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CHAPTER 4

WORKING WITH MIGRANTS' MEMORIES IN ITALY: THE LAMPEDUSA DUMP

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Abstract

The Archive of Migrant Memories aims at recording and diffusing migrant self-narratives in Italy to leave a visible trace of recently arrived migrants and their rising agency in Italian society. Retrieving oral and written records of migrants travelling to and landing on Italian soil intends to contrast, both physically and metaphorically, the hiding or cancellation mechanisms lying behind the collective unease surrounding immigration policies in today's Italy. The recurrent dumping of migrant lives in the Mediterranean, particularly on its European southernmost gate at Lampedusa, symbolizes the careless disposal of irksome memories of migration within present-day Italian society. Here the remains of rotten boats derived from the repeated landings of irregular migrants on the Island and their human 'waste' – old shoes, clothes, cooking utensils, children's toys, throw-away objects, but also water-stained documents, photos, holy books, and individual writings such as letters, memoirs or diaries – lie to decompose as a vivid expression of what is not to be remembered in the nation's past.

Keywords: archive, dump, migrant voices, politics of memory, objects of affection, displaced memories

I am not asking for a big thing, I am only asking to remember the value of man, and to respect it. I hope our arrival has been a useful thing, not just a burdensome one, one which may be useful [to all]. Let us teach the human values of respect, and of sharing (Mohamed Ali, 2013).

Returning to Lampedusa as a free man

It is with these words that Zakaria, a Somali student of journalism who left his home and country the day after his teacher was gunned down in Mogadishu, ends his video appeal for a retrieval of personal objects he and his friends lost on the island of Lampedusa where they had fortuitously landed four years earlier. Zakaria's return to Lampedusa as a free man after he received refugee status from the Italian authorities is in itself a return journey into memory. Invited by Dagmawi Yimer to join the film jury of the Lampedusa In Festival, Zakaria went back to the Island in September 2012 accompanied by Mahamed, an Eritrean youth who served in the Army for seven years before escaping to Italy after he was denied by his military commander attending the funeral of his father. Like Zakaria, Mahamed had landed in Lampedusa as a 'clandestine' migrant four years back, had been 'disciplined' (Gatta 2012: 13–17) at arrival according to the usual disembarkation procedures (the aluminium foil over a trembling body, squatting on the ground in ordered lines, being asked by a local policeman the standard questions: 'what is your name, where are you from, who was driving your boat'?) before being group-escorted to the Imbriacola Identification Centre, where he was stripped naked, showered, given an anonymous pair of shorts and a T-shirt, and provided with a disembarkation number, which identified him throughout his stay in the Centre.[1]

The return of Zakaria and Mahamed to Lampedusa was promoted by the Archive of Migrant Memories (AMM) in line with its policy of leaving a visible trace of individual migrants' trajectories in today's Italy (www. archiviomemoriemigranti.net). The return of the two young migrants Zakaria and Mahamad to Lampedusa in the Summer of 2012, this time by air, of their own free will, as invited guests of a local festival, was quite different from their earlier anonymous and 'clandestine' landing four years earlier. In the words of Mahamad:

[1] 1. For a close observation of disembarkation procedures at the Lampedusa harbour, and the arrival of the migrants at the Centre of identification and expulsion, see Gatta (2009).

> I was lucky enough to see Lampedusa again four years after my landing there. When I climbed into the airplane my heartbeat went up and I started thinking about myself and the difference between the first landing and now. I am going back with a [new] identity, a legal document, knowledge of the Italian language, and [especially] freedom and my own name (Mahamad Aman, *Return to Lampedusa*, further).

When the two returnees climb together the hill overlooking the Imbriacola Identification Centre, and stare at the burnt-out building that was put on fire during an inmate revolt the year before, they have no difficulty acknowledging the 'clandestine' nature of the Centre[2] itself, located in a low, out of sight valley at the end of a winding no-end road. Pushed back by the guards who ignore the search for the lost documents by the two ex-inmates, the real nature of the Centre becomes clear to Mahamed as he starts reminiscing his earlier arrival there:

> We were welcomed [in Lampedusa] but we were locked in and we could not go out, surrounded as we were by iron wire, armed guards and security checks. The difference then was that we could not get out, just as today I could not get in. We [Zakaria and I] could make it to the Centre because no one saw us coming until we were quite close to it as [the Centre] lies hidden in a valley and is quite invisible [from outside]. I only realised it was so when I went back to it. I asked myself how invisible we must have been from outside (Id., *Return to Lampedusa*, further).

The invisibility of the Imbriacola Centre points to the much wider invisibility and anonymity of foreign migrants within Italian society in the past twenty years. Since the early Summer of 2008,[3] when the Berlusconi Government introduced the first repressive bill into Italian Parliament which criminalised all undocumented foreign migrants as 'stowaway' (*clandestini*) within Italian society, foreign migrants in Italy –

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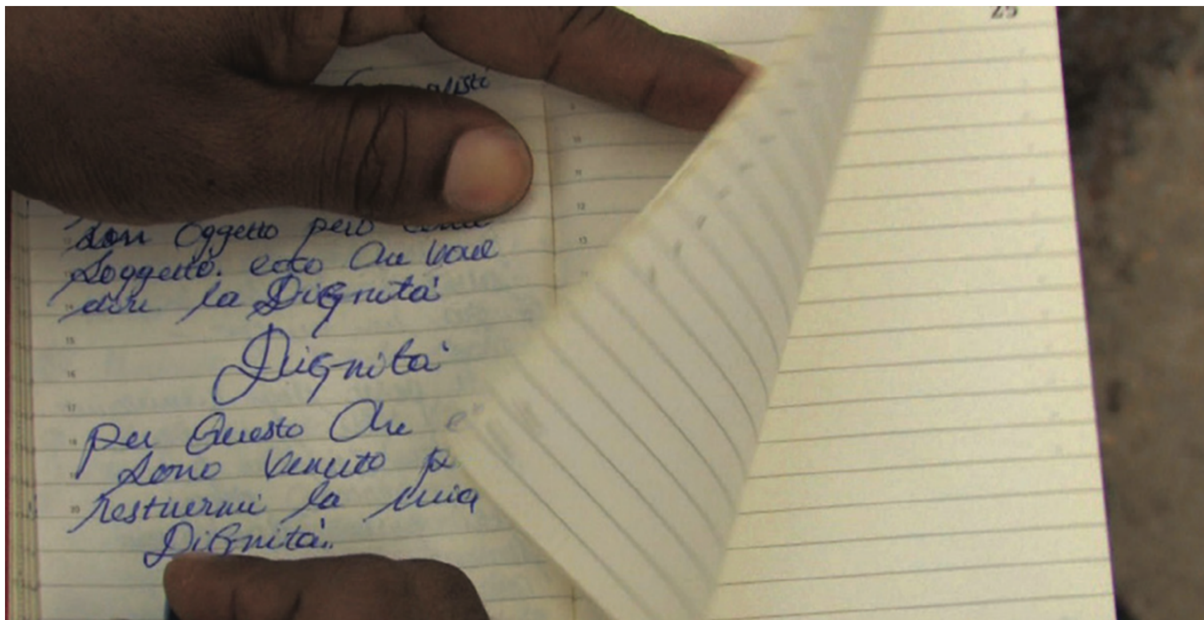
[2] The Centre has changed name several times. Started as a Welcome Centre (Centro di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza [CPSA]), was transformed in 2008 into a Centro di Identificazione ed Espulsione (CIE) and after 2013, returned being a Welcome Centre (Centro di Accoglienza [CdA]). In December 2015, it started operating as a Hot Spot for fingerprint taking and for expressing a possible, if restricted, asylum choice. See the latest Report on Italian 'malaccoglienza' (bad hospitality) by the Lasciatecientrare Campaign (Accardo and Guido 2016: 18–32).

[3] The 'pacchetto sicurezza' was introduced by the Italian Government in May 2008 and was approved by the two Chambers, in spite of strong opposition by civil society, on 27 July 2009 (Law 94). According to it, irregular migrants could be detained in the Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIE) up to eighteen months without process, their crimes being punished with a 1/3 increase on the sanctions applied to Italian citizens. Italian writer Erri De Luca has renamed the CIE as 'Centres of Extreme Infamy'. Alessandra Ballerini, a well-known human right lawyer in Genova, has recently stated the following: 'When they ask me to explain what the CIE are I am always in difficulty... They are cages, cages for undocumented migrants' (2013).

whether refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants – have been seen and perceived (and often represented in the media) literally as 'non-people' (Dal Lago 1999). Unlike other postcolonial countries, Italy has perceived and treated the incoming migrants, among whom were increasing number of descendants of her colonial subjects, not differently, and in some case worse, than their fathers ignoring their postcolonial status and claims to a common past (Iyob 2005). The established presence in today's Italy of a consistent number of refugees, and asylum seekers coming from her ex-colonial possessions, combined with mixed marriages to descendants of former colonial subjects trying to escape from the ravages of their countries in conflict, have reopened ancient routes and connections. Moreover, they have also stirred up memories and images that go far beyond modern fears and insecurities, reviving the legacy of past relations of colonial domination (Triulzi 2015b).

Figure 1 – Eritrean youth Mahamed Aman returns to Lampedusa four years after landing there 'to have his dignity back' (still from Zakaria Mohamed Ali's To Whom it May Concern @AMM2013).



Right from the start, foreign migrants have been seen by mainstream/official Italy as intruders into the country's history and culture, a potential threat to Italian institutions and society. Forced to eke out a hazardous fate in the country of arrival most migrants, irrespective of their status, have lived in a precarious state of marginalisation with no real integration procedures and programmes to ease their moulding within Italian society (Accardo and Guido 2016). Here is how Abubakar, a Somali refugee interviewed by Dagmawi Yimer in 2009, defines the 'Italian welcome':

> The Italian welcome can be summarised in one word: *buon appetito!* After landing, they took me to this centre [the Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Centre at Castelnuovo di Porto north of Rome] where I am staying now. Life is very difficult here. I expected to find a future in this country, instead they only give you a place where you can sleep and eat, *buon appetito*, after which you are left on your own. I have crossed the whole city looking for something to do. We Somali have a proverb: *qooro lusho aa qeyrka ku jira* ('only dangling testicles give you peace'), meaning that people need to move, to do things. In other European countries they give you a traveling card that allows you to go around. Here instead it is *buon appetite*! and nothing else (Yimer 2014: 134–35).

Abubakar's *buon appetito!* summarizes well the limits of the Italian welcome to the 'Uninvited' (Harding 2000). In more than one way, for nearly twenty years Lampedusa has been a consistent training ground, and a political laboratory, for creating Europe's public image of the excessive number of uninvited poor migrants coming to European shores, and for the staging of successive and necessary 'states of exception' (Agamben 2003) to limit their numbers whatever the cost. By December 2015, when more than one million migrants mainly escaping the Syrian civil war reached Southern Europe, new walls and iron-wire borders emerged within Schengen Europe and new legal obstacles and social prejudices spread sharply along migratory routes (Medecins sans frontières 2015; Tazzioli 2016). Early apprenticeship of rough treatment for the un-invited hosts was tested first on the Island of Lampedusa, where irregular migrants escaping war and hunger, though rescued at sea by the Italian Navy through Mare Nostrum,[4] were hardly welcomed beyond the ambiguous mix of State humanitarianism and security measures which accompanied their arrival. Although private and often generous hospitality was shown by the islanders to their fellow men in distress, the dumping of migrants' rights together with their hopes and dreams for a better future kept unabated in the island's identification/detention Centre as the uninvited hosts were hidden from public eye in the militarised structures of the Centre, the ill-famed Identification and Expulsion Centre now turned (since early 2016) into one of the six 'hot spots' in southern Italy (Vassallo Paleologo 2016: 18–22). Since the very beginning undocumented migrants, with few exceptions in case of international protection or relocation, were not to stay in Italy.

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[4] During the one-year rescue operations started on 18 October 2013 Mare Nostrum rescued 150,518 people at sea. See http:// www.marina.difesa. it/EN/operations/ Pagine/MareNostrum. Accessed 31 October 2014.

Once they set foot on the Island, they were summarily identified to be quickly repatriated or expelled or were allowed informally to continue their migratory journey further north, which most of them did much to the disconcert of Northern Europe.[5] The arriving migrants were thus surrounded from the very beginning by invisibility and anonymity as a measure of containment, but also as a way of getting rid of their presence as quickly and as unnoticed as possible.

The *Archivo delle Memorie Migranti* and the recovered voices

It is exactly the invisibility surrounding foreign migrants in Italy, and the need to re-establish their own voice and agency, that moved a small group of researchers, teachers, and activists in early 2000s to lay the basis of what later (2012) became the AMM. The Archive was born out of open dissatisfaction with the way mainstream and state media under Berlusconi Governments (*c.* 1994–2011) represented the migrants and their alleged 'invasion' of the Italian peninsula. Basically, we wanted to change the prevailing negative image surrounding the new 'arrivants' (Derrida [1996] 1999: 30) and wanted to do it through joint action not just for, but together with, them: the 'migrants' archive' was what came out of it. The idea of compiling a repository of migrant memories (the migrants' own recollections of their leaving home and travelling to a safer place) came out of an experimental Language School in Rome titled *Asinitas*[6] which based its teachings not on books but on the students' own narratives (Triulzi 2015a). The school was started in Rome in the early 2000s in association with a group of Italian psychologists and therapists named 'Doctors against Torture', who were themselves dissatisfied with treating migrants' post-trauma stress with individual face-to-face sessions.

Through the daily welcoming and care of foreign immigrants at the school, and the choice to draw teaching methods and materials from the students' live voices, learning Italian was conceived as a necessary form of 'survival' for migrants who wanted to claim the memory and dignity of their migratory journey. Thus, narrating one's own story was encouraged to recover from the 'travelling pains' (Coker 2004) of the journey, and to search for new forms of self-expression of individual needs and desires.

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[5] Italy was sanctioned several times by Europe for allowing migrants not to identify themselves. See 'L'Europa chiede conto all'Italia dei 60.000 migranti "spariti"' (http://www.lastampa.it/2015/09/02/esteri/ lue-chiede-conto- allitalia-di-mila- migranti-spariti- 0TuncZiu4U8zNblQtXu 2VM/pagina.html. Accessed 2 November 2015).

[6] The school was named after Giordano Bruno's praise of donkey's endurance and determination (Bruno 1985; see www.asinitas.org).

This is how the first ‘narrative circles’ came about – sitting around in group, each one narrating and listening to each other’s stories (and silences) to diminish, if not to cancel, the inbuilt distance between those who listen and those who narrate (Scego 2009).

Thus, the migrant memory archive – in its double sense of *migrants*’ and *migrating* collective memory – was born out of the necessity to gather, share and make public the individual stories of people who, for whatever reason, ended up coming to or crossing the Italian peninsula. When we started our work in the early 2000s, only few echoes of these personal narratives reached private media, and no trace of them was to be found in public statements, as little peoples’ histories often struggle to find recognition beyond the attentions of sensationalist journalism and inquisitorial bureaucracy. Like Svetlana Aleksievič recording Russian women’s experience at the war front, our focus was not the event itself but ‘the individual person’ going through that event ([2005] 2015: 16). Alienated Eritrean and Ethiopian youths trying to escape the ravages of war and the lack of a foreseeable future were the first individual migrants’ recollections we recorded for our Archive:

> My name is Adam [...]. I am the fifth child (out of eight) in my family. I was born in 1989 E.C. in Addis Ababa [...]. At [school] I was able to score sufficient points to go for higher education but at that time many kids of the younger generation were leaving the country in different directions, for different reasons. Some went out to Kenya and then to South Africa. Others went to Yemen via Somalia; the rest went to Sudan and Libya. I was restless at the time. I was only 17 then (AMM, Interview Adam, 13 May 2008).

> My name is Negga [...]. I am 19 years’ old and am a tenth grader. I came here because I heard a lot from other youngsters in Qirqos about people who had come over to Europe, London, Italy, also by watching western movies and TV. We knew nothing about the problems of how to get to these places, we only heard that life in Europe was beautiful; we were encouraged by all these rumours and tales to make the journey (AMM, Interview Negga, 18 February 2008).

> At that time, I heard that some of my friends were ready to go out of the country. I talked to my sister, and she said she would find some money to help me go with them. She sent me the money. Together with my friends, we made preparations [...] We were eleven youngsters from the same *safar* who had started the journey together and travelled through the Sahara for 21 days. We chose the route thorough Sudan and Libya because we thought it would be easier there to travel without documents [...] We did not want anyone to know about our intentions. We prepared our trip secretly (AMM, Interview Dawit, 2 February 2008).

It was only when they started savouring the bitter fruits of random violence and extortion, which accompanied each step during their repeated crossings of desert and sea that the reality of trafficking and exploitation appeared in all its naked brutality:

> We were stopped, imprisoned, and sold time and again. I did not think we would be treated like donkeys; we were being sold just like objects. It reminded me of the past when we were sold [like slaves]. In Libya it is the same [today]. I could not believe it [...] After the fifth [arrest] I called my mother and told her crying that I could not bear it any longer and wanted to return. I thought the journey would simply be from Sudan to Kufra, from Kufra to the Libyan coast, and from Libya to Italy. What I did not expect was all that in between (AMM, Interview John, backstage of *Come un uomo sulla terra*, March 2008).

It is individual accounts such as these that Dagmawi Yimer recorded during the shooting of *Come un uomo sulla terra* (*Like a Man in Earth*) (Segre et al. 2008) that made the Archive a space of remembering and a springboard for migrants' voices to be publicly heard and acknowledged. This is how the AMM, through an act of common sharing and trust with the migrants, found its own *archè* and *commencement* (Derrida [1996] 2005: 11). Our main aim was to mould together the researchers and the migrants' own experience to co-produce oral and written narratives with the migrants directly participating in the collection, archiving and diffusion of their own stories and testimonies. We wanted to empower migrating voices in all their creative *agency* and self-expression. We thought this participatory process by necessity had to involve Italian and non-Italian actors in one single ethical and political project aimed at changing transnational migration from being something allegedly 'other' into a collective shared patrimony, one which – we hoped – would allow a more balanced view of Italy's own historical unfolding in time.

Figure 2 – Ethiopian film-maker Dagmawi Yimer films a migrant boat rotting ashore at the Lampedusa dump (Still frame from Soltanto il mare *@AMM2011).*

The Lampedusa dump

The invisibility of the Lampedusa migrants who were held up in increasing numbers in the off-limit Identification Centre of the island was more difficult to break. The Island had its own record of 'invisibility' within Italian history as it traditionally hosted a penal colony under the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and later became a dumping ground for political exiles under fascism (Fragapane 1993). In both cases, invisibility and distance were considered the indispensable marks of a prison island where different forms and states of exception could be safely applied, as the dwellers' rights and welfare, not differently from the island's inhabitants, could be easily wiped out or ignored at the country's southern limit in the Mediterranean. Besides, the geographical and cultural location of the island, closer to Africa than to Italy, appeared to justify its relative geographical and cultural isolation from the Italian mainland and the demeaning attitude of the central government towards its inhabitants and resources.

All this helps explaining how, culturally, and politically, Lampedusa has a consistent record of acting as a somehow 'legitimate' dumping ground for undesired peoples, lives, and norms of the Italian state. This is why the island of Lampedusa itself and its mixed population of mobile fishermen and strangers can usefully be taken as a metaphor of the nation's stowaway or marginalised communities through time.

When the Berlusconi Government decreed in May 2008, and the Italian Parliament ratified one year later, that irregular migrants were to all effects unlawful and 'clandestines' on Italian soil, and could be held in detention up to six months and fined 5000–10,000 euro each, the island of Lampedusa – where most irregular migrants arrived up to the Summer of 2015 – appeared to be the ideal place where the state could safely employ extraordinary measures and impose an out-of-sight state of exception where the institutional violence of 'indefinite temporary zones' (Rahola 2003) could be safely applied and dissimulated.

Lampedusa was an ideal dumping ground for this throwaway use of (poor) people and (long-worn) norms. Through a careful balancing of humanitarian apparatus coupled with health measures and security checks, the Italian state was able to present to the international media and to the Italian public a carefully constructed image of a courageous forward-looking state able to cope with the sudden arrival of 'humanity in excess': the innumerable landings and rescue operations at sea which were repeatedly shown at peak hours in every Italian house ensured the classic 'border spectacle' (De Genova 2005: 3–6) of all half-humanitarian half-security exploits. The spectacle showed how the southernmost Mediterranean tourist resort was acting to all effects as a border not just to Italy but to Europe and was closely guarded by the state (with the help of Frontex, the European agency for 'border management') to stave off hordes of 'African', i.e., black and poor immigrants, while at the same time saving them from the hands of unscrupulous traffickers (Cuttitta 2012).

Thus, the island of Lampedusa, in the past twenty years or so, saw the staging of two contrasting layers of memory: that of a welcoming 'firm' land (terra-ferma) equally hospitable to both rich tourists and impoverished migrants, and that of a tragic closed land (terra ferma) where the traffickers' victims and the Government's stowaways were the anonymous migrant bodies to be expelled or 'repatriated' away from the Italian soil. The two sides of this 'oppositional identity' (Wright 2014: 775–802) were closely linked. While the first layer of memory implied by necessity the importance of 'guarding' the border in order to save Italy (and Europe) from barbaric invasions, and to save the migrants themselves from unlawful crimes, Lampedusa's temporary norms were seen as the only way of applying the rule of law to un-receivable masses of foreign citizens with different knowledge and experience of human rights. In other words, like in the peripheries of most empires, law at the border had to be necessarily 'borderline'law.

How this oxymoron was to stay unresolved became clear during the fateful events of Summer 2013 when the visit by Pope Francis to Lampedusa of 8 July was followed, on 3 October, by a renewed shipwreck of a migrant boat in front of the island's most famous tourist bay, Spiaggia dei Conigli. The Pope's visit, which was purposefully led outside official acknowledgement of state authorities, saw a massive turnout of people listening to the Pope's slanting the 'globalised indifference' of the world towards the migrants' plight. During the Mass homily, which was celebrated on a wooden altar made out of the relics of a migrants' boat, Lampedusa was praised as 'an island of hospitality', thus renovating the more benevolent imagery of the island as a'firm'hospitable land (Cacciatore and Petrone 2014).Yet three months later, when in early October a boat crowded with more than 500 migrants capsised a few hundred yards from the island's shores killing 368 people, mainly women and children from Eritrea, Lampedusa's oppositional identity was reaffirmed by its renewed burden of death.

Indeed, the Mediterranean crossing has been plagued in the past twenty years by continuous death, the Sicilian Channel being consistently on the forefront since 1996. During the period 1998–2015, 27,382 people drowned in the Mediterranean, an average of some 1,000 dead per year.7 For an island of barely 20 square km inhabited by less than 6,000 residents, the death toll surrounding it is really incommensurable. Thus, the island for the past twenty years has been literally filled up with migrants' bodies and memories. Everywhere on the island there are traces of their passage, in the boats rotting down for years in the island's public dump at Imbriacola till they were removed from public sight, in the live memory of fishermen and volunteers who do their best to create and keep alive the tradition of hospitality in the island. Now that massive movements of people trying to escape war and poverty are pressing again at Europe's southern borders, it may be useful to recall the lesson of memory the Lampedusa dump has left behind in the island itself, and the wider inheritance it bestowed on Europe's ability to cope with today's peoples in flight pressing at its borders (Mezzadra 2006).

7 For further information please see Italian journalist Gabriele del Grande's blog, Fortress Europe: http://fortresseurope. blogspot.it/p/ la-fortezza.html. Accessed 10 July 2016.

Figure 3 – 'Thanks for your visit'. State of salvaged documents retrieved in Lampedusa by Askavusa before restoration (© Askavusa 2012).

Towards a new politics of memory?

How should Italy and Europe memorialize the current migratory plight in the Mediterranean with its increasing toll of death has been long debated on the island itself (Askavusa 2013, 2016). At the heart of debate is how to represent the 'complexity and variability' of present-day migration through a bottom-up local museum able to share and engage both the curators, the local population, and the arriving migrants through an 'affective and participative' curatorial stance (Chambers 2016: 49–50).

The recent opening in Lampedusa of a self-styled 'Museum of trust and dialogue' for the Mediterranean where the Island's people and its visitors are offered world-famous works of art such as Caravaggio's *Amorino dormiente* (*Sleeping child*) or the Greek Head of Ade recently recovered from the Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles has reopened the vexed question of what and whose memory is to be preserved in the island for a critical pondering of the present. One wonders in fact how Caravaggio's *Sleeping Child* or ancient Greek masterworks borrowed from major world Museums can provide more than tourist attractions in an island, where drinking water must be brought from outside and local women cannot give birth due to the lack of an adequate childbirth structure.

If Lampedusa is to become a Place of Memory, is Caravaggio's *Amorino dormiente* (so closely yet falsely resembling the 3-year-old Syrian child Alan Kurdi drowned on a Turkish beach while crossing the Aegean Sea with his family) the image to back a proper politics of memory on the Island? Shouldn't such a memory include more inclusive evidence of local and migrant voices and agency retrieved in the Island itself?

Figure 4 – A hand-written page of the Ethiopian deacon's diary in Amharic retrieved from the Lampedusa dump (© Badagliacca 2012).

The travel diary of an Ethiopian deacon and the 'glossary of survival' composed by a Bangladesh youth are pertinent examples of such memory. The two documents were among the 'objects of affection' rescued from the Imbriacola dump by members of the local Askavusa Association before the original Museum of Lampedusa was agreed at a Town Hall meeting in February 2013, and were exhibited the following September during the LampedusaInFestival.[8] As the exhibition 'With the objects of the migrants' showed, the initial input of the Museum was the direct sharing of the objects with the migrants and the involvement of local volunteers, researchers, and art historians, so as to have a 'direct dialogue' between them (Chambers 2016: 49).[9]

8 For further information about this Festival read Ilaria Vecchi's article in this issue.

9 It should be recalled here that the original Museum of Migration was conceived under the guidance of Prof. Giuseppe Basile, a well-known restorer of Giotto's paintings in Italy, for whom migrants' relics

At that time both documents were sent to our Archive to be curated and translated as they were considered vivid testimonies to the richness of data they could provide to the willing listener of the migrants' own voices.

The first document is a fourteen-page travel diary written in Amharic by an Ethiopian Orthodox deacon stranded in Libya in 2006–07. The deacon attempts to cross the Libyan desert and the Mediterranean Sea twice, each time being arrested and pushed back by the Libyan authorities to the prison of Kufra in the middle of the Libyan desert (Triulzi and Eshetu 2014). Here the deacon and his group are handed over to local *dallala* (intermediaries) who 'buy' the youths out of the Libyan jail to make them cross the desert again, this time in the hands of another group of traffickers:

> I was extremely sad. While in my country, at this very moment – the diary entry is dated Maskaram 1 1998 E.C., equivalent to 11 September 2006 – the best sheep are selected for New Year's Celebrations, here we are picked up according to our origin and sold out according to where we've come from (AMM, Diario di un diacono etiopico, col. 22).

The Diary is a living testimony of endurance, resilience, and faith in God: prayers appear to be the only viable source of hope or sanity as the Ethiopian group travels through hostile lands in the hands of money-hungry traffickers colluded with police and local authorities. Families at home follow the group's odyssey with anguish as the deacon's sister, in a swift letter exchange found together with the Diary in the Island's dump, urges his aggrieved brother not to despair:

> My dearest brother [...] We've heard about the incredible violence and sufferings you went through, and of the dead persons and the sick ones, and of the boys who returned here out of despair. I feel certain that you will make it with the help of God. After all you went through, God will give you a good life, and you will be an example to your brothers and friends. What you have lost you will be given back, the hunger you feel, all the fears you have, will disappear in the end. When suffering becomes unbearable, do not lose hope because you will be repaid of all this. God will repay you with a joyful life. All this happens by His will. You must not be aggrieved by it (AMM, Family letter encl. in *Diario*, letter 2).

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of travelling were to be considered of equal importance for Europe's memory as medieval works of art (see Mosca Mondadori et al. 2014: 133–46).

The second document is a small eight-page list of some 100 English words transcribed into Bengali language, which compose a sort of self-made Bangla-English glossary written by an anonymous migrant from Bangladesh. On his way to Europe, the author is caught up in the Libyan turmoil preceding the violent overthrow of Kaddafi's government in 2011 and eventually lands in Lampedusa where his Bangla glossary is eventually found rolled up in a pair of jeans retrieved in the island dump (Matta and Ghosh 2014). The Bangla 'glossary of survival' is an open invitation to interpretive thinking and exploration of the migrants' own imaginary world. While working on the glossary with the help of another Bangladesh migrant, Mara Matta, a young researcher at L'Orientale University in Naples, has this to say as to the possible origin of the glossary (personal communication, 20 January 2013):

> Reading back, I keep thinking that this youth (we think he is a man but may have been a woman) wanted to tell a story, and that his choice of words is not a casual one. By this I mean that he is not copying words out of a text or a manual but is using an English-Bangla Dictionary to build his own vocabulary, something that would allow him to communicate with 'us', tell us why he went away (or was sent away) from Bangladesh. I have the impression that his words follow some sort of semantically inspired sequence. When he talks of wedding, he also talks of poets, mediators, and lawyers. When he talks of the Sahara desert, he writes of wind and sound – the sound of void. When he talks of the police, he writes of being sent away from home, is speaking of the end... I don't know, it may only be the fruit of my imagination, but reading back in this way, I believe we can understand more, and perhaps even reconstruct, part of the author's story.

Figure 5 – The 'glossary of survival' transcribed into Bangla language by an anonymous migrant from Bangladesh (© Sicilian Central Library, Restoration Lab 2012).

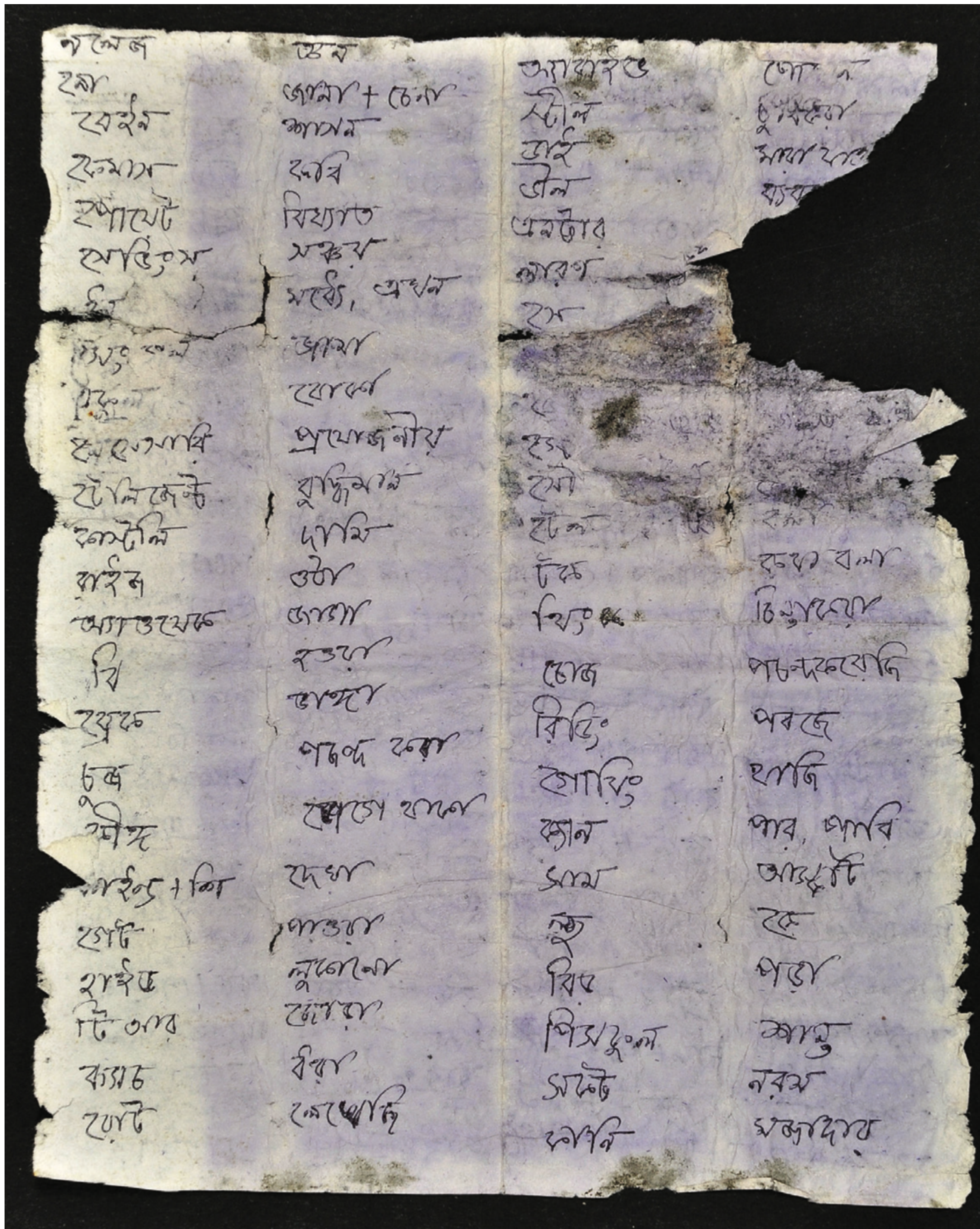
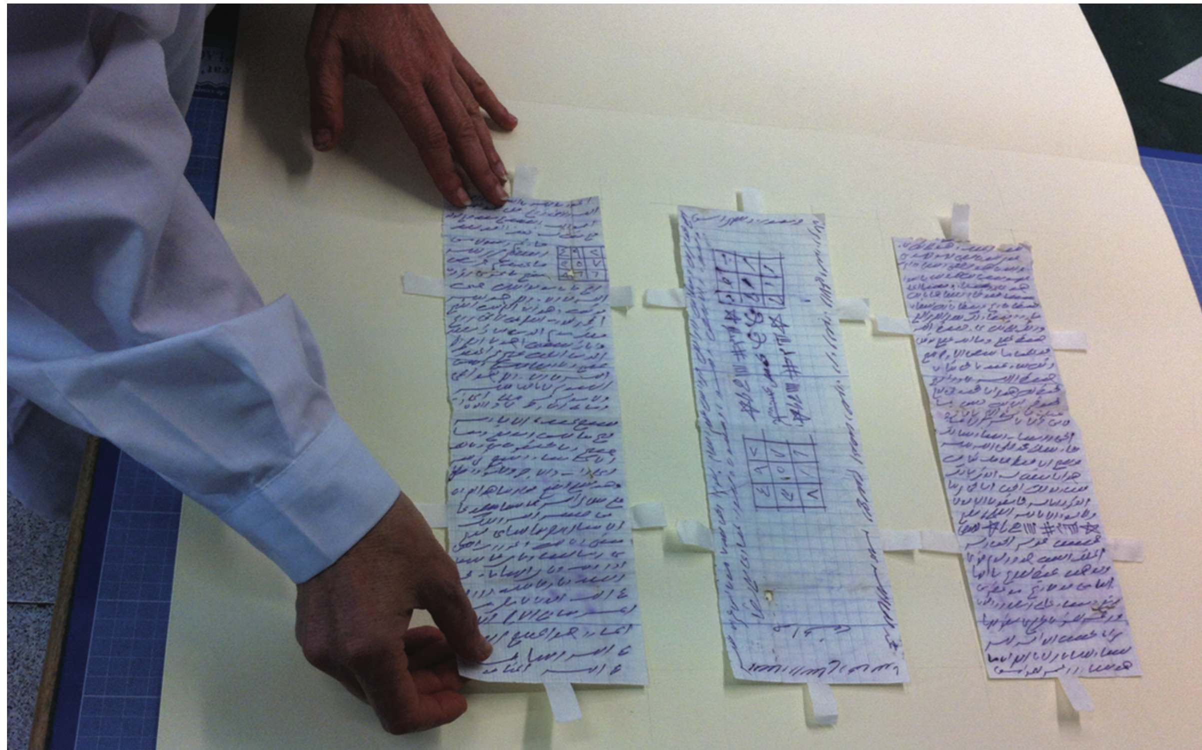


Figure 6 – Islamic amulet (hijab) retrieved in one of the Lampedusa boats being restored in Palermo (© Sicilian Central Library, Restoration Laboratory 2012).



These two documents are small samples of the rich documentary evidence to be found in the scattered points of arrival along the Mediterranean and Aegean seas, for which retrieval operations may bring further evidence beside and beyond the one provided by the Lampedusa dump. It is clear that sources such as these question our own 'incurability' as wasteful citizens of the world, and bring forward a crying need for uncovering, conserving and making visible the untamed humanity, which lies behind it. The fact that the Ethiopian Diary was found neatly wrapped in several layers of sellotape to withstand water, and that the list of anglicised Bangla words was carefully rolled up and hidden inside a worn-out pair of jeans, is a reminder of the importance their owners attributed to the personal belongings they lost or were deprived from at arrival. Clearly, much more work is ahead of us if we want to revisit the experience of the Lampedusa relics as mere 'waste' or anonymous 'exhibit' and reassess their potential use and decoding in raising awareness to the universal dimension of the individual humanity landing at Europe's shores. In this respect, Caravaggio's *Sleeping Child* appears to be yet another form of uncritical cultural 'dumping' on the island: one should not be surprised if the new Museum structure has been attacked by the Askavusa collective as being part of the yet unresolved 'colonial discourse' lying behind Italy's flippant memory of her imperial past now refurbished into the all-englobing humanitarian vocation of the State (2016).

As the 'dumping' of migrant lives and memories continues unabated in the Mediterranean, the risk of transforming Greece and Italy into front-line states to defend Europe's restrictive migration policies is quite real as the two countries and their southernmost islands act as de facto no-entry outposts to the European Union. It is to be expected that such dumping policy will continue in the near future, inside the very heart of our continent. It is this dumping of European identity and universal values the real challenge for our collective destiny in the new millennium.

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