From Italy to British New Guinea and Back: The Life and (Field)work of Lamberto Loria

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Lamberto Loria is one of the most important Italian anthropologists of the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century – and now he can be counted among the founding fathers of the discipline in Italy, both in its exotic and folk branches. Traveller, collector and photographer, in an environment strongly marked by the study of the physical characteristics of man, he gradually developed an interest in the observation of other populations (and in particular of their customs) during his travels in the 1880s and 1890s to Lapland and Turkmenistan, Africa, India and, above all, British New Guinea. A pupil of Paolo Mantegazza and the Florentine school of anthropology, unlike his Italian colleagues, he did not approach the study of otherness theoretically, as an armchair anthropologist, but through a practice of observation on the ground, certainly mediated by the Italian and British instructions for travellers, but in direct contact with the natives. His long experience in British New Guinea allowed him to develop an approach to ethnographic work which was unique in Italy, and comparable with that that was later developed, for example, in British anthropology during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Experiencing Travel

Lamberto Isacco Loria, born in Alexandria, Egypt on 12th February 1855, belonged to a wealthy Italian Jewish family that had moved to Egypt around 1770. His father Marco Loria, the first of five children (the others being Samuele, Vita Isaia, Rosina Rachele and Fiorina), was born in Cairo in 1814 from the first marriage of Lamberto’s grandfather Marcos Abramo (of Tuscan origin, but living in Venice), with Anna Valmarin. [1] A ‘professional landowner’, [2] Marco had studied medicine in Italy (earning a diploma in Pisa in 1832 and another in Florence in 1834), and after returning to Egypt had accumulated a great fortune as personal doctor to the Egyptian Khedive. [3]

Married to Clara Loria, born in Alexandria in 1828 and probably a cousin, Marco had had four children: Abramo (who died at the age of five), Lamberto Isacco, Samuele (who lived only a few days), and Corinna, who was born in 1862. After the Italian Unification of 1861, Lamberto’s father, who by virtue of his Venetian residence was still an Austrian subject, asked King Vittorio Emanuele for the ‘grace’ of recognition as a citizen of the newly established nation and after Clara’s death (while giving birth to Corinna), he moved to Pisa with his two surviving children. There, in 1866, Lamberto began to attend Italian schools,
eventually earning a degree in mathematics under Ulisse Dini in 1881. Corinna married the lawyer Flaminio Anau, with whom she had one daughter, Lina. In 1890, when Lina was six years old, Corinna died prematurely, probably due to a tumour. Lamberto, who had been very attached to his sister, and now to his niece, never married or had children: he devoted his life to travel and ethnography, at first exotic and then in Italy, where he established the discipline.

Loria soon abandoned mathematics and dedicated himself to the natural sciences and to ethnology – though he “owed much […] to that science and still more to he [Ulisse Dini] who, along with it, had taught him the disinterested love of study and rigid probity of character”. [4] Of a practical and proactive disposition, the young Lamberto, who was not keen on sitting at his desk or shutting himself up with books in his study, was soon won over by the stimulating intellectual and scientific climate that characterised Italy – and especially Tuscany – in those years. The ethno-anthropological sciences had been inaugurated about ten years previously with the establishment in Florence of the Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology) and the associated Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia (Italian Society of Anthropology and Ethnology), centred around the physician and confirmed Darwinist Paolo Mantegazza. After the unification of the peninsula, travel outside Europe increased: some of it was related to the burgeoning expansionist ambitions of the young (and weak) national government and some was part of the colonialist climate of the times which drove a wide range of geographical, meteorological, botanical, zoological and ethno-anthropological explorations in more and less remote locations with a view to ‘discovering’, mapping and recording ‘other geographies’ and seizing potential exhibits for the new Italian museums.

Loria’s desire to travel first manifested itself in 1882 when, together with the painter Mario Michela and the engineer Alberto Nasi, he began to organise an expedition to the extreme north of Europe: Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia (and then the Caucasus). The excursion’s principal aims were not strictly scientific but, before leaving Italy, the twenty-seven-year-old Loria requested instructions from the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia – similar to those circulating in those years in France, Germany and the United Kingdom – the intention of which was to help him to investigate the most significant aspects of the places and peoples that he saw.

The instructions were drawn up by Mantegazza and Stephen Sommier (who not long before had completed an expedition in those regions), by the zoologist and traveller Enrico H. Giglioli and by the archaeologist Alexander von Friken. They were compiled in a discursive text which would become his first anthropological vade mecum, instructing him to document the physical characteristics of the peoples he encountered by means of measurements and photographs, to acquire skeletons and skulls, and to describe artefacts from graves and the structures of dwelling places. Loria was also asked to observe several customs, such as the “most original Finnish steam bath” and shamanic rituals, to collect “musical instruments” and “any sort of tools used for fishing, hunting, weaving, or any other use”. These objects, being “of special form and indigenous production”, would be “important [acquisitions] for the Museo di Antropologia”. [5]

In typical 19th-century evolutionist style, Loria was expected to bring back measurements,
anatomical reports and “exotic” artefacts: the anthropology of the period, in Italy as elsewhere, was after all extremely interested in race and material culture. For deeper observation of the customs and psychology of the peoples encountered, the authors referred Loria to the *Istruzioni per lo studio della psicologia comparata delle razze umane* (Instructions for the Study of the Comparative Psychology of Human Races) drawn up by the Italian Society of Anthropology and Ethnology ten years earlier (1873) – a vast inventory of themes of ethno-anthropology of the day, which would be followed only in part by Loria in the second phase of his career.

The trip lasted less than a year: from May 1883 to January 1884. In the first part, after visiting the Ethnological and Anthropological Museum of Copenhagen, the three moved on to Stockholm and Christiania and then left for the North Cape, from which they travelled to Lapland. From there they would have proceeded to St. Petersburg and, following the course of the Volga, down to Georgia and the Caspian Sea. However, it soon became apparent that his scientific interests were not shared by his companions, and the company was disbanded in Tiflis (Tbilisi). While Nasi and Michela set out for India, Loria continued alone to Turkestan, where he tested himself in his new vocation and exercised his skills as a scientist, documenting the life, habits and customs of the Tekkes. “This journey”, he wrote in his notes, “will train me for my future travels and reveal what is still lacking in me if I am seriously to become a traveller”. [6]

While among the Tekkes for about forty days, Loria mainly investigated the themes which form the central body of the *Istruzioni per lo studio della psicologia comparata delle razze umane*: “Moral needs – sentiments” and “Material products of the intelligence”. [7] Beginning with matrimonial customs (including those pertaining to levirate marriage), he traced quite schematically and succinctly the particularities of the aforementioned topics, and continued with funeral rites, the love of parents for their children, respect for the elderly, worship of the dead, hospitality, inheritance, modesty, childbirth, friendship, division of labour, social organisation and rights, technology, hunting, agriculture, food and its preparation, footwear, dress and ornamentation, the condition of women and the division of labour between the sexes, weaving and reading. He frequently highlighted what he considered as the salient traits of the character of the inhabitants: courage, idleness, friendship, sincerity, dignity, immodesty and love of country. And he often returned to these characteristics to enrich or to correct his observations (particularly with regard to mourning and marriage) and he noted, quickly but precisely, certain techniques of labour such as the dying of fabrics, weaving, brick making and the use of birds in hunting. He wrote about the game of chess, music and books and took down a few proverbs. And, naturally, he took a lot of photographs and acquired a lot of objects for the Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia in Florence, especially ornaments, fabrics, carpets and jewellery.

Overall, the expedition was not the most successful. Loria, aside from his initial frustration, followed the instructions of his mentors more or less to the letter, slavishly trying to record as much as was suggested and with an evident – and premature – preference for cultural aspects. To make matters worse, he lost the roughly 600 photographic plates he had amassed among the Tekkes in a fire in Baku: a small treasure trove full of anthropological front-profile shots and a lot more ‘artistic’ photographs portraying, according to the sentiment of the time, “the natural attitude, the character of the individual or the race”. [8]
Moreover, of the many notes he took during his expedition – at least three notebooks, various sheets, and 27 letters to his relatives, which are now lost – [9] Loria published nothing: he merely provided a comprehensive account of his trip, read by Mantegazza in Florence on the 23rd of March 1884 during a meeting of the Italian Society of Anthropology and Ethnology. [10]

Despite this, Loria’s time among the Tekkes was a milestone in his scientific career and in his life. This can be considered, theoretically and practically, his initiation into anthropology and to the observation of the customs of ‘other’ peoples: two fields which were not necessarily connected in the 19th century. In fact, it could be said that Loria’s first steps in this direction happened ‘on the ground’, following a different path from most Victorian anthropologists, who were accustomed to working on data and objects collected by others within the confines of their studies. This point was to be of great importance to the construction of his ethnography, which would always remain distant from theoretical synthesis and far-reaching elaborations, and which, with his roots in the concrete practice of groundwork in contact with alterity, would bring him to develop – albeit mostly implicitly – a new way of doing anthropology. Loria never felt himself to be an armchair anthropologist, nor did he ever desire to be so; more than an ethnographer, he wanted to be a “traveller” in the ‘Leedian’ sense of the term (a travelling naturalist), capable of scientifically observing the whole world around him and of which man is only a part. [11]

The trip reinforced his connection with the Florentine scientific entourage, and not only that. Loria became a close friend of Elio Modigliani (himself belonging to a Jewish family), one of the most celebrated travellers of the 19th century and he established a connection with the naturalist Giacomo Doria, who had traversed Persia and Borneo, founded the Museo Civico di Genova (Civic Museum of Genoa), visited the Bay of Assab and Tunisia, and who from 1891 to 1900 would be president of the Società Geografica Italiana (Italian Geographical Society). His influence was decisive in awakening the desire in Loria to study the fauna of distant places: and it is not by coincidence that all his collections of animals and plants later gathered in New Guinea would end up in Genoa, where they would be the subject of over 40 monographs. Moreover, his relationship with Mantegazza and with the Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia furthered his curiosity about the customs and material tools of primitive peoples and the documentation of their racial attributes. Aldobrandino Mochi, with whom Loria would study the peoples of Italy in the early 20th century, later remembered in Loria’s obituary how he had “patiently instructed himself in the sciences in general” in Genoa, while “in Florence he was trained in anthropological observation”. [12]

Also notable was his relationship with Luigi Pigorini, founder of the study of prehistory in Italy, who established the Museo Preistorico Etnografico di Roma (Ethnographic Prehistorical Museum of Rome) in 1875. Loria would send him most of the ethnographic objects he would collect during his stay in Papuasia, described thereafter by the curator of the museum, Angelo Colini. [13] After the death of her uncle, Loria’s aforementioned niece Lina would donate photographs, diaries, field notes and other Papuan objects to the museum. The importance of Loria’s contact with the Roman circle of scholars – in parallel (and in contrast) with that with the Florentine circle – is further demonstrated by the sale of 500 specimens to the Museo Antropologico della Regia Università di Roma (Anthropological Museum of the Royal University of Rome) – where they would be studied by Giuseppe Sergi in 1892. [14]
After a year’s stay in Italy, Loria decided to set off again at the end of 1885, this time with his friend Giorgio Sonnino, to visit his family in Alexandria. [15] From there he moved on to Cairo – where he would remain until the start of 1886 – visiting the city like any tourist, seeing the monuments, going to bazaars, walking in the typical streets and riding muleback to famous sights (the pyramids, the valley of the Sphinx, the stone tombs, the desert). When he returned to Alexandria he began preparing for a longer voyage – of which little is known – perhaps to Melanesia. [16] In January 1886 he was in Suez, where he met the Italian Consul Carlo Nasi [17] and then Modigliani, who was bound for Nias, Indonesia, and with whom Loria embarked on the ship “Manilla” which took him, after a stop at Aden, to Bombay. Here Loria – who had for some time been suffering from severe headaches – decided to stay and explore the canonical locations of India: Elephanta Island, the Towers of Silence, Jaipur, Delhi and Agra. “Enchanted” by India, like other Italian travellers, he wrote that he wanted to learn more about “its customs, its traditions, its history”. [18] He took and collected several photographs, now compiled in an album, but did not undertake any scientific investigation. A little later, and with his health worsening, he decided to return to Italy, while Modigliani carried on to Nias.

Loria would not leave Italy again until the end of 1888, this time bound for Oceania, “golden dream of naturalists”, [19] having organised a sojourn which would provide him with enough time to explore the south-eastern part of British New Guinea. His main interests were its geographical characteristics, its climate, the animals, the plants, the physiognomy of the natives and their customs – from dwellings to food, from instruments of work to beliefs and, in the most general terms, their form of life. Ample space needed to be dedicated to this trip – or, rather, to these trips, since Loria would travel twice to New Guinea, for seven years in total: firstly because the documentation, unlike before, was now rich in detail; and secondly because it was in this period, only recently studied, that Loria changed from travelling naturalist to a true ethnographer. The reconstruction of the Papuan years also helps us to clarify the final period of his life – when, on returning home, Loria began to dedicate himself to Italian ethnography.

**Papuan Excursions: the First Voyage (1888–1890)**

As previously stated, Loria self-financed two trips to British New Guinea: [20] the first from the end of 1888 to November 1890; the second from April 1891 to the first months of 1897. Loria landed in Papuasia as “the third Italian traveller”, following the tradition established by the botanist Odoardo Beccari and the explorer and hunter Luigi M. D’Albertis, who had stayed there for many years. [21] What distinguishes him from his two predecessors is his greater interest in the ‘human’ side of his explorations. When leaving for Melanesia, Loria took with him the first edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of Travellers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands* (1874), the second part of which, entitled “Culture”, is far richer and clearer than the corresponding section in the 1873 *Istruzioni per lo studio della psicologia comparata delle razze umane* or in similar publications which were in circulation in Italy at that time. [22]
When Loria arrived in Port Moresby at the beginning of the summer of 1889, after about six months of travel, he chose the Kemp Welch River, beyond the Astrolabe Range as an area in which to collect naturalist specimens. Forced to postpone the excursion until the following summer due to a ‘particularly dry’ season, he decided to acquire a small cutter to be able to explore the coast and the surrounding islands. Heading south-east in the company of the taxidermist Amedeo Giulianetti, he passed the months of July, August and September in the area between Kapa–Kapa, Hood Bay and the Gulf of Aroma. He then continued to Samarai and went to Australia in October to repair his boat. Back at sea, he was occupied with a long cruise from 16th October to the end of January 1890, leading him back up the north-eastern coast of Papuasia to the bay of Dyke Acland in an unsuccessful attempt to establish good relations with the natives and explore the interior. On the way back he stopped at the D’Entrecasteaux Archipelago and brought his cruise to an end at the island of Killerton in Milne Bay. On 5th February he set off for the islands of Fergusson, Trobriand and Woodlark for “ethnological purposes”, [23] remaining there until the middle of March. The journey was concluded between May and September 1890 with a return along the Kemp Welch River and an exploration of the surrounding areas, after a difficult period in Australia, devastated by the news of the death of his sister Corinna. On 26th November 1890 he was back in Italy.

Loria’s first interests in Papuasia mainly revolved around naturalistic and ethnographic acquisitions: he continued to collect animals and insects throughout his stay in New Guinea, acquiring many specimens of great scientific interest. There were many native items, resulting from a hectic ethnographic tour de force achieved through bartering (and theft): 2220 to be precise, not including skulls and other bones. The collection contains a mass of work tools, weapons, furniture, cooking and cutting utensils, pots and ceramics, domestic items, pipes and gourds for lime, tools for the cultivation of the soil, nets for hunting and fishing, models of dinghies and boats with full-sized adornments, musical instruments, friezes for huts and, above all, a large quantity of clothes and ornaments of everyday, festive and funeral uses. [24]

The first voyage also offered many opportunities to see native populations up close, to
describe objects and habitations, to investigate customs and traditions and integrate with local life. Thanks to the missives sent to his friend Giacomo Doria – the principal source for the reconstruction of many parts of the first trip – we know that Loria often stayed in the huts of village leaders and would be accommodated for relatively long periods in the same locality. He was also permitted to participate in the Cuiriga, festivities held in Kalo at the end of August. It was a unique experience: Loria had the opportunity to wander freely among the natives accompanied by the interpreter A.C. English [25] and by the headman Badili-Sceri. He noted all that he saw and interviewed the natives on the meanings of the numerous dances that followed one another incessantly; he was sincerely disappointed that his camera was broken, preventing him from reproducing “landscape motifs” and “pictorial groups”.

Though in a somewhat unstructured manner, the explorer seemed from the beginning to be developing a curious and participatory observational praxis that manifested itself in precise and detailed descriptions. Furthermore, even in his first journey Loria began to supplement his free expositions with more rigorous investigations along the lines of the Notes and Queries, as demonstrated by a long account of the Motu tribe in one of his letters. [26]

The most interesting part of Loria’s initial observations resides in the need he felt to specify the level of veracity and exactitude of the information he records: a clear sign of Loria’s connection to the 19th-century search for positive data, and of the fact that methodological questions were being posed as the basis of his outlook. Though he defines his notes as merely “a sketch without order” and written with “no pretence of truth or exactitude”, [27] he considers them nonetheless “essentially” worthy of trust due to the specific way in which he has gathered them. “Since I place scrupulous care on ascertaining the truth of the things I wish to find out,” he states clearly, “and confronting them frequently; and since whenever possible I try not to satisfy myself with what I hear, but try to verify it with my own eyes; I dare flatter myself that the notes I collect, even if they turn out to be inexact or even erroneous in the finer details, are essentially true”. [28] Loria does not limit himself to recording his impressions and reporting what is translated from the informants; he places considerable attention on how he can disentangle himself from the native worldview through repeated and connected questions and continuous visual verification – that is, using the warhorses of western science: logical reasoning and direct observation.

Loria’s experience in the field also nurtured in him the awareness that “it is the restrictedness of time, the wanderlust that prevents him from patiently awaiting the development of the observations and of the narration”, [29] and furthermore that in practice many unpredictable difficulties could impede or slow the recording of customs. Patience was required, as was dedication and guile, to obtain information. Finally, there was the linguistic problem: since he needed an interpreter, “some facts and notes were subject to the inevitable alterations made to the original discourse when translated by an intermediary”. [30] In short, the field – the everyday contact with otherness, the looks, the exchanges, the misunderstandings, the interaction in a temporarily shared life – created in Loria the need for a new method of work. But further still, it had begun to entice him – such that when he returned to New Guinea his research was no longer dominated by the collection of specimens focussing on naturalistic research and material culture, but by the more properly ‘human’ aspects of cultures.
Papuan Excursions: the Second Voyage (1891–1897)

When Loria returned to British New Guinea in April 1891, zoology still played a predominant role in the organisation of his movements: many months were dedicated to exploring the Iarumi–Lakumi area and to scaling the mountain Obree (late 1891), and later to reconnaissance in the area of Moroka (June–November 1893). The collections were gradually entrusted to the assistant Giulianetti. In the gathering of artefacts Loria became more selective: in the five years of his second stay (in 1896 he moved to Australia), only 1400 objects were sent back to Italy.

The point of departure thus finds itself overturned, showing the distance growing between Loria and the *modus operandi* of his Italian predecessors.

The first excursion dedicated exclusively to ethnographic observation began in April 1892, when he stayed for three weeks with the Maghibiri (near the north-eastern part of the Astrolabe Range). They were days of complete immersion in native life. Accompanied by George Belford, an expert hunter well-acquainted with the area and hired in Port Moresby, Loria took lodging in the home of the village headman and had a warm reception from the locals: he was able to wander at will and observe their activities up-close, even to participate in them. For the recording of customs he was assisted by “a native named Ossiva Maraga who” – he points out – “attended a school with a teacher [31] in Port Moresby for two years and therefore knows Motu very well, and can thus converse with Belford, who interprets for me”. [32] His notes were written in the pages of his diary, thematically divided along the lines of the categories contained in the “Culture” section of the *Notes and Queries*. His attention was particularly focussed on religious beliefs, superstitions and magic; matrimonial practices and reproduction; ways of obtaining and cooking food (hunting, fishing, agriculture and meals); sickness and native remedies; and war – all topics which would remain central to his research in the Papuan years.

Briefer stays followed in 1893, when Loria organised an ethnographic trip along the south-
eastern coast of British New Guinea with stops on the island of Lalu–Olo amongst the Mailu (25th January – 11th February), at Maopa in the area of Aroma (14th – 17th February) and at Irupara and Kamali on Hood Bay at the end of November after recovering from a tumour in the leg in Australia. Loria was assisted by local intermediaries in these experiences: two teachers from the London Missionary Society in the first two cases and by the ‘gone-native’ Englishman R.E. Guise in the third. In his investigations, Loria chose to follow a near-identical set of thematic categories in each of these stops, in order to be able to note “only the substantial differences and affinities” that he encountered among the different populations. [33] Furthermore, for the first time he used photography as a direct auxiliary to his ethnographic research, mainly taking pictures of objects and houses. There is no mention of anthropological photographs or anthropometric measurements or casts, despite initial attempts and a frequently expressed intention to advance a method including the cultural as well as the anatomical, morphological and physiological aspects.

Overall, in comparison with his 1888–1890 trip, it is clear that in this first part of the second voyage Loria began to organise his activities so as to allot more time to his ethnographic interests, in some ways overcoming the “restrictedness of time” of which he had written in his letter of 1890. However, it is also true that "wanderlust" [34] was still very much present. The stops dedicated to ethnography were generally lightning experiences in between naturalistic excursions, aimed at maximising the efficiency of each stay as much as possible; the time dedicated to the various tribes was just enough to explore the categories of the Notes and Queries and was certainly not used to learn the local dialects. In short, Loria seems to have collected somewhat as he had taken objects during his first voyage: with the intention of mapping still unknown populations and noting similarities and differences between them which could later identify their proper place on the ladder of civilisation.

More prolonged and systematic attempts to approach the field matured in 1894, when Loria dedicated himself exclusively to anthropological activity, putting together notes on customs and anthropometric measurements from the very beginning. It was an intense period during which Loria at times experienced new research conditions, which brought him to develop a different awareness of the quality of ethnographic data and modes of collection.

The first stop was the small island of Bou on Milne Bay, where he stayed from the 10th until at least 18th March, assisted by the Rev. Fred Walker of the London Missionary Society and by a local teacher. Loria thus described his research: "During the day, I took photographs in the morning and then shut myself in my room to measure the natives, and Walker in the parlour to form their vocabulary and grammar [...]. In the evening, after a chat with the natives about their customs, I developed my photographs and went to bed satisfied". [35] They were days of intense and well-planned work, facilitated by the presence of an authoritative figure and expert in the local dialects. For the first time, the ethnographic notes are separated from his diaries, as if to mark symbolically their objectivity and scientific value.
In the following months, roughly between the end of April and June 1894, Loria sojourned once again in the area of the Mailu tribe, and then proceeded to the island of Kwato from the middle of July until the end of September, except for three weeks spent in Suau (7th – 27th August). He then returned to the coast further to the west, at Domara (6th – 15th November), Velerupu (16th November – 19th December) and Kerepunu (from 22nd December), intending “to measure the natives from Cloudy Bay to Port Moresby and at the same time record their customs”. [36] His collaborators were the Rev. Walker in Mailu, and in Kwato the Rev. Charles Abel, with whom Loria developed a profound and long–lasting friendship. In the other cases, the interpreters were local or immigrant Polynesian teachers. The fruits of his labour were a number of artistic and anthropological photographs, charts of anthropometric figures and related notes (unfortunately now lost), and about twenty ethnographic notebooks, which detail the customs of Logea, Domara and Velerupu.

Compared with those taken from 1891 to 1893, although the approach still deviated little from the line taken in the previous set, the notes were more precise, richer and deeper. Loria managed to cover a wider range of the categories of investigation in the Notes and Queries and to introduce some new ones (for instance, legends and kinship systems). The first transcriptions of the languages also appeared, a direct consequence of longer stays and better familiarity with the study of native dialects. The quality of the data increased thanks to a better command of interview techniques, the presence of a larger group of informants, and more consideration of the linguistic capabilities of the interpreters.

While the duration of the stay was much longer than those of previous years, it is nonetheless the case that aim of the method of recording customs was to optimise the research on the basis of the quantity, rather than the quality, of the data. Furthermore, Loria still recorded most of the customs at a third level of translation: from the native language to Motu, from Motu to English, and from English to Italian. His intermediaries often had an imperfect knowledge of the language in use, further undermining the scientific precision of the work.
Loria’s experiences on Kwato in 1894, in close cooperation with Rev. Abel, head of the local mission, showed Loria the limits of this approach. This English missionary, unlike many of Loria’s previous intermediaries, was perfectly acquainted with the local dialect, and understood exactly the information that he wanted to obtain from the natives – enabling Loria to skip a stage of translation and have a better command over the development of the interviews. Above all, Abel endorsed Loria’s research because it could be useful for his own work: understanding the customs of his converts could help him to better lead them on the “right path” – a motivation that was lacking in the native and Polynesian teachers. Unlike the latter, Abel shared Loria’s scientific approach. Indeed, he dedicated himself to the interviews with continuous commitment and spared no time and effort in gathering trustworthy information. His work was meticulous, disciplined and rational, and he took great care to ensure that the resultant data would be accurate, complete and precise down to the finest detail: at times the Englishman seemed more interested than Loria in unveiling the “pure truth” of the native customs and arriving at objective data.

As a European and a missionary, and also due to his strong and forthright character, Abel possessed an authority over the natives that the teachers and Papuan interpreters whom Loria had previously consulted could not wield – authority which Loria, it seems, linked with authoritativeness. Abel’s orders were listened to and respected, and if he wanted all of the natives to gather every day for whole weeks for the recording of customs, setting aside their daily tasks, then they would obey. Thus during his time on Kwato, Loria had a large group of informants at his disposal and could therefore compare results to check their accuracy. He would then proceed to collect results that were more precise when he noted incongruities. Furthermore, given that each informant could be more authoritative or less on a certain subject (due to a variety of factors such as age, social status, gender, etc.), the size of the group enabled him to record a larger quantity of customs.

All this – a methodical English-speaking interpreter with great sway over the informants – created the conditions for Loria to be able to dedicate many hours and days to interviews and to looking further into subjects until then only briefly mentioned. The result was a prolific collaboration. After about twenty days, he felt the need for more weeks to complete his work – which compelled him to return to the island at the start of 1895. Furthermore, the experience showed him a new way of conducting fieldwork, which made him ever more conscious of the low quality of his previous research. At the same time it showed him a way to circumvent, albeit partially, the problems caused by his choice not to learn the local dialects and the variables connected with his contact with the natives (setbacks, delays, unavailable informants, etc.).

Until now Loria had delegated the responsibility for the accuracy of his results almost entirely to his informants. He now realised that the best way to narrow the distance separating him from the certainty and accuracy of his results was not simply to skip a stage of translation, but also to find an intermediary who could serve as his privileged collaborator: one who would approach the task of recording customs with the same rationality and method as Loria himself. No longer placing his trust in teachers inserted into the community from outside (and perhaps only a short time before), but in a missionary and expert, Loria had been able to observe the pre-existent power dynamics between natives and missionaries, finding himself working in what was already an almost entirely pacified
Thus began Loria’s final period on Papuan soil (1895–1896). It was characterised by far longer stays – generally of roughly two months – often concentrated in contact zones under more systematic Christian control and aided by missionaries or other European interpreters with an expert knowledge of the locations in question. From about April to July 1895 Loria resided near the island of Dobu, in the D’Entrecasteaux Archipelago, assisted by the Methodist Rev. William Bromilow. From early September until the 21st of November of the same year he was in the St. Joseph District (opposite the island of Yule, north of Port Moresby), in the village of Innawi, guest of the Sacred Heart Missionary Padre Giuseppe Vitale. Shortly before leaving for Australia in the early months of 1896, Loria returned to Hood Bay. There he intended to record the customs of the villages of Babaka, Kamali and Bula’a with the help of Reginald E. Guise, an Englishman of noble extraction who had moved to New Guinea in search of fortune and who had for many years lived in close contact with the natives – he even had Papuan wives and children.

Though Loria did not consider all of his sojourns satisfactory (he was particularly disappointed by his collaboration with Guise), the results of his last year of research, contained in 25 notebooks, stand out from the previous ones for their richness, accuracy and variety. In particular, the favourable research conditions found at Dobu allowed him better range over the totality of the local culture and to record its different aspects more meticulously. The Notes & Queries framework was expanded, enabling richer and freer reporting, while still operating within strict guidelines. This excursion of Loria’s in the southern Massim region bears comparison with the work of some important names in Melanesian anthropology: Charles G. Seligman’s The Melanesians of British New Guinea (1910), the many studies of Bronislaw Malinowki on the Trobriand and, above all, Reo Fortune’s Sorcerers of Dobu (1932).

In support of this new and more careful way of approaching fieldwork, Loria began to use photography with increasing frequency and variety – particularly in two trips along the coast and to Hood Bay, one in December 1895 and the other from March to April 1896. He used two cameras: a 13x8 for static shots and a 9x12 for high-speed shots. These allowed him to take a large number of photographs, which “could give the salient and natural side of Papuan life”.[37] Loria used photography to ‘capture’ all that could not be taken and transported (attitudes, gestures, or whole villages) and to fill in his ethnographic notes later, aided by the visual–mnemonic support of the photographs. It could be said that the photographs served as a basis of study and as completion to his research: they are both part of the production process of primary data (together with or in the place of objects of material culture), and products of the same process – veritable ‘visual notebooks’. In short, the photographic medium became, far more than previously, an integral part of his fieldwork practice and the most useful means of recording customs in a way that he considered complete and truthful.

**Lamberto Loria’s Papuan ethnography**

In July 1896, Loria left New Guinea and undertook an excursion of several months in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. He arrived in Cooktown and made his way from
Townsville to Charters Towers, Rockhampton and Mount Morgan; he then made for Gladstone and Maryborough and by 8th August, he was in Brisbane. In the Museum of Queensland he was fascinated by the collections of Governor William MacGregor, so much so that he planned to return to study them before publishing the results of his researches. From there he returned North around the 18th (Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg). Then, following the southern route, he made his way down the east coast of Australia and left for Italy, where he would arrive at the beginning of 1897. During his stay in Australia, Loria acutely observed the society of the English colony and its race for progress. He visited various localities on the coast and in the interior and described cities, carbon extraction plants, mines, slaughterhouses, storehouses for meat and, occasionally, Australian habits and customs.

In total, Loria brought home numerous naturalistic specimens, bones, ethnological artefacts, two travel diaries composed of twenty-four notebooks (priceless sources for reconstructing the life of the British New Guinea colony), over twenty booklets of ethnographic notes, some other papers, letters and rough books, and about 1500 photographic plates. [38]

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES
FROM THE SECOND VOYAGE IN BRITISH NEW GUINEA (1891–1897)

CUSTOMS OF DOMARA

Customs of Domara: Brief description and localization of Domara, Marriage, Widowhood, Infanticide, Dyeing and Tattooing, Fire, War.

Customs of Domara. Miscellaneous: Miscellany of Customs of Domara: Marriage;

Customs of Domara: Hunting, Fishing, Funerals, Childbirth, Religion, Personal Ornaments, Superstitions, Crockery, Dyeing


CUSTOMS OF VELERUPU

Customs of Velerupu n°1: Dyeing and Tattooing, Fire, Superstitions, Funerals, Hunting, Agriculture, Drumming, Widowhood, Fishing, Dancing, Infanticide, Taboos.

Customs of Velerupu n°2: War, Religion, Marriage

Customs of Velerupu n°3: Hunting (additions), Earthenware, Infanticide, Taboos, Abnormality, Personal Ornaments, Kopi-ano Festival, Music, Baskets, Medicine.

Customs of Velerupu n°4: Following Medicine, Childbirth, Laws, Coloration, Pacts, History, Medicine.


CUSTOMS OF LOGEA

Customs of Logea: Funerals and Mourning, Agriculture, Funerals and Mourning (continuation)

Customs of Logea. Medicine: Medicine.

War Customs of Logea Is.: Relationships (incomplete), Customs of Logea Is., War.

Customs of Logea. War. N°1: War.

Customs of Logea n°2: War (continuation), Drumming, Personal Ornaments, Dyeing, Food, Pleasures.

Customs of Logea n°3: Paulo, Marriage/Miscellany, Hunting, Fishing, Superstitions.

Customs of Logea n°4: Childbirth; Taboos; there are also reports of kinship systems.
Customs of Logea. Legends: Legends of Logea; Origins of the Taubluao, Legend about Swallows, Legend about the Coconut Tree, Legend about Fish and the Formation of the Archipelago, Legend about the Yam.

Pigs and pig-hunting in B. New Guinea

CUSTOMS OF DOBU

Customs of Dobu n°1: Funerals, Mourning, War.
Customs of Dobu n°2: War.
Customs of Dobu n°3: Funerals, Religion.
Customs of Dobu n°4: Marriage (Sexual Contact), Divorce.
Customs of Dobu n°5: Divorce, Adultery, Widowhood, Taboos, Funerals, Childbirth, Witchcraft, Infanticide, Dyeing and Tattooing.
Customs of Dobu n°6: Divorce, Adultery, Widowhood, Taboos, Funerals, Childbirth, Witchcraft, Infanticide, Dyeing and Tattooing.

CUSTOMS OF INNAWI


Customs of Innawi n°2: Games, Legend of the Crocodile, Baskets and Bags, Skin and Hair, Sermons, Causes Limiting the Population, Funerals (continuation), Description of the Innawi, Consignment for Sagu of those of Yule, Ufafa’a, Skirts, Ipi, Indigenous Selfishness, Things to Do.

CUSTOMS OF BULA’A

Customs of Bula’a n°1: Childbirth, Infanticide, Marriage, Childbirth, Infanticide, Marriage, Funerals.
Customs of Bula’a n°2: Funerals, Construction of Houses, Agriculture, Commerce, Canoes, War.
Customs of Bula’a n°3: War, Entertainment and Games, Music, Fishing.
Customs of Bula’a n°4 (lost)
Customs of Bula’a n°5: Religion, Mats, Miscellany, Ropes and Baskets, Medicine.

Loria’s plans for his Melanesian harvest of data seem quite clear. At several points during his second trip, he mentioned the intention of writing articles or books (alone, with Bromilow or with Guise), and despite the difficulties he encountered and the sometimes disappointing collaborations, before his departure Loria seemed inclined to entrust his studies both on Bula’a and on Dobu to the journal Archivo di Antropologia ed Etnologia. Furthermore, he wrote in his diary that he thought he would be able to “write a book comparing the Papuan customs with which I am familiar: viz. those of Magebiri [sic], Innawi, Rigo, Bula’a, Kamali,
Mailu, Velerupu, Logia [sic] and Dobu – 9 tribes separated by more or less equal distances between Yule Island and the D’Entrecasteaux Archipelago]. [39] Only two articles were published during his stay: a missive written to Cesare Lombroso on the phenomenon of hysteria in Papuan women in the journal Archivio di Psichiatria (Archive of Psychiatry); and a letter written on 10th April 1895, addressed to Matthew H. Moreton (Resident Magistrate of the Eastern Division of British New Guinea), in the Annual Reports of British New Guinea of 1894–1895 under the title “Notes on the Ancient War Customs of Logea and Neighbourhood”. [40]

When in Australia, Loria swore to return in three or four years to better examine the artefacts collected by MacGregor: “any study of New Guinea which did not take account of the unique and splendid collection of MacGregor”, he stated, “would be incomplete and of little value.” [41] In this period the previous year’s article on the war customs of Logea for the Annual Reports of British New Guinea appeared in the Gippsland Times (a Victoria newspaper), almost unchanged; and he gave an interview on his Papuan experiences which would be published – in abridged or unabridged form – in many of Queensland’s newspapers.

When he returned to Italy, Loria officially expressed the will to compose a comparative study of the indigenous populations and customs of the many villages of Papua New Guinea, later to be extended to include Australian and Polynesian peoples. [42] Loria also promised various articles on “what he had seen and observed”, [43] to be furnished with over 1000 negatives, which he had brought back with him. [44] In particular, he planned to publish an essay on Papuan kinship systems: “a most interesting matter which has not been much studied, and one to which”, he said, “I have devoted much attention”. [45] Furthermore, he decided to illustrate the collections that he had sold to the Museo Preistorico Etnografico di Roma – a difficult task, especially considering that he wanted to acknowledge all the other collections of Papuan artefacts in Italy and abroad, and that he also intended to publish monographs on specific aspects of Melanesian material culture – “on maces, lances, etc.”. [46]

When he returned home, Loria was no longer a traveller-naturalist. Nor was he a mere collector; it is clear that the objects he gathered were only one of the components which could help to reconstruct the customs of the Papuan peoples. The fact that he now had access to a wide range of data from the Pacific, concerning many peoples within and beyond Melanesia, somehow put him in a situation comparable to that of the armchair anthropologists who perused a variety of sources. The exception was in the fact that Loria was using his own materials – he was providing data for himself, not for theorists at home, and this contrasted anthropological background distanced him from the purely comparatist scholars. Above all, his direct experiences afforded him an insight on the natives which an armchair anthropologist could not have attained.

In Italy, none of Loria’s colleagues had stayed for so long among natives and studied particular populations in such depth and with such exacting method. The Italians exploring in the field at the time were few: Beccari and D’Albertis, to remain also in the Papuan area, were not anthropologists, even in the 19th-century sense of the word; they were travelling naturalists who gathered information about indigenous peoples inasmuch as they were part of the environment. Only Modigliani, who spent a total of eight years in the Indonesian
archipelago (from 1886 to 1894), approached his researches with preparation and reliability, also developing a new sensitivity towards the natives - but never going beyond the heuristic possibilities of evolutionary theory. [47]

Loria’s contributions are thus comparable less with those of his compatriots so much as with those of the generation of Melanesian field anthropologists formed by Haddon, Charles G. Seligman and William H. Rivers at Cambridge, Oxford, and the London School of Economics, among whom, of course, Bronislaw Malinowski stands out. Loria stayed in New Guinea for progressively longer periods than the veterans of the iconic Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits of 1898, so that the central role they gave fieldwork was anticipated by him with perhaps stronger credentials, thanks to the way he observed practices and customs up close. In fact, apart from the use of reliable interpreters and a suitable number of informants to obtain “truthful” information, Loria displayed a growing sensibility for the methodological aspects of data collection, even if they remained sometimes implicit or unstructured.

Transitional Years

On his return to Italy, Loria could have had anthropological and ethnographical projects to keep him occupied for many years to come. But in the seven years that followed (1897–1905) he delivered very few lectures regarding his voyages and his research, and published only two articles on ethnographic subjects and a handful of others on photography. [48]

The climate, which had been favourable to scientific exploration, had changed. The geographical and commercial societies [49] which had emerged in Italy at the end of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s had transformed much during Loria’s absence. [50] Until then these societies had been the main advancers of initiatives to diffuse geographical knowledge and great supporters of exploration outside Europe (especially in Africa). Following the defeat in the Battle of Adwa in 1896, however, and the change of course effected by Prime Minister Antonio Starabba Marquis of Rudini and Foreign Secretary Emilio Visconti-Venosta, they sank into a state of depression and returned to ‘close-by’ national projects. [51]

Moreover, it seems that Loria himself was still feeling tired because of his hard work in New Guinea and, while more a man of action than of letters, preferred to wait: he intended to work eagerly on his materials, and to present himself officially as an anthropologist only afterwards. As his Papuan research had shown, he took great care over the truthfulness of the information he collected: he was systematic, precise and something of a perfectionist. Organising his writings and collection for presentation to an audience of experts and scientists required time. At this stage Loria, rather than limiting himself to gathering anthropological information for others, wanted to use his data as a basis for his own analysis.

The final years of the 19th century saw Loria strengthening old friendships and making new ones. He was invited to participate in the executive committee of the third Geographical Congress, held in Florence in 1898. There, he reinforced his relationships with scholarly
figures such as Giacomo Doria, Enrico H. Giglioli, Paolo Mantegazza, Stephen Sommier, Giulio Fano, Elio Modigliani, Carlo Puini, Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, Ettore Regàlia, Gustavo Uzielli and Pasquale Villari – all characters whom he had encountered in the formative stage of his career or whose paths he had crossed. Loria was involved in the social life of the various abovementioned societies, whose meetings he attended from 1897 until the end of the century.

In particular, he joined the Società Fotografica Italiana (Italian Photographic Society) at the end of 1898 and exhibited some of his photographs taken in New Guinea, Australia and Egypt in the scientific section of the International Photographical Exhibition held from April to May of 1899 in Florence. During the second Conference of Italian Photography (15th–20th May), [52] thanks to a remark made by the versatile physiologist, photographer and traveller Giulio Fano, the importance of photography to ethnographic and ethnological studies was acknowledged, and it was “vowed to ensure that this means of investigation would be used in the study of the indigenousItalic races”. [53] At the same time a photographic investigation was launched concerning “the variously multifaceted manifestations of the popular [Italian] spirit”, which were at risk of being lost due to the levelling tendency of civilisation and the national “racial” amalgamation. Soon after, specific instructions for photographic research appeared in the Bulletino della Società fotografica Italiana (Bulletin of the Italian Photographic Society). In this context, in line with the society’s emerging interest in ethnography and attention to the more technical aspects of photography, Loria published the article “Cenni sull’uso della fotografia nei viaggi di esplorazione” (Notes on the use of photography in exploration journeys).

Little more is known of the years following Loria’s return. He spent the first months of 1901 in Florence (as evidenced by his presence at several meetings of the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia), where, on 24th February, he was elected councillor of the society alongside Aldobrandino Mochi. It was an important moment in his anthropological career: from then on, he began to develop a relationship of collaboration, and then of friendship, with his younger colleague, which would mark the lives and scientific advancements of both.

On 25th January 1903 Loria was re-elected as councillor of the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia for two years. During the meeting of 15th March he finally read his first ethnographic memoir, “Il matrimonio nei villaggi del basso San Giuseppe (Nuova Guinea britannica)” (“Marriage in the villages of the lower St. Joseph (British New Guinea)”). In keeping with its title, the report was focussed exclusively on the matrimonial customs of the populations found around the mouth of the river of St. Joseph – especially on those of Innawi, a place in which he had spent much time. [54]

The article had a tepid reception: so detailed a study of a single cultural aspect (and related to a single population) was almost an absolute novelty in the field of Italian anthropology, which still showed little sign of moving in the direction of greater interest in ethnographic and cultural aspects of other peoples. Furthermore, though in this article of 1903 Italian anthropology gained the first belated fruits of Loria’s long and (relatively) thorough sojourn in British New Guinea, the work betrays very little of the wide scope of his research and of the methodology that he had developed among the Papuan tribes.
In truth, Loria’s attentions were increasingly devoted to more contingent concerns, which made his intentions of studying and publishing the remainder of his Papuan material fade somewhat into the background, though never disappear.

From the end of 1903 to 1904, it is very likely that Loria, besides being councillor of the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia – a position which he would hold until 1910, when the Società di Etnografia Italiana (Italian Society of Ethnography) was founded – was also revising his notebooks on Dobu’s customs. At the same time he became increasingly involved in the Società Fotografica Italiana, of which he was elected vice-president of the administrative council on 17th January 1904. He guided the activity of the society with surprising vigour, practical sense and effectiveness. In October of 1904 he published the article “A proposito di alcune negative tratte dalla Nuova Guinea britannica” (About some negatives taken in British New Guinea).

Despite its title, the test says little about what was shown in the photographs that Loria presented at the third Esposizione Sociale (Social Exposition) and much instead about the adventurous actions undertaken to produce them, showing a Loria whose timidity had completely disappeared, making way for a sure, full and thundering use of language. It seems that in the Società Fotografica Italiana, unlike in the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia, Loria found growing confidence in the importance of his work in British New Guinea. In particular, his approach to the field and the fruits of his labour (the photographic plates that he took back home) were praised at great length, and Loria was valued precisely for those aspects of his practice which Italian anthropology of his day was less able to appreciate. In the dynamic and friendly environment of the Società Fotografica Italiana, he had ample room for manoeuvre which he would have struggled to find at the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia still under the imperious wing of Mantegazza.

The fifth Italian Geographical Congress held in Naples from 4th to 11th April 1904, concerning “the convenience of filling in forms for the collection of notes and profitable materials from the distant regions in which our compatriots stay or travel”, concurred with Loria’s newfound confidence. [55] Taking an immediate interest in the project, he felt himself to be particularly well-suited to having a say in these matters, if not the best candidate for drawing up the instructions themselves. In 1905, in accordance with the decision to provide special anthropological instructions to be presented at the first Italian Colonial Congress to be held in Asmara in October of 1905, Loria decided to take part in the special commission nominated by both the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia and the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali (Society of Geographical and Colonial Studies). Over the course of 1905 the group produced a 79-page sketch. Integrated with the suggestions from scholars of “Eritrean matters” present in Asmara and then tested in the field in January of 1906, this sketch became a manual of over 200 pages which was finally printed in 1907 under the title Istruzioni per lo studio scientifico della Colonia Eritrea (Instructions for the scientific study of the Eritrean Colony).

Loria’s fate was from here on interwoven with the progressive “discovery of national imperialism”, understood as “a movement of action and thought which developed in Italian society” which allowed the geographical and colonial societies to continue to play a political role rather than falling back into pure science. [56] A new phase of the colonial movement
‘officially’ opened during the fifth Geographical Congress of Naples – through the colonial congress of Asmara, it would lead to the foundation of the Istituto Coloniale Italiano (Italian Colonial Institute) and the heavy involvement of the Italian political class. [57]

Loria’s growing engagement, supported by his numerous friends and acquaintances, brought him back to the peak of the geographical and commercial societies. Having obtained the post of vice-president of the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali on 14th May 1905, following the death of his predecessor Carlo Giuliani, Loria attended the congress in Asmara as spokesperson of the Società Geografica Italiana alongside Antonino Paternò-Castello, Marquis of San Giuliano, Cap. A.M. Tancredi and Baron O. De Boccard. He assumed a central role: vice-president of the colonial congress, member of the jury of a photographic exhibition arranged for the occasion, he also took part in the committee promoting the foundation of the Istituto Coloniale Italiano and participated in the testing of the new travel instructions to which he had contributed in the field in Assaorta. When he returned to Italy, he was nominated vice-president of the Istituto Coloniale Italiano and confirmed vice-president of the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali – the crowning glory of his scientific and “political” achievements. In 1907 he would be elected councillor of the Società Geografica Italiana as well, and in 1908 he would organise and participate in the first Congresso degli Italiani all’Estero (Congress of Italians Abroad) which would be held in Rome from 19th to 21st of October and then in Turin on the 31st of the same month.

At the Eritrean congress Loria reaffirmed and specified – on the basis of his personal experience – the need to “acquire a deep understanding of the habits of the indigenous peoples”. He also proposed the development of “two separate legislations, one for Italians and Europeans in general, the other for the natives”. Particularly in the latter, it was important to have “concern with their protection since the concept of racial superiority, when misinterpreted, always leads to abuse”. He emphasised that “the right to property and to honesty, the concepts of right and wrong, change between different peoples.” [58] It was therefore fundamental “to study the indigenous habits in great depth”. [59] During the long years spent in British New Guinea, Loria had seen Governor MacGregor in action, a man who considered legislation and politics strongly connected to an understanding of indigenous habits. The governor himself not only collected notes and, above all, objects, but also spurred functionaries and missionaries to document the customs, idioms and beliefs of the dominated peoples: and their research was regularly published in the Annual Report of British New Guinea.

In 1905, before leaving for Africa, Loria also brought back a few fragments of his Papuan ethnography. The first item, which appears, unfortunately, to have left little trace, was the lecture on “Il commercio nella Nuova Guinea” (Commerce in New Guinea) which he held during the periodical meeting of the Società Italiana di Antropologia ed Etnologia on 16th April 1905. The text of the memoir, which concerned the “baghi” (bagi: a necklace of red shells) - a significant topic if one thinks of the Kula ring studied by Malinowski and of the theories of the gift of Marcel Mauss – was not handed out.

The other is an essay on Papuan themes which was presented at the fifth International Congress of Psychology, held in Rome from 26th to 30th of April 1905. The contribution, which bore the title “Appunti di psicologia papuana” (Notes on Papuan Psychology), almost
serving as a counterpoint to the specificity of the places and customs described in “Il matrimonio nei villaggi del Basso S. Giuseppe”, contains a long account of the character of the natives extrapolated from the many observations that he had made in various zones of British New Guinea. Written specifically for the congress and in line with a marginal tradition with respect to the more popular collective psychology, Loria’s contribution took up once again the observations on the indolence of the Papuans which he had expressed in the conference of 1898. Aligning them with the comparative psychology of human races formulated by Mantegazza, he ended by reinforcing the generalising tendency, of an evolutionist and colonial nature, that was already present in his approach – despite his focus on the particulars in the previous articles.

This comparative psychology of human races had formed for thirty years the backbone of an anthropology that linked the most strictly anatomical and physiological aspects of man with his cultural production: an anthropology that was considered – in Italy – as the natural history of man and mother of all the sciences. But, alas, it now risked being labelled too general or too ambitious, since the context of the early 20th century was characterised by the affirmation of specific social sciences and humanities. Moreover, struck by the lack of a univocal theoretical or methodological specialisation, the domination of the all-embracing vision of the study of man had also weakened the discipline in Italy. So much so, that already in the early 20th century the Italian anthropological community had started to display tentative signs of discontent, to scrutinise carefully the epistemological framework and to consider the redefinition of the confines of the discipline.

These aspects were further revealed during the course of the fifth International Congress of Psychology, helping Loria to gain a new awareness and spurring him to propose the founding of a museum, and, through the museum, a new discipline which would focus on ethnography translated to an object of investigation far enough from the watchful eye of Mantegazza: Italian ethnography.

**Italian Ethnography**

In the spring of 1905, according to a story that has become famous in the history of Italian anthropology, Loria made an excursion to the countryside in Campania which resulted in his ‘conversion’ to Italian ethnography. The foundational myth, repeated many times in his own words, states that

> in 1905 […], I had to travel to Cirello in Sannio. And there the idea came to me that I ought to abandon the studies of exotic ethnography which until then had forced me on long and dangerous journeys, and to attend instead to our own people. I knew that Italy, despite being populated by people of a single race, presented, above all due to its history, a great variety of habits and customs. […] At Circello I was deeply impressed by the difference in the habits, customs and psyche of those southern populations. […] I was organising the trip to Assaorta, which I have since completed, and I asked myself if it wouldn’t be more convenient to collect documents and manufactured items in Italy than elsewhere. [60]

This growing interest in the Italian peoples and its rapid materialisation in the establishment of a museum dedicated to Italian ethnography were born of the association of different ideas already present in Florentine photographic circles and, more generally, in Italian scientific
(and political) circles. Loria further strengthened them through frequent interaction with Aldobrandino Mochi, with whom he was working on the first draft of the instructions for the Eritrean Colony. In the beginning of summer 1905 Loria had a memoire ready to present to Count Giovan Angelo Bastogi to ask him to finance the enterprise. [61] The initial core of the Museum would be Mochi’s small collection, which had been presented at a reading of the memoire *Per l’etnografia italiana* (For Italian Ethnography) in 1902, and then expanded in 1903 by Modigliani’s donation of objects from the Aosta Valley. Ergological collections would soon be added, along with other materials and documents representative of Italian populations.

In *Per l’etnografia italiana*, partially in line with proposals by Fano and in the wake of the transition towards studying “the savages living amongst us” suggested by Enrico H. Giglioli in 1883, Mochi openly suggested a change of focus from foreign peoples to his own compatriots. Along the Italian peninsula, he wrote, one can see “the swarm of peoples struggling up the lower echelons of the rugged mountain [that leads to civilisation], or who have made themselves comfortable at the feet of the first incline”. [62] These are the people “of our countryside, of our mountains, of all the hidden corners still unreached by the civilisation that radiates out from the city centres. Of this people and of the centuries-long survivals that it represents we take too little notice, we forget one and the other of them all too easily”. [63] All the same, the great mass of the people, he declares, “have little to envy of those savages that at first sight seem so far from us and before which we are so proud”. [64]

In Mochi’s view, the urgent study of these ‘internal savages’ and of those things which, in Tyrolean jargon, he called ‘survivals’ had to be carried out through the analysis of the artefacts of the peasants which had first to be collected systematically. Therefore, his proposal was to apply to the study of Italian ethnography a method of research which had until then been overlooked in researching Italian folklore, which had been principally (but not exclusively) concerned with the collection of songs and folk poetry.

In 1905 Loria took up Mochi’s project, which had soon come to a standstill, and made it his own. As he would maintain in his pamphlet *Sulla raccolta di materiali per la etnografia italiana* (On the collection of materials for Italian ethnography) published in 1906, he widened it “to all the ethnographic, demopsychological, and folkloristic documents, call them what you will, to their nature and the form in which they are presented”. [65] The Museo di Etnografia Italiana (Museum of Italian Ethnography) established in Florence was founded with the aim of “collecting all that pertains to Italian folk habits and customs, traditional to and characteristic of the many regions of our country”, which were rapidly disappearing. [66] Though much attention was dedicated to the collection of objects (until then greatly neglected),

*... one ought not to distinguish between manufactured artefacts and demopsychological documents of other kinds, be they material, linguistic, transcriptions of legends or descriptions of traditions. Because [...] these various types of documents do not substantially differ from one another, but rather integrate with one another and illustrate one another. In fact, one might in many cases say that they overlay and interpenetrate each other so intimately as to allow for no division. [...] To give preference to one or the other of these categories of documents, to collect one*
and ignore the rest, is to do something incomplete, is imperfect and misconstrued scientific work. [67]

These statements demonstrate an approach to the study of Italian ethnography which ranges over material and immaterial culture according to a “descriptive ensemble” in which all the different elements are integrated. An ethnographic approach, which in its categories of research recalls that developed by Loria in his study of the Papuan populations and which, at the same time as the drafting of the pamphlet Sulla raccolta di materiali per la etnografia italiana, was taking shape in the Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea.

In Assaorta (Eritrea) Loria and Mochi had spent over two months together with Olinto Marinelli and Giotto Dainelli: the former pair focussed on the ethno-anthropological research and the collection of objects; the latter on geological and geographical research. The expedition – the first Italian colonial expedition with an interdisciplinary team – had started in the region of Akkâlä Guzay escorted by governmental askaris from the inhabited centre of Saganeiti on 6th November and had concluded with the return to Massawa on 15th January 1906. Mochi had taken a large quantity of anthropometrical measurements, had investigated genealogies and had kept a diary. Loria had been focussed on taking photographs, collecting ethnographic objects, and noting certain aspects of indigenous culture: in particular, the “cosmographical ideas” and sexual and family life. [68] An important success of the mission was the ethnographic collection for Mantegazza’s Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia in Florence, consisting of roughly 1300 objects which documented the everyday life and festive customs of the Saho and, naturally, organised them according to the Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea.

When they returned home, it took them over a year to complete the final text. Constructed to embrace the entire reality of the African region, the Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea, only published in 1907, contained sections devoted to cartography, geology, hydrology, meteorology, anthropogeography (Dainelli and Marinelli), botany (Sommier) and zoology (Beccari). The chapters on anthropology (Mantegazza and Mochi) and ethnography (Loria, with contributions from Mochi and others), as in the English Notes and Queries on Anthropology, were kept strictly apart; ‘anthropology’ was explicitly taken to mean physical anthropology. The ethnographic section, consisting of 48 pages, besides being more than double the size of that devoted to anthropology, was also the only section in all of the Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea to be given so much space: a sign that Loria’s diligence in his participation in the project and his high level of skill found ample room for expression. It is also a sign that the times were changing, that ethnography was taking on a newfound visibility and autonomy and that new characters were beginning to scale the slope of Italian anthropological science.

In particular, the writing of the Istruzioni functioned as a true rite of passage for Loria as ethnographer – from the pre-congress preparation, to testing in the field, to the lengthy editing process (lasting the whole of 1906). In the section “Ethnography”, in fact, Loria presented and circumscribed the disciplinary field of ethnography capitalising on his experiences in Papuasia. After the fifth International Congress of Psychology in Rome, he was also living a moment of intense “operative recovery” within photography, which had been seen to improve the value of his work in the field in his use of technology, his method
and his management of relations with the natives.

From the suggested objects of observation to the ways of collecting objects, there are many traces of the “Papuan Loria” in the *Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea*. Loria not only selected the same categories of research from the *Notes and Queries* that he had used to describe the Papuans, but even personalised, adjusted and simplified them on the basis of his experience in British New Guinea. In fact, the ethnography contained in the *Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea* restored the mediation worked out in the field between the contributions of two different traditions: the English tradition that strictly separated the physical and cultural fields of study, dedicating more attention to the latter, and the Italian tradition, which, even in its constitutive indefiniteness, directed Loria’s gaze towards specific categories of research within the “Culture” section of the *Notes and Queries*. All of this was sustained in the introductory part by the methodological directions developed by Loria over the long course of his experience.

The writing of the *Istruzioni* and the participation in the mission in Assaorta, then, put Loria in a new position within the panorama of anthropological studies in Italy. He had been an explorer of distant lands, a great collector, a proficient photographer, and an expert in the customs of British New Guinea. But, in truth, he had not been a particularly important member of the scientific entourage, due to his small number of publications and the equally small restitution of his research to the national and international public. He now rose thanks to his previous experience in Papuasia as an expert “guide” in questions of fieldwork and a competent authority on a discipline clearly distinct from anthropology and of a strong applied character. Though the contents of Loria’s Papuan ethnography remained practically invisible to the scientific community, the formulation and methodology developed throughout his Melanesian experience were fundamental to the definition of an autonomous ethnographic discipline in Italy and for the first Italian application of a systematic and scientifically selective approach to fieldwork.

In *Sulla raccolta di materiali per la etnografia italiana*, we also find many traces of Loria’s experiences in British New Guinea. In the list of “Objects and documents which the Museum harvests” the cultural productions of the populations of the Italian peninsula recorded or collected were, it seems, in all ways similar to those identified for the study of the Eritrean population and to those used for the description of the Papuan ones. They were also filtered through the categories enumerated by the anthropologist Enrico Morselli in 1884 at the General Italian Exposition in Turin. [69] Naturally, the choice of typology for documents and objects useful for illustrating Italian ethnography was influenced by different parameters: those linked to the various types of populations being studied, to their specific “level of evolution along the ladder of civilisation” and to the distinct interests of the researchers – like the previous tradition of investigation already present in Italy. Thus it becomes clear that Loria and Mochi were particularly interested in the peoples of the Italian countryside and in the survival of artefacts, habits and customs considered traditional, and that their priority was the collection of objects which, previously neglected, were identified with great care.

A true programmatic manifesto for Italian ethnography, *Sulla raccolta di materiali per la etnografia italiana* incorporated the older attempts to document the soul or psyche of the nation (as well as that of its ancient ethnic groups) along Morsellian lines with new and
preponderant contributions emerging from an exotic ethnography which, on the fringe of the evolutionist establishment, had begun to develop investigations of an ideographic nature. Italian ethnography shares, then, the same categories of observation and the same attention to methodological questions as Papuan ethnography (necessary differences aside). But above all, there is a similar integrated vision both of the use of methodologies and of the consideration of the data found in the field; the same comparative attention to the differences among the investigated populations; and, lastly, a desire to limit the negative consequences of civilisation already developed in an applied conception of the discipline of ethnography.

More generally, Loria’s interest is intertwined with a new and growing attention, reinforced in Italy between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, to a study of local life which would open “a new path to real understanding of the national spirit, in its infinite variety”. [70] Linking the fragility of the national body to the need to fill “the large chasm which lies between the miserable and almost savage life […] of the common people of our less developed regions, and those of the comfortable city-dwelling classes”, [71] Loria and Mochi made of the ethnography of the Italian peoples a question of the construction of a national identity. “Such studies”, they affirmed in the footsteps of Angelo De Gubernatis and his programme of the Società Nazionale per le Tradizioni Popolari Italiane (National Society for the Italian Popular Traditions) born in 1893, “will allow us to understand the various dispositions, the different intellectual values, the different moral qualities of the peoples that constitute our nation: information needed by the educator and also at times by the man of state.” [72]

In his last article of 1912, “L’Etnografia strumento di politica interna e coloniale” (Ethnography as instrument of internal and colonial politics), by now a leading figure in Italian anthropology, Loria reaffirmed, recalling in part what he had already expressed in the Congress of Asmara, [73] that

[...] the understanding of the habits and customs of each of our provinces will probably lead to special laws which will be attuned to those habits, to those customs. [...] And this, far from being harmful to the national spirit, will be the cement that will indissolubly unite the various regions of Italy: only in such a way will the wonderful reawakening of our people be complete. This must give us our ethnography. Our studies will thus not only be useful to the scholar, but will be a source of national wellbeing. [74]

Moreover, as clarified by the historian and politician Pasquale Villari, a great supporter of Loria’s enterprises ever since his first emergence on the scene, Italian ethnography would be the means for an “ideal course through the most noble of modern civilisation’s conquests”. The Museo di Etnografia Italiana would be “a highly patriotic work” which, “despite its highly scientific character”, would be “intended not only for scholars, but for the cultured public in general”. “Helping to introduce the Italians to the Italians”, Fano had said, “is sacred work”, and Loria had decided to complement the exhibition of objects with a library and a series of publications concerning Italian ethnography, which would serve to illustrate what was studied in the museum-cum-laboratory and to “spread new and useful cognitions through the country”. [75]
The Museo di Etnografia Italiana officially opened in Florence on 20th September 1906 and suffered from fickle economic success. Temporarily subsidised by Count Bastogi, the work was originally undertaken by Loria alone, who travelled around Italy at his own expense to gather material, while Mochi (nominated vice-director, also free of charge) stayed in Florence to catalogue and systematise the artefacts. [76] Soon finding itself without Bastogi’s help, the museum would not find another financier until the spring of 1908. This financier was Ferdinando Martini, newly elected Minister of Public Education, who took an interest in Loria’s activities. He had also become Vice President of the Committee of Celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Unification and was now in charge of organising the Universal Exposition to be held in Rome in 1911 for the occasion. He proposed that Loria transport the objects to Rome and augment the existing collection for an exhibition of Italian ethnography in the context of the Exposition. Loria accepted for merely a reimbursement of expenses and the word of the state to construct a Museo Nazionale di Etnografia Italiana (National Museum of Italian Ethnography), at the end of the exhibition and with the objects gathered.

From the very beginning, Loria built up a network of collaborators who would help him in forming collections which would then be added to those already established. Besides some institutions, he involved various types of people: not only anthropologists and folklorists, but also teachers, clergymen, historians, passionate amateurs, and enthusiasts of related disciplines (literature, particularly of the folk kind, philosophy, and dialectology). In the end the total number of researchers, excluding the principle collaborators, reached over one hundred and twenty.

Every collector, guided by a specific circular containing a list of documents and objects to collect (modelled on Sulla raccolta di materiali per la etnografia italiana), concentrated on one or more sections of Italy, travelling or maintaining contacts with local artisans, guided by Loria, soon joined in his task by the historian Francesco Baldasseroni. Besides the simple collection of objects, the participants were urged to provide for every object, material or document sent to Florence brief but decisive notes explaining its significance, use and also instructions for assembly in the case of utensils or objects which could be disassembled. Moreover, they were invited to fill in special index sheets which Loria worked on after the trip in March of 1909 which led him to visit some of Europe’s most important ethnographic museums in order to assess their preparation and to take inspiration for the arrangement of the Italian museum. Particularly struck by the museums of Copenhagen and Stockholm, Loria conceived of a dual filing system (complete with a drawing or photograph of the object itself), by theme and by group of objects, which would in turn be organised according to place of origin and theme. [77] In 1910 he took on the project with Athos Foco Mainardi – later abandoned – of collaborating with a film society to present footage depicting Italian folk culture in its diverse regional variations.

The Ethnographic Exhibition of 1911, planned in association with the Mostra delle Regioni (Exhibition of Regions) and set up on the right bank of the Tiber in the then Piazza d’Armi (now Piazza Mazzini) [78] with over thirty thousand objects on display, was an enormous success. However, the inflow to the festivities of the Republic’s 50th anniversary, which were organised to show how well it was fitting into the political landscape of an evolved, industrialised, capitalistic Europe, was, generally speaking, more meagre than had been hoped.
After the triumphal entrance, one arrived at the Foro delle Regioni (Forum of the Regions), designed by the architect Marcello Piacentini and modelled on ancient fora. Then, surrounded by porticoes and columns on which the emblems of all the regions were displayed, a grand staircase led to a spacious area which opened onto the right and left, with a spectacular artificial lake as its centrepiece. To the right stood the building housing traditional pieces, displaying items from every region, thematically arranged, covering every aspect of everyday life: from birth to death, with religion, domestic life, work and leisure on the way. And then there were the instruments for spinning and weaving, fabrics, costumes, gold and jewellery, with a great variety in decoration and finish; furniture; documents concerning folk religion (from amulets to cribs to miniature religious floats), and folk literature; toys and products typical of the local gastronomy of various regions. There was also a section which did not concern the lives of peasants, but nonetheless concerned the people, the people of the city: for instance signs of the botteghe (small shops) and artisans’ tools - destined themselves to be surpassed along with the advent of “modern culture”.

In front of the building housing the traditional artefacts, a provisional construction, the Palazzo delle Maschere e dei Costumi (Palace of Masks and Costumes), featured over one hundred and fifty costumes, mounted on dummies which reported the physiognomy of the inhabitants of each region. Ceremonial moments and typical customs were reconstructed: the tattooing from the town of Loreto (Marche), the baptism of the Alta Valle del Cervo in Piedmont, marriage processions and groups of pilgrims. All around the outside of the area here described there were “regional marquees”, each one of which was “a construction of summary character” in which the “most beautiful [elements] of the region represented” were synthesised, with much heterogeneity in terms of style, time period and proportion. Inside there were small craft and local history exhibitions.

In an area adjacent to the marquees were the “ethnographic groups”, subdivided into three zones: Southern Italy (meridionale), Central Italy (centrale), and Northern Italy (settentrionale). Characteristic buildings were reproduced: the trulli of the town of Alberobello (Puglia); the houses of the region of Barbagia (Sardinia); typical historical monuments of several important cities, such as the Palazzo del Popolo in Perugia (Umbria), the Palazzo del Podestà in Fabriano (Marche) and the medieval fountain of Pianoscarano in Viterbo (Lazio); the farmhouse of San Gimignano (Tuscany); typical buildings of Naples and Venice; the spinning mill in Brianza (Lombardy); and Sicilian cart and mandolin factories. The interiors of all these structures were perfectly furnished to reconstruct domestic environments, workshops and shops, all functioning and staffed by real men and women in traditional dress. One could observe “the loom which was worked” and on the “street or canal” one found “the carriages and boats which travelled it”; in the thresholds sat women embroidering, pastry makers and pizzaioli worked in their reconstructed spaces, in a great variety of animated scenes, set in realistic contexts in which all was “harmonically combined and arranged to create a perfect illusion”, while anyone could really acquire and sample the products, as in a real artisanal fair.

The Exposition of 1911, though a masterly display, was for Loria only part of a far wider-reaching project covering different activities intended to inspire an impulse in Italy for ethnographic studies. To reaffirm the necessity of “creating a science of Italian ethnography,
and so indirectly to caution and inform our politicians and legislators, so that in governing and legislating they will take account of the differences and different needs of the individual Italian regions”, [83] Loria founded the Società di Etnografia Italiana in 1910. Moreover, aware of the need to inspire “a whole movement of new investigations” around the museum, without which it would give “to Italy a beautiful but useless thing, a jewel without a ring”, [84] he organised the first Congresso di Etnografia Italiana (Congress of Italian Ethnology) in 1911 to “outline the paths that researchers in this discipline must take; [and to] identify the methods with which it can rise to the dignity of a science”. This, he wrote in a letter to the Canon Francesco Polese,

[...] will be divided in three parts: in the first, we will deal with the major problems of methodology in general, and respond to questions such as: What is Italian ethnography – the ethnography of a people considered civilised? What is the relationship between it and general ethnography? What are the scientific advantages to be gained from it, how can it prosper? How should the museums of individual regions be organised – like the National Museum? How shall objects be collected? And how are the collected objects to be studied? How shall catalogues be made? In the second part (Methodology; Special part), we will examine the most important chapters of Italian ethnography, [...] we will discuss, among other subjects, dress, ceramics, jewellery, amulets, birth and wedding traditions, funerals, food, hunting and fishing, work-tools, small industries, and popular religious festivals. In the third and final part we will discuss the relationships between ethnography and other sciences (history, law, glossology, geography, etc.). [85]

Held in Rome while the exhibition was still in progress, from 19th to 24th October 1911, the congress saw the contributions of the major Italian students of Man and of important figures of the age: anthropologists, linguists, palaeoethnologists, philologists, scholars, historians, travellers and folklorists. The organising committee was composed of Pasquale Villari, Ferdinando Martini, Domenico Comparetti, Angelo de Gubernatis, Giuseppe Pitrè and Hugo Schuchardt. Among the speakers at the conference, besides Loria, Mochi, Baldasseroni, De Gubernatis and Schuchardt, were Alfredo Niceforo, Enrico Morselli, Francesco Novati, Carlo Puini, Giulio Cesare Paribenì, Giuseppe Bellucci, Caterina Pigorini-Beri, Luigi Pigorini and Giuseppe Sergi. [86] Three generations of Italian scholars were present: the founding fathers (De Gubernatis, Pitrè, Sergi, Puini, Pigorini), the middle generation, made up of the students and direct ‘descendants’ of the founders (Loria, Baldasseroni, Mochi, Morselli), and the new generation, made up of young researchers like Raffaele Pettazzoni and Raffaele Corso who were first setting foot in the scientific world.

The congress, held one year after the death of Mantegazza, showed the transition from the cultural climate of the origins of Italian anthropology to that which would characterise the discipline during the first half of the 20th century. The reports “confront the old diachronic theories and some new synchronic approaches; the typological–functional comparison was aligned with the large and extended comparison in time and in space; and the analytical and content–based comparison with the analogical comparison of cultural phenomena”. [87] As shown by Sandra Puccini, the nomothetic evolutionist attitudes which, for most of the 19th century, had guided research on man and society in the search of laws of biological organisms and social bodies, were now called into question. This is accompanied by the advent of historical–geographical methods which would exercise a powerful influence over
Italian folkloristic and ethnological studies throughout the first half of the 20th century. Lastly, it was in this congress that the clear separation of the sectors of study which for over forty years had been kept together by the all-embracing general anthropology of Mantegazza was finally officially ratified. [88]

In 1912, to ensure the continuity of the many innovations in ethnology and to aid its progress in Italy, Loria founded *Lares*, a scholarly journal the name of which refers to “the whole, vast world – still to be investigated – of the origins, the distant stories, and the traditional customs of Italic descent” [89] and whose direction would not be guided “by overly rigid schools of thought” and which would welcome “every study and every theory” so as to create, in contrast to what had existed under Mantegazza, a tranquil space for scientific confrontation and growth. [90] But not only this: in accordance with the ambitions of the Società di Etnografia Italiana, Loria planned the release of a series of ethnographic publications which “with the passing of the years [would provide] a wealth of material for those who want to understand the life and the soul of our people”. [91]

But the Società di Etnografia Italiana and Loria’s plans were short-lived: the first terminated its activity in 1914 due to the outbreak of war and because in those years an entire generation of founders fell away; Loria himself died unexpectedly of cardiac arrest in his home on Via Lucrezio, Rome on 4th April 1913, at the age of 58. The First World War and the triumph of Crocean “absolute historicism” at the expense of positive inductivism did the rest. [92] *Lares* continued publication until 1915 under the direction of Francesco Novati, later to be relaunched in 1930 by Emilio Bodrero and Paolo Toschi as an official organ of the Comitato nazionale per le Tradizioni Popolari (National Committee for Popular Traditions) linked to the fascist *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National Recreational Club). [93] The objects collected for the ethnography exhibition, rather than being installed in the Museo Nazionale di Etnografia Italiana, were shut away in containers. Only after two world wars, many hardships (and many losses), they were organised in 1956 under the title Museo Nazionale di Arti e Tradizioni Popolari (National Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions). A museum which in 2018, over a century after his death, has finally been named after its founder: *Museo delle Civiltà — Museo delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari ‘Lamberto Loria’* (Museum of Civilizations - Museum of the Arts and Popular Traditions ‘Lamberto Loria’). In the same year, his Papuan ethnographic notes were finally published.

**Some final remarks**

A potentially paradigmatic figure at the turn of two centuries and two ways of doing anthropology, Loria alas never abandoned the evolutionary framework and did not have a revolutionary impact on the discipline: he did not publish the results of his Papuan research and soon turned his attention to Italian ethnography, founding a new field of study, for which he is especially remembered in Italy. The link between his long experience in the terrain in Papua and his new interests, however, are strong (and so far neglected by Italian historiography, which has focused almost exclusively on the impressive collection of ethnographic objects he made for the Mostra di Etnografia Italiana of 1911). Loria, in fact, used what he learnt in British New Guinea to draft the *Istruzioni per lo studio della Colonia Eritrea* and the directions for the collection of Italian ethnographic objects, where he applied similar categories of observation, devotion to methodological questions and comparative
attention as well as an applied conception of the discipline.

Member of the most important scientific and colonial associations of the time and in close connection with important political figures, taking advantage of the renewed attention to regional identities in the Italian national construction, he managed to found a museum of Italian ethnography and to organise an ethnographic exhibition as part of the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Unification of Italy. Loria was seen as a point of reference for the younger generations of anthropologists in Italy, not least due to the foundation – during the years that saw Mantegazza’s approach cracking – of the Società Etnografica Italiana and the scientific journal *Lares*, conceived as a space of confrontation open to the new ferment that the scientific landscape of the early twentieth century were experiencing.

A man of action, who taught by doing and transformed his ideas through the practical organisation of things rather than theoretical elaboration, on his untimely death Loria left many of his projects unfinished: he was still waiting for the creation of a national museum to accommodate what he had gathered; his Società Italiana di Etnografia was still too fragile and tenuously rooted to survive the vicissitudes of the war; and the thousands of pages of his Papuan research remained unpublished. The influence of his work on the anthropological discipline – also because of his very few published writings – did not survive his life and the people who knew him except in the memory of his undertakings.

Soon the traces of Loria’s impact and even of some phases of his life were lost – traces that are only now being fully unveiled and on which there is still much work to be done.

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[2] He declared “Profession: Landowner” in his application for nationality, without specifying the nature and origin of his property.

[3] The information is contained in Mio state civile, written by Marco Loria (Lamberto’s father) shortly before his death, dated Pisa 6th June 1871 and kept among his other papers by his granddaughter Lina (Fondo Cividalli, doc. 5).


[7] The first title features questions concerning children, the elderly, love and marriage, the family, the homeland, social feelings, moral qualities, character, religion, government, laws and property. The second contains those concerning the ‘industries’: hunting, fishing, agriculture, dwellings, luxury industries, commerce and currency.


[9] Loria had suggested that his relatives keep the letters “in chronological order, because I will need them for the travel diary which I will perhaps write when I return” (R. Ajmone. 1956. *La vita e l’opera scientifica di L. Loria*. Tesi di Laurea in Lettere, Università “La Sapienza” di Roma, A.A. 1955–1956, p. 5).

[10] The text of the report, which does not appear in the *Archivio di Antropologia ed Etnologia* of the SIAE, and the travel diary of Turkmenistan were published by Sara Ciruzzi in 1995. Two letters written to Mantegazza should also be included: one from St. Petersburg, dated the 21st of September 1883 (which would be published in “La Nazione” in Florence on 7th October the same year); the other from Tiflis, dated 19th January 1884.


[16] Various accounts of the voyage remain. According to Francesco Baldasseroni, Loria “intended to go to Nias with Elio Modigliani […]; but for health reasons he could not complete the journey and contented himself with a stay in the [East] Indies, letting his companion go on alone” (F. Baldasseroni. 1913. “Lamberto Loria”, *Lares*, vol. ii, pp. 3–16: 4). In the “notes” quoted by Ajmone, Loria wrote only that from Suez he would have undertaken an exploratory journey “heading south”. Aldobrandino Mochi, Pigorini and Cosimo Bertacchi write that his goal was New Guinea. Pigorini also mentions an excursion with Sonnino going back up the Nile up to the first cataract. But Ajmone states that she has found no trace of it, neither in the “notes” nor in Loria’s diary (R. Ajmone. 1956. *La vita e l’opera scientifica di L. Loria*. Tesi di Laurea in Lettere, Università “La Sapienza” di Roma, A.A. 1955–1956, p. 37).

[17] Brother of Alberto Nasi, with whom he had travelled in Northern Europe.


[20] Declared Protectorate in 1884, British New Guinea became officially a colony in 1888. The administration of the colony was shared by United Kingdom, New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.


[25] A.C. English in 1890 was Resident Agent of Rigo.


[27] Ibid., p. 575.


[31] A converted and educated native used for the spreading of the Christian faith.

[32] Archivio Storico del Museo delle Civiltà – MPE ‘Luigi Pigorini’, 247c, ii, iii, p. 278. Belford interrogated Ossiva–Maraga in motu and then translated the answers in English for Loria. The costumes recorded by Loria, then, passed through three different translations: from the local dialect to the motu (Ossiva –Maraga), from the motu to English (Belford), from English to Italian (Loria).


[34] See note 26.


[38] All of these are now kept in Italy: the naturalist collections at the Museo Civico di Genova; the anthropological collections at the Museo Antropologico ‘Giuseppe Sergi’ (Anthropological Museum ‘Giuseppe Sergi’) in Rome and at the Museo di Storia Naturale (Museum of Natural History) in Florence; the ethnographic collections, diaries, field notes and photographs at the Museo delle Civiltà — Museo Preistorico etnografico ‘Luigi Pigorini’ in Rome (Museum of Civilisations – Museum Prehistoric Ethnographic ‘Luigi Pigorini’). Some other materials are at the Museo Civico Archeologico Etnografico (Civic Archeologic and Ethnographic Museum) of Modena. The ethnographic notes have recently been transcribed and are available online on the following website (in Italian): http://www.cisu.it/images/PDF/Loria/appendici%20dimpflmeier%20puccini.pdf


[43] Ibid., p. 160.

[44] Ibid., p. 158.

[45] Ibid., p. 159.


[48] The first conference, entitled “La Nuova Guinea Britannica e i suoi abitanti” (British New Guinea and its Inhabitants), was held at the insistence of his old friend Giacomo Doria, president of the Società Geografica Italiana. Loria entertained Queen Margherita di Savoia, the members of that scholarly institution and many curious people on 5th April 1898 in the hall of the Regio Liceo (Royal High School) E.Q. Visconti on the Piazza del Collegio Romano. In the second, held in Florence on the 15th of the same month on the occasion of the third National Geographical Conference, Loria presented “La guerra dei Logea (est della Nuova Guinea)” (The War of the Logea (Eastern New Guinea) to a much larger audience (Atti del V Congresso Geografico italiano, Napoli, 6–11 aprile 1904. 1905. Napoli: Tocco e Salvietti, p. 95). The texts of the contributions were not published. The typescript of the first conference has recently been recovered among the papers of Loria’s heirs in Israel.

[49] Societies such as the Società Geografica Italiana, the Società Africana d’Italia (African Society of Italy), the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali (Society of Geographical and Colonial Studies) and

[50] Loria, from 1880 onwards, was a member-for-life of the Società Geografica Italiana and, from 1885, of the Florentine arm of the Società Africana d’Italia, which in 1893 was transformed into the Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali under the presidency of Giovanni Marinelli.

[51] The battle of Adwa, the first defeat ever suffered by a European army in Africa, marks the arrest of the Italian colonial advance in Eritrea and Ethiopia and the temporary retreat into a more moderate foreign policy.

[52] Loria won the gold medal in the scientific section of the Esposizione fotografica internazionale di Firenze.


[54] L. Loria. 1903. “Il matrimonio nei villaggi del basso San Giuseppe”, Archivio per l’Antropologia e l’Etnologia, 1903, XXXIII, pp. 85–96: 96. The contents of the article are almost unmodified from the reports on marriage in the first notebook of the Costumi di Innawi (Customs of Innawi) – a mere re-elaboration which can be attributed to contingent practical choices. The memoire should have been the first in a series of reports: this is suggested by the final lines of the article and the analysis of Loria’s ethnographic notes conserved in the Archivo Storico del Museo delle Civiltà – museo preistorico etnografico ‘Luigi Pigorini’ (Museum of Civilizations – Prehistoric Ethnographic Museum ‘Luigi Pigorini’) of Rome.


[57] Ibid., p. 12. In 1904 the societies in question, thanks to a newfound organisational and ideological vigour, were once more at the forefront of research. Under the cautious presidency of Giglioli, the SSIG showed a renewed interest in African themes, while the number of articles concerning the ‘black continent’ printed in the BSGI between 1899 and 1903 increased from 2 to 11. In April of 1904, to provide another significant example, the SGI financed Lt. Vannutelli’s commercial geography mission in Anatolia, and in 1905 elected the politician and great supporter of colonialism Antonio Giuliano to the office of councillor.


[60] L. Loria. 1907. “Com’è sorto il Museo di Etnografia italiana in Firenze”, in Comunicazione al VI


L. Loria – A. Mochi. 1906. Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia, notes of various measurements and genealogies, plants and dwellings and villages and drawings of work practices.

There are eighteen categories ranging from clothing to ornaments and individual tools; from household utensils to tattoo; from furniture to fabrics; from means of transport to gear for fishing, hunting, pastoralism and agriculture; from containers and special places for preserving food to drawings; from musical instruments to folk dances; from objects linked to ‘traditions, superstitions and popular legends’ to those used in religious festivals, up to the customs and traditions relating to domestic feasts, funeral solemnities, agricultural festivals, carnival (S. Puccini. 2006. Il corpo, la mente, le passioni. Istruzioni, guide e norme per la ricerca sui popoli nell’etno-antropologia italiana del secondo Ottocento. Roma: CISU, pp. 109–114).


[78] "The Regionale seeks to establish the peculiar historical and artistic character of the country, to fix, so to speak, its exterior and aesthetic physiognomy; the Etnografica wishes to show not the appearance of the country, but its customs; it seeks to indicate and summarise its life" (A. Calza. 1911. L’Esposizione etnografica e l’Esposizione regionale a Roma, in G. Treves. 1911. Le Esposizioni del 1911 a Torino, Roma, Firenze, fasc. II, p. 18).


[80] The wooden mannequins were carved by the Florentine sculptor Aristide Aloisi and arranged in scenographic groups by the painters Galileo Chini and Giovanni Costantini, a notable painter, decorator and restorer of the period.


[82] Ibid., p. 17.


[88] Ibidem.


[92] The years between the two World Wars in Italy were strongly influenced by the thought of the philosopher Benedetto Croce who, considering human history as a deployment of the history of the Spirit, had relegated every kind of scientific investigation to the role of pseudo-knowledge and denied ‘primitive’ populations and peasants any active role in History. Ernesto de Martino, in 1941, was the first to criticize this position (E. de Martino. 1941. *Naturalismo e storicismo nell’etnologia*. Laterza: Bari).

[93] Founded in 1925, the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro provided leisure and recreational facilities for workers during the Fascist regime.