

Alessandro De Cola, Ph.D.

Research fellow

Department of History and Cultures,
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Alessandro De Cola is a research fellow at the Department of History and Culture, University of Bologna, and a Research fellow at the International Studies Group, University of the Free State. He is currently working on the research titled “African consumers and the 19th-century Global Economy: the case of Venetian glass beads”, within the Italian Research Project of National Relevance (PRIN) 2022 “Arms, Beads and Cloth. African Consumers and the 19th-century Global Economy”. His work focuses on social, economic and monetary history of East Africa and the Indian Ocean in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He has published on the impact of colonial monetary policies in Eritrea during the First World War, the role of money in the regularisation of African soldiers in the Italian army, and the tropes on the Eritrean monetary systems in colonial publications. He is writing on a monograph on the monetary history of Eritrea from the 1850s to the 1950s.

RESEARCH POSITIONS

1 February 2024 – ongoing_Reserch Fellow.

Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna

Title of the project: "African consumers and the 19th-century Global Economy: the case of Venetian glass beads", within the project: PRIN 2022 Prot. 2022YE9NBH CUP: J53D23000530 006, “Arms, Beads and Cloth. African Consumers and the 19th-century Global Economy”

1 April 2024 - 30 June 2024_Visiting Scholar.

Institut für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, Universität Wien, Vienna, Austria

1 February 2024 – 31 January 2027_Reserch Fellow.

International Studies Group (ISG), University of the Free State

1 September 2021 – 31 January 2024_Postdoctoral research fellow.

International Studies Group (ISG), University of the Free State

Working on the research project titled: “Monetary Landscapes of the Red Sea: Italian Colonialism, Labour, and the Maria Theresa Thaler”.

EDUCATION

1 October 2017 - 7 June 2021_PhD student.

PhD programme in Global Histories, Politics and Cultures, Department of History and Culture (DISCI), University of Bologna

PhD dissertation titled: “Transitions in the Monetary History of Eritrea. Colonial Policies, Military Labour, and the Maria Theresa Thaler (1885-1921)”.

2 February 2020 - 31 August 2020_Visiting PhD student.

International Studies Group (ISG), University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

10 October 2012 - 17 March 2016_Laurea Magistrale (MA) in Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology.

School of Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna

Grade: 110/110 (First Class Honours-1st), cum laude, with a thesis titled *Mappe, Capi e Mercati. Strategie del Potere Coloniale nei Northern Territories della Gold Coast (1896-1937)* [Maps, Chiefs and Markets. Strategies of the Colonial Power in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast (1896-1937)].

28 September 2009 - 8 October 2012_Laurea (BA) in Anthropological Sciences.

School of Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna

Grade: 110/110 (First Class Honours-1st), with a thesis titled *Enjoy the Movement, Forget the Rest. Il Parkour tra Controcultura ed Omologazione* [about the commodification of the urban practice of parkour].

WORK EXPERIENCE

5 May 2021 – 4 June 2021_ Copyediting of the volume *Monetary Transitions. Currencies, Colonialism and African Societies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna, Piazza San Giovanni in Monte, 2, 40124, Bologna, Italy.

16 February 2021 - 28 February 2021_ Technical Assistant in a high school.

Ministero dell'Istruzione – Liceo Niccolò Copernico (BOPS030004), Via Ferruccio Garavaglia, 11, 40127, Bologna

04 November 2016 - 13 December 2016_Tutor of the Department of History and Cultures of the University of Bologna.

University of Bologna, School of Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage

19 May 2016 - 31 October 2016_Teaching tutor of the BA degree course in Anthropology, Religion, Oriental Civilizations.

School of Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna

04 May 2015 - 31 October 2015_Students' tutor of the BA degree course in Anthropology, Religion, Oriental Civilizations.

School of Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna

PARTICIPATION AT CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

26 September 2023_ Stanley Trapido Seminar series.

International Studies Group (ISG), University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Title of the presentation: "Who designed colonial money. A study on Eritrea".

31 May-3 June 2023_European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) 9, African Futures

University of Cologne

Title of the presentation: "Smuggling multiplicity: how illegal monetary transactions kept the economy of the Italian East Africa alive (1885-1941)".

16 May 2023_ WISO-Abendkolloquium

University of Vienna

Title of the presentation: "Rethinking the two sides of the coin: the Maria Theresa thaler in the Red Sea (1860s–1960s)".

13-14 October 2022_ 15th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network (AEHN).

University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Title of the presentation: "More than a monetary crossroads: assessing the regional dimension of the circulation of the Maria Theresa thaler in the Red Sea region".

4 October 2022_ ISG online seminars series.

Title of the presentation: “Debt Slavery and Antislavery Action in the Southern Red Sea: The Case of the Pearl Fishing Industry in the Italian Colony of Eritrea”.

17 August 2022_ WITS History Workshop.

Title of the presentation: “The 1890 Brussels Act, debt slavery and pearl fishing in the Southern Red Sea”.

29 June-1 July 2022_ 6th Conference of the Associazione per gli Studi Africani in Italia (ASAI)

University of Urbino

Title of the presentation: “Bandits of the Red Sea: human trafficking, bonded labour and pearl fishing after the 1890 Brussels Act”.

21 September 2021_ ISG online seminars series.

Title of the presentation: “Military wage labour and the strategies of African veterans in the early phase of Italian colonialism in Eritrea (1896-1907)”.

11 March 2020_ Ramblers seminar series.

International Studies Group (ISG), University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Title of the presentation: “An Introduction to the Maria Theresa Thaler Issue in Colonial Eritrea: Currency Circulation and Italian Policies during the First World War”.

4 February 2020_ LEAP seminar series.

Laboratory for the Economics of Africa’s Past (LEAP), Department of Economics, University of Stellenbosch

Title of the presentation “The Maria Theresa thaler and the impact of Italian policies in Eritrea during the First World War”.

18 - 19 October 2019_ 14th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network (AEHN), titled: “Global dimensions of African Economic History”

School of Economics, University of Barcelona

Title of the presentation “The Maria Teresa thaler shortage in Italian Eritrea during the First World War: colonial policies and local responses”.

6 March 2019_ Internal seminar of the PRIN project 2015JXPLWF titled “Pratiche monetarie e politiche imperiali in Africa orientale (1890-1950): nuove prospettive di ricerca”.

Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna

Title of the presentation: “La ‘questione monetaria’ nella colonia eritrea e il tallero di Maria Teresa da ‘moneta-merce’ ad ‘anacronismo’ nei modelli interpretativi coloniali (1857-1941)”.

22 February 2019_ Doctoral seminar titled “Un Mare di Isole. Metodologie e interpretazioni delle complessità insulari”.

Ph.D. Programme of Global Histories, Cultures and Politics, Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna

Title of the presentation “‘Linee che attraversano mare’: il caso delle isole Hanish (1923-1938)”.

6-7 December 2018_ International conference titled “Insularities and enclaves in colonial and post-colonial circumstances: crossings, conflicts and indentarian constructions (15th - 21st centuries)”.

Centre for History (CH-UL), University of Lisbon, Lisbon

Title of the presentation “(Un)deserted Islands: Colonial Economy and Red Sea Society in the Hanish Islands Case (1920s-1930s)”.

PARTICIPATION AT WORKSHOPS

16-17 dicembre 2021_ Università di Pavia-Workshop nell’ambito della International Winter School Global Labour Scapes. Labour in Africa: Historical and Social Dynamics.

Titolo della presentazione: “The regularisation of indigenous troops and the spreading of military wage labour in the early phase of Italian colonialism in Eritrea (1885-1907)”.

22 October 2021_ Stellenbosch-African Economic History Network (AEHN) regional workshop.

Title of the presentation: “The impact of military wage labour and the economic strategies of African veterans in the early phase of Italian colonialism in Eritrea (1896-1907)”.

29 - 30 June 2021_ Cambridge-LSE Workshop in African Economic History.

Title of the presentation: “Money, military wage labour and the strategies of the first indigenous veterans in the Italian colony of Eritrea (1896-1907)”.

15 - 16 January 2020_ International Workshop titled “Monetary transitions in colonial Africa”.

Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna, Italy

Title of the presentation “The Maria Theresa thaler in Italian Eritrea: The Impact of Colonial Monetary Policies during the First World War”.

3 - 4 May 2018_ Post-graduate workshop for the presentation of the Ph.D. research proposal.

Ph.D. Programme of Global Histories, Cultures and Politics, Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna

SUPERVISION

October 2022 - ongoing_ Co-supervision of Keabobaka Tsholo, PhD candidate at the University of the Free State (First Supervisor Dr. Victor Gwande).

Provisional title of the thesis: “The role of development corporations in Bophuthatswana's political economy, 1977-1994”.

FUNDING AND RECOGNITIONS

March 2021_ Winner of a grant from the Young Scholar Initiative (YSI), for the organisation of a writing workshop for African early career scholars (with Dr. Geraldine Sibanda).

14 November 2019_ Winner of a Marco Polo scholarship, issued by the Department of History and Cultures of the University of Bologna, for the funding of a visiting period at the International Studies Group (ISG), of the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, starting from February 2020.

28 July 2017_ Winner of a scholarship, financed by the Gerda Henkel Foundation, dedicated to the research topic: “Monetary transitions: the introduction of colonial currencies in East Africa and their impact on local societies and economies”.

13 October 2014_ Winner of a merit-based scholarship for the completion of the MA dissertation, proclaimed by the School of Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the University of Bologna.

November 2012_ Winner of a competitive selection for a fieldwork training project lead by Dr Gaetano Mangiameli (PhD) in Bolgatanga, Ghana.

July 2011_ Recipient of a certificate of merit by the president of the University of Bologna.

ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

27 March 2023 – January 2025_ Member of the Programme Committee of the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies (SGNCS) 2025 Congress.

Global Studies Center, Gulf University for Science and Technology (Kuwait)

Dicembre 2023 – 27 settembre 2024_ Member of the Organizing Committee of the “17th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network”.

Faculty of Economics, MEMOTEF, LaSapienza University, Rome

13 - 14 September 2021_Organiser and member of the scientific committee of the inaugural bootcamp for early career scholars “Money and Monetary Institutions in Africa” (partially financed by the Young Scholars Initiative, YSI).
University of the Free State

February 2018 - 7 September 2018_Member of the secretariat of the “ASAI V - Fifth Conference of the Association for African Studies in Italy”, held in Bologna, 5-7 September 2018.
Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna

December 2017 - 13 October 2018_Member of the Organizing Committee of the “13th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network” held in Bologna, 12-13 October 2018.
Department of History and Cultures, Via Zamboni 34, 40126, Bologna (BO), University of Bologna

PARTICIPATION IN SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATIONS

13 October 2023 – ongoing_ member of the Membership Committee of the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies (SGNCS)

September 2022 – ongoing_ Organiser of the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI)

16 September 2021 - ongoing_Founding member of the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies (SGNCS).

17 January 2020 - ongoing_Member of the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI).

12 October 2018 - ongoing_Member of the African Economic History Network (AEHN).

5 September 2018 - ongoing_Member of ASAI (Associazione per gli Studi Africani in Italia).

1 January 2019 - 12 February 2021_Secretary of ASAI (Associazione per gli Studi Africani in Italia).

PARTICIPATION IN EDITORIAL BOARDS OF JOURNALS AND BOOK SERIES

April 2019 - ongoing_Chief copyeditor of the scientific journal “Afriche e Orienti”.

08 August 2016 - ongoing_Member of the editorial board of the book series “Heritage. Antropologia, Musei Paesaggi”, Bonomo Editore.

PUBLICATIONS

- De Cola A. (2023), “Money and the Regularisation of African Soldiers in the Early Phase of Italian Colonialism in Eritrea”, *War & Society*, 42, 2, pp. 140-156
- De Cola A., “The Maria Theresa thaler in Italian Eritrea: The Impact of Colonial Monetary Policies during the First World War”, in K. Pallaver (ed.) *Monetary Transitions. Currencies, Colonial Rule and African Societies*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2022
- De Cola A., “Il problema monetario nella Colonia Eritrea: il Tallero di Maria Teresa nella letteratura coloniale (1857-1941)”, in K. Pallaver e G.L. Podestà (eds.), *Una moneta per l'impero. Pratiche monetarie, economia e società nell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2021

NON-ACADEMIC ARTICLES

- De Cola A., “Economia di mercato (nero)”, *Nigrizia*, anno 141, n. 7-8, Jul-Aug, 2023, pp. 51-53
- De Cola A., “Italy and the Colonialism of Others”, *Africa Is a Country*, December 23, 2022, <https://africasacountry.com/2022/12/italy-and-the-colonialism-of-others>