

Special issue of Modern Italy: Visualizing Italian Colonial Culture

Deadline: Jun 30, 2021

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Visualizing Italian Colonial Culture: Mass-Produced Images and Objects, 1882-1960

Special issue of Modern Italy (Journal of the Association for the Study of Modern Italy, Cambridge University Press), edited by Carmen Belmonte and Laura Moure Cecchini

For a peer-reviewed special issue of Modern Italy (Journal of the Association for the Study of Modern Italy, Cambridge University Press), we seek proposals for original essays that analyze the visual and material culture of Italian colonialism, from the acquisition of Assab Bay until the independence of Somalia. This issue wants to bring into dialogue scholarship in the humanities and the social sciences that addresses the production and circulation of mass-produced images and objects of Italian colonial culture, exploring their active role in shaping the Italian colonial imaginary, and its notions of race, gender, and nationhood.

Pioneering studies have addressed visual responses to Italian colonialism, but the social imaginary of colonial popular culture should be further analyzed. Mass-produced materials shed new light on both the consensus-building strategies as well as on the anti-colonial reactions to Italian imperialism. Investigating a diverse range of media forms – including postcards, comics and graphic novels, commercial advertisements, fashion and design, decorative objects, posters, photographs, trading cards, toys and games, illustrated journals and prints, and other ephemera – we aim to unpack the circulation of colonial ideologies both in the peninsula and in Italy's occupied territories. Images and objects narrate Italian colonialism in ways that are often complementary or alternative to those provided by textual sources, and we seek to bring to light these narratives.

By addressing the imbrication of capitalism and colonialism in the lived experience of colonizing and colonized populations, we aim to elucidate rapidly-changing production technologies that visualized and materialized imperial hierarchies, some of which still survive in contemporary Italy. We are interested in contributions that address the ways in which the visual and material repertoire of Italian colonialism manifest visual strategies peculiar to Italy's imperial project, as well as contributions that compare the Italian case and other forms of settler and exploitation colonialism.

We encourage interpretative analyses that locate images and objects within their specific historical and cultural context of production and reception. Topics of particular interest include (but are not limited to) the study of mass-produced materials generated in the context of:

- colonial propaganda campaigns

- colonial exhibitions and human displays
- geographic, ethnographic, and anthropological surveys
- public rituals celebrating Italian colonial endeavors
- commercial advertising of goods and raw materials
- enrollment of indigenous troops in the Italian army
- anti-colonial resistance and dissent
- mapping and representations of the Italian empire
- colonial commodities and military objects
- collecting of artifacts from the colonies
- travel and tourism

As the COVID-19 pandemic has curtailed access to physical archives, we also encourage submissions that rely on digitized journals, archival sources, and image databases on Italian colonial culture.

Abstracts of 500-700 words, in English, accompanied by a list of images, a bibliography (including primary sources), and a short biography, are due on June 30, 2021.

A total of five to seven proposals will be accepted at the discretion of the editors of the issue and of the journal; completed essays of approximately 8000 words will be due on December 15, 2021. Once essays are submitted, the entire issue will undergo peer review.

Please submit abstracts and inquiries to Laura Moure Cecchini (lmourececchini@colgate.edu) and Carmen Belmonte (carmen.belmonte@khi.fi.it)

Reference:

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