, De Gubernatis wanted to stress the survival of a plurality of Italian cultures in opposition to a view of the country as shaped only by a few dominating types of civilisation. In his programmatic statement, he moved a critique of the political administration as one of the main responsables for a forced and one-sided assimilation of the country, while he intended to "ritrovare l'Italia reale popolare sotto l'Italia illustre, o verniciata".⁴⁴ Even if both the journal and the society did not last more than two years, they represented an important step in defining new collecting scopes and methods⁴⁵ and in bringing together a community of local amateurs interested in the topic.

In line with De Gubernatis's attempt, in 1895, the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia launched a call for the making of a *Carta etnografica d'Italia*. As a result, in 1898 Francesco Pullè published the *Profilo antropologico dell'Italia*, which did not include pictures but texts and maps to visualise the different historical, linguistic, somatic, and psychological

⁴¹ See Vivien Greene, "The 'other' Africa: Giuseppe Pitre's 'Mostra Etnografica Siciliana' (1891-2)", in: *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, XVII (2012), pp. 288-309; Carmen Belmonte, "Staging Colonialism in the 'Other' Italy: Art and Ethnography at Palermo's National Exhibition (1891-1892)", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, LIX (2017), pp. 86-107.

⁴² See Filipa Lowndes Vicente, *Altri Orientalismi: l'India a Firenze 1860-1900*, Florence 2012.

⁴³ Angelo De Gubernatis, "La tradizione popolare Italiana", in: *Rivista delle tradizioni popolari italiane*, I (1893), pp. 3-19: 5 ("From the various lands of Italy, the ancient peoples still send us resounding voices; let us listen to them with reverence and, amidst the rubble, reconstruct the clues of

our various latent ancient civilisations. It is not true that the Hellenes, the Etruscans, the Phoenicians, the Latins, the Volscians, the Equi, the Sabines, the Umbrians, the Samnites, the Ligurians, the Sardinians, the Siculi, the Euganeans, the Insubrians, the Allobroges, the Veneti, the Cimbri, the Lombards, the Saracens and the Franks have completely disappeared from Italian soil. Some of our oldest races, especially in the mountain villages, on some islands, in some Alpine and Apennine valleys, have remained almost intact").

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. II ("to find the real popular Italy underneath the illustrious, or varnished, Italy").

⁴⁵ See Enzo Vinicio Alliegro/Maurizio Coppola, "La nascita degli studi di tradizioni popolari in Italia tra Ottocento e Novecento", in: *Prima*

traits of the Italian populations. It was envisioned as a systematic tool able to outline the numerous ethnic roots crossing the peninsula through the anthropological map.⁴⁶

So far we have discussed projects that tend to propose a view of Italy as a diverse but unified entity. However, in 1898 two important publications nurtured the idea of the presence of racial differences in the peninsula. The book by the Sicilian anthropologist Alfredo Niceforo *L'Italia barbara contemporanea* provided a scientific argument for the already strong anti-meridional feelings. Following in Lombroso's footsteps, Niceforo connects biological and historical diversities to demonstrate the barbaric condition of Southern Italy as opposed to the civilised and more advanced North, stating that "Here, modern Italy has a high mission to accomplish and a great colony to civilize".⁴⁷ Such a theory found support in the collection of anthropometric data made by Ridolfo Livi, who created an extended statistic sample using military conscription data to highlight the difference in the cephalic index between the North (brachycephaly) and South (dolichocephaly).⁴⁸

The positivistic anthropological communities were variegated and the intention, methods, and results of their research could vary significantly. The need to address the differences between ethnic groups on both a regional and local level resulted in the creation of theories of racial variety, contrast, or unity.

It is important to keep these experiences in mind to understand the tendencies and the method of nascent Italian anthropological communities, especially their interest in mapping Italian varieties. Photographs were not always employed in the aforementioned projects, but were introduced and progressively promoted as one of the tools to build up a set of data for anthropology and ethnography, which were striving to demonstrate their scientific methodology. At the same time, photography was seen as capable of documenting types and capturing costumes, thus providing comparable information on both the physical features and the cultural dimensions of the various Italian people.

Photographic Communities

The Società Fotografica Italiana was founded in Florence in 1889, and its first president was Paolo Mantegazza, considered the father of Italian anthropology. The connection with the discipline did not end here: fellows interested in both fields were, for example, Stephen Sommier, Lamberto Loria, Giulio Fano, Francesco Pullè, and Giovanni Santoponte.⁴⁹ In 1898, Giulio Fano, a new fellow of the Società Fotografica Italiana, emphasized the importance of the use of photography in ethnography.⁵⁰ In his letter, entitled "Un'importante proposta", he envisioned a photographic survey of the Italian population that could "[c]ontribuire a far conoscere gli Italiani agli Italia-

etnografia d'Italia: gli studi di folklore tra '800 e '900 nel quadro europeo, ed. by Gian Luigi Bravo/Benito Ripoli, Milan 2013.

⁴⁶ The map was inspired by Rudolf Virchow's statistical use of anthropometric data in Germany; see Puccini (note 18), pp. 84–87.

⁴⁷ Alfredo Niceforo, *L'Italia barbara contemporanea (studi e appunti)*, Milan 1898, p. 6; quoted by Greene (note 41), p. 291. On the 'Southern question' see also Italy's "Southern Question": *Orientalism in One Country*, ed. by Jane Schneider, Oxford 1998; Claudia Petraccone, *Le due civiltà: settentrionali e meridionali nella storia d'Italia dal 1860 al 1914*, Bari 2000; Aliza S. Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861–1911: Meridionalism, Empire, and Diaspora*, New York 2006; Antonino De Francesco, "La diversità meridionale nell'antropologia italiana di fine secolo XIX", in: *Storica*, XIV (2008), pp. 69–87.

⁴⁸ Ridolfo Livi, "La distribuzione dei caratteri antropologici in Italia", in: *Rivista Italiana di Sociologia*, II (1898), pp. 415–433.

⁴⁹ See Cristina Panerai, "Fotografia e Antropologia nel 'Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana: una promessa disattesa", in: *AFT*, I3 (1991), pp. 64–69.

⁵⁰ Giulio Fano (1856–1930) was a physiologist from Mantua; he had studied in Padua, Bologna, Turin, and Leipzig and worked in Genoa and Florence (Mario Crespi, s.v. Fano, Giulio, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XLIV, Rome 1994, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giulio-fano_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/).

⁵¹ Giulio Fano, "Un'importante proposta", in: *Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana*, X (1898), pp. 371f.: 372 ("contribute to let Italians know Italy").

ni”⁵¹ somehow recalling the famous quote attributed to Massimo d’Azeglio: “We have made Italy, now we have to make the Italians.”⁵² In expressing the variety of the Italian people, Fano took India as a basis for comparison: “In quale paese infatti, che abbia una lunga e gloriosa storia, se ne eccettuiamo forse l’India, possiamo noi trovare tanta varietà etnica come in casa nostra?”⁵³ In this parallelism, it is hard not to think of the trajectory of the already mentioned De Gubernatis. According to Fano, photography could capture the Italian plurality, giving value to it and shaping a narration based on national variety:

Nei villaggi della Sicilia, della Sardegna, dell’alto Piemonte, della Liguria, dell’Abruzzo, della Toscana, di tutte le parti d’Italia vi sono tesori di documenti umani da raccogliere e in questa indagine certo la macchina fotografica sarebbe un istrumento di investigazione e di documentazione di un valore incalcolabile.⁵⁴

In listing some areas as exemplary, he included not surprisingly Sardinia and Sicily, considering that as already mentioned southern areas and islands were considered as exotic and fascinating spaces.⁵⁵ However, he included also northern and central regions, testifying to the broad and national scope of the project. Moreover, he put forward the idea of “human documents”, which implicates a series of theoretical shifts. This wording hints at a positivistic conception of history based on written sources, but includes also the object-based approach promoted by anthropological

knowledge, suggesting that the human person, in its bodily and cultural manifestation, had to be considered as a document.⁵⁶ The value of the human document is enclosed in the word “tesori” (treasures), a term rarely applied to ethnography and more often related to the field of art history and cultural heritage, which suggests the idea of something hidden to be exploited. Fano’s words clearly show how the photographic medium had been invested with an analytical authority and constituted the basis for investigation: he seems to imply that the power to turn humans into documents came precisely from the camera. In connection to that, photography’s role was also a historical one, because pictures could constitute a national material memory: “Quante cose che ignoriamo o che non sappiamo abbastanza esattamente o che abbiamo dimenticate o che vogliamo obliare, ci verrebbero insegnate, sarebbero raccomandate alla nostra memoria in modo facile, esatto e ineccepibile dalla lastra sensibilizzata!”⁵⁷

Photography was not the mirror of the social memory but the antidote to the unstable mechanism of collective remembrance. The mechanical device took on the role of the omniscient teacher and saved society from oblivion and ignorance, while the operator behind the camera was not taken into consideration. Although in line with both the mechanical objectivity and the salvage paradigms,⁵⁸ a new narrative element is present. In expressing the value of photography in disclosing the reality, the author is praising its capacity not only to represent exactly and to save from disappearance but also to rescue from

⁵² On the fame of the statement and its attribution, see Claudio Gigante, “‘Fatta l’Italia, facciamo gli Italiani’: appunti su una massima da restituire a d’Azeglio”, in: *Incontri*, XXVI (2011), 2, pp. 5–15.

⁵³ Fano (note 51), p. 371 (“In which country that has a long and glorious history, with maybe the exception of India, can we find as much ethnic variety as in our own home?”).

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 372 (“In the villages of Sicily, Sardinia, Northern Piedmont, Liguria, Abruzzo, Tuscany, and all parts of Italy there are treasures of human documents to be collected, and in this research, the camera would certainly be an investigation and documentation tool of incalculable value”).

⁵⁵ See Paolo Mantegazza, *Profili e paesaggi della Sardegna*, Milan 1870; Giuseppe Sergi, *La Sardegna: note e commenti di un antropologo*, Rome 1907.

⁵⁶ See Jacques Le Goff, “Documento/Monumento”, in: *Enciclopedia Einaudi*, Turin 1977–1984, V, pp. 38–43.

⁵⁷ Fano (note 51), p. 372 (“How many things that we do not know or that we do not know well enough or that we have forgotten or that we want to forget would be taught to us, would be recommended to our memory in an easy, exact, and impeccable way by the sensitized plate!”).

⁵⁸ On mechanical objectivity see Lorraine Daston/Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, New York 2007.

the deliberate and selective process of forgetting. In this sense, the “inchiesta fotografica [...] non avrebbe perciò soltanto uno scopo estetico e scientifico ma pur anche un obiettivo altamente etico e sociale”.⁵⁹ A documentary genre where the visual representation of reality is also linked to instances of education and social service emerges in these words.⁶⁰

In the conclusion, Fano addressed the thorny problem of regionalism. As he perfectly understood, a similar proposal could present the threat of reinforcing local cohesions to the detriment of the national identity. So he reversed the argument putting differences at the heart of the Italian ‘imagined community’:

Non si tema che una simile istituzione possa accentuare il sentimento regionale che molti temono latente in parte del nostro paese; nulla può allentare ormai i legami che ci uniscono, mentre dallo studio comparato che ho proposto, meglio risulterebbero alcuni dati oggettivi che lusingando le nostre varie attitudini metterebbero in maggior rilievo quelle differenziazioni che fanno la nostra forza e la nostra potenzialità.⁶¹

In Fano’s view, the Società Fotografica Italiana should become the main promoter of the survey, and Giorgio Roster, who was at that time the president of the society and had an active role in promoting the development of scientific photography in Italy, reacted with enthusiasm. Such a positive reception

of Fano’s proposal clashed with the pragmatic opinion of the photographer Carlo Brogi, who was worried about the economic feasibility of the project. Indeed, the making of a photo campaign represented a heavy cost, which Fano wanted to split with the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia, strengthening the multiple contacts between the two Florentine institutions. Between 1898 and 1903, Fano’s proposal was discussed many times, and two commissions were created for its implementation;⁶² however, all these attempts were abandoned, leading to the withdrawal of Fano from the Società Fotografica Italiana and showing the inertia of the society in that matter. The ethnographer Lamberto Loria recalled Fano’s desired and “patriotic” endeavour during a meeting in 1905, where he blamed the Society for rejecting its support:

Io non so quali ostacoli si frappesero alla pratica attuazione della proposta del Prof. Fano. Confesso però che una simile estrinsecazione della attività della nostra Società rientra talmente nell’indirizzo che a mio parere si deve dare ad una Società Fotografica che si intitola Italiana, che è mia ferma intenzione di fare mia in un prossimo futuro la idea dell’amico Fano e con il suo aiuto escogitare i mezzi più opportuni per porre in pratica il patriottico proponimento.⁶³

Here, Loria already put forward the possibility of a wider project, which indeed led him to the making of the ambitious ethnographic exhibition in 1911.

⁵⁹ Fano (note 51), p. 372 (“the photographic enquiry [...] would therefore have not only an aesthetic and scientific purpose but also a highly ethical and social objective”).

⁶⁰ See Estelle Sohier/Olivier Lugon/Anne Lacoste, “Introduction au dossier”, in: *Les collections de photographies documentaires au tournant du XX^{ème} siècle* (= *Transbordeur*, I [2017]), pp. 8–17.

⁶¹ Fano (note 51), p. 372 (“There is no risk that such an institution could accentuate the regional feeling that many fear to be latent in part of our country: nothing can now loosen the bonds that unite us, while the comparative study that I have proposed would result in some objective

data that, by highlighting our various attitudes, would highlight those differences that are our strength and our potential”).

⁶² “Prima adunanza, 16 Maggio”, in: *Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana*, XI (1899), pp. 181f.

⁶³ Lamberto Loria, “Presentazione appello di Giacomo Boni”, in: *Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana*, XVII (1905), p. 125 (“I do not know what obstacles came in the way of the practical implementation of Prof. Fano’s proposal. I confess, however, that such an implementation of the activities of our Society is totally in line with the direction that, in my opinion, a Photographic Society that want to be called Italian should work on. It is

Toward 1911

Lamberto Loria (1855–1913) had travelled in Northern Europe, New Guinea, and Eritrea using photography as part of his practice,⁶⁴ but 1905 has been narrated as the year of his ‘conversion’ to Italian ethnography:

Nel 1905, prima di andare in Africa per i miei studi, dovetti recarmi a Circello del Sannio. E là mi venne l’idea di abbandonare gli studi di etnografia esotica che mi avevano fino allora obbligato a viaggi lontani e pericolosi, e di occuparmi invece del nostro popolo. Sapevo che l’Italia, pur essendo popolata da gente di una sola razza, presentava, soprattutto per la sua storia, una grande varietà di usi e di costumi; ma l’esame superficiale che in quei pochi giorni potei fare delle popolazioni sannite, mi dimostrò che se avessi impiegati i miei più belli anni di vita e di studio alla nostra etnografia, avrei potuto raccogliere molti oggetti e studiare molte usanze ormai totalmente scomparsi.⁶⁵

In a sort of epiphany, before a trip to Africa, Loria, known for his exploration of far-flung populations, narrated to be confronted with the unexplored value of Italian traditions. The description of reversing the focus from the outside to the inside, from afar to the close-by, reveals how the exotifying lens and

the salvage paradigm, first applied to non-Western populations, was now directed toward Italians.⁶⁶ Certainly, Loria was well aware of the discussion going on about folklore and the study of popular traditions; however, it is interesting to analyse the rhetoric that he chose to use, able to describe him at once as the canonized figure of the ethnographer-explorer and as the initiator of a new field of internal ethnography, sweeping away in a few lines the existing research that had already developed in Italy.

In 1906, Lamberto Loria inaugurated a new phase in the study of the Italian population, founding together with Aldobrandino Mochi the Museo di Etnografia Italiana in Florence.⁶⁷ Around five thousand objects representing the material cultures of the Italian peoples were classified; photographs were an integral part of the collection. The project was ambitious because it channelled scattered sets of research into a coherent museological project, but it would not have reached visibility without institutional help, which came from Ferdinando Martini.

Minister of Public Education from 1892 to 1893, Martini was appointed governor of Eritrea in 1897, where he organised the first Congresso Coloniale Italiano held in Asmara in 1905. On that occasion, he met Loria, who was presenting the result of the scientific *Missione Eritrea* and the *Istruzioni per lo studio della*

my firm intention to embrace the idea of my friend Fano in the near future and, with his help, to devise the most appropriate means to put the patriotic proposal into practice”).

⁶⁴ Recently, two major volumes dedicated to the figure of Loria have been published: *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significati*, ed. by Paolo De Simonis/Fabiana Dimpflmeier (= *Lares*, LXXX [2014], I), Florence 2015, and *L’eredità di Lamberto Loria (1855–1913): per un museo nazionale di etnografia*, conference proceedings Rome 2014, ed. by Annamaria Giunta, Florence 2019.

⁶⁵ Lamberto Loria, “Due parole di programma”, in: *Lares*, I (1912), pp. 9–24: 9 (“In 1905, before sailing for Africa for my studies, I had to go to Circello del Sannio. And there I got the idea of abandoning the studies of exotic ethnography that had so far obliged me to make long and dangerous travels, and of concerning myself instead with our own people. I knew that Italy, though populated by folk of the same race, presented, especially owing to its history, a great variety of usages and customs; but

the superficial examination of Samnite populations I could make in those few days convinced me that if I would have employed the best years of my life in the study of our own ethnography, I could have collected many objects and studied many customs now totally disappeared”).

⁶⁶ See Lindsay Harris, “Photography of the ‘Primitive’ in Italy: Perceptions of the Peasantry at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”, in: *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, XVII (2012), pp. 310–330, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2012.667225; Maria Grazia Lolla, “Local Colour and the Grey Aura of Modernity: Photography, Literature, and the Social Sciences in Fin-de-Siècle Italy”, in: *Stillness in Motion: Italy, Photography and the Meanings of Modernity*, ed. by Sarah Patricia Hill/Giuliana Minghelli, Toronto/Buffalo/London 2014, pp. 67–96.

⁶⁷ On the museum see Paolo De Simonis, “‘Un progetto campato in aria’: cornici fiorentine attorno al primo Museo di Etnografia Italiana”, in: *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significati* (note 64), pp. 127–188.

colonia Eritrea, promoted by the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia together with the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali. After having visited the museum in Florence, Martini, who was vice-president of the committee for the celebration of the national quinquagenarian of 1911 in Rome, proposed to Loria the realization of a thematic exhibition dedicated to Italian ethnography for this occasion and even encouraged him with the possibility that the exhibition could result in a national museum of ethnography to be opened in Rome soon after. Their connection originated therefore in the colonial experience and it continued in the field of domestic ethnography.

Strengthened by such political support, in 1910 Loria gave birth to a new society, the Società di Etnografia Italiana, and its related journal *Lares*. In the programmatic first number, he presented his idea of comparative ethnography and insisted on the parallelism and analogy between external “savage” and internal “less evolved class”: “perché come il selvaggio ha analogie con l’uomo primitivo, così le nostre classi meno evolute, rimaste indietro nel cammino della civiltà, conservano ancora, nascosti e sopiti, taluni degli istinti e dei caratteri delle genti selvaggie”.⁶⁸ Comparative knowledge came to be linked with colonial as well as national control in another article of the same issue: “Se la conoscenza degli usi e costumi dei popoli soggetti ad una nazione civile rende a questa più facile la conservazione del dominio, a più forte ragione la conoscenza degli usi e dei costumi del nostro popolo renderà dei servizi inaspettati alla nazione nostra.”⁶⁹ In Loria’s words, internal and colonial policies were mentioned in the same breath, and the emphasis on the colonial administration

was particularly poignant in those years, when the Italian government went to war over the Libyan territory, opening a new colonial phase through which it wanted to demonstrate its presence on the African chessboard after the subdued phase that followed the defeat of Adowa in 1896. In the years leading to the national celebration, the legitimation of the state went hand in hand with the legitimation of the colonial power, both in the political and the scientific agenda.

In this interweaving of interests and experiences, where education, colonial administration, and political nationalism met, it is possible to see that ethnography had emerged as a suitable discipline through which communicating the idea of the nation to a wide audience, particularly through the medium of the exhibition. In particular, Loria’s ethnographic exhibition could deliver at once the scientific explanation for the differences characterising the peninsula, the spectacle of the various popular traditions, and the ideological justification for the unification of the country. Localism and regionalism, long considered the ghosts of Italian unification, were glorified as its most authentic manifestation.

Rome 1911: The Ethnographic Exhibition

On 21 April 1911, the symbolic recurrence of the foundation of Rome, the *Mostra di Etnografia Italiana* opened in the Italian capital.⁷⁰ As the catalogue states, it should “rivelare le caratteristiche bellezze che l’Italia offre negli usi e nei costumi del suo popolo” and show how “pur nei più umili strati sociali, pur tra i pastori e tra i contadini ancora oppressi dall’ignoranza e dal pregiudizio, conservi tutte le energie del-

⁶⁸ Loria (note 65), p. 22 (“because just as the savage shows similarities with the primitive man, so our less evolved classes, lagging behind in the path of civilization, still preserve, hidden and slumbering, some of the instincts and characters of savage folk”).

⁶⁹ *Idem*, “L’Etnografia strumento di politica interna e coloniale”, in: *Lares*, I (1912), pp. 73–79: 78 (“If the knowledge of the manners and customs of the peoples subjected to a civilised nation assists the latter in

preserving its rule, all the more so the knowledge of manners and customs of our own people will render unexpected services to our nation”).

⁷⁰ For the *Mostra di Etnografia Italiana* in general, see Stefania Massari, “Per la storia del Museo”, in: *Arti e tradizioni: il museo nazionale dell’EUR*, ed. by *eadem*, Rome 2004, pp. 27–155: 27–81; Sandra Puccini, *L’itala gente dalle molte vite: Lamberto Loria e la Mostra di Etnografia italiana del 1911*, Rome 2005; Stefania Baldinotti/Lidia Paroli, “Piazza D’Armi”, in: *La festa delle feste:*

la stirpe e sia destinata a un avvenire radioso”.⁷¹ The poster (Fig. 5), designed by the artist Galileo Chini, provided a sense of ennobling of the popular traditions, offered the viewer a variety of multifarious and colourful textiles, hats, and jewelry, and gave the idea of a crowd that was getting together for this special event in a sort of parade, showing varieties but also providing a sense of togetherness.

The event was part of a larger programme of celebration for the fiftieth anniversary of the Italian unification, with events not only in Rome but also in Turin and Florence, which were the former capital cities of the Italian kingdom. Each city participated with a different kind of exhibition: Rome should represent the conceptual anima of the nation, and thus the fair was centred on ethnography, the Italian regions, and the fine arts. The themes of the show in Turin were instead progress, industries, and labour. Florence, which only later entered the exhibition programme, hosted sections on portraiture and floriculture.⁷² The celebrations of 1911 represented an important moment of legitimation both from a national and an international perspective: their aim was to show how much Italy had developed in its first fifty years after the unification. In particular, there was the need to show that the nation had progressed in the fields of economy and education and that it was forging its own peculiar identity.

In line with the approach developed in Florence by Mantegazza and in continuity with Fano’s proposal, Loria conceived a display where the varieties were acknowledged but inserted within a ‘unitarian’ discourse, in which Italianity was guaranteed by the

belonging to the same race. The spatial organisation of the exhibition can tell us something about the articulation and negotiation of those ideas. In the same space, Piazza d’Armi, were organised the regional and the ethnographic exhibition, which were two connected but separate initiatives. As explained in the dedicated journal, the regional exhibition was composed of several pavilions summarising the main architectural character of each region, whose planning was entrusted to the various regional committees, while the ethnographic show “anziché riassumere l’aspetto di un paese, ne riassume la vita. L’esposizione regionale è, per così dire, statica; l’etnografica è dinamica”.⁷³ Oscillating between the ideals of unity and plurality, the pavilions of the Foro delle Regioni formed a square that contained in its centre the two ethnographic buildings, dedicated respectively to popular objects and uses (Palazzo delle Collezioni Etnografiche or Palazzo delle Scuole) and to masks and costumes (Palazzo delle Maschere e dei Costumi).

As Loria and his assistant Francesco Baldasseroni explained in the catalogue, the regional exhibition should be considered a crown surrounding the ethnographic show. In the latter, objects were placed primarily according to categories of objects and only consequently geographically, a choice that was defended by Baldasseroni also for the design of the museum display: “Si devono davvero considerare le varie parti del nostro paese come altrettante oasi chiuse dal deserto, come isole etniche cerchiate dal mare, e l’Italia non ha da essere qualche cosa di più di un’unità soltanto politica?”⁷⁴ Therefore, despite the promotion of local traditions and differences,

Roma e l’Esposizione Internazionale del 1911, ed. by Stefania Massari, Rome 2011, pp. 52–131.

⁷¹ *Esposizione Internazionale di Roma: catalogo della Mostra di Etnografia Italiana in Piazza d’Armi*, Bergamo 1911, p. 5 (“reveal the characteristic beauty that Italy offers in the customs and traditions of its people” and show how “even in the most humble social strata, even among shepherds and peasants still oppressed by ignorance and prejudice, it retains all the energy of the lineage and is destined for a bright future”).

⁷² For the diversification of the exhibitions in the three cities, see Stefania Massari/Stefania Baldinotti, *Il fatale Millenovecentoundici: le esposizioni di Roma, Torino, Firenze*, Rome 2012.

⁷³ “L’Esposizione Etnografica e la Etnografia”, in: *Rassegna Illustrata della Esposizione del 1911*, I (1910), 3, pp. 1–3: 1 (“instead of summarising the appearance of a country, summarises its life. The regional exhibition is, so to speak, static; the ethnographic is dynamic”).

⁷⁴ Francesco Baldasseroni, “Il museo di etnografia italiana”, in: *Lares*,

“a persisting fear of the possible political undertones of cultural regionalism”⁷⁵ was still surfacing in 1911 and it would continue to be a controversial topic in Italian political discourses.

Between the ethnographic building and the regional pavilions, another part of the ethnographic exhibition was dedicated to the recreation of typical dwellings and workshops populated by actual people performing traditional tasks, the so-called “gruppi etnografici”. Loria wanted to create there a living exhibition, with objects inserted in a recreated urban or rural context and actual people dressed in traditional garb, as he explained in a letter to one of his collaborators, Giuseppe Mussoni:

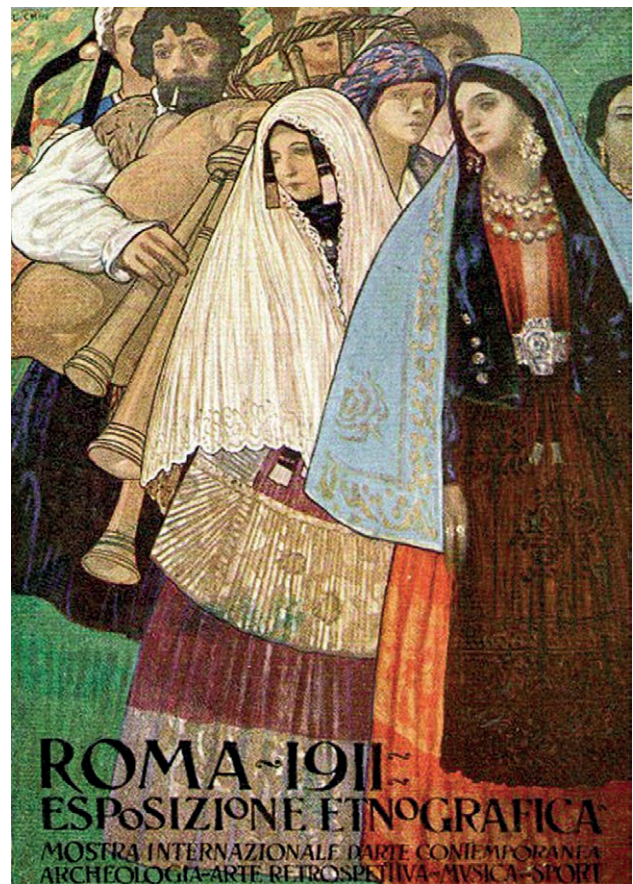
La Esposizione non deve essere una cosa fredda e muta come in generale sono tutti i Musei [...]. Essa deve rappresentare in modo vivo e parlante la vita del nostro popolo riproducendo in grandezza naturale le case [...] le caratteristiche botteghe [...] le chiese [...]. Il tutto poi deve essere popolato dagli abitanti delle diverse regioni vestiti con i caratteristici costumi locali.⁷⁶

The idea of a ‘living museum’ became part of the rhetoric of exhibitions and dominated the whole of the twentieth century, in Italy and abroad: Loria’s immersive arrangement was something in between the period rooms, the diorama, and the ‘human village’, where the scientific agenda was mixed with popularisation, spectacle, stereotypisation: settings were recreated and condensed in a given style with pieces of furniture and objects, while visitors looked at performers in the role of the ‘typical’. Moreover, the ‘living exhibition’ met the need to investigate the lively materiality

I (1912), p. 44 (“Are we really to consider the various parts of our land like so many oases locked in the desert, ethnic islands encircled by sea, and should not Italy be something more than a purely political unit?”).

⁷⁵ Cavazza (note 13), p. 82.

⁷⁶ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 31, Fasc. 784, doc. 51 (“The exposition should



5 Galileo Chini, poster for *Roma 1911. Esposizione etnografica*. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale

of contemporary Italian cultures in opposition to a traditional way of reading the nation and its identity through its past cultural heritage, answering “[i]l desiderio di significare e rappresentare la vita del nostro popolo, non più coi documenti del passato, ma con la testimonianza e quasi colla parola del presente”.⁷⁷

not be a cold and silent thing as in general all museums are [...]. It must represent the life of our people in a lively and speaking way, reproducing in natural size the characteristic houses [...] shops [...] churches [...]. All this must then be populated by the inhabitants of the different regions dressed in the characteristic local costumes”).

⁷⁷ “Dell’Esposizione del 1911”, in: *Rassegna Illustrata della Esposizione del 1911*,

The 1911 Photographic Archive

Photography had a pivotal role in the conception of the exhibition, and an archive of thousand pictures was gathered from 1906 to 1911.⁷⁸ To collect objects and photographs, Loria relied on over a hundred collaborators, each working in a specific area. From well-known scholars to enthusiastic amateurs, from naturalists to school teachers, a network of *raccoglitori* (collectors) was spread all over the Italian regions.⁷⁹ As we have seen, since the late nineteenth century photographic pictures came to be included in exhibitions and museographic projects, sometimes as part of the display but mainly as research objects. In building the photographic collection, Loria adopted many of the previous proposals and also drew on his experience as a field researcher and amateur photographer.⁸⁰ To maintain control over the situation, Loria and Baldasseroni constantly kept correspondence with their collectors, and a system of registration was set up to monitor the amount of materials entering the museum.⁸¹ Instructions published in previous years were readapted for the ex-

hibition and written guidelines were put in place to coordinate the *raccoglitori*, to explain their task, and to direct the practice and the gaze of the amateur collectors. Regarding photography, Loria used as a model the “Avvertenze per la raccolta dei documenti etnografici” of 1906,⁸² and a *Circolare per raccoglitori* was also distributed.⁸³ In 1908 Loria presented the project to the fellows of the Società Fotografica Italiana and asked their contribution in “dare notizie, informazioni, consiglio a tutti quei volenterosi che mediante la fotografia vorranno contribuire alla buona riuscita di una raccolta etnografica che deve fare onore all’Italia”.⁸⁴ The documentary nature of each photograph was strictly controlled: “Ogni fotografia, fatta con processi che ne assicurino per molto tempo l’inalterabilità, dovrà portare tutte quelle indicazioni di luogo, di tempo, di misura, indispensabili per dare all’oggetto illustrato il suo vero carattere.”⁸⁵ The emphasis on the durability of photos testifies to Loria’s intention to collect long-lasting materials, whose scope went beyond the ephemeral duration of the exhibition. We see how Fano’s proposal for a nation-

I (1910), 3, p. X (“the desire to give meaning and to represent the life of our people, no more with the documents of the past, but through the witness and almost the voice of the present”).

⁷⁸ The photo archive is today preserved in Rome at the Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale. As it often happened in archival management, written and visual sources were separated, therefore eliminating the connection between a given letter and the pictures that were sent together with it. Moreover, in an undefined moment after 1911, pictures and postcards were divided in folders according to the region they belonged to and were mostly pasted on standard cardboards, which led to the loss of fundamental information on the back of the photos. In addition, the historical photo archives include material collected or donated to the museum until the 1950s, so it is not possible to identify with certainty the extent of the original photo archive collected by Loria between 1906 and 1911. For a general description, see Marisa Iori, “L’Archivio fotografico dell’Istituto centrale per la demotnoantropologia”, in: *Immagini e memoria: gli Archivi fotografici di Istituzioni culturali della città di Roma*, ed. by Barbara Fabjan, Rome 2014, pp. 43–52: 43f.; *eadem*, “Lamberto Loria e le origini dell’archivio fotografico dell’Istituto Centrale per la Demotnoantropologia”, in: *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significati* (note 64), pp. 287–310.

⁷⁹ In Italian, the term *raccoglitore* differs from *collezionista* (collector), car-

rying a more practical intention. The names of Loria’s collaborators are listed and acknowledged in Loria (note 65), pp. 13–18.

⁸⁰ See Francesco Faeta, “Lamberto Loria: la fotografia nella documentazione etnografica e il carattere politico del lavoro antropologico”, in: *Leredità di Lamberto Loria (1855–1913)* (note 64), pp. 91–94; Fabiana Dimpfleier, “La fotografia di Lamberto Loria a cavallo tra Ottocento e Novecento: alcune note preliminari”, in: *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significati* (note 64), pp. 107–118.

⁸¹ Laura Mariotti, “Storia dei processi catalografici”, in: *Arti e tradizioni* (note 70), pp. 157–179.

⁸² Lamberto Loria/Aldobrandino Mochi, “Avvertenze per la raccolta dei documenti etnografici”, in: *Museo di etnografia italiana in Firenze: sulla raccolta di materiali per la etnografia italiana*, Milan 1906, pp. 25–33.

⁸³ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 32, Fasc. 802, doc. 6 (letter by Lamberto Loria to Francesco Novati, 15 August 1908).

⁸⁴ Lamberto Loria, “Comunicazioni”, in: *Bullettino della Società Fotografica Italiana*, XX (1908), p. 281 (“to give news, information, advice to all those willing that photography will contribute to the success of an ethnographic collection that must do honour to Italy”).

⁸⁵ *Ibidem* (“Every photograph, taken with processes that ensure its inalterability for a long time, must carry all those indications of place, time,



6 Athos Mainardi, "Curiosissimo rito alle sorgenti della Melfa: donne che si giurano eterna amicizia [...]", ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 86768

al ethnographic photo archive came back in Loria's words, who hoped to put together all the collections in a new ethnographic museum.

In answering the curator's request, some of the *raccoglitori* acquired pictures while others were photographers themselves. When looking at the archives, the majority of the photographs are dedicated to types and costumes and had been either acquired from photographic studios or were taken by amateurs; the sitter is posing frontally and his entire body is shown. Sometimes more than one subject is represented. Commercial pictures produced for the tourist market representing traditional jobs or everyday life are common, and private or family portraits were

also collected. Snapshots taken by amateurs constitute another very interesting group (Fig. 6). Besides costumes, the photos sometimes represent working activities and street scenes (Figs. 7, 8), while religious ceremonies are rare. Only for Sardinia there are images which adopt the anthropometric standard of the frontal and profile view, although it is employed to expose physiognomic aspects, not to measure (Fig. 9). The focus on the human figure is evident, as people are represented in almost every picture, while we can rarely find landscapes and interiors of dwellings (Fig. 10). Such a diverse body of photographs is tied together by what Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton have termed the "infinite recodability"⁸⁶ of

and measurement that are essential to give the illustrated object its true character").

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Edwards/Christopher Morton, "Introduction", in: *Photography, Anthropology and History* (note 4), pp. 1–24: 4.



7 *Street scene in Sicily*, ca. 1910.
Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 36296



8 "*Al lavoro! San Nicola dell'Alto [...]*", ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 33813



9 *Women in Sardinia*, ca. 1910.
Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 35669



10 *Huts in Sicily*, ca. 1910.
Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 36322



11 Costume portrait from Cravagliana (Piedmont), ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 34932



12 Family portrait from Campochiaro (Molise), ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 33185

pictures, which acquire meaning in relation to their location and use. Very often, photographs include written inscriptions either in the back or in the front (Figs. 11, 12), testifying to the value of pictures as knowledge-objects.⁸⁷ In most cases, they provide information on the shape of clothes, colours, and provenance. The amount of handwritten indications shows how much the visual surface was perceived as a material working tool.

Most pictures were concerned with costumes because, in the management of the exhibition, they answered to a clearly delineated need, as explicitly stated

in many documents and in the correspondence with the collaborators, such as a letter from Baldasseroni to Giuseppe Antonio Andriulli:

[...] a proposito dei costumi, ricordati che ognuno di essi *deve* avere una fotografia la quale dia un'idea più che sia possibile nitida ed esatta dei visi e degli atteggiamenti; e che nel verso delle fotografie deve essere notato il colore degli occhi, dei capelli, della pelle e debbano essere date tutte quelle indicazioni e istruzioni che servano per facilitare l'opera di chi prepara i fantocci.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ On the idea of photographs as knowledge-objects see Elizabeth Edwards/Christopher Morton, "Between Art and Information: Towards a Collecting History of Photographs", in: *Photographs, Museums, Collections: Between Art and Information*, ed. by *idem*, London 2015, pp. 3–23, and the

volume *Photo-Objects: On the Materiality of Photographs and Photo Archives in the Humanities and Sciences*, ed. by Julia Bärnighausen *et al.*, Berlin 2019.

⁸⁸ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 2, Fasc. 26, doc. 9 (letter by Francesco Baldas-

Indeed, one of the most important collections of the *Esposizione etnografica* was that of the costumes, which were mounted on mannequins specifically created for the occasion. Photos were used to recreate the correct arrangement of the clothes and to outline the mannequin, to make it resemble as close as possible the regional character it sought to portray. The Florentine sculptor Aristide Aloisi had the task of elaborating the dummies for each type, thereby respecting the physical features and taking inspiration from the pictures. In this use of photography, we can find the attempt to connect the stylistic quality of the costume portrait with that of the ethnographic type, recording the exact physical characteristics but also the material and cultural aspects.

The analysis of the correspondence between Loria, Baldasseroni, and the *raccoglitori* shows how the latter attempted to follow the theoretical guidelines, but it also reveals the negotiation that characterised their experience in the field and their need to mediate between the exhibition objectives, the technical possibilities offered by the photographic medium, the availability and the quality of the existing visual material, and the sitters' willingness to be portrayed. For example, the Livornese Athos Mainardi,⁸⁹ who collected mainly in Abruzzo and Molise, explained his difficulties in making good portraits with small

snapshots.⁹⁰ At the same time, he was warning that postcards could not be considered reliable visual sources:

Appunto perché le villane non si fanno fotografare, le cartoline provengono da mascherate di signore che in generale sono di altre province (mogli vanesie d'impiegati). Ora queste signore curano di 'abbellirsi' infischandosi altamente dell'etnografia.⁹¹

The transparency of the photographic medium was not taken for granted and the possibility to employ ready-made materials had to pass through a process of verification. In Campobasso, Mainardi could count on the production of Antonio Trombetta who “nel '60 lavorava al colladione e fece una raccolta di costumi che, data l'epoca in cui lui li fotografò, sono per noi importantissimi”.⁹² The fact of having pictures from the 1860s reassured the collector, because the Italian unification was perceived as a turning point after which, as he put it, “comincia la degenerazione del costume”.⁹³ For the reuse of a private portrait for scientific necessity, a modification and translation of the image content were necessary, such as the isolation of the interesting model in case of group pictures (Fig. I3 a, b). The subject is finally transformed into a scientific datum by the inscription on the back, which

seroni to Giuseppe Antonio Andriulli; “[...] concerning the costumes, remember that each of them *must* have a photograph which gives as clear and exact an idea as possible of the faces and attitudes; and that on the back of the photographs the colour of the eyes, hair and skin must be noted and all the indications and instructions which serve to facilitate the work of those who prepare the puppets must be given”; emphasis in the original document).

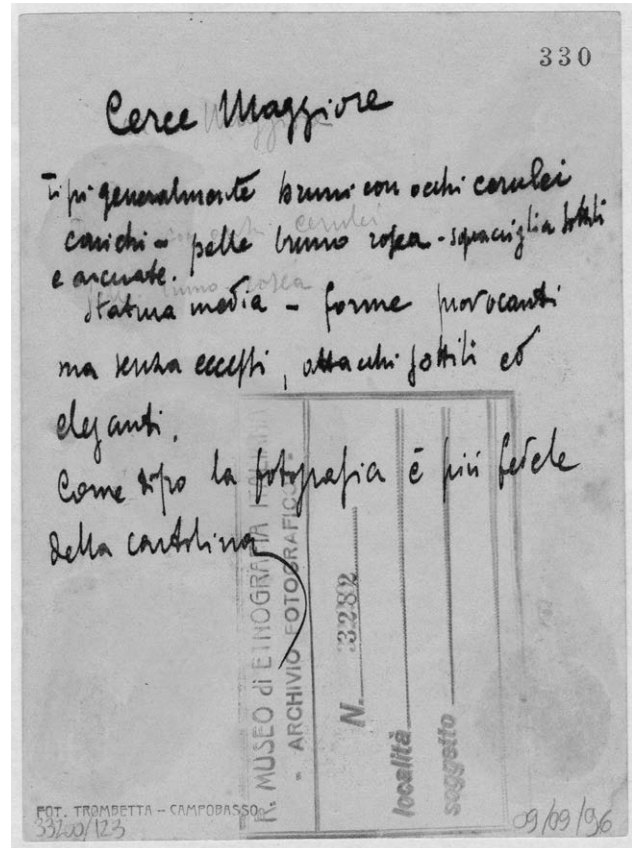
⁸⁹ Given the extensive correspondence and collection of Athos Mainardi, this figure has been analysed in depth by various scholars, see Puccini (note 70); Ferdinando Mirizzi, “Loria e i raccoglitori regionali per la Mostra di Etnografia Italiana del 1911: il caso della Basilicata”, in: *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significati* (note 64), pp. 189–202.

⁹⁰ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 28, Fasc. 701, doc. 14 (letter by Athos Mainardi to Francesco Baldasseroni, 17 July 1910).

⁹¹ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 28, Fasc. 702, doc. 6 (letter by Athos Mainardi to Francesco Baldasseroni, 23 June 1910; “precisely since the farmer women don't let themselves be photographed, the postcards come from the masquerades of ladies who are generally from other provinces [vain wives of employees]. Now, these ladies take care to ‘embellish’ themselves, disregarding ethnography to the extreme”).

⁹² Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 28, Fasc. 701, doc. 7 (letter by Athos Mainardi to Francesco Baldasseroni, 3 July 1910; “in the 1860s he worked with collodion and made a collection of costumes which, given the era in which he photographed them, are very important to us”).

⁹³ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 27, Fasc. 700, doc. 19 (letter by Athos Mainardi to Lamberto Loria, 8 September 1908; “the degeneration of costume begins”).



13 a, b Antonio Trombetta, *Family portrait from Cerce Maggiore (Molise)*, recto and verso. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 33200

assures that “come tipo la fotografia è più fedele della cartolina” (“as a type, the photograph is more faithful than the postcard”).

Alessandro Roccavilla,⁹⁴ who worked in north-western Italy, especially in the Piedmont region, was responsible for the set-up of the Palazzo delle Maschere e dei Costumi, where he included a series of “gruppi plastici”, that is groups of mannequins posed as participating in specific traditional events. Repro-

ductions of such mannequin displays can be found in the catalogue of the exhibition (Figs. I4, I5), while the archives reveal that photographs were employed to fix and reproduce the composition (Figs. I6, I7). However, the pictures were not shot in the field and were not reproducing the event in its actual context. The setting is a closed space, which, judging from the furniture, could have been an office or a school, or even the space where the exhibits were assembled.

⁹⁴ On Roccavilla see Dionigi Albera/Chiara Ottaviano, *Un percorso biografico e un itinerario di ricerca: a proposito di Alessandro Roccavilla e dell'Esposizione romana del 1911*, Turin 1989; Pierangelo Cavanna, “Un territorio fotografico:

tracce per una storia della fotografia di documentazione del Biellese”, in: *Bollettino della Società Piemontese di Archeologia e Belle Arti*, n.s., XLIV (1990/91), pp. 199–216.



Corteo nuziale di Casteldelfino.

14 "Corteo nuziale di Casteldelfino",
in: *Esposizione Internazionale di Roma:
catalogo della Mostra di Etnografia
Italiana in Piazza d'Armi*,
Bergamo 1911, p. 147



SCENA DEL TATUAGGIO DI LORETO.

15 "Scena del tatuaggio di Loreto",
in: *Esposizione Internazionale di
Roma: catalogo della Mostra di
Etnografia Italiana in Piazza d'Armi*,
Bergamo 1911, n.p.



16 Staged picture for the "Corteo nuziale di Casteldelfino", ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 2, Fasc. 27, doc. 1



17 Staged picture for the "Scena del tatuaggio di Loreto", ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 2, Fasc. 27, doc. 6

In some cases, the background also includes a blackboard with an unclear inscription which seems to indicate the place where the scene is happening. The sitters are always the same, interpreting various roles, from the people in the cortège to the bagpipe player. In the archive, these images were accompanied by a written description of the scene with a numbered list containing information on the role of the subjects represented.⁹⁵ Thus, the photographs were a totally constructed *mise-en-scène*, a sort of *tableaux vivants* with people performing specific rituals or processions. Once more, photographs were visual materials functional for the construction of the exhibition display, but in this case they were not employed for their referential function but for their capability to freeze a re-enactment, a performance that could make visible traditional scenes and poses, a tendency which is evident also in other pictures of the archive (Figs. 18–21).

Conclusion

The shifting attention of Italian anthropology toward national domestic cultures and their representation resulted in different descriptive, visual, and collecting projects envisioned by anthropological and photographic societies to document the multifaceted traditions of the peninsula. Such attempts were closely connected to processes of identity-making, and the narrative surrounding them oscillated between the search for a national character and the stress on local peculiarities, the issue of nostalgia and the need to control. As Tiziana Serena puts it:

The photographic archive is a sedimentation of representative images of a certain idea of nation, formed

⁹⁵ Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 40, Fasc. 965, docs. 18f. (correspondence between Alessandro Roccavilla and Lamberto Loria); *ibidem*, B.2, Fasc. 27, docs. 1f. (correspondence between Giuseppe Antonio Andriulli and Lamberto Loria).

at a certain moment in history [...]. We must see the photographic archive as a field of complex forces, where the aspirations of the social classes that forged the idea of nation found photography to be an irresistible ally.⁹⁶

In trying to address the topic, the article referred to the scholarly literature that analyses the use of photography in the development of anthropology, the changing ideas surrounding the representation of popular cultures, the emergence of local tradition as a central subject of learned communities, and the political role that folklore acquired in the nation-making in the nineteenth-century European framework. If studies coming from the history of science, the history of anthropology, and the history of photography have helped to ignite renewed interest in the post-unification period, in general, the history of liberal Italy is an understudied topic compared to other historical phases. Historiography has treated the *Risorgimento* and its implications in the making of national narratives (including analyses of the first years after the unification) or has privileged the Fascist period, while it has granted much less attention to the actual development of the country up to World War I. The chronological span of this article tries to address such a flaw, in the conviction that the years between 1861 and 1911 are instead fundamental to understanding the making of national consciousness and identities, the development of colonial culture, the establishment of anthropology, ethnography, and folklore studies, all aspects that will resurface in the following years.

The essay has aimed to show how the ethnographic discourse on the nation was entangled with the discourse on colonialism. Niceforo's argument on the South as a land to be colonized, the parallelism that came to be established between the Sicilian ethnographic exhibition and the Eritrean village, Loria's

comparative approach that connects the studies of the colonial populations to those of Italian rural communities are examples that show how processes of othering were shaping the ethnographic object and how the focus on the domestic was adjusted through the focus on far-flung people. Different concepts of local, regional, and national were mediated and displayed in the ethnographic practice. The plural geographical and historical identities that formed the Italian nation were immediately recognised as problematic features to address. In the first years after the unification, the main attempt was to map and show ethnic varieties either in their physical or their cultural manifestation. The stress on the regional identity brought about by Giuseppe Pitrè in Sicily highlights the role of islands and margins in producing specific ideas of ethnography. In the view of De Gubernatis, Fano and then Loria, the local and regional was not to be treated as an obstacle but emphasized as the characteristic trait of Italy. The progressive convergence between the national rhetoric and the stress on local customs triumphed in the 1911 ethnographic exhibition, when traditions were treated as a living heritage that constituted the heart of the nation.

The history of Italian ethnography is the history of processes of institutionalisation, when a growing community gathered around societies, journals, and exhibition projects. Through the analysis of its discourses, it is possible to follow the definition of the scope and the making of the scientific status of ethnography, which was based on the collection of material and visual data. The construction of a new subject passed through the possibility of visualising it, and in this regard, photography played a major role. The emergence of and reference to photography varied across time: from a supportive tool in exhibition-making it became a scientific medium that had to follow precise stylistic or classification

⁹⁶ Serena (note 10), p. 180.



18-21 *Shepherds from Abruzzo, ca. 1910. Rome, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, inv. 33381-33384*

standards, carrying an ambivalent tension between the representation of physical and physiognomic traits and the attention to the material manifestation of cultures.

Combining the analysis of programmatic statements and photographic discourses with the research on the actual pictures preserved in archives, it is possible to retrace the role that materiality exerted on

theory, as well as the transformation of the photographs' status and meaning once they entered into the institutional container. Archival research reveals how much ethnography was based on pre-existing materials, using photographs produced for a tourist market or private portraits made by commercial studios. An important aspect which has emerged is the fundamental role of amateurs in collecting existing

and producing new photos and in developing practices of field photography. As Edwards and Morton have observed, “photographs are always part of larger museum discourses, part of larger mixed assemblage, which might include [...] objects, notebooks, letters”,⁹⁷ but they are also “increasingly being understood as knowledge-objects in their own right”,⁹⁸ and it is therefore important to explore “what kind of collecting history might be written for the bulk of often anonymous, unregistered photographs”.⁹⁹ The history of the ethnographic use of photography cannot be completely separated from a broader understanding of disciplinary models, object collection, and theoretical disputes, but the focus on photography can help illuminate the interplay between objects and images, the network of agents and collaborators at work, the visual culture, practice, and constraints that have structured ethnography. On the other hand, the attention to scientific photographs (and not to photography as an artistic object or artwork) helps to refocus the attention beyond the visual content and to show that, as Costanza Caraffa has emphasised, “photographs are not only images, but also historically shaped three-dimensional objects. They have a physical presence, bear traces of handling and use, and circulate in social, political, and institutional networks.”¹⁰⁰

Ethnographic institutions and archives are therefore spaces that channelled a complex system of photographic production, nurtured the “documentary impulse”,¹⁰¹ and progressively attached an educational and social function to the positivistic ideal of the “total archive”.¹⁰² Scientific knowledge, through the making – or envisioning – of new photo archives, tried to build a visual identity for the nation, in a continuous negotiation between unity and plurality, self and other, modernity and tradition.

This article is the result of a series of research encounters, made possible by the institutions who supported my research throughout the years: the IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca, the Photographic History Research Centre, De Montfort University, Leicester, and the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. I wish to thank Linda Bertelli, Kelley Wilder, Costanza Caraffa, Gerbard Wolf, Vera Wolff, and Marisa Iori for their precious suggestions. I am grateful to Herbert Justnik, Martin Keckeis, and Julia Schulte-Werning for having invited me to the conference Reimagining One's Own: Ethnographic Photography in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Europe, held at the Volkskundemuseum Wien and the Photoinstitut Bonartes, Vienna, in 2021. I also thank Rosa Anna Di Lella, Monica Zavattaro, Maria Gloria Roselli, and especially Massimo Cutrupi for their assistance in the archival research, and Samuel Vitali for his accurate revision and editing.

⁹⁷ Edwards/Morton (note 87), p. 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Costanza Caraffa, “Objects of Value: Challenging Conventional Hierarchies in the Photo Archive” in: *Photo-Objects* (note 87), pp. 11–32: 16.

¹⁰¹ Mitman/Wilder (note 5), pp. 1–22.

¹⁰² See Boris Jardine/Matthew Drage, “The Total Archive: Data, Subjectivity, Universality”, in: *History of the Human Sciences*, XXXI (2018), 5, pp. 3–22, DOI: 10.1177/0952695118820806.

The article analyses the use of photography in the development of the discipline of ethnography in Italy between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It considers primary sources, exhibitions (such as the *Esposizione Industriale Italiana* in Milan of 1881, the 1884 *Esposizione Generale Italiana* in Turin, and the 1891–1892 *Mostra Etnografica Siciliana* in Palermo) as well as archival projects and programmatic statements related to the main ethnographic societies and institutions. The aim is to understand how the visualisation of Italian cultures was shaped by the photographic frame, how photography was promoted as a valuable tool in the study of traditions and how photographs circulated inside and outside the ethnographic framework. Special attention is given to the 1911 *Mostra di Etnografia Italiana* in Rome, curated by Lamberto Loria, through an examination of its protocols, networks, and visual methods. This paper raises questions about the entanglement between concepts of local, regional, national, and colonial, the emergence of local tradition and folklore as central identity elements, and the role and materiality of photographs within the ethnographic system.

Sistema Museale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze, Museo di Storia Naturale, Antropologia e Etnologia, Florence: Figs. 1–4. – Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale, Rome: Figs. 5–13, 16–21. – From Esposizione Internazionale di Roma (note 71): Figs. 14, 15.

Umschlagbild | Copertina:

Insenziertes Foto für den "Corteo nuziale di Casteldelfino" | Messa in scena per il
"Corteo nuziale di Casteldelfino", ca. 1910.
Roma, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale,
Archivio Storico, Archivio Loria, B. 2, Fasc. 27, doc. 1
(S. 125, Abb. 16 | p. 125, fig. 16)

ISSN 0342-1201

Stampa: Grafiche Martinelli, Firenze
settembre 2022