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Sardigna no est Italia: Resistance as Sardinian Identity

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

by

Cherie Noelle Hamilton

September 2023

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Erith Jaffe-Berg, Chairperson
Dr. Kyle Khellaf
Dr. Vrinda Chidambaram

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2023

The Dissertation of Cherie Noelle Hamilton is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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Dedication

To my fellow first-generation college students and women who choose to pursue and produce research despite the tiring misogyny of academia.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sardigna no est Italia: Resistance as Sardinian Identity

by

Cherie Noelle Hamilton

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Comparative Literature
University of California, Riverside, September 2023
Dr. Erith Jaffe-Berg, Chairperson

Since the inauguration of academic disciplines such as Anthropology, Classics, and Mediterranean Studies, the island of Sardinia and its rich cultural history have remained largely underinvestigated and underappreciated in scholarly work. The typical image of Sardinia, largely dictated by the scant investigations in these disciplines along with the works of travel writers and Italian intellectuals, is one of a backward and savage people belligerently dependent on anti-modern pastoralism. This dissertation project, motivated by the Sardinian slogan “Sardigna no est Italia” (“Sardinia is not Italy”), explores the nuanced notion of resistance on the island. Beginning with an overview of the contemporary North-South struggle in Italy and the economic subjugation faced by Sardinia and the South after unification, this dissertation documents the many phases of subjugation and exploitation Sardinians have resisted as far back as classical antiquity. In doing so, this project highlights the island’s role as a Mediterranean trading center since the Neolithic period as well as the advanced Nuragic civilization, thereby challenging traditional historiography which has centered Greece and Rome as the ‘civilizing’ forces of the Mediterranean Basin. In connecting perennial resistance from antiquity to the

present, this work emphasizes the critical need for collaboration between classical studies and cultural studies by acknowledging that contemporary cultural identity and resistance are deeply entrenched in the historical past. The remainder of this dissertation focuses on the many forms of artistic production – murals, graffiti, public art, political posters, and literature – which serve as the primary preservation efforts for the island's rich cultural heritage. The Sardinian language is also explored both in terms of its historical development and of the contentious sociolinguistic dilemma birthed from national language movements forced by peninsular Italy. In sum, this dissertation intends to reclaim Sardinian identity by bringing it from the liminal periphery of Italy, the Mediterranean, and academic scholarship and placing it at the fore of Mediterranean Studies moving forward.

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CHAPTER 1
An Introduction to Italy's Fractured Identity

Figure 1.1: *Graffito in Nuoro, Sardinia*

È doloroso a dirsi…[che] non abbiamo ancora, come dovremmo avere, una Italia…ma due Italie assolutamente diverse: una tutta prospera, tutta colta, tutta progredita, tutta civile; l'altra tutta misera, tutta analfabeta, tutta arretrata, tutta barbara. L'una può dirsi l'Italia <<europea>>; l'altra l'Italia <<africana>>. Una delle parti che formano l'Italia africana è la Sardegna!

It's sad to say, but we don't yet have – like we should – one Italy. Rather, we have two entirely different Italies: one fully prosperous, educated, advanced, and civil; the other entirely miserable, illiterate, backward, and barbarous. One can be called *European* Italy; the other, *African* Italy. One of the parts that make up *African* Italy is Sardinia!

-Eduardo Cimbali, 1907

Siamo una terra antica di lunghi silenzi,
di orizzonti ampi e puri, di piante fosche,
di montagne bruciate dal sole e dalla vendetta.
Noi siamo sardi.

We are an ancient land of long silences,
of wide and pure horizons, of misty plants,
of mountains scorched by the sun and by revenge.
We are Sardinians.
-Unknown, "Noi siamo sardi"

Research trends of the 21st century show that the field of Mediterranean Studies is beginning to acknowledge the diverse nature of the region and of Mediterranean identity (e.g., Gianluca Solera's *Citizen Activism and Mediterranean Identity: Beyond Eurocentrism*; Rim Affaya's "Unity and Diversity in Euro-Mediterranean Identities: Euro-European and Arabo-Mediterranean Dimensions"; Luca Petruzzellis and C. Samuel Craig's "Separate but Together: Mediterranean Identity in Three Countries"). It is an overdue effort to incorporate the intersectionality demonstrated by modern scholarship in the social sciences, and one that is poignantly overdue in the context of Italy. As Italy figures more and more as the face – and gatekeeper – of Mediterranean identity in the global marketplace, Italian Studies scholars must constantly interrogate the pervasive standards of *romanitas* and *italianità* to which history has been measured thus far.

Since its genesis with Fernand Braudel's 1949 study, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*), the field of Mediterranean Studies has largely been the territory of classical archaeologists and historians of antiquity (i.e., wealthy, white, male elites) whose contributions reflect the reality that investigations of the region have primarily centered Greco-Roman history. Even Braudel himself, whose work subverted tradition by shifting the focus of inquiry from leaders to the common people, still considered a place like Sardinia "a prisoner of its own poverty" that was "too lost in the sea to play an important role" (150).[1] The consequences of the field's historical domination by those who assign the highest esteem to the Greek and Roman traditions are clear; among them, a severely lacking

[1] More to come on Braudel's description of Sardinia and its place in the discipline in Chapter 2.

corpus on rural and peasant communities, the marginalization of linguistic minorities, and an effective erasure of migrant histories. A group of scholars reflecting on the interdisciplinarity of Mediterranean Studies posited the following about the region in 2017 (Catlos et al. 105):

> As an intellectual or historiographical paradigm, category, or construct, 'the Mediterranean' has a tremendous potential to open up new and otherwise inaccessible avenues of inquiry and comparison—crossing, as it does, 'civilizational,' 'national,' and disciplinary divisions. It can serve as antidote to Orientalism, and as a positive, constructive critique to Eurocentrism.

This project, inspired by the phrase "Sardigna no est Italia" (in the Sardinian language, which translates to "Sardinia is not Italy"), showcases the under-investigated and underappreciated island of Sardinia as a space of perennial subjugation and a locus of resistance throughout centuries. A region of Italy and a Mediterranean crossroads long before Rome's legendary founding, Sardinia's indigenous Nuragic culture and enduring pastoral tradition situate this community in the liminal periphery of both the region and the field, so much so that its population proudly proclaims its separation from Italy as a matter of identity as well as historical fact.

Before exploring the regional specifics of Sardinia's relationship with Italy and the Mediterranean which motivate this project on resistance and cultural identity, it is important that this chapter offers a prefacing introduction on the longstanding contention between northern and southern Italy. Sardinia, though culturally distinct from this supposed dichotomy in some ways, shares intimate connections with the South in its struggle for economic, linguistic, and cultural autonomy. And as this chapter will demonstrate, Sardinia played a critical role as a tool for the northern political bloc during the nation's unification

in portraying any non-northern territory as inherently backward and anti-modern through pseudo-scientific anthropological investigations. With longstanding ties to Africa rooted in antiquity as well as legacies of poverty and pastoralism, Sardinia accompanies the rest of Italy's South as having fueled the racist, elitist, and xenophobic narratives that background the field of Mediterranean Studies.

Racism, Xenophobia, and the Africa-Italy Situation Today

Prejudiced perspectives are not relegated solely to the annals of history, and are not simply contained in the pages of antiquated texts sitting on archive shelves or in academic journals read only by scholars in their respective fields. Their implications are far-reaching and they widely pervade the public domain, perhaps in their most insidious fashion yet thanks to the accelerated development of technology and global capitalism. Factions of Italian leadership and their constituencies persist in waging war against supposed 'outsiders' who may not even be from outside the confines of the nation's borders. Alessandro Mahmoud (stylized "Mahmood"), a singer-songwriter of Sardinian-Egyptian heritage who was born and raised in Italy, faced explicit criticism after taking first place at the renowned Sanremo Music Festival in 2019 from Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the far-right La Lega party, Matteo Salvini. Upon Mahmood's victory, Salvini tweeted, "#Mahmood…mah…La canzone italiana più bella?!?...Voi che dite?" ("I mean, Mahmood? The most beautiful Italian song?!? …What do you all think?") – a comment clearly insinuating his disapproval on account of Mahmood's ethnic background and the song's Middle Eastern cadence (Matteo Salvini). Bombarded with questions regarding his

identity, Mahmood soon after stated in an interview with Tgcom24, “In realtà sono un ragazzo italiano…sono nato da madre sarda e padre egiziano e sono italiano al cento per cento” (“In reality, I’m an Italian guy. I was born to a Sardinian mother and Egyptian father, and I’m 100% Italian”) (Mahmoud, “Altro che soldi”). Salvini was quick to reframe his comments after receiving backlash, later stating that Mahmood had been “messo al centro di una storia non sua,” (“thrown into the middle of a story that isn’t his,”) one that belonged rather to the “salotto radical chic” (“radical chic crowd”) who force others into being “simboli dell’integrazione” (“symbols of integration”) (Salvini, “Non ce l’ho”).

This tongue-in-cheek response from Salvini is typical of the Lega party leader and Deputy Prime Minister of what became Western Europe’s first populist government in 2018. Salvini represents the height of neoliberalism and he embodies the narrative of Mediterranean gatekeeping that has underpinned Italian history for centuries. And though Salvini attempted to mitigate the implications of his comments on Mahmood’s Sanremo victory, his desire for ethnic cleansing is not new to those aware of contemporary Italian politics. Just one month earlier in January of 2019, Salvini refused to authorize an EU deal which would have allowed a portion of 49 refugees stranded in Maltese waters to enter Italy. The passengers had been rescued off the coast of Libya the year prior and were packed onto German-owned charity ships where they remained for weeks as Malta, Italy, and other EU states refused to offer them a safe port. Salvini refused the arrival of these migrants and others multiple times throughout his tenure as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior – many of whom drowned in efforts to reach shore after jumping overboard. And while the United States was embroiled in the racialized polemics of Donald

Trump's presidency in which he described Mexicans immigrating to the U.S. as, "in many cases…criminals, drug dealers, and rapists,"[2] Salvini similarly declared his unwavering resistance to the "ricatto delle ONG" ("blackmail of the Non-Governmental Organizations") trying to transport migrants and cautioned against the impending "Africanization" of an Italy that was subject to "trafficanti di esseri umani" ("human traffickers") running the "business dell'immigrazione" ("immigration business") (Salvini, "Siamo").

Like Trump, Salvini gives a contemporary and particularly explicit voice to the nativist and racist undercurrents of Italian political thought that have persisted for decades. He works to maintain a typical "everyman" image, even abandoning a massive television appearance in 2019 so that he could speak to a village of 300 people in Sardinia, though his policy recommendations only further cement his conception of the South and Sardinia as antithetical to the Lega party's mission of making Italy a powerful player in the Western capitalist sphere. This antagonistic dynamic of Sardinia/the South and the Lega's political mission is not very discrete, considering the party's original name of Lega Nord (The *Northern* League) which was rebranded only in 2018 for marketing purposes. The racist and exclusionary views espoused by Salvini and his followers underpin governmental policies and social programs, and in turn shape the public image of an Italian identity created far outside the reality of the nation's multicultural history. The ever-increasing use of online forums and social media adds fuel to the proverbial fire, fostering communal spaces for hate speech and portraying racist and nativist narratives as acceptable forms of

[2] Quoted from Donald Trump's announcement speech for his candidacy for president, 16 June 2015.

public discourse. This is evidenced by the SWG poll in 2019 which found that 45% of Italians considered racism justified in certain situations, with an additional 10% saying that all explicit acts of racism should be justified, context notwithstanding (Colonnelli, "Under Matteo Salvini").

Cautions against the "Africanization" of Italy are a particularly telling and common facet of Italy's racist discourse. This speaks to the exclusionary ideology of nation-building that figured prominently during unification and again during the rise of Italian Fascism, the tenets of which are still supported by many Italians under the guise of labels like populist/populism which can "serve as an unintended form of democratic legitimization of modern neo-fascism" and far-right extremism (Mammone 174). Under Fascism, Mussolini tried to declare the validity of a supposedly purified Italian race, one freed from Africanizing influences that could be traced directly to its progenitors in the Roman Empire. This propaganda, of course, neglects the heavy involvement of Northern Africa in the growth of the Roman Republic and Empire, not to mention the complex network of trade extending to the Levant that sustained Italy's development through the Medieval Period. Conceptualizations of Africa as 'backward' or 'savage' also have devastating implications for migrants in Italy today, ones that scholars are bringing to the forefront with interventions in the field. SA Smythe's 2019 article, "Black Italianità: Citizenship and Belonging in the Black Mediterranean," explores notions of *afroitalianità* through migrant and postcolonial literature to see how Black writers respond to Italy's histories of colonialism and occupation. In Heather Merrill's 2018 article, "Black Spaces: African

Diaspora in Italy," she explores the racialized space of arrival for Africans in Italy and how African Italians, immigrants, and refugees contest and live with anti-Blackness in Italy.

Migrant stories, now more than ever, are being told amidst calls for continued systemic discrimination from those at the top of the Italian political chain of command. And while these migrants' journeys are perhaps the most explicit representations of how the gatekeeping of Mediterranean identity can have tragic and severe consequences, Salvini's scrutiny of Mahmood's Sanremo victory also shows us the status quo for how insidious the policing of identity can be. If a Sardinian-speaking Milanese pop icon who sings in Italian and was born and raised in Italy isn't Italian enough, what can that mean for the rest of the population in a nation whose history has been multicultural and multilingual since antiquity? Seeing as though Italy's time as a unified nation has been relatively short, it is not surprising that ideas about a threatening Global South and the fear of lagging industrialization played prominent roles in the country's path to nationhood. In fact, the *Questione meridionale* ("Southern Question") and the field of *meridionalismo* ("Southernism") were inaugurated in the 1870s, in the wake of the nation's unification. These discourses came to represent the current of thought amongst elites who were attempting to manage an ethical-political response to an abstract 'South' with whom they were now bound in nationhood.

The Risorgimento and Italy's *Questione meridionale*

Before the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (a merging of the Kingdom of Sicily with the Kingdom of Naples) was united with the upper peninsula at the start of the 1860s, the

liberal political class didn't have extensive knowledge of the southern peninsula and islands. The unknown South then became everything the country didn't want to be: "barbarous, primitive, violent, irrational, feminine, and African" (Dickie 1). This supposed "backwardness" of the South has often been characterized as African, and it is not difficult to find acknowledgment of these sentiments in Italian pop culture today. A simple Google search for "map of Italian stereotypes" produces countless examples made by/for Italians with the southern regions labeled as 'Ethiopia,' 'Somalia,' 'Africa,' or even 'Middle East' (Figures 1.2 and 1.3).[3] And so, the subordinated South came to be viewed – and characterized – as an extension of Africa rather than an extension of Northern Italy. Adding further tension to the newly unified Italy was the recency of the Paris Commune, when working class radicalism in Paris spurred the National Guard to seize the city in 1871 and establish a progressive social democracy for two months before the French government managed to suppress the revolt. Italy faced a major problem: the South was occupied by large

Figure 1.2

Figure 1.3

[3] Sardinia's label of "Berlusconia" in Figure 1.2 refers to media tycoon and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's 168-acre estate situated in the high-end vacation district on the island's northern coast. The label "what are they speaking?" in Figure 1.3 alludes to the lexical and syntactic distance between the Sardinian language and standard Italian – they are mutually unintelligible.

populations of working class and peasantry. Liberal elites had now governed the country for over a decade since unification and were still struggling to identify and confront the realities of the southern peninsula and islands.

It was Pasquale Villari who would become the most impactful conduit for delivering the details of southern reality to the forefront of the liberal northern political scene and officially ushering in the "Southern Question." Villari was a historian and native southerner who had fled to Florence from Naples after participating in the uprisings against the Bourbons in 1848, and he was no stranger to critiquing the contemporary Italian state. In a series of letters to the Milanese magazine *La perserveranza* published in 1861, he denounced the selfishness of the northern bourgeoisie who behaved as a colonizing force in the South post-unification (Urbinati 135). A few years later in his 1866 essay titled "Di chi è la colpa?" ("Who's to blame?"), Villari lambasted the "piemontesismo [che] sono gli uomini che hanno sempre tenuto il mestolo in mano, e sempre a danno del paese" ("the Piedmontism,[4] the men that always have their hand in the mix, and always to the detriment of the country.") (2). He characterized what he viewed as the true enemy of the Italian state (31):

> V'è nel seno della nazione stessa un nemico più potente dell'Austria, ed è la nostra colossale ignoranza, sono le moltitudini analfabete, i burocratici macchina, i professori ignoranti, i politici bambini, i diplomatici impossibili, i generali incapaci, l'operaio inesperto, l'agricoltore patriarcale, e la rettorica che ci rode le ossa.
>
> There is, in the soul of this same nation, an enemy more powerful than Austria, and it is our colossal ignorance, the multitudes of illiterate, the bureaucratic machine, the unaware professors, the child-like politicians, the

[4] *Piedmontism* here referring to the dominance exercised by the northern Piedmont region after the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy.

> impossible diplomats, the generally incapable, the unskilled worker, the patriarchal farmer, and the rhetoric that eats away at our bones.

Villari had by now become known as an agitator, perennially cautioning against the North's isolated mentality and their refusal to take on the project of building a nation from its separate parts. In 1875, it was his *Lettere meridionali* (*Southern Letters*) that shifted the Southern Question from constant rumblings to being at the forefront of northern political consciousness. The letters were published in *L'Opinione,* a right-wing journal of the moderates, and were addressed to the editor. They described the social conditions of the peasantry in Sicily and Naples, becoming the nation's first look at the daily realities of those who he claimed had been forgotten by the country's elites. And while Villari framed the letters in a national context – the full title is *Lettere meridionali ed altri scritti sulla questione sociale in Italia* (*Southern Letters and Other Writings on the Social Question in Italy*) – he focused on the South as a "regional case of special importance" which "underscore[d] the southern specificity of [the nation's] problems" (Moe 55).

Villari was a Neapolitan native, though he came to include himself in the "narrow circle of the educated bourgeoisie" he described on the floor of parliament in 1876 who had forgotten about "a vastly numerous class to which Italy has never given a thought, and which it must finally take into consideration" (qtd. in Moe 53). He offered an ultimatum for addressing the inequity of the nation: "L'affrancamento delle masse sofferenti, e di quelle del Sud in particolare [che possa] restituire l'ideale perduto" ("It is the liberation of the suffering masses, and of the South in particular, that can reinstate our lost ideal") (*Lettere* 74). Though Villari's vivid depictions did indeed bring attention to the harsh realities of daily life in the South, even his own hypotheses suggested a socio-mental

deficiency somehow innate to southerners that could have caused their societal problems, rather than describing them as outcomes of the social, linguistic, and political marginalization they faced. At the start of his letters, he declares his openness to the idea that "la camorra, il brigantaggio, [e] la mafia sono la conseguenza logica, naturale, [e] necessaria di un certo stato sociale" ("the *camorra*, brigandage, and the mafia are the logical, natural, and necessary consequence of a certain social condition") (*Lettere* 3) that could occur anywhere in the nation, but his frequent depictions of "la miseria" across Naples and Sicily seem to ascribe a uniquely southern quality to the problems and characterize the South as a *"regio dissimilitudinis,* a place unlike any other, irreconcilable to the modalities of modern society" (Moe 54).

Villari's disturbing vignettes of the living conditions of the lower classes in Naples and Sicily served their purpose to shock Italy's northern elites from their position of indifference. In Naples, he described the commonplace reality of entire families sleeping on piles of straw in the *bassi* dwellings, where it is difficult to breathe amidst "il puzzo che tramandano immondizie ammassate da tempi immemorabili" ("the stench from piles of garbage handed down from time immemorial") (*Lettere* 7). In Sicily, Villari described in vivid detail the degradation suffered in the sulfur mines, where children and adults alike were forced to emerge screaming and "col pericolo…di andar giù e perder la vita" ("at the risk of falling and dying an instant death") (*Lettere* 21). Throughout his *Letters*, and particularly when discussing issues like the mafia and brigandage, Villari returns to the importance of a *Questione agraria* ("Agrarian Question") to which he attributes the South's issues. He describes how crime exists similarly in urban areas (though to a lesser

extent than in rural areas), so the vast rural landscape of the South would inevitably produce more crime. Despite his efforts to displace the aggression toward the South from its inhabitants onto its agricultural conditions, this trade-off with the Agrarian Question still situates such “terribili calamità” (“horrific calamities”) plaguing Italian society uniquely in the South (*Lettere* 39).

In the end, the shocking vignettes of daily life spurred new ventures to the South, ones that are best described as both forensic investigations and missions of coloniality. In post-French Revolution modernity, ideas about the right to dominate certain territories gained an increased focus on alleged hierarchizations of certain groups, and so the fact that Villari presented a broader “Social Question” in an entirely southern framework opened the door for new diagnoses of the maladies in the South. And despite his other declarations about crimes such as brigandry being “nasca non da una brutale tendenza al delitto, ma da una vera e propria disperazione” (“born not from a brutal tendency toward crime, but out of true desperation”) (*Lettere* 43), new ventures in the South took on much more sinister overtones. Politicians and close collaborators Leopoldo Franchetti and Sidney Sonnino would pick up where Villari left off with new publications, cementing the Southern Question and the field of *meridionalismo* as foundational issues of a unified Italy.

Franchetti and Sonnino were sent to conduct a private investigation into the state of Sicilian society, later to be presented as a two-part report for the Italian Parliament, and it was clear that they were “articulat[ing] a South that [was] clearly foreign” to them as “representatives of a different and superior civilization” (Moe 63). The South they depicted was one that existed only as a “perverse realm of social disorder and moral degradation,”

rather than a subjugated population struggling to survive on unsustainable agricultural practices in the shadow of a rapidly industrializing North (63). The country's elites were primed to hear more about the backward, savage southerners whom statesmen Giuseppe Massari had recently described on the floor of the Parliament as those who eat bread "che non ne mangerebbero i cani"[5] ("that even dogs wouldn't eat"). In Franchetti and Sonnino's joint studies, *Condizioni politiche e amministrative della Sicilia* and *I contadini in Sicilia*, the South fully took on the image of an ill patient for whom they could offer a diagnosis. The authors introduced a medicalized justification to the discourse of *meridionalismo*, conditioning readers to their assumed superiority through the extensive use of metaphors that portrayed the entire region as plagued by seemingly uncurable diseases of criminal behavior and poverty. Presented from an elitist perspective, they made every declaration about the South from a place of objective truth, even opening the 1877 edition of the reports with a quote from Machiavelli's *Il Principe*: "Non ci è altro modo a guardarsi dalle adulazioni se non che gli uomini intendino che non ti offendono a dirti il vero" ("There is no way to guard yourself against adulation other than men understanding that they won't offend you by telling you the truth") (Franchetti and Sonnino, Introduction).

What is an Italian? The Nation-Building Project

In the latter part of the 19th century, the central crisis plaguing the nation was very much one of identity. It developed from the disconnect between the nation's various cultures, languages, political systems, and social climates, and was characterized early on

[5] Taken from Session 1863, N. 58 B, Proceedings of Parliament

by statesman Massimo D'Azeglio in 1866: "Pur troppo si va ogni giorno più verso il polo opposto: pur troppo s'è fatta l'Italia, ma non si fanno gl'italiani" ("Sadly, we're moving more everyday toward the opposite pole: Unfortunately, Italy has been made, but Italians aren't being made") (9). Now-unified Italy sought desperately to establish a national character, defined by Silvana Patriarca as the "set of dispositions that translate into the public and political attitudes of a people" (*Italian Vices* 11). With the push for the "new Italian man" came works like Samuel Smiles' 1859 *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*, whose translation became widely popular with Italy's elites and was known as the bible of mid-Victorian liberalism across Europe. D'Azeglio, Smiles, and others cultivated the wave of self-helpism and individualism that had already taken hold in other parts of Europe and was being birthed in Italy. It was a time when the "idea of character was an important component of political thought," a concept that would make a striking comeback under Mussolini's Fascism of the 20th century (Patriarca, *Italianità* 49). The Italian editions of Smiles' *Self-Help* were even translated as *Chi si aiuta Dio l'aiuto* (*God helps those who help themselves*), a title that would encourage its accessibility to the Catholic public (51).

The nation's mission to define and manifest the "new Italian" – masculine, patriotic, healthy, and cultured – drew stark comparisons with the population of the South. Structural issues of poverty and crime in places like Sardinia required structural solutions, though the governing classes sought rather to blame these individual populations for what they characterized as inherent or at least self-induced problems. To the elites, the South was indeed a *regio dissimilitudinis* ("region of unlikeness") – a term originating in Plato

and used in Christian thought to describe one's spiritual world *before* conversion, or the place of exile where God must meet humans. The idea of the South as a "place of exile" where the civilized North must go (presumably as a reflection of God) certainly embodies both the hierarchical worldview of the northern elites and the existential condition they thought existed in the South at the time. It was since the 17th century that visitors to Italy declared the vices they saw there as laziness, effeminacy, and superstition, qualities later to be diagnosed by the ruling classes as uniquely southern and existing outside the realm of rehabilitation (Patriarca, *Italian Vices*). Despite the many cultural, linguistic, and structural boundaries stifling the South's development, it was the individualism of Smiles' self-helpism that dominated contemporary thought. By removing accountability from all institutional levels, it was encouraged that (Briggs 37):

> Relying on yourself was preferred morally—and economically—to depending on others…The progressive development of society ultimately depended…not on collective action or on parliamentary legislation but on the prevalence of practices of self-help.

Supplementing the wave of individualism was a general enthusiasm amongst elites for Positivism, the school of thought rooted in the writings of criminologist Cesare Lombroso. Lombroso introduced a discourse in which all causes of criminality could be evidenced by physical defects, thus identifying those who were "born criminal" and removing any affiliation between "human will" and social or political transformation (Urbinati 136). The Positivist School's constructions of Northern racial superiority and Southern inferiority included the contributions of Enrico Ferri, Raffaele Garofalo, and Alfredo Niceforo, all of whom would go on to have close ties with Italian Fascism.

Enter Sardinia

The influence of Positivist criminology brought Sardinia to the forefront of southern inquiry with Alfredo Niceforo's 1897 book *La delinquenza in Sardegna* (*Crime in Sardinia*, the first to focus specifically on the island. His work followed the pseudoscientific trend of phrenology sweeping across Western Europe at the time and he presented the Sardinian skull as a distinct barbarian subtype (the *parallelepipedoides variabilis sardiniensis*), supporting the discourse of the time which implied that "the criminal activity in central Sardinia was evidence of biosocial inferiority vis-à-vis the national culture of continental Italy" (Heatherington 295). In Niceforo's words, the high levels of state-defined crime in the central region of Nuoro and the inhabitants' tendency toward herding and pastoralism were because the area (41, 43)

> si è atrofizzata nel cammino della civiltà ed è rimasta con le idee morali delle primitive società: gli uomini presentano così un atavismo psichico individuale, e l'intiera regione, nella sua coscienza collettiva, un atavismo sociale…Nell'organismo sardo, essa sta a segnare la parte che subì un arresto di sviluppo nella sua evoluzione morale.
>
> atrophied along the path to civilization and remained with the moral ideas of a primitive society: the men demonstrate an individual psychic atavism, and the entire region demonstrates a social atavism in its collective conscience…In the organization of Sardinia, this marks the area that suffered an arrest of development in its moral evolution.

Niceforo's direct focus on Sardinia was supported by Cesare Lombroso's tangential discussions of the island in his work from 20 years prior. In his *L'uomo delinquente* (*Criminal Man*) he had described the island as a "savage state" where crimes of passion were widespread, citing the presence of vendetta murders which "assume the character of a crime of passion because [they are] nearly always carried out in broad daylight; without

ambush, accomplices, or a plan; never with poison or for material gain; and often by people who until that moment had lived honorable lives" (107). Worth noting here is the seminal work of Sardinian legal philosopher Antonio Pigliaru whose 1959 book *La vendetta barbaricina come ordinamento giuridico* (*Barbagian Vendetta as a Legal System*) showed that the use of vendetta killings has actually functioned historically as communal folk law in the region, coexisting with the state as an institution rather than an instinct (Di Lucia et al. 97).

Generally speaking, the 20th and 21st centuries have not brought much positive change to the public conceptions of southern Italy and the islands by way of social or political practice. The dominant discourse of the post-unification moderates and liberals which were fueled by pseudoscientific 'investigations' have been consistently repurposed through various avenues: Mussolinism, the *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democracy) party, and Salvini's far-right extremism, among others. The image constructed of the South and of Sardinia reproduces a familiar dynamic that Edward Said described in his *Orientalism*, one that frames the region as permanently irreconcilable with modernity by "emphasiz[ing] its difference and, by chaining it to exotic and seductive forms, ends up denying it any autonomy, maturity, or ability to rule itself" (Cassano xxxviii). It is a sustained image that remains today, where it is not uncommon to hear public sentiment such as that of the Milanese landlord who stated in a publicized audio recording leaked by a prospective tenant in 2019, "Non affitto ai meridionali…I meridionali, i neri, i Rom sono tutti uguali…Io sono una razzista al cento per cento…Sono una salviniana, leghista come Salvini, come Matteo, il mio capitano" ("I don't rent to southerners…Southerners, blacks,

gypsies, they're all the same. I'm a racist, 100%. I'm with the Lega Nord party like Salvini, like Matteo, my commander") (Siotto, "Milano"). As the leaked recording from this Milanese landlord implies, ideas of race and racial hierarchization are still very much embedded in Italy's considerations of its South. Declarations about the "Africanization" threatening to infiltrate and poison a supposedly homogenous Italian identity have been made by countless elites, Salvini only most recently, in attempts to whitewash a nation whose history is undeniably multicultural and multilingual.

***Sardigna no est Italia*: Goals of this Project and Remaining Chapters**

In response to Italy's stakes in both the global and domestic North-South struggle, the remaining chapters of this project turn the focus decidedly inward with a closer look at the understudied and undervalued aspects of Sardinian history and culture. In this endeavor, I will confront the historical context of the colloquial statement that can be heard in conversations or seen scrawled as a graffito in public spaces across the island: *Sardigna no est Italia*. Mentioning this phrase will evoke a reaction and a conversation from most Sardinians, particularly those of older generations, though it can also bring up questions for those unfamiliar with the long history of resistance on the island: *Sardinia* isn't Italy? The region whose king, Vittorio Emanuele II, became the first king of a united Italy since the 6th century AD? The region whose dialects – in terms of their preservation of archaisms – make up the closest surviving language to Latin, the ultimate symbol of the Roman Empire? The island known for its beaches which symbolize the picturesque Italian seaside landscape and bring in millions in profits, *isn't* Italian? Approaching the statement

Sardigna no est Italia from an analytical standpoint requires both macro- and micro-level observation.

Among noteworthy talking points is the fact that Sardinia is, of course, an island. This geographic isolation changes more than a region's agricultural and economic potential, it also dramatically changes a region's role in the nation-building process. When the Sardinia-Italy dynamic is considered in comparison with that of Corsica to France, or of Hawaii or Puerto Rico to the United States, it's clear that islands have sociocultural and historical differences that distinguish them from their respective mainlands despite any supposed unity under conceptions of a shared "nationhood." Additionally, islands are naturally less traversed (and thus, lesser known) by citizens of their mainland nation. Therefore, the case of Sardinia and the relative recency of Italy's unification (read: nation-building) offers a unique vignette of a region's evolution as capitalism spread across Western Europe. The disconnect is not imagined; Even by the end of the 19th century, Sardinia was "considered a territory not solidly assimilated with the mainland, a place where Italian was hardly spoken and where state authorities, due to the presence of rural banditry and major difficulties with internal connections, were unable to fully exercise its sovereignty" (Farinelli 25).

This project reclaims important aspects of Sardinian history from the centuries-old characterizations made by the aristocracy and upheld by the exclusionary academic tradition which has dominated intellectual discourse. In doing so, I identify the many ways in which Sardinia's marginalization and exploitation have shaped its inhabitants' self-understanding. Sardinia remains relatively understudied today, not just in Italy's

investigations of its South, but also among general scholarship in archaeology and other fields (Vella 2016). This work is an overdue look at the impetus for the expression "Sardigna no est Italia," created *by* and *for* Sardinians to encapsulate their struggle for autonomy, remembrance, and recognition in Italy and in the Mediterranean. After all, until relatively recently Sardinia's geographic isolation made it as foreign to Italians as it was to non-Italians. The modern figuring of Sardinia didn't come until the aftermath of the Age of Exploration, wherein the European 'discovery' of the island "was chiefly carried out in the nineteenth century…[by] British, French, German, and Italian traveling authors" (Corso 134). Yet even by the end of the 19th century, the notion that "Italian travel writers on Sardinia [were] less foreign than other European travelers would imply a lack of historical perspective" (135). It was indeed the voyeuristic traveler's gaze that would come to create the image of Sardinia that spread across Europe. Well into the 20th century, English novelist D.H. Lawrence still described the island in his travel book called *Sea and Sardinia* as "like nowhere…Sardinia, which has no history, no date, no race, no offering. Let it be Sardinia. They say neither Romans, nor Phoenicians, Greeks nor Arabs ever subdued Sardinia. It lies outside…the circuit of civilization" (15).

Whether biased and deprecatory or otherwise ill-informed, false characterizations of Sardinia and Sardinians stemming from the works of early writers and intellectuals are still prevalent in depictions of them today. As Maria Bonaria Urban has noted, the portrayal of Sardinians by modern filmmakers often still matches the same stock of literary images from these 18th and 19th century traveling authors (303). The "ethnocentric viewpoint" of these films is then (306)

> translated into the re-creation of the Sardinian world as an exotic land, inhabited by primitive men with bizarre customs who populate a territory awaiting discovery, the cinematic image arising from this perspective is configured as an ethnographic spectacle: a representation of the Other as an anthropological rarity, in terms of his way of being and his behaviour and in terms of the reality which surrounds him.

Regardless of venue or medium of the island's depiction, evidence shows that Sardinia has not and will not fit the model of *italianità* fashioned by the capitalist and political elites who govern the nation's trajectory and ensure Sardinia's subjugation for their own profit. Their model was forged in the birth pangs of Italian unification, wherein "any consistent idea of Italian-ness had to somehow hover above the material manifestations of politically and culturally fragmented Italian spaces," but its impact still reverberates through policy structure, popular culture, and intellectual discourse (Hester 288). The following chapters will explore Sardinian history and Sardinians' efforts to preserve their cultural heritage. As will be shown, there are many aspects of *sardità* (Sardinian-ness) which have been shaped by centuries of resistance to colonization, exploitation, and subjugation from outside forces.

Chapter 2 ("Before Rome, Beyond Rome: Sardinia in Antiquity") begins with a discussion of disciplinarity that is intimately connected to this project's mission to bridge the gap between classical studies and cultural studies. Included in this chapter is an exploration of the pervasive legacies of antiquity which have plagued Italy's historiography, with a particular focus on how the historic domination of the Romans has been weaponized in various contexts to convey notions of supremacy and to deny the reality of Sardinia as a locus of sophisticated trade and cultural syncretism in the Mediterranean since before Rome's theoretical founding. Another critical element of this

chapter involves an overview of Sardinia's under-appreciated Nuragic civilization which developed throughout the Bronze and Early Iron Ages and left behind over 7,000 stone structures called *nuraghi* (sing. *nuraghe*, see Figure 1.4) whose function(s) remain relatively unknown and under-investigated by archaeologists.[6]

Figure 1.4*: Small-scale reconstruction of a nuraghe structure*

Following a period of Phoenician settlement and thriving cross-cultural development, the Nuragic civilization was largely subdued following Carthage's occupation of the island in the 6th century BC. What we see during this period, however, is the birth of violent resistance in the island's hinterlands where the indigenous populations were relatively undisturbed in the rougher terrain of the Gennargentu mountain complex. Rome's swift annexation of Sardinia and Corsica in the 3rd century BC then leads into a discussion of the island's contentious development under Roman control. Still marked by perennial bouts of violent resistance from the local populations, this period saw the birth of the "Afro-Sardinian" pejorative which stemmed from Rome's conception of Sardinia as an extension of its nemesis rooted in Northern Africa, Carthage.

For centuries, Sardinia's coastline and much of its rural territory continued to evolve both linguistically and culturally through prolonged contact with the Latin language and Roman customs. Following the fall of Rome was the long arc of various presences on

[6] Worth noting is that the total of extent *nuraghi* "surpass[es] the surviving pre-classical or extra-classical buildings of any other region of the western and central Mediterranean, including Magna Graecia" (Pallottino 88).

the island which yielded similar developments: the Byzantines, the maritime powers of Genoa and Pisa, and then the stretch of Aragonese, Spanish, and Savoyard rule on the island beginning in 1323 and lasting into the 1700s.[7] Despite the extensive reach of these powers, though, the island's central region of Barbagia[8] remained largely isolated due to its mountainous perimeter. It is in this zone that we see the most enduring efforts to preserve Sardinia's cultural heritage and resist domination.

Chapter 3 ("Resistance Through the Arts: How Sardinia Preserves its Cultural Heritage") explores the various ways inhabitants of this central Barbagia region and even of the more urbanized areas of the island use artistic production as a mode of activism and cultural preservation. This chapter has a particular focus on Orgosolo, a small town that criminologist Alfredo Niceforo described in his book *La delinquenza in Sardegna* (*Crime in Sardinia*) as "il punto criminale di una zona criminale" ("the criminal center of a criminal zone") (21). This town and it adjacent pasture lands would later be the site of one of Italy's most well-known instances of non-violent resistance succeeding over military force, when crowds of local citizens in 1969 occupied a NATO weapons testing field that had forced shepherds to relocate their herds. Today, Orgosolo and the surrounding towns are home to hundreds of resistance murals with anti-militaristic, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist sentiments. Many of these murals are a testament to Sardinia's own contentious history of subjugation, though recent years have seen the introduction of resistance murals in solidarity with other marginalized groups across the globe (see Figure 1.5 for Sardinian

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[7] Though not an exhaustive list, these factions are considered to have had the most impactful presence on the island.
[8] Named so for its label of *Barbaria* (the Barbaric land) by the Romans.

***Figure 1.5**: Caption reads, "Un'altra guerra? No grazie." ("Another war? No thank you.")*

***Figure 1.6**: Image of a Native American woman with the caption (in progress), "L'uomo bianco ha portato un pezzo di carta e ha detto di firmare. Quando abbiamo imparato l'inglese, ci siamo accorti che con quel documento..." ("The white man brought a piece of paper and told us to sign it. When we learned English, we realized that the document...")*

sentiments and Figure 1.6 for a work-in-progress alluding to the struggle of Native Americans).

Given Chapter 3's focus on resistance through artistic production, attention is also given to illicit urban graffiti in Sardinia's major cities and the ubiquitous presence of political posters that document and call for organized protests to confront issues like the damage caused by NATO's extensive military installations and the problematic history of penal colonies and prisons established on the island due to its geographic 'convenience' for peninsular Italy. Lastly, I follow Barbara Harlow's seminal notion of resistance literature as a mode of artistic production used by local authors to document the diminishing presence of traditional Sardinian customs and by intellectuals to mobilize the masses in the fight against industrial and economic domination. The works of Emilio Lussu and Antonio Gramsci figure prominently with regard to the latter, whose writings document the exploitation of Sardinian soldiers in the First World War and theorized the cultural hegemony used to maintain capitalist control over the island (respectively).

The final chapter of this project (Chapter 4, “Sardinia’s Language and its Complex Sociolinguistic History”) brings the Sardinian language to the forefront with a discussion on its relation to identity, class, power, and resistance. This section provides an overview of the historical development of Sardinian, a language classified as “definitely endangered” by UNESCO, meaning that it is no longer learned as a mother tongue in the home. The topic of Sardinian’s linguistic evolution begins with the scant evidence we have of the Nuragic Sardinian spoken on the island before Rome’s intervention and is followed by commentary on the long periods of contact with Latin, Spanish, and Catalan superstrates which influenced the Sardinian dialects spoken today.

This chapter also covers language as a critical tool for governing elites in the maintenance of power, a notion well-understood and acknowledged by Sardinians (See Figure 1.7). The sociolinguistic issues are rooted in Italy’s mission to standardize a national language in the lead-up to unification, though they extend well into the post-war period with Fascism’s lingering policies which banned the use of Sardinian dialects being compounded by the opportunity for social and economic mobility tied to speaking standard Italian. Chapter 4 concludes with a closer look at how language still plays a major role in Sardinia’s policymaking today, with the Italian Republic acknowledging Sardinian as a minority language in 1999 and the formation of cultural-political movements like the

Figure 1.7*: Mural depicting a young Sardinian with the Italian flag, meant to symbolize the imposition of the standard Italian language, covering their mouth. The text is in Sardinian and reads, “tenet su dirittu de faeddare sa limba sua”* (*“hold on to your right to speak your own language”*)

Movimentu Linguisticu Sardu, the annual Festa de sa Limba Ufitziale, and others. As recent as 2020, the Sardinian language was still "represented by the most consistent linguistic minority within the Italian State and one of the most relevant in all of Europe by number of speakers" (Strinna, "Current"). Unfortunately, however, Sardinian still lacks a standardized orthography due to internal cultural debates about the valuation and authenticity of its main dialects.

In the conclusion to this project ("Fighting Global Capitalism: Sardinia Moving Forward"), I look at Sardinia in today's modern landscape and its potential future as part of a nation determined to undermine its pastoral heritage and move only further toward a commitment to global capitalism. Despite the supposed potential of its rich cultural heritage, Sardinia seems to be in a state of perpetual rehabilitation from emigration, economic, and social crises that have persisted for decades. The increased development of tourism in the late 20th century is addressed in this section, having boosted economic prospects for the region, though with long-term environmental and sociocultural effects that should be acknowledged as a direct consequence of capitalist exploitation (Hospers 640).

Also emphasized in this section is the impact of Sardinia's exploitation as a receptacle for Italy and the European Union's (EU) military experimentation. Though the island is just one-tenth of Italy's total area and has only 3% of the total population, it is home to one of Europe's most expansive military installations that has been described as recently as 2021 as "a playing field for the war games simulation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joint forces and Israeli military forces" (Esu 197). The EU's

occupation of Sardinia in these military testing endeavors has induced the widespread anti-militaristic sentiments mentioned earlier. Furthermore, they have had devastating public health consequences including toxic emissions that consistently exceed legal limits and contaminate air, water, soil, milk, and animal tissues (Cristaldi et al. 1631). As a result, local populations have developed severe health problems, at times affecting up to a quarter of newborns in a single year (e.g., the "Quirra syndrome," a colloquial term used for decades to reference the abnormal frequency of lymphatic cancers and birth defects in the town of Quirra, where the Salto di Quirra military polygon has conducted weapons testing since the 1950s) (Zucchetti 82).

It is clear that Italy's refusal to incorporate the island and other parts of the South during the nation's formative years has had far-reaching implications, and the elite have further isolated a population so culturally distinct from the mainland that it now rejects its Italian identity entirely (i.e., Sardigna no est Italia). At times, Sardinia's contemporary history seems to indicate that the hegemonic domination Antonio Gramsci cautioned against has all but strengthened, with Matteo Salvini's far-right Lega party winning the island's regional elections in 2019. The pervasive effects of Empire (both past and present) have stifled certain aspects of Sardinia's economic and cultural growth, and it remains an often referenced – though rarely acknowledged – part of Italian and Mediterranean history. As scholars in Italian Studies work to rectify the gatekeeping of identity across the Mediterranean, this project turns to Sardinia as a site of astonishing cultural preservation that has historically been considered "part of a marginal colonial periphery at Europe's edges" (Carta 676). Guided by the grassroots expression, Sardigna no est Italia, I approach

the task of reclaiming what is a uniquely Sardinian identity. Even the regional government popularized the slogan *quasi un continente* ("almost a continent") in a 2009 tourism campaign which is still in use today, reflecting the many ways in which Sardinia's history remains distinct from the rest of the nation. In the ensuing chapters, this project confronts the traditional image of Sardinia as "lost between Europe and Africa," and depicts its history without encouraging a search for redemption in industrialized modernity (Lawrence 103).

CHAPTER 2
Before Rome, Beyond Rome: Sardinia in Antiquity

***Figure 2.1**: Early Iron Age votive ships and 'bronzetto' figurine of a Capotribù (Chieftain) from Nuragic sites*

> *a Poenis admixto Afrorum genere Sardi non deducti in Sardiniam atque ibi constituti, sed amandati et repudiati coloni. Qua re cum integri nihil fuerit in hac gente plena, quam valde eam putamus tot transfusionibus coacuisse?*
>
> The Sardinians, who are sprung from the Phoenicians with an admixture of African blood, were not planted in Sardinia and settled there, but rather marooned there as undesirables. Since, then, the uncontaminated stock was so utterly unsound, must we not think that it has become sadly soured by constant intermixture?
>
> -Cicero, *Pro Scauro*[9]

Given Sardinia's position in the current European arena, it is clear that there is an interplay of racism and ethno-nationalism that has combined with the forces of global capitalism and technology to stifle the island's development in the modern period. Chapter

[9] Taken from Cicero, *Pro Scauro* 42-43.

1 discussed the current political and social discourses in which contemporary manifestations of Italy's post-unification *Questione meridionale* (Southern Question) are apparent. In particular, this relates to the ways in which prejudiced ideas about the stagnation of Italy's South have a long history of being used by radical right-wing political movements and the ideologues who sustain them. Even in 2023, the far-right Lega Nord party's (Northern League, rebranded in 2018 as simply La Lega) constitution declares its prime objective in Article 1 as "il conseguimento dell'indipendenza della Padania attraverso metodi democratici e il suo riconoscimento internazionale quale Repubblica Federale indipendente e sovrana" ("the achievement of the independence of Padania through democratic methods and its international recognition as an independent and sovereign Federal Republic") (Lega Nord, "Statuto"). *Padania* is the name for an imagined independent state constructed by the party that would include all of the nation's North and none of its South – and certainly not Sardinia. This movement is commonly known as Padanian nationalism.

Seeing as one of the nation's most powerful and influential political parties advocates a nationalism which excludes nearly half of its own citizens, it is not surprising that a phrase like "Sardigna no est Italia" ("Sardinia is not Italy") has gained traction in the region's public discourse. In fact, the phrase at times seems more like a truism than a statement of resistance. But the mission of this project and particularly of this chapter is not to identify the racist and prejudiced overtones of today's political discourse that affect Sardinian attitudes toward the nation. Rather, it is to evaluate how Sardinia's resistance to the dominant forces of the Mediterranean and Western world has spanned centuries – even

millennia – and it backgrounds the subjugation Sardinians face today. This chapter will answer some of the general questions that linger in the more underexplored areas of Sardinian anthropology and classical history: Can we trace the development of Sardinian resistance to antiquity, following both its physical and symbolic forms? What are the roots of the "Afro-Sardinian" identity used as a pejorative today, and what did ancient authors have to say about Sardinia?

Part of Sardinia's significance in this regard is its sheer longevity as an island already populated throughout the Neolithic period and then by the Bronze Age Nuragic civilization. Ancient Sardinians were engaged in cross-cultural contact and trade with the Mycenaeans, Etruscans, Phoenicians, and others long before the founding of Rome, an acknowledgment rarely made in the context of scholarship that has traditionally centered the Romans as the civilizing force of the region. By further connecting antiquity to the present, I will reposition Sardinia in the historical tradition by providing answers to some more specific – and rarely asked – questions: Why did the Phoenicians enjoy a seemingly fruitful relationship on the island, complete with cultural syncretism? Why weren't the Greeks able to secure a foothold on the island, making it part of the Magna Graeca region? Was the period after Rome's annexation of the island truly one of Romanization, or was it simply a phase of Roman colonization met with formidable resistance? By tracing the island's earliest developments in the coming sections, this chapter will show how today's biases stem from the island's earliest interactions with the surrounding Mediterranean world.

Race and the Racialization of Sardinians

Because ideas of an 'Afro-Sardinian' identity and race in general play a major role not just in today's discourse but also in antiquity, there is another important aspect of the 'racialization' of Sardinians that should be noted before beginning a conversation on the island's earliest phases. As Anne Finger points out, the racialization of Sardinians can easily be easily underestimated by readers from the United States, for example, because most Sardinians would "register as white in the U.S. racial schematic" but have long been described as "dark savages and barbarians within Italy" (18). She also touches on the spread of Christianity and its influence on ideas about the motivations behind criminality. This relates to the modern context of Italy's unification and the development of the Southern Question, wherein the 19th century Positivist school of criminal anthropology portrayed Sardinians as sharing a common 'disability' in an effort to shift focus away from prevailing religious notions of crime as being caused by sin and evil. By doing so, the governing classes were able to add 'scientific' justifications to their arguments on the criminal mind and high crime rates in the region (17, 20):

> Southerners weren't just another race; they were, in the eyes of [the positivist school] a disabled race. Disability as metaphor is rife throughout all their writings – Niceforo spoke of the 'delinquent zone' around Nuoro as having 'atrophied'…in *Psicologia della Sardegna* (*Psychology of Sardinia*) Orano wrote of places on the island where 'the race grows and teems like rotten, purulent gangrene'; in *La Decadenza delle nazioni Latine* (*The Decline of Latin Nations*) Sergi – the co-founder of the Italian Eugenic Society – said: '…I would like to act…like the surgeon who amputates a bone affected by necrosis in order to avoid death.'

Italy's social attitudes toward Sardinia have gone through cycles, with each new phase building on the foundational prejudices of prior generations. It is not surprising that

movements in eugenics and criminology have played key roles over the last two centuries in the diffusion of anti-southern and anti-Sardinian discourse since they've been a constant in the parallel (though extremist) settings of apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany. The central goal of a 'division of races' is precisely how groups in power operated from the mid-1800s onward in Italy and is a key part of understanding *why* Sardinians and Southerners were depicted as physically and mentally deficient people who were incapable of rehabilitation. This in turn exposes the shades of racialized prejudice embedded in the Lega party's mission to start the new nation of Padania without Sardinia and others; this was embraced culturally by northerners as a mission of segregation as much as it was a mission of capitalist control.

One might think then that there was a time, perhaps before the advent of hyper-capitalism and globalization, when there was a sense of Italian 'racial' identity that did include Sardinians. After all, the revolutionary universal hero of Italian unification, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was a staunch supporter of Vittorio Emanuele II, the King of Sardinia who became the King of the first united Italy since the 6th century CE. Garibaldi had a personal affinity for Sardinia, too. He retired to Caprera in the archipelago just off Sardinia's northern coast in 1854 and remained there for nearly 30 years until his death in 1882. But the previously mentioned goal of a "division of races" was the driving factor for regional development within Europe, regularly overriding or coopting any contradicting thought-currents. There were statements from leaders of Italian Aryanism like Angelo De Gubernatis who wrote at the time, "Ario anch'io, ed italiano per giunta, ossia nato di popolo nel quale...Dio volle stampata un'orma più profonda del genio ario" ("I am both Aryan and

Italian, that is, I'm born of a population in which God wished to make the deepest imprint of Aryan genius") (7). But his idea about an "Aryan Italian" needed to be parsed and clarified since the Aryanism that had already developed *outside* of Italy both "stereotyped [Italy's] modern 'degeneration'" while also "exalting its past role in European civilization" (De Donno 409-10).

The late 19th and early 20th centuries featured intellectual discourse with prime examples of how ideological motives backgrounded and influenced scientific investigations. Deeply intertwined with this are the hypotheses of the time about Indo-European heritage that declared a commonly inherited ideology amongst all speakers of Indo-European languages (called "Aryan languages" well into the 20th century). According to its exponents, this common ideology implied a natural social order of kings and lawmakers at the top, and the common man at the bottom (Arvidsson 1-2).[10] De Gubernatis' argument for Italian Aryanism may not have gained substantial traction, but another critique of this Nordic Aryanism by Giuseppe Sergi soon would. A leader of positivist criminology and eugenics, he argued that the Italics (originating in Rome) were the superior indigenous ethnic group, and that the Nordic populations that arrived later in the North were the ones to assimilate to the Italics (De Donno 398). Yet despite his proposed primacy of the 'Mediterranean' race, even Sergi was quick to clarify that Sardinians were part of a separate and degenerate variety. In his own English publication titled *The Mediterranean Race: A Study of the Origin of European Peoples,* he defined Sardinians as a Eurafrican "inferior stratum" of the population whose short stature and

[10] This, of course, substantiated and justified the power dynamics of Fascism.

ellipsoid faces rendered it “impossible to admit that they are of the same species as those belonging to the Mediterranean groups” (237, 258).

Looking Backwards

Just as the coming chapters on resistance in the venues of artistic production and language will similarly demonstrate, understanding the history of Sardinia is critical to viewing resistance as a deeply integrated facet of Sardinian identity. I include this brief section as a reminder that investigations of culture must ‘look backwards’ in some way. Even if not in a strictly linear and chronological fashion, we must acknowledge that the prejudices faced by Sardinians – and their resistance to them – cannot be evaluated solely in the context of industrialized modernity. By analyzing Sardinia as a palimpsest, this chapter elucidates the many ways in which its periods of cultural syncretism, occupation, and subjugation have built upon one another. That being said, this chapter is not an attempt to define some simplified linear path back to the ‘ultimate root’ of Sardinia’s current issues, be they intra- or inter-regional. It is rather an acknowledgement of the fact that its history cannot be studied in isolated pockets of time, and that many of the island’s developments in antiquity have reverberated through later periods in new contexts. Consider, for example, that Carthage’s early ties to Sardinia led to the island’s negative characterization by the Romans (for whom Carthage was their greatest threat) and the birth of the racialized Afro-Sardinian pejorative.

These earliest phases of racialized discourse continued through to the much later construction of a European racial hierarchy mentioned in the previous section, bolstered

by the ideological support for a mythologized Indo-European primacy. Such movements have had a massive impact on Italy's contemporary interest, or lack thereof, in Sardinia's cultural and economic development. Since these efforts have been embedded in the cultural discourse for some time, they are today compounded by extreme capitalism and diffused through the new waves of technology that have reshaped communication and the dynamics of power. Because of this, anti-Sardinian and anti-Southern discourses in Italy continue to thrive, at times even in these same places. After all, the far-right Lega party won Sardinia's regional elections in 2019. The dynamic seen here is akin to what Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman described in the United States as a 'manufactured' consent produced by powerful elites[11] through a propaganda model of communication which plays on internalized assumptions and habits of thought. Simply put, nationalist thought-currents and media production in Italy are very much invested in, and capable of, creating a hegemony that neutralizes places like Sardinia without overt coercion. Given that Sardinia is a rare example of a quasi-isolated population that has one foot in the door of capitalist modernity and yet has managed to maintain strong ties to its cultural traditions of antiquity, we should analyze it comprehensively in order to fully appreciate the interplay of historical discourses.

Classical Studies and Cultural Studies: Coexist vs. Collaborate

It would be a shortcoming of this project if it were to remain disciplinarily invested solely in the past or the present, which continues to be something of a contentious

[11] These elites are Marx's "bourgeoisie."

distinction between classical studies and cultural studies (Kovala 2003). Can Sardinian resistance in antiquity be relevant to the resistance efforts happening there over two millennia later? Can Sardinia's relationship with Republican Rome and the subsequent Empire really have ties to modernity that are worth investigating? When confronting these types of questions in her 2014 article, "Time on Trial," classicist Victoria Wohl addressed the problematic "presentism" of cultural studies' methodology. She said that efforts of cultural studies scholarship often "seek to capture a moment in time, which often entails taking that moment out of time, cutting it off from its past and future, and viewing it as a deracinated present." In doing so, such projects risk "reducing history's potential alterity" and "turning the past into a mere 'prequel' to the present" (98). On one hand, this is a sentiment that I share, at least in part. Without knowing the full scope of Sardinia's foray into the Roman world, its perennial function as an exploitative economy, and its modern inheritance of the Eurafrican/Afro-Sardinian pejorative, it would be difficult to achieve a comprehensive understanding of why this community's prevailing thought-current is "Sardigna no est Italia."

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that classical studies has its own legacies of gatekeeping and exclusivity that have prevented its collaboration with modern studies of culture. In fact, the pioneering Center for Cultural Studies which was inaugurated in 1964 at the University of Birmingham faced criticism specifically from classics faculty who contested its name. They claimed that 'cultural studies' already existed in its fullest form, as classical studies. As a result of their contestation, the name was changed to the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies before its opening (MacCabe 7). Anecdotal as

it may be, this situation represents more than just an insular dispute amongst university faculty. It also speaks to the tendency of classical studies to claim ownership over the Western model of cultural development, often supposing its own simplified and 'ultimate root' of today's nuanced issues. In Ralph M. Rosen's article, "Classical Studies and the Search for Community," he points out a recognizable shift in classical studies. He describes it as an academic discipline that was "not very long ago held to provide a universal education for anyone aspiring to be a functional and informed citizen," yet has now "gradually come to be seen as a haven for antiquarians and pedants, far removed from the concerns of the modern world" (173).

There are a couple of reasons behind the shift Rosen described, and they tie into the disconnect between classical and cultural studies. Primarily, many now recognize and acknowledge classical studies' longstanding tendency toward exclusivity that has limited the voices of women, people of color, and other marginalized groups. Given this lack of diversity amongst classical studies scholars, it is to be expected that the scholarship they produce would follow a similarly narrow path. Deborah Yaffe notes the "unquestioned assumption" that is "enshrined even in the very name of the field…[That] the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome represent the best of human culture" ("Color"). This, of course, involves the "implicit downgrading of ancient civilizations rooted in China, India, Africa, and the Middle East" – with Africa and the Middle East having many complex ties to Sardinia throughout antiquity (Yaffe, "Color"). Scholarship in contemporary cultural studies, on the other hand, relies far more heavily on socio-anthropological approaches and the intersectional paradigms constituted by marginalized communities.

Where, then, is the common ground between classical studies and cultural studies? And how does this chapter benefit from situating an analysis of Sardinian resistance in this space? These are important questions, particularly in a climate where high-stakes capitalism and industry seem to have far more daunting relevance to Sardinia's issues than antiquity, which is rarely discussed in relation to the island's cultural or economic development. My approach echoes the position of James I. Porter, who posited in his article "The Materiality of Classical Studies" that the discipline largely exists to legitimate the "fascination" with material remains and would therefore benefit from better approaches to understanding the more intangible aspects of culture, like resistance (64). Further, because any analysis involving classical antiquity is by necessity a "work of historical remembrance for the modern world," the discipline is "an active agent in the construction of modern ideologies" (Kovala 186). And so, this chapter accounts for Sardinia both in the past *and* in the present, knowing that the latter is built on the former and not looking for "answers" or "roots" of problems by assigning an imagined temporality to culture. Rather, this chapter acknowledges and appreciates the intangible elements of resistance and autonomous identity as those readily visible today in Sardinia yet compounded by an enduring history of subjugation.

Topography and Ancient Authors

A general awareness of Sardinian topography is key to understanding the island's earliest developments in terms of its regional and cultural divisions, as well as its relation to surrounding communities in the Mediterranean in antiquity. Among the influential points of contact with Sardinia were the earliest Phoenician settlements of the 9th and 8th c. BC, the Carthaginian invasion and dominance beginning in the late 6th c. BC, and Rome's annexation of the island in the 3rd c. BC, all of which reflect the distinct dynamic existing between the island's coastal and inner regions. Additionally, the rather impermeable terrain of the eastern coast at Olbia accounts at least partially for why Greeks were not able to secure a foothold in what appeared to be a tempting opportunity for colonization for several reasons: its fertile plains covering nearly 20% of the island, extensive mining potential with silver trade dating back to the Early Iron Age (later to be utilized by the Romans), and control of the major Mediterranean trading centers at the port of Nora. Aside from its plains, Sardinia is comprised of hills or mountains, the latter of which being largely confined to the Gennargentu massif in the island's center and eastern borders (see Figure 2.2).[12] This mountainous portion of the hinterlands has been populated since

Figure 2.2

[12] The name Gennargentu is derived from the Sardinian words *genna/jenna* ("door") and *argentu* ("silver"). One may think that this refers to the presence of silver ores in the area, though the mining centers are largely confined to the southwestern Iglesiente region of the island, well outside of the mountain complex. "Silver door" in fact refers to the strong presence of silver-toned schist rock which characterizes the mountain reliefs.

the Neolithic and is considered in this project and other investigations to be the primary locus of resistance in antiquity where linguistic, political, and pagan traditions have been preserved. Today, the region is known as Barbagia, a toponym derived from the Roman label of *Barbaria*, and is confined mostly to the Nuoro province with further extension along the Gennargentu massif (Figure 2.3) (Contu 292-293).[13]

Figure 2.3

In terms of its relation to resistance and cultural preservation, the significance of the Gennargentu mountain complex and Barbagia is attested to in the work of several ancient authors who commented on the Sardinian population and attempts to homogenize the region. Diodorus Siculus wrote in the 1st c. BC of the Ilienses tribe of the Nuragic people who gathered in the island's mountainous center, "digging tunnels for themselves instead of houses" to avoid the dangers of "the Carthaginians and Romans [who] often pursued them with arms" yet "could never reduce them to obedience" (*Bibliotheca Historica* V.15.3). Livy, writing around the same period of Augustan leadership, described an expedition against the mountain tribe of a "gente ne nunc quidem omni parte pacata" ("a people who are now not even pacified in every part" *Ab urbe condita* XL.34.12). Tacitus, too, commented in his *Annals* on the need to quell violent brigandage deriving from the hinterlands even under Tiberius' rule (ii.85):

[13] See Contu: "The first Latin document we know in which there is the expression 'civitates barbariae' (hence the place-name Barbagia in Central Sardinia) is a dedicatory epigraph of the 1st c. AD found at Fordongianus Forum Traiani, considered a sort of document of forced pacification of this area and a sort of armistice between the Emperor Tiberius and the central Sardinian population."

> Actum et de sacris Aegyptiis Iudaicisque pellendis factumque patrum consultum ut quattuor milia libertini generis ea superstitione infecta quis idonea aetas in insulam Sardiniam veherentur, coercendis illic latrociniis et, si ob gravitatem caeli interissent, vile damnum.
>
> There was a debate too about expelling the Egyptian and Jewish worship, and a resolution of the Senate was passed that four thousand of the freedmen infected with those superstitions who were of military age should be brought to the island of Sardinia to quell the brigandage of the place, a cheap loss should they die from the pestilent climate.

Evidence of violent resistance and the preservation of pagan traditions in Barbagia continued well into the High Empire and Late Antiquity. Pausanias, the Greek geographer writing in the 2nd c. AD, offered in one of his typical digressions some comments on the mythical history of Sardinia in his *Description of Greece*. He posited that a group of Trojans who escaped with Aeneas after the war were carried by the winds to Sardinia and that they "made their escape to the high parts of the island and occupied mountains difficult to climb, being precipitous and protected by those with pointed stakes" (*Description of Greece* 10.17.7). Pausanias also noted the period of Carthaginian control on the island, stating that "at the height of their sea power" they had overcome the majority of coastal populations "except the Ilians and Corsicans, who were kept from slavery by the strength of the mountains" (10.17.9). And in a letter from Pope Gregory I in the 6th c. AD to the autonomous duchy of Barbagia, he advocated for Christianization by way of missionary work and relayed his frustrations toward the mountainous people who refused to give up ancient Nuragic practices and "still adored stones and stalks," living like "senseless animals" in the absence of Christian salvation (*Epistle XXIII*).

The mountainous stretch of Barbagia was a natural boundary which made it undeniably difficult, if not impossible, for Punic, Roman and other external forces to

penetrate and homogenize the area.[14] Commentary from ancient authors demonstrates the existence of centuries-long resistance efforts throughout antiquity which have aided in preserving the region's proprietary pagan and tribal traditions. Today's scholarship and cultural conservation efforts greatly benefit from this preservation, as it facilitates comprehensive studies of the region such as this that seek to make connections between antiquity and the present. In the following sections, I will explore some of the other nuances of Sardinia's historical development that run contrary to the dominant discourses of Roman primacy and Sardinian underdevelopment.

Early Sardinia and the Bronze Age Nuragic Civilization

Since propaganda about the primacy of solely the Romans and even of their Etruscan-Umbrian-Oscan heritage has pervaded public conceptions of the early phases of Mediterranean development, establishing the longevity of structured society on Sardinia offers a level of context which is covered mostly by a few specialized scholars and often published only in Italian. The oldest identified human remains on Sardinia are dated around 20,000 years ago at Oliena in the Nuoro province, and the island has been populated sporadically since that time (Melis 1332). Throughout the Neolithic period – most commonly identified as the 'pre-Nuragic' period – there is evidence of obsidian trade sourced from Monte Arci (Figure 2.4) and distributed through northern channels via

[14] This is not to say that the tribal populations of Barbagia did not also engage in violence against fellow Sardinians of the plains and coastal regions. George Perrot describes the time of Augustus as one in which "the mountaineers would descend to the plain to destroy the harvest and carry off the cattle; and the Roman praetors, conscious of being inadequately supported, affected sometimes ignorance for acts of rapine which they were powerless to punish, rather than engage in a pursuit as inglorious and arduous as it was doubtful" (5).

Corsica and southern channels via northern Africa for some five millennia (Balmuth 671-673). And by the end of the Neolithic, the pre-Nuragic inhabitants on the island had also constructed some 2,500 *domus de janas* (*case delle fate* in Italian, or *house of the fairies* – See Figures 2.5 and 2.6). These prehistoric cave structures are named so for their shallow interiors, thought to have hosted "elaborate death rituals" and feature walls with "carvings and paintings depicting structures, cattle-head motifs, and geometric designs" (Robin 429).

Figure 2.4

Figure 2.5 (exterior)

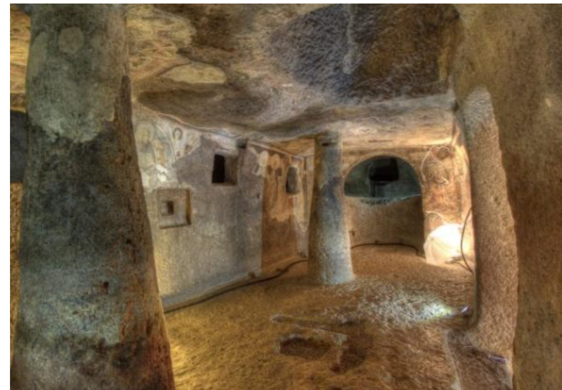

Figure 2.6 (interior)

In terms of structured society, though, seminal Sardinian archaeologist and scholar Giovanni Lilliu points to the Early Bronze Age around 3000 BC for evidence of what he calls the first cohesive *nazione sarda* (Sardinian nation) (*Costante* 338). It is in this period that we see the development of the Ozieri culture which was then followed by the tribes of the Nuragic people (the Ilienses, Balari, and Corsi) who inaugurated the period of organized labor, technical and artistic advancements (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8 for bronze votive ships and Nuragic military figure statuettes, respectively) and a common language

that all extended "beyond the internal political division of the tribes."[15] Overall, there was an overarching "collective consciousness" and a shared notion of being an "island-nation" which motivated further development through unified efforts (Lilliu, *Costante* 340-342). One of the strongest pieces of evidence for a shared cultural identity on the island since the Bronze Age is the presence of some 7,000 *nuraghi* (sing. *nuraghe,* Figure 2.9) scattered across the island.[16] These megalithic structures have been the primary focus of Sardinian archaeology and, "in terms of evidence, size, density and number, they surpass the surviving pre-classical or extra-classical buildings of any other region of the western and central Mediterranean, including Magna Graecia" (Pallottino 88).

Figure 2.7

Figure 2.8

Called *castra* (military encampments) by Livy and *daidaleia* by the ancient Greek historians for their similarity to the "golden hives constructed by Daedalus for the goddess Melissa," the average *nuraghe* features a conical tower with a Greek-style *tholos* vault,

[15] The Ilienses tribe in particular has been a group of much speculation, identified in the earlier passage by Pausanias as the descendants of the inhabitants of Ilium (Troy) who fled with Aenaeas after the Trojan War.

[16] The etymology of *nuraghe* (*nuraxi* in Sardinian) is unclear because its origin is of the Pre-Latin Paleo-Sardinian spoken on the island that is only preserved in some interior toponyms. It may have some connection to the Sardinian *nurra*, which means "pile of stones." The proper adjective "Nuragic" is derived from these archaeological finds.

Figure 2.9

sometimes with a spiral staircase leading upward to several separate chambers (*Ab urbe condita* XLI.12; Lilliu *Civiltà nuragica* 9-10). The extent of their purpose and usage is still unclear – mostly due to a lack of interest outside the island in the modern realms of archaeology and anthropology – though they most certainly served in some capacity as military strongholds or points of defense given their typical location on hilltops with other *nuraghi* in view. In the context of primacy and early establishment in the Mediterranean, the distribution of *nuraghi* "over the entire island, especially in the west central region, and their staggering number, give patent and concrete testimony of both a large though scattered population and of the organization of human effort throughout the historical development of the island" (Lilliu, "Nuraghi" 33).

Cohesion, structured development, and solidarity amongst the Nuragic communities is precisely what accounts for the survival of many intangible aspects of Sardinian cultural heritage: the pagan Carnevale procession of *issohadores* and *mamuthones*[17] (Figures 2.10 and 2.11) thought to have Nuragic roots; the *cantu a tenòre*

[17] The origins of these names are a matter of conjecture, generally thought to be a preservation of Paleo-Sardinian with *mamuthones* perhaps connected to the Sardinian "melaneimones" ("black faces").

style of polyphonic folk singing still practiced today which dates back to the Nuragic era (Antonaci et al. 3964); or *sa strumpa/s'istrumpa*,[18] a form of ancient folkstyle wrestling preserved in an Iron Age bronze statuette and still practiced in organized form today

Figure 2.10 (issohadores)

Figure 2.11 (mamuthones)

Figure 2.12

Figure 2.13

(Figures 2.12 and 2.13). Gary S. Webster cites the "the tenacious persistence" of the Nuragic tribes "throughout the periods of Punic and Roman administration, especially within the interior regions" as having allowed for the very transmission of these "original Nuragic sociopolitical divisions" (13). This is not to mention the Sardinian genetic model which has been of continued interest to geneticists for a variety of reasons, from their

[18] *Sa strumpa/S'istrumpa* come from the Sardinian verb *istrumpare*, meaning "to throw abruptly to the ground."

remarkable proclivity for extreme longevity to their genetic affinity and possible shared ancestry with the Basque people (Marcus et al. 1). Furthermore, the work of geneticists has also demonstrated that "the Nuragic period is not marked by shifts in ancestry, arguing against hypotheses that the design of the [*nuraghi*] was brought with an influx of people from eastern sources such as the Mycenaeans" (9).

Though there does not appear to have been any mass migration from the Aegean which fortified the population of Sardinia, there is ample evidence of established trade and contact with other peoples of the Mediterranean during the Nuragic period. "Fine wares, coarse stirrup jars, pithoi" and other pottery which have been verified by physico-chemical and archaeological analyses as having been "imported from the Greek mainland, Crete, and Cyprus" during this period (Ferrarese Ceruti et al. 35). In fact, Maria Luisa Ferrarese Ceruti, Lucia Vagnetti, and Fulvia Lo Schiavo describe Nuragic Sardinia and its unique role in the Mediterranean as follows (37):

> The variety of imports found at Antigori (Figure 2.14) make us think that this Nuragic complex or another coastal site in the vicinity might be considered an 'international emporium,' reflecting the characteristics of similar sites in the Near East, Cyprus and the Aegean, with very few parallels in Italy.

Figure 2.14

If we are to take anything from the archaeological and anthropological evidence available, it is that Sardinia's development during the late Neolithic and throughout the Bronze Age constitutes a formally structured society with confirmed ties to other established regions of the Mediterranean Basin. Importantly, this subverts some of the traditional thought-currents involving cultural primacy in the regions that make up today's Italian nation, as well as

those surrounding the notion of a persistent lack of development or sophistication on Sardinia. In the next section, I will examine the influential period of cultural syncretism with the Phoenicians, which ushered in a new wave of city-building and social development.

Sardinia and Phoenician Syncretism

The Phoenicians were the first established civilization for which we have evidence of colonization and settlement on Sardinia. In addition, the cultural syncretism helped structure Sardinian communities in a way that would aid them in future resistance efforts. The early period of Phoenician contact with Sardinia was one of pre-colonization, however, characterized by scholars as a phase in which the Phoenicians sought to extend trade routes to the western Mediterranean, bringing "silver to the Levant from southwest Sardinia some 200 years before the de facto settled there" (Eshel et al. 6007). Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Phoenician contact with Sardinia, particularly during their period of coastal settling, is that it appears to have been more mutually beneficial than the subsequently resisted 'occupations' of other groups like the Carthaginians and Romans.

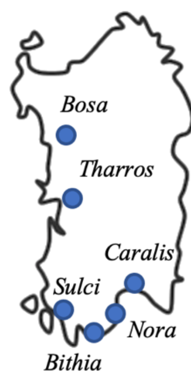

Figure 2.15

The Phoenicians arrived in Sardinia sometime in the late 9th c. BC when the Nuragic civilization was flourishing. Over the span of the next two centuries, they established several coastal settlements (Figure 2.15), including Caralis on the southern coast, which today is the island's capital city of Cagliari. The period of Phoenician presence on the

island is particularly relevant to this project on resistance because Phoenician influence on the Nuragic communities also saw the development of social differentiation and hierarchically organized society. As Gary S. Webster notes, "there is little doubt that the presence of foreign traders on the island had profound secondary effects" on Nuragic development that were surely "as much social and ideological as techno-economic" (192). Some of the primary evidence for this assertion lies in the archaeological investigations of the *tumbas de sos zigantes* (or "giant's tombs") at Mont'e Prama, a *comune* near Tharros on the island's western coast. Hundreds of limestone fragments were discovered during excavations spanning from 1975-1979, including 15 heads and several torsos. Fully upright, some of the completed figures stood up to 2.5 meters in height (see Figure 2.16 for a *zigante* housed at the Museo Archaeologico Nazionale di Cagliari).

Figure 2.16

The notion that social change is indicated by the investigation of these tombs in particular, whose construction is thought to have lasted through the 8th c. BC, is connected to the emergence of single occupant graves at the site. Collective burials were typical of the Early and Mid-Nuragic funerary practices, even at other sites called "giants' tombs" by locals found across the island. At these sites, specifically the "megalithic corridor graves" concentrated in central Sardinia, "were undoubtedly collective graves capable of containing several dozen, and

in some cases several hundred, corpses" (Melis, *Nuragic* 29-31). At Mont'e Prama, however, dozens of pit graves covered with a sandstone slab were discovered in the excavations. Each housed a single deceased individual – usually a young male – "huddled in a seated position, without any grave goods" (Usai).

This signaled the emergence of an increasingly stratified Nuragic society, supported by the "increased number of grave goods, often prestigious items or other elements indicating the status of the deceased (such as weapons)" discovered over time at other burial sites across the island (Depalmas 156). We see parallels in the Aegean tradition at Mycenae around the same time, where the "evolution of grave form and the richness of the burials [represent] a crucial phase in the process of social stratification in the [late] Aegean Bronze Age" (Graziadio 403). However, it should be maintained that even well past the Iron Age Greek contact with Sardinia is ostensibly negligible; According to John Papadopoulos, "Take away the Aegean pottery [in Sardinia] and there is very little Greek residue left" (367). He further cites David Ridgway's assessment: "Not all the 'First Western Greeks' were Greek, in fact; and much light remains to be shed on them by their neighbours in Sardinia – the one area of modern Italy that was never permeated directly or indirectly by Hellenism" (72). On the other hand, we do have significant archaeological evidence of Phoenician intervention on the island. Andrew Roppa talks more about the clear crossover between Phoenician and Nuragic cultures gleaned from the excavations at Mont'e Prama (524):

> While the iconography of the Mont'e Prama statues is firmly rooted in the local Nuragic cultural tradition (Lilliu 2002: 249–54), features such as their size (traditional in Levantine and Aegean statuary) and context are clear evidence of interaction with the Phoenicians that at that time had already

> landed on the near shores of the Gulf of Oristano and begun, at least temporarily, to settle in the area. The context at Mont'e Prama exemplifies the complicated social milieu within Iron Age Nuragic communities and their need to reestablish their communal identity through renovated forms of elite self-representation, which were triggered by increased interaction with Levantine newcomers (Tronchetti and van Dommelen 2005).

This increased interaction between Nuragic Sardinians and their surrounding populations is precisely what triggered the development of communities which were structured in such a way to enable them to advance technologically (in terms of trade and coastal hubs) while still maintaining the indigenous cultural traditions in its hinterlands tucked behind the Gennargentu mountain range.

When conceiving of a Sardinian 'identity' even as early as the Bronze Age, it is well worth considering that Sardinia was situated at the center of what scholars have called the *Mare Sardum* long before any figuring of Rome's *Mare Nostrum* – much less of Rome itself (Mastino et al.). Functioning doubly as an "island-crossroad" and an "island-deposit," Sardinia occupied a conspicuous space in the Mediterranean as a major player in international trade. Over prolonged contact with the Phoenicians came the emergence of a social hierarchy, evidence of an early writing system, and an "urban physiognomy (we have no evidence of indigenous 'cities')" – all of which benefitted and helped organize and secure the island's population, in some ways facilitating the subsequent bouts of successful resistance against Carthaginian and Roman occupations (Mastino, "Ancient" 46).

Carthage and the Birth of Violent Resistance

There isn't substantial evidence of violent resistance against Phoenician presence on Sardinia. This is largely because while Phoenician expansion was driven by the desire

to colonize the coastal regions in order to dominate maritime trade networks, they were not necessarily motivated by imperialist aspirations of conquering the Nuragic people. In fact, as the previous section noted, Nuragic and Phoenician cultural syncretism helped strengthen their communities through the introduction of organized cities and the beginnings of a formal writing system. This differs greatly from the violent militaristic domination and enslavement sought by Carthage, a Punic colony founded in 814 BC.

By the time that Sardinia was firmly entrenched in the Mediterranean trade network, the Phoenicians had "gradually populated the coasts of North Africa with larger and smaller settlements and industrial-commercial areas" like Carthage. Yet, while Carthage was indeed a Phoenician foundation, "there is a general impression that Carthage functioned much like an island, pulling from networks that connected [itself] and other Mediterranean regions, especially within the Phoenician settlements in Iberia, Sardinia, and Sicily" (López-Ruiz 117). As the Punic colony expanded through the 6th c. BC, they too sought to conquer trade routes in the region:[19]

> The role and function that Sardinia played in the control of the ancient Mediterranean routes due to its central location, especially for trade involving Carthage and the central-Italic and Etruscan area, is demonstrated by the imperialist ambitions which the Punic north-African city wanted to carry out in Sardinia – beyond, as elsewhere, the simple foundation of coastal colonies.

It is through Justin's *Epitome* from around the 2nd c. AD that we receive an account of the Carthaginian general Malchus being sent to Sardinia in the late 6th c. BC, sparking the earliest documented bouts of violent resistance. According to his account, Malchus had

[19] Wall text for *La Sardegna e i commerci.* Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari, Sardinia.

been fighting successfully for some time in Sicily before redirecting efforts to Sardinia, where they "were conquered in battle" and "lost the greater part of their army" to violent resistance and guerilla warfare from Nuragic forces in the highlands, forcing him to retreat ("translato in Sardiniam bello, amitta majore exercitus parte, gravi praelio victi sunt," XVIII.7.1). Ensuing campaigns by generals Hamilcar and Hasdrubal, however, proved successful and resulted in control of the island's southwest territory by 510 BC, as well as the port of Olbia on the northern coast (Figure 2.17). Over time, Carthage's tendency toward religious syncretism was also incorporated through temple projects at the coasts; See Figure 2.18 for bottle-shaped idols excavated at the temple of Egyptian goddess Bes in Bithia (established between the 3rd and 1st c. BC).

Figure 2.17

Facing further imperialist violence by the Carthaginian army's renewed strength, the Sardinians withdrew to the mountains, taking refuge in the various *nuraghi* and cave systems. Preserved for some extended time thanks to their retreat to apparent safety was their language, the "so-called Proto-Sardinian of Mediterranean origin known to us only through a few hydronyms and place names," as well as some personal names which "retained their popularity even into the imperial age – further evidence of the Sards' attachment to traditions that were still

Figure 2.18

alive" (Mastino, "Ancient" 47-48). Considering the phases of violent resistance and then of self-preservation (i.e., their retreat) Sardinian resistance should be understood as "the historical constant of the island," where "old forms, old usages, and much of the heritage of indigenous tradition was simply submerged and ossified" (Lilliu, *Costante* 81; Lilliu, "Sopravvivenze").

Since Sardinia's coastal regions, particularly in the South, had for some time been part of the Phoenician commercial trade networks, Punic colonization shifted from their immediate presence in the coastal colonies into the interior part of the island. During the process of 'Sardinian-Punic integration' that took place mostly over the 5th and 4th centuries BC, Carthaginians engaged in an "instrumental feature of this process…the so-called 'capillary colonization,' which is shorthand for the establishment of numerous rural settlement sites and cemeteries in the hinterland of the older Phoenician coastal settlements" (Van Dommelen, *Colonial grounds* 125). And so, even by the 3rd century BC Sardinia had deeply rooted relations with North Africa and no significant ties to the Italian peninsula.

Sardinia and Rome: Romanization or Roman Colonialism?

It is important to remember that Rome's (theoretical) founding was in 754 BC, well into Sardinia's presence in commercial trade and the birth of the aforementioned 'cohesive Sardinian identity.' In 509 BC, the year following Carthage's success over guerilla warfare in Sardinia which secured control over a large portion of the island, Rome was just seeing the end of Regal period with the citizens' revolt following the rape of Lucretia by Sextus

Tarquinius, son of the tyrannical king. This, of course, is according to the Roman tradition and Livy, who described the events some 500 years later. Tim Cornell, who cites the extent archaeological record and examines methodological debates on Rome's beginnings, notes that there are still some reliable indicators that the monarchy had dissolved or become purely ceremonial by 500 BC. In particular, he references the burning of the Regia and the sanctuary at Sant'Omobono at this time (with the subsequent abandonment of the latter) as "symbolic and anti-monarchical gestures" (Cornell 237-238). That said, emerging afterward was the Roman Republic, *res publica*, suggested by Cornell to have started with the "proto-republican" personal rulers who perhaps held the true political and military power (rather than ceremonial kingships) "through life magistracies by virtue of popular vote" (238). The next few centuries solidified Rome's project of expansion through political strategies enabled by the further development of magistracies and assemblies of people for collective power.

The 5th century BC was a time of relative stagnation for Rome in terms of growth, though we know Roman expansion within the peninsula to have increased exponentially during the 4th century, starting with the capture of Veii in 396 BC (345). Further accelerating this process was Rome's victory in the wars with the Samnites (particularly from 343-338 BC), a society in the southern central Apennines perhaps not as pastoral of a society as described by ancient authors though still lacking urban centers and complex trade. By the 3rd c. BC, the Romans were a powerful yet solely peninsular player in the Mediterranean sphere, in addition to the slowly declining Greek populations who occupied the Magna Graecia region of southern Italy and parts of Sicily. Carthage, however, was

still "undisputedly the greatest power in the western Mediterranean" at the beginning of the third century and the "clear master of all of the southern and western parts of Sicily" (Goldsworthy 25-26). And in 300 BC, "the land controlled by Carthage was significantly greater than the *ager Romanus*, the lands owned by the Roman people" (29).

In the contest for power between the Carthaginians and Romans known as the Punic Wars, which lasted from 265 – 146 BC, Rome would finally attain control of Sardinia. The First Punic War saw the extensive growth of Rome as a naval power, concluding with a treaty declaring Carthaginians' exit from Sicily, then becoming the Republic's first province in 241 BC. The impetus for Rome's annexation of Sardinia just a few years later was the Mercenary War, however, triggered by the mutiny of thousands of mercenary soldiers employed in Sicily during the First Punic War who had not received payment for their service. Soon after the revolts in Sicily, the extensive mercenary troops deployed in Sardinia also began to mutiny, slaughtering local Carthaginian inhabitants with little threat of resistance.

Carthage sent a new expedition to Sardinia under the general Hanno in order to quell the uprisings, though his troops quickly deserted and joined forces with those revolting. The combined troops crucified Hanno and killed "every Carthaginian on the island," according to Polybius (1.67-68, 1.79). They held "forcible possession of the island" until they too battled with the native Sardinians in *Barbaria* who drove them off

the island to the Italian peninsula. Rome saw this as an opportune moment of Carthaginian weakness, and annexed Sardinia along with Corsica into the Republic in 238 BC.[20]

With the newly acquired *Provincia Sardiniae et Corsicae*, Rome worked inward toward Sardinia's hinterlands in an effort to gain more complete control over the island than was enjoyed by the Carthaginians or their Phoenician predecessors. A constant, however, was the violent resistance they faced by the Nuragic communities still living in the pockets of the Gennargentu massif. In addition, the Romans had reason to show precaution in challenging the native Sardinians. They already had a level of familiarity with 'barbarous' mountain peoples in the central Italian highlands from their engagement with the Samnites, who did not centralize to govern but certainly did to fight. Although the Romans would eventually overcome the Samnites at the conclusion of the third war in 290 BC, their serious defeat at the Battle of the Caudine Forks in 321 BC was virtually a massacre and at the time would have been a poignant reminder of the violent potential of highland populations.

Worth further mention here are the Samnites, who much like the Sardinians have been mistakenly labeled as 'backward' or 'unsophisticated.' Livy described them as *montani atque agrestes* (savage mountain-men, IX.13.7). Nic Fields has discussed that even today there still exists a modern distortion caused by "our adoption of the Graeco-Roman equation of civilization with urban living" that tends to denigrate tribal populations whose "socio-economic order and institutions were clearly suited to the geography of the

[20] Roman tactics here proved to be the impetus for the Second Punic War, though its impact lies outside the scope of this section.

region." And interestingly enough, in "studies of local society [in the central Appenines] written in the 1950s and 1960s, reconstructions of the ancient aspect tended to mirror contemporary poverty and marginality" (Dench, *From Barbarians* 8). In fact, the Roman-Samnite conflict bears a striking resemblance to the Sardinian situation when "viewed as one opposing lowland urbanized agriculturalists to upland raiding pastoralists" (Fields 18). Rome's acquisition and initial attempts at dominating Sardinia's hinterlands also predated Hannibal's crossing of the Alps in 218 BC, meaning that they still potentially viewed mountainous regions as a sort of secure natural barrier.

Unsurprisingly, the Romans in Sardinia indeed encountered the same violent resistance faced by Malchus, the Punic general whose initial defeat there sparked renewed Carthaginian military strength and their extensive placement of mercenary soldiers on the island. This resistance, a "historical constant" in Sardinia according to Giovanni Lilliu, proved to be the determining factor for the survival of ancient customs and tradition. Arising as a consequence of this perennial resistance is a duality in the interpretation of Sardinia as 'part' of Rome. Can we describe the situation as true Romanization, or simply as a Roman occupation of a successfully resisting and relatively isolated region? Romanization certainly succeeded to an extent on the island, though central Sardinia did not adopt Latin or Roman customs for an extensive period of time and various ancient authors (Diodorus Siculus, Livy, and Tacitus) testified to the violent counterefforts from the hinterlands which lasted at least through Tiberius' rule.

Peter van Dommelen – who argues for "Roman colonialism" in Sardinia rather than "Romanization" – acknowledges that despite the typical Roman interventions of taxes

being imposed and land redistributed, the emergence of local identities through new cultures drawing from Punic and Nuragic backgrounds indicate that perhaps Roman influence on the ground was less effective than expected. He thinks the term 'Romanization' should be "abandoned altogether…because of the inherent overtones of assimilation and the implicit colonialist perspective" (Van Dommelen, "Cultural imaginings" 80). Concurrent with Rome's annexation of Sardinia was the inauguration of the term *Mare Nostrum* after establishing themselves as a maritime power after the Punic Wars. In this period the term referred solely to the Tyrrhenian Sea, though it would later be used to describe the entire Mediterranean Sea in 30 BC after Octavian's annexation of Egypt (Tellegen-Couperus 32). Consequently, this new *Mare Nostrum* belonging to the Romans quickly began to erase any prior notion of a *Mare Sardum* identity and cultivated a 'new' Sardinia imagined as neatly subsumed under the notion of *romanità* which has plagued Italy's historical self-figuring. As Roman culture began to pervade the coastlines of the island, we see modes of a Sardo-Roman syncretism evidenced in material culture; See, for example, a bronze figurine of Hercules bearing his lion skin on a distinctly Sardinian figure in Figure 2.19 (found at Posada on the northeastern coast and dated to the early 4th c. BC).

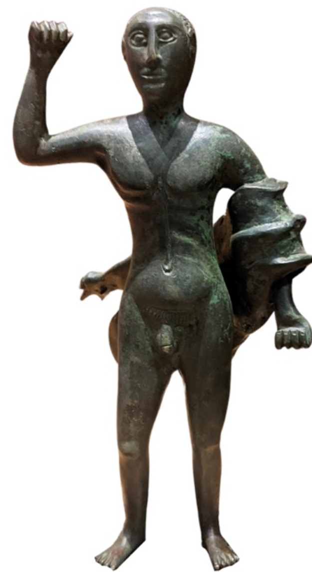

Figure 2.19

Because records of antiquity primarily attest to perennial bouts of violence against the Carthaginians and Romans, it is easy to forget the other forms of resistance like tax evasion or other skirting of laws must have been common during the period of Roman dominion. For any semblance of a native Sardinian population residing largely in the mountainous inland portion of the island – we may call this a "marginal refuge population" – the "most common form of resistance in the ancient world was always less a politics of rebellion than a politics of exodus, of melting away with one's flock and families – often before both were taken away" (Graeber 183). Yet, it is fair to say that violence is the more memorable and well-documented mode of resistance which remains embedded in Sardinian identity. Antonio Sorge describes this as just part of Sardinia's "legacies of violence," noting that (29-30)

> most of the great transformations subsumed under the name of Romanization occurred during the Imperial period, with the reorganization of major cities, the creation of an island-wide infrastructure, and expansion of *latifundia* into the agricultural lowlands (Meloni 1990: 97-138). [But] the Roman arrival did not augur well for the restive mountain districts. In an attempt to pacify the highlands, the consul Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus led a protracted campaign beginning in 181 BCE and lasting until 174 BCE, with disastrous consequences for the vanquished.

In celebration of the slaughter of the native Sardinians, Livy reports that Gracchus dedicated a plaque to the god Jupiter in the temple of the Mater Matuta reading as follows (XLI.28.6):

> Ti. Semproni Gracchi consulis imperio auspicioque legio exercitusque populi Romani Sardiniam subegit. in ea provincia hostium caesa aut capta supra octoginta milia. re publica felicissume gesta atque liberatis sociis, vectigalibus restitutis, exercitum salvom atque incolumem plenissimum praeda domum reportavit; iterum triumphans in urbem Romam redit. cuius rei ergo hanc tabulam donum Iovi dedit.

> Under the command and auspices of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus the legion and army of the Roman people conquered Sardinia. In this province more than eighty thousand of the enemy were slain or captured. The state having been most successfully administered and the allies set free, the revenues restored, he brought back home the army safe and secure and very enriched with booty; for the second time he entered the city of Rome in triumph. In commemoration of this event he set up this tablet to Jupiter.

On top of the violence and the label of 'enemy' assigned to Sardinians, Roman rhetoric also cultivated a further image of them as being innately flawed and in permanent opposition to Rome's civilizing project. For Cicero, "they were liars and traitors, almost none kept their word, and they hated the alliance with the Romans – even though there were no longer any cities in mid-first-century BC Sardinia with the status of 'free' or 'friendly to the Roman people,' but only *civitates stipendiariae*" (Mastino, "Ancient" 56).

Though small-scale violent encounters with Sardinians happened periodically even through the fall of the empire, the island was still largely pacified and served a variety of functions to the Roman world. Firstly, the Romans were aware of their opportunity to exploit the region's mining and agricultural resources. With the establishment of various *latifundia* to support grain production and "intensely cultivated hinterlands worked by agricultural labourers, often in conditions of slavery," Sardinia's grain surplus may have provided for over 60% of Augustan recipients (Mastino, "Ancient" 52; Rowland,

Figure 2.20

"Production" 18).[21] Slave laborers were also employed in the mines, and according to the *Codex Theodosianus* Sardinia "produced most of the Roman lead" by the fourth century (Boulakia 140).[22]

In addition to Sardinia's benefit to Rome as an extractive economy used to support its growing population and infrastructure, leading political factions also quickly identified its potential to serve doubly as a space for punishments of exile. It was initially a frequent designation of exile *ad insulam,* a punishment popularized by Augustus (Cohen 206-217). According to Tacitus, this was a particularly harsh sentence when served in Sardinia (2.85). By the time of the later Roman Empire when religious persecution was a pronounced consequence of the "complex relations between the church and the empire," the punishment of *damnatio ad metalla* (or *damned to the mine/quarry*) in Sardinia was commonly assigned and was attested to by Hippolytus in his *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (IX.7). Exile in the mines of Sardinia was considered uniquely severe, usually a lifetime sentence of "reduction to slavery [and] hard labor" which often proved fatal for the prisoner (Gustafson 422).

A variety of testimony from ancient sources and archaeological findings has been covered in this section, all of which speak to the ways in which Sardinia was 'discovered,' subjugated, and exploited throughout the course of Rome's expansionist project. The enmity between Rome and Carthage fueled an enduring image of Sardinians as 'backward' and 'barbaric,' having 'bred' and coexisted under the dominion of the Punic colony and

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[21] See the fragmentary portrait of Augustus from Karales (Cagliari) in Figure 2.20, dated to after 20 BC and part of the extensive Roman statuary found in the city.

[22] See *Codex Theodosianus,* X.19.9

thus assumedly inheriting their negative traits. Yet, our evidence in this regard is also a testament to the birth of violent resistance on the island, first in opposition to the Carthaginians and then the Romans. Since the Romans' sustained presence on the island lasted for centuries longer than Carthage, the preservation of Nuragic and otherwise 'native' Sardinian customs in the island's hinterlands is especially noteworthy and is well worth documenting in a project on Sardinian resistance efforts.

Weaponized Antiquity

The final substantive section of this chapter is a critical matter of discussion for any investigation into Italy's sociopolitical history, especially for projects like this that deal with issues of regional identity and resistance. It involves the notion of what I term "weaponized antiquity," which describes the ways in which the legacy of Rome and its eventual empire have played a pivotal role in the historiography of Italy and its accompanying nationalizing efforts. Weaponized antiquity can be identified in many nuanced forms, perhaps most visibly in the explicit nationalist propaganda of the 20th and 21st centuries. But it is also readily apparent in disciplines like history and anthropology whose foundational works were built on pervasive discourses in Italy that lend a false impression of a utopian Rome with little diversity, internal harmony, and pre-destined achievements of 'founding' the Western world.

A prominent feature of this discourse was introduced by Italian intellectuals and politicians at the turn of the 19th century through what Antonino De Francesco calls the "myth of a perpetual presence in the country" which "substantiat[ed] a cultural primacy"

(vi). He refers to the continuation of this myth as the "constantly reasserted antiquity of the Italian nation," noting its many uses and diffusion through the disciplines of history, archaeology, palaeoethnology, and anthropology (vi). A major influence in this regard was Vincenzo Cuoco's 1806 novel, *Platone in Italia* (*Plato in Italy*), which imagined the height of the civilizing Etruscans in pre-Roman southern Italy in order to invoke a spiritual rebirth for Italy that could unite it specifically without foreign influence.[23] Notably absent in the development of these thought-currents was any mention of Sardinia, though, whose Nuragic civilization we know to have been engaged in cross-cultural contact and trade with the Etruscans long before Rome's legendary founding (D'Oriano and Sanciu 2013; Tronchetti 2016; Amicone et al. 2020).

As mentioned earlier, what developed from this discourse is the most visible weaponization of antiquity under Mussolini's Fascism, though I will show how these are simply the strongest reverberations of an undercurrent that was already present for some time. Antiquity is an easy tool for fascist movements, an opportunity to market and justify ideas like "back-to-nature nostalgic ruralism," land reclamation, and 'ancient' virtues (Roche 5). Additionally, the "Rome" and "Romans" of these imagined standards are just that, imagined. Or rather, they reflect what is commonly referred to as *romanità* (or, Roman-ness). Iterations of this concept pre-date Fascism and include the invocation of Ancient Rome as "a model for national strength built on the sacrifice of the individual" and "a beacon or importer of civilization to other lands" (Aicher 118). In this way, the Roman Republic is conceived of as the predecessor to an inevitable empire, a whitewashed utopia

[23] At the time, Italy was desperately measuring itself against France's cultural development.

free from internal corruption and innately superior to its conquered and neighboring communities like Sardinia.

Compounding this is what Anthony Grafton identifies as a turn in scholarship during the 18th century, one that made great efforts *not* to recognize that "ancient Rome was an ethnically varied city and that people of African and Jewish and Arabian descent became Romans" (qtd. in Yaffe, "Color"). This is especially interesting when considered in light of how the Romans themselves characterized their founding populations, which offers a clear picture of how modern treatments of Rome are influenced by contemporary ideologies and problematics. Sallust, for example, describes in his *Bellum Catilinae* that Rome was co-founded by the Trojans and Aborigines, two groups of different races, languages, and customs who merged together within the same walls (6.2).[24] Emma Dench offers an extensive treatment of Roman identity (according to the Romans) in her 2005 book, *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*. She centers the European and American view of Rome's decline as attributed to race-mixture which faces a massive stumbling block when confronted with the reality of its heterogeneity – in particular, the "Roman practice not only of enfranchising foreigners, including the 'natives' themselves, but also of manumitting slaves and admitting them to the citizen-body" which even Tacitus cites as the emperor Claudius' reasoning for Rome's imperial success (Dench 5, 98; *Annals,* ii.24).

[24] Urbem Romam, sicuti ego accepi, condidere atque habuere initio Troiani, qui Aenea duce profugi sedibus incertis vagabantur, cumque his Aborigines, genus hominum agreste, sine legibus, sine imperio, liberum atque solutum. Hi postquam in una moenia convenere, dispari genere, dissimili lingua, alius alo more viventes, incredibile memoratu est quam facile coaluerint.

That said, the prevailing principles of *romanità* tie into the retroactive figuring of Rome as a whitewashed utopia, a common thread not unique to Mussolini but a critical aspect of his philosophy that conceived of Rome's fall due to race-mixture as only temporary and that a "Third Rome" was on the horizon – the First Rome being that of the empire and the Second Rome thriving at the height of Medieval Christianity. There were several connections made between Mussolini and the Roman elite, too, with initial self-comparisons to Caesar and a feigned lineage tracing back to Romulus before he settled on likening himself to Augustus. This self-figuring as a modern reincarnation of Augustus is perhaps most embodied in his commissioning of the *codice del Foro Mussolini*, a Latin document buried next to the forum's obelisk that mimicked the *Res Gestae*.[25] Not surprisingly, Mussolini's plan for Sardinia under Fascism was little more than a modernized extractive economy centered on coal (hence, the city of Carbonia he established in the late 1930s) which can be likened to Rome's exploitation of grain production there.[26]

Fascist propaganda films of the time that were centered on Sardinia also indicated the regime's intention to "obliterate the cultural differences between Italian regions" in an effort to cultivate the image of a culturally unified Italy that played off of the falsified 'unitary' image of the Roman Empire (Carta, "Documentary" 228). Enrico Guazzoni's 1942 propaganda film on Sardinia, *Oro nero* (*Black Gold*), for example, was divided into two distinct parts. The first was meant to offer a 'before' image of the island through the

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[25] Not the Egyptian obelisk of antiquity, but rather the one erected in 1932 by Mussolini in celebration of the 10th anniversary of his march on Rome.
[26] More to come later in this chapter on the exploitation of grain production in Sardinia.

feigned reconstruction of archaic Sardinia that was completely inaccurate, with stereotypical Sardinian scenes including a “requisite” flock of sheep, but with shepherds speaking in Roman dialect and performing a contrived local dance (Urban 424-425). The second part, the ‘after’ image, “features a close-up of Carbonia, the mining town founded by Mussolini” that helped the island “find its way to modernization and well-being thanks to Fascism” (424-425). There were myriad instances of quasi-subliminal messaging facilitated by the various arms of the Fascist government like the Istituto Luce (or L’Unione Cinematografica Educativa, The Educational Film Union) which was responsible for propaganda film production. All were intended to cultivate the image of both ancient and modern ‘Rome’ as a savior of perennial greatness in public consciousness, yet there were many other governmental messages that were far more explicit in this regard.

For example, Mussolini declared that “la caratteristica del popolo italiano è che tutto è eterno e tutto è attuale. Per noi Cesare è stato pugnalato appena ieri” (“for the Italian people, all is eternal and contemporary. For us it is as if Caesar was stabbed just yesterday”) (*Opera Vol. 31* 49). He planted the seeds of his racial policies in other speeches, too, stating, “Il problema razziale è per me una conquista importantissima…I romani antichi erano razzisti fino all’inverosimile. La grande lotta della Repubblica Romana fu appunto questa: sapere se la razza romana poteva aggregarsi ad altre razze” (“The racial problem for me is a very important challenge…The Romans of antiquity were incredible racists. The great struggle of the Roman Republic was to know if the Roman race was able to live alongside other races”) (*Opera Vol. 29* 190). Addressing Rome’s fall, Mussolini posited that it was due to “la corruzione delle stirpi dominatrici al contatto troppo frequente e

prolungato coi popoli inferiori" ("the corruption of dominant races in too much and too frequent contact with inferior peoples") (*Opera Vol. 33* 154).

This is all to demonstrate with a few brief examples the waves of influential and explicit propaganda that imagined Ancient Rome as a superior civilizing force, and that "the studied mediation of the ancient past served principally as a means of legitimating Fascism's hold on the destiny of the nation and of encouraging an ever-wider circle of believers in its nationalistic philosophy" (Burdett 98). Yet, the reason why the weaponization of antiquity is foundational to this project has even more to do with the role that *romanità* and Rome's legacy have played in the development of academic disciplines like history and anthropology from which the modern image of Sardinia was first fashioned. Because these disciplines have enjoyed pivotal influence in shaping our contemporary understanding of global systems and the ways in which singular civilizations have developed relationships with one another, the impact of a biased viewpoint can easily reverberate through centuries of scholarship and, in turn, public reception.

We can look to Fernand Braudel, for example, whose approach to history and influence under the Annales School in the 20th century revolutionized the discipline by shifting the focus from traditional studies of leaders to investigations of the common man. By emphasizing the interplay of social groups, economics, and communication, among other factors, he brought the French historical perspective for the first time to "a position [of] favorable and fruitful relations with the social sciences" (Hexter 481). But even Braudel seems to be influenced, at least to an extent, by the shadow of Rome's domination in the Western world. What he shares in common with other scholars who have shaped

new narratives of Mediterranean history like Peregrine Horden, Nicholas Purcell, and Chris Wickham is making “little to no mention of Sardinia…[and] when it *is* named, it is relegated to the footnotes” (Hobart 28). But he does bring Sardinia into the conversation in his greatest work, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II* (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*). See here how Braudel opens his discussion on the Mediterranean islands (150):

> Sardinia is an average example. In spite of its size it was quite clearly not of key importance in the sixteenth century, whatever the geographers of the period and Sardinian chroniclers of all periods might say. It was too lost in the sea to play an important role, too far from the enriching contacts that linked Sicily, for example, with Italy and Africa. Mountainous, excessively divided, a prisoner of its poverty, it was a self-contained world with its own language, customs, archaic economy, and pervasive pastoralism – in some regions remaining as Rome must have found it long ago.

There is an implicit conception of Sardinia in this excerpt as a somewhat ‘useless’ existence in the Mediterranean world of the period, whatever that can signify in context. It is the last line, though, that backgrounds the mission of this project to free Sardinia from the distorted narratives of the academic and intellectual tradition. What can be said of Braudel’s Sardinia that was “found” by Rome, a place “too far from *enriching* contacts”? What takes shape here is the bias against liminal and self-sustained communities like Sardinia, ones whose existence has not been driven by missions of imperialism and expansionism. As Eviatar Zerubavel emphasized in *Terra Cognita*, the “discovery” of these supposedly ‘unknown’ places – meaning unknown to the Western tradition – is not an instantaneous event but rather a long process which is as much mental as it is physical (35, 75). By situating Sardinia in narratives that distort the reality of history, such as its supposedly fated annexation under Rome’s predestined dominance, the island became in the European

tradition a barbaric population existing unwillingly self-imprisoned by its own incapability. Moreover, recognition of Sardinia as a locus of resistance in antiquity has rarely been appreciated in light of its reality as a formidable opponent for Rome.

To be sure, this excerpt from Braudel is a notorious example because he describes Sardinia in a way that follows this pattern almost pathologically while also mentioning the island's "discovery" by Rome. However, Braudel was not alone in his interpretation of Rome's power and its supposedly innate superiority over its acquisitions. One need not look far for countless instances of how the idolatry of empire has impacted the European consciousness even outside the Italian context and assisted many calculated national projects that "selectively appropriate and re-invent" Classical Rome to "identify and support their own nationhood and expansion" (Hingley 35). To name only a few: Britain justifying its imperial mission through the Roman parallel that "provid[ed] morals and lessons…through a philosophical consideration of concepts such as empire, efficiency, and administration" (37); the Roman concept of *gravitas* "play[ing] a fundamental role in the formation of the character of the English gentleman" (37);[27] or, the Third Reich's promotion of Tacitus' *Germania* as "a bible that every thinking German should possess, as this booklet by the Roman patriot fills us with pride in our forefathers' superior character" (Benze 20).[28]

So, the influence and abstracted worship over Rome's supremacy in the ancient world has substantiated other arguments for 'supremacy' in a wide range of contexts. By

[27] See also: Mason, Philip. *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal.* André Deutsch, 1982.
[28] See also: Krebs, Christopher, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's <Germania> from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*. W. W. Norton & Co., 2011.

acknowledging this, the places which in historiography are framed solely in the shadow of Rome come to inherit the biased interpretations birthed in antiquity. And this chapter is an excavation of sorts, one that seeks to extract and explain the roots of Sardinia's resistance – more specifically, *what* exactly Sardinians are resisting against. Because it is not simply today's capitalist endeavors or xenophobic undercurrents of public thought. There is a common thread that ties the idea of weaponized antiquity to the centuries of prejudice that tint Sardinia's image.

This common thread can be summarized in one word: *rhetoric*. It is the art and power of persuasion, if we are to adopt Quintilian's basic formulation.[29] We often think immediately of the rhetoric of the courtroom, like Cicero's declaration about Sardinians which opens this chapter: "a Poenis admixto Afrorum genere Sardi non deducti in Sardiniam atque ibi constituti, sed amandati et repudiati coloni. Qua re cum integri nihil fuerit in hac gente plena, quam valde eam putamus tot transfusionibus coacuisse?" ("The Sardinians, who are sprung from the Phoenicians with an admixture of African blood, were not planted in Sardinia and settled there, but rather marooned there as undesirables. Since, then, the uncontaminated stock was so utterly unsound, must we not think that it has become sadly soured by constant intermixture?" *Pro Scauro*, 42-43). This comment was taken from the trial of his defendant Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, a Roman propraetor charged in 54 BC with misconduct as governor in the province of Sardinia (Asconius 30).[30]

[29] "Est igitur frequentissimus finis: 'rhetoricen esse vim persuadendi'" ("So, the most common definition is: 'rhetoric is the power of persuading," *Institutio Oratoria*, 2.xv.3)
[30] More on this as described by Asconius in his commentary to *Pro Scauro:* "Ex praetura provinciam Sardiniam obtinuit, in qua neque satis abstinenter se gessisse existimatus est et valde arroganter" ("After his praetorship he held the province of Sardinia, and was regarded as having behaved there with arrogance

Given the circumstances, there is some degradation to be expected toward the Sardinian witnesses that Scaurus was alleged to have exploited. Yet Cicero's accusations follow a typical pattern, one that is awfully familiar to the rhetoric of Italy's Risorgimento intellectuals that came nearly two millennia later. At the trial, Cicero states that while there may be some decent Sardinians, "the large majority of them are without honor, without any fellowship or unity with our people…What province is there aside from Sardinia that contains not a single state that is a friend of the Roman people?" ("magnam quidem esse partem sine fide, sine societate et coniunctione nominis nostri…quae est enim praeter Sardiniam provincia, quae nullam habeat amicam populo Romano?" *Pro Scauro,* 44-45). For Cicero and the Romans, Sardinia was home to a population plagued by its *vitia* ("defects" or "vices"; *Pro Scauro,* 44).

There is much to glean from the rhetoric of the courtroom during a period of great successes at Rome since it obviously played off existing conceptions of Sardinia, and more specifically the innate and unchangeable character of Sardinians. Yet, rhetoric has an impact much more far-reaching than simply within the legal tradition. A foundational task of this chapter has been to read ancient rhetoric vis-à-vis Sardinia, and to identify the perpetual undercurrents that connect antiquity with modernity. We cannot ignore the tradition of rhetoric in both classical and modern historiography that has been explored extensively by modern scholars (Luce 1989; Woodman 1988; Kempshall 2012). Nor can we forget the seminal work of Mary Louise Pratt, whose *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing*

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and insufficient restraint," as translated by Simon Squires in: Asconius, *Commentaries on Five Speeches of Cicero*, edited and translated by Simon Squires, Bristol Classical Press, 1990.)

and Transculturation comes into dialogue with this project by centering the European travelogues of the 18th century that created the domestic subject of their own imperialism. Following the pervasive pattern discussed throughout this chapter, "Northern Europe asserted itself as the center of civilization, claiming the legacy of the Mediterranean as its own" (9). These, too, feature the rhetoric of the "consolidation of bourgeois forms of subjectivity and power" along with "new territorial phase of capitalism" that motivated the search for new sites of exploitation (10).

Conclusion

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, "Vandals and Byzantines held [Sardinia] before it became a protectorate of Pisa, Genoa and then Spain" (Pungetti et al. 144). Subsequently, the island enjoyed a period as an independent kingdom lasting from 1718 to 1861 before finally joining unified Italy. Since this project intends primarily to showcase the bookending historical periods of the island and demonstrate that there are indeed deep-rooted connections between the island's past and present, Sardinia's cultural development throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period is unfortunately outside its scope. However, it is worthwhile to mention that the 'savage' depictions of Sardinians first fashioned by the Romans were upheld throughout these periods and eventually exacerbated by the boom of Greco-Roman fascination during and after the Renaissance.

As discussed in throughout this chapter and particularly in the last section, the dominance and supposed superiority of the "classical civilizations" of Greece and Rome

have implicitly directed modern biases against the Sardinian population which survived for millennia on traditions of pastoralism and paganism rather than urbanism and expansionism. The Greeks are of particular importance to the context of Sardinia, too, even though they only secured brief control of the port of Olbia during the 7th c. BC which was quickly reclaimed by Carthage. According to Miriam Balmuth, much of why the archaeology of Sardinia is “little known to readers of English” is due to the fact that there “are no Greek remains that would have stimulated research and publication at a time when interest in Classical art was high” (663). The Greeks also viewed Sardinia’s megalithic constructions like the *nuraghe* “with admiration, but they also thought that the island’s ‘barbarians’ could not have developed such an architectural culture without the help of heroes” (663).

Even in antiquity, the “political myths of the Greeks and Romans situated Sardinia in a dimension of barbaric alterity…a prejudice that denied the very foundation of a ‘Sardinian nation’ and its cultural originality” (Mastino, “Ancient” 45). The testimonies from these ancient authors, including their suppositions about the native Sardinians and their customs, fueled future judgments on the matter. A sampling of these includes the Muslim Arab al-Idrisi’s geography of the world commissioned by the king of Sicily in the 12th century who described Sardinians as being “of Latin African origin, but they have become barbarians and live apart from other Latins….never leaving their weapons,”[31] or Antonio Bresciani’s *Dei costumi dell’isola di Sardegna* (*On the customs of the island of*

[31] I refer here to the French translation: “Les habitants de la Sardaigne sont d’origine latine africaine, mais il sont devenus des barbares, et vivent à part des autre Latins; ils sont braves, entreprenants et ne quittent jamais leurs armes” (302) in al-Idrîsî, Muhammad. *La première géographie de l’Occident*, edited by Henri Bresc and Annliese Nef, Flammarion, 1999.

Sardinia) who described Sardinian customs in the lead-up to the Risorgimento as 'barbaric' and 'stomach-turning' in comparison to those of Classical Greece and Rome.

In bringing this chapter to a close, I will redirect focus to Sardinia's central Barbagia region. Initially recognized by the Carthaginians and termed *Barbaria* by the Romans, this large swath of inland territory protected by the Gennargentu mountain complex is to thank for the centuries of cultural preservation afforded to the native Sardinian population. Because of perennial resistance in this area, a necessarily violent element in antiquity, we see the survival of the Sardinian language, pagan traditions, and communal pastoralism in the hinterlands. In the next chapter, I will take a closer look at this Barbagia region in modern Sardinia. Steeped in its own historical self-understanding, the region's forms of cultural production like mural projects, political posters, and literature will demonstrate that resistance to the domination of 'Italy' as a peninsular power is very much a constant in Sardinian identity.

CHAPTER 3

Resistance Through the Arts: How Sardinia Preserves its Cultural Heritage

Figure 3.1: *Mural in Orgosolo, Sardinia*

The mural above reads: *...fra i vari tipi di cranio della "zona criminale tutti appartenenti ai popoli più selvaggi e primitivi, uno è particolarmente diffuso nella Sardegna centrale: si tratta del parallelepipedoides variabilis sardiniensis..." del libro "La criminalità in Sardegna" di A. Niceforo, 1897*

…among the various types of skulls in the "criminal area, all belonging to more savage and primitive populations, one is particularly diffused throughout central Sardinia: We're talking about the *parallelepipedoides variabilis sardiniensis*…" from the book *Crime in Sardinia* by Alfredo Niceforo, 1897

Che ne sarebbe della civiltà del mondo, se l'ingiusta violenza si potesse sempre imporre senza resistenza?

What would become of the world's civilization if unjust violence could always be imposed without resistance?

-Emilio Lussu, *Un'anno sull'Altipiano*, 1938

Much has been said to this point about the foundations of resistance in Sardinia, particularly about the many historical and cultural differences that distinguish it from mainland Italy and the rest of the Mediterranean. Chapter 1 of this project surveyed what

we might today characterize as a more contemporary *Questione meridionale* (Southern Question) in Italy and how the nuances of such social problems as racism and xenophobia interface with the nation's contentious North-South dynamic to perpetuate the southern economies' stagnation and sustain the recent growth of radical right-wing movements. Chapter 1 also tackled the important issue of figuring Sardinia itself, a region somewhat abstractly connected to the Italian nation whose two most immediate associations in public consciousness create a rather contradictory image: (1) the affluent luxury of the Costa Smeralda juxtaposed with (2) the supposedly barbaric poverty and pastoralism of the island's hinterlands. And while it is true that Sardinia is casually considered by many Italians to have an identity that is not-quite-southern – and certainly not northern, – it is of crucial importance to recognize that Italy's history of meridionism[32] did indeed forge an understanding of Sardinia that was both isolated yet intimately connected to Africa, much like the nation's South. And as this chapter will show, Sardinians themselves certainly have an understanding of what connects them ideologically with Italy's South and in fact commiserate with these communities on many of the government's empty initiatives that are little more than performative gestures toward aiding its southern economies.

Chapter 2 of this project took a closer look at Sardinia's historical development and the more physical[33] forms of resistance in the island's past. This discussion also

[32] A term first introduced by Manfred Pfister in his exploration of British travelogues to describe a counterpart to Said's Orientalism, yet another discursive formation which "has played an incisive role in the formation of British and European cultural self-understanding" in that it magnifies the traditional Orientalist paradigm of "Europe and the rest of the world." It is a shift from "the level of differences *between* Europe and non-European countries" to that of the "differences *within* Europe" (3).

[33] I term these forms "physical" in that they involve actualized forms of violent resistance with physical consequence.

emphasized some of the earliest distinguishing developments on the island, including its active role in trade since the Neolithic period and its uniquely underexplored Nuragic civilization. Sardinia's native communities sustained themselves for centuries before the advent of Rome, and indeed took advantage of the island's inner mountainous terrain during bouts of violent resistance against Carthaginian, Roman, and other occupations. Significantly, Chapter 2 identified the birth of the "Afro-Sardinian" identity in antiquity, which still functions as a pejorative to this day. To the Romans, the Carthaginians of Northern Africa were among the most formidable threats of the Republican period. And by the time of the Punic Wars (264 – 146 BCE) during which Rome annexed Sardinia, Carthage had enjoyed large-scale control of the island for some 250 years. Therefore, given Carthage's own identity as a savage nemesis to Rome, the newly acquired Sardinian territory shared similar judgment. Here began Sardinia's role as a conveniently isolated space, quite suitable as an extractive economy for grain and mining yet most often utilized as a place for exile and persecution.

Understanding the historical backgrounding of Sardinia is foundational to unfolding the ways its inhabitants' view themselves as insiders on the island yet outsiders in their nation. Also foundational is the validity of experience, and the value in qualitative investigations which reveal such modes of self-figuring. By analyzing Sardinia's past, we unveil a cultural palimpsest. Centuries of war and colonization are compounded by modern social movements in today's age of technology and unprecedented levels of communication, creating a new Sardinian identity steeped in nuanced forms of resistance. Given the affirmed importance of documenting personal experience and acknowledging

the role played by Othering[34] when it comes to identity, this chapter builds on the historical understanding of Sardinia's development and its early forms of resistance. By looking to modern forms of cultural production, new aspects of resistance come to the forefront of a Sardinian identity. The examples addressed here take the form of preservation efforts or expressions of solidarity with other marginalized groups through media such as sanctioned public art, illicit street art or graffiti, and literature. And significantly, these are quite often the only accessible forms of resistance for marginalized communities.

Before moving onto the myriad examples that showcase Sardinians preserving their cultural heritage through the arts, I will first explain what is meant by "preservation" and what isn't. This is because "preservation" in contemporary discourse is intimately tied to the growing realms of eco-tourism to which Sardinia is no stranger. It is a common trope of capitalist eco-tourism to promote natural landscapes as the "true" essence of a region, completely removed from the generations of inhabitants whose traditions have cultivated and constituted such environments. This is in direct contrast with the spirit of this project, which specifically centers how community members identify with each other and the world around them. Eco-tourism usually masquerades as mutually beneficial "preservation" that begins with an investment, much like the previously mentioned Costa Smeralda region. This area was once the *comune* of Arzachena peppered with *stazzi* (Gallurese farmhouses), but after an investment in the 1960s by a group led by Prince Aga Khan it has now become

[34] Mary Canales describes this concept as the understanding that the self "is known only through Others, and how Others are 'marked' and 'named' depends on the role taking of the self" (17).

a stretch of high-end resorts and for-purchase “nature excursions” projected to bring in a profit of €108 million in 2022.[35][36]

Community-based tourism should also be mentioned, as it is often ethical in its conceptualization but not in its implementation. This term essentially refers to any tourism sustained by indigenous leadership and promotes local culture by way of community members’ direct involvement. These endeavors to foster interest can at times lead to exploitation of local populations, though explorations of Mamoiada and Sant’Antioco in Sardinia have demonstrated the notably ethical successes for community-based tourism and are similarly appreciated in this chapter (Iorio and Wall, “Behind the masks”). Preservation in this project, then, explicitly refers to aspects of cultural production and the efforts made by individuals, organized or otherwise. Rather than environmental protection and eco-development, this notion of preservation includes a range of practices: the memorialization of events, the perpetuation of folklore, the continued practice of pagan and *Carnevale* tradition, as well as the intentional use of the Sardinian language in place of standard Italian, among other things. In this chapter, I will consider three categories: organized public art (murals), elicit street art (graffiti and political posters), and literature.

[35] According to Smeralda Holdings CEO Mario Ferraro (See “The best year”).

[36] Lidia Decandia even describes the Costa Smeralda as a simulacrum, the idea introduced by French sociologist-philosopher Jean Baudrillard which described the contradiction of capitalism’s ‘ideal experience’ with reality. It is this image of Sardinia, the “destination” Sardinia, that lacks any real cultural value. Decandia notes that it is precisely the “invention” of the Costa Smeralda which resulted in the Gallura region being “devoid of any city in the classical sense of the word” (Baudrillard; Decandia 5-26).

Murals

In Sardinia's hinterlands, memorialization intersects with resistance and cultural production in a group of towns that feature hundreds of murals with themes of anti-militarism, anti-capitalism, and what we may call a pastoral solidarity – that is, the shared bond throughout inland Sardinia over its pastoral traditions. By my definition, a necessary component of this solidarity is the explicit acknowledgment of external forces like capitalism and industrialization which work to secure Sardinia's complete reliance on mainland industry instead of investing in its potentially self-sustaining agriculture. This pastoral solidarity isn't simply an abstraction of shared sentiment with no real manifestation. To the contrary, it is actualized in the island's ancestral custom of *sa paradura* ("riparazione" in Italian, or "restoration" in English), wherein a shepherd who loses a portion of their herd and/or supplies due to natural disaster or some other cause is made whole through contributions from the wider pastoral community, usually involving the donation of sheep or other resources.

Practicing *sa paradura* is resistance in itself because it is antithetical to the individualism promoted by the neoliberal right-wing ideologies that are thriving today in Italy and elsewhere.[37] This only emphasizes the growing disparity between the Sardinian worldview and capitalist Europe's. The *sa paradura* custom pivots to address today's issues, as well, and particularly over the last few years. In 2019 and 2021, regional organizations in Barbagia hosted formal *sa paradura* events for shepherds whose herds

[37] Consider in this regard the wave of self-helpism during the height of mid-Victorian liberalism discussed in Chapter 1, which has now reemerged as a focal point of contemporary political discourse.

and resources were destroyed in the wildfires at Siniscola and Oristano ("Siniscola, il cuore"; "Incendi in Sardegna"). And in early 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic had induced "grave concern" regarding the Italian national health system's ability to manage and respond to the unprecedented crisis, Sardinian shepherds again invoked *sa paradura* with a modified approach (Remuzzi and Remuzzi 1225). They called upon the pastoral community to "*symbolically* donate 100 liters of milk" each (in reality, the equivalent value in Euro) to scientists at the University of Cagliari that were researching and developing the COVID-19 vaccine ("Coronavirus, la paradura").

Understanding how integral pastoralism is to Sardinian self-understanding and historiography is critical because its themes are ubiquitous in the resistance artwork found on the island. When a mural features men shearing sheep or working in vast green pastures, or a shepherd standing alone amongst his herd, there is a declaration being made about centuries of sustained pastoral traditions. These self-depictions stand in clear opposition to other figures that appear prominently in many of Orgosolo's murals, ones that represent subjugating forces like the national government, the Italian and American military forces, or individual figures (Alfredo Niceforo, for example, the pseudoscientist whose phrenological publication on crime in Orgosolo.- the town he called "il punto criminale di una zona criminale" ("the criminal center of a criminal zone") is confronted in one of the town's murals shown in the opening photo of this chapter).

There is a visual dynamic to be seen in the coming murals which is created by the juxtaposition of (1) how Sardinians represent themselves compared to (2) how they represent the outsider/enemy type forces. While this dynamic reflects the sociopolitical

circumstances of a relatively small population in the Mediterranean, it also speaks to a much larger, if not global, discourse on pastoralism in the age of capitalism. In his 2001 book, *'You Can't Go Home Again': Pastoralism in the New Millennium*, Roger Blench conceived of a global "discourse of pastoralism," one that perpetuates modern biases against activities that don't align with capitalism's mission of infinite growth. Blench particularly notes the prevalence of words like 'last', 'final' and 'end' used in the titles of books and articles to describe pastoral communities, "even where this is manifestly not the case" (20). He cites, for example, Linda Benson and Ingvar Svanberg's influential 1998 book on the Kazakh population titled *China's Last Nomads,* "despite the fact that China has many other nomadic peoples…some who have been given a new lease of life by recent liberalization" (Blench 20). And so, there is a looming threat of erasure which is ever-present for Sardinians which they fight against, as a unified community, through the production of murals and public art.

Public murals in particular have served as a mode of resistance for local communities and have been the focus of research for sociologists, art historians, and anthropologists for decades. Scholarship on the practice of muralism highlights its universal nature, with studies ranging from places like Philadelphia (United States) or Santiago (Chile) to various regions across South Africa (Moss, "Cultural Representation"; Rolston, "¡Hasta La Victoria!"; Marschall, "Sites of Identity"). The role of public art in general is easy to underestimate, however. Hilde Hein commented that public art has often become something of an oxymoron in today's modernist age of the individual, where "philosophical aesthetics focuses almost exclusively on subjective experience and a

commodified work of art" (1). She talks more about the jarring difference between this "commodified" approach and a more purposeful philosophy of public art, which is the context for Sardinia's muralism phenomenon (1):

> [Much of] art is taken to be the product of an individual and autonomous act of expression, and its appreciation is, likewise, a private act of contemplation. By contrast, as a public phenomenon, art must entail the artist's self-negation and deference to a collective community. It is interesting to observe that the recognized art of nearly all cultures, including that of the western European tradition prior to the late Renaissance, embraces just such a collective model, indulging the differences among individuals as variant manifestations of a common spirit. The celebrated treasures of Greece and Rome, as well as the Christian works of the Middle Ages and the age of the fresco that succeeded them, do not exalt the private vision of individual artists so much as they bespeak the shared values and convictions of cultural communities.

Kristin Lee Moss, whose analysis of Philadelphia's some 3,000 murals revealed participants' efforts to embrace the diversity of the community and to bridge the gap between 'high' and 'low' art, considered murals valued spaces for identity negotiation. And though the population of Sardinia's Barbagia region may not be diverse – to the contrary, it is quite homogeneous – it nevertheless remains a marginalized community that uses mural art to preserve its cultural heritage and resist hegemonic domination. Moss talks more about identity as it relates to cultural reality, and how these marginalized communities address conflict (375):

> Culture is a site of struggle; conflict and negotiation occur when differing ideologies and experiences meet material conditions. [This] uncovers and critiques issues of power and structures of oppression through consideration of how the ideologies and practices of different constituents in the mural program can contest or support existing societal relationships.

Moss' work builds on cultural identity theory, which was first introduced by Mary Jane Collier and Milt Thomas in 1988 and proposes that one's cultural identity is developed

through the combined processes of *avowal* (how one views themselves) and *ascription* (how others view them). We see these processes clearly illustrated in Sardinia's murals, reflecting decades of conflict and negotiation in a wide range of artistic styles. And one must also consider the geographical space of Sardinia's murals in the central Barbagia region, which are decidedly more rural than the urban environments which are generally the focus of other mural studies.[38] Barbagia's murals are painted with community members in mind as the primary audience, rather than a more metropolitan collection of passers-by.

Returning to the birthplace of Sardinia's resistance mural movement brings the focus to a small town called Pratobello, comprised largely of grazing lands, and the neighboring *comune* of Orgosolo (Figure 3.2). As Italy was recovering from its legacies of fascism and poverty in the postwar period, the nation's accession to NATO in 1949 set a new path for Sardinia's supposed "development." Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Sardinians had become well aware that NATO's progression would likely continue to result in numerous permanent military installations across the island. And in 1969, these towns became the venue of one of the most famous instances in Italian history of non-violent resistance succeeding over military force.[39]

Figure 3.2

At the end of May in 1969, authorities placed notices across Orgosolo and surrounding areas mandating that the towns' shepherds relocate their herds in the municipal

[38] From the 1950s through today, the population of Orgosolo remains just over 4,000 inhabitants.
[39] It is worth mentioning again the history of guerrilla warfare and violent resistance in this region, which is now uniquely juxtaposed with its non-violent counterpart.

Pratobello pastures for a period of two months so that the Italian Army could erect a temporary polygon over the summer and conduct live-fire drills. The demand and its reception quickly became a contentious situation, with the local Orgolese community suspicious of the military's claims that the installation would only last for the summer. They were outraged by the request to effectively evacuate 46 square miles of land and relocate some 30,000 sheep and cattle in a region whose backbone was pastoralism and whose fertile terrain would be destroyed by the installation. In response to the mandate, the shepherding community collectively requested interventions and/or reforms from the Italian government that could help grow and sustain fertile pasture lands. The tensions of this debate are visualized in several of Orgosolo's murals that feature a popular slogan of the time: *Concimi, non proiettili!* (*Fertilizers, not bullets!*) ("Pratobello").

The genesis and progression of Orgosolo's muralism will be explored shortly, though the murals in Figures 3.3 and 3.4 are worth showcasing here since they are both a visualization of this phase in the Pratobello ordeal and a testament to the sheer variability of the art found here. Each of these murals features a man holding a sign over his head in protest

Figure 3.3

that reads: *CONCIMI NON PROIETTILI*. The man in Figure 3.3 is colored with bright red, white, and blue tones and he has a heavily stylized face with typical Sardinian features like large, dark eyes and a wide, heavy brow. He is shown from the shoulders up, with enlarged hands that hold the sign overhead. Small text in the middle of the painting reads:

PRATOBELLO 1969, memorializing the context for the viewer. The mural in Figure 3.4 adopts a cubist aesthetic, showing the full length of a man standing on a balcony which is painted as an extension of the physical balcony adjacent to it. He too holds a sign with the slogan in protest overhead, with enlarged hands that perhaps emphasize their importance as the primary tools of the shepherding community. In person, murals like these are an emotional reminder of the very real history of this town's steadfast solidarity. Their placement is intentional, as well. Just a few feet down from the mural in Figure 3.4 is a cluster of bullet holes from the military's shooting drills that had already commenced in 1969 when the locals submitted their proposal for reforms to the national government.

Figure 3.4

With live-fire drills already underway in early June, the Ministry of Defense issued a swift denial of the citizens' proposal. Given that this was their only real opportunity for a formal attempt at negotiation, its rejection led to even higher tensions and a spirited resolve among the people of Orgosolo and Pratobello. Sardinian journalist Giuseppe Fiori cited a saying that he saw on the cover of pamphlets being circulated by political groups on the ground at the time: *È la lotta e non il voto che decide. Abbandonate le illusioni.* (*It's the battle, and not the vote, that decides. Abandon the illusions.*) ("Cresce la tensione" 2). At this point, local Orgolesi engaged in one of the most memorable forms of resistance against the military impositions by gathering in mass in the pastures of Pratobello to disrupt

Figure 3.5*: Men, women, and children walking to the pastures of Pratobello*

the state's attempted interventions (Figure 3.5). For days, men, women, and children gathered to block the targets and intentionally place themselves in harm's way, leaving the military no other choice but to cease fire. Days were spent in the fields, and protestors even received notable support via telegram from Emilio Lussu, a longtime political activist and founder of the autonomist Partito Sardo d'Azione (Psd'Az, Sardinia Action Party), not to mention a former soldier of the famous "Brigate Sassari" ("Sassari Brigades") during the First World War. His telegram read:

> Quanto avviene a Pratobello contro pastorizia et agricoltura est provocazione colonialista stop. Rimborso danni et premio in denaro est offensivo palliativo che non annulla ma aggrava ingiustizia stop. Chi ha coscienza dei propri diritti non li baratta stop. Responsabilità non est militare ma politica. Perciò mi sento solidale incondizionatamente con pastori et contadini di Orgosolo che non hanno capitolato et se fossi in condizioni di salute differenti sarei in mezzo a loro stop. Allontanamento immediato poligono et militari si impone come misura civile e democratica [di] lavoro et produzione stop.[40]
>
> What is happening in Pratobello against pastoralism and agriculture is colonialist provocation [stop]. Reimbursement for damages and cash prizes are an offensive palliative that does not cancel out injustice but rather aggravates it [stop]. He who knows his own rights does not barter them [stop]. Responsibility is not military, but political [stop]. For these reasons I am in unconditional solidarity with the shepherds and citizens of Orgosolo who have not capitulated, and if I were in better health then I would be in the midst of it with them [stop]. The immediate removal of the polygon and the military imposes itself as a civil and democratic measure of work and production [stop].

---

[40] See "Pratobello"

Lussu's support during the revolt of Pratobello is also memorialized in one of the murals at Orgosolo (Figure 3.6). It features Lussu's portrait with a stoic gaze toward the viewer at eye level, surrounded by the transcript of his telegram in bold, red text. This mural and others like it are a meaningful reminder that Orgosolo's murals were created for a small and rural population, differing greatly from the hyper-urban environments of other mural studies where passers-by will usually take in only a few brief words before moving on with their commute. To the contrary, many of Barbagia's murals include large paragraphs of text that encourage readers to pause and consider the town's powerful moments of unity and determination.

Figure 3.6

The conclusion and ultimate success of the Pratobello revolt came only a couple of weeks later on June 25th, 1969. After a particularly disruptive protest in the pastures during which hundreds of Orgolesi were either detained or arrested, a small delegation of politicians and locals were sent to Rome in a final push to reach a resolution. The local population continued to cause such sustained disruption to the military (even after the delegation was sent) that the national government finally agreed to end operations the following month, provide restitution, and even restock herds (Fiore, "Accordo" 9). Though the events at Pratobello did not prevent Italy's military installations from continuing to develop throughout the rest of the island, this story remains embedded in Sardinian history.

It is memorialized in the town's murals and serves as an inspiring reminder of a historic act of resistance against a formidable national government that has perennially tried to subjugate the island's space, resources, and people.

The conclusion of the revolt and the coming years saw the flourishing of artistic production in Barbagia, the phenomenon of *muralismo* finding its impetus in this period. Sources are conflicted as to which was the *first* mural to be painted there, but what is certain is that the two major contributors to the towns' muralism project were the Gruppo Dioniso (Dionysus Group, an anarchist social group), and Francesco Del Casino, a local middle school art teacher. Neither of these contributors were Sardinian themselves, Del Casino being from Siena and the Dionysus Group originating in Rome. Gruppo Dioniso was an offshoot of the Dioniso Teatro Club (Dionysus Theatre Club), launched by Giancarlo Celli in 1965 as a challenge to theatrical convention. Celli was an actor, writer, and theatre director whose views became progressively anarchistic as he sought to break the elitist tradition of performance by removing its hierarchical, exclusive nature and bringing a sense of community back to the theatre. He was particularly known at the time for utilizing unconventional public performance spaces and inaugurating the period of cellar theatres and spectator participation (Ruggeri 311-316).

The Dionysus Group had already gained its reputation as a provocateur collective on the mainland, though their presence and involvement in Sardinia was a decidedly political turn. Giancarlo Celli had moved the Dionysus Group to Milan during the summer of 1969 and was looking to further merge political activism with the arts when the revolt of Pratobello occurred. As word of the dispute spread quickly throughout Italy, Celli saw

this as an opportunity to relocate the group to Sardinia and look for ways to assist with organizing local resistance movements. When they arrived in July of 1969, the group members were welcomed across Barbagia and were immediately offered accommodations, including a fully equipped art studio located nearby that was stocked with materials for creating murals, posters, and other media (Balbus, "Quelli del Dioniso"). The citizens had exhausted all of the procedural avenues of resistance available to them and were clearly open to those who were sympathetic to their struggles and wanted to offer assistance, even if only by means of documenting their subjugation. In fact, part of understanding Sardinian resistance is acknowledging their willingness to accept and work with outsiders that share their values.

This is why Italy's ever-present *Questione meridionale* (Southern Question) and contemporary Marxist thought resonated throughout Sardinia's social circles, because they identified that the treatment they faced from the national government was only a small part of the massive overarching systems of global capitalism and American imperialism. Under Celli's leadership, the Dionysus Group brought an explosion of interdisciplinary intervention to Sardinia. Their energized approach embraced the spirit of the group's namesake, too, with Dionysus being the symbol of debauchery, festivity, theatre and frenzy in the Greco-Roman tradition. By mobilizing the common people, the group sought to encourage a Marxist class consciousness amongst the proletariat that could expose the underbelly of some of Italy's most powerful institutions. And to be clear, their efforts weren't limited to mural painting and theatre, nor did they remain solely in Barbagia. They also organized more disruptive protests in the coming months against other "enemy forces"

like the police, and against Pope Paul VI's visit to Sardinia in 1970 (Furno, "La sassaiola" 11).

The revolt of Pratobello may have been the catalyst which triggered the Dionysus Group's relocation to Barbagia, but one of their first murals painted in mid-1969 shows that they clearly had both the big-picture understanding and the willingness to confront large-scale issues like imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism.[41] The mural, shown in Figure 3.7, is of a woman who is meant to represent Italy. She wears a sash with the Italian colors and a hat patterned with the American flag, implying the influence of American imperialism on Italian politics. She holds a large scale in her hand, the righthand side of which holds a Sardinian shepherd standing with his herd. The lefthand side of the scale holds a man standing next to his automobile, a reference to the burgeoning auto industry in northern Turin. The hand of the woman tips the scale in favor of the man with the automobile, and just to her left is the outline of mainland Italy and Sicily. Yet, there is one notable absence. In place of Sardinia, there is a large question mark. The mural clearly alludes to the American-led Western forces of capitalism and industry that determine the fate of communities like these. It begs the question, *is* Sardinia part of Italy? Or is it simply an

Figure 3.7

[41] Figure 3.7 is identified as their first mural by Francesca Cozzolino ("De la pratique").

acquisition made centuries ago for which they now have no use other than exploitation? The mural is signed with an anonymous "*1969 ORGOSOLO Dioniso*."

Given that many of the local murals do not have signatures, it's best to discuss the other primary contributor to the collections before showcasing further examples. Francesco Del Casino was a local art teacher who had come to Barbagia for a position in 1964 at just 20 years old after attending the state art institute in his native Siena. He was politically active and, much like the Dionysus Group, he sought to break down the walls that separated institutions from the common people. In his case, this meant breaking "the divide between schools and society" (qtd. in Pinna, "Francesco"). He quickly found himself in conversation with the local Circolo Giovanile d'Orgosolo (Youth Circle of Orgosolo), a left-wing political group founded in 1967 that shared his affinity for the Communist heroes of the time: Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Emilio Lussu, and Che Guevara, all of whom are found in murals of the Barbagia region. The Youth Circle's members became increasingly involved in organized activism and began distributing pamphlets and posters against the NATO bases on the island, among other things. They collaborated with Del Casino on some of the posters and, soon after, they joined him and his *scuola media* (middle school) students as steady participants in his mural painting projects (Cozzolino, "I murales" 100). Together with his students and the Youth Circle, Del Casino facilitated the completion of some 250 murals at Orgosolo (Cozzolino, "Les murs").

Muralismo in Orgosolo boomed in 1969, but the practice has continued into the 21st century. Today, there are several hundred murals throughout the Barbagia region, spanning the façades of both shopfronts and residences. The unique character the art lends to these towns has even generated a new "ethnic tourism" which today is still largely intranational (Satta 62-64). Generally speaking, the murals are political in nature and follow the ethos of the movement's genesis, though over time they have come to address a wide range of issues. In some murals, we can clearly see how the events of Pratobello cemented a somewhat antagonistic relationship between Sardinians and a mainland Italy whose governmental power seems destined to forever exploit the island. The mural in Figure 3.8, for example, shows two men standing in a pasture on either side of a small stream. The man on the left is a Sardinian shepherd, wearing a typical hat and overcoat of the region and standing with his flock. He stares across the stream toward the figure on the righthand side, a man in Italian military garb who stares back while clutching a rifle in his hands. The text above the image has an ambiguous orthography that implies the very real disconnect between Sardinians and Italians. It reads: *Non c'è mai Stato italiano che abbia*

Figure 3.8

conosciuto il sardo, come il sardo l'italiano! (There has never been an Italian who knows the Sardinian, like the Sardinian knows the Italian! The upper-case *Stato* allows for a secondary interpretation which implies the "Italian State" instead of simply "the Italian").

Another nearby mural (Figure 3.9) shows three Sardinian men, two of which are shirtless, working in the fields and shearing sheep. The cubist aesthetic emphasizes their bodies and especially their hands, the most important tools in managing the physicality of shepherding. The early stages of the Pratobello protests are memorialized in the text to the left of the image: *Lavorate, lavorate, pastori di Pratobello, con i greggi delle capre. Non andate allo sbaraglio. Attenti all'artiglieria che fa i tiri sul bersaglio* (*Work, work, shepherds of Pratobello with your goat herds. Do not throw yourself in harm's way. Watch out for the artillery firing at the targets*).

Figure 3.9

As mentioned earlier, it is not uncommon to see murals with anti-military and anti-imperialist sentiments directed at the United States. This is not surprising, given the extensive fighting Sardinians did on behalf of U.S. interests in the First World War to no real benefit of their own. The famous Brigate Sassari (Sassari Brigades) comprised entirely of Sardinian soldiers are of especially poignant importance in the collective memory here, these men having been among the first to face the novel violence of trench warfare. One of the murals in the nearby town of Oliena (Figure 3.10) shows a group of Sardinian soldiers

with somber and desperate expressions as they walk away from a large mass marked with the American flag to represent the enormous, faceless power that was (and is) the United States. The depiction of these men is far more realistic than previous murals, too, with distinct facial expressions and shaded eyes that make for a somber contrast when compared

Figure 3.10

with the stylized features seen earlier. The men are bound together at the wrists, representing a sort of enslavement they faced in their participation in these battles. Accompanying the painting is a caption in the Sardinian language: *Ke torran sos ossos, ke lassan sas purpas, rispondan chie tenet custas curpas* (*Let them return the bones [of our soldiers], let them release their flesh, let those who hold the blame give the answer for this*). The implication here is that imperialist America is to blame for the death and trauma incurred by the Sardinian soldiers who fought on behalf of the United States for no ultimate benefit of their own.

Sardinians don't only express resistance toward the U.S. because they sent soldiers to fight in conditions that proved disastrous and fruitless in the long run. The island also faced a period of complete militarization in the postwar period after the nation's accession to NATO in 1949. Between 1956 and 1970 alone, Sardinia saw the installation of enough

military facilities under NATO to render it the most militarized region in Europe at the time (Esu 199). But even earlier, during the late years of World War II, American bomber units operated extensively out of bases in Sardinia, Corsica, and Northern Africa (Mark 29). Aide Esu and Simone Maddanu have written about how local press coverage of such military presence was framed in the early years as a potential savior, the elusive modernizing factor that could save the island from its inevitable economic demise at the hands of capitalist industry (Esu and Maddanu, "Military pollution"). Another mural (Figure 3.11), this time in Orgosolo, shows at grand scale the horrified faces of a woman and young child outside of a military base (indicated by barbed wire) as they look toward the sky at an aircraft dropping bombs overhead. The passage to the left is in Sardinian and reads: *Sa bomba americana partida terra-terra dae Perdasdefogu colpidi una columba. Sa bomba americana si bi succedi gherra diventat una tumba tottu sa menu logu de sa terra isolana…* (*The American bomb, launched from the ground at*

Figure 3.11

Perdasdefogu, hit a dove. If the American bomb starts a war, this entire beautiful place and its island land will become a grave…).

It proved too difficult to determine whether or not a launch at the Perdasdefogu base was indeed once stifled by a passing dove, though the Sardinian I spoke with in the town agreed that there is an equally salient message in the mural. American forces had already destroyed peace in Sardinia (the dove being a symbol of peace in Italy, much like in the U.S.), and continued violence would undoubtedly lead to mass death and desolation. The depiction of the woman and her child specifically at the Perdasdefogu base is of particular significance in Sardinians' collective memory. This area was home to the Salto di Quirra military polygon where intensive weapons testing which began in the 1950s caused devastating public health consequences, including toxic emissions that consistently exceed legal limits and contaminate air, water, soil, milk, and animal tissues (Cristaldi et al. 1631). Locals coined the term "Quirra syndrome," a reference to the abnormal frequency of lymphatic cancers and birth defects which affected up to a quarter of newborns in a single year during the 1980s.

There are other murals in the area that demonstrate how Sardinians extend solidarity to other marginalized and subjugated populations, both regionally and on a global scale. They certainly share in the plight of Italy's South, which is evident in one of Orgosolo's murals (Figure 3.12) that shows a bird representing the Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy) carrying a sack filled with money which is labelled "Cassa del Mezzogiorno." The label references the massive public works project, commonly referred to as the *Cassa*, which was set up by the Italian government in the mid-1950s. It was intended to revitalize

Figure 3.12

the South (including Sardinia) and rescue it from its own underdevelopment, though it devolved into insidious corruption (DiMaria 205). In the mural, the cash spills from the bag into the hands of a corrupt politician with vampire fangs below.

Murals like the one in Figure 3.13 speak to what we can broadly refer to as Sardinians' class consciousness on the global scale. It shows women holding their children and crying out for help with arms outstretched, a statement in protest against Sudan's genocide in Darfur which began in 2003. It reads simply, *SOLIDARIETÀ* (*SOLIDARITY*). Another mural depicts the end of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in Iran (Figure 3.14) and the destruction of his monument in 2006 with a looming question written

Figure 3.13

Figure 3.14

over the heads of Iranian citizens in the crowd: *Quante stragi di innocenti per la fine di un tiranno?* (*How many massacres of innocent people before the end of a tyrant?*).

Though this chapter can only cover a limited number of Barbagia's murals, it should be clear by now that their breadth of subject matter and powerful emotional contexts create a unique atmosphere in these towns. They produce what we may call a *paese-museo*, or town-museum. This artistic concept was popularized in Sardinia by Pinuccio Sciola, another muralist and sculptor who worked just outside of the island's capital city of Cagliari. Apparent in its name, the *paese-museo* aesthetic speaks to the ethos of the Dionysus Group and Francesco Del Casino's intent to break down the walls between the institution (the *museum*, where information is controlled by others) and the people (the *town*). In fact, some of the most powerful resistance murals in Barbagia are those that take the viewer back to the sense of unity and pastoral solidarity that has sustained these rural populations for generations. One of Francesco Del Casino's murals from 1975 (Figure 3.15) depicts a Sardinian family crouched together on the ground, the father with primitive facial features. The caption to the left reads: *Torneremo tutti insieme un giorno, 500,000*

urla come un sol urlo, squarciando il muto cielo di Sardegna (*We will all return together one day, 500,000 cries like one single cry, tearing through the silent sky of Sardinia*).

Figure 3.15

Outside the physical walls of institutions and the figurative walls of institutional power, Sardinia's resistance murals are an expansive venue for testimonies given by and for the local citizens. By creating and maintaining the murals themselves, these citizens are given an "instrument of denunciation, protest and self-affirmation" that is "consistent with the history of political and ideological movements that transcend narrow regional boundaries" (Valentino and Cicalò 9). After a long walk through countless streets and alleys dotted with murals along the way, a final mural that offers a summarizing sentiment to this chapter appears beside a stairway in Orgosolo (Figure 3.16). It features an abstract line-sketch of a Sardinian shepherd surrounded by his family and livestock. The text surrounding it reads:

Qui sono passati i Re, i dittatori, i carabinieri, i governi di destra e di sinistra, e l'esercito. Ma Orgosolo è Orgosolo! E rimarrà sempre un popolo fiero della propria terra, delle tradizioni millenarie fondate sull'ospitalità, sull'altruismo, sul rispetto della dignità umana. Orgosolo, un paese indomito, inimitabile, unico!!!

Through here have passed kings, dictators, police, right-wing and left-wing governments, and the military. But Orgosolo is Orgosolo! And it will always remain a people proud of their land and their thousand-year-old traditions founded on hospitality, altruism, and respect for human dignity. Orgosolo, a town that is unconquerable, inimitable, one of a kind!!!

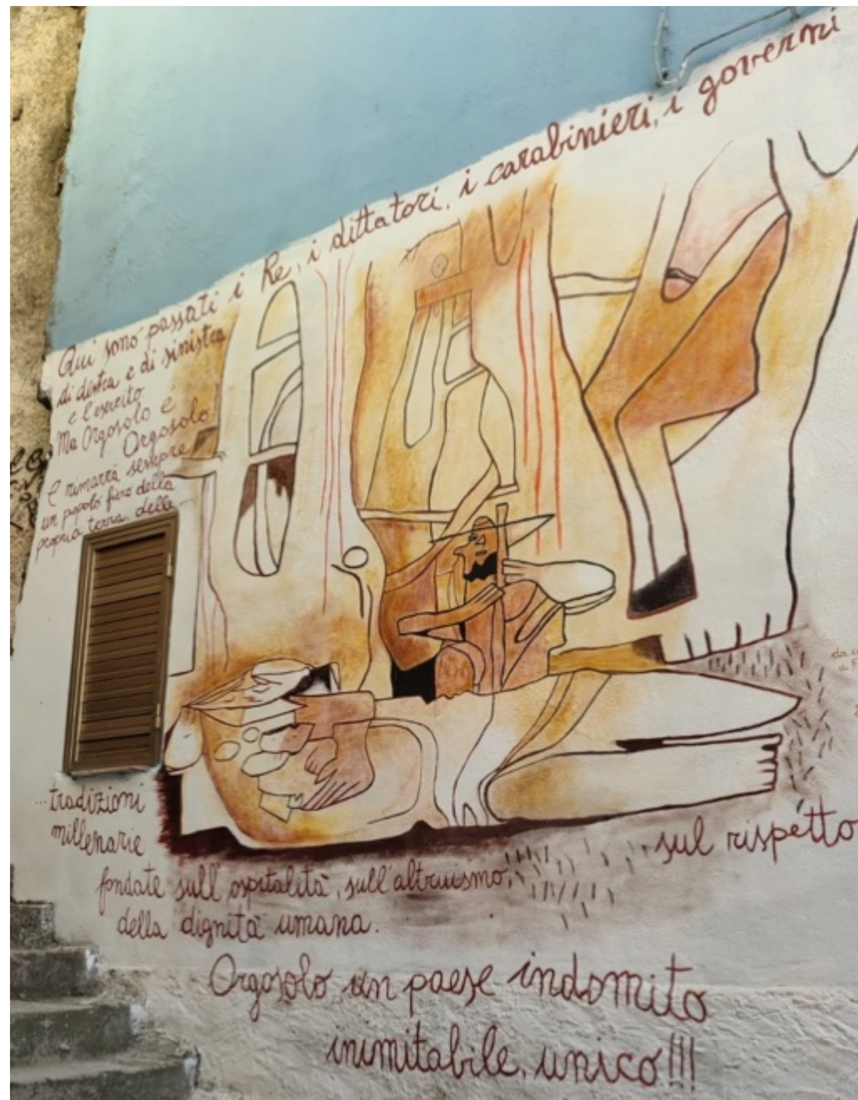

Figure 3.16

Graffiti and Posters

The Barbagia murals may be among the more well-known and recognizable forms of artistic resistance in Sardinia, but this is not to say that they are the only methods within the visual arts, nor the most significant. One of the most common curiosities of those travelling to Italy from abroad (particularly for Americans) is the seemingly ubiquitous presence of graffiti, even on façades of governmental buildings or buildings with historical significance. Sardinia, in this case, is certainly no exception. In American culture, graffiti[42] is most often associated with notions of gang activity, territorial tagging, and otherwise indiscriminate vandalism. These varieties are certainly visible in Sardinia, but what stands out more as you walk through the city streets of Cagliari, for example, are graffiti like the bilingual (Italian/Sardinian) one in Figure 3.17 that stretches around 10 meters and reads: *CONTRO LO SFRUTTAMENTO DELLA SARDEGNA | MELLUS ARESTIS KI TZERAKKUS* (*AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION OF SARDINIA | BETTER TO BE SAVAGE THAN ENSLAVED*).[43] The first half shows clear resistance to the national

Figure 3.17

[42] It is worth noting that what Americans refer to as graffiti is called a *scritta* ("writing") in Italian, with *graffito* referring to something of higher artistic quality like the *murales*.
[43] Intentional or not, the graffito is interestingly foregrounded by signs directing commuters to the Municipal Department of Education.

government and larger organizations like NATO that have perennially exploited the island's resources, followed by an allusion to the centuries-long labels of 'savagery' and 'backwardness' given to Sardinians who would rather embrace their heritage than become 'enslaved' by Western modernity. The bilingual nature of this graffito is also significant, the first half written in Italian and the second in Sardinian. It gestures toward the sociolinguistic situation in Sardinia (i.e., the marginalization of the island's native language as Standard Italian was increasingly mandated throughout the South) that will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Even this first example makes it clear that there is a declarative and political bent to much of Sardinia's graffiti writing. Is it possible, though, for graffiti writing to function as legitimate resistance? By considering first the public walls which are necessary for the production of graffiti, Foucault's notion of governmentality reminds us that these physical walls "are planned and built as part of a strategy aimed at controlling people and their activities by means of a control of space" (Mubi Brighenti 322). By using these walls for explicit political and social statements, disenfranchised people who normally "feel powerless in exerting influence in decision-making and social control" are able to "challeng[e] the dominant power structure through graffiti as a form of reclaiming public spaces" (Miladi 130).

In his influential Detroit case study, "Urban Graffiti: Crime, Control, and Resistance," Jeff Ferrell made some significant points about the "double conceptual danger" that researchers face when trying to assign "resistance" as a feature of practices like graffiti writing that tend to be committed by younger populations (74-75):

> On one hand, they must avoid romanticizing resistance – that is, employing the concept of resistance so broadly and so vaguely that it becomes a sort of fuzzy accolade applicable to almost everything 'kids' do…On the other hand, scholars must avoid defining resistance so narrowly or rigidly that only those activities that fit prearranged categories or larger political agendas count as resistance.

Because of this dynamic, it's easy for graffiti writing to be dismissed as the illegitimate outbursts of young people who don't fully understand their situation. But yet, there is a reason we see graffiti take center stage over murals as a form of resistance in more urban areas like Sardinia's capital city of Cagliari. In the urban environment, "graffiti writers [can] violate the sorts of spatial controls" that bind a city, disassembling the "orderly latticework of authority [and] reclaim public space for at least some of those systematically excluded from it" (86, 79).

So, who is being excluded? And how are they being excluded? If we look at more instances of Cagliari's graffiti writing, there are common threads that appear. Some are statements of explicit support for progressive social and political movements. Figure 3.18, for example, shows a large graffito in the Sardinian language that reads: *SOTZIALISMU INDIPENDENTZIA FEMINISMU* (*SOCIALISM INDEPENDENCE FEMINISM*) near the entrance of Italy's largest covered food market, the Mercato Comunale di San Benedetto in Cagliari. More writing from a nearby side street reads simply, *VOTA P. COMUNISTA* (*VOTE FOR THE COMMUNIST PARTY,* see Figure

Figure 3.18

Figure 3.19

Figure 3.20

Figure 3.21

3.19). Other graffiti writings confront the institutions that imprison and displace citizens. One large graffito (Figure 3.20) in Cagliari reads *FUOCO ALLE GALERE* (*BURN THE PRISONS*) and is followed by the symbol of anarchism. Another one nearby (Figure 3.21) reads *STOP SFRATTI* (STOP EVICTIONS).

And while they may not have the same transgressive permanence of graffiti, there are also posters seen plastered throughout the island which cannot be left out of a discussion on resistance. For those who may not want to engage in the more illicit practice of graffiti writing, posters are known to "do a great deal in terms of raising consciousness, signaling the objectives of your resistance and how they will be achieved" (Tripp 396). In fact, posters have been prominently featured in global contexts of resistance such as Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile, the apartheid-era

violence in Ghana, and the Arab Spring in the Middle East (Cristi and Javiera Manzi, "Political"; Gadzekpo, "Street News"; Tripp, "Art of Resistance"). In Sardinia it is common to see posters distributed in the typical fashion of flyposting, meaning that they are plastered with wheat paste onto walls, shop windows, or residential doors. Their message of resistance is generally directed toward NATO's many military installations on the island, or toward the prison systems. Many also serve as flyers announcing public demonstrations against these governmental endeavors.

The poster in Figure 3.22 is an interesting example of how Sardinians purposefully collaborate to engage in interdisciplinary forms of resistance. It reads *SMANTELLIAMO LE BASI: Bonifichiamo il Limbara dalla guerra* (*LET'S DISMANTLE THE BASES: Reclaim Limbara from war*) and describes how the armed forces abandoned the military installation there, but left behind a "mountain of refuse" that destroyed the beauty of the city. The poster advertises a mass gathering at which they plan to "depart from the USA's ex-base in Limbara, transform the radars into large anti-military murals and convert the former barracks into spaces that the local people can use." And another nearby poster (Figure 3.23), this one almost entirely removed, once relayed a similar message. It is written in the Sardinian language and reads:

Figure 3.22

Figure 3.23

MANIFESTADA CONTRA A S'OCUPATZIONE MILITARE DE SA SARDIGNA (*DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE MILITARY OCCUPATION OF SARDINIA*).

Longstanding contentions between the national prison administration and Sardinia are commonly confronted in the resistance posters, too. The island has gone through many phases of serving as a receptacle for Italy's unwanted criminals, and its extensive pasture lands have suffered ample exploitation from the Italian government's institution of penal colonies (Di Pasquale 427-430). As recently as 2022, the progressive association Socialismo Diritti Riforme (Socialism Rights Reform) declared the need for "cultural mediators" to address Sardinia's overcrowded prisons where "one in four prisoners [in Sardinia] are not Italian" and do not speak the language, therefore receiving subpar treatment from guards who refuse to "ensure that the stay of these people in jail serves their social recovery" ("Sardinia: one in four"; "Carceri: in Sardegna"). Further, despite the supposed "allocation and accommodation" guidelines provisioned by Italian law that state prisoners should serve their sentences as close to their homes/families as possible, the reality is that "many prisoners [coming] from Southern Italy are sent to the North or to Sardinia" (Marietti 18).

In some of these posters, a call for action is paired with the vignette of an individual prisoner. The poster in Figure 3.24, for example, reads *IL CARCERE È UNA MERDA* (*PRISON IS SHIT*) in bold letters across the top, followed by descriptions of the abuse and violence suffered by Paolo, a prisoner detained near Cagliari. The poster calls for a protest outside Cagliari's courthouse, and the demand for action is clear: *Questa volta è toccata a Paolo di Uta, ma i prossimi saranno coloro che non accettano di subire un sistema che professa la rieducazione ma in realtà opprime ogni forma di umanità* (*This time it was Paolo of Uta's turn, but the next ones will be those [of us] who do* ***not*** *accept suffering under a system that professes reeducation but in reality oppresses every form of humanity*). At the bottom of the poster is a line in Sardinian: *KONTRA IS PRESONIS NISHUNU EST SOLU* (*NO ONE IS ALONE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST PRISONS*). Lastly, another nearby poster (Figure 3.25) has similar details but is mostly peeled away. It reads *LA VOSTRA GABBIA, LA NOSTRA RABBIA* (*YOUR CAGE, OUR RAGE*).

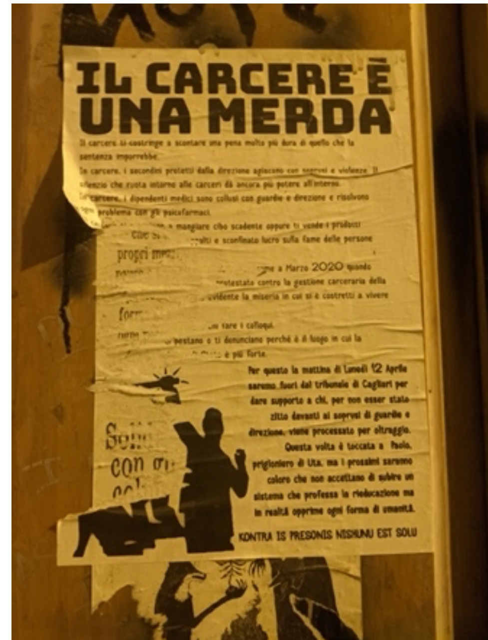

Figure 3.24

Figure 3.25

Literature

Having seen the visual dynamic of Sardinia's murals and the stark contrast of posters and graffiti against the backdrop of an urban landscape, it is easy to understand these artistic forms of resistance as evocative and powerful reminders of the region's past. However, language and literature also play a major role and are not without their place in the history of Sardinian resistance. Chapter 4 will discuss the many ways in which speech communities use the Sardinian language to confront and resist the linguistic hegemony of standard Italian.[44] This section turns specifically to the Sardinian authors whose works serve as resistance. From the writings of Emilio Lussu and Antonio Gramsci who became major intellectual figures in the fight for Sardinian autonomy, to those of Michela Murgia or Giulio Angioni whose narratives provide testimony of Sardinian traditions, these forms of cultural production all have relevance to resistance as a marker of Sardinian identity.

The advent of postcolonial resistance studies in the 20th century brought intersections of race, class, and power into conversation with paradigms of orientalism and feminism in ways that have encouraged more comprehensive views of identity (Youssef and Golson 1). In Barbara Harlow's seminal 1987 book, *Resistance Literature*, she spoke to the catalyst of this new genre (28-29):

> Resistance literature calls attention to itself, and to literature in general, as a political and politicized activity. The literature of resistance sees itself furthermore as immediately and directly involved in a struggle against ascendant or dominant forms of ideological and cultural production.

[44] There is already demonstrable evidence of this in the bilingual posters/graffiti shown earlier in this chapter.

I am careful here not to assign context where it is unjustified, especially since Italy is very much a part of the Western world that Harlow identifies as the culprit of the global colonization and violence which spawn resistance literature. She specifically contextualizes literatures birthed from liberation movements and active hegemonies in places like Lebanon, South Africa, Peru, Kenya, and Egypt as major players in this movement. For Harlow, it is indeed the "Third World"[45] inhabitants that can constitute resistance authorship and work to replace the existing constructions of their identity made by those who write history.

It is a fair question to ask if Sardinians can truly produce resistance literature while Italy is a prominent figure in the Western world with its own legacies of colonization. When the parameters laid out by Harlow herself are considered, though, the answer is a resounding yes. Libya, for example, was colonized by Italy from 1911 to 1943 and was exploited for its "vast, empty, cultivable" lands that locals were actively using for "cereal cultivation and pastoralism" (Fowler 630). In this case, even the portion of Sardinia's history covered in this chapter shares more in common with the colonized than the colonizer. Harlow looks at peasant communities in Peru, too, whose low literacy rates speak to the empowerment offered by the written word when it finally functions on their behalf. Sardinia is not dissimilar here, either. At the outset of World War I, "literacy rates in Piedmont, Liguria, and Lombardy [in Northern Italy] were more than 90 percent,"

[45] The "Third World" being the distinction created during the Cold War to designate those countries who aligned with neither NATO ("First World") nor the bloc of of the Soviet Union, North Korea, and other allies (Second World).

compared to Sardinia's rate that hovered around only 50 percent (Ciccarelli and Weisdorf 348, 358).

Over many things, Harlow's project is a call for the reform of the "academic enterprise" which is guided by "western-specific models or patterns" that do not include voices of the colonized, marginalized, and subjugated (14). She even brings Antonio Gramsci into the conversation, the native Sardinian and founder of the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI, Italian Communist Party) whose theory of cultural hegemony has shaped contemporary Marxist thought. Harlow mentions Gramsci when addressing how literatures from the marginalized can "challenge" the status quo (14):

> The challenge is raised already in those areas, geographical and ideological, where there is at work what Gramsci termed a 'counter-hegemonic ideological production.' Literature and literary studies themselves, as part of the academic enterprise, are being contested by the cultural and ideological expressions of resistance, armed struggle, [and] liberation.

Harlow's work guides my approach to this section because she offers some distinct "genres" of resistance literature that continue to circulate in the discourses of postcolonial resistance scholarship. Narrative is one of these genres, and it has foundational influence in contemporary literature produced in Sardinia.

Resistance narratives have a "self-conscious" historicity to them that, for Harlow, can subvert power imbalances by "demand[ing]" that readers confront the "burdens of historical knowledge" (80). What she refers to here, and what is of critical importance to Sardinian resistance, is how marginalized communities have historically been subjected to the narratives written about them from the perspective of the "winner," the oppressor, the colonizer. Once the perspective of the *oppressed* themselves becomes a primary player in

the discourse, there is a resistance to the dominant ideology happening. This is reminiscent of Michel Foucault's questioning of "what place [the subject] can occupy in discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules," especially when there is a clear ideological impediment to free composition and circulation of narrative (221).

Sardinian authors give particular relevance to Harlow's notion of a self-conscious historicity involved with literary narrative. In 1967, two years before the Pratobello revolt spurred the phenomenon of muralism in Sardinia, literary critic and scholar Carlo Dionisotti published a collection of essays titled *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (*The Geography and History of Italian Literature*). Hi collection was intended as a rebuttal to the prevailing unitary approach to Italian literature proposed by the prolific critic Francesco De Sanctis in the prior century, titled simply *Storia della letteratura italiana* (*The History of Italian Literature*). With his addition of *Geografia* to the title, Dionisotti encouraged an emphasis on regional identity in the literary production of Italy's peripheral areas, "shifting the point of observation from Florence, Rome, [and] Turin….to the South, the borders of Italy, or the islands" (Sulis 69). With both Harlow's notion of resistance literature and Dionisotti's reframing in mind, the works of Sardinian authors can be viewed as a response to the foreign gaze and a reclamation of their identity by placing the island and its cultural traditions as the protagonist (69).

Though Dionisotti' contributions had a major impact in terms of the reception and appreciation of regional identity in literature, and particularly with works of historical fiction, this is not to say that there weren't earlier narratives that spoke to the variety of Sardinia's thematic struggles as part of the European arena. Perhaps one of the earliest and

most significant contributors of the first half of the 20th century was Sardinian author and politician Emilio Lussu, whose telegram to Sardinian shepherds was memorialized in one of the murals shown earlier in this chapter. In the wake of the First World War, Sardinians were facing the reality that their home had become a new venue for exploitation with the advent of organized global warfare. Lussu's 1938 historical novel, *Un anno sull'Altipiano* (*A Year on the High Plateau*), was a quasi-fictional account of the First World War's novel trench warfare, which Lussu himself experienced in 1916 on the Asiago Plateau as part of the famed "Brigate Sassari" (Sassari Brigades, comprised of entirely Sardinian troops) that Antonio Gramsci would reflect on in his pivotal 1926 essay, *La questione meridionale*. His narrative features explicit criticism of commanding officers[46] and their strategies which encouraged brutal violence and carnage with little to no gain. The novel also became known for Lussu's vivid depictions of the fear among soldiers in the wake of such unjustified violence. At the conclusion of trench warfare in the novel, the narrator hopes to "finalmente [essere] liberati da quella miserabile vita" ("finally be liberated from that miserable life") and "[avere] finite d'ucciderci l'un l'altro, ogni giorno, senza odio….[con] quella spaventosa carneficina generale" ("stop killing each other, every day, without hate….in horrific, generalized slaughter") (Lussu 11).

Resistance became a mainstay of Lussu's endeavors, particularly in organizing and leading the Partito Sardo d'Azione (Psd'Az, Sardinian Action Party) after the war with the help of other ex-Sassari Brigade members. He also dedicated the updated 1960 edition of

[46] Most of whom are easily identifiable as those who fought alongside Lussu, and real events of what happened during his time on the Altipiano dei Sette Comuni are recounted.

Un'anno sull'Altipiano to Gaetano Salvemini, a vocal antifascist who was forced into exile by Mussolini's regime and stripped of both his university teaching position and Italian citizenship after being charged by the government in connection with his resistance newsletter, *Non Mollare* (*Don't Give Up*) (Baldwin et al. 7). The Psd'Az remains Italy's oldest Stateless-Nationalist-Regionalist Party (SNRP) and the first to "demand autonomy and recognition of its nationhood within the modern Italian state."[47]

Though a prominent figure of Sardinian history, Emilio Lussu is hardly the only author to be mentioned in a conversation on resistance narratives. Sardinian authors began to flourish during the first half of the 20th century when the *verismo* literary movement was in full force. Inspired by French naturalism, *verismo* narratives adhered to objective depictions of contemporary life, often with stark depictions of pain and suffering amongst the lower and working classes. Grazia Deledda, a native Sardinian and the first woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1926, wrote vivid narratives about traditional life and isolation in rural Sardinia, bringing women's experiences to the later period of the genre. Inspired by the work of Lussu and Deledda and catalyzed by a new phase of militarization (i.e., exploitation), Sardinian authors inaugurated another literary movement which began in the 1980s and continued into the 21st century called the Sardinian *Nouvelle Vague* ("New Age") or the Sardinian Literary Spring, viewed as a rebirth of their narrative strategies (Fofi, "Sardegna, che Nouvelle Vague!"). These authors addressed Sardinia in the modern

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[47] The party burst on the scene with Lussu in 1921 with an impressive 36% of the popular vote, though it has seen a range of successes and failures. Over time, it has failed to "pose a major threat to the territorial integrity of the Italian state or to catalyze constitutional reforms in Italy" (Hepburn 595). Its support in the popular vote has declined to the single digits in the 2000s.

age – essentially, the incompatibility of their home island with an industrializing Western Europe that forces the disappearance of traditional customs.

Examples of work from the Sardinian New Wave movement include Michela Murgia's 2009 novel *Accabadora*, in which she depicts the adoption of a orphaned girl by a local woman who serves as the local *accabadora* – the Sardinian term for a woman whose role in rural culture was to mercifully end the lives of those suffering via euthanasia. The actual existence of *accabadora* women remains somewhere between myth and reality in Sardinia, documented mainly by travelers of the 19th century like Alberto La Marmora who wrote in his 1826 *Voyage in Sardaigne,* "I cannot hide that in some parts of the island women are particularly in charge, those who are given the name *accabadure* and shorten the suffering of the dying" (qtd. in Turchi 2). Regardless, their depiction portrays Sardinian customs as part of the island's self-sustaining model, a social utility for the preservation of dignity. Progressive politics and resistance are still very much a part of Murgia's career today with the weekly magazine *L'Espresso*, where she writes a column called "L'Antitaliana" ("The Anti-Italian"). She also ran as a candidate for the *Possible Sardinia* coalition during the regional elections of 2014 (albeit unsuccessfully), which advocated for Sardinian independence from peninsular Italy.

Other authors from the Sardinian New Wave include Milena Agus, whose novels like *Mal di pietre* and *Sottosopra* include vivid depictions of Sardinia's capital city of Cagliari and have passages which remain in the Sardinian language even in translated editions. In her most recent novel *Terre promesse* (*Promised Lands*), she follows the journey of Esther, a Sardinian who seeks to escape the cultural isolation of her home island

only to find the same restlessness on "the Continent." Another author, Giulio Angioni, depicts a Sardinian shepherd named Costantino Saru in his novel *Assandira.* In this narrative, Saru is convinced by his family to open a bed and breakfast (called Assandira) that offers northern European clients the opportunity to experience life in the pastoral realm of Sardinia. The central theme of this work is the "complex cultural and economic transition" which characterizes the Sardinian village, "the (too rapid) passage from archaic tradition to globalizing modernity, two eras distinguished respectively by an agro-pastoral economy of subsistence and the development of a tourism-based economy" (Pias 189). Though initially successful, the bed and breakfast eventually burns down, killing Saru's son and causing his daughter-in-law to miscarry.

Powerful narratives like these, though fictional, carry in them the "burdens of historical knowledge" that Barbara Harlow believes their readers are – and should be – forced to confront. When given the space to create and contribute, these narratives share a common quality with the resistance murals of the island's hinterlands: They speak to a Sardinian identity that is vastly different than the images constructed by dominant ideologies. A big part of their message is an explicit opposition to the "folklorization" of Sardinian culture, or "the re-stylization of traditional expressions so that they become less complex aesthetically and semantically…thus reifying the notion of a dominant culture" (Seitel 6). This idea of folklorization has been a perennial issue for Sardinia due to the mass diffusion of travel writers whose work interprets every element of folklore as "a 'survival' of an archaic way of life" that makes "no attempt to understand the meaning of the practices in contemporary communities" (Magliocco 174).

In addition to the narratives of resistance in the genre of historical fiction, there are also some key Sardinian intellectuals whose literary works contribute greatly to resistance literature and should therefore be included here. First and foremost, there is perhaps no greater figure of importance to Sardinians than Antonio Gramsci, the Marxist thinker from the rural town of Ales (Figure 3.26) whose influential theory of cultural hegemony was referenced by Barbara Harlow earlier in this chapter. His conceptualization of hegemony was taken from the *Quaderni del carcere* (*Prison Notebooks*), a collection of essays he wrote while in prison after being arrested by the Fascist regime in 1926. And though Gramsci spent the second half of his life outside the island, his Sardinian heritage is widely reflected in public monuments and art.

Figure 3.26

At Piazza Gramsci in Cagliari, for example, a passage from the front page of the first issue of *L'Ordine Nuovo* ("The New Order") – a weekly Socialist magazine founded by Gramsci and a few others shortly before they established the PCI – stretches across a cement partition (Figure 3.27), reading: *Istruitevi, perché avremo bisogno di tutta la nostra intelligenza. Agitatevi, perché avremo bisogno di tutto il nostro entusiasmo. Organizzatevi, perché avremo bisogno di tutta la nostra forza*. (*Educate yourselves, for we will need all of our intelligence. Motivate yourselves, for we will need all of our enthusiasm. Get organized, for we will need all of our strength.*). In the same piazza there is a sculpture (Figure 3.28) made by Pinuccio Sciola, the artist responsible for the *paese-museo* (city-museum) aesthetic mentioned in this chapter's section on muralism. The sculpture is titled

La porta della cella di Gramsci (*Gramsci's cell door*) and is a tall, abstract series of perpendicular lines with a squared center which is meant to represent his cell door window.

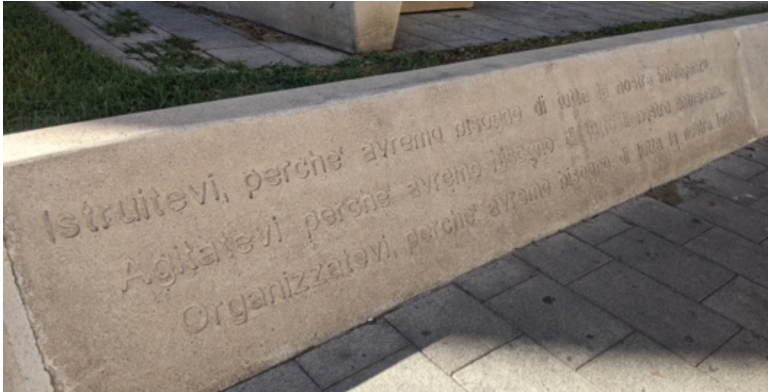

Figure 3.27

Figure 3.28

Accompanying it is a plaque that reads: *Il carcere di Gramsci. Un alto muro e una finestra chiusa da una grata: così l'Artista ricorda la carcerazione di Antonio Gramsci, figlio della Sardegna, il cui pensiero vive nel mondo contemporaneo.* (*Gramsci's prison. A high wall and a window closed off by a metal grid: This is how the artist depicts the incarceration of Antonio Gramsci, son of Sardinia, whose thought lives on in today's world.*).

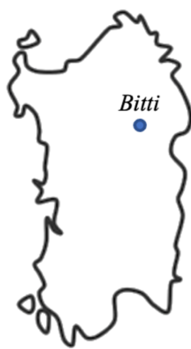

Figure 3.29

Finally, this section would be lacking without a mention of Michelangelo Pira, or "Mialinu" Pira[48] as he is known by many Sardinians. He was an anthropologist and journalist from the central town of Bitti (Figure 3.29) whose role in resistance will be discussed at length in the following chapter on language, given the influence of his 1968 book *Sardegna tra due lingue* (*Sardinia Between Two Languages*).

[48] A 'Sardized' form of Michelangelo.

This book was among the first to offer an original analysis of the sociolinguistic “problem” and diglossia in contemporary Sardinia. Ten years after its release, however, he published a book called *La rivolta dell’oggetto* (*The Revolt of the Object*) that confronted the antagonistic relationship between Sardinian identity and the collective identity of Italy. In this book, he conceptualized a revolution that would have to take place in order for Sardinians to shift from being the passive “objects” of national policies and strategies to being self-determined “subjects.”

In his literary projects, Pira connected resistance and revolution as requisite elements of Sardinia moving forward in the modern world. As a cultural anthropologist at the University of Cagliari, he was keenly aware of how the national government and its policing systems dealt with prominent crime issues like *banditismo* (kidnapping) on the island. In *La rivolta dell’oggetto*, he compares it to the problem of brigandage in the south and discusses the impact of Positivist criminologists like Alfredo Niceforo who used phrenology and other forms of scientific racism to explain the supposed “backwardness” of Sardinians (101):

> Come il brigantaggio meridionale, il banditismo sardo sarà imputato dalle classi dominanti unitarie italiane non alle specificità culturali isolane (e tanto meno ai rapporti di queste con la cultura del dominio), non ai codici di intere comunità e comunque di classi sociali oppresse, bensì alle individualità (e perciò sarà visto solo come somma di comportamenti individuali privi di qualsiasi codificazione sociale) considerate feroci <<per natura>> (dunque per ragioni razziali) come sosterrà la scuola positivista, braccio ideologico del dominio alle cui misure repressive…deve offrire una giustificazione che rimandi a ragioni etiche di civilizzazione.
>
> Like with southern brigandage, kidnapping in Sardinia will be blamed by the dominant unitary Italian classes not on the cultural specificities of the island (and even less on the relationship of these with the culture of domination), not on the codes of entire communities and of oppressed social

> classes, but rather to the individuals (and because of this, it will be seen solely as the sum of individual behaviors devoid of any social codification) considered savage <<by nature>> (so, for racist reasons) as the Positivist school will sustain in their role as the ideological branch of the domain whose repressive measures must offer a justification that refers back to an ethical reasoning of civilization.[49]

What Pira elucidates here is the contentious position of post-unification and post-World War II Sardinia. In this period, the island's geographic isolation combined with national-modernizing movements to leave entire communities struggling to reconcile their regional identity with the collective "Italian" identity. He viewed the Sardinian *questione*[50] as a general cultural *questione* and used a major portion of *La rivolta dell'oggetto* to conceptualize a Sardinia that could operate without the State and return systems of education and social organization back to autonomous communities.

Returning to the view of literature in general as a form of cultural production that can facilitate resistance, there are distinct roles that are filled by the genres discussed in this section. What we get symbolically from resistance narratives and historical fiction is a clear picture of the Sardinia that would otherwise exist without such external forces as global capitalism and Westernization. Authors like Grazia Deledda, Michela Murgia, Milena Agus, and Giulio Angioni push back against the typical narratives of their home island by depicting the pastoral world and showing some of the traditional customs that have since been defined as "intangible cultural heritage."[51] Emilio Lussu bridged the gap

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[49] Philosophically speaking, the "ethical reasoning of civilization" here refers to the speculative reflection about judgments of morality.

[50] *Questione* is the term used by Pira and is best translated as "dilemma" in English, rather than "question," as it implies a significant and general problem in need of addressing.

[51] UNESCO established the term "intangible cultural heritage" to distinguish it from cultural property. (e.g., monuments and artifacts). Rather, an intangible cultural heritage is "a practice, representation, expression, knowledge, or skill considered to be part of a place's cultural heritage" and can include things like "oral

between historical fiction and intellectual treatise with his eye-opening narrative of the horrors of trench warfare into which entire brigades of Sardinian soldiers were sent. The bulk of his work in politics and the intellectual realm bring him in line with Gramsci and Pira, resisting dominant forces by exposing the subjugation of subaltern classes.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the primary areas of artistic production in Sardinia where resistance is at play because, at first glance, "resistance" can be difficult to define. In 1985, political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott introduced some key questions to help find a definition through his influential ethnographic research on the subjugated peasantry of Malaysia. Does resistance have to involve "collective action," or can it be "individual"? Does it have to have revolutionary "intent" and "openly challenge the basic structure of property and domination"? Should it be explicit and purposeful, or can it be "largely symbolic" (Scott 289-290)? Scott ultimately concluded that resistance is nuanced, and the seemingly innocuous and "everyday forms of resistance" are some of the "truly durable weapons of the weak" (303). Sardinia in its modern history has faced countless failed attempts at negotiating with the national government, not to mention the overwhelming development of global capitalism and other "Westernizing" forces. And so, the murals, graffiti, posters, and literature produced in Sardinia that have been covered in this chapter *are* some of their main avenues of resistance and identity negotiation.

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traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, or festivals." See: UNESCO. "What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?" https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/01851-EN.pdf

CHAPTER 4
Sardinia's Language and its Complex Sociolinguistic History

Figure 4.1: *Sardinian language graffito reading "Sardinian lessons now!!"*

> Language is the sheep's clothing which hides the wolf, the dominant culture.
>
> -Henry Kahane

> Ogni volta che muore una lingua, muore un mondo. Ogni volta che una lingua resiste, resiste la diversità, la molteplicità, la ricchezza dell'umano.
>
> Every time a language dies, a world dies. Every time a language resists, diversity, multiplicity and human richness resist.
>
> -Gianni Biondillo

In 1984, Sardinian writer and linguistic activist Francesco Masala[52] wrote the following in *Il riso sardonico* (*The Sardonic Smile*), an autobiographical collection of stories from his life on the island with an emphasis on his defense of the Sardinian language:[53]

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[52] Or as he is known to Sardinians, Frantziscu Màsala.
[53] Masala, Francesco. *Il riso sardonico*. GIA Editrice, 1984.

> Sono nato in un villaggio di contadini e di pastori, fra Goceano e Logudoro, nella Sardegna settentrionale e, durante la mia infanzia, ho sentito parlare e ho parlato solo in lingua sarda: in prima elementare, il maestro, un uomo severo sempre vestito di nero, ci proibì, a me e ai miei coetanei, di parlare nell'unica lingua che conoscevamo e ci obbligò a parlare in lingua italiana, *la lingua della Patria*, ci disse. Fu così che, da vivaci e intelligenti che eravamo, diventammo, tutti, tonti e tristi. In realtà, la lingua sarda è il linguaggio del grano, dell'erba e della pecora ma è, anche, *la lingua dei vinti*: nelle scuole, invece, viene imposta *la lingua dei vincitori*, chiamiamola pure linguaggio del petrolio e del catrame, cioè la lingua della borghesia italiana del Nord, che ha concluso il Risorgimento colonizzando industrialmente il Sud ma convincendoci di aver *unificato la Patria*.
>
> I was born in a village of farmers and shepherds, between Goceano and Logudoro in northern Sardinia, and during my childhood I only heard and spoke the Sardinian language. Then in the first grade, my teacher – a severe man dressed in black – forbid me and my peers from speaking the only language we knew and forced us to speak in the Italian language, '*the language of the fatherland*,' he told us. That's how we went from lively and intelligent to dull and sad, every one of us. In reality, Sardinian is the language of wheat, grass, and sheep, but it's also the '*language of the vanquished*.' In the schools, however, the '*language of the victors'* is what's imposed, and we also call it the language of oil and tar, or the language of the Italian bourgeoisie of the North that concluded the Risorgimento by industrially colonizing the South yet convincing us they had '*unified the fatherland*.'

Personal testimonies on the imposition of language policies in Sardinia like this one are powerful and invaluable, though readership is usually confined to the rather closed community of the island's population. It is reminiscent of other instances of linguistic imperialism, as well, like those in the school systems of Native Hawaiians and Native Americans.[54] Masala's anecdote indicates a critical awareness on the part of Sardinian speech communities, that their language is an immediate, prominent marker of identity and that linguistic hegemony is a common tool of governing classes intended to encourage

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[54] See Crawford, James. *At War with Diversity: US Language Policy in an Age of Anxiety*. Vol. 25. Multilingual matters, 2000.

homogeneity and stifle resistance. Even the well-known theories of cultural hegemony proposed by the Marxist intellectual and native Sardinian, Antonio Gramsci, are rooted in his observations and subsequent analyses of issues related to language. His studies of language diffusion under Matteo Bartoli at the University of Turin were his first exposure to the notion of social-control structures being governed by the ruling classes. He wrote of the relationship of language to class during his time in Fascist prison (*Quaderni Vol 3* 2346):

> Ogni volta che affiora, in un modo o nell'altro, la quistione della lingua, significa che si sta imponendo una serie di altri problemi: la formazione e l'allargamento della classe dirigente, la necessità di stabilire rapporti più intimi e sicuri tra i gruppi dirigenti e la massa popolare-nazionale, cioè di riorganizzare l'egemonia culturale.
>
> Every time the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it signifies that a series of other issues are at hand: the formation and enlargement of the ruling class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relations between the ruling groups and the national-popular mass, that is to say, to reorganize the cultural hegemony.

Gramsci saw firsthand the intention of Italy's ruling class, the northern bourgeoisie, to exploit Sardinia and other southern populations by coercing them to conform with governing ideologies that held them in positions of subjugation. This conceptualization of hegemony has direct ties to language and ideology as it refers explicitly to "the legitimation of the cultural authority of the dominant group, an authority that plays a significant role in social reproduction" (Woolard 739).

The relationship of language to class is just one aspect of sociolinguistics, the field whose scholarship fuels this chapter and is preeminently concerned with the social questions of language use and how competing social values come to the fore in speech

practices (739). The first three chapters of this project presented a framework for understanding Sardinia as a region at odds with the Italian nation, and one perennially engaged in resistance. Chapter 1 described the contentious politics of Italy today, with an emphasis on the roles of liberalism and pseudoscience during the Risorgimento period which fueled an exclusionary nation-building project and solidified the disconnect between Sardinia and the peninsula. Chapter 2 sought to reclaim Sardinian history from the legacy of Roman antiquity which has long pervaded both cultural and scholarly discourse by denying the island's sophisticated role in Mediterranean trade networks long before Rome's founding and instead portraying it as a backward, savage population. Chapter 3 then took a closer look at the island's central Barbagia region, where the Gennargentu mountain complex serves as a natural barrier to outside influences and has facilitated various forms of resistance and cultural preservation.

In this final chapter, I will turn to the Sardinian language as a space of subjugation and resistance. This will include a closer look at the historical development of the indigenous language, how Sardinians in the 20th and 21st centuries resist linguistic hegemony, and the highs and lows in their fight for the revitalization of Sardinian. The development of the linguistic situation in Sardinia has been both complex and contentious, politically speaking, making it well-deserving of its own chapter. After all, perhaps the most apparent testament to the Sardinian language's ties to resistance is the independentist slogan motivating this project, *Sardigna no est Italia*. The phrase can be seen in graffiti across the island and is rarely written in Italian (rather in various dialects of Sardinian), declaring an explicit antagonism toward the mainland.

As it stands today, there are around one million speakers of Sardinian out of the island's 1.64 million inhabitants. This figure has dropped since 2007, when a survey commissioned by the regional government reported that nearly 70% of Sardinians considered themselves active users of a local language, with another 29% only capable of understanding a local language and around 3% unable to speak or comprehend one (Oppo 7). Aside from the emigrant population it is not spoken anywhere outside the island, and in 2010 it was declared a 'definitely endangered' language by UNESCO, meaning that it is "no longer learned as the mother tongue by children in the home" (Moseley and Nicolas 39). As will be discussed in a later section on the complications of revitalizing this indigenous language, there is still currently "no single dialect [of Sardinian] which is recognized as a standard form of the language, and there is no standard orthography" (Jones, "Sardinian" 314).

The overall aim of this chapter is to explore the sociolinguistic factors that led to the rise, maintenance, and current fall of the Sardinian language. Backgrounding this is Italy's path to becoming a unified capitalist nation, the outcome of which is commonly characterized as its modernization, with direct impact to the language and speech practices of a supposedly anti-modern Sardinia. What comes to the fore in this investigation is the rise of Sardinia's own *Questione della lingua* ("Language Dilemma"), notably characterized by Michelangelo Pira as *"Sardegna tra due lingue"* ("Sardinia between two languages").[55] As will be emphasized in this chapter, there is an important

[55] This is the title of Pira's 1968 publication of sixteen conversations regarding the critical state of the language issue in Sardinia, all of which were previously broadcast on Radio Sardegna.

acknowledgment to be made in recognizing that the rise of literacy in Sardinia – which was understood to mean literacy in Standard Italian – was an acquiescence to the dominant power structures which operated in the northern Tuscan dialect of Italian, to the detriment of the local languages in which Native Sardinians were already fully literate.

The rise of Standard Italian and the coerced abandonment of local languages in Sardinia reflects a duality in cultural identity, an issue spanning centuries which has been examined through various lenses in the previous chapters of this project. It is no surprise that conceptions of "island" and "nation" have not traditionally meshed, and research in the relatively new field of island studies has established that an "island identity" is one not tied solely to geographic isolation but also to experiences of "oppression, colonialism [and] dependency" shared by the entire population (Baldacchino 273). Given that language contact and change are intrinsically linked to these issues, it is critical that one abandons essentialist views of language and adopts a comprehensive approach that acknowledges that these "cultural processes" are "intimately bound up with socially located cultural subjects" (Bucholtz and Hall 375). In the following section, I will provide an overview of the scholarship on language and identity and offer context for the linguistic situation in Sardinia.

Language and Identity

It wasn't until relatively recently that identity came to play a central role in linguistic anthropology. The notion of cultural identity was certainly present in the bulk of 20th century scholarship, though it usually served as a backgrounding factor to the primary

foci of linguistic investigations. Today, however, it is widely acknowledged that language is intimately tied to one's identity, and that language is "the most flexible and pervasive" symbolic resource for the "cultural production of identity" (369). Similar to categories like race and sex, one's language, accent, and speech tendencies are often immediate markers of identity which impact how they are treated by those like them and unlike them. In the most basic sense, we can refer to these as categories of *sameness* and *difference*, knowing that the way one speaks will position themselves firmly in one category or the other.

Speakers are acutely aware of their ability to position themselves within such categories, too. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin spoke of the "double-voiced discourse" wherein one's speech contains within itself an implicit 'dialogue' which communicates their identity to the listener. Goffman's seminal collection of essays, *Forms of Talk*, further reinforced this notion. He affirmed that we indeed formulate our utterances in anticipation of how the listener or audience will interpret them, even down to the minutia of tone changes, pauses, and word choice. For Goffman, speakers are situated in a "participation framework" whenever there is an utterance. This framework determines the social treatment of the speaker, as those in dialogue with them are fellow participants and gate-keepers in determining whether or not one's speech aligns appropriately with the identity they work to portray (*Forms of Talk* 153).

Numerous studies have attested to this linguistic phenomenon and how it is used by speakers to gain access to certain spaces and convey more 'ideal' or mainstream identities. Elaine W. Chun's 2001 sociolinguistic analysis of a Korean-American student showed his adoption of (what he viewed as) African-American English as a mechanism for

conveying masculinity and challenging "characterizations of Asian American men as passive, feminine, and desirous of whiteness" (61). Anna Livia and Kira Hall's 1997 volume, *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality,* offered a collection of articles geared towards "bring[ing] performativity back to linguistics" by highlighting the many ways in which gender and queer identities are performed at the discourse level. Others have looked at more complex and multi-dimensional performances of identity through language, as well. Claire Kramsch and Anne Whiteside's 2008 study examined the practice of code-switching, wherein one alternates between languages in order to convey social status or allegiances, amongst Yucatec Maya immigrants in San Franscisco. They found that members of these speech communities regularly switch between English, Spanish, and Maya so as to stay on good terms with neighboring Asian and Hispanic communities (Kramsch and Whiteside 660). Carol Myers-Scotton similarly turned to speakers in Kenya who code-switch between Kikuyu to signal ethnic pride, Swahili to imply an urban identity, and English to signify their education in varying social contexts.

On a fundamental level, these examples and others highlight that language's association to identity can be assessed through the binary dynamic of in-group versus out-group. These terms were introduced by social scientist William Graham Sumner as part of his work on folkways, the ways of living, thinking, and acting that guide general conduct within a given community. In-group refers to a class of individuals characterized by internal cohesiveness, kinship and a shared "relation of peace, order, law, government, and industry" (Sumner 25). Contrasting this is the out-group, or the class of individuals categorized as different or separate from those members of the in-group. The out-group is

often conceived of as a threat to the status quo and its members are often characterized via stereotyping and prejudice.[56] These concepts have traditionally played a key role in investigations involving social identity theory and intergroup contact theory (Marques et al. 1992; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006), though their significance now extends to projects of language (Marunevich and Kononenko 2020; Howard et al. 2015; Carnaghi and Maass 2007).

In the Sardinian context, we may also examine the in-group/out-group dynamic in relation to ethnic identity and the longstanding discourse led by the dominant classes which has characterized the island's inhabitants as inherently deficient and ethnically distinct, a matter discussed extensively in Chapter 2. Ethnicity has occupied a somewhat contentious space in terms of pinning down a definition, given that most regions and the communities that inhabit them (Sardinia included) are neither entirely homogenous nor static. For the purposes of this project, I am choosing to employ Stephen Shennan's definition of ethnicity as a "self-conscious identification with a particular social group at least partly based on a specific locality or origin" (14). After all, Sardinians' geographic insularity has influenced not just to their relative genetic isolation but also to the preservation of an autochthonous identity to which their language is intimately linked. Furthermore, the construction of ethnicity through language and material culture in the region has been a prevalent practice since Roman times (Blake 113-119).

[56] Sumner specifically cites the creation of epithets (27) based on perceived differences between the two groups. Consider here the common epithet *inculapecore* ("sheep-fucker") used by Italians to describe Sardinians.

That being said, indexing one's ethnicity involves a comprehensive and potentially complex analysis of one's linguistic background. The use, preservation, and revitalization efforts of a heritage language – a minority language learned by speakers in the home – are employed by Sardinians with respect to their local varieties. These practices highlight the fluid nature of one's relationship to both the minority and dominant languages, and in turn can function as a purposeful declaration of ethnic belonging (e.g., speakers of Benjamin Bailey's 2000 study of Dominican-Americans stating that "they *speak* Spanish, so they *are* Spanish") (Fought 21; Bailey 556). Even in contexts of speakers using a non-native or dominant language, there are suprasegmental features of language that can be immediate markers of ethnicity (Fought 22-23). For example, the syllable timing of spoken Sardinian is readily apparent when its speakers communicate in Italian, making it a recognizable indicator of their locality.

Sardinians became especially cognizant of how integral their local language was to their cultural and ethnic identity at the height of the *neosardismo* movement, which began in the late 1960s after 'standard language' (i.e., Italian language) policies were instituted in schools throughout the island. A century out from the nation's political unification in 1861, leading factions of the period were still very much involved in the protracted project of "making Italians" indicated by the Risorgimento aphorism, "Fatta l'Italia, bisogna fare gli italiani" ("We've made Italy, now we have to make Italians"). The ruling class conceived of multilingualism and multiculturalism as antithetical to nationhood, a notion Sardinians were all too aware of in the post-war period as their economic standing floundered despite the so-called Italian "economic miracle" which spanned the 1950s and

-60s. In the opening remarks at the National Linguistic Convention held at Cagliari in 1977, the Regional Vice-President of Sardinia Sebastiano Dessanay remarked ("Una richiesta" 18),

> Se in Sardegna in questi ultimi anni si è riproposto il problema della lingua, è perché dinanzi agli attacchi sempre più duri e organizzati contro la loro identità di popolo e direi di nazione intesa in senso culturale moderno i sardi hanno avvertito drammaticamente l'istinto di sopravvivenza e il dovere di difendere e far crescere la loro diversità e individualità. I pericoli di una sorta di 'genocidio' pulito hanno acuito la nostra sensibilità di popolo.
>
> If the language problem has been brought up in Sardinia in recent years, it is because in the face of increasingly harsh and organized attacks against their identity as a people, and I would say as a nation, understood in a modern cultural sense, Sardinians have dramatically felt their survival instinct kick in and feel the duty to defend and nurture their diversity and individuality. The dangers of a sort of cleansed 'genocide' have sharpened our sensibilities as a people.

By the late 20th century, the dichotomy between 'Italian' and 'Sardinian' identities was both apparent and a subject of activism in Sardinia as literacy rates in the indigenous language began to plummet. Sardinians were faced with the very real dilemma of what Peter Nelde terms "political language conflict," which "becomes especially clear when it occurs between population groups of different socio-economic structures" such as the dynamic between Sardinia and the North where "the dominant group requires that the minority adopts the majority language as a prerequisite for the integration into mainstream society" (35).

The following section on language and class will build upon the concepts of identity examined here. I will emphasize that while 'mainstream' and 'minority' linguistic identities coexist in Italy, the rise of industry and global capitalism in the 20th and 21st centuries has encouraged the domination of the former and resulted in the subjugation of

the latter. Adopting a Marxist Gramscian perspective, I will further explore language policies as a hallmark of 19th and 20th century Europe, ideas of working-class consciousness, and the illusion of a mass 'democracy' control by closed, elitist circles.

Language and Class

In addition to the connections between one's identity, the language they speak, and the *way* they speak, there are also clear ties between language and class that have significant consequences when it comes to the capacity for upward social and economic mobility. Class and identity are naturally intertwined as well, as seen in contemporary references to a working-class identity, middle-class identity, or more broadly in Marx's notion of class consciousness which implies a shared identity enacted through revolution (Strom 1995; Curtis 2013). The development of sociolinguistics during the 20th century brought social questions to the fore in relation to one's speech acts, and this development corresponded with the growth in class distinction as capitalism spread throughout Italy and Western Europe. Because of this, research on the intersections of language and society in ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology have particular relevance to the Sardinian context. This section will look at the different facets of socioeconomic stratification and the ways in which language hierarchization and linguistic prestige impact speakers.

Class has become a topic of increasing scrutiny in light of the social and economic developments of the modern era, and identifying language as a critical tool for the maintenance of social order and homogeneity has become a primary focus of contemporary

sociolinguistics scholarship. In fact, Bernstein and Henderson cite the recognition of our most “basic processes of communication” (i.e., language we speak and the way we speak it) as having substantial “regulative functions” in society as one of the most significant developments in the behavioral sciences since the second World War (24). Further, there have been many examinations of class and language in contexts of both heteroglossia and multilingualism which will now be explored.

Étienne Balibar noted that often the “clash” of what we may term “class languages” are “precisely not different languages,” but rather registers of the national language to which all citizens share a supposed common identity under nationhood (“The Nation Form” 98). This notion of heteroglossia implies the presence of several varieties within a single national language which are linked to a “situation of use” (Irvine 127). These varieties, as Bakhtin theorized, can be categorized into a multitude of identifiable registers: “social dialects, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, [or the] language of authorities” to name just a few (“Discourse in the Novel” 205). These registers are in turn employed by speakers in an effort to adapt and adhere to the linguistic norms of a given situation. For example, one typically uses different intonation and word choice when they are speaking in the context of a job interview than they would at a gathering of friends or when patronizing a convenience store.

Much empirical research has been done on the expression of social or economic class within a single language, with the most prominent evidence coming from American contexts where English’s many ‘marked’ registers are readily apparent. It is also worth noting that language discrimination tends to be a more prominent feature of Western

societies, in general (Hudson 210). William Labov, founder of the variationist theory, observed the speech practices of New Yorkers who were employed at several department stores catering to lower-, middle-, and upper-class clientele. He found that his lower- and middle-class subjects exhibited "linguistic insecurity" in situations where they had to converse with upper-class interlocutors, resulting in changes in their pronunciation of the phonological variable (r) (Labov 40). They also tended to hypercorrect their speech by overshooting the mark with certain grammatical constructions (e.g., "*Whom* did you say was calling?") (318).

Even within the same economic class, Labov and others have explored the pressure for Black Americans to adhere to White mainstream linguistic norms. Tracey L. Weldon's study of middle-class African American English found that speakers of its so-called "Proper"[57] variety are associated with sounding "educated" and "friendly," whereas speakers of what she terms Standard African American English (SAAE) are characterized as "Ghetto" or "uneducated" (209-212). John McWhorter similarly dispelled prevalent myths about Black English "sounding stupid" and having "bad grammar" in his 2016 book *Talking Back, Talking Black: Truths About America's Lingua Franca*, in which he also identified the pervasive and racist view of Black English as a bastardization of Standard English.

This is all to say that empirical evidence from studies in monolingual contexts aligns with the Durkheimian notion of social fact, that "we are free to talk in any way we

[57] Weldon's term indicates a variation of AAE developed through a process of *mainstreaming* in which speakers opt to use a dominant language variety as a result of sociopolitical pressures. See also Spears, Arthur K. "Unstressed *BEEN*: Past and present in African American English." *American Speech,* vol. 92, no. 2, 2017, pp. 151-175.

want, but there will be social consequences if we depart too strongly from the norms" (Labov 157). There are markers of one's class position embedded in the way they speak that immediately signal their affiliation, or lack thereof, to institutions of power, education, and mainstream conceptions of 'sophistication.' From a Marxist perspective that emphasizes the social realities of language use, we may consider these markers and their implications an explicit indicator of one's relation to the means of production and their supposed 'role' in society. As will be discussed next, the changes in speech practices mentioned here are fostered by the aspiration or opportunity for upward social mobility, which play a similar role in multilingual contexts.

Situations of language contact and bilingualism likewise are influenced by a variety of sociopolitical forces and institutions of power. This is of particular relevance to the Sardinian context, seeing as Sardinian's mutual unintelligibility with the Standard Italian has been a matter of perennial contention and a motivating factor in efforts for regional autonomy.[58] In such situations there often emerges a prestige language which is hegemonically diffused throughout surrounding speech communities. In his seminal article, "A Typology of the Prestige Language," Henry Kahane describes how the forces of the dominant class govern the social valuation of language and induce linguistic hegemony (495):

> A certain political/social constellation favors the appeal and the spread of the language behind it, and this constellation determines the course of events: (a) the social structure of the target culture which is going to absorb that language; (b) the ways in which that language is acquired and integrated; [and] (c) the domains of modernism which it represents.

[58] See Mereu (389), who notes that "there is considerable structural distance between the two linguistic systems, at all linguistic levels."

Since Italy's *Questione della lingua* ("Language Dilemma") and the standardization of Italian as the national language will be discussed in a coming section, I will instead examine the prolonged use of Latin here to exemplify this notion.

For reasons inherently linked to class and prestige, Latin's usage was sustained for centuries after its relative 'death' following the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD. Just as Latin enjoyed lengthy periods as the linguistic-symbolic power of the State (i.e., the Roman Empire) and the Church (i.e., a parallel to empire), it also enjoyed – and still does – a period as the linguistic-symbolic power of high culture, or "the mother tongue of the learned" according to Bo Lindberg.[59] By 800 AD, the language had no native speakers yet survived as the customary mode of communication amongst clergy members, lawyers, officials, and sophisticated travelers. Even as Tuscan Italian came to dethrone Latin as the literary *lingua franca* in the early modern period, it remained a shibboleth that distinguished a particular class of people (i.e., the elites of varying domains) and was "virtually the only language of instruction at universities" well into the 1700s (Burke 54).

The implications of Latin being a 'prestigious' language still reverberate through today's Western education systems and are of crucial sociolinguistic relevance to issues of class and access. The study of Latin is widely considered part of the rigorous and 'classical' academic regimen historically reserved for white male elites.[60] Limited or no access to classical language study is typical in communities of color and regions of low economic

[59] "lingua eruditorum vernacular"

[60] For association with the masculine, see Joseph Farrell's chapter, "The Gender of Latin" in his book, *Latin Language and Latin Culture: From Ancient to Modern Times* (see references for full bibliographical information).

standing, making upward mobility and access to higher levels of education even more difficult for students whose standardized testing is normed and developed on the linguistic standards of white middle-class subjects (Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey 29). Latin has relevance to the myth of a so-called 'pure' Standard English, as well, seeing as though its grammatical structure influenced the rules prescribed in English grammars since the 1700s (McWhorter, *Word on the Street* 92).[61]

Whether it be the privileged access to literacy or fluency, the hierarchizing of dialects or the standardization of one, language and speech practices are perennial figures in instances of socioeconomic stratification and class conflict. The division of labor has forced new consequences, as well, with Monica Heller and Alexandre Duchêne stating that language now plays "an increasingly important role under the conditions of late capitalism, and in particular they reveal a heightened focus on linguistic variability (sometimes thought of in nationalist terms as problems of 'dialect' or of 'multilingualism')" (16). This multilingualism has existed throughout the history of Italian culture, though, and the "dialect vs. standard language diglossia" is simply a contemporary version of the "traditional diglossia we find existing since the Middle Ages between Latin and the vernacular" (Lepschy 17). Yet, the consequences have greater implications in todays' world where the way one speaks immediately identifies them within a class category and is a key determinant of their access to upward social and economic mobility.

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[61] e.g., 'splitting infinitives' or ending a sentence with a preposition were both impossible in written Latin, and were thus established as grammatical rules for English even though it is a Germanic (and not Romance) language (see John McWhorter's *Word on the Street: Debunking the Myth of a "Pure" Standard English*).

In the Sardinian context, the notion of having socioeconomic motivations behind standard language acquisition is all too familiar, given that the island had the lowest literacy rate (10%) of all regions at the time of unification in 1861 (De Mauro 95). The notion of linguistic hegemony is paramount here since "language is spread predominantly not by government or state coercion, military or police action, but by speakers accepting the prestige and utility of new languages, phrases, and terms" (Ives 7). In the next section, I will provide an overview of Sardinian's historical development and trace the different periods of linguistic contact.

The History of the Sardinian Language

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, Sardinian is the indigenous Romance language currently spoken by around one million inhabitants and emigrants from the island. It is considered by linguists the most conservative of all Romance languages, a categorization which stems from two main considerations: First, that Sardinian has preserved "many archaic features of Latin which are not found in other Romance languages," and second, that there is an "absence of any significant influence from non-Romance languages" (Jones, "Sardinian" 314). Generally speaking, research on linguistic change in Sardinia has primarily focused on the influence of Italian's standardization and the formal implementation of language policies – a matter which will be explored later in this chapter. This section will offer a timeline of Sardinian's historical development and the island's various periods of language contact which induced phonological, lexical, and syntactic change. Given that my coverage of this timeline is abbreviated due to the nature

of this section, I will limit the discussion to what is considered the primary diasystem of Sardinian. This diasystem includes the northern Logudorese and southern Campidanese dialects and excludes the peripheral dialects of Sassarese and Gallurese as well as the other hybridized forms of Ligurian and Catalan spoken by small populations of the island.

The first language spoken on Sardinia was Paleo-Sardinian, also called Nuragic Sardinian with reference to the Nuragic civilization which thrived on the island in the prehistoric period. The distinction between Paleo-Sardinian and Sardinian refers specifically to the language used on the island before and after (respectively) its Latinization.[62] The little amount of evidence that has survived of Paleo-Sardinian is "linguistically incompatible with all known languages," making its origins a source of debate for linguists" (Ong and Cacciafoco 131). Despite this, recent investigations on the etymology of the island's toponyms – particularly in the hinterlands of the central Barbagia region – have shed new light on their enigmatic origins and given at least some clues as to the "linguistic forms and features of the language" (131). Brenda Man Qing Ong and Francesco Perono Cacciafoco's analysis of these toponyms showed that they have "striking phonetic sequences that are uncharacteristic of Proto-Indo-European (PIE), such as **s(a)rd-*, **kar-*, **-ini, *-ài/*-éi,* and **#[θ]*" (131, 138-150). They qualify this, though, with the assertion that any pre-IE/non-IE theory must remain speculative given the lack of historical data and scholarship on Paleo-Sardinian.

[62] As discussed in Chapter 2, the island was annexed by Rome in the wake of the Mercenary War in 238 BC, though it took several centuries for the island to become Latinized due to violent resistance efforts in the hinterlands.

Sardinian linguist Massimo Pittau also worked extensively on Paleo-Sardinian, or *la lingua sardiana* as he termed it.[63] He similarly analyzed toponyms and cited links between them and the language of the Etruscans. For example, he noted the western *comune* of Usini's linguistic ties to the Etruscan anthroponym *Usuna,* or the *comune* of Aghilói's ties to the "probable Etruscan origins" of the Latin *aquila* (Pittau, "Toponimi"; Pittau, *Lessico italiano* 18). Linguist Gian Domenico Serra also made connections between Etruscan family names and Sardinian onomastics.[64] Of critical importance with regard to Paleo-Sardinian, however, is that all hypotheses and varying levels of analysis must remain tentative. Though they may offer potential insight into the arrival and displacement of certain communities in the Ancient Mediterranean, there is simply too little known about the language to reach a consensus on its origins. Eduardo Blasco-Ferrer has likewise noted the "ingenuous attempts at reconstruction that fail to make use of an appropriate methodology, but rather compare Paleo-Sardinian forms with homophones from other languages, have yielded wildly erroneous results" ("A new approach" 67).

Following the introduction and extended presence of the Phoenicians on Sardinia starting from the end of the second millennium BC, the linguistic landscape of the island steadily involved the coexistence of multiple languages. The Nora Stele (Figure 4.2), a dedicatory inscription found on the southern coast, is the oldest known Phoenician inscription in the Western Mediterranean. In terms of Pre-Latin substrata, this period of

[63] As compared to the post-Latinized *lingua sarda*.
[64] See Serra, Gian Domenico. *Etruschi e latini in Sardegna: nomi di luogo, cognomi e agnomi sardi medievali e moderni da gentilizi etruschi e latini*. Bergandahls, 1952.

Phoenician-Punic influence resulted in an influx of loanwords in the Sardinian lexicon (again, mostly evident in toponyms) which are highly concentrated in the southern and western portions of the island where their settlements were most developed (Putzu, "History").

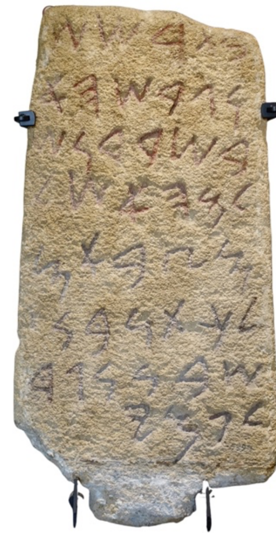

Figure 4.2

Rome's annexation of Sardinia in 238 BC marked a new period of linguistic contact. As only the second province acquired by Republican Rome, the preservation of archaic forms of Latin is especially noted in the island's central mountainous region where rough terrain restricted outside influence. Such preservation was also aided by violent resistance efforts in the central region and local refusal to engage with Latin communication which we know from ancient authors to have lasted at least into Tiberius' rule in the 1st century AD (Sorge 29-30). As a consequence of the continued social isolation of the hinterlands, linguists have noted a "division between the 'central' dialects [of Sardinian] (Nuoro and Logudorese)" where archaic Latin forms like "*elix, ianua,* and *facere*" persist (Putzu, "History").[65] These are compared with the analogous yet more recent Latin forms of "*ilex, ienua,* and *fagere*" which emerge in the southern Campidanese dialect spoken in areas where the continued adoption of Roman customs was far more widespread (Putzu, "History").

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[65] See also Wagner, Max Leopold. "La stratificazione del lessico sardo." *Revue de linguistique Romane*, 1928, pp.1-61.

It should be noted that a major part of the foundational research on, and interest in, the Sardinian language and its Latinization is credited to German linguist Max Leopold Wagner. From 1905 to 1927, he conducted meticulous studies across the island and published extensively on the etymological and formal aspects of Sardinian's variants (Tiragallo 7-18).[66] Though provisional compared to contemporary standards of linguistic research, Wagner's work established some conclusions about Sardinian's Latinization which are (relatively) widely accepted. This includes his assertation of an African-Latin influence on the Latin of Sardinia, as seen for instance in the word for Friday, *cenábara* [ʧɛˈnaβura] (Campidanese), which he identifies as having derived from the Latin *cenā purā* referenced by Berber theologian Augustine of Hippo (Wagner, *La lingua sarda* 144-145; Adams 576).

Though copious Latin inscriptions have been excavated (and many more remain unexcavated) across the island, it is not until the medieval period that we find evidence of written Sardinian. As a prefacing remark on the time period following Rome's domination, we know that Sardinian must have been markedly different, phonologically and lexically, from the other Latinized dialects of the peninsula in the late 1200s. This is based on Dante's remark in his Latin essay, *De vulgari eloquentia*: "Sardos etiam, qui non Latii sunt, sed Latiis adsociandi videntur, gramaticam tanquam simie homines imitantes; nam *domus nova* et *dominus meus* locuntur" ("Even the Sardinians, who aren't Latins, though they seem to have been considered Latins, let's get rid of them, because they don't even have their own

[66] His *Dizionario etimologico sardo* (*Etymological Dictionary of Sardinian*, see references for full bibliographical information) is considered unparalleled and foundational to Sardinian linguistics.

vernacular. They just imitate Latin as apes imitate humans; They say things like *domus nova* and *dominus meus*” I.xi.6). This comment alludes to the linguistic situation of long-lasting diglossia, too, which we know existed in Sardinia as the Latin language performed “an acrolectal function, acting as a model for the high uses of Sardinian, and Sardinian was progressively relegated to unofficial domains in the urban centers and to the countryside” (Putzu, “History”).

When compared with the textual record of Romance language varieties like Late Latin or French, evidence for the medieval stages of Sardinian is relatively limited. The emergence of narrative texts wasn’t until the 15th century, so the most substantial resources from this period are administrative documents (e.g., *statuti, carte,* and *condaghes*) (Bentley 325). The most extent and useful of these are the *condaghes*, registers from monasteries which recorded their various exchanges of property and have been dated to the period spanning from the early 1100s to the mid-1200s (Rowland, “Sardinian Condaghi” 117-122).[67] These texts indicate that Sardinian seemed to have a fairly unified orthography in the Middle Ages. In Sam Wolfe’s syntactic analysis of the *condaghes*, he concluded that the Sardinian of the *condaghes* appears to be a relic of the period in which Late Latin went through generalized verb-fronting, yielding VSO and SVO orders (Wolfe 317-320). This rendering of medieval Sardinian as a verb-initial language is atypical in comparison with all other Romance systems of the period which were verb-second, in addition to Sardinian

[67] These documents also served as the inspiration for the independent publishing house *Edizioni Condaghes* in Cagliari, which is dedicated to the diffusion and valorization of the Sardinian language.

being the only Romance variety that "retains the late Latin characteristic that left peripheral topicalization or focalization is optional and pragmatically-driven" (303).

"Old Italian" – the term used generally to account for regional contributions of Tuscan, Pisan, and Genoese – also had lexical and syntactic influence on Sardinian since the 1200s when Genoa and Pisa established significant relations with the island via trading posts. Figure 4.3, for example, shows the *Breve di Villa di Chiesa*, the original copy of the formal legal code written in Old Italian and preserved in the municipal archives in Iglesias, a southwestern city founded by the Republic of Pisa at the turn of the 14th century. According to Wagner's theory, the influence of these powers on the island also resulted in phonological changes to the Sardinian language. Documentation is relatively scant, however, making it difficult to distinguish between linguistic change occurring from contact during this period or later during the lead up to Italian unification. With respect to the influence of Old Italian on Sardinian, Wagner identified three separate categorizations: First, words from Old Italian such as *mezetima* ("Wednesday") or *muccubellu* ("extortion") found only in the medieval Sardinian textual record; Second, words from Old Italian like *predare* ("to foreclose") which survive in modern Sardinian dialects; And third, words from modern Sardinian such as *arricchiu*

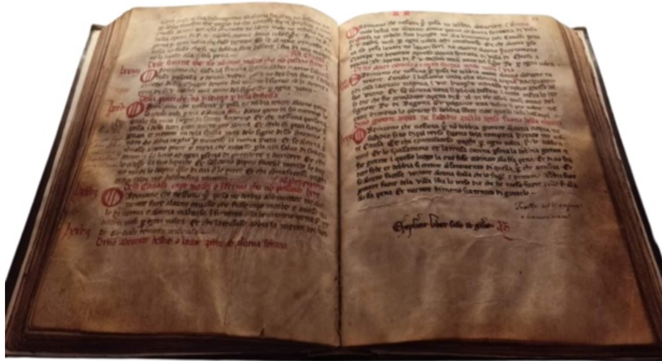

Figure 4.3

(“enriched”) or *gióvanu* (“young man”) whose pronunciation seemed to stem from the corresponding Old Italian terms *ricco* and *giovano* (*La lingua sarda* 246).

A final source of linguistic change I will discuss here which resulted in the substantial reshaping of the Sardinian lexicon during the Middle Ages is the influence of Catalan and Spanish superstrates. The period follows the arc of Aragonese, Spanish, and Savoyard rule on the island beginning in 1323 and lasting into the 1700s, during which Spanish and Catalan were used in urban centers and for local administration while Sardinian was spoken in the countryside. Aside from Latin, Wagner considered the combined Catalan-Castilian influence to be “by far the most important element in Sardinian” with a significant influx of loanwords from both languages (232). Linguist Immacolata Pinto also documented many instances of morphological induction, citing the application of Iberian suffixes to Sardinian lexical bases and of Sardinian affixes to Iberian words in her 2011 book, *La formazione delle parole in sardo* (*The formation of words in Sardinian*). While this long period of language contact resulted in distinct changes to Sardinian’s lexicon and morphology, Ines Loi Corvetto has noted that the impending introduction of Standard Italian gradually shifted the use of Catalanisms and Hispanicisms to substitutions deriving from Italian (Loi Corvetto 856).

While this section has been relatively limited due to the constraints and focus of this project, I have offered an overview of the most impactful points of language contact in Sardinia that span from antiquity through the modern era. As noted at the outset of this section and worth mentioning at its close, I opted to follow Michael Jones’ linguistic scope out of convenience, limiting discussion of the island’s more coastal speech communities

where Catalan, Ligurian, and Corsican hybrids are involved ("Sardinian" 314-315). This is all considered in light of the first few sections of this chapter, which presented some of the foundational arguments on the intersections of language, identity, and class. From the earliest stage of Paleo-Sardinian to the impact of Punic, Latin, Catalan, and Spanish influence, linguists have been able to glean a decent amount of information about Sardinian's historical development despite comparatively scant interest and textual evidence with respect to other Romance varieties like Neapolitan, Occitan, and others.

Contact and influence from these superstrates are a direct result of the island's tumultuous political history, spanning over a millennium of occupation and colonization efforts. The linguistic record of Sardinian's evolution is in its own way a cataloguing of the island's contentious past; In it, we see evidence of Rome's imperialist mission of colonization, the island's time under Pisan and Genoan control, and the period of Hispanic rule. Yet, the catalyst for the most impactful change to the linguistic situation in Sardinia was Italy's *Questione della lingua* ("Language Dilemma") and its subsequent nation-building project which began in the 18th century after the conclusion of Spanish rule. In the following section, I will detail the events of this transitional period and describe how it led to the current era of organized linguistic resistance efforts.

Italy's *Questione della lingua* and the Standardization of Italian

We know the *Questione della lingua* to have been introduced during the Middle Ages (note Dante's remark on Sardinian Latin from the previous section) when the work of the literary "Three Crowns" (Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio) reached such immense

popularity that their shared Tuscan dialect was solidified as the variety deserving of standardization. Yet it wasn't until the Renaissance that the Latin-vernacular bilingualism truly began to shift toward a Tuscan-dialect bilingualism with an emphasis on Tuscan's codification. Dialect remained alive during this period, even thriving in the theatrical and literary traditions, though it was frequently used in these contexts to parody country folk or portray sufferings specifically of the lower classes (Haller 17).

Southern dialects like Sardinian faced more targeted deprecation in the Late Renaissance when ideas about the hierarchizing of language began to take on racial overtones. Intellectuals of the period were guided by a revived interest in the classical languages and the Attic, Doric, and Ionic variations of Greek were of particular significance to their considerations of the various dialects spoken across Italy. We see evidence of linguistic insecurity from Italian philologists of the period like Vincenzo Borghini, who declared that the Italian dialects were inherently inferior socio-culturally to those enjoyed by Greek speakers (Alinei 179). This century also featured the foundation of the Accademia della Crusca, an academy of professionals dedicated to proper linguistic usage of the Tuscan dialect whose elaborate dictionary publications sought to shape a 'normative' Italian.

Regional languages like Sardinian continued to be framed as derivatives of the common language (Tuscan), with intellectuals of the time denoting a distinct *sostrato etnico* (ethnic substratum) in southern dialects and making explicit connections between one's language and their innate level of civility. By 1764, Tuscan Italian was established as the island's official language in all public sectors by the Savoyard government in an

effort to supplant the residual effects of prolonged Spanish rule there and to ensure Sardinia's integration with the Italian mainland. The intensification of the *Questione della lingua* coincided with Italy's own nation-building efforts and its subsequent unification in 1861, considered among elites to be a mission of linguistic unification as much as one of political unification. Alessandro Manzoni, the famed author of *I promessi sposi*, was appointed as head of a governmental commission to secure the diffusion of the Tuscan standard in 1868. His proposals included the subsidization of dictionaries and the recruitment of teachers solely from Tuscany for placements across Italy, policies which were highly influential and further reinforced the solidification of Italian in Sardinia (Ives 38).

It is readily apparent that ideas about hierarchized language and biases against southern dialects whose lexica and syntactic structure differed greatly from the northern Tuscan were only magnified during the years following unification. In 1873, the manifesto of the Società Dialettologica Italiana (Society of Italian Dialectology) stated that their intention was to study dialects in order to learn the "intellectual merits and moral qualities of the peoples who now constitute our nation" (Corazzini, "Programma").[68] And as cultural hegemony typically ensures that subjugated groups willingly act in accordance with dominant standards, even the actions of the Sardinian speakers themselves during the 1700s and 1800s revealed a supposed hierarchization of their own varieties based on prestige. The production of grammars and other descriptions of the Sardinian language tended to

[68] See also Barbara Ann Naddeo's extensive discussion on the politics of dialect management in her 2001 article, "Urban Arcadia: Representations of the 'Dialect' of Naples in Linguistic Theory and Comic Theater, 1696-1780" (see reference list for full bibliographical information).

produce models which were focused on the central Logudorese variety, characterized as illustrious because of its presumed archaic origins and qualities (Corongiu 18). The fieldwork of the time also centered investigations of the most isolated parts of the island, further associating its authenticity with notions of primitiveness and stigmatizing minority culture as inherently anti-modern (Tufi 145-160).

Though the *Questione della lingua* and its ensuing linguistic policies served as Italian's entry point to Sardinia's linguistic landscape, it was the acute industrialization and growth of capitalism which have most notably impacted Sardinian speech communities. In the next section, I will discuss the revival and intensification of linguistic policies under Fascism, whose nationalist projects extended across Sardinia and sought to extinguish linguistic diversity on the island under the guise of its inclusion in an alleged national identity. This section will also cover the stifling of Sardinia's economy in the post-war period and the opportunities for upward socioeconomic mobility associated with speaking the dominant language in an increasingly globalized economy, which remain a major threat to the long-term survival of Sardinian.

Sardinian in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Despite the language dilemma being central to Italy's symbolic and political unification, changes in speech practices in Sardinia have been the most pronounced during the 20th and 21st century. Influence on language use has stemmed from a few different factors in this period, and this section will focus in particular on the role played by the Fascist regime and the rise of global capitalism. The first phase of these changes began

with Mussolini's acquisition of power and his mission to construct a national identity, one which he claimed would coincide with the inauguration of a "Third Rome" (the "first" Rome being that of the Empire, and the "second" Rome being that of Medieval Christianity) (Arthurs 11). Italians were still culturally and linguistically fragmented several decades into unification, and Mussolini played off of the concerns of the bourgeoisie who looked to nearby France as a model nation-state with a flourishing capital and dominant common language. Given the prominence of the Tuscan dialect and the industrial success in Turin, the North continued to surge in political and financial growth while the largely illiterate South, where regional dialects differed greatly from Tuscan, remained stagnant.

For Fascist officials, it was the "persistence of dialects in Italy [that] was the most evident and annoying reminder of the distance between [the] two realms" coexisting at the time: the political administration of the northern bourgeoisie, and the socio-cultural realm of regional affiliations (Ben-Ghiat 439). By this time it was well understood that "to speak [dialect] was not only backward but also anti-Fascist," because "dialect turns language inside out, from a nether world beneath the bourgeois one. It corrupts the official, dominant, bourgeois language that dominates at the top" and disrupts notions of the *buon costume* ("morality") that Fascist leadership insisted was part of the inherent superiority unique to the Italian race (Bonsaver 20). Overall, the regime's project of nationalizing the masses meant eradicating dialect and would "entail the use of institutions such as the school, the army, and public rituals to create a uniform civic culture" (Ben-Ghiat 438).

In order to tackle the language issue, Fascist leaders knew that the education system had the institutional strength to pervade home life and alter personal practices like speech. They also knew that achieving linguistic unity across Italy would encourage allegiance to the ruling class and prevent resistance efforts that could develop from solidary amongst regional speech communities. Scholars have tied Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital to Italy's language problems, and we may consider this in the context of his emphasis on the "linguistic market" which is integrated under the auspices of the state (Wells, "The linguistic capital"; Bourdieu 651-652):

> Linguistic competence (like any other cultural competence) functions as linguistic capital in relationship with a certain market…The education system is a crucial object of struggle because it has a monopoly over the production of the mass of producers and consumers, and hence over the reproduction of the market on which the value of linguistic competence depends, in other words its capacity to function as linguistic capital.

When Mussolini took power in 1922 nearly 30% of all Italians still communicated exclusively in their respective regional dialects, a rate which was assuredly higher in Sardinia where the linguistic separation of their language from the northern Tuscan standard resulted in perennially low literacy rates.

In terms of its cultural and linguistic identity, Sardinia's reputation as that of an exotic and subaltern culture came to be utilized by the regime. Even in the early 20th century, dialect theatre still held substantial weight as a form of popular entertainment across Italy. This is because the region spent centuries before unification without a centralized government (unlike Renaissance England, France, and Spain), so Italy "remained particularly open to cultural, linguistic, and theatrical diversity" with plurilingualism and dialect mixing serving as "important feature[s] of the Italian theatre

tradition, from Ruzante and Calmo to Dario Fo" (Carlson 68). Unsurprisingly, Fascist leadership strongly opposed certain aspects of dialect theatre, particularly its authentic representations of local life and culture which contradicted the supposed unitary Italian identity proposed by national propaganda. Despite their frustration about the relative impossibility of a national theater at the time, one that could "address real problems and could speak to the entire population," the regime tolerated dialect performance for strategic purposes (Cappuccio 77). Provided that performances remained relatively apolitical, Mussolini saw this as an opportunity to take advantage of "the prestige which Italian musical theatre enjoyed at home and abroad…[thereby] accumulating political capital by exposing Italy's glories not only with respect to the Roman past, but also on the stage" (Golovlev 316). Theatre also served as a 'performance' of regional history, framing it along with local folklore (both of which were still taught in elementary schools) as relics of the past, unattached to present identities yet simultaneously "emphasiz[ing] the Mediterranean imperial dimension of Italian Fascism" (Seixas 122).

Policy-based language management, however, played a critical role in controlling the island through linguistic parameters. Beginning in 1923 and lasting until 1948, the Sardinian language was banned in schools, the press, and public spaces, a time characterized by Francesco Masala in the anecdotal story which opened this chapter. Though regime's national campaign against linguistic regionalisms was protracted and ultimately fruitless, it made a lasting impact on Sardinia in particular. In 1943 when all of the programs for linguistic autarchy had gone bankrupt and were abandoned, bans on the

Sardinian language remained in place on the island as it fell further into economic subjugation to the industrialized North.

The post-war period only complicated the linguistic situation further in Sardinia, with the introduction of new social and economic motivations which encouraged Sardinians to abandon their native language and adopt the national standard in hopes of achieving financial security in a failing island economy. In fact, it wasn't until 1949 that peninsular Italy was all but forced to address whether or not they intended to integrate Sardinia as part of the unified nation (e.g., a 1949 newsreel voiceover from *Notizie dalla Sardegna* declared, "Ci prenderemo cura di lei perché è una forte e sincera regione d'Italia" – "We will take care of her, because she is a true and strong region of Italy") (Mancosu 48). Many have pointed to the diffusion of television in the 1950s to account for the massive rise in literacy rates with the standard language in Sardinia, though the socio-economic changes of the post-war era which had the greatest impact on the social balance of the diglossic situation in Sardinia (i.e., the situation in which Italian and Sardinian are used in tandem by the population).

From the second half of the 20th century to the present, bilingualism and code-switching have become typical features of most Sardinian speech communities and have had induced language shift. The first years of the 1950s saw the establishment of several educational centers on the island which were sponsored by the National League for the Struggle Against Illiteracy. Their success was referenced in a 1952 issue of the UNESCO Courier which lauded the "new enthusiasm for learning sweeping southern Italy" that was helping to eradicate the "plague of illiteracy" in Sardinia (Levi 3-5). Bilingualism became

typical in the subsequent decades, with empirical studies of the 1980s demonstrating that Italian was increasingly adopted even in the more rural parts of the island as the common language of socialization within the family.

For younger generations today, the Sardinian dialects tend to function as a socially recessive code since they have largely been raised and socialized in Italian. Many still have a command of their local dialect thanks to familial contexts, however, and even more are competent enough to engage in code-switching to convey their ethnic identity in informal conversations. Below are some typical examples of the ways in which speakers code-switch, particularly in instances of emotion (anger/excitement/shock) where Sardinian words or phrases signal the speaker's attitude toward the listener:[69]

(N.B. Bolded lexical items are in Sardinian, unbolded items are in Italian, and code-switching tends to occur at strong clausal boundaries.)

1. (In the context of being invited to go out for the evening)

Si	*dai,*	*magari*	*vengo*	*ma*	*davvero*
Emph.part.	give-imp.	maybe-adv.	I-come	but	seriously-adv.

no	***'ndi***	***tengu***	***gana**!*
NEG	**of$_{P}$-it-3rd.sg.cl.pron.**	**have-1st.sg.pres.**	**desire**

'Come on, I might come but I seriously **don't want to at all**!'

2.

Perché	*me*	*lo*	*chiedi?*
why-Q	me-1st.sg.dat.pron.	it-3rd.sg.acc.pron.	ask-2nd.sg.pres.

Itta	***'ndi***	***sciu***	***deu**?*
What-Q	**of$_{P}$-it-3rd.sg.cl.pron.**	**know-1st.sg.pres.**	**I-1st.sg.nom.pron.**

'Why are you asking me? **What do I know about it**?'

[69] I'd like to thank my native speaker consultant, Giacomo Scanu.

3.

Ti	***d'***	***appu***	***giai***	***nau****!*
You-2nd.sg.dat.pron	**it-3rd.sg.acc.pron.**	**have-1st.sg.pres.**	**already-adv.**	**told-1st.sg.past.part.**

Non	*lo*	*so!*
NEG	it-3rd.sg.acc.pron.	know-1st.sg.pres.

'**I already told you**! I don't know!'

4.

Non	*so*	*di*	*cosa*	*parli…*
NEG.	know-1st.sg.pres	about-P	thing	talk-2nd.sg.pres

lassa	***perdi****.*
let-2nd.sg.imperat.	**lose-inf.**

'I don't know what you're talking about…**forget it**.'

5. (In the context of receiving exciting news)

Ma	*davvero?*
But	seriously-adv.

No	***mi***	***du***	***nerisi****!*
NEG	**me-1st.sg.dat.pron.**	**it-3rd.sg.acc.pron.**	**tell-2nd.sg.subjunctive**

'Are you serious? **Don't tell me**!'

In her analysis of over 1,000 codeswitches in the late 1990s, Rosita Rindler Schjerve made some key observations about the habits of speakers for whom either Sardinian or Italian is the matrix (dominant) language. She found that younger speakers made the most switches from Italian into Sardinian at the boundaries of speaking turns (also evidenced in the above examples) and that the oldest speakers were characterized by their low code-switching activities. As for the middle age group of speakers she observed, they were the most active code-switchers and displayed the highest level of bilingual competence, switching frequently between Sardinian and Italian at inter- and intraphrasal points (Rindler Schjerve, "Codeswitching as an indicator" 235-237).

Overall, Rindler Schjerve describes the Sardinian language at the turn of the 21st century as one between maintenance and change, noting that the "Sardinian lexicon is

being strongly remodeled on Italian…though [there seems to be] no wide-spread morphological mixing between the two" ("Sardinian between maintenance" 253-254). However, the drafters of a 1996 survey on language use conducted by the European Union made more stark comments on the state of Sardinian (Oppo 5):[70]

> [È] un ulteriore gruppo linguistico minoritario in situazione di grande pericolo. Le agenzie della produzione e della riproduzione (delle lingue) non svolgono più il ruolo che svolgevano solo una generazione fa. Il sistema educativo non interviene in alcun modo per sostenere la lingua, per favorirne la produzione e la riproduzione. La lingua non ha prestigio e viene usata nei luoghi di lavoro solo occasionalmente e non in modo sistematico. È ormai una lingua relegata alle interazioni fra amici e parenti in contesti precisamente situati. La sua base istituzionale è debolissima e in declino. Eppure vi è preoccupazione fra i parlanti che hanno un forte legame emotivo con la lingua, per il suo rapporto con l'identità sarda.
>
> [It is] a new minority linguistic group in a situation of great danger. The agencies of production and reproduction (of languages) no longer play the role they did only a generation ago. The education system does not intervene in any way to support the language, to facilitate its production and reproduction. The language has no prestige and is used in the workplace only occasionally and not systematically. It is now a language relegated to interactions between friends and relatives in precisely situated contexts. Its institutional base is very weak and in decline. And yet there is a concern among its speakers, who have a strong emotional connection to the language, about its relationship to Sardinian identity.

The next and final section of this chapter will explore this personal connection between Sardinians and their ethnic language, detailing the formal efforts at organized linguistic resistance and preservation.

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[70] See more on Sardinian language use in *Euromosaico*'s "Sardinian language use survey" (see reference list for full bibliographical information).

Efforts to Resist Hegemonic Language Shift

Since the 1960s, language revitalization efforts have gained notable traction in Sardinia. Despite the weak and unorganized institutionalization of Standard Italian in the opening decades of Italian unification, the governmental push during the second half of the 20th century which was discussed in the previous section raised literacy rates substantially in Sardinia and increasingly solidified Italian as the language not just of administration but also of private life. As a result, Sardinians became cognizant of the decline in their local varieties and a renaissance of the Sardinian language came to the fore in the late 1960s. This section will provide an overview of Sardinians' formal efforts to achieve linguistic autonomy and standardize the Sardinian language, endeavors which are unfortunately complex and fraught with their own sociocultural implications.

I will preface this section with a brief comment that resistance to linguistic hegemony does not necessarily require collective action and can still operate meaningfully at the individual level. Chapter 3 offered examples of the many resistance murals and anarchist graffiti that make intentional use of the Sardinian language to express cultural solidarity and add emphasis to their fight against Italian domination (as well as the imperial dimension of English tied to their conceptions of NATO). The graffito in Figure 4.4, for example, is in a central area of the capital city of Cagliari and employs both Italian and Sardinian. It spans some 10 meters and alludes to Italy's historical conception of the island as backward and savage, the first half reading in Italian: *CONTRO LO SFRUTTAMENTO DELLA SARDEGNA* (*AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION OF SARDINIA*), and the second

half reading in Sardinian: *MELLUS ARESTIS KI TZERAKKUS* (*BETTER TO BE SAVAGE THAN ENSLAVED*).

Figure 4.4

Activist posters share similar qualities, where Sardinian text is commonly used in the expression of anti-prison and anti-military sentiments which are intimately connected to the national government's and NATO's occupation of the island. In Figure 4.5, a poster promoting a protest against the maltreatment of local prisoners is written entirely in Italian (the majority language) with a final line in Sardinian: *KONTRA IS PRESONIS NISHUNU EST SOLU* (*NO ONE IS ALONE* [*IN THE FIGHT*] *AGAINST PRISONS*). Lastly, we have the myriad instances of *SARDIGNA NO EST ITALIA* graffiti across the island, almost always written in a Sardinian dialect and often accompanied by the

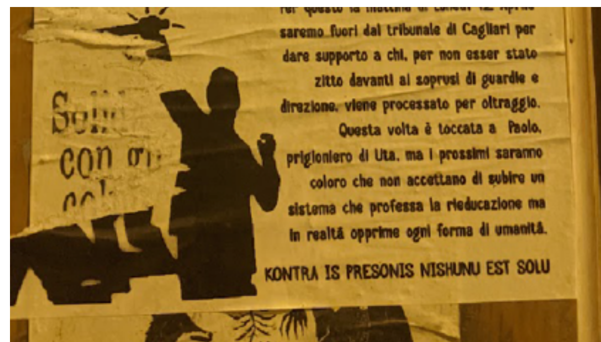

Figure 4.5

communist hammer and sickle symbol which conveys proletarian solidarity (Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

Figure 4.6

Figure 4.7

While the minoritization and notable decline in the use of Sardinian dialects throughout the 1950s and -60s encouraged communal efforts to preserve the indigenous varieties, such linguistic movements gave rise to new in-group complications. Organized efforts at linguistic preservation began with the resurgence of the movement termed *neo-sardismo* led by the Partito Sardo d'Azione (Psd'Az, Sardinian Action Party) in conjunction with a series of other organizations like *Sardinnya et Libertat* (Sardinia and Freedom), *Democrazia Proletaria Sarda* (Sardinian Democratic Proletariat), and *Su Populu Sardu* (The Sardinian People) (Hepburn 600). The ethos of this collective push was an update to the socialist *sardismo* movement of the post-First World War era which called for regional self-determination. The focal point of this movement was a demand for the instruction of Sardinian in schools, as well as its use as the official language of public institutions and local media. The linguistic dimension was a particularly new addition for

the Psd'Az, the most prominent group whose emphasis had formerly been on political autonomy with little mention of language in its prior policy recommendations (Hepburn 611).[71]

The combined efforts of these progressive institutions in Sardinia in the 1970s led to organized attempts at codifying the Sardinian language which, in turn, led to issues of prestige and mutual intelligibility between the island's two main dialects: the northern Logudorese variety, considered literary and prestigious due to its preservation of archaisms in the speech communities of the island's hinterlands; and the southern Campidanese variety, spoken in the capital city and surrounding areas. Stemming from these debates were five suggested approaches for how to arrive at an official linguistic norm for the region (Rindler Schjerve, "Sardinian: Italian" 274-275):[72]

> (1) on the basis of *logudorese comune* which is considered most authentic and enjoys the highest prestige;
> (2) on the basis of a general Logudorese koine (*logudorese comune, logudorese settentrionale, logudorese centrale*), which, however, in the view of many language planners, lacks empirical reality;
> (3) on the basis of a Logudorese-Campidanese koine that is beginning to appear in the language of intellectuals but needs further development along the lines proposed in the "Ortografia sarda unificata"
> (4) on the basis of a general Sardinian koine, for which language policy has not yet created any prerequisites; or
> (5) on the basis of an interim solution, which would consist of using *logudorese comune* as a written standard in administration and education, while all dialects would contribute to the development of a spoken standard.

[71] For more on the political and social history, see Martin Clark's "La storia politica e sociale 1915-1975" (see reference list for full bibliographical information).
[72] Schjerve Rindler draws from Cristina Lavinio's "La questione della lingua in Sardegna: Alcune considerazioni" (see reference list for full bibliographical information).

The proposals involved subjective recommendations and contained enough bureaucratic complications to render them incapable of being instituted thoroughly. In 1981, the regional council passed a law recognizing the legal equality of Sardinian and Italian and inaugurated a new wave of bilingualism on the island. However, despite additional proposals by scholars like Eduardo Blasco Ferrer in the 1980s (i.e., his *La lingua sarda contemporanea: Grammatica del logudorese e del campidanese*) to simultaneously codify both the Logudorese and Campidanese dialects, the debate continues today and there is still no unified orthography or recognized form of the spoken language.

While the issues of codification and preservation persist, Sardinian has by no means undergone significant language attrition in recent decades. In 1982, a survey conducted in the region indicated that 54% of families still spoke in a Sardinian dialect with one another (Coveri 198-202). The turn of the 21st century introduced renewed efforts to standardize the language, though they have been plagued by similar issues of the prior decades. In 2001, a failed proposal for a unified orthography called *Limba sarda unificada* (Unified Sardinian Language) received immediate criticism and fueled debates on television and in the press due to its biased focus on the Logudorese variety (Corongiu 13-14, 21). In 2006 the proposal was reformulated and introduced as *Limba sarda comuna* (LSC, Common Sardinian Language), meant to serve as "a written complement" to the spoken varieties with spelling "open to additions" and therefore "represent[ing] a linguistic model placed in an intermediate position between the varieties of the Sardinian language" (Hrvatin 249). The LSC was adopted regionally in 2006 and its use has even extended (though not widely) to certain funded school programs in various towns. The core issue endures, however;

Without a formal written standard, Italian has remained the only acceptable option for region-wide educational purposes.

Gendered aspects of speaking Sardinian as opposed to Italian have introduced new conversations on language revitalization efforts, as well. The itinerary of the annual Festa de sa Limba Ufitziale (Festival of the Official Language) featured a new panel in 2017 coordinated by journalist Manuela Ennas on the "chistione feminile de sa limba" ("feminine dilemma of the Sardinian language") ("Sos temas de sa Festa"). This gathering of intellectuals and community members was advertised in the local news as an opportunity for collective conversation on some lingering questions: "È vero, come dicono le indagini sociologiche che le donne parlano di meno il sardo? L'universo femminile accetterà la sfida di tornare alla lingua materna?" ("Are the sociological investigations that say women speak Sardinian less really true? Will the feminine world accept the challenge to return to their mother tongue?") ("Donne e limba sarda"). Reliable estimates for the disparity in gendered speech patterns are scant since few investigations into the matter have been completed, though explorations of other regional dialects have affirmed the idea that women gravitate toward using Italian in the role of child-rearing in an Italian-dominant economy, and that when they speak dialect instead of the national standard they tend to be viewed as rough and inelegant (Cavanaugh 70).

Overall, it can be said that the linguistic situation in Sardinia involving the codification, institutionalization, and revitalization of dialect(s) has suffered due to ineffective and competing attempts at (1) corpus planning and (2) status planning. Organizations and associations that have pushed for corpus planning advocate for the

codification of a linguistic "norm" yet have remained unsuccessful because the lack of central institutions makes carrying out such formal projects virtually impossible. On the other hand, those pushing for the latter (status planning) have tried to prevent Sardinian from falling further into disuse by heightening its prestige through its use in functional domains like public administration and bilingual periodicals.[73] Only time will tell if new avenues of technology like the internet and other methods of large-scale collaboration can turn the tide and secure the long-term survival of Sardinian.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered strong evidence that language in Sardinia has become an increasingly significant marker of cultural identity and social standing in a region subjugated politically and economically by the industrialized northern elites in Italy. Recent decades have shown that the bilingual diglossic situation involving Italian and Sardinian, though longstanding, has by now become unstable due to the uneven levels of social prestige in the two languages. As Italian continues to operate as the national language of administration, business, social and familial settings, Sardinian dialects have fallen further into disuse. Much like other aspects of the Sardinian cultural identity, their speech varieties have been stigmatized at the national level as those of a supposedly backward and anti-modern people. Gramsci's discussion in his *Quaderni* encapsulates how social

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[73] Rosita Rindler Schjerve p. 275, also Kloss, Heinz. "Research possibilities on group bilingualism: A report." *International Center for Research on Bilingualism, Publication B-18*, 1969.

disparity in Sardinia was actualized through the politicization and hierarchization of the Italian dialects (*Qauderni Vol 2* 1377):

> Ogni linguaggio contiene gli elementi di una concezione del mondo e di una cultura...[ma] chi parla solo il dialetto o comprende la lingua nazionale in gradi diversi, partecipa necessariamente di una intuizione del mondo più o meno ristretta e provinciale, fossilizzata, anacronistica in confronto delle grandi correnti di pensiero che dominano la storia mondiale.
>
> Every language contains elements of a conception of the world and of a culture...He who speaks only dialect, or understands the national language only to a degree, must then necessarily have an intuition of the world that is more or less restricted, provincial, fossilized, and anachronistic compared to the major currents of thought that dominate world history.

Due to the stigmatization of the Sardinian language and ethnic identity, along with the unfortunate disadvantage of Sardinia's underdeveloped administrative institutions, there have been various social and pragmatic roadblocks along the path to language revitalization. Today, around 61% of Sardinians are active users of a local variety and the language remains 'definitely endangered' according to UNESCO, a designation made in 2010 indicating that Sardinian dialects are no longer learned as the mother tongue by children in the home.

In the final conclusion to this project, I will make a few observations on the current sociopolitical state of Sardinia and the viability of preserving its indigenous culture. While resistance to hegemonic language shift in particular has been – and continues to be – a perennial feature of public discourse in Sardinia, the linguistic situation faces a similar fate to that of the cultural and economic circumstances. With the continued growth in capitalism and the imperial domination of Western culture, it is of critical importance that Sardinians achieve institutional strength through collective organization and action.

CONCLUSION

Sardinia Moving Forward

Figure 5.1: *Sardinian language graffito in Cagliari, Sardinia*

> *Io so che quando tutto è perduto, o anche soltanto sembra perduto, quello è il momento di ricominciare daccapo.*
>
> I know that when everything is lost, or even just seems lost, that is the moment to start over from the beginning.
>
> -Antonio Gramsci

In this dissertation, I began with the grassroots phrase "Sardigna no est Italia" and set out to investigate how such a statement of resistance came to be an integral function of Sardinian identity. What I have shown throughout the course of the last four chapters is that resistance for Sardinians is nuanced and takes many forms, none of which are more or less significant than the others. Perhaps most importantly, this project has confronted the classical canon and traditional historiography in order to reclaim Sardinian history and culture from the pervasive characterizations which have constituted its identity in the modern era. Sardinia is not Italy, nor is it the image that Italians and other Europeans

fashioned of it. That is, Niceforo's 'barbaric' and 'primitive' Sardinia, plagued by a so-called 'social atavism,' or D.H. Lawrence's Sardinia, the one "lost between Europe and Africa…outside the circuit of civilization" (103).

I mentioned D.H. Lawrence in the introduction to this project, whose widely read travelogue called *Sea and Sardinia* described his journey to the island in January of 1921. He wrote that he was intrigued by Sardinia because it had "no history, no date, no race, [and] no offering" (15). He had particular interest in visiting Nuoro, the central province that would later become home to the resistance murals of Orgosolo. But *why* did he want to see Nuoro? He gave a specific answer: "This is what is so attractive about the remote places…Life is so primitive [in Nuoro], so pagan, so strangely heathen and half-savage. And yet it is human life" (215).

Yes, believe it or not, rural Sardinians are indeed humans.

And so, this project adopted something of a two-pronged approach. Firstly, I leaned on the historical record and material culture in order to paint a more accurate picture of early Sardinia as a remarkably sophisticated and organized society, not a backward and hopeless region 'rescued' by the supposed civilizing forces of the Mediterranean that we typically hear about (i.e., Rome and Greece). Second, I turned to Sardinians themselves to see how they organize and resist the hegemonic forces of colonialism, xenophobia, and capitalism. This second facet of the project was especially motivated by the many ways in which Sardinians preserve the intangible aspects of their cultural heritage at the community level with no lack of enthusiasm, even when the bureaucracy of policy-level change makes it seem hopelessly unlikely.

This approach continually brought me back to a question that this dissertation should, ideally, answer. What counts as resistance, particularly for subjugated and marginalized communities? Knowing that Italy's governmental powers have a vested interest in the continued growth of capitalism and global enterprise, we must recognize that resistance may not always occur in what are considered traditionally 'impactful' venues like large-scale political movements. In light of this, I see the dominant feature of resistance in Sardinia as a lack of indifference on the part of its people, a resistance to accepting the status quo of industrialized modernity which ensures the demise of pastoral traditions if it has its way.

This again brings to mind the work of Antonio Gramsci, the native Sardinian from the rural town of Ales whose theory of cultural hegemony cemented Western Marxism as a form of resistance thought. In a *Prison Notebooks* entry dated February 11th, 1917, he wrote of his hatred toward the indifferent: "L'indifferenza è il peso morto della storia…La catena sociale non pesa su pochi, in essa ogni cosa che succede non è dovuta al caso, alla fatalità, ma è intelligente opera dei cittadini" ("Indifference is the dead weight of history…The social chain rests not upon the few, and everything that happens within it is not a matter of chance, nor of fate, but rather the intelligent work of citizens."). When we think specifically of *resistance* as the "intelligent work of citizens" that stands in opposition to indifference, Gramsci's home island offers a unique example of how sociopolitical hegemons force a collective response and shape a new cultural identity of this region's inhabitants.

Due to the oppressive nature of racism, xenophobia, and capitalism which are front and center in Italy's public discourse today, this dissertation naturally began with a contemporary look at Italy's sociopolitical standing. In Chapter 1, I offered myriad examples of the modern political and social dialogues that speak to Italian's self-figuring – with particular emphasis on northern biases against southerners and Sardinians. I then traced the North-South dynamic back to the period of the Risorgimento, where economic stagnation and illiteracy in Sardinia and other parts of the South were met with indignation from northern elites who sought to fashion a 'modern' Italian identity. In the years following the nation's unification, Sardinia became the primary focus of pseudo-scientific investigations (Alfredo Niceforo's *La delinquenza in Sardegna* having the greatest influence) intended to 'diagnose' the maladies plaguing the supposedly 'backward' and 'undeveloped' region.

A constant undercurrent of modern Italian politics has been the cautions against a looming 'Africanization' of the nation, with the 'Afro-Sardinian' pejorative being a perennial feature of xenophobic and racist attacks. There are obviously new shades of racism and xenophobia attached to such declarations in today's age of ever-increasing technology and global capitalism which seek to exploit Africa's land and resources, though I knew from the historical tradition that negative associations of Sardinia with Africa had long-standing ties dating back to antiquity. In Chapter 2, I took a closer look at Sardinia in its earliest phases. The intention of this chapter was to make a purposeful connection between cultural studies and classical studies, where I sought to insert a new narrative of Sardinian development which has traditionally been subsumed under the focus of Rome's

supposed function as *the* civilizing force in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Beginning with the remarkable material culture of the Nuragic civilization and Sardinia's role as a Mediterranean trading center in antiquity, I traced the birth of violent resistance on the island to the period of Carthage's invasion. Rome's subsequent annexation of the island inaugurated the Afro-Sardinian pejorative due to the island's development under Punic domination. The remainder of this chapter challenged the aforementioned notion of Rome as a civilizing force in Sardinia, one repurposed by Mussolini's Fascist regime in the 20th century.

In Chapter 3, I turned to cultural production in the modern era to better analyze the ways in which collective memory is critical to Sardinian self-figuring. Artistic production played a primary role in this regard, and the resistance murals in the town of Orgosolo took center stage in this chapter. A community-based reaction to NATO's oppressive occupation of the Barbagian pasture lands via military installations, the phenomenon of *muralismo* began in the late 1960s and continues to today, with hundreds of murals dedicated to documenting Sardinian history, culture, and resistance. Furthermore, we see resistance efforts through the ubiquitous presence of political posters and graffiti across the island, where retaliation against the prison systems and the exploitation of land and labor can be seen on nearly every street in urban areas. Lastly, this chapter leaned on literary production as a perennial mode of resistance with works ranging from intellectual writers like Michelangelo Pira and Emilio Lussu to those of contemporary authors like Milena Agus and Giulio Angioni whose novels carry in them the important "burdens of historical

knowledge" by preserving Sardinian tradition and speaking to the effects of technology on pastoral communities.

With the importance of the written word as a mechanism of resistance in mind at the conclusion of Chapter 3, I shifted focus in the final chapter to the Sardinian language. Chapter 4 considered language as a marker of identity as well as a marker of class in linguistic hierarchies, wherein the language one speaks and the way they speak it are directly connected to how they are perceived in a given social context. Language is a critical tool used by governing elites in the maintenance of power, with the case of Sardinia being no exception. This chapter noted the hierarchization of language rooted in Italy's mission to standardize a (northern-based) national language in the lead-up to unification, though it extended well into the post-war period with Fascism's lingering policies banning the use of Sardinian dialects. After World War II, the opportunity for social and economic mobility tied to speaking standard Italian resulted in a drastic decline in the use of Sardinian, a language which is today labeled as "definitely endangered" by UNESCO. Chapter 4 concluded with a look at Sardinian language preservation as a space of resistance, with the Italian Republic acknowledging Sardinian as a minority language in 1999 and the formation of cultural-political movements like the *Movimentu Linguisticu Sardu,* the annual Festa de sa Limba Ufitziale, and others. As recent as 2020, the Sardinian language was still "represented by the most consistent linguistic minority within the Italian State and one of the most relevant in all of Europe by number of speakers" (Strinna, "Current"). Unfortunately, however, Sardinian still lacks a standardized orthography due to internal cultural debates about the valuation and authenticity of its main dialects.

Faced with renewed pressures to modernize in the 21st century, Sardinia still fights to reconcile its communal and pastoral identity in the insidious age of technology, capitalism, and global warfare. Though just one-tenth of Italy's total area and holding only 3% of the nation's total population, Sardinia is home to one of Europe's most expansive military installations that has been described as recently as 2021 as "a playing field for the war games simulation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joint forces and Israeli military forces" (Esu 197). Aside from inducing widespread anti-militaristic sentiments mentioned throughout this project, there have been devastating ecological and public health consequences including toxic emissions that consistently exceed legal limits and contaminate air, water, soil, milk, and animal tissues (Cristaldi et al. 1631).

In addition to the damage caused by the EU's military endeavors, for which it is admittedly difficult to imagine any meaningful reparations, Sardinia is now faced with the project of tourism as a last resort for attaining economic stability. This is also admittedly challenging, given the risks posed by eco-tourism efforts which can result in the long-term exploitation of resources and community members. There have been some notable successes, though, in the town of Mamoiada where traditional Carnevale processions have become a relatively popular spectacle for outsiders. However, the bulk of tourism revenue comes from the expansive luxury resorts on the Costa Smeralda whose establishment has destroyed local farmhouses and pasture lands in favor of building sterile five-star accommodations.

Moving forward, it is critical that Sardinians keep telling their stories and keep organizing in any way that can enact meaningful change. As technological abilities

continue to increase in the hinterlands, there is a potential for eco-tourism efforts to be self-sustaining and community-driven, though it may be a difficult balancing act. Despite the challenges, though, Sardinians have perennially organized, protested, and resisted their subjugation. With many aspects of Sardinian history still understudied and poorly documented in modern scholarship, this aim of this project has been to reclaim Sardinian history and culture from the lingering words of 18th and 19th century travelogues that described the island and its people as primitive anthropological rarities. As a concluding remark, I am reminded of an ad campaign launched by Sardinia's regional government in 2009 called "Quasi un continente," wherein a series of diverse photos were assembled in collages to portray the richness of the island as "Almost a continent" on its own (see Figure 5.2). The motivation of the campaign was to secure revenue via tourism, though it in fact embodies the spirit of this project, to acknowledge

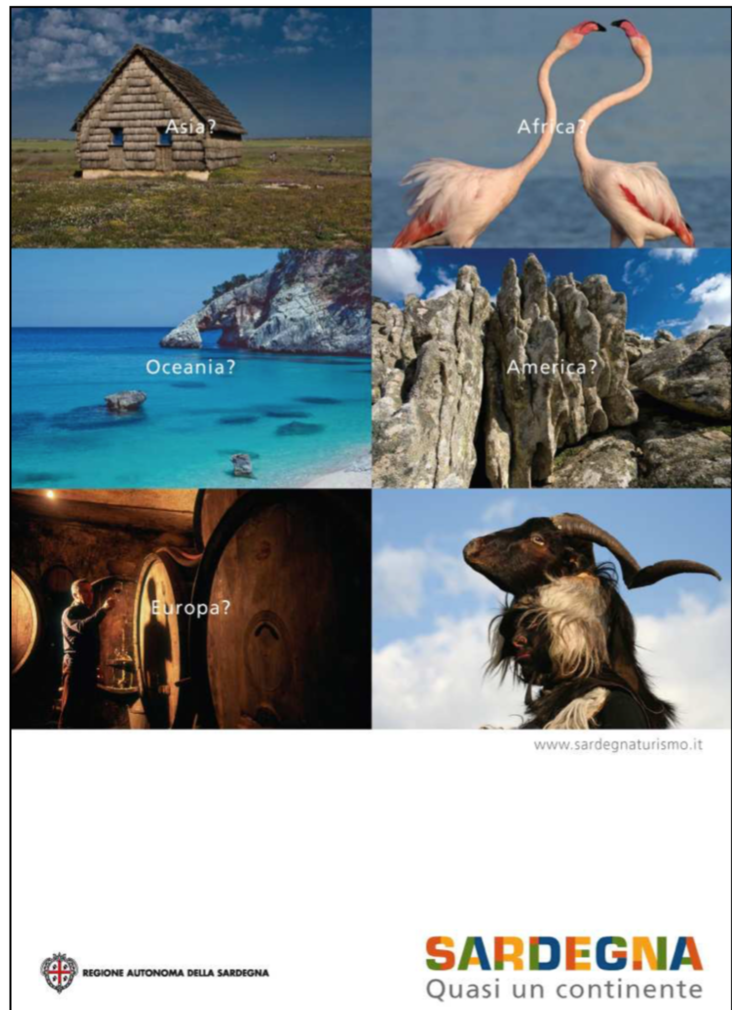

Figure 5.2

Sardinia's history and cultural heritage as equally rich and worthy of investigation as any other region.

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