

THE RELUCTANT IMPERIALIST: ITALIAN
COLONIZATION IN SOMALIA

by

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DEDICATION

To Debra, for patience...

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INTRODUCTION

"The Scramble for Africa" was a period of rapid colonial expansion for the major European powers in the period from 1875 to 1912. The major players of this exploration and conquest of Africa are well-known: Great Britain, France, and Germany, but lesser known is the involvement of Italy in the Scramble.

The Italian endeavors in Africa were more limited, in time and territory, than the other colonial powers. At its height, under Mussolini, the Italian Empire encompassed most of the Horn of Africa--from Somalia to Eritrea, and including Ethiopia, plus what is now modern-day Libya. Save for the fascist period, the Italian colonial enterprise was not much touted, nor was it particularly intrusive on the people over which the Italians held sway; if anything, their rule was one of almost embarrassed neglect. It was embarrassed that, outside of a few dedicated imperialists in the commercial and political arena, most Italians were at best ambivalent, at worse actively opposed, to the taking of colonies in Africa. This attitude was particularly prevalent after the end of the Italian empire; work on the colonial experience is fairly sparse, save for a burst of interest in the 1960s and in recent years. The records covering the period were subject to a fifty-year classified status

that prevented them from being used extensively, a situation that has since ended.

The Italian interpretation of the colonial experience is based heavily on the political alignment of the historians working on the material. Communist and socialist interpretations, common in the post World War II era, are universally hostile due to ideological bias. The apologists, those pining for the days of empire, have none of the wistful quality for the actual colonial space that one sees in works by British historians. For Italian colonial apologists, the real loss is Italian--the lost of respect, prestige, and power associated with owning colonies, but there is little of the love and sense of loss for, say, Eritrea, that one sees in similar works on India or Africa from contemporary writers in Britain or France.

The reasons for this ambivalence for empire is fairly simple on reflection. The birth of a united Italy in 1859 was the liberation from their own colonization by foreign powers, Austria and Spain. The subsequent political and economic strains of creating this new nation-state, which involved the fusing of several different peoples--Sicilians, Neapolitans, Sardinians--into a cohesive Italian people occupied much of the attention and exchequer of the government. Italians from areas outside Piedmont-Sardinia often viewed their new government as foreign, and as distant as the courts of

Madrid or Vienna had been. The fostering of an Italian nation was of foremost concern for the government; to many, colonies were a distraction, and a questionable one, at that. Others, however, like Prime Minister Crispi, saw colonies as a means to control rampant emigration while reducing overpopulation, and easing endemic financial crises. Many of the period saw colonization as a means of more quickly forge this new 'Italian-ness' and give it legitimacy, by making the new Italian state heir to the empire of Rome, setting it on par with other European powers, and giving the Italians a unifying objective.¹

The first steps of the Italian colonial project are the subject of this thesis: specifically, the creation of a colony in the port towns of the Benadir - the coastline of modern day Somalia. These preliminary moves in the "Scramble for Africa" were tentative, at best, and not especially successful. Italy would follow a British model of early colonization: the use of a private company which would administer the territory and reap the profits of it. The model was only partially successful for the British in India and Africa, but for the Italians it was the most risk-reductive of start-ups.

The failure of these first corporate entities to survive, but also to be effective in their mission, was due to the ambivalence of the Italian public and

1. For the general situation in Italy during *Risorgimento*, see Smith, *Modern Italy*. Also see Hibbert, *Garibaldi and his Enemies*, and Ridley, *Garibaldi*.

government to imperialism. Through neglect or active opposition, the Italian governments through the period of the commercial colony in Somalia exacerbated the weaknesses of this model of colonization; that a commercial entity was often unprepared, or unwilling, to take over the burdens and expenses of governance and defense of those territories under their protection. In the case of the Benadir colony, Italy was opposed to aiding in the defense of the colony throughout the period of private administration, nor to provide any subsidy for the creation of infrastructure. Profits suffered, in the case of the Filonardi Company, and created a level of uncertainty and instability that drove off the very investments that might have made the colony successful.²

Following this period, the administration of southern Somalia would be directly appointed by the Italian government, and would continue until the Second World War, when the colony would be taken by British forces.³ After the war, Italy once again found itself in the position of trustee for Somalia under the auspices of the United Nations. A UN report on the conditions in Somalia would read much like those of the early colonists,

2. For a basic overview of the Italian colonial enterprise in Somalia, see Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*.

3. The post-company period is best covered in Hess, but general colonial issues are also handled in Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*.

calling on the outside world to provide leadership and investment in the region.⁴

Contrary to usual interpretations of colonization, the effect to Somalia as a country appears to have been minimal. The conditions of the country improved slightly, in terms of infrastructure and organization. The human costs were high, but less so than in comparable administrations by other European colonies. If anything, Somalis were subjected to a kind of negligence by colonial administrators and settlers who were less than enthusiastic about the imperial enterprise.

For Italians, the colonial experience is one of shame. The whole of the imperial period is generally ignored, save for a few movies of the 1930s and some contemporary communist critiques. The Italians moved into colonization hesitantly, particularly in Somalia, where the government sloughed off responsibility on private concerns which administered the region in the first decade or so. The government failed to aid in the protection of the colony, nor did they work actively to help the companies in charge of the Somali ports succeed in expanding the infrastructure or trade.

Following the incorporation of the colony into the responsibility of the government, the Italians continued a series of non-policies toward the African

4. Regarding the post-colonial period, see the UNTAP report *The Trusteeship Territory of Somaliland Under Italian Administration*.

holdings; it is a pattern that would continue until the Fascist period. In the wake of Italian imperialism, Italy would continue to have relations with their former colonies that were (and remains) strained over issues of investment and the return of national treasures. Italy failed to really engage in a relationship with their colonies during the early years--even in terms of power. The Fascist period would define the Italo-Somalian relations solely on the basis of force and power--hardly a relationship at all.

Ambivalence is the characteristic that best defines the Italian colonial experience.

CHAPTER 1: ITALY AND THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

1. A New Nation

Italy was not just young in the late nineteenth-century, it was a newborn, willed into existence by a few men living in exile, and hard-nosed pragmatists in the governments of Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and Second Empire France. The creation of Italy began with the creation of the Italian state in 1859, but it did not end there. Throughout 1860, the southern areas of Calabria and Abruzzi, as well as the island of Sicily, were added to the country through the personal actions of Giuseppe Garibaldi and a small band of mercenaries.¹ A fortunate alliance with Prussia against Austria in 1866 (and despite dismal Italian performance in battle) saw the gain of the Veneto - the territory and ports around Venice. Taking advantage of French misfortune against the new Germany which necessitated the withdrawal of troops protecting the Papacy, Italy finally, in 1870, was able to gain control of the Papal States and the coveted capital of the ancients, Rome. Even after that, revanchist claims on the areas of Trieste continued.

For much of the early nineteenth century, nationalists had worked to foster the notion of a united Italy. Giuseppe Mazzini and other Italian

1. Hibbert, *Garibaldi and His Enemies*. (New York: Penguin, 1987), 175-317 cover this campaign and ramifications.

nationalist resided in exile in Paris and London and formulated ideas on the how Italy should come into being and what shape--usually on liberal ideas of the American and French revolutions--that government should take.

Soldier-revolutionaries, exemplified by Giuseppe Garibaldi, had fought losing battles to create a united Italy in Rome in 1848. Garibaldi, already a hero in South America for his fighting prowess, would later join the 1859 fight for a unified Italy; in fact, his raid on Kingdom of Two Sicilies--unauthorized by the government of Piedmont-Sardinia and France--was so successful that he had to be stopped by the 'Italian' forces in the north, lest he attack Rome and detract from the prestige to the Sardinian king and government, and threaten their alliance with France. It also handed to the new Italian government the provinces of the south. A north/south split in the mentalities, economy, and even language of Italy would create internal problems for the Italian government that continue today.

This new state was a constitutional monarchy, headed by the crown of the former Piedmont-Sardinia, King Victor Emmanuel II. The king was an "...insignificant man, good-natured and shrewd...rough-hewn and by no means despicable character but [having] little of the luster and aureole of majesty."² The new government was distrusted by the former functionaries of

2. Smith, *Modern Italy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1997), 28.

the various duchies and kingdoms that had been absorbed, the Catholic Church refused to recognize the new government and chafed at having lost its lands to this constitutional monarchy. Old revolutionaries, like Mazzini and Garibaldi, were disappointed with the monarchy; republicanism was the main ideal for the Italian revolutionaries living in exile before the *Risorgimento* (or resurgence, the Italian name for the unification of the country in 1860.)

The lack of popularity of the government was particularly strong in the south, where the Spanish-maintained Kingdom of Two Sicilies was, in many minds, simply replaced by another foreign rule from the north. The mostly illiterate population got their news of the new government through the local priests, or the nobles that had been connected to the former kingdom--neither group well-disposed to the new Italy. Added to this distrust was the perpetual miserable state of the area. The crushing poverty of the area extended to the infrastructure; roads between major towns were often in disrepair, if they existed at all. The area was lawless, prowled by *banditi*, and revolt by the peasantry was frequent, though uncoordinated. The economy was still mostly based on barter, where rents and goods could be paid for in kind, which perpetuated feudal connections between the farmers and the landowners.

The cost of reunification and the difficulties of throwing together disparate economies and peoples throughout the peninsula kept the fledgling Italy in dire financial straits. In the south, *latifundi*--large farms with tenant workers--lost their feudal character, but the farms remained in the hands of a small few investors, with the local farmers working as day laborers for little money. The bad soil and harsh climate caused failures in three out of ten harvests; private ownership of small farms could not provide the capital needed to adequately make agriculture work.³

Capital problems were not reserved for the south. Prior to the *Risorgimento*, the peninsula had been broken up under the sovereignty of Austria, or small states with various governing systems. Agriculture, mostly in cereals and cotton, had been the primary crops; industrialization was almost non-existent. Italian investment capital was mostly tied up in these antediluvian forms of production. Investors had not been attracted to Italy before the unification, and the continued focus on agriculture by Italian businessmen did not draw the amounts of capital that other areas of Europe did. Despite this, foreign investment was responsible for much of the improvements made by the new government. For example, "...[t]hree out of the four big Italian railroad companies were to be completely financed from

3. Smith, *Modern Italy*, 42.

abroad... foreign houses owned much of the textile and shipping industries.¹⁴ English investments were limited to Sicilian agriculture, French investment to Piedmont and Naples, and German investment in Lombardy. This investment helped to preserve the new nation, but also had the effect of creating massive debt. The dangers of reliance of foreign investment showed in banking crises during 1866.⁵ Investment, and what industry there was, was located mostly in the north, where free trade philosophy--a central tenet of the *Risorgimento*--was popular; the south was unprepared and unable to compete in such a market, used to a feudal system in agriculture, and government contracts for construction. Though a policy of deflation, Italy was able to balance its budget by 1875, but the situation in the south would preoccupy the government's attention throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

Added to the economic woes was political instability. The new government, as mentioned, was instantly at odd with many factions. The republican radicals of the left were generally distrusted by elite and ordinary Italians alike. The reactionaries of the Right were just as anti-monarchal as the republicans, fueled in their rhetoric by the Catholic Church, which

4. Smith, *Modern Italy*, 45.

5. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World* (London: Routledge, 1996), 80-81.

refused to acknowledge the Italian state until 1929 in the Lateran Treaties. The center parties found themselves in perpetual coalition, where any misstep or mishap would cause a government to fall. In the first ten years of the Italian state, nine governments were elected, several of these governments having been reelected, only to be turfed out once more. The short-lived administrations meant that any reform proceeded slowly, and in fits.

The economic and political uncertainty had another effect: emigration. The population of Italy had been large from the beginning, about 22 million people, excluding papal Rome in 1860. Rampant unemployment, or underemployment, was the norm in the south and middle of the country. Peasant workers found themselves with not many more options in this new nation, and many looked to other places to improve their conditions. In the period from 1876 to 1885, 1.31 million Italians left Italy seeking opportunity. Of that, approximately 64.9 percent emigrated to other European countries, 25.2 percent to South American countries, and about seven percent to the United States.⁶ Men always left in larger numbers than women, and despite the troubles in the south, the emigration was spread relatively evenly over the whole of Italy.⁷

6. Rosoli, *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana* (Rome: Cser, 1978), 345-347 and 350-355 for emigration number broken down over certain periods.

7. Rosoli,, 356-365 for breakdown by region, 375-377 for gender.

By 1870, newspapers and journals were decrying widespread emigration and the inability (or unwillingness, in the case of liberal politicians)⁸ to prevent it. That it was thought the government should stop this loss of the people "whose blood haemorrhaged [sic] out of the nation"⁹ Debates concerning the phenomenon show that the idea of 'being Italian' was something of great importance to those who created, governed, and nurtured the new state. "Nation" was another tenet, like free trade and independence, of the *Risorgimento*. Creating Italy also required the creation of Italians. To do this, national educational standards were introduced in the early decades of the state, and the teaching of an official Italian language - primarily using northern dialects - instead of the local ones was central to forging this new identity. This last factor, language, has been cited by Benedict Anderson as central to the creation of a national identity, and is one of the strongest means to create identity in a societal group.¹⁰ The loss of these new Italians could be, and was, taken as a rejection of this new identity and represent a failure of the infant state to create a bond with its people. It was imperative for the survival and success of the new nation to establish a sense of belonging, but

8. Bosworth, *Italy: the Least of the Great Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1979), 39-67.

9. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World*, 120.

10. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 37-46.

also of pride, in the young Italy; emigration did not precipitate the loss of this identity, but typical lines of debate seem to follow this line of thinking.

The desire to be seen as a cohesive, strong nation governed much of Italy's relations with other powers during the nineteenth century. This was essential not just for the defense of the political unit where weakness might invite attack from one of the other European powers; it also would soothe fears for investors, and to allow the new nation to bargain with strength over tariff and other economic issues. Italy had begun as a vassal of Napoleon III's France, the new state having been carved out of the Austrian empire by French, as well as Piedmontese force of arms. It had remained under the wing of the same Great Power until the collapse of France before the Germans in 1870. That their sponsor power could be done away with reinforced the need to appear strong.

Considering the colonial background of the Italian peninsula, and the ever-present economic troubles for the new state, it might seem strange that they would turn to the idea of imperialism. However, these last two trends, national pride and emigration, were the fuel on which Italian imperialism was born. The idea of Italy was, as mentioned before, manufactured. Part of that imagined identity was historical. The Italian nationalists that had worked for *Risorgimento* couched their rhetoric in images of this new Italy's

connection to the greatness of Rome and its empire; it is one of the reasons why most Italians did not see unification as complete until the nation's capital was located in that ancient city. As the decedents of the Romans, Italians had quite large sandals to fill.¹¹ To be a Great Power, to be taken seriously by the other nation-states, Italy had to emulate them. Wealth defined these greater countries. Often this wealth was associated with colonies.

2. To Be a Great Power

The popularity of the colonial enterprise is questionable. During the time of its inception, Italy still had limited suffrage, and support in the government was haphazard, at best. However, the desire to stem the tide of emigration, or at least turn it to the country's advantage was one the first, and most lasting, arguments for colonization.¹² As late as Mussolini's colonial push, Italians were citing the need to direct emigration into the colonies; to give opportunity to the dissatisfied in a new place that was still Italian.¹³ Commercial reasons also were persuasive: colonies provided a place for Italian exports, which were unable to compete against the economies of scale that Britain, France, Germany, and the United States had created. Raw

11. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World*, 94-97.

12. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966), 2-3.

13. Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini* (London: Zed, 1985), 10.

materials that Italy lacked could be found more cheaply in the colonies than to import them from other trade partners. This, in turn, would make Italian goods cheaper and more vigorous on the world market.

The initial colonial interests for Italy concerned the Mediterranean, *nostra mare* ("our ocean") and its trade, once the life blood of the Italian city-states. Italian expatriates lived in international cities like Alexandria in Egypt, but were heaviest in concentration in Tunisia. The idea to turn Tunisia into a protectorate, or to partition the country between France and Italy, was first floated in 1864 by Emilio Visconti Venosta, then foreign minister. The idea went nowhere at the time. Italy was still forming, and had neither gained the Veneto cities (still held by Austria) nor the ultimate goal of Rome and the Papal States (protected by French troops.) The interest in Tunisia, however, continued for the traders in North Africa, and with the craze for colonies first starting to heat up in the 1870s, once again the government began to entertain--peripherally--the notion of a protectorate or colony.¹⁴

The opening of the Suez Canal was met with great fanfare, and after a few years in which to gain business was handling much of the European shipping to India and China; the Mediterranean had once again become a major corridor for trade in Europe. It was a situation that the Italian

14. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World*, 97-98.

administrations of the 1870s viewed with hope. Italian trade through the canal into East Africa started almost immediately.¹⁵ The Rubattino Shipping Company established itself at Assab, on the southern end of the canal in 1869, and was frequently at odds with French merchants.

The Italian desire for empire was, in many ways, a foreign idea. As in advertising, the demand followed opportunity. During the Berlin Conference "[f]oreign diplomatists were not behindhand in suggesting that Italy could find a toe-hold in the scramble for imperial power. Appetite came with offering."¹⁶ Even at this point, however, Italy's aspirations for expansion were focused on the Trentino, the area around Trieste. German and British diplomats attempted to assist in the Italian revanchism, but Austria rebuffed the offers, and suggested Tunis or Tripoli (after Tunis, the largest Italian population and trade partner in Africa) for Italian expansion. A resistance to colonization and the idea that French and Italian interests could coexist in North Africa was expressed through the 1870s by on-again, off-again Prime Minister Carli, but 1881 showed otherwise when France forced the Bey of Tunis to accede to a protectorate.¹⁷

15. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 20.

16. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World*, 97.

17. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 2-5.

Tunis had, as late as 1936, about 94,000 Italians living in the country, and in 1881, the number was approximately 15,000, the bulk of the Europeans in Tunis.¹⁸ The Italians' population and the close proximity of the country to Sicily (90 miles), plus the historical connections with Carthage, had made Tunis if not a colony, a place to which Italy felt it had the right to. French interest in the place had been minimal, but during the 1878 Congress of Berlin, ostensibly called together to settle the 'Eastern Question' of the Balkans, Chancellor Bismarck had suggested Tunisia as a outlet to salve their Gallic pride over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in 1870.¹⁹ At the same time, German diplomat Count von Bulow was offering the suggestion to the Italians. Wesseling recounts the atmosphere of barter at Conference of Berlin: "As Count Corti, the Italian minister of foreign affairs put it, 'Everybody was telling everybody else to take something which belonged to somebody else.'"²⁰

The Congress of Berlin first catalyzed the imperial impulse for Africa in the European countries. For Bismarck, it was a matter of realpolitik: by directing the attentions of the other Great Powers toward Africa, it created

18. Wesseling, *Divide and Rule: The Partition of Africa, 1880-1914* (Westport: Praeger, 1996), 21.

19. Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (New York: Random house, 1991), 110-111.

20. Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, quoting Count Corti on the Congress of Berlin, 20.

some breathing space in which to avoid the inevitable clash between the Russians, Turks, and Austrians (and their allies) over territory in the Balkans. The notion of a French empire in the Sahara was already popular in the Quai d'Orsay since the annexation of Algeria in 1830. The French also saw weakness in their traditional enemy and rival in Africa, Britain, which was suffering setbacks in South Africa during the 1878-9 Zulu and 1879-80 Boer wars.

In February of 1881, word from the French consul, Theodore Roustan, in Tunis informed the foreign ministry of moves by the Italian consul, Licurgo Maccio to gain favor with the Bey of Tunis, Muhammed el-Sadok, for a railway contract in the country...a contract the French were also interested in receiving. The competition between the two sides was conducted through the salons of Maccio's and Roustan's respective mistresses. Intrigue between the two factions led to the dispatching of a French warship, but other than that Paris took no action until word of a 650 million franc loan being floated on the Paris Bourse by the Italian government of Caroli. With a successful loan, the Italians--always cash-strapped--could afford to be more aggressive in the Tunisian matter. The French moved swiftly, sensing their moment slipping away; French troops mobilized from Algeria in April and within

three weeks, had forced the bey to accept a French protectorate, despite the protests of the British and Italians.²¹

The French annexation of Tunisia was a blow to what little imperial goals Italy had. "Without Tunis, the Italian flag would only be carried to places where virtually no 'Italians' lived and Italian expansion in the Mediterranean [*nostra mare*] world would never find a genuine popular base."²² Their one-time ally had showed them the nature of the competition between the colonial powers in Africa; if Italy was to join in the scramble, they would need to move with more speed and determination. The willingness to move decisively on the issue of colonies, however, was still limited to a few entrepreneurs and politicians. Foreign Minister Pasquale Mancini thought of annexing Tripolitania (Tripoli, and other city-states; what is modern-day Libya) to offset the French gains in Tunis in 1883, but the plan was abortive; the expense of empire was still daunting to the new country, and the notion of competing directly with France was dangerous. Tentative steps were taken at the port of Assab, where the Rubattino Company was

21. An excellent account of the salon intrigues over Tunis can be found in Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 109-122.

22. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World*, 98. [*Nostra mare*] is this author's insert to drive home the importance of the Mediterranean in the Italian mind; this ocean was, after all, under the control of Rome, and later Venice, Genoa, and other city-states.

located, in 1882 to protect the lucrative Red Sea trade. The port would serve as the kernel for the latter Eritrea colony.

CHAPTER 2: THE SCRAMBLE FOR EAST AFRICA

1. Carving a Continent

The Scramble for Africa was still a disjointed, haphazard affair in the period from 1879, and the end of the Congress of Berlin, until the Berlin Conference--the international meeting in which Africa was carved into "spheres of influence" by the major powers of Europe--in November 1884. Throughout that period, much of the activity of the Europeans had been directed toward expanding existing commerce and exploration. West Africa saw a tumble of French and British explorers, joined by others under the unlikely employ of the King of Belgium, racing to map and claim trading rights throughout the Bight of Benin and the Congo. In South Africa, British forces were embarrassed by a series of disastrous engagements with the Zulu, such as Isandlwana; and Mujaba Hill against the Boer, were ultimately settled in favor of the British, but the political damage done placed William Ewart Gladstone in the prime minister's office in London. His opposition to colonial adventures stalled British activity (at least officially) in Africa. East Africa was still open for the taking. Explorers from all over Europe and the United States were tramping across the savannahs and mountains, and trade was rapidly increasing between Europe and the East African coast.

Italy, until this point, had emphasized exploration over commerce in North and East Africa. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the missions of various explorers like Orazio Antinori, Odoardo Beccari, Pietro Antonelli, Giuseppe Giulietti, and Antonio Cecchi (who would later play a prominent role in creating the Italian colony in Somalia) provided a surge of writings on the area, yet never reached the fevered popularity that similar works saw in England and France. Backed by groups like Italian Geographic Society, or the African Geographic and Commercial Exploration Society, these explorers traveled extensively in the Horn of Africa and the interior of the Sudan and Ethiopia. Missionary activity involving Italians was never as sweeping as that of the other colonial powers, nor did it serve as a lightning rod for imperialist ambitions. Nearly exclusively Catholic, Italian missionaries were more concerned with the spiritual “colonization” of the Africans. In fact, the animosity between the Church and the new Italian government served to work against the imperial aspirations of the government throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Italian missionaries were oft harsh critics of imperial aspirations, and later of the policies of the Italian colonial administrations.¹

1. Hess covers the non-effects of the Italian missionaries in *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 7-10.

The real voices for colonization were the explorers, many of whom were supported by the Italian African Society, whose first colonial conference was in Naples in early 1885, coinciding with the Berlin Conference. The Italian African Society's interest in colonies paralleled that which swept through Europe in the wake of the Berlin Conference. Pamphlets and books on the subject flooded the market, including in Italy. Most were blatantly nationalistic and emotional on the issue; colonies were seen as a necessity to the modern Great Power, a club to which the Italian government desperately wanted membership. Writers like Pasquale Turiello and Alfredo Oriani advocated the use of force, but were a minority on the issue. Most writers favored alliances with existing colonial powers, and/or peaceful commercial expansion.²

The Berlin Conference marked the turning point in the Scramble for Africa. By delimiting spheres of influence, the European powers confirmed gains made through exploration and commercial adventurism, and laid out a plan for how the Powers would carve up those regions as yet unexploited. German interests in Africa had been solely as a leverage point for Bismarck to gain concessions in Europe, while distracting his opponents with colonial gains. By creating the demand for colonies, however, the chancellor

2. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 6.

inadvertently created the same artificial need for foreign holdings in his own country. Germans wanted colonies to show that their young nation, much like Italy, had the stuff of a Great Power. German commercial interests in southwest Africa led to the gaining protectorates over Togo, the Cameroons, and Namibia, but it was the blank area of East Africa that caught the desire of the German and British; the very area that Italy had showed any interest for.

A compromise that would allow the powers to trade in areas as yet unclaimed was hit upon--the creation of the Conventional Free Trading Areas. The first covered the Congo river basin, the second the "eastern maritime zone," which encompassed the territory from the mountain lakes to the Indian Ocean, and from 5° north to the Zambezi River. In this region, agreements between countries or trading entities were agreed to be binding only to the signatories of treaties, but not on an independent state. This last part was designed to keep the sultan of Zanzibar, who was the erstwhile sovereign of the eastern free trade zone, from being locked into a binding treaty for the whole of his domain. The conference also addressed the obligations of the powers in Africa. Humanitarian groups had pushed for various platforms to be included in the Berlin Conference, including the most pressing - the abolition of the slave trade in Africa. Some attempt was made to also abolish the trade and sale of liquor in Africa, but a binding resolution

on the matter did not surface (as Germany's main export to Africa was hard liquor.)³ Also, a prohibition on the sale of modern weaponry and ammunition was floated and passed by the conference, ostensibly to protect the natives, but much more likely to protect the intended colonists.

Disappointingly, Italy had been left out of the partitioning process. No territories had been specifically laid out for them, including their Eritrean colony. The omission, in the aftermath of the Tunis incident, was ominous; it was also a slight to the prestige and importance of Italy, herself. Germany, a nation younger and more fragmented than Italy, had been given concessions. The slight was enough to convince the prime minister, Crispi, that the time for a more robust colonial policy was in order.

The Berlin Conference had left the Horn of Africa wide open for exploitation. The Conventional Free Trading Area in East Africa abutted the region, but sections of Somalia, and more importantly, the kingdom of Ethiopia, were excluded from the agreement. Somalia's strategic importance to the Eritrean colony was grasped by many Italian imperialists; the country provided another border with Ethiopia--the ancient and still powerful independent kingdom on the highlands abutting Eritrea and Somalia. Ethiopia had grabbed the imagination of many an explorer after the

3. Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 115-117.

legendary city's discovery by Richard F. Burton in 1854.⁴ European explorers and diplomats gradually opened the kingdom to the world, even touching off a conflict between Britain and Abyssinia in 1868. The area had been invaded by the khedive of Egypt in 1875, but he had withdrawn his troops in 1884 with the rise of the Mahdi in the Sudan.

The withdrawal of the troops from Ethiopia and garrisons along the coastline provided the first real opportunity for Italian colonial ambitions in Africa. The then-foreign minister, Pasquale Mancini, was pushing for Italian entry into the Scramble for Africa, despite heavy anti-colonial feelings in the country and government. His reasoning: to find "outlets for the emigration that has now attained alarming heights."⁵ Mancini already had a plan for occupying the whole of the Eritrean coast, including Massawa, a former British/Egyptian garrison town recently abandoned to shift troops to engage Madhist forces in the Sudan. The creation of this Eritrean colony would supply an access point to the interior for trade in Ethiopia. Ethiopian riches, something of a fiction (based heavily on the descriptions of Burton⁶) when

4. Burton describes the Ethiopia of the 1850s in overwhelming detail in *First Footsteps in East Africa, or, An Exploration of Harar* (Toronto: Dover, 1987.)

5. *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati (sessione 15)*, March 17, 1885.

6. Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*.

looked at from European terms of wealth, was the center point to the Mancini plan for colonization.

At about the same time, Antonio Cecchi (1849-96) enters the picture. His 1876 expedition had surveyed the area from Zeila to the Kaffa region of southern Ethiopia. An ardent imperialist, he plied the foreign ministry with extensive reports on the economic possibilities of Northeast Africa. Throughout the early 1880s, he traveled in Somalia and published accounts of his travels along the Benadir, the Somali coastline. Cecchi's colonial aspirations matched those of Mancini, who foresaw an Italian trading sphere in Northeast Africa, embracing Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. By controlling the Benadir coast of Somalia and Eritrea, the Italians could effectively control trade to Ethiopia.⁷ This would also stop French activity in the Red Sea (one of the concerns that prompted the Italians to take official control of Assab,) and would position them to make themselves useful to the British against the Mahdi. Mancini was only partially successful. Internal troubles occupied much of the deputies' attention, and his colonial ambitions were tertiary to their debates.⁸ The Italians were able, however, to occupy Massawa in February of 1885. British and Egyptian troops had been withdrawn from the

7. Covered in a letter from Mancini to Prime Minister Depretis (*Archivio Storico degli ex-Ministerio Africa Italiana* [hereafter ASMAI] pos. 65, f. 1.)

8. *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati (sessione 15.)*

garrisons in the town and retasked to confront the threat from the Mahdi, following the infamous killing of the governor of the Sudan, Charles Gordon. The Italian move sparked an official protest from the khedive in Cairo, but after some wrangling with the British (on behalf of the khedive) the Italians were allowed to hold the area.

2. Antonio Cecchi's Dream

The ports of the Benadir were another matter. The coastline of East Africa, the so-called Conventional Free Trading Area, was under the suzerainty of the sultan of Zanzibar, Said Bargash. The Benadir ports of Kismayu, Brava, Merca, Mogadishu, and Warsheik, as well as the sultanates of Obbia and Mijjertein, were part of this area and were under the de facto protection of the British.⁹

The ports had a long history going back to Ibn Battuta, who saw gloriously rich commercial ports in his travels, but by this time, the once-great cities were long past their prime. The wealth had long ago been drained by Arab traders to Oman, the sultan of which had held command over the region, on and off, since 1698. Arabs living and trading on the coast had intermarried with the Somali, but there was a definite break between the

9. Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 135-137.

Arabs and the Somali; internecine fighting was common, and it was not until 1823 that the Omani tried to exert their power over the area. Sultan Seyyid Said had moved his court to Zanzibar in 1840, and looked to extend his control to the coast. Although he was able to get acknowledgment of his sovereignty from the Arabs and Somali at Mogadishu, he could not truly exert any real power over the area until 1842, primarily through tax collection.

Tax collectors aside, the real power in Mogadishu, a busy port of five thousand souls, was the sultan of Geledi. A Zanzibari military outpost set up in 1871 under *wali* (governor) Selim Yaqub, but he had to pay tribute to Geledi's Ahmed Yusuf (ostensibly Zanzibar's subordinate.) The *wali* system slowly eroded the sultan's direct power; many of the governors worked hand in hand with local sultans or chiefs. An example of the collapse of Zanzibari control occurred in 1882. Mijjertein, one of the local sultanates in Somalia, was having internal troubles and had run maritime trade & salvage on Cape Guardafui to fill its coffers. Yusuf Ali, a brother of then Sultan Osman Mahmud, was *wali* overseeing the salvage operations, and had been keeping goods and profits from the sale of the same to himself. Zanzibar protested his actions and threatened Ali, but in the end he would be bought off. The

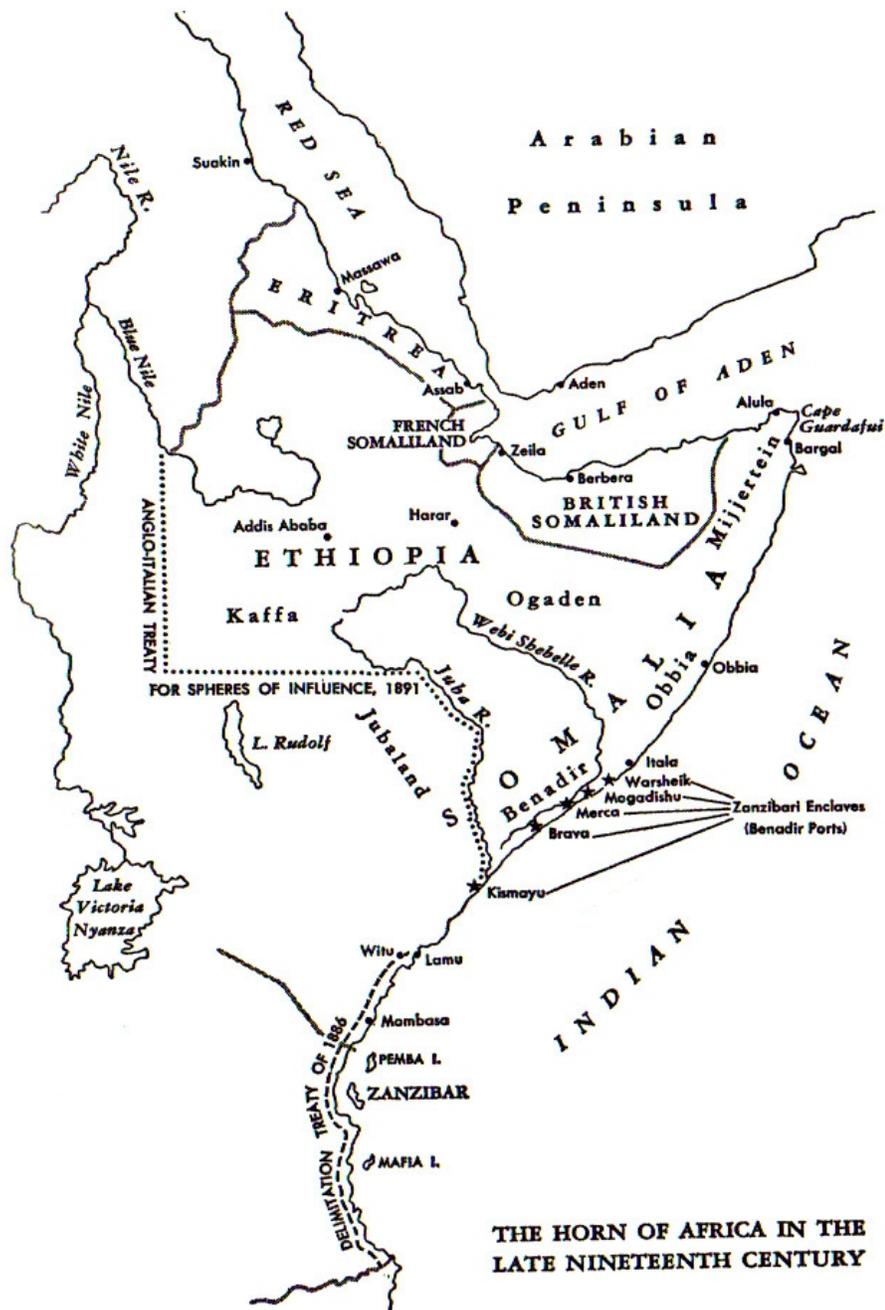


Figure 1: The Benadir Ports. Reproduced from Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, pg 5.

trouble between the sultan and Ali did not end there, however, and the latter established himself at Obbia as sultan and an independent ruler. Talk of war between the two rulers was bandied about, and a peace treaty signed in 1884 did not end the trouble.¹⁰

Into the Somali theater came Antonio Cecchi, dispatched by Mancini to survey the area of the Juba River and determine the state of the countryside *vis-a-vis* commerce and agriculture. Until that time, European activity in the area had been spotty since the 1500s, when the Portuguese would stop at Mogadishu to trade. The English landing parties throughout the early part of the 1800s were raided and driven off by the Somali, save for the Burton expedition in 1854 (although his first try and met with resistance and failure.) The Indian (colonial) government continued to survey the coast, but Burton's successors in the country would be French and German explorers traveling the area in the 1860s.

Cecchi's work in Somalia in 1884-85 began with a visit to Zanzibar and its possessions on the Juba River. His assignment to the area had been motivated by his 1876 expedition, the reports from which Cecchi had enthused about the Juba region and the opportunities it presented for trade and colonization. Accompanied by Commander Matteo Fecarotta of the

10. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 16-20.

waship *Barbarigo*, Cecchi had also instructed to negotiate commercial agreements with Sultan Said Bargash; talk of colonization or white settlement in general was to be avoided. To aid them in gaining an audience with the sultan, and in their negotiations, Cecchi and Fecarotta relied on the most influential of the few Italians trading in Zanzibar, Vincenzo Filonardi.

Filonardi was a trader in cloves and had been a fixture in the region since the opening of the Suez Canal. Supported by the Italian Society for trade with Africa, he operated in the area and had by 1884 managed to gain a loan from the Bank of Rome and other Roman friends to create the V. Filonardi e Compagnia with a starting capital of 180,000 lire. At the time of Cecchi's arrival on the island, his trade was about 233,000 lire (approximately \$50,000) a year, quite a sum for the period. He would be so helpful that Cecchi would recommend him to the post of Italian consul in the sultanate.¹¹

The April 30 meeting with the sultan began well. Said Bargash was willing to negotiate a cession of Kismayu and other Benadir ports, but within days court intrigue by the German diplomats, led by explorer Carl Peters, looked to exclude Italy.¹² Cecchi was convinced by the middle of May that the sultan would not cede territory; the German and Arab interests had

11. A small biography of Vincenzo Filonardi can be found in galley 331-32 of *Italians in Africa* of the *Archivio Storico dell'ex-Ministerio Africa Italiana*.

12. Pakenham gives a brief but detailed view of the Anglo-German activities (and specifically those of Peters) in Zanzibar, *The Scramble for Africa*, 276-296.

effectively shut them out. The commercial treaty, however, was a success and Cecchi returned to Italy after a desultory exploration of the coast in *Barbarigo* and continued to pressure for governmental efforts to tap Somalian trade.¹³

The Italians weren't the only target of Peter's aggressive actions in Zanzibar. The bookish-looking Peters, representing the German Company for Colonization, had secretly been signing treaties with tribesmen all through the countryside of what would become Kenya and Tanganyika--from Lake Victoria across the savannah to Kilimanjaro. His plan was simple: to get the treaties, raise the German flag, and bluff the sultan of Zanzibar with naval might if he should oppose their actions. The British consul, John Kirk, and the chairman of the East Africa Association, William Mackinnon, had pressed the sultan to refuse the Germans their concessions on the coast, but a task force of German warships forced a protectorate on the sultan. An Anglo-Franco-German commission formed quickly to decide the extent of the sultan's coastal holdings, and those areas were delimited into German and British spheres of influence. Peters got what he wanted, but had been outmaneuvered by Lord Salisbury's government. The German East Africa

13. Report on the events at Zanzibar by Cecchi to Foreign Minister Mancini, May 16, 1885. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f. 1.)

Company got the areas it had already acquired, but were not boxed in on the north and south by British spheres of influence.¹⁴

The Benadir ports that the Italians were so interested in, were included in this treaty, signed December 4, 1886. Although it fell under their sphere of influence, the British seemed unconcerned with the Benadir. Forced into carving up his possessions, the sultan began looking to play the Europeans one off the other. Remembering the German maneuvering to exclude the Italians from Somalia, the sultan indulged his dislike of the Germans and allowed Filonardi to begin pressing for concessions to Italy to spite them. In September, Said Bargash offered Italy the Kismayu concession, an offer similar to the one he had made to Cecchi before the meddling of the Germans. The sultan had learned that Somali had been refusing to aid Germans attempting to trade or explore in the area, and he saw this as an opportunity to break German hold over his coastal territories.¹⁵ Filonardi reported on Oct 20, 1886 that the sultan "...would be pleased if Italy took possession of the Somali region [and]...would support it wholeheartedly."¹⁶

The offer, however, was declined by the Italian government. Crispi, despite his pro-imperial stance, had to deal with a Parliament which refused

14. Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 276-296.

15. Letter from Crispi to DiRobilant, September 10, 1886. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.9.)

16. Filonardi to Crispi, October 20, 1886. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.4.)

to use force to make colonial policy. The sultan withdrew his offer for Italy to assume control of the Benadir. Negotiations would continue from 1887-93 for a cession of the Benadir ports, but more from the standpoint of trade.

Filonardi saw the possibility of a concession as an opportunity to expand his trade in the area, and worked to keep Italian interest up. Seeing the lack of will to use force to wield in the area, Filonardi speculated that Italy would have to operate in concert with the British or Germans. Since relations between Italy and Britain had been strong since the *Risorgimento*, and Anglo-Italian cooperation had already succeeded in the creation of the Eritrean colony, Filonardi viewed them as the preferable choice.

Problems in the concession negotiations were often due to misunderstandings or missteps on the part of the Italians. The death of Said Bargash on May 15, 1888 was one of these mistakes, combining both elements. Filonardi was to present the new sultan, Said Khalifa, with a letter of introduction from the king of Italy, but the month of Ramadan had suspended all official business. Filonardi's letter warning of the presentation had not been responded to. Informing the new British consul, Charles Euan-Smith, that the sultan had deliberately insulted the king, Filonardi

suggested an appropriate apology should include the ceding of Kismayu to Italy.¹⁷

Filonardi's impatience is understandable: his business had grown to about million lire a year, 87 percent of which was clove trade. If he were able to enter into trade in Somalia, he might stand to gain the addition of another million in capital from his investors in Rome. His zeal caused him to stumble in a meeting with the sultan on June 5, 1888, when he demanded the unconditional cession of Kismayu in apology for the insult to Italy. The sultan had protested that the slight had been unintentional and wished to send a letter of apology. He wisely refused to cede the port town, and Filonardi lowered the Italian flag at the consulate the next morning, severing official ties with Zanzibar. The gamble was a failure. Both British and German consuls backed the sultan and the British went so far as to suggest that they would defend Kismayu from Italian aggression. Bismarck had no problem with an Italian concession freely given, but "Germany would not remain indifferent if that locality were to pass into Italian hands by violent means."¹⁸ Italy would not be able to stand against these powers; any colonial

17. Report by Ewan-Smith to Salisbury, June 4, 1888. (London: Foreign Office Paper 84.1907 #125.)

18. Ambassador Edoardo de Launey, Berlin, to Crispi, June 8, 1888. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.7.)

enterprise would have to take place under the aegis of cooperation with one power or the other.

3. The IBEA and the Italian Company

As mentioned before, the Italians had been tightening their relationship with Britain over this time, having started with the Eritrean issue. Central to success of the Italian's goals in Zanzibar was William MacKinnon, chairman of East African Association. Following the dust-up over the German East Africa Company's moves on the East African coast, the Lord Salisbury had turned to MacKinnon to handle the East African Association was granted. In exchange for an annual rent equal to the customs receipts of the area, the EAA would handle the administration of what became Kenya. The concession had spurred Her Majesty's government to issue MacKinnon a royal charter, allowing the EAA to incorporate as the Imperial British East Africa Company (hereafter IBEA.)

The IBEA's main competition was the German East Africa Company (GEAC). Despite large capital infusions, IBEA could not operate a concession on the Kenyan coast and in the Benadir. Cooperation between Filonardi and the Italians on one side, IBEA and the British on the other side would be

mutually beneficial. On August 2, 1888, Mackinnon addressed the IBEA opining that "...in the undertaking to civilise [sic] East Africa England would have the co-operation not only of German but also of a young Nation which demonstrates itself to be the heir to the wisdom and vigour [sic] of Rome."¹⁹ The Italian *charge d'affair* in London, Tommaso Catalani, also informed Prime Minister Crispi that the IBEA plan had the support of Lord Salisbury, the prime minister.²⁰

Mackinnon's plan for rapprochement between Italy and the sultan was to obtain a fifty-year concession for the IBEA on the Benadir ports, with full administrative powers and right similar on to that on the coastal strip. The company would then transfer control of the ports to an Italian East Africa Company, sponsored by the Italian government, with terms identical to the original concession. Kismayu and the adjoining Juba River would be under joint control, with the river as the boundary between British and Italian spheres of control.²¹

Crispi consulted Cecchi, at that time the consul to Aden, on the plan. The explorer was unenthusiastic, particularly over the condominium of

19. Ambassador Catalani, London, to Crispi, August 8, 1888 (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.8.)

20. *Ibid* (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.8.)

21. Mackinnon's proposal are covered in an August 2, 1888 letter from Catalani to Crispi. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.8.)

Kismayu, and a lingering distrust over possible British involvement in his 1885 failure to secure a concession. Additionally, no Italian East Africa Company existed - the most likely candidate to handle the concession was *V Filonardi e Compagnia*. Cecchi's concerns, and his discussions with Filonardi of the situation, revolved around the possible competition with the British company. Co-existence in Kismayu could hamper Filonardi's ability to raise the capital necessary to the venture.²²

However, before action could be taken on the plan, Said Khalifa announced a refusal to grant any more concessions in his territories. In addition to his ire and fear of the Germans and other European powers, Zanzibari Arab traders were opposed to the concessions - particularly to the aggressive GEAC - which broke their monopoly on trade on the coastline. Their animosity was exacerbated by attempts by the British consul at pressing for the restrictions mandated by the Berlin Conference on slavery and arms trading in the region. On top of this, anti-German uprisings had broken out on the coast in August 1888, and all parties waited to see what the end result would be. Crispi and Salisbury both decided to wait until the trouble passed

22. Cecchi to Crispi, August 5, 1888. (ASMAI pos. 55/2, f.8.)

and the time was more advantageous before broaching the subject again with the sultan.²³

Future cooperation with Italy on the Benadir matter was promised from IBEA director George Mackenzie and Consul-General to Zanzibar Euan-Smith, and Mackinnon continued to be actively supportive, but there was a catch: the Italians wanted Cecchi withdrawn from Zanzibar. The British found his reports overly-enthusiastic, his manner bombastic; he also had misled the foreign ministry on events in Zanzibar.²⁴ Mackinnon wanted to get the project on track. He had had a vision of a massive East African and Zanzibar Company, including capital of £50 million, but the crown would not support the scale of his scheme. The Italians were necessary to realize his East African plan, even to a smaller extent, and he was eager to help them gain their concession. The Italians acceded to the British demands and Cecchi was quickly reassigned to survey the Benadir coast.

Without Cecchi upsetting the sultan (as he had with his predecessor) and stalling the British negotiations, the IBEA was able to gain a new concession in October 9, 1888--the coastal areas were transferred to the IBEA with the power to levy taxes, regulate trade, and appoint administrative

23. Memo from Sir J. Lister, Foreign Office, to DiRobilant, August 31, 1888. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.9.)

24. Hess, *Italian colonialism in Somalia*, 23.

officers; courts and administration needed to be conducted in the name of the sultan and under his flag. Having won the concession on the coast within the British sphere of influence, work then began on wresting a Benadir concession. The initial negotiations were heartening and it looked as if the agreement would signed by December. So confident were the parties in the speed of the negotiations that Catalani had signed an agreement for the subcontracting of the Benadir to the Italian company on the December 8, 1888. The document was predated Aug. 1, 1888.²⁵

Almost as if on queue, Cecchi arrived once more in Zanzibar from his survey mission with an alternate plan for a peaceful concession or an occupation of Kismayu by force. Cecchi's proposals were in response to the widening revolts against the Germans on the coast, and he had (mis)seen the opportunity to oust the Germans for good. The addition of the irksome Cecchi into the mix, however, derailed the concession. The sultan had been on the verge of signing the treaty and Cecchi was called to accept a letter to the Italian king. Cecchi claimed the sultan had been insolent, refused to accept the letter...the letter with the agreement to the concession. The sultan, understandably offended, still tried to send the letter through the British consul. London, which had been concerned with the Italian moves in Eritrea

25. Catalani to Crispi, December 9, 1888. (ASMAI pos. 55/1, f.9.)

and the Sudan, used Cecchi's move to stall on the concession. The agreement between the sultan and the IBEA would not be signed for another seven months.

Despite the break in progress in the talks in Zanzibar, the Italian colonial moves had not slowed. A crisis in the northeast of Somalia created opportunity, where Yusuf Ali, the sultan of Obbia, had arrived in Zanzibar to request the protection of Italy. A dispute between the sultans of Obbia and Zanzibar regarding a little village, Mruruti, near Zanzibari-held Warsheik had spurred Ali to turn to the Italians to support his claim. Filonardi recognized the opportunity to strengthen their position in the area and informed Crispi so.²⁶ Crispi immediately ordered a naval response, attempting to head off French naval vessels thought to have been heading for the problem area (but in actuality to survey a Russian expedition at Tadjoura), "for the purpose of declaring the Italian protectorate, and, according to the circumstances, to proceed to the effective occupation of territory."²⁷ Filonardi left for Obbia at the end of January, and by February 8, Yusuf Ali had placed his sultanate under Italian protection for an annual subsidy of 1200 Maria Theresa thalers.²⁸

26. Filonardi at Zanzibar to Crispi, December 17, 1888. (*Libro Verde*, doc. 2, 27.)

27. Order to Commander, *Staffetta*, from Naval Ministry, January 5, 1889. (*Libro Verde*, doc. 3, pg. 28.) French mission purpose covered in a letter from Catalani, London, to Crispi dated February 10, 1889. (ASMAI pos. 59/1, f.1.)

28. The Maria Theresa thaler was originally an Austrian silver coin .833 fine, mostly minted in the Levantine and used in Mediterranean and African trade since the late

Filonardi then headed to Aden to report the situation to Cecchi--who had once again been reassigned--and the British authorities, before returning to Obbia two weeks later. There he found Arab merchants, upset over losing their trade monopoly, had been stirring up insurrection against the sultan. Filonardi's popularity with the Somali, however, helped to quell a possible rebellion and Yusuf Ali, grateful for Italian aid, convinced his son, sultan Osman Mahmud of Mijertein to accept an Italian protectorate. The negotiations were not immediately successful, but an agreement was reached on April 7 that was similar to the Obbia one, just with an increase of subsidy to 1800 thalers. Yusuf Ali, of course, had to be compensated the same amount. The Berlin Conference signatory powers were informed of the protectorates over Obbia and Mijertein on Mar. 2 and May 16 respectively.²⁹

The Italian press barely covered the incident, and only the nationalistic *La Nazione* in Florence mentioned the possibilities of the Obbia for a coaling stations and blockading the slave trade.³⁰ The Germans, however, were upset by the turn of events, and newspapers like *Kreuz Zeitung* felt that Italy owed Germany some form of compensation; *Kölnische Zeitung* suggested

1700s.

29. Mijertein treaty signed April 7, 1889 is included in *Libro Verde*, doc. 11, annex 1, 40.)

30. *La Nazione*, March 17, 1889, sec. 1, 3.

Germany had prior claims in the area.³¹ However, there were no existing treaties with the rulers. In fact, the Germans had been offered a protectorate over Mijertein in 1885, but the offer had been ignored.³²

The Italian versions of the Treaty of Ucciali, negotiated by Gen. Antonio Baldissera after the occupation of the Eritrean hinterland on the Ethiopian border, set the stage for future problems for Italy. In that version, which was to solve problems over the border between Italian protectorates and Ethiopia, established protectorates not just over Obbia and Mijertein, but Ethiopia as well. The underhanded means of extending Italian influence convinced the British of the need for delimitation between Italian and British spheres of influence, to prevent just such an 'interpretation' of the boundaries between the two colonial enterprises. Filonardi met with Mackinnon at the IBEA offices in London to approve a draft agreement on the Ethiopian issue, as well as the Juba/Kismayu line of demarcation. The British were firm on the condominium over Kismayu, a situation that made Filonardi uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the agreement was signed on Aug. 3, 1889 (see

31. *Kreuz Zeitung*, April 8, 1889, pp. 24; *Kolnische Zeitung*, March 23, 1889, 21.

32. Ambassador de Launey, Berlin, to Crispi, March 5, 1889. (ASMAI pos. 59/1, f.8.)

Appendix I.)³³ Four weeks later, Said Khalifa signed the concession of the Benadir ports to the IBEA.

Crispi's imperialistic policies appeared to be a success. By November 15, 1889, Italians held a protectorate over the east coast of Africa from the northern boundary of the territory of Kismayu to the parallel 2° 30' of north latitude. The northern border of the new protectorate ended in the north at the border of the Obbia protectorate; the whole of Somalia from the Juba to Cape Guardafui.³⁴

Crispi's enthusiasm was premature. The British parliament still had to approve the deal. Lord Salisbury has concerns about the fourth clause, setting out the boundaries between British and Italian areas. The deed of transfer was signed November 18, 1889, but Foreign Office concerns over the exact borders caused negotiations on the issue to continue into 1891, when the demarcation was finalized.³⁵ Despite the agreement being concluded, the actual transfer of the Benadir ports did not occur for another four years. Changes in the governments of Italy and Zanzibar continually held up the transfer of the ports from the IBEA to an Italian Company's control.

33. Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty* (London: HM Stationary Officer, 1909), vol III, 1088-1091.

34. Crispi to Italian deputies, November 15, 1889. (ASMAI pos. 55/3, f.20.)

35. Signing of the agreement between the IBEA and the "Italian Company" announced in the *London Post*, November 21, 1889.

Horse-trading between France, England, and Germany settled the shape of European control over eastern Africa in this period. Britain took on Zanzibar as a protectorate in November 4, 1890, and this event allowed the British to move along on establishing the sphere of influence of Italy.

Filonardi, meanwhile, visited the two protectorates and the Benadir enclaves in December 1889 and May 1890. He provided the sultan of Obbia with gifts of rifles and cartridges to defend against his anti-Italian elements. His visits included the first made by an Italian vessel, *HMV Volta*, at Warsheik, where the first Italians were killed by hostile Somali. In March, 1891, Filonardi took possession of the area from Warsheik to Obbia and began surveying the area for a suitable port of operations. Local chiefs suggested *el-Athaleh*, and Filonardi agreed, renaming the town Itala. To avoid troubles like those at Warsheik, he stationed a garrison of eighty Arab *ashkari* in the town. In Mogadishu, he signed multiple treaties of friendship with local leaders.

Crispi's government fell in February 1891 and the new prime minister, Antonio di Rudini, came to power. His slogan of "stay at home" describes well his attitude toward colonialism; he was much more concerned with the poor economic conditions in Italy. The expense of colonization was already too high in his opinion, but the desire to remain close to Britain required him

to continue work on the delimitation of the spheres of influence in Somalia.³⁶

On March 24, 1891, diRudini and Lord Duferin signed the agreement, dividing the spheres in the middle of the Juba River from the Indian Ocean to 6° N, then along to longitude 35° E. Kismayu remained in British hands.

The Italians had only to notify the new sultan, Said Ali, of the new protocol, fix the amount of the annual rent, and to form an Italian East African company. After the disastrous relations with Said Khalifa, the Italians were understandably nervous about dealing with the new sultan. However, the new ruler was completely under the thumb of the British and the acting-consul, Cottoni, found Said Ali was neither interested in the arrangements and had little knowledge of even where the areas involved in the concession were.³⁷ He was, however, terribly interested in the rents that could be squeezed from the Italians for the Benadir ports.

Discussions about the rent took place in December 1892. First an assessment of the annual trade of the ports had to be estimated. The sultan's representative used documents to prove Zanzibar received 235,102 rupees for the year ending in May 1892, but that it had been a poor one due to disease. Using this, he asked for a rent of 235,000 plus 50 percent of the customs. The

36. Comments on colonization's costs by diRudini are from *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati (sessione 17)*, May 5, 1891.

37. Consul Cottoni, Zanzibar, to diRudini, September 2, 1891. *Libro Verde*, doc. 47, 90-91.

Italian acting-consul countered with 79,000 thalers (about 168,000 rupees.) The sultan brought up an offer by an Indian merchant offering the sultan 200,000 rupees for the concession. After much haggling, the amount of 200,000 for the first year, with 160,000 rupees annually afterward was agreed to. In August 12, 1892, the concession of the Benadir ports to Italy was signed. Italy now had clear title to all of Somalia.³⁸

Yet another government in Italy, that of Giovanni Giolitti, began negotiations with Filonardi to take charge of the concession. Giolitti was not in favor of colonial adventurism. Italy was suffering through another depression, and Africa was the first place that the new prime minister turned to in order to cut expenses. His foreign minister, Benedetto Brin, for this reason worked to postpone the approval of concession by the Italian parliament. Cottoni warned that the British might choose to farm out the concession to an Indian merchant, Kanji Ranchipur, if they did not move. Brin's response was vague, that he favored the *status quo*.³⁹

In December, the British agent in Zanzibar lost patience. He opined that the issue should be postponed to allow the Italians to put their house in order. The ambassador in Rome was more direct: Italy's lack of surety "...has,

38. Finazzo, *L'Italia nel Benadir* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1966), 225-233.

39. Cottoni, Zanzibar, to diRudini, November 9, 1892; Brin to Cottoni, November 11, 1892. (ASMAI pos. 55/5, f.39.)

it appears, brought about an absolute cessation of trade, the loss consequent on which is already severely felt by the Zanzibari Government, and will also ultimately be injurious to Italy, if the King's government should decide to take up the concession."⁴⁰ The result was to push Brin into action; the Italian ambassador in London suggested that postponement could not continue indefinitely.⁴¹ In March, Said Ali died and his successor, Said Hamed, though willing to grant a concession, was disturbed by the Italian procrastination and reduced the initial concession to a three-year period.

At the same time, Filonardi had made his first overture to the government. He could gain 1.5 million in lire from *Credit Mobiliare* if he could gain a government subsidy of 300,000 lire annually for twenty-five years.⁴² Tornielli did not like the idea of a subsidy,⁴³ but Filonardi was backed by Cecchi, who also provided inflated and imaginative descriptions of the commercial opportunities of the Benadir and Somalia.⁴⁴ On May 15, 1893, Brin and Filonardi signed the contract for administration of the Benadir with a government subsidy of 300,000 lire and an additional 50,000 for Itala. The

40. Ambassador Lord Vivian, Rome, to Brin, December 31, 1892. (ASMAI pos. 55/5, f. 39.)

41. Ambassador Tornielli, London, to Brin, January 23, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.1.)

42. Filonardi to Brin, January 24, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.1.)

43. Tornielli to Brin, February 23, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.1.)

44. Cecchi to Brin February 24, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.1.)

Filonardi Company was to deliver the subsidy to Yusuf Ali and Osman Muhmud. The Italian government also had to agree to a 50,000 rupee penalty, should they abandon the concession within the period of three years; double that if they decamped in the event of war, and went into effect July 16, 1893.⁴⁵

Despite the stalling of the Italians, the IBEA administrator in Kismayu, Robert Simons, had been conducting treaties with the Somali chiefs in the territory that was to be Italian. Simons signed these treaties on standard IBEA forms, but wrote "This document to be exchanged later on for one duly signed by Italian authorities." Wherever "Imperial British East Africa Company" appeared, Simons wrote in "Royal Italian East Africa Company." His signature was slugged, "on behalf of the Royal Italian Company, by authority of Sig. Brusuti, Acting Italian Consul at Zanzibar."⁴⁶

With everything in place at long last, in September 1893, Filonardi arrived to take possession of the Benadir ports.

45. Brin to Filonardi, May 11, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.1.)

46. Protection treaty with the Somali sheiks of villages Haji Ali and Lanshunua. (ASMAI pos. 55/6, f.42.)

CHAPTER 3: BABY STEPS: THE FILONARDI COMPANY (1893-1896)

1. An Uncertain Undertaking

Foreign Minister Brin had made it clear to the Filonardi that the Italian government wanted neither financial nor military liability in the colony; he was specifically instructed "...not [to] entail any financial burden for the State Exchequer..."¹ The example of the IBEA, which has been seen aided in the creation of the "Royal Italian East Africa Company," was an inspiration to Filonardi in his administration. That the cost to the home country could be transferred to private enterprise by having the colony administered by charter company had many examples. It was something the British had been doing since the creation of the chartered companies that ran the affairs of the American colonies, in the 1600s, or the East India Company. Even though the EIC had been dismantled in 1859 and the British crown had taken direct control of affairs on the subcontinent, the preferred method of doing imperial business in Africa was the chartered company. It was a model that the other European powers had been following on the Dark Continent.

Brin's instructions to Filonardi included the following: all treaties that the concessioner made had to be approved by the government - partially to

1. Brin to Filonardi, June 15, 1893. *Libro Verde*, doc. 71, 121.

keep a tight control on the purse strings. Italian law was to be applied to Italian nationals, native law (the Muslim *Shari'a*) for the Somali and Arab population. Native law was an issue to be put aside for the time being; Brin and others in Rome felt the matter could be studied in the event of a permanent concession--showing even with the adoption of the colony Italy's lack of surety in the enterprise.

Another example of the lack of trust in the mission, begun just before the concession, was approved by the Italian government, was the appointment of Count and Lieutenant Giovanni Lovatelli to study the Benadir situation and report to Rome. Until this point, the main source of information for the government on Somalia had been through either Cecchi or Filonardi, both men having reasons for favoring colonization made their reports suspect to Brin. Other than these two architects of the colony, the only recent information came from a mission sent to introduce Italian influence in Somalia under Commander Giorgio Sorrentino. He put together an extensive report on the population, their customs, and political situation in the port areas, as well as on the opportunities for trade. He found no political unity, each tribe ruled by local chiefs or sultans. Trade in Merca was almost nonexistent, disease was rife in Brava.

Lovatelli had been a liaison with the IBEA at Kismayu, and had been a member of several expeditions under the guise of that company. He had even saved the life of the British consul during combat with Somali at a trading station. His report declared the company's likelihood for success was aided by its small size, and pointed out that the larger companies, like the IBEA and the German East African Company were having difficulties. The German company, in particular, had gone bankrupt and only after reforming as a purely commercial enterprise had it been successful.

His assessment of the companies based solely on capital does not explain the troubles of these companies, rather it was more likely the nature of the rule they imposed. The IBEA had a much more stable political and commercial situation, having followed the East India Company model of allowing native custom and civil law to continue without interruption, focusing almost solely on trade and some level of defense, and allowing the civilizing mission of the natives to missionary endeavors. The German governance in East Africa, much like in Cameroon, Togo, and elsewhere was intensely invasive; white settlers and military interfered much more with the day-to-day lives of the natives, and brutality of the type frequently attributed to colonial rule in the works of later historians was much more likely to occur in those areas.

This is covered, to a certain extent, in Lovatelli's recommendation that "...the Filonardi Company [should]...let matters stand as they are...reforms and change would only arouse the distrust of the natives..." The Somali, in general, he found amenable to Italian administration, save for Arab traders who viewed the loss of their trade monopoly as devastating. This disposition would aid the company in its work, Lovatelli thought, but he also thought them "...not men, but children, and it is necessary to treat them as such."²

Another area of concern was the dislike imparted to Lovatelli of Abu Bakr bin Oudh, Filonardi's interpreter, by a Somali sheik Faki Addu. The interpreter was connected with the Arab traders of Merca, already a trouble spot, and the sheik warned that Filonardi's dependence on the man could draw the Italians into Arab-Somali hostilities. The Somali had viewed the Italians as a means to break the Arab hold over the region; a man so well-disposed to the Arabs might be seen as an impediment to that. Despite this warning from Lovatelli, Filonardi would continue to use Abu Bakr for the remainder of the company's concession.³

While Lovatelli was concerning himself with Filonardi's personnel, Filonardi himself was watching the situation at Kismayu with worry. An

2. Lovatelli's May 27, 1893 report. (ASMAI pos. 55/6, f.41.)

3. Lovatelli to Filonardi, July 12, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 55/6, f.42.)

uprising by the Somali had garnered a strong British response. Filonardi fretted that the Somali might try to escape British action by crossing into the Italian sphere of control. This crossing of tribal boundaries could engender a trouble between the Somali and weaken the Italian administration in the eyes of the colonized. He wired the government to suggest Italian aid in setting a garrison at Jumbo, on the left bank of the Juba across from Kismayu. Coming only a few months after his instructions from Brin, it would seem likely that Filonardi already realized the cost of the concession might outstrip his ability to pay for it.⁴

2. Administration of the Benadir

On September 21, 1893, nevertheless, the change of authority proceeded. Various *wali* and other tribal sheiks were summoned to Zanzibar for the ceremony investing Filonardi with rule over the Benadir ports. During this time, Filonardi drafted the provisional ordinances for the concession. All uncultivated lands outside the towns, if their owners could not be properly ascertained, were to become the property of the Italian crown. The government also had the exclusive use or granting of concessions to exploit mineral deposits. Permission to fell trees for timber in the forests

4. Filonardi report of July 12, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 55/6, f.42.)

along the Juba and Webi Shebelle rivers would have to come from the company, effectively controlling the main source of fuel for the natives. The slave trade was prohibited and the abolition of the practice was to be phased in. Regulation of justice, specifically native law, was covered in Article VI: "...the law shall be applied in accordance to the standards of the Muslim *shari'a*..." He followed on this with the method for the administration of the courts. The company would appoint *qadi* (judges) and only the rulings of those approved *qadi* would be considered binding. Registers of proceedings and sentences would have to be maintained and court costs, derived from the nature of the case and usually falling between half and one Maria Theresa thaler, would fall on those involved. The Receipts of these costs would be divided between the company, local *wali*, and the *qadi*.⁵

Customs and tariffs for the ports were also set. A low import and high export tax was designed to increase company profits; a five percent *ad velorem* tariff, save on transit goods, coal, provisions, and agricultural or infrastructure-oriented equipment was imposed. Alcoholic products were given a 25 percent import tax, with beer and wine under 20 percent alcohol by volume were taxed at the regular level. Exportation of tobacco was hit at

5. Quote in paragraph, as well as the information of the same is from the *Provision Ordinance for the Government and Administration of Territory Under the Protection of Italy*. Filonardi report #171, September 16, 1894. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.3.)

25 percent; ivory, copal, rubber 15 percent, and cloves--Filonardi's main trade good--a whopping 30 percent. Zanzibari goods were excluded from the tax to prevent double dipping (the Filonardi Company being, ostensibly, a contractor of that government.) All ships had to receive a certificate of permission before unloading, and the company could then inspect for contraband. Included in this was a ban on the importation of firearms and ammunition, a central piece of the Brussels Act of 1890, Article VIII.⁶

The administration was designed to allow for indirect rule where possible, to cut expenses. *Wali* and *qadi* were central to administration in the territory, but the company still ruled by decree where it was necessary. Of note, there was no effort to unify the area as a national or even singular entity. Filonardi's goal was to keep the administrative engines simple and small, hence reducing costs. The capitalistic nature of this rule, however, did afford the average Somali a great deal of independence from the colonial government. This suggestion of government rather than the imposition, he hoped, would avert troubles like those of the British at Kismayu, and keep the countryside quiet and profitable.

His hopes were soon shaken. During his tour of the ports aboard *Staffetta* (under the command of Commander Incoronato), which began with

6. *Provisional Ordinance for the Government and Administration of Territory Under the Protection of Italy*. Filonardi report #171, September 1894. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.3.)

his arrival on October 5, a landing party at Brava ventured inland to assess the situation. Led by Captain Ugo Ferrandi, and manned by Lieutenant Maurizio Talmone (ship's surgeon), another crew member, thirty *ashkari*, and two men from Brava's five tribes, they headed toward Bardera. Within ten hours march, they found that internecine war was a constant in the countryside. Damage to infrastructure, like the canal at Webi Gof which had been blocked, impeded trade, and the agriculture was non-existent.

Lieutenant Talmone's assessment was nevertheless optimistic: "Even if our Benadir establishments should not produce immediate results...it will not have been unpleasant for us to have ben among the pioneers who prepared for future generations of Italians a convenient outlet for the overflow of our people and our products."⁷ The view of Somalia as a dumping ground for Italian emigration and exports was still central to the goal of the colony. Talmone's assessment of the peaceable colonization of Somalia was crushed two days later at Merca, where he was killed by a Somali spear. He had been attacked while coming ashore by a Somali who thought he could prove Somali superiority to the Italians. The murderer was killed by an *ashkari* moments after his attack. This direct assault to the colonial rule, however,

7. Talmone to Commander, *Staffetta*, November 10, 1893. *Libro Verde*, doc. 81, annex I, 178-180.)

could not have but required a response, had it been Italian or Zanzibari officials in command of the expedition.

Filonardi used a Muslim punishment - the removal of the hand that threw the spear from the dead Somali. The *wali* of Merca was replaced after the city was shelled and the inhabitants disarmed by *Staffetta's* crew. The Filonardi Company would maintain a garrison at Merca of 280 *ashkari* under the command of the new *wali*, Suleiman bin Hamed. The bombardment of Merca had another unintended consequence--the Bimal tribesmen stopped bringing their good for trade in the city. Food shortages and inflation followed, and Filonardi was forced to send grain to Merca to stave off starvation. The city would remain a problem area for the company.⁸ Filonardi, who suffered from gastric troubles, fever, and jaundice during the tour, was deeply depressed by the action, as he intimates in his report on the incident.

The cost of concession was already beginning to show. Instead of a commercial and administrative enterprise, the company might be forced to adopt a paramilitary function, as well. This should not have been unexpected. All of the colonial companies that had administrative duties (of which law enforcement is one) ultimately needed to use force of arms to keep

8. Filonardi report to Foreign Office, November 10, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.3.)

the peace, whether in India, Southeast Asia, or elsewhere. Filonardi, however determined to avoid the traps of past corporate administrations he might have been, had no choice but to bend to necessity. To defend the prestige of the company - something central to maintaining good order with the natives and the Arabs traders still hoping to destroy the rule of the company and gain back their trading rights - he realized that the construction of garrisons and town walls was needed. The cost he estimated at 25,000 thalers (or roughly £2,500 of the period) - a large investment that could not be amortized over a longer period due to the short period of the concession and the lack of guarantee of an extension. He requested, in his position as consul-general to Zanzibar, the Italian government subsidize the construction with an advance of 150,000 lire, half the subsidy for the next year.⁹

This request sent warning signals to the government, never overly enthusiastic about the concession. The call for extra money came at roughly the same time as *Staffetta's* captain reported on the Somali situation. Incoronato found the Somali "...untamable and lazy..." and "...preferring to live by war and rapine..." He found the coast unsuited to the creation of ports, with the exception of Kismayu. Tribal hostility, coupled with the relative isolation of company facilities and limited capital might make Italy

9. Filonardi report #90, December 31, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.3.)

"...obliged to intervene..." in the rule of the colony.¹⁰ His conclusions were straightforward:

Somalia is not a good country for emigration; Europeans could only be supervisors, not workers.

Cotton, though of poor quality, might provide a good export crop; meat and grain might also be exported to Eritrea.

The so-called port of Itala is useless.

Not much can be expected from the company, inasmuch as it lacks serious guarantees and the act of concession is such that no one would want to expend large sums. Yet there is promise of trade with the interior, especially if a station were set up at Lugh on the Juba."¹¹

Since capital was already committed to the enterprise, the commander suggested that the government might be compelled to take the place of the

10. Incoronato report #90. (ASMAI POS. 75/1, F.3.)

11. Incoronato's final report to the Naval Ministry January 10, 1894. *Libro Verde* doc. 82, 181-183.

company in administering the colony. Incoronato's assessment of the difficulties in the country were further confirmed by Commander Edoardo Ruelle of the gunboat *Volturno*, on assignment to explore the Benadir, however, he differed on the matter of the company. "...it is indispensable that above all else the company establish itself securely and not require the government to intervene at any time to put down revolts, avenge insults, or subjugate rebels..."¹²

3. In Too Deep

Filonardi had been managing the concession as well as he could. His wide-ranging knowledge of the area from his time as a trader and as the consul-general, aided him in trying to improve not only the commercial situation, but the lives and safety of the people of the concession (one could argue solely to improve the profitability of the company, but that would seem unfair for a man who had lived so long amongst the Somali and Zanzibari.) However, customs revenues were not sufficient to stem the hemorrhage of funds from the company; the Filonardi Company was in dire straits. He

12. Ruelle report of December 1, 1893. *Libro Verde* doc. 83, 187-188.

appealed to the foreign ministry and the Zanzibari court to lower the annual rent, which took up about 60 percent of the company's budget *per annum*.¹³

Worse for Filonardi, Giolitti's government fell over peasant revolts in Sicily, and Crispi--the imperialist--once more formed a government. Despite the new government's interest in colonies, Crispi's foreign minister, Baron Alberto Blanc, was unsympathetic to Filonardi's plight. His response to the request for a renegotiation of the rent was clear: "You can make no modifications to the contract with the sultan of Zanzibar. That is the Royal Government's concern. Please send me your resignation as consul."¹⁴

Removed as consul, the oversight on Filonardi's company would fall to the new consul. While Filonardi threw himself heavily into the management of his company, hoping to rescue it, and incessantly called on the government to cancel the contract it could no longer hope to fulfil. Unable to mount adequate defenses, the government had "...contributed directly to destroying its credit, its morale, and its prestige among the natives..."¹⁵

The situation was serious enough to attract the attention of their British partners in Somalia. British ambassador R.C. Ford inquired "whether the Italian Government are [sic] contemplating withdrawing from the Ports of

13. Filonardi report #221, December 31, 1893. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, F.3.)

14. Blanc to Filonardi, March 17, 1894. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.5.)

15. Filonardi to Blanc, April 2, 1894 (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.5.)

the Benadir...¹⁶ This questioning of the Italian commitment was taken by the Crispi government as a blow to Italian prestige. There was no way, at this point, that they could retire from Somalia without a loss of face. In response, Blanc appointed as consul to Zanzibar Antonio Cecchi, and charged him with investigating the finances and operations of the Filonardi Company. He also charged Lovatelli, in Aden to accompany a British hunting expedition in Somalia, as a special envoy empowered to make treaties of protection with Somali chiefs inside the Italian sphere of influence.

Cecchi, who has been such a thorn in the side to the British and the deceased sultan Said Khalifa, was unhappy with his new appointment, but more so with the creation of Lovatelli as special envoy. He found the situation insulting and wrote "...I know of no reason why I should tolerate [it]..."¹⁷ Cecchi's badgering of the foreign ministry would eventually lead to the recall of Lovatelli, but during his time in Somalia, there was a running dispute between the men (mostly on the part of Cecchi) until the spring of 1895. Ironically, Lovatelli would serve as acting consul for Cecchi while he was in the Benadir, investigating the Filonardi Company.

16. Ford to Blanc, March 11, 1894. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.5.)

17. Cecchi to Blanc, May 6, 1894 (ASMAI pos. 55/6, f.44.)

Cecchi's initial inquiry was designed to place the company in a bad light. The company was, in his opinion, "...a name, or very little more..."¹⁸ An audit of the books was conducted, since Cecchi distrusted Filonardi's claims, and showed them--in his opinion--to be in disarray. For 1893-94, Cecchi found the company income to be 461,000 lire with the government subsidy of 300,000 lire for the administration of the Benadir and 50,000 for Itala. Expenses were tallied at 376,554 lire, including the rental of 256,000 lire to the sultan, leaving a profit of 85,000 lire. Cecchi's biased inquiry, however, is unreliable; a later inquiry by the Italian government showed the company income to be 463,076 lire with subsidies, and the expenses 493,934 lire with rental...a deficit of 30,858 lire.¹⁹

Cecchi's recommendations for the company were unoriginal. He suggested the reduction of rents after the end of the concession; that the Filonardi Company, having insufficient capital, should have its contract revoked and the government assume its duties; and that a cession of Kismayu be renegotiated, following the decamping of the IBEA in that city, as it was the only serviceable port in the area. All of these recommendations were

18. Cecchi's report on the Filonardi Company, June 10, 1894. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.5.)

19. Report by F. Quirighetti on the Filonardi Company's expenses, and report by E. Dulio on the Provisional Government expenses. (ASMAI pos. 75/4, f.34.)

extant before the inquiry. Filonardi had suggested the first, himself. The last was a personal fixation for Cecchi and was strongly supported by the navy.

The response to his inquiry must have chafed; the government was critical of his enthusiasm for imperialistic ventures. The cancellation of the Filonardi contract was not on the table. Blanc knew that the expenses of government administration were not, as Cecchi suggested, less than that of a private contractor; as an example, the Eritrean colony was proving to be a costly affair. The foreign minister directed Cecchi to offer an annual stipend of 30,000 lire to Filonardi if he would reorganize on the lines suggested by the consul. He also floated the idea of a twenty-five year concession of the Benadir if Filonardi could raise at least two million lire from Italian sources--a highly unlikely proposition.²⁰

Cecchi's suggestions: ending the weekly steamer service, closing the (redundant) company warehouses and installations in Zanzibar, and reducing the garrisons at Merca and Brava respectively by thirty and sixty men. The saving were about 36,000 lire (enough, by the later government inquiry to put the company in the black.) An advantageous lira to rupee exchange rate on the government subsidy gave the company its first real profits since the beginning of the concession of 47,000 lire. Despite the

20. Blanc to Cecchi, September 21, 1894. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.6.)

reorganization of the company, Cecchi continued to rail against the company attitude, specifically an impasse between Filonardi and the consul regarding the reimbursement for the repair of the city walls in Mogadishu. Work Filonardi rated as 300,000 lire in cost was assayed by Cecchi as only having cost 12,000. No matter what the issue, Cecchi's main reason for assaulting the image of the company was clear: the establishment of a colony, one run by the Italian government.

Throughout 1895, the Filonardi Company continued to recover from the disaster of the first year of concession. Cecchi, however, continued to pummel the company to the foreign ministry. Also, a wealthy Milanese industrialist, Giorgio Mylius, arrived in Zanzibar, allegedly to gain impressions of the area commercially. His impressions were not favorable, and specifically recalled the lack of ports and capital that had been repeatedly mentioned by others. The concessionary company "...does not exist save in the person of Signor Filonardi. He is, on his part, under the absolute control of the Arab Abu Bakr, his alter ego and a man who inspires little trust."²¹ That his assessment echoes Cecchi's is hardly surprising: Mylius was

21. Mylius to Cecchi, February 6, 1895. (ASMAI pos. 75/3, f.24.)

interested not only in growing cotton in Somalia, he was also Cecchi's nephew.²²

Cecchi was committed to ending the concession expire at the end of the term and to replace it with a company more to his liking. Blanc, while agreeing with this course of action, took no other action that to suggest that Cecchi gain more insight on colonial administration by visiting Eritrea. Filonardi, for his part, simply wished to know the date his trial would end. He found support for gaining government resolution to the concession from Mylius, who was already envisioning a commercial and agricultural entity to replace V Filonardi *e Co*. While Mylius worked to gather capital with the open support of Cecchi, Filonardi traveled to Rome to harangue the government for payment of debts owed the company, an action which further convinced the foreign officer to be rid of the trader.²³

4. Cecchi Seeks to Replace V. Filonardi & Co.

Cecchi was ordered back to Italy to consult with government and business leaders on the Benadir in November 1895. He began in Milan, Mylius' base of operations, pounding home the idea of Somalia as a land of

22. Ribera, *Vita de Antonio Cecchi*. (Florence: Vallecchi, 1940.)

23. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 39-42.

opportunity with the right capital and company. He frequently brought up the subject of an Ethiopian threat, a subject that still haunted the Italians. Somalia provided a vital strategic position should the government be required to act in Ethiopia. Working with Mylius and a consortium of eight other Milanese businessmen--including the Duke Visconti di Mondrone, Count Alberto Amman, Ettore Ponti, Luigi Erba, Silvio Crispi, Felice Schreiber, Ferdinando Bocconi, Count Emilio Turati--a constitution for the new company was hammered out. Their actions caught the attention of Crispi, who was delighted "...to see them participating in...and promoting this noble undertaking."²⁴ Blanc promised the new company his full support.

The Ethiopian issue was well-considered. Since the Treaty of Ucciali, the borders of Ethiopia and Eritrea had been established, but disputes over the differences between the Ethiopia and the Italian versions continued, and disagreements over the demarcation between Ethiopia and the Sudan, where the Madhist forces still reigned, and between Ethiopian and Eritrea were beginning to boil over. General Oreste Baratieri, the governor of Eritrea, had set upon a policy of military action to secure the interior of the colony. Occupying the Tigrean area of northern Ethiopia, Baratieri's forces drove the local ras, Mangasha of Tigre, into the arms of Emperor Menelik II. Menelik,

24. Crispi to the Prefect of Milan, November 21, 1895. (ASMAI pos. 75/3, f.24.)

for his part, had been repudiating the Italian version of the Treaty of Ucciali, and the idea of Ethiopia as a protectorate of Italy. The emperor had his own ideas regarding the future of his country, including expansion to the Red Sea and into Somalia.

Blanc had already moved to secure the Benadir from Ethiopian threat. He had arranged for the Italian Geographic Society to send an expedition under Vittorio Bottego into the interior to map the upper stretches of the Juba river and establish a commercial station at Lugh. Bottego's expedition departed in August, 1895, on the eve of the Italian occupation of the Tigre highlands. With arms and ammunition from Eritrea, Bottego's 250 men disembarked at Brava in September to hear of the a force of Ethiopians occupying Lugh. Bottego forged into the Somalian interior and reached the trading post on November 18 to find it unoccupied by the enemy. Bottego left a force under Captain Ferrandi at the town, concluded a treaty of protection with the sultan of Lugh and pressed on into the interior.²⁵

Little did he know that relations between Italy and Ethiopian had collapsed. The defeat of Mangasha, the Tigrean king, to Baratieri's forces had galvanized the warlords and the emperor of Ethiopia against the Italians in Eritrea. While Baratieri, secure in his belief that Menelik could not have

25. Finazzo, *L'Italia nel Benadir*, 313.

mobilized his forces nor could he supply them 500 miles from Addis Ababa, pursued Mangasha into the interior. He was wrong; Italian troops had met the enemy at Amba Alagi on December 7 and were defeated. Menelik, he found out, had 30,000 men at his disposal--far larger than the general had believed possible. Baratieri, on his side, had 9,000 troops, mostly local ashkari. More bad news came in. Menelik had surrounded the fortress of Makalle and the Italian garrison there. The Italians withdrew to the Eritrean border to await reinforcements.

Crispi's government railed at the situation and had supplied the general with men and provisions. While awaiting their arrival, Baratieri dug in at Adigrat to await the ever increasing numbers of Ethiopians. By the end of February 1896, he knew the stalemate could not continue. He had a force of 20,000 men, but was, by his count, outnumbered five to one. If he simply waited Menelik out, the emperor's horde of soldiers would consume all the food in the city of Adowa and be forced to retire before his troops were forced into a similar situation. Crispi, however, saw the defeat at Amba Alagi as a personal one; Baratieri must act for the honor of the army and of Italy! Badgered by the prime ministers cables, Baratieri launched what he hoped

would be a surprise attack on Adowa at five in the morning of March 1. By noon, his forces had been wrecked and were in retreat.²⁶

Cecchi's plans were nearly derailed by the Adowa fiasco. In Rome when the news hit, it stunned the nation and swept Crispi out of power by the 11TH of March. Cecchi attempted to cajole the new foreign minister, Onorato Caetani, to see to the issue of the Benadir concessions. For the new company to take on the concession, the old company and the government had to reach an agreement before the July 16 end of the Filonardi contract. Negotiations with Prime Minister diRudini's government were concluded on April 15, contracting with the newly formed *Societa Anomina Commerciale Italiana del Benadir*, or the *Societa del Benadir*, or the Benadir Company.

The convention between the government and the Benadir Company called for the "peaceful management" of the Benadir and the Somalian interior as prescribed by the Anglo-Italian protocols of 1891 and 1894. It was charged with the development of commerce and administration in the interior. The government reserved oversight of the operations of the company, but once again did not assume "...any obligation to defend the colony from external attacks, reserving to itself full liberty of action to take such steps as it may consider necessary in the public interest." The company

26. An excellent and readable account of the Eritrean situation and the Battle of Adowa is in Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 470-486.

would receive an annual subsidy of 400,000 francs, 50,000 more lire than the Filonardi Company had received, to cover operational expenses for the trading stations. After twelve years, the subsidy was to be reduced to 300,000 francs. The company would control customs and taxes, mineral rights, and lands under Italian control as per the Filonardi directives. Products of Somalia were to gain the same treatment as those of the Eritrean colony. The company would pay the rent to the sultan of Zanzibar and the subsidies to the sultans of Obbia and Mijjertein, but the Italian flag would be flown. A post service, and maintenance of governing buildings would be the responsibility of the company. Existing laws and legal systems would remain intact, and the company would continue to suppress slave and arms trade in the countryside. Additionally, 2/3rds of the company capital had to remain Italian and the board of directors would be comprised only of Italians (including Eritrean or Benadir-residing Italians.) The government also side-stepped any liability for protecting the credit of the company "...even in the interests of the colony, and the company..." In the matter of defense, the company could purchase arms and munitions from the depot in Eritrea at cost and the government agreed to position a warship off of the coast of Somalia to aid in defense. A fifty year duration on the convention would assure the long-term, preferential credit for the company. Lastly, the

government could cancel the contract after 25 years with two in notice; the company could cancel after twelve with one year's notice.²⁷

Despite Cecchi's attempts to create more governmental involvement in the colony, the Benadir Company gained a contract similar in scope and function to that of the one with its predecessor. The commitment of the crown was small, and most of the responsibility and liability rested with the concessioner; however, better financing and the guarantee of a long-term concession made the prospects of success much more realistic. The main obstacle for the agreement was Parliament and public discouragement with colonization after the disaster at Adowa. The charter passed, but it was a near thing.

In May, 1896, Cecchi returned to Mogadishu to inform Filonardi of the charge of control. Administration of the colony was transferred on July 15 from Filonardi to a representative of the Benadir Company. Filonardi, despite his ire at the way the concession had been handled in Rome and the dismissive way in which he had been replaced, remained throughout the September monsoons as acting royal commissioner for the colony, but under the control of the consul at Zanzibar (Cecchi,) who was in the process of renegotiating the rent. Throughout July and August, Cecchi worked with

27. Both quotes and the paragraph content is from the government contract with the Benadir Company, signed April 15, 1896. (ASMAI pos. 75/3, f.24.)

London and Rome to reduce the rent 40,000 rupees to 120,000 per annum (approximately 192,000 lire.) By the first of September, the deal was clinched, and the new company had more leeward in its budget.²⁸

Cecchi left for Mogadishu on September 12, and found that the situation on the coast had deteriorated. Until that point, the stability of Somalia had been mostly a factor of Filonardi's personal charm and political connections with the leaders throughout the port towns and hinterland. Although the tribes in and around the towns were still well-disposed toward the Italians, the exit of Filonardi left a question mark on how long the quiet would last. Indian merchants, upset with the Filonardi Company for what they claimed was monopolization of trade in Warsheik, Itala, and other towns, protested over their treatment and claimed the machinations of Abu Bakr bin Oudh (Filonardi's interpreter) cut them out of the trade for the benefit of the Arabs.²⁹

The departure of the popular Filonardi left a "state of tranquility and security"³⁰ but Abu Bakr and other pro-Filonardi Arabs were already muttering sedition. The calm was disturbed quickly by the Treat of Addis

28. Cecchi, Zanzibar, to Lloyd Matthews, agent general, August 12, 1896. (ASMAI pos. 55/7, f. 49.)

29. Letter (in Arabic) to Cecchi, September 4, 1896. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.11.)

30. Cecchi report #179, November 6, 1896. (ASMAI pos. 75/2, f. 17.)

Ababa (October 26, 1896) which ended hostilities but left the border between Ethiopia and Somalia undefined and the Treaty of Uccialli annulled. Menelik II had little control over his local chiefs, and some of these looked to Somalia to expand Ethiopian hegemony. Sensing Italian weakness, a column of Ethiopian troops descended on Lugh on November 13 under the command of the *Dedjazmatch* ("general" or "warmaster") Wolde Gabre, demanding the evacuation of the Italians. Captain Ferrandi - who had been left in charge of the trading post by the ill-fated Bottego [killed in Ethiopia in February 1896] - refused, forcing Gabre to go around the town and flank the Italian near Baidoa. The long-expected Ethiopian invasion looked to be materializing.

Cecchi moved to make alliances with the sultan of Geledi to defend against the Ethiopians and expand trade along the Webi Shebelle. Following that, he put together an expedition to meet the Ethiopians. With 70 *ashkari*, Commander Fernando Maffei of *Staffetta*, Commander Francesco Mongiardini of *Volturmo*, and a handful of crew from those vessels in support, Cecchi pressed on into Somalia. That night, they were attacked at Lafole, only twelve miles in, then again in the morning as they prepared to move. The second time, the *ashkari* mercenaries fled and within an hour all but three of the Italians were dead, including Cecchi, who had worked so long on establishing a colony in East Africa, and would never see it to maturity.

The demise of the Filonardi Company's concession in Italy had a similar fate as other colonial corporations. Like the East India Company that Britain used to govern the subcontinent, to its contemporaries--the German East Africa Company, the Imperial British East Africa Company, and others--a lack of support from the home government left the company unable to financially cover the burden of administration. The idea that government could do better eventually traded commercial rule (with relative benignity of governance) for direct rule (with increased bureaucracy, and official prejudice against the natives in government positions.)

CHAPTER 4: STUMBLING TOWARD EMPIRE: THE BENADIR COMPANY (1896-1905)

1. Problems from the Start

With the death of Cecchi, the foreign ministry appointed Commander Giorgio Sorrentino royal commissioner extraordinary to the Benadir colony, and charged with him the restoring order to the area and repairing the dignity of the Italian administration. On the ground in Somalia, Emilio Dulio, the company commissioner, investigated the Lafole incident and found it unconnected to the Ethiopian siege of Lugh. The Ethiopians had been run off by Rahanwein tribesmen and could not have been involved. On arrival on January 26, 1897, Sorrentino immediately began an investigation. Within a fortnight, he had learned that Lafole was not part of a general uprising, nor an Ethiopian ambush; Wadan tribesmen had committed the attack, with aid from the Geledi (the sultan of whom had met with Cecchi only a day before his death), who had been in collusion with Mogadishu Arabs. Abu Bakr, Filonardi's former interpreter, and another Mogadishu-based Arab had arranged the massacre in a fit of pique over their lost positions with the former company.

Arrested for his involvement, Abu Bakr was transported to Masawa, in Eritrea, where he died in prison without the benefit of a trial. A short punitive expedition versus the Geledi was staged once Eritrea *ashkari* reinforcements arrived in March. Sorrentino led the mission against the Geledi and Wadan personally, burning the village of Lafole and a few other towns. The action forced the sultan to sign a peace treaty. Trade in the countryside had stagnated due to uncertainty over the Lafole attack, as well as Ethiopian raids on trade caravans between Lugh and the coast. Having learned from Ferrandi at Lugh of complicity by Mogadishu traders in Ethiopian attacks, Sorrentino rounded up the Arab opposition and deported them by the end of April. With the Lafole massacre avenged, Sorrentino turned his attention to the governance of the concession and found himself faced with the issue of slavery.¹

One of the central instructions to both the Filonardi and Benadir companies had been the elimination of the slave trade. The slave trade and the domestic servitude were long-established institutions in Africa, and it was seen by many a poor tribesman or woman--most who lived a subsistence life--as a means to create some level of stability and security in their lives. The widespread acceptance of slavery had proven to many a colonial leader

1. Hess covers Sorrentino's investigation and actions in *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 40-41.

impossible to eradicate; even the famed 'Chinese' Gordon, who had supposedly eliminated it in the Sudan, had only managed to suppress open trade in people.² Filonardi had made a few tentative steps, but had stopped when the Arabs and Somali objected. Sorrentino found that even whites owned slaves, including the late Cecchi, who owned a young domestic.

He and Dulio decided to table the issue for the time being. Relations with the interior tribes were already strained after the avenging of Lafole; an attack on slavery might foment revolt. Additionally, the cost of enforcing the slave prohibition was prohibitive. Sorrentino had been told avoid commitments that might strain the colony's budget, and were only certain to be successful.³

The legitimacy of the company's rule between 1896 and 1898 is questionable, not just from the usual moral grounds cited against imperialism, but from legal ones, as well. The Italian parliament had yet to ratify the convention between the Benadir Company and the government. DiRudini's cabinet was working to end the Crispi policies in Africa, which had cost Italy 355 million lire and presented them with little in trade, attracted little to none of the emigration from Italy, gave them a massive and

2. Gordon's efforts against the slave trade in the Sudan are covered in Trench, *The Road to Khartoum* (New York: Dorset, 1979), 140-160.

3. Brin to Sorrentino, December 15, 1896. (ASMAI pos. 75/2, f.17.)

embarrassing defeat in Adowa, and the death of the nearly-forgotten explorer Bottego and his expedition in Ethiopia. The Treasury Minister, Luigi Luzzatti, warned against the expense that adoption of the contract would entail, and thought the money could be better spent at home.⁴ This ambivalence of the treasury to Somalia, in fact, had forced Visconti Venosta, the foreign minister, to shift money from the Eritrean mission to cover the government's obligations to Filonardi concerning the Mogadishu walls (settled for 149,870 lire;)⁵ convincing the government to accept the annual subsidy would be difficult.

Domestic crises, including a serious economic depression, rioting in Florence and Rome, kept the diRudini government on the defensive, and the deadline for which the company protocols would be abnegated was fast approaching. The newly created Colonial Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs avoided the end of the concession by granting provisional administrative duties in the Benadir from May 1 to December 31, 1898. The company could operate in the Benadir without parliamentary approval and, it was thought, might force the Chamber of Deputies to act. The collapse of yet another Italian government brought General Luigi Pelloux into power in

4. Luzzatti to Foreign Ministry, August 10, 1897. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.12.)

5. Notarized transaction record, June 13, 1896. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.14.)

June. Peloux continued to try and get the Benadir convention through the parliament, but anti-colonial deputies successfully shot it down once more. The provisional status of the Benadir was extended for another year.

In Somalia, the effects of the dickering over the convention were apparent. The lack of action by the government left the sole responsibility for Somalia in the hands of the company. For Sorrentino, security was paramount. He set up military posts - called *presidios* - manned by Muscat and Hadramaut Arabs. These two sets of mercenaries despised each other, and their intriguing prevented one group or the other from staging rebellion against the company. The creation of the *presidio* system was directed more at quelling Arab restiveness than Somali. The various Somali tribes had their share of anti-Italian sentiment, but their internecine squabbles kept them from acting in concert, and their hatred of the Ethiopians brought them squarely behind the Italians where that empire was concerned.

The real danger for the company was not security, as much as it was the collapse of trade and agriculture in the countryside. The Ethiopian raids and the punishment of Lafole and Geledi had done lasting damage to a weak system. Ferrandi, nevertheless, established a new trading post in Jesira in July of 1897 to aid in the stumbling trade, but Dulio was unwilling to entertain the expense of an irrigation system between the Webi Shebelle and

Brava--key to improving conditions for agriculture so touted as central to the success of the colony--so long as the concession's future was undecided. British trade stations had been set up on the Juba, and plans for a competing station at Bardera were scrapped due to a lack of funds and the unstable nature of Somali trade. Back in Italy, the stockholders passed a resolution that the "present state of affairs should not continue..."⁶ and the Benadir law was presented once more in November 1899. The anti-colonial forces expounded once more on the expense, on Adowa, on the relations with Ethiopia. Direct government rule was even more unacceptable, however, and the bill finally passed 173 votes to 151. The Senate was less opposed to the political and military colonies, and the idea of a commercial colony run by a chartered company eased the bill through 60 votes to 10 against. Over three years after the company had taken over administration of the Benadir, King Umberto finally approved the convention on Christmas eve of 1899.⁷

The Christmas gift did little to raise the spirits of the company officers and shareholders. The shares of the company had collapsed due to the lack of dividends, and the secretary of the company, Angelo Carminati pointed out that the company had not the resources to engage in any real improvements

6. Pestalozza to Foreign Ministry, May 6, 1899 (ASMAI pos. 75/5, f.42.)

7. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 68-72.

in the colony. "As you see, our hands are tied and we can only hope fortune will aid us."⁸

In Somalia, Dulio finally became governor, after more than three years as provisional royal commissioner. Dulio was an old Africa hand, who had come out as an explorer earlier in the 1880s, thought the colony could be build into much more than the other directors, although the administration was still much along the lines of those set up by Filonardi in 1893, with naval officers on loan to the company providing the bulk of the local administrators, and a small group of civil employees (often Arabs.) The local rule had been controlled by agents of the company, who in addition to managing trade, conducted review and appeals of the *qadi* and mediated between the varying factions of Somali and Arab. These agents had been formed into residencies--along the lines of the old East India Company--in Merca and Brava, and these residencies were multiplied to cover the governance of the whole colony at the suggestion of Sorrentino.⁹

8. Carminati to agnesa, Colonial Office, January 30, 1900. (ASMAI pos. 75/5, f.42.)

9. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 72-74.

2. Success Never Realized

The success that had been anticipated for the Benadir Company never materialized. Central to the concept had been the creation of a large-scale agricultural colony where Italians looking to escape the economic hardships of the homeland could come out and farm their own parcel of land. The profitability of this model, however, was already being disproved in Eritrea, where the governor had "...transported Italian pauperism into a region ill-adapted to European cultivation..."¹⁰ Small farmers could simply not put together the capital necessary to cultivate crops in the inhospitable Eritrean soil; it was a similar problem to the one they had in southern Italy. The same problem existed in Somalia. Only a massive influx of capital and expertise would allow Somalia to develop an agricultural base for the economy. The Benadir Company's income was limited to the government subsidy and customs duties (see Appendix C) and would not suffice.

Although the colony was not seeing a growth of farming, nor was there a real expansion of trade--which was limited to a few coastal towns and the Lugh trading post--it did manage to make a profit. The suggestion that the company siphoned off the difference between the subsidy of 400,000 lire and the sultan's rental of 192,000 lire was made by *L'Economista italiano* in the

10. Enrico Alamanni to Carminati, December 30, 1898. (ASMAI pos. 75/4, f.32.)

April 30, 1903 issue.¹¹ The company made presentations to the Colonial Office regarding the extension of the infrastructure in the form of rail lines, communications, irrigation schemes, and roads. These improvements, however, never materialized. Investments in the company remained flat, most likely due to uncertainties raised by the internal conflicts and the ever-present threat of Ethiopian on the disputed northwest border.

In addition to the financial woes, morale in the colony was low and vicious personal politics between the officers was rife. Commander di Monale, captain of *Voltorno*, reported to the naval ministry, "There is nothing that could possibly justify the present dissension--only little frictions, poorly worded and badly interpreted phrases, little lapses of proper form and tact increased by isolation."¹² The isolation was extreme: most of these stations had only intermittent contact with the outside world, usually in May and September, when the packets from Zanzibar came. Personal ambitions made things worse. Ignio Badolo, the Merca resident, had aspired to the governorship, but had fallen out of favor with Dulio over a riverboat scheme. (He had wanted to build, at company expense, a river steamer too large for use on the Somalian rivers.) Badolo also raised a red flag concerning the

11. "Problemi per La Compagnia Benadir." *L'Economista italiano*, April 30, 1903 issue, 6-7.

12. Report of Commander di Monale to Naval Ministry. (ASMAI pos. 75/1, f.50.)

company's action...or inaction...regarding slavery. "In a word, nothing is being done here, and no one wants to do anything. Slavery is still at its zenith..."¹³

Badolo had formed a camp of supporters who were opposed by loyalists to Dulio. Badolo's problems, and those of other company officers was documented by the Zanzibar consul, Pestalozza, who found the company doctor, Carlos Mucciarelli, unwilling to engage in his duties over the perceived slight - he had wanted the position of resident in Brava. The lead engineer had been characterized by Dulio as a "drifter," and Pestalozza found the man to have little work. Salaries were wildly disparate: Dulio earned 30,000 lire; Badolo, 12,000; Cappello, the resident in Brava, 6,000--half the income of Badolo for the same position. Customs officers made 2,400 lire a year, the company accountant, who was in ill-health and ineffective, 4,200 lire per annum.¹⁴

By 1902, while Dulio was preparing to go on leave, Pestalozza's inquiry into the company operations was getting underway. Suggestions of impropriety began almost immediately. Dulio had instructed that disputes between natives and Europeans should be judged by *qadi* using Muslim

13. Badolo to Visconti Venosta, September 20, 1902. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.54.)

14. Pestalozza to the Foreign Ministry, February 8, 1903. (ASMAI pos. 75/5, f.50.)
Carminati to the same. (ASMAI pos. 75/5, f.44.)

custom, but residents continued to administer justice "according to each resident's individual criteria...In substance there is no organization of justice, no military organization, no guaranty of trade and communications, no internal or external security..."¹⁵ Difficulties were being disguised by company officers, the investigation found.

Trouble did not stop in Africa. Dulio continually raised ire with the directors of the company. The governor took an independent attitude, frequently dismissing the instruction of the Benadir Company and the Foreign Ministry. His immediate superior was Consul Pestalozza, but Dulio ignored his inquires and disdained to contact him regarding the political operations of the company. Visconti Venosta had to write directly to Dulio to remind him of his obligations to confer with Pestalozza in a letter as early as Nov. 15, 1900.¹⁶

3. Slavery and the End of Company rule

The real threat to the company, however--one which they had ignored since the inception of the company's administration--was slavery. Badolo's letter to the foreign ministry had been designed more to embarrass Dulio

15. Eduardo Cappa, Brava, to Elia Raicevich, Inspector of Benadir Company. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.60.)

16. Visconti Venosta to Dulio, November 15, 1900. (ASMAI pos. 75/5, f.44.)

than to honestly raise the question of what to do about the practice. It had the effect, however, of spurring an inquiry in the slave question in the last few weeks of 1902. Lieutenant Gaetano Bossi was dispatched to do a cursory investigation. "Slavery exists in Italian Somalia, and it is impossible to abolish it without the effective occupation of the country by the Italian government, as in the Benadir towns."¹⁷ Bossi found the company had made no attempt to extinguish the practice, which had been and still was well-established in the native culture. The primary expression of slavery was domestic servitude, common to the Arab community, but also widespread through the countryside (indeed the continent.) Bossi did not stop with his report to the government. Along with the Italian Geographical Society explorer Luigi Bricchetti, he started a campaign to end the slavery issue in the Benadir through the newspapers.

The first shot was in *Il Secolo*, a Milanese newspaper, and appeared on December 18, 1902.¹⁸ Bossi and Bricchetti brought to light the lack of action by the company in combating the practice, and specifically targeting Dulio. Brucchetti, who had originally promoted the Benadir company in 1895, railed at a stockholder meeting on Dulio's inaction. Abolitionist sentiment began to

17. Bossi's memo, dated December 2, 1902. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.54.)

18. Bossi and Bricchetti. "Schiavitu nel Somaliland," *Il Secolo*, December 18, 1902.

spread through the company, and the government ordered another investigation into the company's action or complicity in the trade. Heading up the inquiry was Commander Onorato di Monale, captain of *Volturmo*.

The results were shocking and damning. Chiefs of Brava affirmed to him that slaves had been brought into the country as early as the year prior with the knowledge and assistance of company authorities. "In the Benadir, a slave can be bought, sold, imprisoned, inherited, given as a gift, exploited, and, rarely, liberated...Italian employees sometimes buy and liberate women whose 'services' they then utilize..."¹⁹ The rank and file company authorities were aiding in the perpetuation of the slave trade, and the administration made only the occasional proviso against it. No other action or instruction was passed on. The report and newspaper campaign spurred action in the Chamber of Deputies. The Anti-Slavery Society of Italy, composed mostly of upper-class women and priests, convened a congress to raise awareness of the situation and pushed for a government investigation of the colony.

Dulio denied the charges made about him in a letter to the foreign ministry on February 14, 1903.²⁰ The same day, he served notice to the chiefs

19. Di Monale report, February 8, 1903. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.56.)

20. Dulio to Foreign Ministry, February 14, 1903. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.56.)

in Mogadishu prohibiting purchase, sale, or trading of slaves. He also ordered that all slaves wishing to purchase their freedom were entitled to, a practice that already existed but was infrequently used; slaves owned by slaves who purchased their freedom were automatically manumitted. After the question of slavery was raised in Parliament, Dulio issued an ordinance setting up tribunals on slavery "...no longer according to the norms of Shari'a, but according to the decrees and ordinances passed by the sultan of Zanzibar for the application of the General Act of Brussels."²¹

In Italy, Carminati and Mylius tried to put the best face on the situation. They reminded the government that the company had not officially administered the colony until the convention was passed in January of 1900, and then had been concerned mostly with issues of security. They informed the government that the personnel in the residencies were already to be changed and that they would make their own internal inquiries into the matter. No matter the spin put on the history of the company's rule, the situation was unconscionable and the directors of the company suggested that the colony ought to be passed "to other hands"...namely, the government.²²

21. Governor's Ordinance #1737, April 20, 1903. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.57.)

22. Carminati, Mylius, and Crespi to Foreign Ministry, March 20, 1903. (ASMAI pos. 75/6, f.56.)

An investigation of the slavery question and the company's complicity was begun by the new consul-general at Zanzibar, Luigi Mercatelli. He also oversaw the internal inquiry by the Benadir Company's commission. The officers of the company, from Dulio on down, as well as native *wali* and *qadis*, were questioned and found to be responsible for the lack of action. The report also found the company and the government to be culpable in the continuing state of affairs in the colony. Dulio was singled out for not having concealed the existence of slavery in Somalia to prevent his having to discomfit himself by engaging in abolition.²³

As a result, Dulio was relieved on October 5, 1903. The governor was rattled by the investigation and understandably anticipated his arrest, although it would never materialize. Several officers were cited for neglect or incompetence and removed from their positions. Badolo was singled out for his steamship scheme and his incompetence citation led to a lawsuit against him in the matter. The company was found at fault for not having sent out anyone from the Board of Directors to inspect the operations of the Benadir, and also faulted them for placing one of those director as governor of the colony - a conflict of interest in their opinion. The company had failed to recognize their moral obligations, and had assumed the concession with

23. Chiesi and Travelli, *Le Questioni del Benadir*. (Milan: Bellini, 1904.)

inadequate capital to perform their duties. "In the present conditions of disfavor in public opinion, of government hostility, and of slender means, we believe that the Benadir Company cannot continue in the enterprise without meeting up with new failures, without incurring greater responsibilities which could have incalculable consequences for the colony and the country..."²⁴

Chiesi and Travelli also suggested an amendment of the convention to establish the responsibility of the government in the operation of the company. "It is our understanding, however, that once you enter into the European colonial movement...you have to have some kind of political directive."²⁵

The days of a company-administered company were coming to an end. During the 1903-4 budget discussions in Parliament, deputies like Francesco Vitelleschi, debated the morality of sloughing off the responsibilities of colonization on a private company. "To entrust the administration of the colony to a chartered company, he declared, was equivalent to abandoning it altogether."²⁶ His was a common sentiment in the Parliament. While the foreign ministry entered into negotiations with the sultan of Zanzibar to purchase the Benadir outright in February, the company continued to

24. Chiesi and Travelli, *Le Questioni del Benadir*, 379.

25. *Ibid*, 382-383.

26. Attributed to Vitelleschi by Robert Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*, 83.

administer the colony under a cloud of suspicion and broken morale. By May, Foreign Minister Tommaso Tittoni announced that the government decided to assume direct administration of the Benadir, bringing the days of a private company administering an Italian colony to an end. Italy, it seemed, would have to take on the responsibility for herself at long last. On May 1905, Luigi Mercatelli took control of the Benadir and Somali colony as royal commissioner general.

Once again, a corporate administration had failed due to the lack of support, and active interference, of the government. One can speculate on what the chances of success for the Benadir Company might have been had their charter been quickly ratified. It might have spurred investment, but there had been a reluctance by domestic and foreign investors to support Filonardi in the past. The governance might have been more active and engaged in improvements of the countryside, but internal politics would still have damaged the administration of the country.

The question became “could the government do a better job?”

CHAPTER 5: THE REST OF THE STORY: THE EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION

1. Italian Imperialism in the Twentieth Century

In 1905, the Benadir Company's concession was revoked and for the first time, the Italian government took direct control over the Benadir. The new administration took a hard line on the slave trade, spurring native revolts against the anti-slavery initiatives in 1907. Steady and slow military action pacified the revolts and began an expansion into the Somali interior. The pace increased with the involvement of Giacomo de Martino, who became governor in 1910. de Martino was a Futurist: a supporter of militarism, technology, Social Darwinism, & irridentism. As with earlier efforts, Somali allies aided in the pacification and expansion for their own gains, and anticipating the possibility of an Ethiopian campaign. Within a year of de Martino's taking command in Somalia, the borders of the colony had expanded to about the position of the contemporary Somalia.

The futurist movement ended the ambivalence toward colonization that had dominated the Italian government and intelligentsia throughout the nineteenth century. The futurists were a movement of young artists and thinkers who embraces progress and modernism. They were forward

looking, and attempted to rid themselves of the burdens of history, turning toward technology, war, and social conflict to cleanse society. Colonization figured prominently in the futurist vision of the world, but the approach was conflicted. Marinetti, one of the founders of futurism, had been raised in the city of Alexandria in Egypt. The population of Alexandria was international in character- a melting pot of the various Mediterranean races. Marinetti, like several other anti-Fascist writers of the interwar period, grew up in this environment, and he held a romantic view of Africa and colonization. For the futurists, the colonies were a space for the expansion of modernism, as much as for the personal recreation of the self.¹

This aggressiveness helped in the 1912 Italo-Turkish War in 1912. The war was ostensibly due to the Great Porte's refusal to allow the Italians to trade at ports in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. After pummeling the Turks, Italy gaining possession of Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands, and established a protectorate over Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. As with Somalia and Eritrea, the government had direct control over the colonial administration, but continued to be cautious in their governance, using native troops, continuing local civil law (but imposing Italian property and criminal

1. Lucia Re, "Alexandria Revisited: Colonialism and the Egyptian Works of Enrico Pea and Giuseppe Ungaretti." Palumbo, *A Place in the Sun* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley, 2003), 176.

law.) The most pressing issue for the Libyan colony was establishing the border with British-administered Egypt and French possessions Tunisia and Algeria. However, this changed following World War I. During the war, Italian attention had been turned toward the Turk, and in North Africa, tribal and religious leaders created the Tripolitanian Republic in 1918.

The new 'government' of the Tripolitanian Republic was a loose alliance of these *ras* and *ullema*, and their calls for independence were quickly tempered with the end of the Great War. Negotiations with the Italians led to the Fundamental Law of Tripolitania, in which several of the tribes were provided local autonomy, and the natives were granted legal equality with the Italian settlers. The show of weakness on the part of the Italians encouraged the Sanusi tribe in Cyrenacia to continue to agitate, and they were granted autonomy under their own emir in 1920. Similar incidents in Somalia were calmed by the Italian government giving concessions to the tribesmen in the Somali highlands.

World War I changed Italian society at large, as well as in their colonial administration. Despite having allied with Britain, France, and the other allies, Italy saw no benefits from the Treaty of Lausanne. German holdings around the world were parceled out between the French and British; the only victorious combatant to not receive colonial concessions was Italy.

The weakness of the liberal government in Italy and the perceived collaboration of the socialist factions led a group of disaffected socialists, led by Benito Mussolini, to form the Fascist party. The fascist philosophy combined the muscular attributes of the futurists, with the popularism of socialism, and added a helping of historical tropes to create the idea of a Great Italy--the successor to the Roman Empire, and a slighted Great Power in its own right. Militarism, popularized in the prewar years, combined with a feeling of righteous indignation at the government and the allies. The weakness shown the colonies was just another element to spur the derision of these malcontents toward the government. After the ascension of Mussolini to the national stage in 1922, the attitude toward the colonies became more exploitative and militant.

In Somalia and Eritrea, Italians had been using the local tribes against each other, the old axiom of "divide and rule." Now, Fascists disarmed the native police, the bulwark of the Italian military presence, and militarily punished those in defiance. Italian troops now policed the colonies. This led to the humiliation of long time allies, the Obbia, in Somalia, and in 1925 they rebelled. Italian troops moved quickly to put down the rebellion, and set the tone for the new administration of Somalia. The new governments in the colonies were larger than before, a dumping ground for the second-rate

members of the Fascist regime. Imposition of direct taxation on businesses was also a new tactic (until that point taxation had been import or export duties, as they had with the Filonardi and Benadir companies,) and made the colony a larger profit than pre-Fascist days. Conversely, the Fascists turned their attention to public education--ignored by the government until 1922--which was mandated by the government in 1929, but run by religious missions to save the colonial administration money.

These harsher tactics spurred more discontent in the colonies, but their implementation and effects were scarcely mentioned back in Italy. Unlike Britain or France, where colonial affairs loomed large in the public imagination and in the news, Italy's colonies were ghost-like, their existence known, but rarely talked about. Few movies touted the colonist, novels that talked about the colonial space--usually by authors raised in Alexandria--viewed the colonized sympathetically. However, the colonial discourse never managed to gain air over the main social issues of fascism versus socialism; the politics of colonies were sidereal to the bigger issues of a Europe where old hatreds simmered just below the liberal democracies' surfaces and the worldwide depression of the 1930s.

The colonial enterprise continued to be advertised as a means to lower unemployment and create materials for export, but the numbers of colonists

do not bear this out. The numbers of emigres remained high throughout the colonial period, with increasing amounts of Italians choosing the United States as their destination. The colonies, by comparison, rarely saw more than a few thousand Italians, even at the height of the depression; most of those were involved in the administration of the areas.²

2. The Beginning of the End

That the conquest of Ethiopia, long a burr in the foot of Italian colonialism, should be prelude to the end of Italy's empire is ironic. The Ethiopian problem had not been solved with the Italian loss at Adowa in 1896; instead the Italian loss had become a blight on the national honor, used by pro-colonial factions as an excuse for expanding their operations, and used by anti-colonial factions to show the hazards of foreign adventurism. The end of the Great War had seen Italian interest in Ethiopia come back to the fore, first with an abortive railway scheme that would have gone through the country to join Somalia and Eritrea. Expansion by force into Ethiopia was on the table in 1932, but Mussolini avoided pursuing the matter until the French renounced their interest in the country in 1934. The withdrawal of French interest happened to coincide with the Ethiopians agitating for access to a sea

2. The history of Mussolini's rise and the attitudes toward empire are recounted in Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*.

port. Emperor Haile Salassie had made attempts to get Italy to cede Assab in exchange for some territory in Abyssinia to no avail. Mussolini, for his part, had been trying to get the French and British to accede to making Ethiopia an Italian protectorate. However, Ethiopia was a member of the League of Nations; changing the status of the country to a protectorate would require League supervision of the Italian operations, something Mussolini would not allow.

A flurry of meetings and negotiations between Britain, France, and Italy occurred in the early part of 1935, even as Italian troops were massing in Eritrea. Until this point, the three countries had been working together to counter Germany's rising military aspirations, but the impasse over Ethiopia split the once cozy relationship between Italy and Britain.³ The invasion of Ethiopia began in earnest in late 1935 and the resistance of Emperor Haile Sellaise collapsed quickly under the weight of a well-funded, mechanized force. Selassie himself evacuated Ethiopia in 1936 and did not return until after British and Ethiopian troops had liberated the country in 1941. Italian East Africa extended over a vast area: Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia were each administered as a separate area, but were a contiguous presence on the

3. Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*, 12.

map of Africa. Libya, the other colonial jewel was separated by the Sudan from Italian East Africa.

In Italy, the ambivalence that characterized the attitude of Italians toward empire disappeared overnight. Despite the sudden imperial fervor, Italian investment in Ethiopia was lackluster, and only 3,200 farmers were enticed to settle in the country. The cost of empire was a stunning 1.53 billion lira.⁴ Ethiopia's exports and taxes provided around 100 million lira.⁵ Ethiopian resistance to the Italian presence was aided by a weak and divided administration. Personal enmity between the viceroy and the military governors made Italian rule unwieldy throughout 1936.

The Ethiopian affair had broken faith between Italy and her traditional ally, Britain. Despite attempts to appease the Italians, Mussolini's intent to invade and control Ethiopia forced the French and Britain into opposition; this pushed Italy toward the Germans, setting the stage for the alliances of the Second World War. The empire expanded briefly in 1940, during the Second World War as Mussolini's forces initially pushed the British and French out of their slices of Somalia, but their victory was short-lived. The British recovered from their losses in the field quickly. They reconquered their

4. Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*, 109-111.

5. *Ibid*, 74-76.

colonies, then went on to force out the Italians out of Ethiopia and Eritrea by November of 1941. In Libya, the Italians were forced to withdraw by 1943 as the allied forces swept across North Africa, effectively ending the era of Italian colonialism in Africa.

3. Somalia After Empire

The collapse of Mussolini's government and the end of Second World War was not the end to the Italian presence in Africa. Although they were no longer colonies, the United Nations established trusteeship over the former Italian colonies, with the Italian Trusteeship Administration overseeing the reconstruction of the countries over the space of the next ten years.

The United Nations Technical Assistance Program surveyed the situation in Somalia in 1952 and their report parallels those of the various government investigations of the company period at the turn of the twentieth century. The agriculture, long touted as the cornerstone to the Somali colony's success, had not been developed to any real extent. In fact, for the majority of the native population, agriculture was animal husbandry based and capable of barely subsistence level production. UNTAP suggested the creation of farming stations – something that had been brought up before and

which had limited (if any) success.⁶ Industry was practically nonexistent, save for an Italian-owned electric plant. Internecine fighting continued to create instability in the countryside. Capital, most of all was needed.

The Trustee period was a boon to Somalia in the form of capital. As a former colonial power, Italy was more effective in transferring capital than it had been during the colonial period. The *Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia* (hereafter AFIS) began in 1950 and poured 200 billion lire in to the country, attempting to rectify the near total illiteracy, the weak economy, and the inter-tribal problems of the country. Italian investment, however, had little effect on the weak agriculture or lack of industry. Much of the money disappeared into the bureaucracies created by the Trusteeship, funneled into the government and military apparatuses. By 1969, when the Somalian government was finally on its own feet, the major issues that had plagued the colony still worried at the new nation. The border with Ethiopia was still ill-defined and disputed.

Agriculture was mostly directed toward cash crops to pay the international community for the loans that had been funneled to the country. These crops depleted the health of the soil, and writers like Angelo del Boca fault the capitalist farmers for the failure of farming to flourish. More likely

6. UNTAP report *The Trust Territory of Somaliland Under Italian Administration*, 8-15.

the Barre revolution and the effort to create a socialist economy was instrumental in speeding the failure of the Somali agro-sector. The farm owners had frequently commented on the inability to motivate Somali workers, but I would suggest this is due more to the lack of direct ownership in the product and profit; communal farming keeps these same issues, and piles on top of it a lack of market-based planning. The famines of the late 1980s and 1990s were a direct result not of colonial rule, nor of a lack of investment in the country (although the money stopped flowing after the Barre revolution and its increasing authoritarian control over the country,) but as a result of existing cultural and geographical inequities.⁷

Even the warlordism of the modern-day country is not due to the colonial period, but rather the colonial administration simply interrupted what was already the standard political structure of the region. The Italians simply inserted themselves into the existing power arrangement, just as the sultan of Zanzibar--whom the Italians first represented--had decades before. Only due to the superior military might of a modernized Italy in the twentieth century allowed them to put a halt to the internecine troubles of country. Removing the Italian presence at the end of the Trusteeship simple

7. A critique of the post-Italian investment and "failures" is addressed by Angelo Del Boca in "The Myths, Suppressions, Denials, and Defaults of Italian Colonialism." Palumbo, *A Place in the Sun*, 30-33.

set the Somali balance of power to a *status quo anticolonialism*, much as the removal of colonial administrations throughout the continent has spurred similar crises. Democratic structures collapsed to military dictatorships, which like the colonial powers, put a temporary halt to the internecine fighting. As soon as the revolutionary government put in place began to falter, however, under the weight of discontent (domestic and international) over the famines, the tribal warlordism of pre-colonial days re-manifested itself.

In effect, the Italian colonization had no effect on the infrastructure, economy, nor the political situation in Somalia. Surely there were human costs during the course of Italian administration, particularly in the period of the 1923-30 uprisings, and the Fascist concentration camps of the late 1930s and the war; these costs are tragic and should not be minimized, but the overall effect on the society of Somalia was not to create more nor less unrest and violence in the population on the whole. These trends were already extant in the tribes before Filonardi set foot in Mogadishu to take charge of the Benadir for the sultan.

Equally ineffective an argument is to blame the “ruling class” (as del Boca and other Italian socialists will) of Italy for the failures of bringing modernism or prosperity to Somalia. As with the argument against

colonization as a whole, existing competition between native tribes created instability that even heavy investment could not right, and in fact prevented industry from ever taking hold. Poor geography prevented the establishment of successful agriculture, or of a thriving mineral trade that existed in other African countries. Cultural imperatives also fought against modernity, preventing the establishment of political and social structures considered by American and Europeans to critical to a healthy society.

4. The Italian Reaction to Imperialism

The rhetoric of the colonial period suggests that Italy sought out proven ways to combat unemployment and overpopulation. In doing so, Italy had looked to the example of countries such as Britain and France, for whom the colonies provided an outlet for both, and provided a space for the adventurous and militant to define themselves. The numbers show, however, that the Italian colonial enterprise did not abate emigration, nor did it redirect it into the colonies. Also, imperialism did not provide a relief to unemployment and perpetual financial problems of the government. The public never embraced colonization as they had in Britain, France, or Germany; only a few thousand would move to the colonies. The unemployed looked first to other European countries or to the Americas for a place to

escape poverty. In the south particularly, Italian life was not all that dissimilar to the colonies. Many viewed the government and the companies that controlled the peninsula as Northerners, somehow as distinctly alien as their former Spanish rulers; the terrain of the south was difficult to farm as Somalia. Why move to a similar experience?

The real motivation behind Italian colonialism always resided with elements of the government and the military, who looked for a way to create a sense of community and purpose in the new country. The new Italy was, to those helped create it, the heir to the Roman Empire. Their greatness lay in their cultural heritage and the legacy of an empire. More than the other European powers, colonization was an issue of image; an attempt by Italy to create themselves as a Great Power by looking like a Great Power. Other European powers would convince Italy of the need for imperial adventures at the Berlin Conference, infecting Italy with their *mal d'Africa* by creating a need that was not really there, but appealed to the self-image of the new nation.

This sense of need for empire did not translate to the public. The creation of the colonies went practically unnoticed, but by prospective colonists and businesses. More immediate and pressing were the internal problems of a new nation with little cohesion in identity, perpetual financial

problems, and a sharp *anomie* created by the sudden modernization and liberalization of the economy-- in many ways the same problems that the latter Somalian state would have. In fact, Italy was a pre-modern culture that was fragmented into small city-states and duchies (rather than tribes) that had to struggle with the introduction of modernist political, economic, and social systems. The state had not come to grips with these changes when they entered into the imperial fray, and would not truly be able to engage in their colonial aspirations until their own internal situation had matured (arguably about the time of Mussolini's rise to power.)

Having embarked on the imperial path in the 1880s, Italy found itself reluctant to do what was necessary to truly compete against the other European powers. The expenses of empire were daunting, particularly in light of the internal economic troubles Italy faced. The military brinksmanship against better armed countries like France prevented them from challenging losses, such as in Tunis, and led them to seek colonial enterprises that were insulated from the scramble between the other players. Eritrea was a toe in the water, a safe spot of land in Africa with no immediate European competitors. Once safely established there, and with a burgeoning cooperation with Britain, the government of Crispi felt confident enough to press for more. Even in that, the nation tried to have it both ways by

removing itself from the responsibilities of empire. In the Benadir, the nation foisted the cost and hazard of a colony on a private enterprise, with none of the guarantees that similar entities from other nations could count on, in the event of military necessity.

The ambivalence toward their empire arose from the immediacy for the people and government of Italy toward the domestic struggle to become a modern nation-state. Only until there was a stability in the economy and political organization in the home country could they truly turn their attention to colonial matters. The hesitancy of Italian colonization made them less engaged and less enthusiastic than the other colonial powers, and created a unique, ghost-like presence in Somalia until the rise of the futurists and Fascists in Italy. This lack of engagement with the colonies doomed the companies of the Benadir to failure, and characterized the lack of impact that even the Italian governmental presence would have on Somalia at large.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE IMPERIAL BRITISH EAST AFRICA COMPANY AND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

Agreement entered into this 3RD day of August, 1889, between the Imperial British East Africa Company, hereinafter called "The British Company," of the one part, and M. Catalani, charge d'Affairs for His majesty the King of Italy in London, for and on behalf of the Royal Italian Government, of the other part, whereby it is agreed as follows:

Whereas, negotiations have been carried on for some time past, and are still pending, between the British Company and His Highness Seyyid Khailfa, Sultan of Zanzibar, for the cession by the said Sultan to the British company of certain lands, territories, and countries which lie on the coast from and including Kismayu and north of the mouth of the River Juba, including the ports of Brava, Meurka, and Magadisho, with radii landwards of 10 sea miles, and of Warsheikh, with a radius of 5 sea miles:

And whereas, His Highness the said Seyyid Khalifa, Sultan of Zanzibar, by letter dated the 15th January, 1889, to His Majesty the King of Italy, through her Britannic Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Zanzibar, authorized

His Majesty the King of Italy's Government to arrange with the British Company for the joint occupation of Kismayu:

And whereas, the Royal Italian Government are desirous of acquiring territories and ports in the East coast of Africa, and the British Company are anxious to assist the Royal Italian Government in attaining such object:

1. Now, it is hereby mutually agreed between the parties hereto, that when His Highness Seyyid Khalifa, Sultan of Zanzibar, concedes to and hands over according to his promises and declarations to the British company the said lands, territories, and countries lying on such coast from and including Kismayu and north of the mouth of the river Juba, including the ports of Brava, Meurka, and Magadisho, with the radii landwards of 10 sea miles, and of Warsheikh, with a radius of 5 sea miles, the British Company shall, with the consent and approval of the Sultan, but at the expense of the Italian Government, transfer, or cause to be transferred to the duly authorized Agents of the Italian Government, the aforesaid lands, territories, and countries, and the above ports of Brava, Meurka, Magadisho, and Warsheikh, to be held by the Italian Government on the same terms and conditions, as those which may be contained in the Concession to be granted for the aforesaid ports and territories to the British Company, or on the best terms obtainable from the Sultan.

Except as to Kismayu and its adjoining territory, which is to be jointly occupied by the parties hereto, as hereinafter provided.

2. The Italian Government hereby agrees to indemnify the British Company from all expenses, reasonable demands, and claims, if any, that may arise by reason of the provisions of the Agreement, or in the carrying out of the same.

3. The British Company agree with the Italian Government upon an equal joint occupation of Kismayu and its adjoining territory as conceded by the Sultan, which will be jointly and equally held and administered by the two Contracting Parties. Both the British Company and the Italian Government shall possess at Kismayu and its adjoining territory perfect equality of right and privileges, but subject always to terms, if any, of the Concession to be granted as aforesaid. The Italian Government and the British Company shall bear and pay an equal share of the cost of administration, and shall divide equally the net returns from Kismayu and its adjoining territory. The detailed provisions for arriving at a modus vivendi, and carrying out in the most friendly way the provisions of this clause, are to be agreed upon and settled at Kismayu by the Agents of the Italian Government and the Agents of the British Company duly authorized as soon as possible after Kismayu has

been handed over by the Sultan of Zanzibar to the British Company, and by the British Company to the Italian Government.

4. The Italian Government bind themselves to limit the Italian sphere of influence and operations on the East African continent by refraining from exercising any political or other influences, accepting Protectorates, making acquisitions of lands, or interfering with the extension of British influence on the territories or over the tribes lying to the west or south of a line drawn from the north bank of the mouth of the Juba River, and intended to keep always on the north and east sides of the River Juba to the point where the 8th degree of north latitude intersects the 40th degree of east longitude, and a line drawn direct from the above-named point and running over the parallel intersecting the 35th degree of east longitude of the meridian of Greenwich.

On their part the British Company agree and bind themselves to limit the said British Company's sphere of influence and operations on the East African continent by refraining from exercising any political or other influence, accepting Protectorates, making acquisitions of lands, interfering with the extension of Italian influence on the territories or over the tribes lying to the east and north-east of the lines above specified, provided, nevertheless, that if the course of the Juba River should, on survey, be ascertained to flow at any points to the north or east of the above-mentioned

lines, then the northern or eastern bank of the said river, as the case may be, shall at such points be accepted as the line of demarcation between the said parties. This proviso, however, shall only extend to deviations of the said river up to the point where the 8th degree of north latitude intersects the 40th degree of east longitude. The above-mentioned lines are distinctly marked in red on the Map annexed hereto, and which Map, for the purposes of identification, has been signed by the parties hereto.

5. It is hereby further agreed that the Italian Government shall have joint and equal rights with the British Company of navigation on the Juba River and its tributaries so far as it may be requisite to give the Italian Government free access to the territories reserved to its sphere of influence as above mentioned.

6. The two contracting parties agree that any controversies which may arise respecting the interpretation or the execution of the present Agreement, or the consequences of any violation thereof, shall be submitted, when the means of settling them by means of an amicable are exhausted, to the decision of the Commission of Arbitration, and that the result of such arbitration shall be binding upon both Contracting Parties. The members of such Commissions shall be elected by the two Contracting Parties by common consent, failing which, each of the parties shall nominate an Arbitrator, or an

equal number of Arbitrators, and the Arbitrators thus appointed shall select an Umpire.

7. The Royal Italian Government reserve to themselves full power to delegate all their rights, powers, and privileges belonging to them, or acquired through the present Agreement, to an Italian Company, in the course of formation, to be called "The Royal Italian East Africa Company," or some such similar name, binding themselves, however, that the said Italian Company shall comply with all obligations undertaken herein by the Italian Government, who will themselves remain responsible for the strict compliance with the obligations herein contained. This Agreement to be construed according to English law.

Done and signed at London, in duplicate, in the English and Italian languages, with the understanding that the English text shall be binding, this 3rd day of August, in the year 1889.

W. Mackinnon.

T. Catalani.

Signed by the said Sir W. Mackinnon and Signor Catalani in the presence of

George S Mackenzie

3rd August, 1889

1. Hertslet, Sir E. *The Map of Africa by Treaty*. HM Stationary Office, London. 1909. Vol. III, pg. 1088-91

APPENDIX B

CONVENTION BETWEEN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE BENADIR COMPANY

ARTICLE I. The government agrees to hand over to the "Societa Anonima Commerciale Italiana del Benadir (Somalia Italiana)," having its head office at Milan, the administration of the towns and territories of the Benadir, with their respective hinterland, as at present exercised by the government, and that at the risk of the company and without guarantee.

The convention will be in effect from May 1, 1898.

On its part, the company agrees to further the civil and commercial development of the colony and to furnish a detailed account of its administration to the Italian government, which will have the right to supervise the company's operations. The company will also develop in the most suitable manner, the economic condition of the towns conceded to it and for that purpose will undertake all works which may be thought necessary.

There not being fixed beforehand a detailed program of such works to be undertaken by the company in order to obtain the above-mentioned ends does not lessen its legal obligation to do whatever may be recognized as its duty, given the circumstances and under the sanction of law.

In case of disagreement, disputes will be handled in the manner laid down by Article XVII.

ART. II. The government agrees to pay to the company from May 1, 1898, to April 30, 1910, the annual sum of 400,000 gold francs and from May 1, 1910, to July 16, 1946, 350,000 gold francs, for the maintenance of existing stations, as well as of those which the company may hereafter found.

ART. III. Should the territory of Lugh remain in the Italian zone of influence, or should it in accordance with future treaties pass to another state with Italy retaining the right to maintain a trading station there, the administration of Lugh in the first case, or of the Italian trading station at Lugh in the second case, will, with all its rights and responsibilities, fall upon the company, as in the case of the other stations.

ART. IV. The government will make use of the company and will hand over to it regularly the sum necessary for the payment of the annual subsidies to the sultans of Obbia and Alula, that is to say, in all 3,600 Maria Theresa thalers, so long as the government is under obligation to the said sultans.

ART. V. The government will apply, as regards the company, Article III of the Anglo-Italian protocol of March 24, 1891 [Equality of treatment between British and Italian subjects and protected persons at Kismayu.]

ART. VI. The government agrees to grant to the company free and gratuitous enjoyment of mines with the power of transferring concessions of the same to third persons, although only with the consent of the government if third persons are foreigners.

The enjoyment of mines and the concessions to third persons must not be of longer duration than that of the administration of the company.

The government also agrees to give to the company without payment the power to occupy all lands which at the time the company takes possession are recognized as state domains and all real property of which it may have obtained the use and enjoyment from the sultan of Zanzibar. The company have the power to give concessions for the use of these lands, for a term not longer than that of its administration, to Italians or to dependent natives resident in the colony. It will have the power, moreover, to give concessions to foreigners so long as the term does not exceed that of its administration and so long as the concession has the previous consent of the government.

The government, with the consent of the company, will have the right to make concessions both to foreigners and to Italians for terms exceeding that of the company's administration.

ART. VII. The company will collect the customs duties for its own account on the basis of existing treaties and existing taxes; it can also levy

new taxes or repeal existing ones and reduce customs duties, subject to the approval of the government.

ART. VIII. The products of the territories to which the present convention refers will receive the same customs treatment as those of the Eritrean colony on their importation into the kingdom.

ART. IX. The company agrees - a) to fly the national flag; b) to pay to the sultan of Zanzibar the annual rent of 120,000 rupees or whatever lesser sum may be agreed on hereafter; c) to pay annual subsidies due the sultans of Obbia and of Alula as mentioned in Article IV; d) to maintain in good condition all the buildings received from the government; e) to maintain at least six hundred askaris for the internal security of the colony; f) to administer justice according to the rules in force in the towns and territories conceded to it; g) to apply the general acts of Berlin (February 26, 1885) and of Brussels (July 2, 1890) in regard to [suppression of] the slave trade and trade in arms and spirituous liquors; and h) to operate the postal service in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Postal Union.

ART. X. The government does not contract any obligation to defend the colony from external attacks but reserves to itself full liberty of action to take such steps as it may consider necessary in the public interest.

ART. XI. On request by the government, the company will be obliged either to expel from the colony any Italian or foreigner or to hand over to the government any offender taking refuge there.

ART. XII. The statutes of the company are annexed herewith as an integral part of the present convention.

No changes can be introduced in the said statutes under pain of forfeiture without the prior consent of the foreign minister.

ART. XIII. The government does not assume responsibility of any sort for credit operations made by the company, even in the interest of the colony, and the company in such operations can offer as guarantees only its own private property and private credit.

ART. XIV. The present convention, which will come into effect on May 1, 1898, will remain in force until July 16, 1946, at which time it will ipso facto expire without any need of mutual notification.

The government, moreover, reserves the right to cancel the convention on July 16, 1921, with two years' previous notice, should it wish to exercise its own powers and administer directly the towns and territories subject to the present convention, or should it not feel disposed to continue to exercise its right of option toward the sultan of Zanzibar according to the convention of August 12, 1892.

The power of cancelling the present convention is also given to the company after twelve years from May 1, 1898, with a year's previous notice.

ART. XV. Permanent works constructed at the initiative and expense of the company, of such a nature as to ameliorate the financial condition of the colony, will at the expiration of the contract be accepted by the government and paid for at a set valuation, provided the execution of such works and the plans relating to them had received the previous consent of the government and reserving always to the company its right to cede to third parties those works not accepted by the government.

ART. XVI. Should the government cancel the convention at the end of twenty-three years, as provided for in Article XIV, the company will have a right to compensation, even for works undertaken without the authorization of the government at a valuation calculated at a sum between the expenses of the works in question and the greatest profit shown.

No indemnity will be due from the government if the cancellation of the convention results from an act or fault of the company.

ART. XVII. The value of the works for which compensation may be due will be determined by three arbitrators. Each party will name an arbitrator; these two arbitrators will choose a third; and in the case of disagreement over the choice of the third, the matter will be referred to the

president of the Court of Cassation at Rome, where the seat of arbitration will be.

Any question of civil law arising between the government and the company in the execution or interpretation of this convention will also be decided by arbitration.

The judgements of the arbitrators will be arrived at without formality or procedure, and there will be no appeal against them.

ART. XVIII. The company must respect the laws of the state and the treaties in force and other treaties which the government may think fit to conclude or publish.

In the case of disputes, or other difficulties, between the company and the sultan of Zanzibar, or the chiefs of the various tribes, or the English authorities of the neighboring territories, the company must submit to the decision of the foreign minister.

In the case of disagreement between the parties, the arbitrators will determine whether the convention has suffered material alterations by reason of new treaties or by the measures taken as a result of conflicts.

In the case of an affirmative decision, the company will have the right to demand the cancellation of the conventions with compensation for the value of the works executed.

ART. XIX. The company's charter will be registered with a tax of 1 lira.

ART. XX. The company will have the right to withdraw from the government depots, and possibly from those at Massawa, arms and ammunition at cost price which the government may consider strictly necessary for the security of the stations. Beyond this, all trade in arms is forbidden to the company.

ART XXI. The government will make arrangements to keep a warship on the coast or in the waters of Zanzibar.

ART XXII. The present convention and the privileges derived from it cannot be transferred by the company to third parties.

ART XXIII. The present convention will be registered with a tax of 1 lira and will not be valid until approved by law.

G. MYLIUS
DR. S. B. CRESPI
A. CARMINATI

RUDINI
VISCONTI VENOSTA
LUZZATTI
A. DI SAN MARZANO
A. S. VIMERCATI

Rome, May 25, 1898

2. Hess, Robert. *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*. U of Chicago, Chicago. 1966. [from ASMAI pos. 75/4, f. 30 not available at this writing].

APPENDIX C

COSTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BENADIR, 1893-1898

V. Filonardi e co. (1893-1896)

1893-1894

Income (Lire)		Expeditures (Lire)		Net Profit/Deficit
Government Subsidy	350,000	Rental to Zanzibar	256,000	
Customs Revenue	140,657	Ordinary Expenses	237,934	
Other Taxes	8,418 (est.)			
TOTAL	463,076	TOTAL	493,934	-30,858

1894-1895

Government Subsidy	350,000	Rental to Zanzibar	256,000	
Customs Revenue	115,879	Ordinary Expenses	87,631	
Other Taxes	8,418 (est.)			
TOTAL	474,297	TOTAL	343,631	+130,666

1895-1896

Government Subsidy	350,000	Rental to Zanzibar	256,000	
Customs Revenue	115,879 (est.)	Ordinary Expenses	103,296	
Other Taxes	8,418 (est.)			
TOTAL	474,297	TOTAL	359,296	+115,001

Provisional Government Administration (June 15, 1896 - April 30, 1898)

1896-1897

Income (Lire)		Expenses (Lire)		Net Profit/Deficit
Customs Revenue	179,115	Rental to Zanzibar	222,000	
		Ordinary Expenses	220,280	
TOTAL	179,115	TOTAL	442,280	-263,165

1897-1898

Customs Revenue	223,293	Rental to Zanzibar	222,000	
		Ordinary Expenses	220,280 (est.)	
TOTAL	223,293	TOTAL	442,280	-218,987

3. Report by F. Quirighetti on Filonardi Co. expenses , Report by E. Dulio on Provisional Government expenses (ASMAI pos. 75/4, f. 34.)

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