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Abstracts

ELISABETTA CICCIOLA - EMANUELA LOCCI, Eritrea: da colonia primogenita a terra massonica

This essay aims to deepen the events linked to Italian affairs in the Horn of Africa, from the first statements of interest during the pre-unification period to the paradigm shift that led our country to promote - albeit unevenly - a colonial policy crowning with the rise of nationalism during Fascism. Eritrea will thus be analyzed as officially proclaimed in 1890 the first colony gained by Italy. The paper will profit from some unpublished manuscript and printed sources found in the historical archives of the Grand Orient of Italy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome by investigating the Masonic presence there from 1891 - shortly after its proclamation - to 1956, with a break from 1925 to 1941. It will show how the lodges were essential centers of sociability and gathering through which the universal Masonic values of brotherhood and solidarity were conveyed. The Freemasons actively boosted the development of the colony, supporting the establishment of public facilities and opposing the regime through the foundation of national liberty movements and antifascist initiatives - such as the National Antifascist Union. From some files preserved in the archives of the Grand Orient of Italy, it emerges how the fascist services - working covertly in Eritrea after the freeing by the English in 1941 - considered Freemasonry and the Eritrean Lodge of Asmara, founded in that very year, as the heart of antifascism, persecuting its members and killing its worshipful master.

Keywords:

Freemasonry

Colonialism

Eritrea