

HISTORY
of the
GRAND ORIENT
of
ITALY

edited by
EMANUELA LOCCI



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*Freemasonry is a school of liberty,
of atonement and brotherhood.*

Ettore Ferrari
1912

There is a human feeling called gratitude.

Mine is to Marco Novarino.

A master. My mentor.

CONTENTS

Foreword	xv
1. Masonic Networks in Early Modern Italy, <i>Giulia Delogu</i>	1
1.1 Intro	1
1.2 Rome and Florence	2
1.3 Masonic, Cultural, and Poetic Networks: The Case of Tommaso Crudeli	3
1.4 Venice, Genoa, and the Kingdom of Sardinia	8
1.5 The Triumph of Freemasonry in Eighteenth Century's Naples	10
1.6 Masonic, Cultural, and Political Net: La Lira Focense	15
1.7 Hapsburg Lombardy: Milan, Cremona, Pavia	19
1.8 Masonic, Cultural and Commercial Net: The Free Port of Trieste	23
1.9 1805: The Birth of the Grand Orient of Italy	24
2. Italian Freemasonry from the Eighteenth Century to the Unification: Leaders, Metamorphoses, Renditions, <i>Luca Giuseppe Manenti</i>	27
2.1 Intro	27
2.2 From Enlightened Despotism to Napoleon	29
2.3 Bonapartism and Freemasonry	35
2.4 Brothers and Kins	39
2.5 In Riots and Revolutions	52
2.6 Epilogue	58
3. From the Rebirth of Freemasonry to the Grand Mastery of <i>Adriano Lemmi (1859–1896), Demetrio Xocato</i>	61
3.1 Intro	61
3.2 The Italian Grand Orient: The Early Years	63

3.3	The Diverse Masonic Panorama	67
3.4	From Italian Grand Orient to the Grand Orient of Italy	70
3.5	The Administrative and Structural Reinforcement	73
3.6	Toward the Merger of Italian Freemasonry	78
3.7	The Era of Lemmi	87
3.8	The Fall of Lemmi	92
4.	The Grand Orient of Italy During Liberal Season, from Nathan to Ferrari, <i>Emanuela Locci</i>	101
4.1	Intro	101
4.2	Political Line	102
4.3	Masonic Rise	103
4.4	Nathan's First Grand Mastery	103
4.5	From Ernesto Nathan to Ettore Ferrari	115
4.6	The Schism, the Birth of the Great Lodge of Italy	123
4.7	Freemasonry and Political Life	125
5.	Luster and Misery of Italian Freemasonry Between the Great War and Fascism, <i>Nicoletta Casano</i>	139
5.1	The Homely Political Commitment of Italian Freemasonry at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century	139
5.2	The Political Commitment of Italian Freemasonry at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century in the World	141
5.3	WWI: Patriotism and Pacifism Compared	143
5.4	Nationalisms Compared	147
5.5	Benito Mussolini and Masonry	148
5.6	Freemasonry and Fascism	151
5.7	The End of the Allowed Endurance of Freemasonry in Italy	158
5.8	Conclusion	161
6.	The Grand Orient of Italy in Exile, <i>Emanuela Locci</i>	163

7. Italian Communities and Freemasonry Abroad,	
<i>Emanuela Locci</i>	169
7.1 Intro	169
7.2 The Early Italian Ateliers in the Empire: L'Unione d'Oriente and Italia	169
7.2.1 <i>Italia Risorta</i>	171
7.2.2 <i>La Fenice, La Sincerità, and La Speranza and Bisanzio Risorta</i>	173
7.3 Italian Freemasonry in the Region	174
7.3.1 <i>Orhaniye</i>	174
7.3.2 <i>Armenak and Stella Jonia</i>	175
7.4 Italian Freemasonry in Salonika: Macedonia Risorta, and Labor et Lux	176
7.5 The Role Played by Italian Masonry in 1908 Revolution	177
7.6 The Italian Settlement and the Grand Orient of Italy in Egypt	179
7.6.1 <i>Italian Lodges</i>	180
7.6.2 <i>Il Nilo</i>	181
7.6.3 <i>Nuova Pompeia</i>	181
7.6.4 <i>Cincinnati</i>	183
7.6.5 <i>Italian Masonry in Port Said and Suez</i>	184
7.7 Tunisia Masonic Ground	184
7.7.1 <i>The Italian Settlement in Tunisia Before Fascism Rising</i>	184
7.7.2 <i>The Italian Outpost During Fascism</i>	186
7.7.3 <i>The Birth of Freemasonry in Tunisia</i>	187
7.7.4 <i>The Early Lodges</i>	187
7.7.5 <i>Cartagine e Utica</i>	188
7.7.6 <i>Progress of Italian Masonry</i>	189
7.7.7 <i>Veritas</i>	190
7.7.8 <i>Ateliers in Tunisi: Concordia e Mazzini-Garibaldi</i>	190

7.8 The Grand Orient of Italy in Lybia	192
7.8.1 <i>The Grand Orient of Italy Lodges After the Taking of Libya</i>	193
7.9 Italian Masonry in Eritrea	198
8. Masonic Solidarity in the Liberal Age: Education and Philanthropy, <i>Demetrio Xoccatto</i>	201
8.1 Education	201
8.2 Aid to the Needy	213
8.3 An Assessment	226
 ADDENDA	
I. Gran Masters Grand Orient of Italy	231
II. Reference Bibliography	233

7. ITALIAN COMMUNITIES AND FREEMASONRY ABROAD

Emanuela Locci

7.1 Intro

Italian Masonry, notably the one represented by Grand Orient of Italy (G.O.I.) often overcame national boundaries to reach far lands. Thus, many are the ateliers founded by the appointment of G.O.I. outside Italy—from Africa to Asia and Americas. Here, we'll focus on Italian lodges established in Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Eritrea. The time lapse goes from 1861 to 1955.

The lot considered has been wholly part of Italian communities based in diverse territories. Many are the reasons of Italian presence abroad, from economic and social to colonization purposes. The birth and development of masonic groups bond to nowadays-avowed Palazzo Giustiniani is tied to the growing migration in the Mediterranean shores and beyond.

The first case study is related to G.O.I.-bound cells in the Ottoman Empire by then.

In this dominion, since Middle age, many were the Italian groups. Traders were deeply involved in seashore traffics in Empire cities such as Constantinople, Salonika, and Smyrna. Their nature was assorted: swashbuckling, traders, sailors, and soldiers for hire, political refugees, and friars. Italian migration has always been lively and people were growing in number and influence.

In 1871, Ottoman Empire-based Italians were roughly 10.000 units.⁶⁴⁸

7.2 The Early Italian Ateliers in the Empire, L'Unione d'Oriente, and Italia

When G.O.I. defined the lodge institution, the Empire already numbered other Freemasons practices from France and Britain.

648 Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une Ville Ottomane Plurielle, Smyrne aux XVIII et XIX siècle*, Isis Press, Istanbul, 2006, p. 80.

The first acknowledged Italian atelier is “L’Unione d’Oriente” [*Orient Union*], affiliated to Turin G.O.I.⁶⁴⁹ No more items on: it’s not listed in any official minute on 1861–1971 spans.⁶⁵⁰ The second in order of birth, named “Italia,” was built in Constantinople in 1862; recently, the record found allowed to draw the identity of founders and members. Certified facts are scarce, but among the Brethren is counted for sure Marquise Camillo Caracciolo di Bella, Italian Realm ambassador to the High Port.

The effective Italia Brethren’ list in 1864 shed some light on its story. This paper allows us to grant the identity and amount of active masons. Inspecting the items comes out the members were not just Italians: Hebrews, Greeks, and Armenians. In 1864, there weren’t any Ottomans: their partaking is late. The comp shows immediately the adherence to the universality assumption in masonry and its openness to diversity of confession and ethnicity thus meeting in this institution.

Two years since its foundation, according to the document abovementioned, it consisted of 70 active members plus 9 to be.

Some names recur in “Italia Risorta” [*Resurged Italy*] records, a lodge risen from the ashes of Italia in 1869, two years after its quitting for inside conflicts frustrating the routine.

Among the charity activities by Italia, the key one was establishing a primary school addressing migrant children and concerned customers without nationality bias. The school was aimed to keep the Italian history, customs and idiom alive becoming one of the most outstanding education institute with an exquisite secular profile as willed by founders and Provost, freemasonry member Trinca. The atelier featured also by other philanthropic initiatives, such as the sanitary assistance during the cholera epidemic in 1866, rewarded by Ottoman government. Commendation came from Italy too: Grand Master Ludovico Frapolli appointed Worshipful Antonio Veneziani deputy of G.O.I. to European Turkey.⁶⁵¹

649 October 8, 1859, *Ausonia* lodge was established in Turin. A few months before, *Grande Oriente Italiano*—better known as *Grande Oriente di Torino*—arouse with the aim to start a Great National Lodge. Cfr. P. Buscaglioni, *La Loggia Ausonia e il primo Grande Oriente Italiano*, Edizioni Brenner, Cosenza, 2001.

650 ASGLT, *Logge italiane in Turchia* (edited by Archivio Storico Grande Oriente d’Italia, here from ASGOI), Roma, July 2005, p. 1.

651 ASGLT, op. cit., p. 2.

In 1865, Italia was embedded in the official list of G.O.I. appointed lodges, joined the Constituent Assembly of Genoa but couldn't be represented by any member.

Despite the gains, in 1867, Italia disrupted the activity, many Brethren questioning on the easiness in approving undignified members. A concurrent issue in ceasing was finances, due to the school high cost of keeping.⁶⁵²

Anyway, same year, Francesco Abbagnara represented the atelier during the Constituent and Executive Assembly in Naples. The other Italian ateliers partaking were “Stella Jonia” [*Ionian Star*] from Smyrna Orient, founded in 1864, “Anacleto Cricca” from Magnesia—born in 1867 by the founder of the same name (1824–?), and “Macedonia” from Salonika Orient, established in 1864 by Han Barouh Coen, a Hebrew hailing from Italy.⁶⁵³

Despite the ceasing of Italia, Italian freemasonry in Istanbul was still alive and a new lodge, named “Italia Risorta,” arouses—whose title reminding the prior institution and recalling the aspiration of Risorgimento.

7.2.1 *Italia Risorta*

“Italia Risorta” was founded on March 10, 1869, as the very first under G.O.I. purview, based in Rome. At the end of 1869 Worshipful was Antonio Geraci and registrar Enrico Ottoni.⁶⁵⁴

In 1871, the mason, deputy, and then senator of Italian Realm, Mauro Macchi, was the spokesman in the Constituent Assembly in Florence at the end of May, while Giuseppe Mazzoni (1808–1880) did it the year after. In 1875, the lodge chooses Antonio Barbagallo as Worshipful, Stefano Tundra first proctor, Vincenzo Della Mea second proctor, Gennaro Marchesi orator, and Luigi Cattolinich as deputy. All distinguished members in the Italian community.

On March 20, 1875, the lodge appointed Giuseppe Garibaldi Worshipful for life since its members—as well as Italy based masons—had a profound esteem for Garibaldi and his acts as for Giuseppe Mazzini, so that Italian

652 Thierry Zarcone, *Mystiques, Philosophes et Franc-Maçons en Islam*, I.F.E.A., Maisonneuve, Paris, 1993, p. 213.

653 Sam Levy, *Salonique à la Fin du XIXe Siècle*, ISIS Press, Istanbul, 2000, p. 74.

654 ASGLT, op. cit., p. 3.

Brethren living in Istanbul supported the campaign by “Trionfo Ligure” [*Ligurian Triumph*] in Genoa to erect a monument to Mazzini.⁶⁵⁵

The year after, by order n. 10—effective in August 18—, G.O.I. suspended its works; notwithstanding, less than two years after it raised again under the direction of Antonio Geraci, leading up to 1889 when awarded for his masonic engagement with a honor gold medal by Orient appointed lodges of Constantinople.⁶⁵⁶ In 1887, vice-Admiral Woods Paşa (Henry Felix Woods), Worshipful of Bulwer lodge, promoted Geraci British mason for his qualities.⁶⁵⁷

In the span 1890–1891, the atelier was mastered by Attorney Giorgio Furlani and in the forthcoming four years by Worshipful Raffaele Ricci. During his mastery activities held over,⁶⁵⁸ but soon after Brethren Geraci, Guerracino, Catalani, Reiser, Atlas and Luzzena were solicited to start it up again thus re-activating the lodge the following year.⁶⁵⁹ From 1909 to 1911, Worshipful was dean Raffaele Ricci and in 1913, the lodge suspended its feat once again, resuming in 1919, with Ricci still mastering. In 1921, a new Worshipful was elected—Giulio de Medina—while in the ensuing round, Raffaele Ricci succeeded anew.

In 1925, Worshipful was Alberto Fano.

In the masonic scenario of Istanbul, the Brethren often worked in diverse cells even not in Italian Obedience and in leading roles. It's the case of Veneziani, Worshipful in “Italia” and co-founder of “L'Unione d'Oriente” were he was deputy. Giorgio Guarracino in 1868 was Worshipful in the Azize lodge and first proctor in “L'Unione d'Oriente.”

Geraci, Worshipful in “Italia Risorta,” was an active member in “Bulwer” lodge—British Obedience—while Woods Paşa, Worshipful in Bulwer, was also Brother in “Italia Risorta.” This mutual insight eased the dissemination

655 *Trionfo Ligure no. 90* in Genoa has been founded in 1856 and yet lies under *Grande Oriente d'Italia*.

656 ASGLT, op. cit., p. 3.

657 Angelo Iacovella, *La massoneria in Turchia: la loggia Italia Risorta di Costantinopoli*, in “Studi emigrazione”, no. 123, 1996, p. 402.

658 ASGOI, *Decreto Grande Oriente d'Italia n. 58 del 1895*, Roma.

659 ASGLT, op. cit., p. 3.

of revolutionary ideas from Risorgimento, producing effects on formerly initiated Ottomans.⁶⁶⁰

“Italia Risorta,” despite some admin criticism due mainly to the shifting of G.O.I., cast itself in the masonic entourage of the Ottoman capital. It lavished in many charitable acts appointed by the sultanate and worked continuously for all the reign of Abdülhamid II, differently from French lodges, become sleeping. Officially didn't act for revolutionary purposes and this shielded them from interdiction hitting many other cells in the capital. No clue on direct involvement in the complot by Young Ottomans first and Young Turkish then, but easily balls and feasts weren't just for charity. During these meetings, masonic propaganda took place and arguably the Italian freemasonry in Salonika was the moonlight harbinger of Young Turkish movement.⁶⁶¹

The lodge had a modest insight in Ottoman society according to the number of members.

Generally speaking, the membership had a constant ranking and initiatives were narrowed but not ceased only before 1908 Revolution, Libyan war, and WWI. The activities stopped definitively in 1923, when Atatürk republic began.⁶⁶²

7.2.2 *La Fenice, La Sincerità, and La Speranza and Bisanzio Risorta*

Other ateliers relying upon G.O.I. served in Istanbul, albeit not fundamental as “Italia Risorta.”

“La Speranza” [*Hope*] was established in August 25, 1867, following the Scottish Rite Ancient and Accepted. After just two years, modestly running indeed, the outstanding attendants stated to merge with Brethen from “La Fenice” and “La Speranza” to build up “Azize.”

“La Fenice” [*Phoenix*] was founded on March 15, 1868;⁶⁶³ scarce are the documentary sources on, we can resume it didn't overcome the first year. The gathered masons soon decided to close the temple and join the Brethen from “La Sincerità” [*Honesty*] and “La Speranza,” forming

660 Thierry Zarccone, op. cit., p. 214.

661 *Ibidem*, p. 215.

662 Angelo Iacovella, op. cit., p. 404.

663 ASGOI, *establishment Seal n. 2194*.

“Azize,” whose infos are narrowed to the start—1869—and the name of the first Worshipful, Giorgio Guerracino, already known in other masonic entities.

“La Sincerità” was founded August 5, 1868, under the aegis of G.O.I.⁶⁶⁴ We should wait the beginning of twentieth century to face the birth in Constantinople of a new Italian lodge; “Bisanzio Risorta” [*Resurged Byzantium*] was thus founded in 1908. Its first Worshipful, and institutor was Nicola Forte, teacher in the head male school. From 1909 to 1910, Edoardo Denari—engineer and wealthy businessman—was Worshipful. During his mastery, the lodge was engaged in the charter of the Great Ottoman Orient. In 1911, due to the conflict between Italy and Ottoman Empire to possess Libya, the lodge diminished its significance up to resolve in closing in 1913.⁶⁶⁵ After 10 years, Worshipful Jouhami resumes it again: no more info we possess about its routine.⁶⁶⁶

7.3 Italian Freemasonry in the Region

Coming next Istanbul as the political and cultural center of the Empire, Smyrna (now Izmir) and Salonika were the main cities for business and heritage. Masonry had a remarkable outcome there—Salonika mainly—and led on Empire issues.⁶⁶⁷ In just Smyrna, there were 13 ateliers founded during 1860–1870: 7 British, 5 Italian, 1 French, and 1 Greek.

The Italian settlement in Smyrna dates back to far times and the first documents come from 1700s, when Venetians and folks coming from Ionian isles were roughly 2,000 units.⁶⁶⁸

7.3.1 *Orhaniye*

Italian masonry came to Smyrna in the second half of 1800s; the first lodge—“Orhaniye”—was founded on March 28, 1868, by the appointment of Italian Grand Orient ratified by a masterly seal numbered 1993 and recognized by Scottish Rite Supreme Council on August 5 1898.

664 *Ibidem*.

665 ASGOI, *Decreto del Grande Oriente d'Italia n. 139*, November 24, 1913, Roma.

666 ASGLT, op. cit., p. 5.

667 Thierry Zarccone, op. cit., p. 274.

668 Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, op. cit., p. 75.

Its uniqueness consists in only Turkish idiom rituals;⁶⁶⁹ more, unusually than ever, the Worshipful was often a Muslim.

“Orhaniye” gave the setting maul to Enverî Efendi, head of Health Department in Smyrna, who represented the lodge in the Constituent Assembly taking place in Rome during 1874.⁶⁷⁰

All its chief mates in 1870 were Muslims; it happened only in 1909 with the establishment of the Great Ottoman Orient.

In 1872, Worshipful was Giorgio Tamajo,⁶⁷¹ representing the Brethen in Florence Constituent Assembly same year on May. Afterward, it mysteriously ceased but re-opened the next year. “Orhaniye” shared the same domicile with other lodges: 3 Italian plus other 3 British, while in 1878 had legal residence to Doctor Anacleto Cricca’s manor.⁶⁷²

7.3.2 *Armenak and Stella Jonia*

“Armenak” was a Scottish Rite atelier depending by G.O.I. and founded on February 18, 1870, by seal no. 3408. In 1873, Acop Sivagian was Worshipful and in 1977 joined Rome Constituent albeit sent no representative there. This lodge moved its legal residence to Doctor Anacleto Cricca’s house, as the one abovementioned.

“Stella Jonia” was born in 1864 and in its minute Anacleto Cricca is logged; born in Bologna in 1824, son of Pietro, medical doctor, initiated in 1849 under patent no. 01447.⁶⁷³

Cricca played as delegate in the structure and was endorsed with the 33rd degree of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

Captain Anastasio Giuli, adhering to Palermo Supreme Council Obedience under patent no. 106,⁶⁷⁴ founded “La Fenice” on February 1868.

669 ASGLT, Koray Özalp, Bülent Çetiner, *Türk Masonluk Tarihi, vol III*, Istanbul, 1974, p. 17.

670 ASGLT, 2005, p. 9.

671 In 1871, Giorgio Tamajo was elected Sovereign Knight Commander by the High Council of Scottish Rite Ancient and Accepted.

672 ASGLT, 2005, p. 10.

673 ASGOL, *Registri Matricolari loggia Stella Jonia*, p. 3.

674 ASGLT, 2005, p. 7.

Worshipful was Costantino Tritafillis, soon replaced after resignation by Temistocle Iatros. In 1868, the lodge passed to G.O.I. Obedience. Establishment seal no. 2304 stated its recognition and membership.

In 1872, Ludovico Frapolli became Worshipful and following year again Iatros.

In 1884, “La Fenice” was in G.O.I. yearbook as first range lodge, but its activity suspended due to financial issues related to Great Orient grants, then formally “dismantled” with act no.108^{bis}.⁶⁷⁵

In 1911, during the political crisis between Italy and Ottoman Empire cause of the control over Libya, “I Mille” [*The Thousands*] came into being obeying to G.O.I. Followed The Scottish Rite and its first Worshipful—and founder—was Attorney Samuele Ventura. By reason of Italian–Turkish war, the lodge became effective only by the election of Enea Brunetti in 1913, with residence to the Italian Consulate since 1922 cause his being a staffer. After this year, no more record are available on.

7.4 Italian Freemasonry in Salonika, Macedonia Risorta, and Labor et Lux

A rich and gross Italian colony was in Salonika, the interest in creating a lodge there is dated back to the 70s of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷⁶ In 1864, Macedonia was build up as a cell of Italia starter lodge in Istanbul. According to the 1867 Great Orient Dispatch,⁶⁷⁷ “Macedonia” acted exemplary, but at the end of 1800s, events lacked so much so in September 1900 Ettore Ferrari coming for a visit hailed Brethren to live up.

“Macedonia Risorta” was born by the ashes of Macedonia in 1902 under G.O.I. In 1904, Emanuele Carasso was elected as Worshipful keeping the office up to 1909 when he moved to Istanbul to take part to the Ottoman Parliament as member after 1908 revolution. This atelier gathered men aimed to change the face of the Ottoman Empire coming from diverse backgrounds and nationality. Among its members, there were İsmail Hakkı Cambulat, Chief of Staff Captain, Zade Refik Bey, Secretary of Justice, Mehmet Talat, Midhat Sükrü, and Rahmi Ben Rıza.

675 ASGLT, 2005, p. 8.

676 Orhan Koloğlu, *L'influsso della massoneria italiana sulla rivoluzione dei Giovani Turchi*, Quaderni della Casa Romana, I.C.R., Bucarest, 2006, p. 132.

677 ASGOI, *Le logge italiane in Oriente*, in *Bollettino del Grande Oriente* 1867, p. 185.

Between 1902 and 1908, 188 members joined, whose 23 were Officials from the II and III Corps of the Imperial Army. The massive military presence wreaked havoc thus some affiliates left to adhere to “Veritas” French lodge.

Besides “Macedonia Risorta,” in the early 1800s, “Labor et Lux” was founded by masons formerly coming from it. In this new institution, the effective rite was the Scottish Ancient and Accepted. Into the minutes of 1907 and 1909, we read the lodge was active and led by Worshipful Giacomo Carasso, coming from “Macedonia Risorta” himself.

7.5 The Role Played by Italian Masonry in 1908 Revolution

Ettore Ferrari, G.O.I. Grand Master, openly supported the Turkish revolution of 1908. The raise of Abdülhamid II caused a stop in lodges affairs, but Italian freemasonry couldn't back this condition any longer. The status hindered masons to support Italian community, often in miserable conditions due to frequent epidemics or fires commonly occurring in the old district of Constantinople.

To face this impasse and wake the works up again the Grand Master Ernesto Nathan send sculptor Ettore Ferrari—then Deputy Grand Master—as person in charge in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁷⁸ The journey took place during September 1900 and urged inactive Freemasons of Constantinople, Salonika, Smyrna. The outcomes weren't late: the old “Macedonia” lodge in Salonika began again as Macedonia Risorta based in Rue Boulma Giani. Italian masonry on behalf of Emanuele Carasso heard the alarm call by Young Turkish. Revolutionaries gathered in a location aside to “Macedonia Risorta,” taking advantage of the imperial discharge policy for abroad people and their asset. Other Italian idiom lodges welcomed demanding Young Turkish, the movement empowered and some activists became masons.

The Head of Young Turkish accepted new activists with a ceremony taken partly by masonic ritual: the candidate faced a deputation of movement executive Committee and examined on his political beliefs and attitudes. If the outcome was positive, he was sworn upright with the right hand upon a gun on an altar, stating: “I swear to tear my blood till the last drop for freedom,

678 ASGLT, *Selanik'te Kurulan Localar*, in *Mimar Sinan*, Istanbul, 2003, p. 21.

to give perfect accomplishment to the orders by agitation Committee and follow the purpose it sets.”⁶⁷⁹

The purpose of this revolutionary wave was to set back the Constitution, suspended by the Sultan soon after became in law. Abdülhamid, thanks to his thick network of spies—due to avoid a violent death or to be overthrown—knew many military officers moved to liberal ideals and revolutionary principles. Salonika was almost besieged by the Empire troops, two generals were sent to dismantle the movement and put “Macedonia Risorta” under strict surveillance. On March 1908, police moved into the atelier location to catch the minute and other compromising documents: unluckily for them Worshipful Emanuele Carasso had been promptly informed and took away every detrimental paper.⁶⁸⁰

A second sortie by police was unfruitful again: nighttime during a plenary meeting, a member informed the assembly about plain-clothes policemen waiting outside the Brethen. Inside, key members of the Committee, as Rahmi bin Riza, Diamid and Talat were attending. In the end, the activists mingled with the crowd of Freemasons; in the leaving, mess agents were not able to pick any up.

Emanuele Carasso in 1908 went in Istanbul with Talat and same here Ottoman police tailed them night and day. Authorities thought they were about to pull some outstanding personalities to join the revolution. Carasso was blocked and questioned, but didn't betray his fellows. A probe, based on the clergymen Carasso spoke to, was open with no success.⁶⁸¹ This continuous hazard urged the Brethen to shot the time to batter the sultan despotism down. A share of them was involved in propaganda, while the officers from the II and III Corps of the Imperial Army arranged the guard. A third part straightly pressed the Sultan and Ministers to restore the Constitution. Revolution triumphed peacefully thanks to this plan. When the State adopted again the Constitution, Talat was elected House vice-President, Rahmi and Emanuele Carasso were congressmen in Salonika district. On December 31, 1908, “Macedonia Risorta” counted 177 members.

679 Thierry Zarccone, op. cit., p. 245.

680 Angelo Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, Tarih Vakfı, Istanbul, 2005, p. 41.

681 Evram Galante, *Histoire des juifs de Turquie*, Isis Press, Istanbul, 1985, vol. 8, p. 56.

7.6 The Italian Settlement and the Grand Orient of Italy in Egypt

The presence in Egypt of Italian traders, coming from seaside towns such as Naples, Amalfi, Genoa, Pisa, and Ancona, dates back at least to the Middle Ages, even if they were not proper communities, since their stay was seasonal. We will have to await the rising of Mehmet Ali (1769–1849) to record a noticeable increase in the Italian presence and assist in the strengthening of the colony, thanks to the sharp regeneration interesting Egypt during his term. He broadly encouraged the European emigration, French and Italian in particular, precisely to modernize the country, as European staff was pretty experienced and employing it mainly in the army and in the public running.

This large community resided almost exclusively in the main urban centers, Alexandria, Cairo, and Port Said.

The invasion by British troops in 1882 and the joint political supremacy of England did not downsized Italians in Egypt, which had been representing the natural outlet of our immigration in the Mediterranean, second only after Tunisia, which has always been the elected country of Italian resettlement, exerting an attraction that no other Mediterranean country has managed to match. Italian Freemasonry expands in the Mediterranean outskirts even before the Unification of Italy; during the first Constituent Assembly of G.O.I., held in Turin in 1861, Egyptian delegates from “Isis,” “Pompeja,” and “Eliopolis” entered. Two years later, deputies of two other lodges, “Caio Gracco” of Alexandria and “Alleanza dei Popoli” [*Alliance of Peoples*] from Cairo,⁶⁸² were added to the Masonic assembly of Florence. During span 1868–1870, the Italian Consul outlines the situation of his community, highlighting the weight of Freemasonry, thought as an organization of subversives and evildoers, and emphasizing the links between it and homeland active rebels. The presence of Italian masonry in Egypt thus was always substantial, but a noticeable decrease happens after WWI and the almost complete fade after 1925.⁶⁸³

682 Fulvio Conti, *Entre orient et occident. Les loges maçonnique du Grande oriente d'Italie en Méditerranée entre les XIX et XX siècle*, in Marta Petricoli (edited), *L'Europe méditerranéenne*, n. 8, Bruxelles, 2008, p. 113.

683 Jacob M. Landau, *Prolegomena to a Study of Secret Societies in Modern Egypt*, in “Middle Eastern Studies”, vol. 1, n. 2, 1965, p. 163.

Between the mid-nineteenth century and WWI, 32 ateliers arose, including 19 in Alexandria, 9 in Cairo, and 4 in other minor locations. In the luster from 1920 to 1925, the lodges became 26, including 12 in Alexandria, 8 in Cairo, and 6 in close to the Suez Canal.

During the reign of Fuad I (1922–1936), many worked under the protection of the King, mason himself,⁶⁸⁴ but with the advent of fascism, the Italian Consulate was commanded by Mussolini to close the eight Italian ateliers of Alexandria in Egypt, gathering together roughly 800 members. On November 7, 1937, “Giordano Bruno,” “Cincinnati I,” and “Cincinnati II” held a plenary meeting “in the shadow of Egyptian independence, following the end of the Capitulations,” as written in the official invitation. There were about 300 masons of diverse nationalities and, in the days following, leaders of the Italian lodges met with to attempt a re-asset.⁶⁸⁵

7.6.1 Italian Lodges

Amid the early ateliers, we're aware in Egyptian territory, there are “Caio Gracco,” “Fratelli Repetti” [*Repetti Brothers*], and “Alleanza dei Popoli” [*People Alliance*], already working just after the Unification of Italy.⁶⁸⁶ There are scarce documentary records, but as far as the first is concerned, it is determined in 1862–1863 Worshipful Master was Arturo Piazza.⁶⁸⁷ In 1863, the “Alliance of Peoples” in Cairo succeeded, with its sole wherewithal, in funding and managing a small hospital garrison and its members also planned the opening of an international college. His Worshipful E. Rossi, personal doctor of the Prince of Egypt, was awarded the title of Bey. In a letter of April 1863, he outlined masonry scenery in Egypt, especially the proselytizing action Italian Freemasons were carrying out in the local society.

The opening to the outside of the lodges, toward the community that housed them, constituted a peculiar trait of Italian Freemasonry here. At first lodges kept only Italian citizens, but soon they opened the temple to the local population. It was part of its cosmopolitan hint—much felt at

684 *Appunti sulla massoneria italiana in Egitto*, in “Rivista Massonica”, n. 8, 1978, p. 510.

685 Virginia Vacca, *Curiosa conseguenza dell'abolizione delle Capitolazioni: ricostituzione di logge massoniche italiane*, in “Oriente Moderno”, XVII, n. 11, November 1937, pp. 584–585.

686 ASGOI, *Minute, Grande Oriente d'Italia n. 349*, July 5, 1862.

687 ASGOI, *Minute, Riunione tenuta dal Grande Oriente d'Italia*, May 19, 1863.

the dawn of the institution's development—but which had been fading, when not dispersing, in the following centuries. On May 22, 1875, a lodge numbering exclusively Egyptians “Luce d'Oriente” [*Light of the East*] arose following the S.R.A.A. and whose main purpose was the dissemination of Institution's principles among the natives. David Fernandez was commissioned to inaugurate the lodge and the new Master, Habib Naggar, had words of recognition for the work carried out by G.O.I. In January 1901, Ettore Ferrari visited the Egyptian lodges, after being in Thessaloniki and Istanbul during the previous year, with the aim of verifying the state of the art.

Nel gennaio del 1901 Ettore Ferrari visitò le logge egiziane, dopo essersi recato nel corso dell'anno precedente presso le logge di Salonicco e di Istanbul, con lo scopo di verificare lo stato in cui versavano le logge.

7.6.2 *Il Nilo*

After the first Masonic practice by “Caio Gracco,” “Fratelli Repetti,” and “Alleanza dei Popoli,” actually not long-eve, Italian Masons founded other lodges, more favorable in the course. “Il Nilo” [The Nile] was one of these; although its foundation date is unknown, it was still pretty alive during the reign of Fuad. Numerous his philanthropic engagements, including: the beginning of a social assistance service, polyclinics, a first aid roadside assistance, and the civil cemetery in Alessandria.

In the '80s of nineteenth century, the lodge was literally overwhelmed; did its utmost to encourage the entry of the Egyptians in it and for this, in July 1880, the lodge had requested to perform its functions in two distinct but supportive sections, one formed by the Europeans and the other by natives claiming it.⁶⁸⁸

In 1890, the lodge went through a period of crisis due to internal disagreements and Italian Freemasonry stated its dissolution with a special decree prescribing to reconstitute it immediately endorsing mason Fortunato Ventura.

7.6.3 *Nuova Pompeia*

The prominent Italian atelier in the Egyptian territory was the “Nuova Pompeia” [*New Pompeia*], representing for decades a key reference for

688 ASGOI, *Missive, Loggia Il Nilo al Grande Oriente d'Italia*, July 22.

Italian Masonry abroad. Uncertain is its foundation date—however before 1861—depended on Italian Obedience according to the Scottish Rite Ancient and Accepted.⁶⁸⁹

In 1864, it fronted a crisis influencing eight masons—who pronounced for the detachment from Italian Grand Orient⁶⁹⁰—to ride off. After this plight, however promptly resolved, the National Obedience conferred it the rank of Capitulary Mother Lodge, with the name of “Nuova Pompeia.”

In 1872, returned to its original prosperity, after a span of internal struggles undermining the steadiness. Its dynamism expressed in many initiatives such as providing primary learning to masons and illiterate initiates.

The Italian lodge was on good terms with many foreign cells, such as the Greek “Socrates,” whose Worshipful was invited to attend the works for the installing of new offices.

In 1875, on offices renewal appointment, a discourse was read—raising the possibility for masonry to become a single body by the various national Obediences.

“Pompeia” was dissolved and founded several times in its existence due of serious disagreements amid members until Italian Obedience entrusted some Brethren from “Cincinnati” to provide yet another reconstitution, hoping that many of the retreated masons would return.⁶⁹¹

In 1891, the atelier was still dissolved and reformed; in November 1896, mason Tito Figari came from Cairo to preside over the housing in a new temple. Demolished again in 1898 despite the efforts of its member Alberto Alby, Worshipful Master, since composing the contradictions was uncanny he resigned. Recurring again, the lodge was officially canceled from G.O.I. records by the decree n. 156 of December 9, 1903.

In July 1909, it started one more time and in 1918, it turned out still active; after that date, no more certain facts are listed.

689 ASGOI, *Alessandria d’Egitto*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n. 23, year 4, 1873, p. 8.

690 ASGOI, *Missive, Grande Oriente d’Italia alla loggia Pompeia*, March 11, 1864.

691 *La loggia Nuova Pompeia*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n. 7–8, year 21, 1890, p. 120.

7.6.4 *Cincinnati*

The Egyptian masonic community was fully swinging in 1880—its activities were almost frenetic—new foundations in a row, not ceasing even in this fairly delicate period for Egypt. Italians built “Cincinnati” lodge in Alexandria during 1882, which followed the Symbolic Rite and had inside broadly European partakers.

In 1886, Honorary Worshipful in “Cincinnati” were Grand Master Ferdinando Oddi—of the Rite of Memphis—Dionisi Iconomopoulo, GM of the Grand National Lodge of Egypt, and Eugenio Polzi, head of the Chapter of Alexandria.⁶⁹² Same year the lodge was dissolved due to internal disputes but, by decree n. 53 of September 24, 1886, was promptly reconstituted by a group already militating there. G.O.I. declared the reconstitution took place under the best auspices and the young Worshipful drove the atelier vigorously and profitably. Despite this, the lodge lived a doomed fate between 1892 and 1906, crossing in 1901 a crisis that serious the lodge was canceled from the general records of Italian communion, without providing—as usual—the chance of a prompt re-foundation.⁶⁹³

The 1906 rebirth is due to the struggle by Brethren Raffaele Camerini, Anselmo Morpurgo, Tullio Zacutti, Aristodemo Petrini, Alfredo Tivoli, Oscar Goldenberg, and Max Saphir. In 1937, the lodge was still active, thanks to the Mastery of Davide Augusto Albarin, managing to gather around him the anti-fascist share of the community. In the '40s of twentieth century, Albarin himself became a key Italian freemason, when he was elected Grand Master of G.O.I. from lodges in exile, since reputed exempt from the conditioning of fascism, besides that—Capitulations rescinded—Italian citizens were no longer subject to homeland sovereignty, but only to the Egyptian government. Albarin was Grand Master of the G.O.I. in exile from 1940 to 1944. He began in 1909 inside “Cincinnati II” lodge, founded in 1905; lived almost entirely his life in Alexandria in Egypt, just expelled in 1957 because of the crisis in the Suez Canal and took refuge in France where he died two years later.

692 *Notizie massoniche della comunione*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 17, n. 31, p. 246.

693 ASGOI, *Decreto Grande Oriente d'Italia n. 57*, May 1901.

7.6.5 *Italian Masonry in Port Said and Suez*

The keenness of Italian Freemasonry also showed off in a small center of Egypt, Port Said, where in 1907, “Il Progresso” [*Growth*] was installed by the restless Menotti Rimediotti.⁶⁹⁴ Its built-up was hard according to the Worshipful, since that district didn't number masons willing to form one. Masons were but a few and the locals were not as culturally boosted as in Alexandria or Cairo.

In the end, when he was about to give the idea off, Rimediotti found few but valid contributors, mostly from the Italian community, with some other French element. Once the lodge was founded, no coincidence it was flanked by the already existing French and English lodges in Port Said. In his opening address, the Worshipful Rimediotti emphasized the active alliance amid diverse European lodges, with Italians tight to French Masons in pursuit of lay schools French were setting up in Port Said. The Masonry of G.O.I. went to Suez too, where the “Klysmá” was founded in 1905.

7.7 **Tunisia Masonic Ground**

7.7.1 *The Italian Settlement in Tunisia Before Fascism Rising*

Amid the national minorities in Tunisia in the last two centuries, the Italian one was the prime for longevity and bulk. Its organized presence dates back to a hundred years before the French occupation, only in May 1881.

The structure of the Italian group is assorted, the first settlers were of Ligurian origin and practiced coral fishing on the island of Tabarca, near the northern shores close to the border with Algeria. During the eighteenth century, many Jews came to Tunisia from Leghorn, an organized and solid nucleus, distinguishing itself from the Israelis already in Tunisia. Leghorn Jews can be considered the core of the Italian collectivity.⁶⁹⁵ Called *grana*, they were mostly bankers, traders, and freelancers and in the Regency (Province) of Tunis covered prominent rules.

Many were in the court of Tunisian Bey, like Giuseppe Maria Raffo, for about 30 years in charge of relations with foreign consuls. Even in the military, the presence was primary, mostly during the Janissary revolts, under

⁶⁹⁴ *La loggia di Port Said*, in “Rivista Massonica”, 1908, year 39, nn. 1–2, p. 17.

⁶⁹⁵ Patrizia Manduchi, *La presenza italiana in Tunisia e il suo ruolo nello sviluppo*, p. 83.

Bey Hamuda who, to defeat the garrison, turned to the French army, actually enlisting a handful of Italians.

In 1838, a military school was established, the Military Polytechnic, by the Italian Luigi Calligaris. Upon the request of the Sardinian vice-consul Giovannetti, he accepted the duty of Tunisian troops trainer.

Italian emigration, due to financial reasons, was flanked by political emigration, largely in the first half of the nineteenth century, after the failure of Risorgimento movements, when many young Carbonari and Mazziniani took the road to exile finding in Tunisia a brand new land.

In Tunis, the environment was favorable to continue the struggle for the Italian cause, without endangering as at home.

These refugees were often sort in masonic lodges and the Italian community—leaning on cultured bourgeoisie as a backbone—was on good terms with the indigenous population, thanks to the plenty of welfare institutions. Italians established credit institute and cooperatives, while Dante Alighieri company—with proxies in Tunis, Sfax, and Bizerte—was mainly involved in the establishment of Italian colleges and classes, also frequently held in French schools. The opening of Italian schoolhouses is to be dated around the second half of the nineteenth century to the initiative of political expatriates and some Jews from Leghorn.

Dante Alighieri's engagement also outcome in other areas—libraries, clinics, and hospitals such as the Italian Colonial Hospital, flagship of Tunisian health.

After the French settlement, there arose the Chamber of Commerce and Arts, from 1900 releasing a periodical bulletin. Italian distinguished also in the press, scoring a progressive growth with the arrival of political defectors. Italian idiom, already in used for trade and politics, became the tongue of culture utmost. The first newspaper released in Tunis on March 21, 1838, “Il Giornale di Tunisi e Cartagine” [*Tunis and Carthage Journal*], was linked to Italian Freemasonry and edited by two printers of Neapolitan rise, Romeo and Malatesta. He went out for a single number, as bey Ahmed forbade its circulation right away. In 1859 “Il Corriere di Tunisi” [*Tunis Courier*] debuted, published until 1881; over the years, many other publications in Italian were seen. Each of them portrayed a social group or an activity soon becoming an instrument of protection and promotion to the Italian minority. Official organ of the whole groups became “L'Unione”

[*The Union*], shut only in 1943, after its headquarters have being invaded by fascist legates.

Political bonds amid Italy and Tunisia were guided by the Treaty of Schooner, signed in the homonymous locality on September 8, 1868, stating the issue of the “most favored nation” to benefit Italy. The purpose was the enhancement of economic exchanges between the two in support of Italian broad community already dwelled in Tunisia and the boost of Italian move, with regard to the small and middle-class bourgeoisie.

7.7.2 *The Italian Outpost During Fascism*

Italians are considerable even between the two world wars, their community yet overcome French one, though powerful thanks to the Protectorate.⁶⁹⁶ Fascism also developed in Tunisian colony, but the homologation of society—due to its scattering—was not as deep as homeland.

However, the main opponent in Tunisia have been masonic lodges, at least until 1925, the year of G.O.I. induced dissolution, even though the related decree concerned only lodges operating in the peninsula.

There a progressive dispersion starts; many members over time became fascists. Some of the older founded the “Mazzini e Garibaldi” lodge, amid them anarchist Giulio Barresi who, counting on socialists and communists endorsement, was a fundamental reference character for the diverse anti-fascist in Tunisia.⁶⁹⁷

Another insurgent, filed by the fascist police as a potential terrorist, was Enrico Forti, a native of Leghorn though born in Tunis in 1892 and later a French naturalized.

With the racial laws of 1938, the Italian Jewish community increase its political awareness even though, conscious of Italian Jews strength in Tunisia, the fascist executive itself considerably milds the tones of anti-Semitic propaganda. Italian newspapers, even linked to fascism, dampen the aggressiveness of Italian racial politics and even Consul Giacomo Silimbani sought during his mandate to avoid an enfeebling of Italian Jewish community, whom the French one would have benefited from.

696 Lucia Valenzi (edited), *Italiani e antifascisti in Tunisia negli anni trenta*, Liguori editore, Napoli, 2008, p. 1.

697 Santi Fedele, *Massoneria Italiana ...*, op. cit., p. 53.

7.7.3 *The Birth of Freemasonry in Tunisia*

Historians disagree in fixing a date of masonry blossoming in the North African country; some authors close to Jewish circles postulate it was in 1773, when *grana* arrived in Tunis,⁶⁹⁸ but the historian Dudley Wright sets the year 1821.

To him, Freemasonry got with the resettlement in Tunis of massive Neapolitan groups, yet active members of the Grand Orient of Naples.

Since 1860, Masonry knew a period of huge spread; Italian, French, and English lodges began to multiply.

7.7.4 *The Early Lodges*

The Italian Grand Orient first and following the Grand Orient of Italy built in their early spread in Tunisia “Attilio Regolo” in 1862, “Il Risorgimento” in 1870, “Concordia e Progresso” [*Concord and Growth*] in 1867, “Fede e Costanza” [*Belief and Firmness*], and “Cartagine e Utica” [*Carthage and Utica*] in 1862. Record sources relating to these are scarce, we learn only “Il Risorgimento” in 1879 expressed as Worshipful Guglielmo Funaro⁶⁹⁹ and the following year Giuseppe Ayra, who—on his election—pronounced a speech on the aim of Masonry and masons's mandatory skills. A part of the address was focused on the activity Freemasonry would play in a land like Tunisia, where distinct cultures and religions coexisted and “con interessi sovente diametralmente opposti.”⁷⁰⁰

G.O.I. was close with it, sending in 1882 to the Italian obedience a missive describing the Tunisian Masonic life during that harsh span due to riots fronting Europeans and indigenous peoples. Here, the Brethren were urged not to give in to provocation and to do everything in their power to reconcile to make masonry flourish in Tunisia.⁷⁰¹ In 1887 its temple, shared with

698 Laroussi Mizouri, *La Naissance de la Franc-maçonnerie dans la Tunisie précoloniale*, in “Revue de l’Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes”, n. 173, t. 57, 1994, p. 73.

699 *Tunisi*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 10, n. 19, 1879, p. 298.

700 “often with diametrically adverse concerns” [translator’s note]. *Libro d’oro della massoneria italiana, loggia Il Risorgimento, Tunisi*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 11, nn. 5–6, p. 79.

701 *Lettera del Gran Segretario al G. M. della R. L. Il Risorgimento, Malleopulo*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, 1882, p. 45.

the English lodge Ancient Chartage n. 1717, was destroyed by a fire whose causes were unknown; the English lodge suffered the greatest damage, losing a capital of 20,000 liras.

“Il Risorgimento” was on good terms also with Spanish masonic organs and in 1886, its Worshipful Giuseppe Ayra received from the Supreme Council of Spain the Kadosch Knight patent—30th degree of S.R.A.A.—to thank him for his works to the rescue of the Spanish cholera patients; besides Ayra, the Supreme Council of Spain conferred same recognition to Luciano Bignas, Worshipful of the Ancient Carthage lodge and dependent on the Grand Lodge of England, to Philippe Caillat, Worshipful of the Nouvelle Carthage lodge and employee of the Grand Orient of France, and to Italian Antonio Ferretti, Worshipful of “Fede e Costanza.” Ferretti endowed the recognition to his lodge, as quintessential masonic devotedness.

“Fede e Costanza” was in restless deals with G.O.I. and in 1887, the lodge was pleased by the unity of Italian Freemasonry in the fight against clericalism, long-lasting enemy of the institution. The “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”⁷⁰² [*Journal of Italian Freemasonry*] assumes 1885 as the year of this lodge opening, though the constitution activity began the year before on behalf of Antonio Ferretti.⁷⁰³

In 1889, both “Il Risorgimento” and “Fede e Costanza” were dissolved to allow the birth of a unitary lodge,⁷⁰⁴ welcoming the request the officers of both⁷⁰⁵ presented to G.O.I.

In the mid-60s of nineteenth century, Tunisia was affected by a severe economic crisis, foreigners took the road home, lodges stopped working, and just five years afterwards, Masonry gained again possession of the abandoned temples, preparing for a new era of development and flourishing.

7.7.5 *Cartagine e Utica*

According to some references, the first regular lodge implanted in Tunisia by Italian Obedience was “Cartagine e Utica”⁷⁰⁶ [*Carthage and Utica*]. To

702 *Tunisi*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 18, n. 3, 1887, p. 23.

703 *A Tunisi*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 15, nn. 45–48, anno 1884, p. 375.

704 ASGOI, *Decree n. 36*, March 3, 1889.

705 “Il Risorgimento” was represented by Ercole Marinelli, First Superintendent acting as Worshipful, “Fede e Costanza” spoke on behalf of its Worshipful Riccardo Costa.

706 ASGOI, *Minute*, May 26, 1863, Roma.

collect members, it would have drawn from the Italian resettlement after Naples uprisings of 1821, with the arrival of numerous masonic political expatriates from the Orient of Naples. Thus, in Tunis, a prominent Italian Masonic center operated, without the permission of the Bey, meeting secretly on city outskirts or near the ancient Roman tanks close to the ruins of Carthage.

In 1845, the loggia was renamed “Figli scelti di Cartagine e Utica” [*Picked Sons of Carthage and Utica*], flanked by two other lodges: “Nuova Cartagine” [*New Carthage*] and “Attilio Regolo.” “Figli scelti di Cartagine e Utica” was a bulwark of Freemasonry in Tunisia and acted as a link between the Italian outlander masons and G.O.I., benefiting from the choice of many Italians to leave French lodges to erect new under the Italian Obedience. The new lodge was “Attilio Regolo,” who asked for the foundation patent in 1862.⁷⁰⁷ To open it and to chair over the oath, the Great Council of Italian Grand Orient commissioned Quintilio Mugnaini, Worshipful of “Figli scelti di Cartagine e Utica.” “Attilio Regolo” gained then the invitation to partake in the Masonic summons held in 1862 and there represented by mason Rebuffi.

On years following records are spare; in 1876, the lodge was active but unsteady, for years, the economic scenery is precarious⁷⁰⁸—especially for foreigners—yet the Grand Orient of Italy encourages the lodge to continue its activity.⁷⁰⁹

7.7.6 Progress of Italian Masonry

In early twentieth century, G.O.I. founded numerous lodges, such as “Veritas,” “Fides,” and “Mazzini.” This new phase of Masonic development came after a span when Italian lodges—wholly the Tunisian masonic system—suffered from the strains amid Italian and French communities. This renewed vitality was esteemed a step toward the plain cooperation between the two, although the end of WWI actually re-establish full cooperation between Obediences. This thanks to the treaty signed on February 15, 1920, by the officials of G.O.I. and the Grand Lodge of France.

707 ASGOI, *Minute, tenuta del Gran Consiglio*, April 6, 1862, Roma.

708 *Tunisi*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 7, 1876, nn. 13–14, p. 10.

709 *Tunisi*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 5, 1874, n. 24, p. 15.

7.7.7 *Veritas*

Gathering the most influential members of the Italian community in Tunis, it was founded in 1900 ensuing a long and arduous plot by masons from “Il Progresso di Susa” [*Growth of Susa*]. The temple opened on January 21, 1901, when Brethren of “Antiqua Agape” handed over the foundation patent to the dignitaries of the new atelier. As a tradition, some members addressed about Freemasonry and its aims, and the evening after a dinner was offered including members' families. The following year “Veritas” sent a dispatch to his Mother Lodge in Rome, to announce its solemn inauguration.

Ateliers in Tunis then complained of serious problems, their activities were slow, the whole masonic system was in need of a boost, thus the foundation of “Veritas.”

More than 60 Masons came from the old Italian lodges, as most esteemed elements of Italian community, with a broad presence of Italian Jewish initiates. The meetings discussed disparate topics and—in the meeting on November 2, 1901—the founding of a newspaper to give voice to the Liberal Party. Sequent session discussed the chance for the Italian government to give off schools running in Tunisia in favor of missionaries.

Like many of Italian ateliers, lodge was on good terms with French ones, so much so that in 1903, “Veritas” met its peer *Nouvelle Carthage* and *Volonté* to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of papal Rome. Relations with the French became tight after WWII, when “Veritas,” impoverished of most of its members since 1925 law, joined the French “La Volonté,” giving rise to a new lodge *La Volonté et Veritas Réunies*.

7.7.8 *Ateliers in Tunisi: Concordia e Mazzini-Garibaldi*

In 1916, lodges in Tunis merged into one, “Concordia” [*Concord*]; the activities were immediately well underway, with Tunisian masonic community always on the front line in matters concerning Italians. Engaged in philanthropic ventures, it worked with ease and in 1917, solemnly honored the anniversary of Garibaldi's death.⁷¹⁰ Throughout the duration of WWI, it held its affairs, with several initiations and growth in rank among its members; at the end of the conflict, mason Herdenberg was elected Worshipful,

⁷¹⁰ 64^a *Commemorazione di Garibaldi*, in “Rivista massonica”, year XL, 1917, n. 6, p. 182.

confirming activities did not languish during the war. The scenery altered with the advent of fascism and the arrival, since 1922, of its legates in Tunisia, even in the most farfetched boroughs to settle the party. This diffuse action was directed at subdued European citizens, on the spread of the fascist demands strengthening of the Italian influence on Tunisia. Even “Concordia” was hit by this wave and many Brethren were overwhelmed by the new political and cultural climate ending up adhering to fascism.

In 1920 and 1921, Salvatore Calò was its Worshipful; in 1924, “Concordia” partook in the foundation of “Pensiero e Azione” [*Thought and Deed*], solemnly built on October 17.⁷¹¹

At the opening of its offices, diverse foreign masons intervened, French mostly.⁷¹² Calò was named Worshipful even there, but replaced almost immediately by Domenico Scalerà. The news on “Pensiero e Azione” stopped in 1925, when together with “Concordia” celebrated with a conference Giuseppe Garibaldi. “Concordia” meanwhile was in trouble since fascist propaganda, only very few loyal to Freemasonry did not adhere to fascism and, in 1925, stated to carry on masonic work in secret, founding in 1926, after the ill-famed law that prohibited the cult, “Mazzini-Garibaldi” atelier, also with the contribution of some members of the Italian Consulate. Founded after the establishment of G.O.I. in exile, to Khayat was born from the merger of “Giuseppe Mazzini,” “Garibaldi e Patria”⁷¹³ [*Garibaldi and Homeland*]. The newborn lodge was in constant turmoil, its activity consisting also in the outlawed deliver to homeland of anti-fascist propaganda pamphlets through mason Sante Zammitto, Merchant Marine officer, often traveling on the Tunisi-Palermo trade route.

The leaflets were printed in France by “Giustizia e Libertà” [*Justice and Freedom*].

The very foundation of the lodge was itself a challenge to fascism and, amid founders, Giulio Barresi and Enrico Forti played an important role. Barresi, born in 1885 in Tunisia though native of Trapani, was commodities surveyor in the port of Tunis. He was a key exponent of Italian community, southern population mostly, recognized itself in the anarchic thought of Nicolò

711 ASGOI, *Minute*, February 28, 1920 and *Minute*, May 23, 1921.

712 *Cerimonia d'insediamento delle cariche della nuova loggia Pensiero e Azione all'oriente di Tunisi*, in “Rivista Massonica”, year 54, n. 9, 1924, p. 208.

713 Michel Khayat, *Storia della Massoneria ...*, op. cit., p. 59.

Converti. Heading the lodge for a long time, due to his Masonic merits, in 1938, he was elevated to the 33rd degree of Scottish Rite.

7.8 The Grand Orient of Italy in Lybia

Italian masonry was in Libya far before the colonial initiative Italy followed there after the first decade of the twentieth century. This institution showed the Italian presence in those lands as a national outpost abroad. No wonder lodges were always founded in cities or pivotal places where Italian presence was deep, gathering outstanding persons in the Italian community with no records about native admissions.

The first lodge endorsed by the G.O.I. named “Stella Africana” [*African Star*] was founded in Tripoli in 1862, following the Symbolic Rite. One of the forefathers was Aronne Morpurgo. In 1863, it was abided by G.O.I. in Turin; *Gazzetta Ufficiale* notices its communications were to be posted to Livorno, proving the tight relation between Livorno’s Hebrews and their coreligionists spread in North Africa including non-native Hebrews in Libya. The life of this lodge was not that long and unluckily scarce are the items we dispose to draw its story. In 1867, it can’t intervene to the Founding and Executive assembly in Naples since the representative was busy elsewhere; in those years, Worshipful was Isach Lati.

After a few years, in 1872, activities ceased as reported thus the year after the item disappears from the list of lodges in the Italian Commune. The first masonic outcome in Libya therefore ends as a short but vain experience since in Tripoli, another lodge started following its footsteps—the “Abramo Lincoln,” in 1866—despite a few facts are supplied: the sole solid one is the institution was not existing anymore in 1891. Keeping on the discussion on freemasonic life in Libya, “Cirenaica” comes up, established in Tripoli on February 3 1887,⁷¹⁴ formerly noticed as upcoming on the outstanding Italian masonic review. It was a Symbolic Rite lodge; Giuseppe Ayra, mastering the only astronomical observatory between Tunis and Alessandria in Egypt—one of the most skilled in the Mediterranean—was one of the founders.

As often when clashes happen in an atelier, the office was suspended in 1895 from masonic working groups up to a brand new issue. During this gap, Worshipful was Eugenio Riccard. In this role, he donated 40 liras to

714 *Loggia Cirenaica*, in “Rivista della massoneria italiana”, 1887, p. 96.

earthquake victims in Calabria, to testify the liveliness of the institution, despite the hanging due to heavy conflicts between the Worshipful and the First Knight Commander. On August, same year, the lodge overcame the crisis and reinstated in its masonic profile. According to freemasonry yearbooks, this was not active in 1902 (even if the 1902 RMI states the re-activation). Record books trace a sole working one—“La Vigilanza” [*The Vigilance*]⁷¹⁵—founded in 1900, following the Scottish Rite Ancient and Accepted, located to the house of Professor Giannetto Paggi, Prevost of the Italian Male School. Members were former adherents to Cirenaica. Worshipful was Giuseppe Ayra, while in 1902, Paggi succeeded; during his tenure, 50 liras are devolved to the needy of Martinica. The lodge was “demolished” at the end of 1902, no witnessing of it on following Freemasonry yearbooks. Despite the diffuse bright, the masonic entourage is always yeasty: on 1902, after the G.O.I. fiat n. 123 of December the 24th by the appointment of “Propaganda Massonica” [*Masonic Propaganda*] lodge based in Rome, a Triangle is established, running from 1903 to 1911.⁷¹⁶ The address to refer to Triangle was to one of the most relevant profile of Italian Freemasonry, Adriano Lemmi, in Florence.

7.8.1 *The Grand Orient of Italy Lodges After the Taking of Libya*

To spectate to the very bloom of Italian lodges in Libya, we should wait the gap from 1914, after conquer at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, to the outcome of fascism that ceased the initiative.

A few months after the Italian settlement in Libya, the “Cinque Ottobre” [*October V*] lodge is founded to the Orient in Tripoli (1912). The name recalls the day Italians occupied Tripoli, inflaming conflict in Tripolitania.

The lodge followed the Scottish rite and in the year, it started was able to devolve 20 liras to help the families of Tripolitania war victims. In 1913, Worshipful was Professor Giannetto Paggi, endorsed on 1894 and already effective in “La Vigilanza” [*The Watch*] lodge accomplishments. Perhaps in 1914, Worshipful was Eusebio Eusebione, in charge on artillery and during 1915, in the core of WWI taking part in the foundation of a Triangle in Zuara. The following years—with “Progresso” [*Progress*]⁷¹⁷—celebrated Brother Tito Marconcini for his masonic engagement in Libya.⁷¹⁷ In 1918

⁷¹⁵ ASGOI, *Masonic Yearbook of G.O.I.*, 1902.

⁷¹⁶ ASGOI, *Masonic Yearbook*, 1911, p. 111.

⁷¹⁷ *Solenne voto di plauso*, in “Rivista Massonica”, 1916, pp. 200–201.

took up residence to Vincenzo Campo Ingraio, in 1919–1920 Worshipful was Carlo Smith, while the year after Vincenzo G, De Meo succeeded. In 1921 merged with Leptis Magna freshly renaming as “Cinque Ottobre-Leptis Magna.”

Freemasonry was constantly widening, thus in 1912, two Triangles started, one in Tobruk and the other in Derna: the former didn’t generate any other cell while in Derna after a few time, “Dante Alighieri” atelier was spawned.

A pivotal lodge of Italian Commune in Libya was “Cirene,” founded in Bengasi in 1914. Its minute books have been carefully preserved, thus, a deep investigation is achievable due to catch its arrangement, members, geographical origins of affiliated, profession, endorsement, and advancement. Asking the issues, it’s easily fair on a bunch of 126 Brethren attending the lodge since the very beginning up to November 1923—when the last advance is recorded—all members were Italians, only three born in a Libyan city (Tripoli and Bengasi): by chance second-generation Italians. All the rest were born in Italy, with a major presence from Southern lands. Just one mason was born in Lebanon showing a clear Greek lineage by the surname. On profession structure, soldierly was heading—counting 66 men among infantry, engineers, army, cavalry, riflemen, and doctors—while the others were retailers, employees, attorneys, accountants, and students.

Fair was the relation with the Obedience it was depending, despite the physical distance; some representatives took part to Achille Ballori funerals as he was killed on October 31, 1917, in Palazzo Giustiniani.

Lodge records, minutes letters and telegrams, show an overview on customary activities able to line up the accomplishment of lodges and reveal—to mention—that during WWI Giuseppe Bosco, a member born in Lampircello in 1891 and artillery official admitted in 1915⁷¹⁸ bravely fell in Santa Lucia di Tolmino on October 31, 1917.

In 1919–1920, Worshipful was Engineer Rocco Maurizio Lanzi and its agenda is pretty rich.⁷¹⁹ Then, one after the other, Carlo Ragazzi, Adolfo de Palme, Giuseppe Sboto—replaced by Vincenzo Grana—while in the last year, 1923–1924, Emanuele Sartorio Nicolosi is mentioned. In 1922, the

⁷¹⁸ ASGOI, *Enrollment lists, Cirene lodge, Orient of Bengasi*.

⁷¹⁹ Archivio Storico Centro ricerche Storiche Libera Muratoria, Torino (ASCRSLM), *Collection G.O.I., Lodges abroad, telegram*.

lodge domiciles to an Italian Club, Humanitarian and Culture Society.⁷²⁰ Last facts from the lodge are set in 1925, as fascist persecutions addressed some members. A letter Carlo Regazzi sent to “Cirene” Worshipful drawn the “dark” moment, the Institution is in due to fascist repression. Being a freemason was equal as being in danger, the whole Italian community was split between supporting the national government and the freedom ideals masonry carried on. Mostly, by a letter sent by the deputies of “Cirene” to the Grand Orient of Italy appears many official documents found in the Worshipful dwelling were seized by fascists and afterward many freemasons were called back homeland. Thus, the lodge went through much harm in keeping the activity on. One of the people addressed to this application was Giuseppe Della Cà, eminent figure in “Cinque Ottobre” and deputy chancellor in Tripoli’s government, tribute office employee. Della Cà complained on arguments used to his forced repatriation, straightly accusing General Ernesto Mombelli (1867–1932) as subdued to Fascism will, since the Governor himself charged Della Cà, accused to report facts he was able to cover, cause of its role, directly to the high levels of freemasonry Order against the government. Clearly, Della Cà remitted any charge. After he left we lack any records on lodges, beaten for sure by the pushy fascist presence, since no sources state ateliers activities after 1925, possibly as a result of archives requisition again by fascist initiative. Proving the situation abovementioned, a letter sent by Della Cà to Cirene on behalf of Sovereign Rosicrucian Chapter “Le due Palme” [*Two Palms*], where Della Cà reports about no more adhesions “anche per impedire che il Neofita, necessariamente lasciato a sé ed incapace di auto evolversi non si ingannasse sul fine e sullo scopo dell’Istituzione”⁷²¹

The Grand Orient of Italy—conscious of the situation the masonry suffered in Libyan colony—thus asks to Giuseppe della Cà to reach Rome office to testify about the situation and inviting him to act to support the Rosicrucian Chapter to go on even without him. Due to records lack, we can’t state any progress about. Della Cà corresponded with Giuseppe Leti, who blamed him about the inaccurate keeping of documents; he replies he did every effort to prevent the accident even some papers were safe at least.

720 ASCRSLM, *Ivi*, *Missive* January 15, 1925.

721 “furthermore to avoid the Initiate—necessarily discarded and unable to develop in his status—misunderstood the aim of the Institution” [translator’s note]. ASCRSLM, *Ivi*, *Missive* September 24, 1925.

Retracing through time freemasonry events, in 1913, a distinguished fact takes place: in Derna “Dante Alighieri” is founded (formerly a Triangle), while some of its members start a Triangle in Marsa Susa. This cell played for ten years, following the S.R.A.A. and represented by Mr Alberico Es-perty, chancellor to the region court. To grab some infos on this lodge, we have to wait till 1919, since sources are almost missing for the whole WWI. That year atelier was referring to Professor Fulvio Contini, Pre-vost to the Royal Primary Schools. In 1922, worshipful was Alessandro Sportelli, head of the Royal estate office in Derna. The following year, the lodge office was to Attn. Guido Panighetti, thus probably he was the new Worshipful.

During WWI in Tripoli, “Leptis Magna” is established, whose name re-calls the ancient name of the city close to Tripoli and nowadays known as Homs. Previously endorsed by the Serenissima Gran Loggia Nazionale d’Italia [*Serenissima National Grand Lodge of Italy*], (Piazza del Gesù), then formalized in 1917 under the Grand Orient of Italy. In 1918 was addressed to Marino Nardi dwelling, born in Portici in 1887 and attorney to the war court. Its activities didn’t stop during the fights. Soon after war, Worshipful was Renzo Testori and Edoardo Morvillo the year after. In 1921 merged with sister “Cinque Ottobre.”

During 1914, again in Tripoli, “Progresso” lodge is given to birth—fol-lowing the Scottish rite.

Unluckily, on a few lodges under the G.O.I., we are but able to gather complete infos, anyway—to give a complete overview—below are re-ported the brief facts collected.

In 1918, “Cesare Battisti” was founded, taking the name from the irre-dentist martyr—born Austrian and enrolled as volunteer in the Italian Army, prisoned and hanged for high treason in 1916 as a member of the Austrian Chamber of Deputies. In 1921 to the Tripoli, Orient Italia lodge of Scottish rite was established, made mostly by army officers. As freshly instituted, Worshipful was Antonio Coppolino—Customs Official with G.O.I. roll 43966, in 1914 entered in “Cinque Ottobre” records—while in 1923/1924 was accountant Arrigo Modena.

The very last lodge sorted by records is Lebda to the Homs Orient, taking the name by the ruins of ancient Leptis Magna occupied by Italians in

1912: in 1922/1923 Worshipful Master was Eliodoro Guastella⁷²² and in 1924/1925 Tommaso De Crescenzo.

The above mentioned was the depiction of Italian lodges in Libya since 1862—year of foundation of the first lodge subdued to the Obedience to the Grand Orient of Italy—up to 1925, last year of recorded facts on Italian Institutions. Unfortunately, the found documents give us just a blink on the masonic scenario in Libya. The scarcity of papers doesn't allow us to go deep to offer a comprehensive overlook on this phenomenon. Despite the lacks we can draw up a conclusion: Libya can be thought as a quintessential masonic land. The only masonry was Italian, first with GOI—soon after its starting in Turin—in *secundis* a few obeying to Piazza del Gesù, to testify the vitality of freemasonry. These were founded beginning from 1918, after WWI, tailing just a decade the Obedience in Italy. Two Obedience coexisting allow us to catch the importance of this Institution, enduring and able to gather the outstanding personalities in the Italian community. By the check of enrollment books, we can resume the kind of members and state that often, mostly after the catch by Italy in 1911, the very of them were part of the laical word depicting our nation in those territories: army, admins, teachers in Italian schools.

This bright activity, starting from the '20s, was contrasted by the pushiness of fascists as well as in homeland. Many shakedowns and many commandeering of masonic stuff happened. In this hard moment, Italian Institutions were but undammed by the political issues from fascism, set against the freemasonry. The review ends its investigation on Libya masonry history in 1925, when due to fascism repression, the deeds were stopped, as well as in Italy: in November 1925, an act suppressing secret societies—thus including masonry—was released. The eco reached Institutions abroad with the only exception of Egyptian lodges: iconic was Davide Augusto Albarin, Grand Master of G.O.I., who saved the tradition from the oblivion. In 1925, this chapter ends, despite the numbers and the coexistence of two diverse Italian Obediences. More than 60 years of masonic history, whose remembrance focuses *in primis* on the Institution life itself and the role played in the Italian community, as a bind destroyed only cause of the violence endorsed by laws and endured by fascist squads, to demolish the Libyan masonic network.

722 ASGOI, *Masonic Yearbook*, 1923, p. 34.

7.9 Italian Masonry in Eritrea

Italian Freemasonry established lodges also in Eritrea; despite the unique scenery of the colony, where there were few elements with proper cultural background to be initiated to the Institution, since 1887, the possibility of founding lodges obeying to G.O.I. had been argued. In January 1891, “Eritrea” lodge by the Orient of Massaua saw the light, a focal point of the Italian community for decades. At the end of its first year, the lodge partakes into the founding the Mutual and Rescue Company, numbering 150 members at the very beginning, and inaugurated its Masonic Temple. Its success is doubtless; the high number of affiliates bears witness to this, around 40 only in the first year. In 1892, together with other ateliers, it funds a hospital for foreigners. After a span of six active years, the lodge goes burst and is demolished in 1896; three years later, it's reformed.

Next to this, another one is listed in Massaua, the “Cocab el Sciargh” [*Star of the East*] in 1892. There is little records on this sister atelier. In 1892–1893, Worshipful was Ahmed El Ghul. From its incomplete records of masons acting in it's assumed were all natives. “Cocab el Sciargh” was running when in 1895 delivered 40 liras for the Calabrian earthquake; the following year, its activities held and in 1899, it was demolished by decree n. 127 of May 12, 1899. Some of its members entered the ranks of the Eritrea lodge at the time of reconstitution.

Beyond Massawa, another Eritrean city saw the flourishing of Italian masonic labor: Asmara. Here, two lodges were founded, “Avvenire Eritreo” [*Eritrean Future*], under the Scottish rite; facts on interrupt any update in 1905.

The second one—in order of foundation—is Eritrea, established in 1909 with decree n. 165 of January 15 (same year) under G.O.I. From 1909 to 1911, attorney Eteocle Cagnassi is the Worshipful. Ending 191 the lodge made a contribution of 150 liras to the kins of fallen and wounded in the tripolitan war.⁷²³

In 1918, this atelier set up the Eritrean committee for the air fleet, head by Giuseppe de Rossi. The body raised 1,121.25 liras to purchase a military aircraft to steady the Italian air fleet.⁷²⁴

723 Archivio Storico Ministero Affari Esteri, (ASMAE), *Lodge session minutes*, Collection Eritrea, envelope 616, December 2, 1911.

724 ASMAE, *Committee session minutes*, Collection Eritrea, envelope 616, undetectable day, 1918.

7. ITALIAN COMMUNITIES AND FREEMASONRY ABROAD

In 1919–1920, it's led by one of the prominent players of the Italian community, Giuseppe Latilla. The latest records referring to it come from a missive from G.O.I. dated 1923, where the lodge dignitaries are asked about the progress of masonic activities.⁷²⁵

725 ASMAE, *Missive of Grand Orient of Italy*, Collection Eritrea, envelope 726, April 23, 1918.