

History of Italian Colonialism

notes for a (shared) chronology

Special thanks for their collaboration to:
Carmen Belmonte, Igiaba Scego, Gioia Toscani De Col, Alessandro Triulzi



1869
Purchase of Assab Bay by the Rubattino Company

On November 15, 1869, Italy, acting on behalf of the Rubattino Company, purchased Assab Bay from the Sultan of Zanzibar for 100,000 pounds sterling. The purchase was a key step in Italy's colonial expansion in East Africa.

1882
Acquisition of Assab Bay by the Italian government

The Italian government acquired Assab Bay from the Rubattino Company, securing it as Italian possession.

1885
Occupation of Massawa

The Eritrean port city was proclaimed the capital of Italy's overseas possession.

1887
Battle of Dogali

On January 26, Italian colonial forces under Lieutenant Colonel Tommaso De Cristoforo were defeated by Dogali Eritreans by Ethiopian forces commanded by Ras Alula Engido.

1889
First protectorates in Somalia

Colonial expansion in Somalia began with the signing of protectorate treaties between the Italian government and two Somali sultanates: the Sultanate of Hobyo and the Sultanate of Obock and the Sultanate of Mogadishu.

1890
Colony of Eritrea

On January 15, the Colony of Eritrea was established, with Massawa as its capital.

1896
Battle of Adwa

The First Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-1896) ended with the defeat of Adwa (March 1). Italian troops led by Lieutenant General Oreste Baratieri were defeated by the Ethiopian army of Menelik II.

1902
Concession of Tientsin Bay

The Kingdom of Italy gained control of Tientsin Bay (China) through a concession obtained from the Qing Empire following Italy's participation in the international expedition to quell the Boxer Rebellion.

1908
Colony of Italian Somalia

On April 5, Italian Somalia was established in the southern territories of Somalia with Mogadishu as its capital.

1912
Occupation of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and the Dodecanese

At the end of the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912), the Kingdom of Italy occupied Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in Libya and the Dodecanese Islands in Greece.

1922
March on Rome

On the March on Rome (October 28-29), Benito Mussolini formed a new government that paved the way for twenty years of Fascist rule.

1930
Concentration Camps in Libya

During Italian military operations in Libya (1922-1932), aimed at suppressing anti-colonial resistance, General Rodolfo Graziani organized the deportation of over 100,000 Libyans from the al-Jabal al-Akhar mountains in Cyrenaica.

1935
League of Nations Sanctions

On November 18, the League of Nations imposed economic sanctions against Ethiopia, which reduced the foreign exchange available to the Italian state. Sanctions were lifted in July 1936.

1937
Assassination attempt on General Graziani and Fekisti 12 Massacre in Addis Ababa

On February 18 (Fekisti 12) in the Ethiopian calendar, an attempt on the Ethiopian resistance fighter to assassinate General Graziani, Viceroy of Ethiopia, was followed by the massacre of 12 Fekisti in Addis Ababa.

1941
Invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece

In April, Italian and German troops occupied Yugoslavia and Greece. Following the invasion, the Balkans were divided into areas controlled by Germans, Italy, and Hungary.

1943
Armistice

At a turning point in World War II, Benito Mussolini was removed from office as head of government and arrested on the night of July 24. On September 3, Italy and the Anglo-American allies signed an armistice in Cassibile, Syracuse, Sicily.

1947
Treaty of Paris

As stated in article 23 of the Treaty of Paris, Italy renounced all rights and claims to Italian overseas possessions in Africa.

1950-1960
Italian fiduciary administration of Somalia

The Italian government was entrusted with the Italian fiduciary administration of Somalia (the international status of Somalia was Somalia or AFIS) on behalf of the United Nations to lead the country to independence.

1960

Colonial agricultures and architectures: a selection of events

