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## Constructing race through commercial space: Merkato Ketema under fascist urban planning

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### ABSTRACT

The principles that guided Fascist urban planning in Addis Abeba's Merkato Ketema exemplify a broader set of conditions that governed everyday life in Ethiopia under the Italian regime. Moreover, the Merkato's legacy of racial segregation demonstrates why these interwar architectural interventions remain relevant today. To analyse the market, this article combines two disciplinary approaches: through the history of architecture and urbanism, it analyses the mechanizations of intimate imperialism. This concept argues that colonialism is at its most powerful when it operates on the inside – of markets, homes, and – in the case of food – even inside of the body itself.

### RIASSUNTO

I principi che hanno guidato urbanismo fascista nel Merkato Ketema a Addis Abeba esemplificano una serie di condizioni generali che governavano la vita quotidiana in Etiopia durante l'occupazione fascista. Inoltre, l'eredità di segregazione razziale nel Merkato dimostra la rilevanza persistente degli interventi architettonici ancora oggi. Per analizzare il Merkato, la tesi combina due approcci disciplinari: attraverso la storia di architettura e urbanismo, analizza i meccanismi di imperialismo intimo. Il concetto argomenta che colonialismo è in cima di potere quando muove dal dentro – dei mercati, delle case, e – nel caso di cibo – pure dentro il corpo umano.

**KEYWORDS** fascism; imperialism; colonialism; AOI; Ethiopia; architecture; market; L.U.C.E

**PAROLE CHIAVE** fascismo; imperialismo; colonialismo; AOI; Etiopia; architettura; mercato; L.U.C.E.

Masses of humanity swirl below. From above, the camera slowly pans across this human wall, the most prominent feature of Ethiopia's open-air marketplace. 'Addis Abeba: Mercato', the August 1930 L.U.C.E. newsreel, frames churning motion.<sup>1</sup> Vendors display their wares – teff grain, berbere spice, filigreed jewelry – on *gulit*, pieces of cloth laid across rock platforms, wooden crates, or directly on the ground. This silent newsreel belies the market's volume. Multi-lingual exchanges between so many sellers and buyers combined with the complaints of their market transport and livestock. Camels groaned, donkeys brayed. Noise, dust, and sweat thickened the air. Overwhelming and unmistakably Abyssinian, this market 'stabilized an empire that had always been on the move', as Emanuel Admassu has

observed. Emperor Menelik II positioned the site as a symbol of successful territorial expansion under his rule, commissioning the Coptic Church of St. George at the market's northern limit. Under the Italian Fascist occupation of Ethiopia (1936–1941), Benito Mussolini seized this site, the jewel of the empire, setting Fascist racial policies into wood and stone.

In the historical context of Italian imperialism in east Africa, markets matter in two senses: as specific and concrete locations in the empire, and as an abstract system that assigns value to goods. The Ethiopian marketplaces of Addis Abeba,<sup>2</sup> Harrar, and Quoram matter because of their diversity and their social activity. The vast spectrum of skin tones made it difficult to define separate races, let alone to arrange them hierarchically. Commensality – breaking bread with old and new acquaintances as soon as food was bought or sold – further threatened borders and boundaries. This article examines the colonial market in three ways: as a theatre for the construction of race through architecture and photography in east Africa in the 1930s, as a commercial mode of dissemination of racism in advertising and propaganda in Europe from the 1930s to today, and as a locus for confrontation and reckoning with the racial legacies of colonialism.

The principles that guided Fascist urban planning in Addis Abeba's Merkato Ketema exemplify a broader set of conditions that governed everyday life in Ethiopia under the Italian regime. Moreover, the Merkato's legacy of racial segregation demonstrates why these interwar architectural interventions remain relevant today. To analyse the market, this article combines two disciplinary approaches: through the history of architecture and urbanism, it analyses the mechanizations of intimate imperialism. This concept argues that colonialism is at its most powerful when it operates on the inside – of markets, homes, and – in the case of food – even inside of the body itself. Under Fascist rule, the regime attempted to harness daily actions like feeding and eating through intimate imperialism as a form of biopolitics.

This study is predicated on two assumptions: the material world persists, and daily habits repeat. Fascist imperialism's inherent racism was embodied in spaces, objects, and daily habits. As such, apparently apolitical places like food markets often the last areas to hold on to Fascist period forms of inequality. But by understanding the history of these arenas, we can find new ways of reckoning with colonial memory without reinscribing Fascist ideology. To do so, this article provides three interlinked case studies. First, it discusses colonial marketplaces in east Africa to show how architectural concepts of shifting site and gridded layout cast Fascist concepts of racial hierarchy in stone and wood. Next, it reviews marketplace newsreels to demonstrate how film directors used cyclical narratives and establishing shots to frame the markets of Addis as atemporal zones for culinary tourism. Finally, it shows how food advertising carried these concepts across the Mediterranean, teaching Italians how to act like colonists. National borders

and boundaries are porous, fractious and fractionated, and above all ever-shifting. Because the Mediterranean connects north and east African and southern European cultures – however uncomfortably – far more than it separates them, this study privileges people over nationality, and follows their voices and stories as they cross and re-cross the waters.

### **Fascist urban planning in Addis Abeba: the market neighbourhood and layout**

Fascist urban planning – the destruction of east African street plans and buildings and the erection of Italian monuments and thoroughfares – constituted a key plank supporting Benito Mussolini's imperial project. During the Italian occupation, the Fascist regime realized radical plans to restructure the city of Addis Abeba. The goal, as Marc Angélil has put it, was 'to give [Addis] a new face: a declarative sign of territorial appropriation'. At stake in these interventions lay the branding of Fascist rule on the urban landscape.

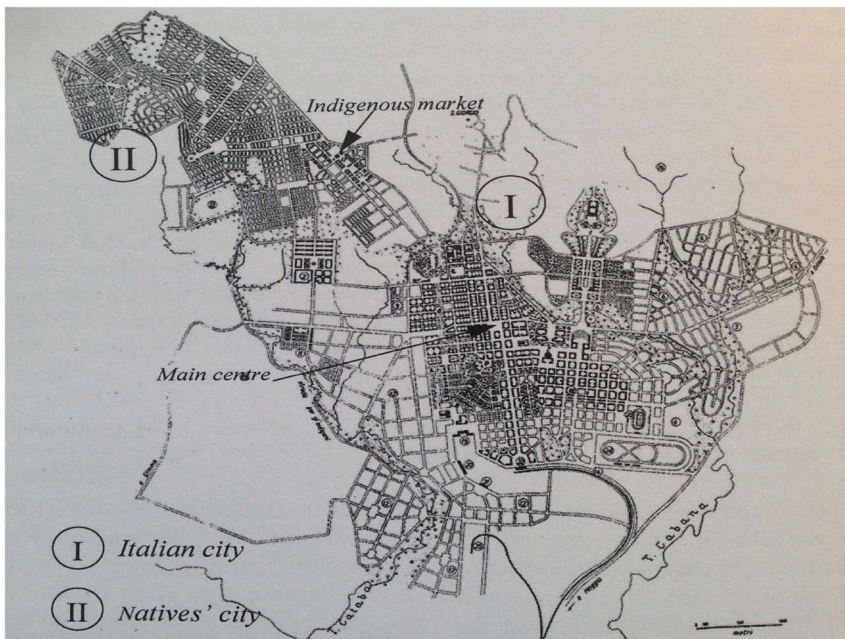
To these ends, the Consulta centrale per l'edilizia e l'urbanistica was created in November 1936. Architects like Cesare Valle, Ignazio Guidi, Alberto Calza-Bini and Plinio Marconi, among others, came together began to participate in revising the plan. In keeping with the discussions held the following year at the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica, the key to the plan was the clear separation between native and Italian quarters: in a word, segregation.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas European urban planning in north African cities like Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers tended retain the area's historic infrastructure while inserting new Italian and French buildings, the Central Committee's plans for the east African hub of Addis Abeba treated the city as a blank slate. Emergent racial politics in Rome account for this shift, since the site itself was by no means vacant: Addis was already an important market hub participating in the world economy by the turn of the century. The city hosted a large international presence, both commercial and diplomatic. *Negradas*, merchant managers, directed the market use.<sup>4</sup> They settled disputes and provided for common needs like storage and waste disposal. As public officials working at the major distribution facility, they organized commercial as well as social relations. Below the *negradas*, vendors followed in the social hierarchy in accordance with the economic value of the goods they traded, created, and repaired. Relative physical location marked social influence, with the market entrance and centre being the peak. Esteem descended as one approached the peripheral shopping zones. But vendors on the edge played a critical commercial role. They provided goods to the low-income majority. As a result, they drew the foot traffic that generated Merkato Ketema's vibrancy and relevance as a commercial centre. Without economic accessibility, markets turn from hubs to husks.

On Saturday mornings at the Merkato Ketema, some 40,000 shoppers converged. They came to buy imported goods from North America, Britain,

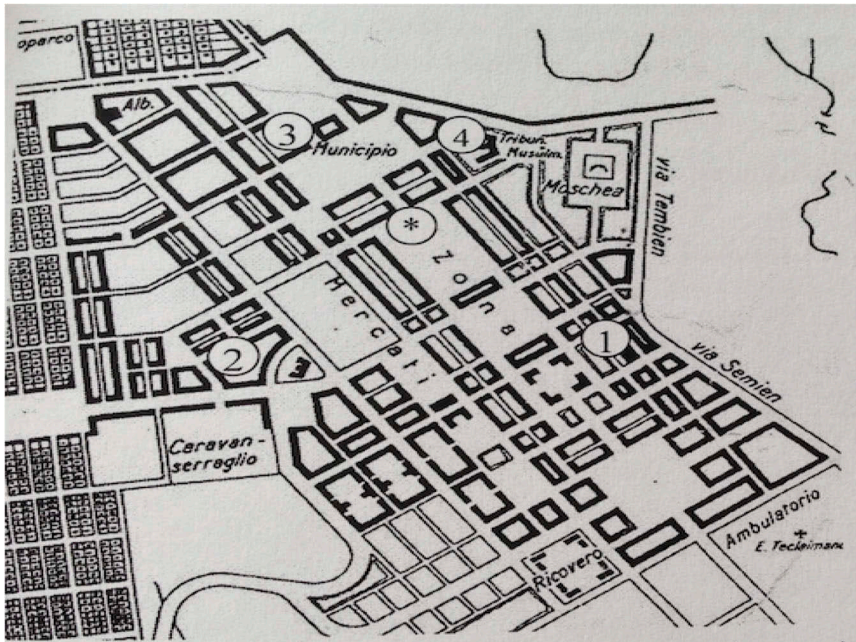
and India, brought to market by traders from across the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> As Mia Fuller has observed, the mix of populations and languages indicates that Addis Abeba, 'despite its poverty, was more cosmopolitan than Tripoli, or, for that matter, than any Italian city' under Mussolini's domestic rule (Fuller 2006, 199).

Examining the Merkato Ketema reveals how the regime used architectural interventions like shifting site and gridding layout to divide Ethiopians and Italians by skin tone, constructing race through commercial space. In her foundational examination of Fascist urban policy as applied to Addis Abeba, Mia Fuller has convincingly argued that regime interventions to the city may be read in terms of racial policy. This study builds on Fuller's thesis by examining the implications for Fascist racial policy as applied a single, heavily used site. The regime's interventions to Merkato Ketema are particularly strident in the Central Committee's first plan for changes to the market.<sup>6</sup> This first step of the Italian plan pushed the market site off the highest hill of central Addis Abeba and onto a lower hill in the northwestern exurbs in 1930 (Figure 1). As a clear measure of urban segregation preceding occupation, the



**Figure 1.** Map of Italian Plan for Addis Abeba marketplace site: (1) Italian City; (2) Natives' City. Original in *Gli Annali Dell'Africa Italiana. Anno II – Numero 4 – 1939 – XVIII*. Annotated reproduction from Heyaw Terefe's *Contested Space: Transformation of Inner-city Market Areas and Users' Reaction in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia* (Doctoral Thesis: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway, July 2005), p. 110. Republication permission granted by Heyaw Terefe (November 8, 2019).

new Italian elite overtook the city's core, with the local population removed and kept in Addis' outer rings. This proto-*banlieu* separated the city's population with barriers in blue and green: that is, with tributaries of the Akaki River Basin, and with swaths of the region's celebrated eucalyptus trees. The move divided the market in two, creating one market for Ethiopians, and one for Italians. While the Governor's Technical Office, alongside famous Rationalist architects such as Gio Ponti and Enrico Del Debbio used architecture to racially segregate vast zones of the city, the Merkato Ketema move is the only case of a site-specific intervention to divide the population in terms of black and white.<sup>7</sup> At the new site of the Merkato (Figure 2), the planners constructed race through segregation and topography between the initial construction phase, from 1930 to 1936. By consolidating Ethiopian and Italian vendors and market-goers at two separate sites, they grouped vast ranges of skin tones into two, supposedly obvious groups. They then used the city's mountainous terrain to physically construct the Fascist conception of racial hierarchy by moving the indigenous Merkato into the shadow of the



**Figure 2.** Map of Italian Plan for Addis Abeba marketplace layout: (1) Cinema Ras; (2) Cinema Addis Ketema; (3) Municipality Building; (4) Tribunal. Original in *Gli Annali Dell’Africa Italiana. Anno II – Numero 4 – 1939 – XVIII*. Annotated reproduction from Heyaw Terefe, *Contested Space: Transformation of Inner-City Market Areas and Users’ Reaction in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia* (Doctoral Thesis: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway, July 2005), p. 127. Republication permission granted by Heyaw Terefe (November 8, 2019).

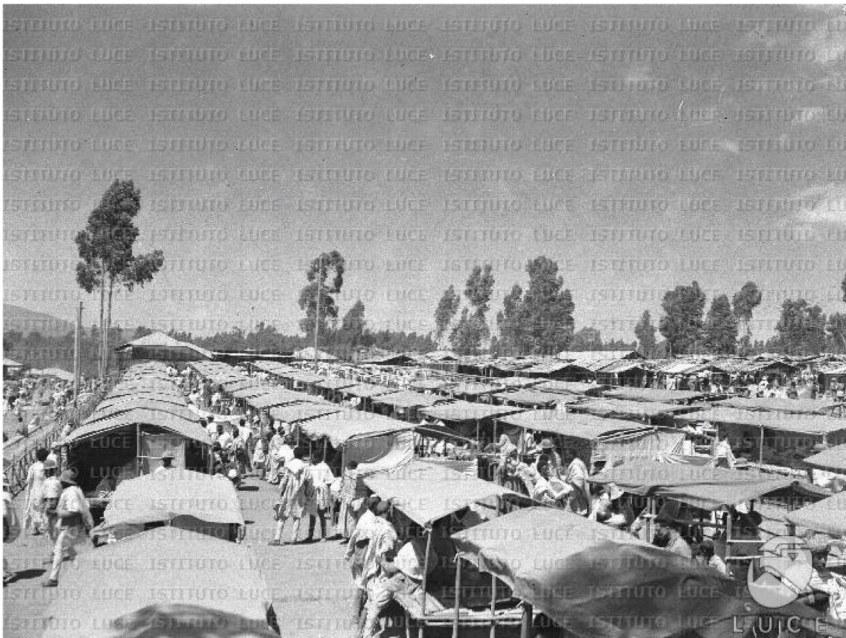
Italian market by placing it on a lower hill, effectively darkening the market. This overtaking of the market constitutes a synecdoche of the Fascist approach to urbanism in the city at large: for the Italian Fascist regime, assuming power over colonial urban space meant architectural absorption. By reconfiguring the city quarters associated with the seat of Ethiopian dynastic power, the Italian empire could attach the prestige of Menelik's ancient empire to Mussolini's territorial ambitions. In a process that Bell hooks (1999) described as 'eating the other', wherein one person assumes the powers of another by consuming her heart, the Fascist regime would inherit the high stature of the Abyssinian dynasty by consuming the market, heart of its empire, by modifying it according to its own designs.

Fascist interventions to the Merkato Ketema in 1936–1938 show how the regime separated and intensified racial groups. Fascist modifications of the market layout show how the regime used architecture to attach qualitative cultural values to these newly constructed racial categories. Flexible structure marked the original marketplace (Figure 3). Social agreement, rather than architectural structure, organized the market. What appeared chaotic to Italian eyes bespoke years of careful negotiations between families of



**Figure 3.** Photograph of Addis Abeba marketplace vendors, 'Mercato di Addis Abeba,' 'Addis Abeba Market'. Photographed in 1936, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia (Archivio L.U.C.E. 'Fondo Luce Africa Orientale Italiana'. Photo Code AO00005276, Series A.A. – Addis Abeba, Rome, Italy).

vendors. This type of market arrangement was also common in southern Europe at the time, and stretched the coastline from Napoli to Nice. But in Addis, Italians squared the circle. They bypassed living architecture in favour of a permanent grid system, erecting wooden stalls in long rows in accordance with Rationalist principles of science and geometry (Figure 4). Now, a brief counterargument: viewing these photos one after the other, it might be tempting to read this new market plan in a positive light. 'This is modernization, not Fascism! Where is the violence and control?' This line of argumentation derives from the *italiani brava gente* narrative, the idea that, compared to the French or Spanish, Italians were the 'good' colonizers, bringing food and jobs rather than hunger and forced labour. This narrative stems from a historiographic problem: for many years, historians of Italian colonialism were excluded from the Archivio Diplomatico.<sup>8</sup> Early scholarship thus replicated Fascist period narratives of the European civilizing process in Africa. Then, the field shifted: historians tended to study only the major state archives, with contain government sources, like this photograph. These histories triangulated sources and read state documents against the grain to create a more cohesive picture of daily life under Fascism. To extend these



**Figure 4.** Photograph of Addis Abeba marketplace stalls, 'Mercato di Addis Abeba,' 'Addis Abeba Market.' Photographed in 1936, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia (Archivio L.U.C.E. 'Fondo Luce Africa Orientale Italiana'. Photo Code AO00005661, Series A.A. – Addis Abeba, Rome, Italy).



decolonial approaches, it is important to contextualizing these images with materials from small, regional archives: they contain the countervailing information. First-hand accounts from female Italian colonists remark on the new European market's poor hygiene compared to the original market. Tekeste Negash have noted the new European plan decentralized the administration, giving each functionary control over one square of the grid. No one was in charge of the market's collective sanitary functions. Put bluntly, the new market plan eliminated the bathrooms. What some may view as the apparent modernity of the second L.U.C.E. photo is misleading: the market may have appeared more organized, but it was less hygienic. The different qualities of cleanliness matter.<sup>9</sup>

Until 1939, the central market was largely open-air. But during the last stages of Fascist interventions to the Merkato Ketema, eucalyptus wood and corrugated sheet metal formed framing systems, creating permanent rows of closed stalls. New constructions rewrote the meaning of the empty intervals between them, creating direct paths through the market. Gridded walkways improved circulation for buyers and goods. But they also arranged Ethiopians vendors so as to make them more identifiable and accessible to European tourists. The market became an anthropological study of racial types, displaying each tailor, spice seller, and metal worker in labelled boxes of uniform size, creating a living diorama that conflated (often incorrectly) race and regional origin of the vendor with the goods that they sold. By imposing the categories that it claimed only to describe, the grid physically pushed vendors to conform to their allotted slots, their literal lots in life. Shopping became a regimented experience. Before the grid system, shoppers could walk wherever they pleased, provided that they took care not to tread on a vendor's wares. Rigid parcelization created heavily trafficked paths that entrenched market hierarchies and shopping habits. Vendors at the front entrance could count on good business, but sellers located in less visible positions saw their access to customers dwindle. For shoppers, browsing became more difficult. Cutting through the heart of the market had previously felt like pushing through a crowded party. Now it felt like crossing a city street.

In an architectural rendition of the ecological fallacy – the false logic that an individual action, place, or person represents all actions, places, or persons belonging to the same group – the market metonymically figured both a continent and a skin tone. When government officials for L.U.C.E., the Fascist film and photo arm, wanted to speak about Africa in any capacity they used the Merkato as a backdrop. Moreover, the regime also encouraged private citizens to engage in the same practice of photographing the market's 'characteristic' elements. In east Africa, Ethiopians were to use the market, in southern Europe, Italians were to watch Ethiopians use the market through propaganda and advertising and to thus understand themselves as white. Frantz Fanon reminds us Colonialism hardly ever exploits the whole of a

country. And here I paraphrase: instead, it extracts and exports its natural resources to the metropole, a mercantile process that enriches the few. But what of the many? The rest of the colony follows the path of underdevelopment and poverty. The regime's persistent focus on the marketplace provided the opportunity to show mercantile images of plenty – bulging bags of exotic fruit and stalls bursting with bright textiles – these images falsely suggest that food in the colonies was bountiful.

The power of architectural history is that it demonstrates how physical structures support mental constructions. Markets – including the Merkato Ketema – may expand or contract, but they are rarely demolished. Their original Fascist goals forgotten, these structures continue to perpetuate the original goals of the buildings' architects, segregating African and European populations. Photography also holds racism in place over time, in part because of tourism. Tourists tend to travel to places that they have already seen in photos. A goal of travel is to capture the exact same picture that originally inspired the trip, recreating the original subjects, poses, and angles to prove they made the journey. This is one way that colonial ideas replicate and disseminate after the troops depart.

### **Merkato Ketema as L.U.C.E.'s cinematic backdrop for 'Characteristic Africa'**

Framing Africa as the territorial embodiment of a primitive world provided a convenient rationale for the early twentieth-century European politics of expansion.<sup>10</sup> In the specific case of the Italian Fascist regime, government officials worked with film directors, using the myth of an empty, under-developed Abyssinia not only to justify the Ethiopian Invasion, but also to promote and reinforce the characterization of occupied territories as natural spaces for Italian tourism and colonization. Correspondingly, *colonisti* understood their steamship voyage to east Africa not only a movement south and eastward in geographical space but also as a move backward into a permanently archaic time.

Cinema L.U.C.E., the Fascist government's cinematic arm, hired directors like Arturo Gemmiti and Arnaldo Ricotti, as well as a host of lesser known names, to produce propagandistic newsreels introducing Italian citizens to the east African colonies. Directors cast Ethiopian marketplaces as realms of picturesque under-development and disorder. But what appeared to newsreel viewers as chaos often belied the presence of strong local structure, one that the directors neither recognized nor accept as culturally legitimate. Picking and choosing edited the narrative, creating the story L.U.C.E. wanted to tell. Unpublished snapshots reveal these markets to be cosmopolitan commercial hubs.<sup>11</sup> By analysing these two bodies of L.U.C.E. imagery –

newsreels (*cinegiornali*) and unpublished photographs – in tandem, directorial decisions come to light. They reveal the filmic techniques that their directors used to construct exoticism and disorder, ultimately supporting the regime's rationale for colonial rule in Italian east Africa.

Fascist officials deployed cinema's remarkable communicative potential by appointing films a starring role in their attempts to alter social beliefs and lifestyles. The Fascist State established the Istituto L.U.C.E. to produce 'documentary' newsreels and short, didactic movies to promote State campaigns for pronatalism and colonization, both within Italy (the *bonifica* resettlements) and abroad in Italian east Africa. In reflection of the central importance accorded to film by the Fascist regime, the number of theatres rose from 2,450 cinemas in 1930 to 2,700 in 1938 to 2,876 in 1942 (Quaglietti 1980 and Rossi 1959, cited in Forgacs and Gundle 2007, 146). In rural areas and inner-city zones without theaters of their own, Luce screened their films for free at Fascist affiliated centres, such as After-Work (*Dopolavoro*) Centres and Mothers' Clinics (*Case per la Maternità e Infanzia*). The regime even managed to project films when obtaining indoor theaters proved costly or when they were simply unavailable. Throughout the late 1930s, the Fascist regime deployed an army of small trucks to project newsreels onto mobile screens erected in open fields and city piazzas up and down the peninsula.

This obsessive focus on creating spaces for cinema was not limited to domestic terrain. Once gridded, one of the first architectural interventions to new Merkato Ketema was to erect not one but two movie theatres, the Cinema Ras and the Cinema Addis Ketema.<sup>12</sup> As Ruth Ben-Ghiat, citing figures from Salvatore Ambrosino, has suggested, 'films were a boom business in Italian Africa'. She further notes, 'the Supercinema Teatro Italian in Addis Abeba held 1,200 people alone, and by 1940 plans were under way for structures that held up to 2,400 people'. Racial segregation in the colonies mandated separate seating areas for Ethiopians and Italians. As the number of theaters rose, the extent of this racially-informed spatial separation increased. Some theaters were reserved strictly for the colonizers, and others for the colonized. Ben-Ghiat describes the increasing extremism of this phenomenon in her description of the Imperial Cinema, constructed in Assab in 1938, which characterized a new type of colonial architecture, 'The most elaborate colonial theaters ... [it] boasted twin indigenous and "national" cinemas separated by a corridor of shops which included clothing stores, a perfumery, hairdressers, and a veranda bar with a gramophone' (Ben-Ghiat, 2003) Ethiopians and Italians living in the countryside viewed films and newsreels in a very different spatial context: they depended on open-air projections provided by regime-funded cinema cars that travelled the Ethiopian hinterlands. From the very beginning of the Ethiopian occupation, these cars were a common sight, pointing the importance that the regime accorded to film as a propagandistic technology. All of which begs the

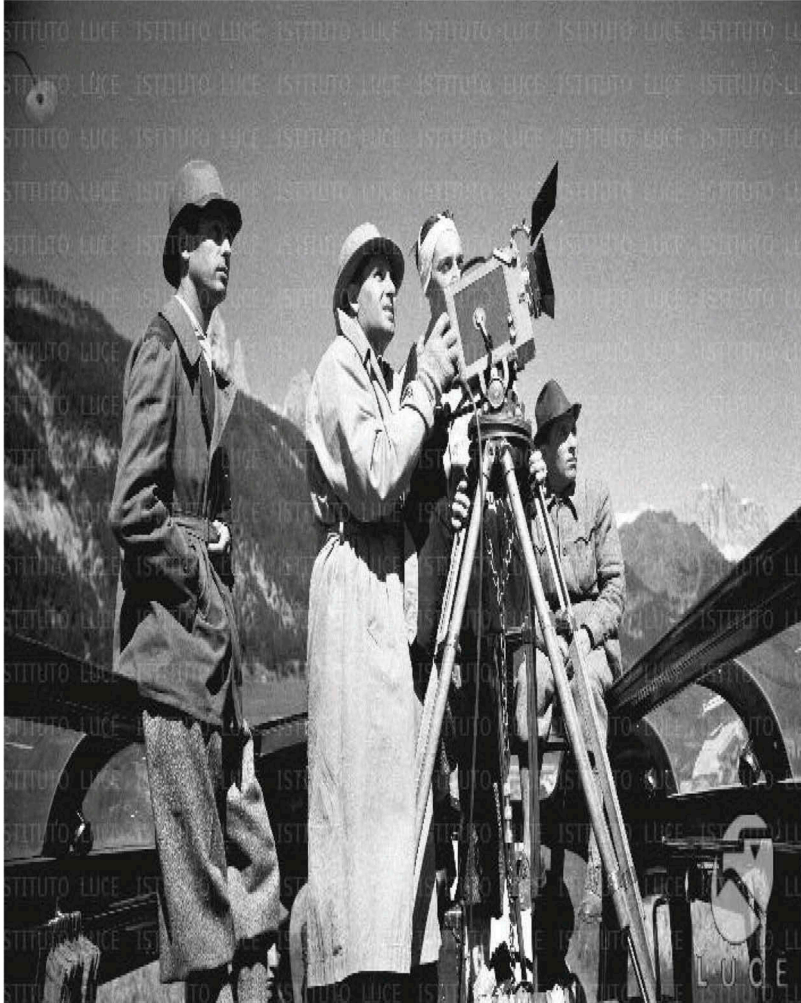
question: with so much state interest in erecting theaters, what was playing on those screens?

Before every feature film, L.U.C.E. newsreels introduced audiences in Italy and Italian east Africa to a number of Fascist cultural projects, including life in the colonies. Over the course of the 1930s, L.U.C.E. devoted 126 newsreels to Ethiopia.<sup>13</sup> Of these, three focused on the markets of Ethiopia's capital city, namely the Merkato Ketema: 'Il mercato di Addis Abeba', 'The Addis Abeba Market' (Unknown director, August 1930), 'Impero Italiano. Addis Abeba. Collonna di autotrattori sfilano per le vie del mercato di Addis Abeba', 'Italian Empire. Addis Abeba. Column of tractors parade the streets of the Addis Abeba Market' (Dir. Arturo Gemmiti, August 1936) and 'Addis Abeba. Il mercato', 'Addis Abeba. The Market' (Dir. Arturo Gemmiti, October 1936). In accordance with the typical duration of L.U.C.E. newsreels during the mid-1930s, all three were brief, each lasting less than ninety seconds. Of these, two out of three include sound.<sup>14</sup> The two 1936 newsreels deployed sound to great effect, using both an Italian male voice-over to narrate the three- to twenty-second film sequences over a musical soundtrack. The Addis Abeba marketplace newsreels' use of sound and its effects evoke a series of questions. How do these newsreels mediate, translate, and modify the Merkato Ketema? How did Italians and Ethiopians actually use this space? At stake in these questions looms a larger issue, one that reveals the everyday workings of Italy's racial politics the east African colonies: why markets figured so centrally to Fascist imperial ambitions in Ethiopia.

The 1936 production dates of the latter two marketplace newsreels follow hard on the heels of the Ethiopian Invasion. In brief, the Fascist regime invaded Ethiopia in 1935. Benito Mussolini proclaimed the commencement of Italian Empire. Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia were united as one colony, Africa Orientale Italiana (A.O.I.) (Italian east Africa). Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I and his family fled Ethiopia. Selassie spoke at League of Nations to denounce Italian aggression. Shortly thereafter, the League of Nations responded with economic sanctions against Italy, and this is where political events become salient for the marketplace newsreels. The Fascist regime heralded autarchy as a means to counter the financial squeeze. This turn of events explains L.U.C.E.'s heavy promotion east African markets through film in subsequent newsreels. Pyramids of cactus fruit and overflowing sacks of *teff* grains portrayed ample foodstuffs, a bounty waiting to be seized. In a loop of tautological reasoning, the invasion that led to the sanctions could also alleviate their effects. Ethiopian markets could potentially counter-balance hunger in domestic Italy.

Filming in Italian east Africa was a laborious and costly endeavour, and yet L.U.C.E. spared no expense into sending their most promising young directors to Italian east Africa to create the marketplace newsreels. Although L.U.C.E. does not name the director who shot 'Il mercato di Addis Abeba' in 1930,

similar filmic material and camera work in L.U.C.E. newsreels purporting to depict everyday life in the east and north African colonial territories point to a possible candidate. At the very least, they suggest the cinematic biography of this unnamed director could look like. Based on mid-1930s film coverage of the Addis markets, director Arturo Gemmiti (Figure 5) seems a likely



**Figure 5.** Photograph of Director Arturo Gemmiti, 'Il regista Arturo Gemmiti davanti alla macchina da presa; al suo fianco gli operatori; totale', 'The Director Arturo Gemmiti behind the film camera; camera operators to his side; total.' Photographed for L.U.C.E. by unknown photographer, September 27, 1941, 'Dolomites,' Italy, black and white photograph (Archivio Luce Photo Code AO0135870, Series 'Riprese per il documentario "Rocciatori ed aquile,"' 'Shots for the documentary "Rockclimbers and Eagles,"' Rome, Italy).

candidate. Arturo Gemmiti worked first as a journalist before signing on with the L.U.C.E. National Institute as a documentary filmmaker and assembly fitter (*montatore*). In 1936, he filmed two marketplace newsreels, 'Addis Abeba. Il mercato di Addis Abeba' and 'Impero Italiano. Addis Abeba. Colonna di autotrattori sfilano per le vie del mercato di Addis Abeba' as part of his mid-1930s documentary work for L.U.C.E. in Italian east Africa.<sup>15</sup> In the later years of Fascism, he returned to Italy where he won acclaim for his Italy-based documentary work with L.U.C.E., including *L'olivo in Sardegna* (The Olive in Sardegna [1941]) and *Rocciatori ed aquile* (Rockclimbers and Eagles [1942]), the latter of which won the documentary category of the 1942 Mostra di Venezia.

Another possible candidate could be Director Arnaldo Ricotti.<sup>16</sup> Ricotti filmed for L.U.C.E. in the Italian and French colonial territories during the early 1930s. Ricotti's filmography includes ethnographic newsreels of marketplaces in Libya, such as, 'Tripoli: Il nuovo mercato', 'Tripoli: The New Market' (October 1932) and 'Tripolitania. I Berberi e gli Italiani', 'Tripolitania. The Berbers and The Italians' (March 1932). Most allusively, this last film included a mid-newsreel sequence nearly identical to those of the Addis Abeba markets. Archivio L.U.C.E. notes describe the scene, 'il mercato in piazza (Tripoli?) vendita di lavori artigianali; il mercato del bestiame; bambini indigeni', 'the market in the piazza (Tripoli?) selling of artisanal works; the livestock market; indigenous children'. Ricotti also shot silent, minute-long newsreels of marketplaces in the French colonial territories ('Cairnan, Tunisia' [1932]). The identity of the director of the Ethiopian newsreels cannot be determined from this information alone, but the fact that Arnaldo Ricotti was one of very few documentary film directors covering marketplaces for L.U.C.E. in Italian east Africa is highly suggestive. Moreover, the narrative structure of the marketplace newsreels follows a tight pattern. This holds true across the north African newsreels, and marks the Addis Abeba's east African series in particular.

Cyclical narrative structure unites the three Addis Abeba marketplace newsreels.<sup>17</sup> Establishing shots pan to canvas the marketplace. Shooting from a distance of over one-hundred feet, the camera climbs over the teeming crowds. The newsreel movement stops abruptly, dropping the motion to emphasize the picture. Instead of a short film, the form switches to a photo album: viewers flip through the market-goers, merchants, and merchandise through a series of near-static close ups. All three newsreels conclude as they begin, with middle-distance overviews of the marketplace. Typifying this approach is 'Il mercato di Addis Abeba'. L.U.C.E. notes to the newsreel divide the newsreel into five sequences corresponding to the camera cuts:

sequence:

- (1) Un piccolo mercato rionale di Addis Abeba
- (2) i venditori espongono per terra su un telo le loro mercanzie

- (3) il via vai degli avventori
- (4) le caratteristiche bottegucce
- (5) colore locale

sequences:

- (1) A little regional market of Addis Abeba
- (2) the sellers display their merchandize on a cloth on the ground
- (3) the comings and goings of the customers
- (4) the characteristic small shops
- (5) local color

In this newsreel, the director introduces viewers to the marketplace with an establishing pan-shot, one of two total moving camera shots included in the newsreel. The scene opens onto a teeming hoard of people in a clearing surrounded by a white, low-slung row of buildings, and – slowly, jerkily – pans from left to right across the expanse from a distance of 150–200 feet. Moving horizontally across the marketplace allows the newsreel audience to see everything, albeit from a distance that precludes engagement in the particulars of the scene due to lack of detail. Like a tourist who tries to see a city by running from site to site, the director suggests that he has ‘covered’ all possible content and viewpoints through one, god’s eye panorama. Shooting across the market in this way equates the process of filming the market and viewing the film with the acquisition of total knowledge of the market and its users. This shot summarizes the market and market-goers, even as the director’s decision to shoot from a distance editorializes the scene. From far away, the viewer discerns a huge number of bodies in motion, but cannot perceive humanizing elements, like facial expression or the familiar marketplace activities like haggling, eating, and inspecting merchandize. Distance creates a spectacle by reducing the particulars of regional garb to a mass of long, white robes, a disassociation that inhibits the viewer’s comprehension of marketplace habits and rules. The camera’s physical distance from the crowd translates into the viewer’s psychological distance not only from the Ethiopian market-goers, but also from the Addis Abeba market itself.

Why did this newsreel preclude viewer identification with the marketgoers of Addis Abeba? Another example of filmic techniques for psychological distancing, this time through the obfuscation of contextual backdrop rather than identificatory detail, points to a possible motive. The Addis market’s topographic situation, eliminated in all but one, half-second shot, evokes southern Italian scenery and climate with its low, craggy mountains and spotted tree cover. Had the director shot this newsreel from any other angle, common Mediterranean geographic features would have invited Italian audiences to compare this regional market in Ethiopia with comparable ones in Italy. Similarly, the low, stucco buildings surrounding the market

square, visible for less than one second, would be equally at home in Ancona and Addis Abeba. Elegant shopfronts visually contradict the racist construct of Ethiopians as living in a permanently anterior time. By avoiding these buildings for the majority of the newsreel, the director suggests that the Addis Abeba market, with its eternal repetitions of buying and selling, exists in mythic rather than modern time. While marketplace activities can also reflect the times with technology, like cash registers, and commercial ephemera, like food packaging, buildings can date the marketplace from a distance. As such, including these modern buildings would have risked destabilizing the fiction of the African archaic primitive by providing visual evidence that Ethiopians did, in fact, inhabit history and modern time. But in this case, distancing and occlusion work to portray the Addis market as a space of unknowable anarchy. Taken in such, these two techniques repel compassionate identification so as to imply the need for Italian architectural intervention.

Although the newsreel title seems to suggest that this market is the central market of Addis Abeba, the *Merkato Ketema*, in fact it was actually a regional market shot outside of the city centre. When the ambiguous title conflated a small regional market with *Merkato Ketema*, the central market of Addis, it also merged two goals that should have been irreconcilable within the space a single newsreel. This editorial decision allowed the director to introduce Italian audiences to marketplaces in the newly acquired east African empire, while also obfuscating commercial features that did not fit with the Fascist regime's notions of what an Ethiopian market should look like: chaotic, outmoded, and closer to nature.

Imperial filmmakers had to tread a fine line: Ethiopian markets had to appear bountiful and picturesque so as to emphasize the regime's accomplishment in conquering them. But at the same time, they should not appear so elegant as to compete with domestic Italian markets. In the newsreel, the director threads this needle with three techniques. First, the language diminishes the market's size, and thus its commercial power, while maintaining its charm. Despite its titular location in the capital city of Addis, the market is described 'regional' (Sequence 1, 'regionale') as well as 'small' (Sequence 1, 'piccolo').<sup>18</sup> The parade of diminutives continues with the use of *bottegucce*, wherein the minimizing suffix *-ucce* renders the shops picturesque. Minimization of at the level of both the market and the store diminishes the cosmopolitan stature of the market even as it embellishes it as a potential touristic site. Scaled down to quaint chaos, the market now becomes an anthropological exhibit of east African life. The camera takes pains to avoid close examination of the many upright stalls lining the square, and instead catalogues a series of vendors exhibiting their wares 'per terra su un telo', 'on a cloth on the ground' (Sequence 2).



Images of east African vendors and shoppers bending, kneeling, and sitting on the dirt, framed blackness as a racial quality that was quite literally close to the earth. This filmic focus of the marketplace evokes witnessing blackness as a form of colonial tourism. And indeed, the sequence concludes with a mass of dark faces, the human incarnation of sequence 5's promise of 'il colore locale', 'local color'. As MacCannell, citing Boornstein, has observed, touristic attractions like market places serve a peculiar purpose, 'They are ways for the traveler to remain out of contact with foreign peoples in the very act of "sight-seeing" them' Boornstein cited in MacCannell (1973, 589–603). In a time and place when the imperial regime was deeply invested in framing Italians as white,<sup>19</sup> sharing a commercial hub with Ethiopian shoppers would have dangerously blurred the segregating lines being drawn into the city Addis through Fascist architecture and film.

During the late 1930s, imperial marketplace newsreels like this one helped to facilitate the type of mental work necessary to create new racial boundaries. Filmic narratives, where cyclical format stood for narrative summary, powerfully reconfigured the marketplace in terms of black and white. First, cyclical format creates a sense of continuity, changelessness. Watching only one or two marketplace newsreels would make viewers feel like experts in this aspect of colonial life. If things repeated, it must be because there was nothing else to add. Second, summary worked in tandem with cycles. It falsely suggested to viewers that they knew the entire marketplace based on carefully framed establishing shots. But these occluded contradictory specifics. Together, cyclical format and narrative summary glossed the specifics of marketplace activity, confusing small markets in the outskirts of Addis for the major ones in the city centre.

Moreover, imperial newsreels were colonial quilts. Cutting and sewing scraps of film cultivated the impression of extensive film coverage of imperial holdings. It is unclear whether or not audiences noticed the flagrant borrowing and repetition. Perhaps they did not. After all, the propagandistic strategy of these newsreels works by lulling the viewer. Once the cycle repeats, the audience knows that there is nothing new to see – just endless repetition. The marketplace newsreels do not satisfyingly conclude, nor do they truly end. Instead, they simply return to the beginning. Obsessive repetition begs the question. What is newsworthy in these newsreels? By repeatedly reporting on Ethiopian marketplaces in the same way, directors helped to construct the impression of a news-less nation, one that has nothing to say to the rest of the world. In marketplace newsreels, cycle and summary turned in tandem to provide Italian viewers with perceived knowledge of empire without direct engagement, or even prolonged indirect engagement. The newsreel lasts, as stated, less than ninety seconds.

## Addis Ababa marketplace newsreels as culinary tourism

In the specific context of the marketplace newsreels, the cyclical framework summarizes the market. By diminishing the huge number of regional markets in Ethiopia to the small, supposedly representative sampling shown in the newsreels, the L.U.C.E. directors implied that comprehensive knowledge of Ethiopian culture was neither attainable nor desirable for Italian colonists. The content used to create these succinct narratives of the marketplace similarly evokes this drive to condense the enormous range of culture down to a single, all-encompassing representation. Along these lines, marketplace newsreels typically begin and conclude with images of cheerful, chattering Ethiopian crowds. Scholars have noted the importance of the image of the ecstatic crowd in providing legitimization and support for Mussolini's rule (De Grazia 1993; Forgacs and Gundle 2007). In the parallel context of Fascist empire, the marketplace newsreels mobilized images of Ethiopians crowds to support a particularly weak plank of the Fascist regime's colonial project. Mussolini's east African campaign needed massive manpower to convert Ethiopia's mixed terrain into Italianate farmland. But as historian Alberto Sbacchi has noted, "Uncertain political and military conditions and apathy for colonial matters discouraged Italian farmers from migrating to east Africa." Lacking a sufficient number of colonists to realize Italian autarchy abroad, the Fascist regime hoped that Ethiopians might be convinced to work on behalf of the Italian State to produce sufficient grain, bananas, coffee, and other foodstuffs to alleviate hunger in Italy. But Ethiopians were understandably loath to aid their conquerors.<sup>20</sup>

This history helps to explain why the persistent directorial focus on Ethiopian crowds at crucial junctures in the marketplace newsreels' narrative arc. Jovial Ethiopian crowds falsely suggested an abundant supply of eager labourers awaiting to join the Italian colonial project. Using the market as a backdrop allows the directors to frame the value of Ethiopian work in the context of food-based autarchy. The newsreels surround masses of Ethiopian bodies with ample piles of food, placing both Ethiopian labour and Ethiopian foods under the general aegis of Italian resources, available for the taking. Particularly notable is the director's focus on those baskets of foods that would have been readily recognizable to Italian audiences, like prickly pears, common to Sicily as well as Italian east Africa. This inclusion is balanced by the exclusion of more commonly consumed Ethiopian foods like *berbere*, the hot pepper mix used to flavour the porridges, pulses, and stews that constituted the majority of Ethiopian afternoon and evening meals. In the marketplace newsreels, the use of the crowd to summarize all Ethiopians into an indistinguishable mass of potential labourers points to the how food and foodways in general, and alimentary autarchy specifically, helped to drive

racist representations of Ethiopians in Italian mass media, ultimately contributing to the Fascist development of racial stereotypes in Italian east Africa.

In other words, the Ethiopian marketplaces shown in these newsreels provided a filmic site for what Lucy Long has termed 'culinary tourism'. This concept refers not only to geographical travel for the purpose of sampling the goods of foreign lands, but also to any journey outside of one's normal dietary routine into the realm the exotic other. Essentially, the marketplace newsreels offered Italians the opportunity to engage with foreign foods as a concrete means to create scripts and strategies to justify the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. But the majority Italians did not experience the Horn of Africa firsthand, nor did they taste its cuisine in person. Rather, Italians consumed imagery of exotic Ethiopian foods at home. Armchair tourism conveyed culinary tourism, both in the cushioned seats of movie theaters and in the wooden chairs around the kitchen table, where Liebig collectable trade cards brought empire to dinner. On the Italian peninsula, Ethiopian imagery shaped racial ideas. These commercial channels actively shaped Italian notions of racial identity through the loose and seemingly innocuous network of meanings attached to popular delicacies like chocolate.

### Italian narratives in Spanish chocolate boxes

L.U.C.E. provided their photos to private companies for free, which spread Fascist ideas along food chains linking the Mediterranean coastlines. When colonial food products like coffee and chocolate travelled trade routes, they trailed Fascist narratives of empire in their wake. Broadly speaking, advertising and mass media reinforced the racial constructions put into place by Fascist urban planning in the Merkato Ketema. As Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Gaia Giuliani have observed, racist periodicals framed black east African men as virile and physically threatening, two traits that made them appear more masculine than white Italian men. To counteract this characterization, Italian news journalists providing east African coverage took pains to point out perceived moments of black male weakness. Article narratives and imagery often used a formidable woman as a counterweight, aiming to frame men in the colonies as docile by comparison. In other words, commercial writing did not simply disseminate established Fascist tropes of racial difference. They also complicated them by applying southern European gender norms to east African settings so as to safeguard white Italian male prestige abroad.

Consider the case of *figurine*, the trade cards that came with a box of chocolates. Produced by the Manuel Orii Roca company in Barcelona, this deck contained twenty cards. The front of each card showed an east African marketplace photo taken by L.U.C.E. (Figure 6). The back of each card told the story of Italian imperialism in Abyssinia in Spanish. Culinary ephemera like these chocolate box trade cards demonstrates how image and text work together to



**Figure 6. Top Left and Right:** Trade card, 'Un mercado en los alrededores de la capital,' 'A Market in the Outskirts of the Capital,' in 'La Guerra entre Italia y Abisinia,' 'The War between Italy and Abyssina' series. Printed by Manuel Orí Roca Benicarló Chocolates Company, 1939, Barcelona, Spain. Card 20 of 23 card set (Wolfsonian Museum, XC2014.12.12.40.15, Miami, United States). **Bottom Left:** Trade card, 'Sastres etiopes trabajando en la calle,' 'Ethiopian Tailors Working in the Street' in 'La Guerra entre Italia y Abisinia,' 'The War between Italy and Abyssina' series. Printed by Manuel Orí Roca Benicarló Chocolates Company, 1939, Barcelona, Spain. Card 18 of 23 card set (Wolfsonian Museum, XC2014.12.12.40.13, Miami, United States).

create gendered narratives of power and racial subordination in the colonial world. The photography shows Ethiopian tailors seated at Singer sewing machines.<sup>21</sup> Tailoring was a key profession for Italian male immigrants to the Americas in 1939, when the cards were produced. Because clothing work – from textile factory labour to laundry – was physically demanding and poorly paid, it was typically associated with women. The low social status of clothing work meant that tailoring was often a professional point of entry for recent male immigrants. Read within the broader gendered context of Italian labour

history in the Americas, the chocolate trade card's choice to depict Ethiopian tailors becomes apparent: in a corollary to the plantation hierarchy climb from *colono* in Brazil to *colonista* in Ethiopia, these cards suggest a parallel rise. In the 1890s and early 1900s, Italian men moved west to work as tailors in Argentina and other Spanish-speaking nations where the Manuel Orii Roca captions could be read. By the late 1930s, Italian *colonisti* brought their suits to east African men for new buttons and hems. Rising from tailor to client meant that Italian men could leverage their privileged position in the colonies to reinscribe their masculinity through the labour and commerce of Ethiopian marketplaces.

Moreover, the chocolate card's text supports the image as a tool for amplifying Italian male prestige through the denigration of Ethiopian men. To this, the text adds defamation of Ethiopian capacity for leadership, assumed to be a masculine pursuit. The back of the tailor's card reads, 'Muerto Menelik el segundo siguió un periodo de indisciplina y su viuda la emperatriz Taitu que no veía con simpatía la regencia, aprovechándose de ello sublevó la región del Tigré y se hizo proclamar emperadora.'<sup>22</sup> Deeply suspicious of European intentions towards Ethiopia, Empress Taytu Betul (Figure 7) was a key player in the conflict over the Treaty of Wuchale with Italy, in which the Italian version made Ethiopia an Italian protectorate, while the Amharic version did not. The Empress held a hard line against the Italians. Empress Taytu Betul's infamy north of the Mediterranean stood in direct proportion to her astounding martial success. She led the Ethiopian cannons division against the Italians in the Battle of Adwa in 1896, resulting in the only major European defeat in Africa at that time. But perhaps most telling of her royal role is this personal detail: Emperor Menelik often prevaricated, postponing difficult decisions by answering (*Ishi, nega*) 'Yes, tomorrow'. Taytu closed these diplomatic incursions with the decisive term, 'Imbi' 'Absolutely not.' As a result, Taytu was increasingly unpopular while Menelik remained beloved both among fellow royals at court in Addis Abeba and among rival powers rising across southern Europe. Common Fascist interests across Spain and Italy and inter-Mediterranean trade routes meant that private food companies served as a potent means to bring political messages of colonialism to a critical population – the future soldiers of the Fascist empire – that is, to children.

How do you play with a trade card? Consider the back of this Istituto Coloniale Fascista pamphlet, produced and paid for by the Liebig Meat Extract company (Figure 8). The front cover depicts the imperialist march on east Africa. The back cover gives a sense for family interactions, and shows how these cards were actually used. Mothers purchased packaged bouillon cubes, and children collected the box tops. Five or six box tops earned a pack of cards. Ten or twelve box tops earned the Liebig album to display them. Let us turn to the Liebig deck (Figure 9). Once again, east African marketplaces populate the majority of these tableaux – the first card in the deck depicts the Merkato Ketema. At a basic level, these cards acquaint petite potential colonists with their empire, giving them a



**Figure 7.** Photograph of Empress Taytu Beytul. Photographed in 1880, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia (Museo della Figurina, Modena, Italy).

sense of ownership while comfortably seated in the metropole. But this form of play amounts to mimicry. What Fascist architects did in stone in the Merkato Ketema in east Africa, European children did in paper in Italy and Spain. This is how children participated in colonialism – by placing people, in little squares, into designated grids, all held in place by international food corporations.

### **Contemporary legacies of fascist intervention to east African marketplaces**

Today, the Addis Merkato is not only the largest market in Ethiopia, but contends with heavyweights Angola's Roque Santeiro market and Nigeria's Oshodi market



**Figure 8.** Propaganda pamphlet, 'La campagna Italiana in Africa Orientale', 'The Italian Campaign in East Africa for Fascist Colonial Institute Historical Pamphlet Series.' Printed by Liebig Meat Extract Company, 1939, Rome, Italy (Wolfsonian Museum, ITAL B1992.1817, Miami, United States).

for the title of the largest open-air market in Africa. Storefronts for over 7,100 small businesses span several square miles, and employ an estimated 13,000 vendors. Since the Italian occupation, the Merkato has grown in size and attendance, but its primary merchandise remains the same. Vendors continue to specialize in domestic agricultural products, most notably coffee. But other, and more problematic, elements have stayed the same as well. Although the Italian regime officially departed from Ethiopia in 1941 with the menacing but ultimately toothless threat, 'Ritourneremo', the Fascist interventions to Addis Abeba's urban fabric remained behind, cast in concrete and in stone (Angelil and Hebel 2016). Indeed, the foundation of the Merkato Ketema arguably constitutes one of the most significant neighbourhood reorganizations in the city's history. Rationalist interventions left a dual legacy: they formed the city's new commercial hub, and at the same time set the stage for the sanitation problems that often accompany this degree of urban density. In his illuminating review of the architectural historiography of the Ethiopian capital, Shimelis Bonsa observes, 'If the racial element of the city's spatial and social forms did not outlive the end of Italian occupation, most of the physical structures it built did . . . most manifestly, the grid segmentation of *Märkato* and *Addis Kätäma*' (Bonsa 2012).



**Figure 9. Left:** Trade card, 'Il mercato di Addis Abeba,' 'The Market of Addis Abeba,' in 'Impero Italiano,' 'Italian Empire' series. Printed by Liebig Meat Extract Company, 1937, Milan, Italy Card 1 of 18 card set (Wolfsonian Museum, XC2014.12.12.1, Miami, United States). **Right:** Trade card, 'Mercato etiopico,' 'Ethiopian Market,' in 'Impero Italiano,' 'Italian Empire' series. Printed by Liebig Meat Extract Company, 1937, Milan, Italy. Card 9 of 18 card set (Wolfsonian Museum, XC2014.12.12.9, Miami, United States).

Indeed, the Merkato Ketema neighbourhood is now known for its poor urban planning, put into place by the Consulta centrale per l'edilizia e l'urbanistica in 1936. Local shopkeepers and stallholders live in poor conditions in the densely populated residential areas on the edge of Merkato or in more salubrious accommodation in the Kolfe district just west of the market. Traffic clogs the narrow roads, built for the occasional colonial functionary's Fiat 509, not for the enormous crowds of today. Examining the city's impact on family life, Abeje Berhanu identifies the specific urban planning issues that have led to social breakdown. Chief among the problems cited is extreme density. It translates to a shortage of recreational facilities, like parks and playgrounds for children. It means that health and educational facilities are likewise rare.<sup>23</sup> These architecture causes and social their effects, discussed in a section entitled 'Poor quality neighbourhood', cite one neighbourhood specifically as an exemplar of faulty urban planning as an architectural precursor to misery: *qäbäle* 13/15 of Addis Ketema, that is, the Merkato Ketema.<sup>24</sup>



Lack of hygienic facilities, the original problem of Fascist refurbishments to the Merkato, continues to plague the space. To restate the issue, the 1936 plan eliminated centralized control by the merchant heads. Previously, these commercial leaders made arrangements to maintain a clean, central bathroom in Addis' urban agricultural markets. Under the Fascist regime, a host of new functionaries stood as autonomous masters of each marketplace segment. There was no incentive to take control of communal market hygiene. It rapidly declined as a result of these interventions. Participants in Berhanu's study indicated that some families use plastic bags to dispose of urine and human excreta, as they do not have access to toilets, creating major health problems in the area. Attempts to build community toilets have not materialized because of lack of space, another legacy of the 1930s grid system. Little wonder then, that Eduard Berlan describes the devolution of the Merkato Ketema neighbourhood as the 'most living' heritage of the Italian occupation.

Today, food markets in Italy and in Ethiopia continue to serve as sites where questions of nationality and belonging can be incarnated, taking form as fruit and flesh.

A number of Italo-east African authors, the vast majority of whom are women, have focused on colonial marketplaces in their postcolonial narratives, and pointed to their connections to the international markets of Rome and Milan. In *Regina di fiore e di perle*, Italo-Ethiopian author Gabriella Ghermandi bookends the novelized oral histories of her family with marketplaces in chapters 'Il mercato di sabato!' 'The Saturday Market!' and 'Il ritorno', 'The Return'. Marketplaces from the central square of Mogadishu to the backlot commerce of the Roma Termini train station provide physical markers of the unmaking and remaking of familial and romantic connections between members of the sub-Saharan diaspora in Italo-Somali author Cristina Ubah Ali Farah's novel *Piccola Madre* (2007).

In Rome, a Monti butcher shop provides the background for Igiaba Scego's (2005) award-winning short story 'Salsiccie', a tale related as a stream of consciousness narration of a Muslim Italo-Somali woman's morning as she buys, cooks, and attempts to eat pork sausages. This subversive mercantile and culinary act provokes an identity crisis. The protagonist, who Scego describes as a lightly fictionalized version of herself, volleys back and forth, 'Am I more Somali? Or Italian? Maybe  $\frac{3}{4}$  Somali and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Italian? Or vice versa? I cannot answer! I have never fractionated myself before. I think I am a woman with many identity. Or maybe many identities.' Sandra Ponzanesi reads the character's tortured calculus as Scego's means of talking back to the absurdism of the 2002 Bossi-Fini migration law, which calculates racial identity in percentages. Where the quantitative grids of racial reasoning fail, her own qualitative listing succeeds.

Italian or Somali, her list relies on the culinary and mercantile language of the marketplace. She asserts, '#1: I am Italian when having a sweet breakfast.'

The fifth item on her list connects food and money, ‘#5: I am Italian when eating 1.80 euro *stracciatella*, pistachios and coconut ice-cream without whipped cream.’ Similarly, her Somali attributes derive from what, how, and when she likes to eat and drink, ‘#1: I am Somali when I drink tea with spices ...’, ‘#6: I am Somali when eating bananas with rice, in the same dish, I mean.’ The stomach resolves Scego’s national and religious identity crisis: she throws up before even eating the sausages, a visceral rejection of Catholic and Italian foodways.<sup>25</sup> But the end of the story remarks on the impossibility of easy identification of Scego’s character: while cleaning up her vomit, she receives a call from a friend telling her that she has been chosen for state employment, confirming her position as an Italian citizen. But she maintains her double identity: Muslim, not eating pork, Italian, getting a public job.

While Scego uses the culinary mixing prompted by Italian marketplace as a backdrop to spark a discussion on transnational identity in her short story, Italo-Eritrean poet Ribka Sibhatu suggests that the marketplaces of Rome and Milan are multi-ethnic as well as Italian. Like Scego’s ‘Salsiccie’, Sibhatu’s *Aulò: Canto Poesie dall’Eritrea* is told in first person, events experienced by a lightly fictionalized version of the author in a style mimicking oral speech. The book presents itself as a manual: it is, at once, a collection of oral histories (text), a song book (music), a cookbook (recipes), and yellow pages (store addresses and phone numbers). These last two forms work together: in a bridge from east Africa to Europe, she first presents Eritrean preparations and then pivots north, pointing out Italian locations to purchase Eritrean ingredients.<sup>26</sup>

Contemporary photographers in Italy are also directly addressing the Fascist period representations of east Africa and urban space, suggesting creative ways to preserve colonial memory. By common aim, the artistic projects reflect on the legacies of Fascism without reifying hate. In Rino Bianchi’s 2013 photography series, Italo-Ethiopian, -Eritrean, and -Somali journalists, activists, and teachers pose in urban spaces associated with Fascist imperialism, connecting east Africa’s Italian period with its current legacy of migration, and the multi-ethnic metropole. Here, community leader Zahra Mohamed stands at the centre of the Viale Somalia. Conducted in partnership with author Igiaba Scego, the resulting compendium ‘Roma Negata: Percorsi postcoloniali nella città’, argues not for the demolition of these squares and byways, but for the reinscription of east African colonial history in the fabric of the Italian city. By inserting black bodies into white spaces, Scego and Bianchi argue for the addition of knowledge, rather than the subtraction of debate. In a particularly trenchant example, film director Amin Nour stands in the Piazza Cinquecento before the Termini train station (Figure 10). Posed still atop a block of stone, Nour appears as a living monument. At the Battle of Adwa, Scego notes, Italy was famously – and erroneously – said to have lost 500 soldiers, the titular *cinquecento* honored by



**Figure 10.** Photograph of Amin Nour. Photographed by Rino Bianchi, Piazza Cinquecento, Rome Italy on 31 October 2013. Published in Igiaba Scego and Rino Bianchi. *Roma Negata: Percorsi Postcoloniali per la Città*. Rome: Ediesse, 2014. Republication permission granted by Amin Nour (January 23, 2020) and Rino Bianchi (January 27, 2020). Photo ©2013RINO BIANCHI.

the *piazza*. Bianchi's photograph of Nour, as narrated by Scego, visually embodies multi-ethnic Europe. His presence silently speaks to the duplicitous morality of eclipsing the victims of the Ethiopian occupation by honoring its perpetrators with Roman street names and statues. This photographic project offers one way of beginning to talk about the connections between past European settler colonialism in Africa and present forms of east African migration and diaspora in southern Europe – a reckoning that takes place not in the Merkato Ketema of Addis, but at the Stazione Termini, Rome's banal and buzzing heart.

## Notes

1. "Addis Abeba: Merkato." August 1930. Archivio Luce, Giornale Luce A, film code A063702.
2. Please note that this article retains primary source spelling for the Ethiopian capital in English and Italian (Addis Ababa versus Addis Abeba) and the capital of Somalia in English (Mogadishu versus Mogadiscio).
3. Architectural and city planning documents produced by Fascist colonial institutes like the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica used the term 'native' instead of Ethiopian. See Archivio Diplomatico, Africa III. "Azione culturale." b. 6. "Enti Diversi" f. 39 Subfolder 59.1 "La Nostra Architettura Coloniale: Mostre e

esposizioni.” Letters, memos, and promotional materials details the architectural activities of the institute, including courses, competitions, exhibitions, and touristic cruises to north and east Africa to entice potential colonists.

4. The *negradas*’ position derives from and supports African land tenure policies that privilege communal ownership. Individual rights are limited to occupation and use. As Heyaw Terefe notes, ‘Land is regarded as belonging . . . to the whole social group [which includes] not only the incumbent generation but also the past and future’ (Terefe 2005, 19).
5. By comparison, the largest group of colonists arriving in Tripoli in 1938 were known as the *ventimila*, the twenty thousand. The regular Saturday attendance of the Mercato Ketema doubled this figure. For specific demographic information on Libya, across rural and urban city planning, see Istituto Agronomico per l’Oltremare. “Libia.” Fasc. 812 “Cenni statistici sullo sviluppo della colonizzazione in nel decennio che ha seguito la Marcia su Roma.”
6. This article section has been informed by an illuminating correspondence with Heyaw Terefe, (Professor of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, University of Addis Abeba; Spring 2015), as well as his study of the contemporary refurbishments and popular use of the Mercato Ketema and the surrounding neighbourhood (Terefe 2005).
7. Political connections to the Fascist regime often meant greater likelihood of securing government building contracts. Successful architects of the interwar period often also held positions within the party. Enrico del Debbio, for instance, was also the National Secretary of the Fascist Architects’ Union. For additional discussion of architecture under Fascism see Gentile (2007) and Lasansky (2004.).
8. See introductory discussion of the Archivio Diplomatico in Ben-Ghiat and Fuller (2005). On archival obfuscation of Italian violations of the Geneva Convention during the Ethiopian Occupation, see Sbacchi (1997) and Del Boca (1976).
9. What we see here is clear visual organization for potential Italian colonists. But it is also disruptive business organization for Ethiopian vendors. In the new market, the *ndrassas* (head merchants) could no longer mediate disputes. When we say ‘this new market seems better’ we must also ask, ‘Better how? And for whom?’.
10. As Anne McClintock has observed, this line of thinking reflects Georg Hegel’s characterization of Africa as occupying not only a different geographical space but also a different temporal zone, surviving anachronistically within the modern day. ‘Africa’, Hegel announced in his 1830–1831 lectures, ‘is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World’s History’ (Hegel’s *The Philosophy of History*, 99, cited in McClintock 1995).
11. Elegance and internationalism marked the market stalls of Addis, but the majority of these remained unpublished. For two examples among many, see photograph of shoemaker at the Addis Abeba market, ‘Calzolai al mercato di Addis Abeba’, [‘Shoemakers at the Addis Abeba Market’]. Descriptive text belies the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the small group assembled, ‘Calzolai al lavoro all’interno di un rudimentale baracchino al mercato indigeno di Addis Abeba; in primo piano, di spalle, un cliente in attesa della riparazione dei suoi sandali’, [‘Shoemakers at work inside a rudimentary stall in the indigenous market of Addis Abeba; in the foreground, from the back, a client awaits the repair of his

sandals']. Photographed for L.U.C.E. by unknown photographer, 1936–1937, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, black and white photograph (Archivio Luce Photo Code AO00005666, Series A.A. Addis Abeba, Rome, Italy) and photograph of vendors at the Addis Abeba market, 'Venditore e cliente al mercato di Addis Abeba', ['Vendor and Client at the Addis Abeba Market']. Descriptive text reads, 'Un mercante espone la merce ad una cliente, ripresa di spalle, al mercato indigeno di Addis Abeba', ['A merchant shows his wares to a client, shot from the back, at the indigenous market of Addis Abeba']. Photographed for L.U.C.E. by unknown photographer, 1936–1937, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, black and white photograph (Archivio Luce Photo Code AO00005673, Series A.A. Addis Abeba, Rome, Italy) For more general overview of photography under Fascism, see Lupano, 2002.

12. See *Gli Annali Dell'Africa Italiana. Anno II-Numero 4-1939-XVIII*, map reproduced and annotated in Terefe (2005, 127). Terefe titles the map 'Italian market place development plan' in figure 8.4, and highlights the additional Italian constructions of a tribunal and a municipal building.
13. L.U.C.E. also produced 54 *documentari* (documentaries) and 4 *repertori* (documentary footage shot but never shown) on the general topic of 'Ethiopia' during this time frame. Figures cited from Archivio Cinematografico Luce Africa Orientale Italiana targeted search, accessed May 23, 2019.
14. L.U.C.E. introduced sound to its newsreels in the early 1930s. In line with this technological development, the 1930s newsreel is silent and the two 1936 newsreels include narrators and soundtracks. For more information see Landy (2014).
15. In the postwar years, Gemmiti founded the film production house La Pastor, and served as its general director until 1947. His popular film *Montecassino* (1950) brought him further commercial success. In his later years, Gemmiti worked in South America, with several stints in Italy. During this time, he produced eleven documentaries in Chile alone. For more information, see "Arturo Gemmiti" (1961).
16. Prior to his work in north Africa, Ricotti served as the filmographer for twelve films in continental Italy from 1914 to 1922. He was most famous for serving as the photographic director of *La lettera chiusa*, a 54-minute, black and white silent film. Directed by Guglielmo Zorzi for Olympus Film, the comedy was a critical and commercial success. See Goble (2006).
17. This camera work also supports the possibility of Gemmiti's directorship. His Mogadishu marketplace newsreels mirror the camerawork of the Addis marketplace newsreels. To provide two examples of the Somali capital markets, the newsreels 'Mogadiscio Somalia. Il mercato di Mogadiscio', ['Mogadishu Somalia. The Market of Mogadishu'] (February 1935) mirror 'Il mercato di Addis Abeba', in style. Both feature a series of static shots of the vendors, market-goers, and merchandise, which are then bookended with pan shots of crowds. In a further structural similarity to the Addis marketplace newsreel, the Mogadishu marketplace newsreels are shot from straight on or slightly above at distance of three to six feet and for a duration of one to two seconds each.
18. Arnaldo Ricotti treats the 'mercato rionale' sequence in 'Tripoli: Opera del Regime' in much the same way, focusing, oddly, on a small, regional marketplace in a newsreel that largely deals with major sites. One possible reason for this apparently incongruous inclusion is that all of Ricotti's chosen sites feature monumental Italian architecture. Perhaps Ricotti ignored the expansive Tripoli

marketplace in favour of the small, regional market for the same reason that this director avoided the central in Addis Abeba: because both capital markets appeared orderly and modern to Italian eyes, neither site could provide evidence for the naturalistic Ethiopian marketplace architecture that regime directors and their metropolitan audiences expected to see.

19. For discussion of Italians' racial self-definition and shifts from black to white, see Giuliana and Lombardi-Diop (2013).
20. Sbacchi cites 'continuous patriot threats and attacks on Italian settlements' as the first and primary reason among a list of nine causal factors leading to historians' consensus that 'Italian colonials found it difficult to provide land and food to Italy' (1997, 117). For history of the Ethiopian Patriots Resistance movement, see Zewde (2016).
21. Singer sewing machines were a typical prize for Italian *coloniste* who earned high marks in the colonial schools. Note that this award implicitly underscores gendered training: if a young woman succeeded academically, she received an object whose use pushed her towards sewing rather than studying, that is, towards a lower-paid and lower-status pursuit. For former colonists' discussion of the Singer sewing machines as awards for academic success in Ethiopia and Libya, see Pianucci (2008), Pennacchi (1988), and Marchesi (1988).
22. The Spanish text reads, 'Upon the death of Menelik II, an unruly period followed and his widow the empress Taitu who did hold a sympathetic view of the regency, took advantage [of the situation] to rile the Tigray region and had herself proclaimed Empress.' All translations are the author's own unless otherwise specified.
23. One notable exception to this statement is the Amanuel Mental Hospital, the only specialist psychiatric hospital in Ethiopia.
24. Abeje Berhanu argues that specific architectural factors combined to precondition problems. 'Poor Neighbourhood' is defined as those divisions of Addis marked by 'housing problems, lack of basic amenities like running water, toilets, electricity, transportation'. Berhanu reads evidence of family problems as reflected by high incidence of teenage pregnancy, prostitution, and marital strife (see Berhanu 2008, 199–221).
25. In a discussion of her short story, Scego describes the meaning of the body's refusal to incorporate the forbidden pork, 'puke represents a way to get back one's own identity', cited in Luraschi (2009).
26. Crossings of language enhance these crossings of genre: On the left side of the book, the text appears in the Italian language, and on the right, it appears in the Ge'ez alphabet, used in Tigrinya. Alternative publishing house Sinnos (Rome) published Sibhatu's work as part of their 'I Mappamondi' series, which celebrates the life stories and languages of immigrants in Italy. They primarily focus on children's literature, in hopes of fostering diversity as a culture given, rather than something that must be explicitly taught (see Sibhatu 1993).

## Notes on contributor

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